



HVERHILL
PUBLIC LIBRARY

**99 Main Street
Haverhill, MA 01830**

**Strategic Plan
FY2012 – FY2015**

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THE CITY OF HAVERHILL

The City of Haverhill, located 30 miles northeast of Boston on the Merrimack River, is one of the oldest and most historic communities in the Commonwealth. Established in 1640 as Pentucket, Haverhill was incorporated as a city in 1870. Although originally settled as farm land, the city evolved into a major industrial center through the establishment of saw and grist mills in the late 17th century, tanneries and boat yards in the 18th century, and shoe manufacturing in the 19th century. The City remained a thriving industrial center until the severe depression of the 1930’s. In the late 20th and early 21st century, the City has seen a resurgence of growth, with computer technology and research industries moving into Haverhill’s industrial parks and central business district.

According to 2010 U.S. Census Data, the current population of Haverhill is 60,879, an increase of 2,000 people from the 2000 Census.

From the 1930’s through much of the 1970’s, Haverhill was in a depressed and declining state, but growth and change have been the major themes of the last few decades. Housing trends in the 20th

century led to the conversion of several old factories into loft apartments and condominiums. The Washington Street area gained new dining and entertainment spots, and federal funds were secured to build a new 350-space parking garage scheduled to open in the fall of 2011.

The sale of the municipal hospital in 2001 saddled the community with a \$20 million debt that continues to plague City budgets. The City of Haverhill begins each budget cycle with a \$7 million deficit which the Commonwealth has helped to offset with additional funds. Still, the long-term consequences of this debt loom annually as the City tries to present a balanced budget.

THE HAVERHILL PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Haverhill Public Library was established in 1873 in an agreement between wealthy industrialist E.J.M. Hale and the City of Haverhill. The agreement stipulated that Mr. Hale would donate land for a building site and half the money necessary to build and furnish a library if the people of Haverhill would donate the other half. He further stipulated that the City, in accepting this gift, would establish a self-perpetuating Board of Trustees and assume responsibility for the annual operating expenses of the library. The original library building opened on November 18, 1875. In 1965 the Trustees decided to build a new library facility to replace the original building. With pledges from the community, proceeds from the sale of the original building, a federal library construction grant, and the fundraising efforts of the Trustees and Friends of the Library, construction began in 1966 and the new library opened in June of 1969. A subsequent renovation project, completed in 1997, increased space for materials, seating, and overall size from 30,500 to 44,000 square feet.

The Haverhill Public Library is governed by a seven-member self-perpetuating Board of Trustees. The City is responsible for funding the maintenance of library facilities and staff salaries. As the owners in trust of the Library, the Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the City lives up to its part of the agreement, as well as providing an annual appropriation of funds for the purchase of library materials and other services. Ultimately, the library's Board of Trustees is responsible for the Library, its facilities and services, policies and procedures. Since the Library's inception, a priority of the Board of Trustees has been the development of a Library Endowment, the interest from which is used to purchase materials and to supplement the City of Haverhill's budget for the Library.

Founded in 1956, the Friends of the Haverhill Public Library has as its mission to raise funds for the library. The Friends Gift Shop, established in 1989, was one of the first gift shops in the area. The Friends also sponsor book sales to further support the Library, including an online sale that began in 2010.

VISION STATEMENT

The Haverhill Public Library is the institution in the City that connects our community to lifelong learning and enrichment.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Haverhill Public Library serves as a focal point of our community, meeting the lifelong learning needs of all people. That Library provides exceptional service, materials, and programs to meet those informational, recreational, and cultural needs.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The goals of a Strategic Plan are to identify key areas a public library must focus on in order to meet the changing needs of the community and to share that information with all library stakeholders – patrons, staff, and community. The selection of some goals over others does not mean that other aspects of the Library's work are less important. The selection of a goal simply acknowledges that the Library will focus additional effort and resources in that area.

The Haverhill Public Library selected Sondra Vandermark of Vandermark Consulting to facilitate the strategic planning process. Sunny used the process outlined in *Strategic Planning for Results*, written by Sandra Nelson for the Public Library Association and published in 2008 by the American Library Association.

The Library formed a Community Planning Committee to create a vision of Haverhill for the next four years. Sunny conducted two meetings of the Community Planning Committee to gather input and identify preliminary service responses. To solicit staff input, she held a focus group with all staff that included an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats (SWOT), followed by interviews with five staff members across all departments. The Director and Assistant Director held two additional staff meetings to discuss the process outlined in *Strategic Planning for Results* and to answer staff questions about how this process would be used to create the Strategic Plan. Departmental managers then held follow-up meetings with their staff. The final piece of data came from a Community Survey the Library posted on its website, made available in-house, and distributed to Haverhill Schools and community organizations. To encourage staff awareness and involvement, the Library set up a Wiki to communicate progress on the Plan and to solicit additional input.

