

J.V. FLETCHER LIBRARY

WIDENING WESTFORD'S WORLD



STRATEGIC PLAN FISCAL YEARS 2023–2025



J.V. FLETCHER
LIBRARY

Widening Westford's World

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J.V. Fletcher Library Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2023–2025

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PLANNING PROCESS

The Library launched its strategic planning activities in October of 2019. In November, the Board of Library Trustees hired strategic planning consultant Barbara Alevras of Sage Consulting Services to guide it through its planning process, to facilitate a series of planning exercises, to oversee the collection and analysis of internal and community feedback, and to assist with drafting the strategic plan document.

After establishing planning goals, identifying specific tasks, and scheduling major project milestones, the Library created a detailed process flowchart (see *Appendix A—Strategic Planning Project Process Flowchart 2019-2020*) that focused on inclusivity, objectivity, and transparency. The flowchart presented a visual “roadmap” of the strategic planning project activities.



To assess its current performance and identify future community needs, the Library began soliciting feedback in February of 2020. The following month, the emergence of COVID-19 interrupted its efforts. The state-mandated shut down of all non-essential organizations resulted in the Library deciding to “pause” its strategic planning activities for eight months, and the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners deciding to extend the plan deadline one year — to October 1, 2021.

The Library revived its strategic planning project in November. It resumed its community feedback collection activities, but conducted these exercises virtually via Zoom, an online video and audio communications application.

The J.V. Fletcher Library offered its staff and Westford residents numerous opportunities to provide feedback about the Library’s status and future needs. It conducted:

- Two Strengths-Opportunity-Aspirations-Results (SOAR) Exercises (results presented in *Appendix C—SOAR Exercise 2020 Summary Report*)
- Five focus groups with target audiences (results presented in *Appendix E—Focus Group 1 – Retirees Summary Report 2020*, *Appendix F—Focus Group 2 – Parents Summary Report 2020*, and *Appendix G—Focus Groups 3, 4, and 5 – Residents Summary Report 2021*)

- Three surveys (results presented in *Appendix H—Board Survey Summary Results 2020*, *Appendix I—Community Survey Summary Results 2020s*, *Appendix J—Staff Survey Summary Results 2020*, and *Appendix K—Young Adult Survey Summary Results 2019*)

The Library received a significant amount of feedback from approximately 390 people. To review the target audience(s) and number of participants per feedback mechanism, please see *Appendix A—Strategic Planning Project Process Flowchart 2019-2021*.

To complement the internal and external subjective feedback received, the Library compiled hard data related to Westford’s demographics and Library activity statistics. The Library identified trends, summarized the information collected, and drafted a document that presents an overview of community demographics and the Library’s offerings. It includes information about the Library’s history, governance, and operations, as well as activity statistics and progress on its current strategic plan (see *Appendix B—Community and Library Profile 2020*).

KEY LEARNINGS

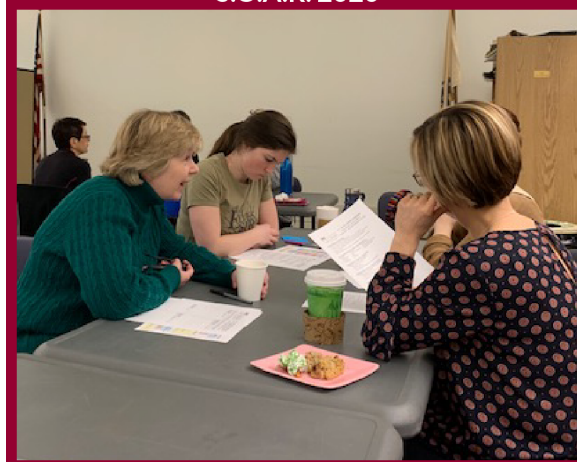
Feedback received during the assessment phase of the planning project offered insights regarding staff and community perceptions of the current Library and expectations for its future. Analyzing the input helped us identify major strengths and challenges and provided numerous creative ideas for how the Library can meet the community’s needs going forward.

In the wealth of opinions and ideas collected, the Library’s greatest strength was consistently identified as the Library’s staff, which garnered extremely positive feedback (*fantastic*, *knowledgeable*, *creative*, *helpful*).

While the feedback was overwhelmingly positive, the most prevalent complaint related to inadequate parking. Requests for an enhanced, expanded parking lot exceeded all other improvement-related responses.



