



Strategic Plan: 2022-2025

Submitted to and approved by the Board of Trustees on August 11, 2021

Mission Statement

The mission of the Seekonk Public Library is to enrich lives by ensuring that every member of the community has access to a vast array of ideas and information.

Vision Statement

The library enriches lives, broadens horizons, and strengthens community.

Introduction

Long-range planning has been an integral part of the operation of the Seekonk Public Library since 1996 when the Board of Library Trustees approved the first strategic plan. In 2003, the library developed a long-range plan, which covered the years 2004 through 2008. In 2007, the library extended this plan to cover the years 2007 to 2010. Unforeseen circumstances delayed the development of a new plan, which would eventually come to cover the fiscal years 2014 through 2017. The library extended the plan through fiscal year 2018. The library developed an annual action plan that served as the interim plan for fiscal year 2019. In this interim plan, the library trustees committed the library to developing a new strategic plan to cover the next four fiscal years, 2020 to 2023. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the completion of this plan until June 2021.

The needs of library users, and the capacity of the library building to meet those needs, has also been studied intensively in the last decade. The library submitted and received a \$50,000 Planning & Design Grant from the MBLC in the summer of 2014. Later that year, the Town appropriated an additional \$25,000 and authorized the appointment of a Library Facilities Study Committee. The committee began work in January 2015. The committee examined library service needs for the next twenty years. It also engaged an architectural firm and a construction management firm to develop options to address those needs.

In January 2017, the Town submitted to the MBLC a Library Construction Grant Application with plans for a new \$15 million library. In July 2017, the MBLC awarded the town a Library Construction Grant of about \$7.3 million dollars. The Town of Seekonk is currently fourth on a list of communities waiting for that funding to become available. In February 2021, an updated cost estimate for the proposed building project was \$19.6 million.

Methodology

The Strategic Planning Committee employed the Massachusetts Library System “Three Meeting Model” for the preparation of this plan. A fourteen-member planning committee, consisting of library administration, trustees, town department heads, and town residents, was formed. The first meeting consisted of a SOAR exercise. The SOAR exercise was followed by a community survey of library usage and services, and a community “visioning” exercise as a prelude to the formulation of library goals. An additional survey was conducted by a consultant in the Fall of 2020 to determine the value of the library during the COVID-19 pandemic. These exercises, and subsequent discussions about community values and aspirations, lead directly to the formulation of the goals and objectives in this plan.

As noted in the introduction, this plan attempts to deal with two distinctly different scenarios for the future of the library. One scenario is that the library will move ahead and seek funding in 2021 or 2022 for the construction of a new library. This scenario further assumes that this effort will be successful and the town will proceed with construction. The other scenario also assumes that the library will seek funding in FY22 or FY23, but will not succeed. This scenario assumes that the library will remain in its present facility. The plan includes goals created for both sets of assumptions. A series of steps or a sequence of events will occur regardless of which scenario the library pursues. The goal statements reflect the sequential nature of these activities, so the library will not immediately assign objectives to every goal.

Planning Committee Members

Brittney Faria/ Director, Human Services and Council on Aging/Town Resident

Mikala Fiero/Town Resident

Jane Flatley/Town Resident

Linda Karewa/Board Member, Seekonk Library Trust/Town Resident

Mark Leeuwenburgh/Town Resident

Patricia Libby/ Board Member, Friends of the Library/Town Resident

Martha Manno/Town Resident

Carol Masterson/Town Resident

Jim Morse/Town Resident

Alyssa Richard/Secretary, Board of Library Trustees/Town Resident

Cesar Vera/Town Resident

Peter Fuller/Library Director (through August 2020)

Kathleen Hibbert/Assistant Library Director/Director, September 2020-present

User Needs Assessment

Seekonk Public Library primarily serves the people of Seekonk, MA; 74% of library cardholders are Seekonk residents, 23% are residents of other Massachusetts cities and towns, and less than 2% are out-of-state residents. The library has approximately 11,000 registered borrowers. Approximately 67% percent of these card holders are adults. The remaining 33% are persons under the age of eighteen. Approximately 3820 have used their cards in the past year. The disparity in the numbers of registered borrowers and regular users indicates an opportunity for the library to significantly expand its user base. The probability of success appears to be enhanced by a generally favorable attitude towards libraries that has been reported by the Pew Research Center and elsewhere.

