



HULL PUBLIC LIBRARY

Strategic Plan 2023-2025

Submitted by:

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Mission Statement	2
User Needs Assessment	2
Community Survey Results	2
SOAR Exercise	3
Hull’s Changing Population	3
Goals	4
Create Community and Opportunities for Engagement	4
Provide Resources and Encourage Access	4
Enhance and Promote Digital Library Offerings	4
Brief Description of Planning Methodology	5
Contributors	5
Governing Body Approval	5

Mission Statement

The mission of the Hull Public Library is to promote a love of reading, learning, and culture by providing access to materials and offering engaging programs for all ages. The Library fosters a sense of community for Hull residents by connecting people and organizations, and supports patrons whether they are inside the building or accessing resources remotely.

User Needs Assessment

Community Survey Results

Over the summer months of 2022, 263 residents participated in the Hull Public Library's community survey. Most of these residents visit the Library monthly (41%) and 60% said that their Library usage has stayed about the same since the pandemic. 48 of the respondents said that they visit another local library in a neighboring town with comments that those locations are either in towns where they used to live or were on the way to where they work, grocery shop, bank, etc.

Most respondents come into the Library to browse (62%) and check out adult materials (56%). Other popular services include borrowing museum passes (35%), viewing the art exhibits (26%), borrowing children's materials (23%), and attending adult programs (19%). A smaller number rely on library technology and come to the Library to use the wifi (14%), use the photocopier (13%), and use the public computers (12%).

Of the respondents, 42% have used eBooks in the past year and 34% have used the Library website. 88 respondents said they have not used any online resources in the past year.

Across the board, borrowing materials was the most important service we provide and 152 respondents (58%) expressed interest in a new Library of Things Collection with lots of great suggestions for what they would like to borrow from the collection including baking and cooking tools, lawn games, musical instruments and craft supplies.

55% of respondents said they would love to attend local history programs, 41% are interested in film screenings and 34% were interested in arts and crafts programming. There was also an interest in yoga, writing groups, computer classes and game nights.

141 respondents said they find out about Library events or closings via the Hull Times (a weekly newspaper) while others looked to Facebook (89) and/or the Library website (113). A large number of respondents (71%) said they were interested in a Library e-newsletter.

In response to our open-ended questions, we got supportive and insightful responses that were also pretty consistent. Across the board, patrons are happy with the services provided, impressed with our selection of materials, love the charm of our historic building, and also want more of the services and resources found at larger, more modern public libraries.

SOAR Exercise

Themes that came out of the SOAR exercise with Trustees, Friends and Staff include:

Strengths: beautiful building, wonderful ambiance, friendly staff, personal relationships

Opportunities: community outreach, field trips, connections with community groups, engaging the summer residents / community, letting the digital collection offset the physical space limitations

Aspirations: build community, gathering place, event destination, encourage more patrons, increase and continue to update collections

Results: increased patronage, increased support, increased participation

Hull's Changing Population

According to a 2022 study commissioned by the Town of the Hull and the Hull Council on Aging, U.S. Census Bureau estimates show that in 2019, there were 3,684 residents aged 60 or older living in Hull (total population is 10,000). Projections suggest that by 2030, there will be between 4,200 and 4,300 residents aged 60 or older in the Town. Residents who are expected to enter old age in Hull are also a sizable group. Together, residents aged 50 or older make up more than half (55%) of Hull's population. Comparably, residents aged 50+ make up only 37% of the state's population.

Additionally, according to survey results, conversations and anecdotes, Hull is a changing town as residents from nearby towns (and recent empty-nesters) have moved to town to live closer to the water while still remaining close to their family, friends, doctors, etc.

Perhaps related to this shift, the number of students in the schools has also decreased over the past several years. According to 2020 Census data, the national average for persons under 18 is 22% and under 5 is 6%; in Hull, the number is 13% and 3%, respectively.

Goals

1) Create Community and Opportunities for Engagement

- a) The Library will build partnerships as a way to better serve and engage the community, support local organizations, and promote library services
- b) Adults, teens and children will have access to programs that help them to learn something, be entertained, and feel more closely connected to their community
- c) The Library will expand marketing efforts to reach more Hull residents, businesses, and organizations.

2) Provide Resources and Encourage Access

- a) The Library will build the collection to better serve the needs of the community
- b) Circulation will increase as to show that the Library is serving Hull residents to the best of their ability
- c) The Library will build a Library of Things
- d) All Hull children will have a library card issued while in elementary school

3) Enhance and Promote Digital Library Offerings

- a) Patrons will be able to utilize more library resources from home through a freshly updated and re-designed website
- b) Patrons will be able to book museum passes from home using an online system
- c) The Library will develop an e-newsletter to keep patrons informed on Library happenings including new materials, online resources, and library events
- d) The Library will make efforts to start digitizing local history collections

Brief Description of Planning Methodology

This plan was developed over the Spring/Summer of 2022 by reviewing “Strategic Planning for Results” by Sandra Nelson, and speaking with professionals at the Massachusetts Library System and other public library directors who had recently gone through the planning process.

The Hull Public Library last submitted a long-range plan for years 2005-2009.

Our approach started with candid conversations with staff, Trustees, Friends and patrons. Several groups completed the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) exercise as a way to brainstorm ideas. We shared a community survey with residents and received 263 responses with very thoughtful answers to the open-ended questions at the end of the mainly multiple-choice survey.

After reviewing results, more conversations and brainstorming sessions were had. Across the board, key themes emerged: residents love our small and charming library located in a historic home, they are pleased with the materials and services provided, and they really like the friendly faces they encounter during each Library visit.

They also want more: more programs, more materials, more updates and news about what is happening within the walls of 9 Main Street.

Some goals were very obvious based on surveys and brainstorming sessions, but further goals were developed based on circulation statistics, shifts in demographics in Hull, anecdotes from patrons, and patterns in program attendance. Once goals were drafted, Trustees and Library staff were invited to review and revise the goals.

Contributors

Hull Public Library Board of Trustees

Friends of the Hull Public Library

Hull Public Library Staff

Governing Body Approval

This plan was approved by the Hull Public Library Board of Library Trustees in September 2022.

Kevin Loechner, Chair

Gail Saitow, Vice-Chair

Caitlin Gould, Clerk

Mary Dunphy

Kathy Grant-Petrelli

Ceila Nolan