J. V. Fletcher Library Staff
Strategic Planning Exercise
S.O.A.R. 2020



Areas of Focus

The most popular potential new and improved initiatives suggested via our various feedback mechanisms relate to the following seven categories:

- **COLLECTIONS:** Interest in growing the non-traditional “Library of Things” collection; increasing the available children’s and young adult books, materials, and resources; and developing a larger, more diverse book collection.
- **FACILITY:** Requests for more quiet space and study/meeting rooms, as well as more and safer parking.
- **MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS:** Most of this category’s feedback was extremely complimentary of the staff. A small number of respondents suggested expanding the operating hours.
- **MARKETING:** Desire for website enhancements (navigation/accessibility); expanded, strengthened outreach; and increased promotion of the Library’s value and offerings.
- **PROGRAMS:** Hundreds of program ideas submitted for all ages. Requests for continued virtual (online) programs, diversity/multi-cultural programs, community gathering opportunities (social, intergenerational, family-friendly), and additional tween and young adult programs.
- **SERVICES:** Interest expressed in curbside pick-up continuing after the pandemic ends, offering more museum passes, and for maintaining/distributing information regarding local resources and services (volunteer opportunities, community clubs/groups, support for older residents, etc.).
- **TECHNOLOGY:** Requests for technology instructional information (training and tech support); improved and expanded digital/website/mobile offerings (WiFi, databases, mobile application, etc.); more hardware offerings (loan more tech devices, 3D printer, additional computers), and self-checkout.



Where possible, ideas received were incorporated into the Library's *Strategic Plan*.

Feedback results are available for review as appendices to this document (see *Appendices* on page 11).

THE PLAN

Vision Statement

The J. V. Fletcher Library is a global gateway dedicated to serving the Town of Westford and committed to celebrating the community's heritage, diversity and multiculturalism. Library patrons of all ages and socio-economic circumstances experience the Fletcher Library as a responsive, innovative resource meeting their unique needs and offering a personal library experience.

Lives are enriched and enhanced through the lifelong exposure to, and exploration of, life-changing ideas, creativity, information and evolving technologies.

In a world of rushed and removed relationships, the library offers both a virtual village and a space of sanctuary and community.

~Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on June 4, 2012

Mission Statement

The J. V. Fletcher Library serves as a progressive responsive community resource, dedicated to the informational, cultural, educational and technological needs of its patrons. The Library supports its users in their lifelong pursuit of learning, personal growth and self-fulfillment. It encourages the young in their exploration of and celebration of the world. The Library is a resource for exploring and using new technologies, collections and media. The Library provides a gathering place for community members – in all their diversity – to meet in social engagement, to share discourse, to ponder divergent ideas and to engage in civic connection. The Library strives to be both reflective of and responsive to the community. It also seeks to be in the forefront of professional library service – attracting and leading the community into the future in a warm and welcoming public setting.

~Approved by the Board of Library Trustees on July 9, 2012



Goals and Objectives

Using the community's feedback and the Library's vision and mission statements as guiding principles, the Library developed an ambitious list of strategic goals and supporting objectives. Pursuing these specific goals and objectives will enable the Library to effectively prioritize and allocate its resources (funds, staff time, etc.) over the next three years.

GOAL 1: Library patrons enjoy a modern, expansive facility, designed to afford: collection growth; study, activity and meeting space; leisure reading; technological access; safe communal areas, and parking during service hours which reflect their needs.

OBJECTIVES:

- 1.1:** The Board of Library Trustees and Library Administration will resume regular meetings with the Permanent Town Building Committee to poise the Library Building and Expansion Project for positive Town acceptance/approval within six months of the awarding of a provisional Grant Award by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.
- 1.2:** The Board of Library Trustees, Library Foundation and Library Friends will engage in informational and fund-raising community events to educate the Westford public on the Library Building Project.
- 1.3:** The Board of Library Trustees, Permanent Town Building Committee and Library Administration will identify viable properties to serve as an off-site library facility during the duration of the Library Building Project, from ground-breaking until occupancy, and prepare for off-site services to the Westford public.
- 1.4:** The Board of Library Trustees, in concert and collaboration with other Town Boards and entities, will continue to pursue improvements, enhancements and solutions to limited Library parking and expanded parking options within walking distance of the Town Common.