Data from a 2020 survey confirms that Seekonk residents cite a sense of community as an important community value, and that the library is seen as a place that contributes to that sense of community. Respondents in a 2019 survey conducted by the library were highly satisfied with the quality of the service they receive when using the library.

Other data from that 2019 survey indicates that the majority of respondents visit the library at least once a week for up to one hour per visit. These users tend to take advantage of a wide variety of services. Readers report, for example, that they will borrow printed books, recorded books, and download e-books. While borrowing materials remains the primary reason cited for using the library, survey data also indicates that the technological help provided by library staff is rated as very important to users. This would seem to indicate an on-going need for services that help the public use emerging technologies.

A comparison of survey data from 2016 to 2019 indicates that attendance at a library program is viewed as an important reason to visit the library, but that demands on personal time act as a primary obstacle in preventing attendance.

New Building Scenario

The following goals reflect a scenario in which the town commits to constructing a new library building within the first two years of this plan.

Service Goals

- 1.1 Library users will consistently enjoy positive customer experiences while visiting the library or using its services remotely.
- 1.2 Seekonk residents will have more opportunities within the library to meet, share, discuss, and organize.
- 1.3 Library users will receive training and support that will allow them to be confident, capable and discriminating users of the library as well as other information resources.

1.4 Library users will be able to attend programs that support the development of new skills, encourage the exchange of ideas, and support residents' efforts to improve the quality of life in Seekonk.

1.5 Library users will be well informed about activities and resources at the library.

1.6 Library users will enjoy the benefits of greater collaboration between the library and local community organizations and governmental agencies.

Resources Goals

2. Building & Facilities

2.1 Library users will receive the best level of library service that is feasibly possible while the library is relocated to a temporary facility.

2.2 Library users will receive a full range of high-quality library services from a new facility.

3. Seekonk Meadows & Library Grounds

3.1 During the construction of the new library, the public will continue to have access to Seekonk Meadows passive recreation area.

3.2 Following construction of the new library, the public will have access to a fully restored Seekonk Meadows passive recreation area.

4. Capital Equipment

4.1. Library users will become more effective users of information technology because of new investments in technology and related equipment.

4.2 Library users will receive expanded and more efficient services because of increased investment in library automation.

4.3 Library users will have access to a more comfortable, secure and accessible library facility because of increased private investment of private funds in furnishing, equipment and other fixtures.

5. Human Resources

5.1 Library users will be assisted by a knowledgeable, well-trained and capable staff who are committed to providing the high customer service.

6. Collections

(Collection refers to all materials collected or made available by the library, including the items in its physical collection of print and non-print items and item available electronically.)

6.1 Learners of all ages will have access to materials that they need to realize their full potential.

6.2 Library users will have access to materials for recreational reading, viewing and listening.

6.3 Library users will have access to materials that allow them to master the skills needed to be successful in the areas of their choosing

6.4 Library users will have access to materials that enhance their capacity to imagine and create.

7. Financial Resources

7.1 Town residents will receive the best possible return in services for all public funding invested in library services.

7.2 Donors to the library and its affiliated non-profit groups will have new opportunities to contribute towards furnishing and equipping the new library and to restoring and improving the Seekonk Meadows

Existing Building Scenario

(The following goals reflect a scenario in which the town does not make a commitment to construction a new library building.)

Service Goals

1.1 Library users will consistently enjoy positive customer experiences while visiting the library or using its services remotely.

1.2 Library users will receive training and support that will allow them to be confident, capable and discriminating users of the library as well as other information resources.

1.3 Library users will be able to attend programs that support the development of literacy and other important life skills.

1.4 Library users will be well informed about information and other services provided by local community groups.

Resources Goals

2. Building & Facilities

2.1 Library users will receive the best level of library service that is feasibly possible by having the library make more effective and efficient use of its existing facility.

3. Seekonk Meadows & Library Grounds

3.1 The public will be able to attend and participate in more library programs on the Seekonk Meadows passive recreation area.

4. Capital Equipment

4.1 Library users will be more effective users of information technology because of new investments in new technology and related equipment.