Community Vision

At its initial meeting, Sunny Vandermark led the Community Planning Committee in a SWOT analysis of the Haverhill community. The Committee identified community strengths that included a developing downtown business community; beautiful historic buildings; diversity of residents; a city with urban, suburban, and rural lifestyles; people who care and work to better their community. Weaknesses include residual areas of poverty, competing financial interests, the City's image in the press and other areas of the Commonwealth, and political in-fighting. The availability of federal funds to assist in development was listed as an opportunity, followed by the genesis of a strong arts community, Northern Essex Community College's strong support of Haverhill, tourism, success in attracting new businesses to empty mills, the City's new parking garage (scheduled to open in the fall of 2011), and the availability of train service to link commuters to Boston and surrounding areas. Threats included a culture of pessimism, water resources, state and federal budget cuts, overbuilding, and a tax-free New Hampshire at the City's back door. The Planning Committee envisioned a Haverhill that is a destination

city, an arts community that is also known for having the best school system in the Commonwealth, a city characterized by economic development, with recreation and social opportunities for all citizens.

The Community Planning Committee identified eight preliminary service responses.

- Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access
- Create Young Readers: Early Literacy
- Discover Your Roots: Genealogy and Local History
- Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services
- Make Informed Decisions: Health, Wealth, and Other Life Choices
- Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning
- Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure
- Succeed in School: Homework Help

Preliminary service responses were shared with all staff, who added one more – Celebrate Diversity. The Library's administrative staff offered recommendations based on the Community Survey results, demographic information, and their professional experiences. Data from the Community Planning Committee and staff sessions, as well as survey results, were presented to the Board of Trustees on May 9, 2011. Four final service responses emerged.

- Create Young Readers: Early Literacy
- Celebrate Diversity & Cultural Awareness
- Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning
- Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access

Staff and Trustees felt that these four service responses met the vision of the Community Planning Committee, reflected staff goals, aligned with community needs, and are attainable based on current library resources.

Community Survey Findings

Five hundred and fifteen people took the Community Survey from mid-March through April 30, 2011. The majority (90%) of respondents have a library card. The majority (42%) have been library users for more than 10 years. 63% are female; 37% are male. The majority (26%) visit the Library one to two times per month. Nearly one quarter of respondents (23%) are not library users.

Providing materials (90%), providing materials and technology for those who cannot afford it (43%), and promoting literacy (35%) emerged as top priorities. The majority (92%) use the library to check out materials, followed by using library technologies (47%). Other popular activities include attending programs (28%), viewing local art exhibits (16%), using local history resources (12%), and downloading ebooks (10%). 51% of respondents access library databases from inside the library; 10% renew or reserve materials online from outside the library; 27% access the Internet via Library WiFi or Library computers.

Lack of time is the #1 deterrent to using the Library. When asked to prioritize programs, activities and programs for children (34%) emerged as a top priority, followed by literary events for adults (27%). The majority of respondents indicated that we should focus resources on collections/materials.

The Community Survey and Survey Analysis are included as Attachment A of this document.

CURRENT COMMUNITY CONDITIONS

The City of Haverhill remains in fiscal crisis – a combination of the ever-present Hale Hospital debt along with the extreme downturn in the state and national economy. Since FY2009, the City has not been able to meet the Municipal Appropriation Requirement (MAR) established by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, and the Library has been forced to apply for a waiver to maintain accreditation.

At a time of peak usage, the number of library staff is at an all-time low. In FY2011, library visitors borrowed 495,305 items, an increase of 9.2% over the preceding fiscal year. Reference staff answered 24,752 reference questions. Library users continue to access the Library from home, school, or workplace. In FY2011, tracking software indicated that approximately 1,114 people visited the Library's website weekly, and an average of 4,825 people came into the Library weekly.

The Library continues to look for opportunities to partner with community organizations. In September, 2011, the Library's Johnson Auditorium became an after-school program site for the YMCA. Career Resources of Haverhill uses the Library's Auditorium and Computer Lab to provide vocational services to people with disabilities.

NEEDS STATEMENT

During the course of the Library's Strategic Planning process, several areas of need were identified and incorporated into four service goals for the FY2012-2015 Strategic Plan.

