

2023-2026 LONG-RANGE PLAN



Adopted by Bridgewater Library Associations, Board of Trustees
November 8, 2023

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LONG-RANGE PLAN COMMITTEE & BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Burnham Library: Where Community Connects

Welcome to the commencement of our library's long-range plan, a strategic roadmap that will shape our next three years. It is our privilege to share with you the foundation upon which we will grow our library. This introduction sets the stage for the journey ahead.

At the core of our purpose lies the commitment as a hub of knowledge, a source of lifelong learning, and a catalyst for cultural enrichment and connectedness within our community. Our vision entails being a dynamic, forward-thinking, and inclusive institution that embraces technology and adapts to societal changes while upholding our fundamental principles.

The valuable insights from the 2022 Community Needs Survey have played a pivotal role in shaping this plan. We extend our gratitude to all who participated; your input is guiding our way forward.

In addition to community feedback, we rely on our extensive experience and best practices in library management to deliver on these goals. The governance and guidance of our Board of Trustees ensure accountability and commitment to our mission. Our Executive Director, with their exceptional leadership, is key to the successful execution of this plan.

In the following sections, we will delve deeper into the objectives and strategies we will employ to realize our mission, vision, and goals. Through the collective efforts of our staff, volunteers, and, most importantly, our patrons, we look forward to creating a library that continues to be a cornerstone of our community for generations to come.

I. OUR LIBRARY

Our Mission

The Burnham Library is a community anchor dedicated to lifelong learning and stimulating curiosity.

Our Vision

The Burnham Library aspires to be a trusted center for increasing knowledge, fostering imagination, and enabling creative engagement. Through the sharing of diverse ideas, we strive to promote an inclusive and welcoming community.

Our Values

ACCESS: We foster an inclusive, welcoming environment that promotes safe, free, and convenient access to programs, services, and information to all without restriction.

LIFELONG LEARNING AND LITERACY: We promote a community culture that supports the lifelong quest for knowledge and stimulates curiosity through collections and programs.

INNOVATION: We embrace the challenge of change. The Library provides services that stimulate, enlighten, and enrich as community needs evolve.

STEWARDSHIP: We facilitate use, access, and conservation of library archival materials. The Library partners with other organizations to preserve the rich cultural heritage of Bridgewater.

COLLABORATION: We take pride in our role as a community anchor, cultivating relationships with local organizations in order to nurture the growth of our community.

SUSTAINABILITY: We invest in the Library's resources by maintaining the Library infrastructure. We foster the growth and development of a well-rounded and forward-thinking staff to ensure the sustainability of our organization.

APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES JANUARY 2022



II. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SUMMARY

Our recent survey has provided valuable insights to help us adapt and grow as a library that serves a community that has seen changes since the 2020 pandemic. We have identified four key focus areas: collections, programs, access, and organizational development.

Collections: Our users appreciate the variety in our collection and trust us as a reliable information source. To keep pace with the evolving community, we suggest continuing to diversify our collection, expanding digital resources, and addressing specific user requests for more popular books and historical materials digitization.

Programs & Services: The survey shows satisfaction with our current programs, but we are keen to evolve alongside our community. We recommend expanding adult programs, developing offerings on contemporary topics and technology, and exploring skill development and early literacy programs to cater to residents and families.

Space & Access: With new residents and families joining our community, we aim to make the library even more accessible. While our expanded hours are appreciated, we recommend evaluating the feasibility of extending our hours to better meet the needs of our evolving community.

Organizational Development: Our friendly and knowledgeable staff continue to be a significant asset. To serve the diverse needs of community members, we recommend maintaining high service standards and ensuring staff are well-equipped to support users effectively.

In summary, these recommendations are aimed at helping us adapt to the changing demographics and evolving community. They will guide our long-range planning to enhance library services, meet the needs of our residents and families, and maintain high levels of user satisfaction, ensuring the library remains a vital and welcoming asset for all.

III. Our Goals, Objectives, and Strategies

A. Collections

Goal

To select, acquire, curate, and ensure ease of access to materials, in all formats, that meet the varied needs and interests of the community.