4.2 Library users will receive expanded and more efficient services because of increased investment in library automation.

4.3 Library users will have access to a more comfortable, secure and accessible library facility because of increased investment of public funds in furnishing, equipment and other fixtures.

5. Human Resources

5.1 Library users will be assisted by a knowledgeable, well-trained and capable staff who are committed to providing the high customer service.

5.2 Library users will have wider access to services that require minimal intervention of the library staff.

6. Collections

(Collection refers to all materials collected or made available by the library, including the items in its physical collection of print and non-print items and item available electronically.)

6.1 Learners of all ages will have access to materials that they need to realize their full potential.

6.2 Library users will have access to materials for recreational reading, viewing and listening.

7. Financial Resources

7.1 Town residents will receive the best possible return in services for all public funding invested in library services.

7.2 Donors to the library and its affiliated non-profit groups will have new opportunities to invest in efforts to maintain and improve the Seekonk Meadows

FY2022 Action Plan for the Seekonk Public Library

This is a revision of the Action Plan approved by the Board of Library Trustees in November 2018. This revision incorporates new goals statements, which are based on those submitted to the Board by the Strategic Planning Committee in May 2019. This revised plan was approved unanimously by the Board of Library Trustees at their meeting on November 18, 2020.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, and the lack of a vaccine as of the writing of this plan, it should be noted that library staff and administration have collaborated to create achievable goals in a shifting environment.

A. SERVICE GOALS

A-1 Library users will consistently enjoy positive customer experiences while visiting the library or using its services remotely.

The library will survey its users about their degree of satisfaction with existing services being offered, and then analyze and report the data by or before March 31, 2022.

Engage all public service staff in defining best practices for providing public service and updating staff procedural manual by June 30, 2022.

Librarians in both the Adult and Youth Services sections will use feedback from participants in all library programs and events to improve and develop library programming.

The library will continue to hold quarterly meetings between customer services and technical services staff to determine ways to better support those providing direct public services.

Adult Services Librarians will use feedback from the Teen Advisory Committee to improve services to young adults.

The library will continue to design and evaluate library services based on key library output measures such as circulation, program attendance, number of visits, and new registrations, which the library collects and reports monthly.

A-2 Library users will receive training and support that will allow them to be confident, capable and discriminating users of the library and other information resources.

The Adult Services section will continue to provide on-line & virtual training to library users with services such as Niche Academy.

Youth Services Librarians will provide teachers, parents and other caregivers information about educational resources and other online services available at the library.

FY2022 Action Plan for the Seekonk Public Library

A-3 Library users will be able to attend programs that support the development of literacy and other important life skills.

Youth Services librarians will offer monthly early literacy programs utilizing virtual platforms, Storytime on the Go kits and/or in-person programs as advised.

Youth Services librarians will offer six (6) enrichment, S.T.E.M. and life skills programs that are designed to engage children and offer shared library experiences for families.

Adult Services Librarians will offer annually a least one program or series annually in the areas of health, local interest, and lifelong learning.

Adult Services Librarians will offer at least one program each quarter designed to engage young adults and increase their use of the library.

Teens will have access to a wide array of services designed to meet their social-emotional needs.

Adult Service Librarians will offer at least one after school program per month for middle and high school students.

A-4 Library users will be well informed about activities and resources at the library.

The library will issue 800 library cards to new users in by June 30, 2022 through a coordinated effort of all its public service staff

Library staff will continue using public access television (Cable TV-9) to promote library services through June 30, 2022.

The library will add all new library patrons to library newsletter lists quarterly.

Library staff will add and update content on the library's revised website monthly.

Library staff will create a social media plan for effective use of available platforms to increase library user engagement by 15%.

Youth Services Librarians will offer virtual classroom visits to students enrolled in the Virtual Learning Academy and hybrid models of learning.

Adult and Youth Services Librarians will continue using monthly Constant Contact newsletters and printed flyers to promote programs and services.

FY2022 Action Plan for the Seekonk Public Library

A-5 Library users will receive a broader range of services through greater community engagement and nurturing of its public-private partnerships.

The library will produce, along with other co-sponsoring groups, one event that will provide information about the programs and services offered by other community organizations and government agencies.