Service

Outstanding customer service is a hallmark of the Haverhill Public Library, and it is fundamental to the Library's purpose. In fulfillment of its promise to carry out its mission with "exceptional service," our focus must be on delivering services that meet community need and ensure continued community support. Growth and diversification of library services depend upon the Library's ability to maintain its focus as a customer-driven organization.

Collection

The Library's collection remains a great strength. Funded solely by the Trustees' endowment fund, individual donations, and library-generated revenue, the collection has remarkable depth. As the diversity of Haverhill grows, it is imperative that the Library's collection reflect the cultural, ethnic, religious, economic, and gender diversity of the community.

Building

It has been 14 years since the Library's last renovation and expansion, and during that time, use of the facility has increased dramatically. The Library has faced significant infrastructure issues in the last few years. Upgrades have been made to the security system, HVAC system, roof, and building entrances. Carpet has been replaced in public service areas, and the Library is now fully ADA accessible. Systems

are aging and repairs expensive, but a facilities plan and capital improvement plan are critical to maintaining a clean, safe, accessible building that meets community needs.

Technology

The Library continues to experience an ever-increasing demand for wireless access and for all technology, especially mobile technologies. The Library's 45 public computers are used by more than 1400 people weekly. As economic conditions have worsened and the digital divide continues to grow, the Library faces increased pressure to serve as the community technology center. For many in our community, the Library's technology is the only technology available. We must continually evaluate and upgrade computer services to meet community needs.

Staff Development

In recognizing that the Library's most valuable resource is a highly-trained, knowledgeable staff, we must continue to provide professional development opportunities for all staff. Technology needs change quickly; the demand for ebooks and electronic resources requires knowledgeable staff with the tools necessary to teach the community to use new resources.

Community Involvement

The 21st century library is often the heart of the community – a place where diverse groups come together to interact and find the resources they need to live their lives. The Library must look for opportunities to partner with community organizations, including service and charitable clubs, educational institutions, other non-profit service organizations, social groups, municipalities, and business organizations promoting the local economy. Community involvement is a valuable part of sharing the Library's message and mission.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Library Strategic Planning Committee

Carol Verny, Library Director
Beth Gallaway, Assistant Director
Nancy House, Reference Librarian, Staff Liaison to Community Planning Committee
Nancy Rea, Board of Trustees
Sunny Vandermark, Vandermark Consulting

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Diane Pickles
Michael Quinn
Nancy Rea, Board of Trustees
James Scully
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Additional Staff

Faris Bennett, Head of Reference and Information Services
Alissa Lauzon, Head of Youth Services
Cathy Page, Head of Circulation

Approved by the Board of the Trustees of the Haverhill Public Library on September 15, 2011

**HAVERHILL PUBLIC LIBRARY
STRATEGIC PLAN
FY2012-FY2015**

I. CREATE YOUNG READERS: EARLY LITERACY

Children from birth to age 5 will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

GOAL: Infants ages 0-2 will get a head start on literacy through the Library's participation in ALA's "Born to Read" initiative.

Objective: By FY2012, Youth Services staff will be trained in the "Born to Read" initiative.

Objective: By FY2014, 50% of parents who attend story time programs will increase their knowledge of early literacy and their skill in using literacy tools by at least 20% through modeling in story time and practice at home.

Objective: By FY2015, distribute READ packets to 25% of local newborns through hospital and physician partnerships.

GOAL: Haverhill children will have access to reading readiness resources through the Library's adoption of ALA's "Every Child Ready to Read" initiative.

Objective: By FY2013, 100% of youth services staff will be trained in the "Every Child Ready to Read" initiative.

Objective: By FY2013, offer developmentally-appropriate story times in eight 6-week session blocks, requiring registration, for ages 2-3, 3-4, and 5-6.

Objective: By FY2014, implement puppets, flannel board storytelling, and rhythm to finger plays, songs, and books to 25% of story time sessions.

Objective: By FY2015, model pre-literacy activities, such as dialogical reading, to parents who attend story time programs.

II. CELEBRATE DIVERSITY & CULTURAL AWARENESS

Residents will have programs and services that promote appreciation and understanding of their personal heritage and the heritage of others in the community.

GOAL: Haverhill residents will have access to materials and services in the native languages of their country of birth.

Objective: By FY2012, 5% of children's programming will be bilingual.

Objective: Each quarter, the Youth Services Department will celebrate one multicultural program of interest to the community.