- Maintain and enhance an inclusive and dynamic collection of physical and digital materials
- Increase circulation and use of collections and services
- Expand offerings of digital media platforms, databases, and streaming content
- Develop access to library archival materials in advance of the 2025-2026 centennial celebration

Strategies:

- Continue to add innovative collections based on community interest, such as puzzles, games, and equipment
- Promote public awareness of available materials in all formats
- Conduct staff training on available online services and digital media
- Implement a sustainable funding plan for providing digital media and online services
- Develop a Collection Development Plan for library archives
- Grow archival collections to document today's history

"I love all the materials other than books that can be borrowed: puzzles, activity backpacks, craft kits, etc."

"More copies of the latest titles"

"More digital bestsellers"



B. Programs and Services

Goal

To offer innovative and valued programs, events, and services that address community needs, foster life-long learning, and develop 21-century digital citizens.

- Inspire the community to explore and create
- Expand programs and services based on community needs
- Engage early learners and their caregivers
- Provide appropriate and appealing programs and services for older youth (grades 5 -12)
- Increase collaborative programming efforts with existing and emerging organizations
- Expand on cultural programming and events
- Support the development of 21-century digital citizens
- Provide access to technological experiences

Strategies

- Expand hands-on and active learning opportunities for all ages that promote skill-building and sharing.
- Develop partnerships with makers and educators
- Continuously evaluate program and service satisfaction
- Explore grant opportunities and sponsorships to expand library services and programs
- Emphasize programs that engage all ages, families, and mixed generations
- Strengthen partnerships with Region 12 leaders
- Cultivate partnerships with local libraries to identify joint programming and funding opportunities
- Provide classes on emerging technology, digital privacy, and security topics to promote digital literacy and digital safety practices

"I'd like more learning programs for tech."

"more lectures"

"additional programming for all ages"

The Library excels ... "diversity of programming, personal touches and welcome environment."



C. Space and Access

Goal

To offer a thriving and safe community space, helpful services, and convenient hours while expanding on innovative ways to serve our community.

- Provide a lively, energetic community-gathering space that is accessible to all
- Ensure that the function and appearance of the building and grounds are well-maintained
- Raise public awareness of the library's programs and services
- Ensure that the library is open and accessible to meet community needs
- Enhance library grounds for community building and programming opportunities
- Assess emerging technologies annually and develop support programs and services accordingly

Strategies

- Use approved Facilities Plan to develop a preventive maintenance schedule and continue to consider safety and accessibility features
- Augment security camera network
- Develop a public engagement strategy for educating both current and potential users on available collections, program offerings, and services
- Continue to engage community stakeholders, adjusting access and services to meet their evolving needs
- Explore capacity to achieve Enhanced CT Best Practice standards of 35 hours per population up to 5,000
- Increase use of study/working spaces and Community Room
- Develop subcommittee to prioritize the development and completion of outdoor programming space and address external access to SYBLC Community Room
- Use approved Technology Plan to facilitate technology strategic goals

"What it needs to do is focus on getting the word out"
Library needs ... "a dedicated shaded outdoor space for kids programs and adult summer concerts"

"It would be great if one evening a week there would be extended library hours"



D. Organizational Development

Goal

Recruit, develop, and retain a team, organization, and culture that supports the Burnham Library's strategy, mission, vision, and values.

- Ensure a productive, engaging workplace with equitable treatment and compensation for all staff
- Provide incentives and opportunities for staff education and training
- Create clear and consistent messaging that conveys the library's vision and goals and promotes library services and programs through communications designed to reach all community members
- Provide a sustainable fundraising structure that addresses both short and long-term financial needs
- Perform a comprehensive policy and procedure review with the goal of removing barriers to library service

Strategies

- Explore the capacity to provide salary, benefits, and hours comparable to other peer libraries in Connecticut.
- Develop and implement personnel policies consistent with library sector best practices.
- Trustees to strengthen relationships with key town leaders to advocate for continued support of the library.
- Update Memorandum of Understanding between Library and Town.
- Ensure a budget for ongoing facility maintenance and long-term capital expenditures.
- Identify pathways to grant funding opportunities.
- Actively engage with the community to increase access to and awareness of collections, programs, and services available to children, teens, and their families

"The personal touch is key at the Burnham Library. The staff know patrons and frequently make suggestions based on their interests. They are creative, energetic, and bring a vitality to Bridgewater. For me, the library is the heart of Bridgewater."