GOAL 2: Library patrons of all ages, abilities, socio-economic circumstances and diverse cultural backgrounds, have access to collections, meaningful activities, programs and events which foster personal growth, self-development, exposure to ideas, art, local and world cultures, and current issues and discourse.

OBJECTIVES:

- 2.1:** Library Personnel will select collections, formats and resources which reflect and celebrate local and world cultures, and the unique demographics of the Westford community.

2.2: Library Personnel will research and proffer programs, activities and events which celebrate local and world cultures, and the unique demographics of the Westford community.

2.3: Library Personnel will provide resources, databases, collections and programs which support the initiatives of the Town of Westford *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee*.

2.4: Library Personnel will provide resources, collections and live and remote programs accessible to the disabled, homebound, etc.

GOAL 3: Library patrons avail themselves of a global array of services, programs, resources, technologies and collections reflecting their life-long needs, interests, careers, diverse demographics, and “New Normal” environment supported by an ample, trained, customer-oriented staff.

OBJECTIVES:

3.1: Patrons enter the “New Normal” with the following COVID services carried forward: virtual and outdoor programs, Craft Bags, Book Bundles, Curbside Delivery, co-funding and hosting with sister libraries on events, Zoom/Virtual meetings and Pop-Up Libraries.

3.2: Westford high schoolers receive academic, research and social support via programs on College Aid, the scheduling of EXAM WEEK two times per year, and HOMEWORK study night one night per month.

3.3: Westford and area residents receive expertise, support, collegiality and networking via the weekly Westford Job Seekers Network free programming.

3.4: Westford patrons enjoy materials in various languages, and/or their native languages, via increased Collection Development and specified Foreign Collection deposit loans from the Boston Public Library.

3.5: Westford patrons enjoy the attention and service of an engaged, dedicated staff resulting from professional development, adequate staffing and training, Succession Planning, and infilling of vacancies.

GOAL 4: Library patrons enjoy increased awareness of, and access to, Library collections, formats, programs, technologies, services, community partnerships and outreach because of an expanded marketing program and the support of the Friends of the J. V. Fletcher

OBJECTIVES:

4.1: Library patrons receive a thorough introduction to library services and spaces via personalized and virtual Library Tours, improved signage and wayfinding, and improved layout.

4.2: Library Personnel promote and market library services, events and collections via traditional publicity outlets, the weekly Friends eNewsletter, Website enhancement, and current and evolving Social Media.

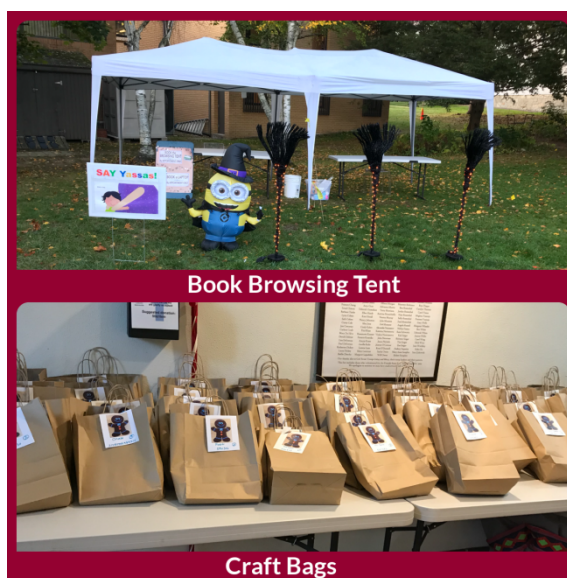
4.3: Library patrons utilize a robust WiFi connection [hardwired or mobile] both within, and beyond the library walls.

4.4: Library personnel maximize marketing, community engagement, outreach and visibility via strong Community Partnerships, cooperation with sister libraries, WestfordCAT, the Public School/Public Library Collaborative, and other partnering entities.

Annual Action Plans

Annually, the Library develops an *Action Plan* for the following fiscal year. This tactical plan identifies new, finite initiatives and activities, but does not include ongoing operational or administrative tasks. It presents a list of specific tasks that support the Library's efforts to achieve its strategic goals during the *Strategic Plan's* term.