Objective: By FY2012, the Library will make quarterly contact with the local Spanish newspaper and radio to increase awareness of library resources for Hispanic residents.

Objective: The number of Spanish-language materials will increase by 5% annually.

Objective: By FY2013, all current policies and brochures will be translated into Spanish.

Objective: By FY2013, library participation in community cultural events will increase by 50%.

Objective: By FY2015, the Library's collection will reflect the diversity of the City of Haverhill by providing materials in two additional languages identified in 2010 Census data.

Objective: By FY2015, all signage, posters, and fliers will be developed in English and two other languages represented in 2010 Census data.

GOAL: Promote awareness of ESOL and literacy resources that are available to the Haverhill community.

Objective: By FY2012, work with the Community Development office of the City of Haverhill to develop a plan to increase awareness of the Greater Haverhill Adult Learning Program.

Objective: By June 30, 2012, secure a community partnership to continue funding of the Greater Haverhill Adult Learning Program.

Objective: By FY2013, survey community agencies to identify current literacy programs, resources, and instructors.

Objective: By FY2014, provide online access to community literacy programs and resources.

III. Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning

Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

GOAL: Haverhill residents will have access to materials for reading pleasure as well as personal enrichment, and to educational and informational resources.

Objective: By FY2012, staff will create quarterly promotional material and displays to engage readers in the pursuit of new titles.

Objective: By FY2012, the library will create a Reader's Advisory presence on the website.

Objective: By FY2012, patrons will have access to "read alike" or genre booklists each month.

Objective: By FY2013, 100% of staff will receive formal training in reader's advisory.

Objective: By FY2014, library staff will facilitate quarterly book chats that will include an online component.

Objective: By FY2015, develop a plan to purchase and install free-standing library kiosks throughout the community.

GOAL: Create a friendly and welcoming place for all library visitors.

Objective: By FY2012, the Library will provide flexible space and comfortable furnishings that offer a variety of learning environments to support community needs.

Objective: By FY2013, create a facilities plan for maintenance and capital improvements to the facility.

Objective: By FY2014, develop a plan to expand use of the Johnson Auditorium.

GOAL: Residents will have opportunities to attend a wide variety of educational, cultural, and entertainment programs designed to inform, inspire, and enrich their lives.

Objective: By FY2013, program attendance at adult programs will increase by 10%.

Objective: By FY2013, the library will offer at least six author visits, book signings, or other literary presentations annually to generate interest in reading.

Objective: By FY2014, at least four programs of special interest to older adults (55+) will be offered, with an average attendance of fifteen, with 90% of attendees indicating that the programs met their needs and expectations.

Objective: BY FY2015, the Library will improve access to genealogical and local history resources, with emphasis on Haverhill history.

GOAL: Haverhill Public Library patrons will have access to popular materials in a timely manner.

Objective: By FY2012, collection development activities will be guided by a Collection Development Policy that is reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

Objective: By FY2013, the community will have access to an outstanding collection that is continuously weeded using the practices outlined in *CREW: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries*.

GOAL: Haverhill Youth will succeed in school through materials and services provided by the Library.

Objective: By FY2012, 50% of teacher requests (for assignment alerts, tours, teacher baskets, reserves) will be submitted electronically.

Objective: By FY2013, 25% of students in grades 2, 6, and 9 will have a Library card.

Objective: By FY2014, 50% of students in grades K and 5 will receive a Library tour or classroom visit.

Objective: By FY2015, increase number of card holders by 15%.

GOAL: Haverhill youth will stimulate imagination and satisfy curiosity about the world around them through a diverse collection that supports local school curriculum and assignment needs, and encompasses a variety of genres, topics, formats, and reading levels.

Objective: Circulation of youth materials will increase by 10% annually.

Objective: By FY2014, library staff will be familiar with state curriculum standards and the school district's curriculum maps.

GOAL: Haverhill youth will maintain literacy skills by participating in Summer Reading Programs.

Objective: Increase participation in Summer Reading programs for youth and teens by 10% each year.

Objective: Continue to offer annual programs, workshops, and events that support the statewide Summer Reading Program theme.

Objective: By FY2015, create survey for participants to evaluate Summer Reading Program package (programs, reading, online components, prizes, marketing, etc.)

GOAL: Haverhill teens will celebrate Teen Read Week and Support YA Literature Day through programs and activities that encourage reading for pleasure.

Objective: By FY 2012, partner with City of Haverhill annually to declare Teen Read Week.

Objective: By FY2013, host two programs in support of Teen Reading Week and Support YA Literature Day.