IV. Key Results and Measurement Strategies

Key results

With the implementation of this plan, the Burnham Library will strive for the following measurable key results:

- Increase the number of active library cardholders
- Increase engagement at the library (ie. program attendance, library visits, etc.)
- Increase library website usage and number of online supporters (email, social media, online newsletter)
- Increase use of digital platforms
- Increase circulation of print and physical materials
- Maintain a high level of patron satisfaction and customer service
- Increase contributions to the Burnham Library Association
- Increase use of digital archives and materials requests

Measurement Strategy

Use of measurements to monitor excellence and impact:

- Conduct a community survey within three years and adjust strategic tactics as necessary based on results
- Develop and adjust mechanisms for generating continuous user feedback
- Capture anecdotes and qualitative feedback more regularly and integrate feedback into marketing and fund development efforts
- Use output and outcome data (including evaluations and surveys) to develop and sustain a range of accessible and representative programming on an annual basis

Summary of Survey Results

Demographics

- 158 respondents (online and print)
- 87% have a Burnham Library card
- 87% are Bridgewater residents
- Majority of respondents are over 60 (52%), 25% are 36-59, 22% are 20-35
- Most visit the library often. Only 9.5% do not use the library.
- Majority (69%) do not have children at home, and 42% have children ages 0-18
- Majority of the respondents (71%) are female

Why People Use the Library

- Majority (88%) express a high level of satisfaction with library services
- Regarded as an inviting and inclusive space; with friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable staff; community-focused and a hub of the town
- Majority (90%) are happy with our expanded hours and consistent hours of operation (from 30 to 32 hours per week)
- Majority (84%) view the library as a place for reliable information
- Majority (81%) expressed satisfaction with the addition of the Susan Beris, MD Youth Learning Center

Collections

- 57% believe that we should continue to prioritize the curation and provision of free access to materials that address the diverse needs and interests of the community
- Majority (88%) expressed satisfaction with the establishment of the Digital Branch (ebooks, audio, and streaming collections) and the introduction of lendable technology
- 34% would like to see an increase in digital materials offerings (ebooks, audio, and streaming), and 29% would like to see an increase in subscription databases
- Majority (87%) are satisfied with the introduction of new collections, such as puzzles and the Library of Things
- 27% would like more copies of bestselling popular books
- 25% would like to see an increase in digitization of Bridgewater history materials

Programs and Services

- Feedback on programming and library services was overall positive.
- On the growth of adult programs since the 2017 Strategic Plan, 72% of the respondents indicated they consider this to be moderate to highly significant; 41% expressed a desire to expand adult program offerings.
- 40% would like programs and forums on contemporary topics.
- 55% would like programs and services that address current and future technology needs.
- 62% would like programs and services that address community needs and foster education and learning.
- 32% would like programs that promote skills development.
- 25% would like a focus on early literacy programs and school-age programs, and 23% on middle-grade and teen programs.
- On technology services implemented since the 2017 Strategic Plan (classes, tech tutoring, public wifi, updated website), 89% of respondents indicated that they consider these services to be important to very important.

Space and Access

- Majority (87%) expressed satisfaction with our outreach and collaboration with town organizations, and 36% emphasized the importance of further strengthening these relationships.
- 59% would like the library to expand its services for underserved constituencies (i.e. homebound residents, homeschooling families, newcomers, and recent retirees)
- 39% express a desire for an improved library experience by expanding programs and services beyond the physical confines of the library walls.
- 40% believe the hours are inconvenient and would like to see an increase in overall hours and additional evening hours during the week.
- Most people discover library services and events through the following sources: library website (52%), Constant Contact (41%), library newsletter (40%), Facebook (38%), Town email blast (38%), staff and library signage (35%), word of mouth (31%).

Burnham Library

Long-Range Planning Committee and Trustees

LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE 2021-2022

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LIBRARY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Jean Kallay