The *Action Plan* is a dynamic document. It is flexible enough to accommodate ad hoc revisions that address unanticipated changes, evolving needs, and fluctuating resources. It will be updated annually. To view the *Action Plan* for next fiscal year, see *Appendix M—J.V. Fletcher Library Action Plan Fiscal Year 2023*.



Measuring and Communicating Progress

To ensure steady progress towards achieving the *Strategic Plan's* goals, the Library Director will review the progress made towards achieving the *Strategic Plan's* goals and objectives monthly, including identifying completed *Action Plan* tasks. The Director will share the *Strategic Plan's* review results with management staff at monthly goal meetings and departmental staff at monthly staff meetings.

Monthly, the Library Director will report to the Library's Board of Trustees on progress made towards achieving the *Strategic Plan's* goals and objectives. In addition, the Director will include strategic plan performance highlights from the calendar year in her annual Town Report.

To ensure convenient access, the *Strategic Plan* will be available on the Library's website.

J.V. Fletcher Board of Trustees 2021



TRUSTEES' APPROVAL

On June 7, 2021, J.V. Fletcher Library's six-person Board of Trustees approved this *Strategic Plan* unanimously.

- Glen Secor, **Chair**
- Elizabeth Diercks, **Secretary**
- Lynn Clermont, **Treasurer**
- Marianne Fleckner, **Foundation Liaison**
- Alisha Hillam, **Friends' Liaison**
- Robert Price, **Trustee**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the strategic planning initiative's extended term, hundreds of people contributed countless hours and significant amounts of feedback to helping the J.V. Fletcher Library develop its *Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2023–2025*.

The Library appreciates the valuable input provided by the staff, Board of Trustees, and Friends of Library Board. It is especially grateful for the time, invaluable feedback, and support received from the Westford community. Residents' input, from users and non-users alike, was invaluable. We appreciate everyone who contributed in even the smallest way to preparing this plan.

FINAL THOUGHTS

We especially appreciate the support we received during this past year of Covid-19, closure, curbside, and a variety of new remote, virtual, and distanced service to the Westford community. We look forward to enacting this Strategic Plan during the "new normal" building on our many traditional services and retaining the many new skills, collections, forms of outreach, and new services inspired by this year of the novel coronavirus.



APPENDICES

1. **Appendix A—Strategic Planning Project Process Flowchart 2019-2021:** The flowchart visually depicts the Library’s planning methodology, including the timeline, assessment mechanisms, and process participants.
2. **Appendix B—Community and Library Profile 2020:** This document presents a demographic profile of Westford, the Library’s history, and information related to the Library’s services, programs, and governance.
3. **Appendix C—SOAR Exercise 2020 Summary Report:** This report documents the results of an environmental assessment of the Library’s strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results.
4. **Appendix E—Focus Group 1 – Retirees Summary Report 2020:** The overview presents highlights of the feedback and ideas about the Library’s collections, services, and staff generated in a focus group of local retirees.
5. **Appendix F—Focus Group 2 – Parents Summary Report 2020:** The overview presents highlights of the feedback and ideas about the Library’s collections, services, and staff generated in a focus group of local parents.
6. **Appendix G—Focus Groups 3, 4, and 5 – Residents Summary Report 2021:** The overview presents highlights of the feedback and ideas about the Library’s collections, services, and staff generated in three focus with general community members.
7. **Appendix H—Board Survey Summary Results 2020:** The board survey was conducted in April-May 2020 via SurveyMonkey. A summary of the results is presented in addition to graphs and charts.
8. **Appendix I—Community Survey Summary Results 2020:** The community survey was conducted in November of 2020 via SurveyMonkey. A summary of the results is presented in addition to graphs and charts.
9. **Appendix J—Staff Survey Summary Results 2020:** The staff survey was conducted in April 2020 via SurveyMonkey. A summary of the results is presented in addition to graphs and charts.
10. **Appendix K—Young Adult Survey Summary Results 2019:** The young adult survey was conducted in December 2019 during the extended exam week study hours. A summary of the results is presented in addition to graphs and charts.
11. **Appendix L—Ideas and Input Report 2021:** This report presents a summary of the ideas and general feedback collected throughout the strategic planning process.
12. **Appendix M—J.V. Fletcher Library Action Plan Fiscal Year 2023:** The Library’s *Action Plan* presents specific tasks for completion during the first year of the *Strategic Plan*.