GOAL: The Haverhill Public Library will provide community members with the information, resources, content, and training they need to become information literate and successful 21st century library users.

Objective: By FY2012, the library will offer at least four displays of literary or topical interest annually.

Objective: By FY2013, develop a marketing plan for library programs, collections, resources, and services.

Objective: Increase by 10% annually the circulation of eBooks (measure: count).

Objective: Increase by 5% annually the usage of electronic resources other than eBooks.

Objective: By FY2014, the number of articles downloaded from premium databases will increase by 10%.

Objective: By FY2015, increase overall adult fiction and non-fiction circulations by 20% from 2011 figures.

GOAL: The Haverhill community will discover a Library that reaches beyond its walls to make each person feel welcome, to invite individuals and groups to make full use of the facility and services, and to work with partner organizations to expand both the scope of services and public awareness of those services.

Objective: Beginning in FY2012, the Library will send letters of invitation to at least one community group per month to visit the library, including suggested resources for each group.

Objective: By FY2012, partner with Haverhill schools on a "Haverhill Reads" project.

Objective: By FY2013, increase the number of volunteer hours by 10%.

Objective: By FY2014, the Library will present four library programs in community venues.

Objective: By FY2014, the Library will create "How We Can Help" contacts with churches, business leaders, and politicians.

Objective: By FY2015, identify and implement an annual staff community service project.

Objective: By FY2015, offer two annual youth and adult programs with presenters from community organizations.

IV. CONNECT TO THE ONLINE WORLD: PUBLIC INTERNET ACCESS

Residents will have high speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing resources and services available through the internet.

GOAL: Haverhill residents will have convenient access to electronic information resources through dependable technology and reliable telecommunications.

Objective: By FY2012, create a Technology Plan that addresses annual updates of hardware, software, and electronic resources.

Objective: By FY2012, replace all public computers on a three-year schedule.

Objective: By FY2013, the library will investigate additional express computers for the convenience of library visitors.

Objective: Continue to offer one-on-one computer training by appointment.

GOAL: The Library will provide the community with a highly-skilled, customer-focused, friendly, and professional staff dedicated to providing a positive and enjoyable library experience.

Objective: By FY2012, all staff will have the opportunity to attend at least one professional development per year.

Objective: Continue to assess, plan, and budget for additional personnel at levels required to support library services.

Objective: Make productivity improvements a continuous process by using automation that frees up personnel for value-added services.

Objective: By FY2013, the Library will investigate the use of technology to make staff more visible and accessible to library users.

Objective: By FY2014, all public services staff will demonstrate core competencies in browsing, searching, and evaluating Internet resources.

GOAL: Adult library users will have the necessary skills for using resources that connect them to the online world.

Objective: Each year, 140 Haverhill residents will attend Internet classes or receive one-on-one training.

Objective: Each year, 100% of participants in Internet classes and one-on-one training will report improvement in computer skills.

Objective: In FY2013, a minimum of 50 library users will participate in demos and classes on use of mobile technologies available in the Library's Technology Toolbox.

Objective: By FY2014, investigate possibility of developing a "tech corner" on the website accessible by the public to review gadgets, trends, formats, etc.

GOAL: Library visitors will continue to have adequate access to free high speed Internet through public computers and the wireless network for the purposes of recreation, work-related research, and information.

Objective: Each year, maintain or increase the amount of time that public computers are in use.

Objective: Each year, increase the number of users of the wireless network by 10%.

GOAL: Haverhill residents will connect with the library through an interactive website and social networking tools.

Objective: Integrate interactive content on website by FY2012.

Objective: By FY2013, offer two programs through the Library's website, such as book discussions, online summer reading, book reviewing, and blog commenting capability.

GOAL: Haverhill Public Library users will increase their technological literacy.

Objective: By the end of FY2012, offer one program per quarter for teens ages 12-18 on a technology topic.

Objective: By FY2013, host two programs that support technological literacy skills.

Objective: By FY2013, offer one program per quarter for children ages 6-12 on a technology topic.

Objective: By FY2014, cultivate two partnership opportunities to solicit volunteers to present classes and demos on specific topics.

Objective: By FY2015, 75% of participants in Internet Safety workshops for educators and caregivers increase their skill at conversing with youth about responsible Internet citizenship by 50%.

Future of Strategic Plan

The Trustees and Staff of the Haverhill Public Library are dedicated to an ongoing planning, implementation, and evaluation effort, with formal collection of data; an annual review; and development of recommendations for future Action Plans.