Adult Services Librarians will work with the Seekonk Land Conservation Trust and the Seekonk Artist Network to conduct the third annual Seekonk Nature Photography Contest, with the concluding awards program occurring by May 31, 2022.

Youth Services librarians will participate in school sponsored and community-wide outreach events held by town organizations and public/private partners.

Adult Services Librarians will produce a *Meet the Candidates* event by March 31, 2022 (before the local elections in April).

B. RESOURCE GOALS

STAFFING

B-1.1 Library users will be assisted by a knowledgeable, well-trained and capable staff who are committed to providing high quality customer service.

The library will conduct three training sessions for Customer Service staff on accessing and using the electronic online offered through the library.

Professional staff will attend a minimum of two (2) professional development workshops (remotely or in-person) per year.

Library Administrators will evaluate annually the performance of all library staff according to the terms of the collective bargaining agreement with the library staff association and the Town Personnel Bylaw.

FACILITIES

B-1.2 Library users will receive an enhanced level of services by supplementing the efforts of paid staff with those of volunteers.

The library will hold its annual volunteer appreciation event in April 2022.

FY2022 Action Plan for the Seekonk Public Library

B-2.1 Library users will have access to a library facility that offers the fullest range of services that may be feasibly achieved.

The library will reconfigure the children's area to provide additional space for the library's youngest users and their caregivers by June 30, 2022.

Library staff will continue to work with Tappé Architects to address any outstanding design issues with the proposed library design.

Library staff will determine space requirements to offer core services while the library is temporarily relocated, and make a recommendation to the Library Trustees by March 31, 2022.

Library staff will prepare an RFQ to engage a project manager to plan and direct the relocation of the library

B-2.2 The public will be able to attend and participate in programs on the Seekonk Meadows passive recreation area.

Youth Services Librarians will offer at least two of its special enrichment programs on the Seekonk Meadow.

Adult Services Librarians will offer at least two of its programs on the Seekonk Meadows.

TECHNOLOGY

B-3.1 Library users will receive expanded and more efficient services because of increased investment in technology and automation.

The library will provide regular and consistent training in the use of the library's self-checkout machines so that these stations will handle at least 60% of the library's total checkouts by June 30, 2022.

COLLECTIONS

B-4.1 Library users will have access to materials for recreational reading, viewing and listening.

B-4.2 Library users will have access to materials that allow them to master the skills needed to be successful in the areas of their choosing

[The following objectives applied to both of the above goals.]

FY2022 Action Plan for the Seekonk Public Library

Members of the library's acquisitions teams and the Associate Director will review and revise as required the library Collection Development Policy by December 31, 2022.

The library acquisition teams will expend all of the town appropriated funds required to meet Massachusetts regulations for state certification by June 15, 2022.

Members of the library acquisition teams with the assistance of other staff will complete an aggressive weeding of the library's physical collection by June 30, 2022 in anticipation of the library moving to temporary quarters.

The library will increase by 10% its investment in services offering downloadable media during fiscal year 2022.

Total circulation activity by the library will increase by five percent (5%) over the total from the previous fiscal year through a coordinated and consistent effort by all of the library's public service to promote the use of the library's collections.

FINANCIAL

B-5.1 Town residents will receive the best possible return in services for all public funding invested in library services.

The library will continue to collect and report monthly key library output measures such as circulation, program attendance, number of visits, and new registrations.

The library will deliver by September 30, 2022 its contribution to the town's Annual Financial Report.

The library administration will prepare and submit an operating budget request for FY 2023 to the Town Administrator by December 31, 2022.

The library administration will prepare and submit a revised capital budget request for FY 2023 to the Town Administrator by December 31, 2022.

The library will annually calculate and report the estimated total value of library services provided annually to the Town of Seekonk in order to calculate the return on investment (ROI) for the town's investment in library services by December 31, 2022.

FY2022 Action Plan for the Seekonk Public Library

B-5.2 Donors to the library and its affiliated non-profit groups will have new opportunities to invest in efforts to improve the library.

The library's administration shall identify opportunities to add new or innovative services and submit funding requests to the Board of Directors of the Friends of the Seekonk Library by April 30, 2022.