

Easthampton Public Library

Strategic Plan
2023-2026

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Katya Schapiro (Library Director, Easthampton Public Library)

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We would like to thank Lisa Downing, Director of the Forbes Library in Northampton, for leading the Strategic Planning Committee through a SOAR and visioning exercise.

**Approval of the Library Executive Board**

The Public Library Association’s Executive Board accepted and adopted this Strategic

Plan FY 2023-2026 on July 10, 2023.

**The Library’s Mission**

The Easthampton Public Library’s mission is to provide a welcoming environment where all users can safely access programming, services, and resources that support and enrich the lifelong learning of the diverse community of the greater Easthampton area.

**The Library’s Vision**

* Easthampton Public Library aims to provide patrons of every race, age, gender, class, religion, sexual orientation and physical ability with the educational resources and technology they need to participate in and advance a democratic society in a safe, welcoming space.
* We strive to treat each patron as an individual with unique needs and hopes, and to deliver relevant, innovative, and inclusive programs, resources, and services. We engage readers and learners of all ages and remove barriers to information.
* We aim to foster a lively cultural and lifelong learning center where one can relax, work, study, or have fun, and where one can always ask questions.
* We endeavor to provide items for education and entertainment that are relevant to community needs along with timely, accurate information assistance that empowers, informs, and inspires the public.
* We aspire to employ a well-trained, cooperative staff that reflects the diversity of Easthampton.
* We work to defend intellectual freedom and the confidentiality of each individual’s use of the library.
* We work to provide technology that expands and enhances services.
* We aim to strengthen our programs and services through collaboration with other libraries, schools, local organizations, and agencies.

**Introduction**

Strategic plans are tools that organizations can use to set goals and objectives to frame the work that needs to be done to fulfill the organization’s mission. For the Easthampton Public Library and our Strategic Planning Committee, we entered into this process with the intention to develop a plan that we believe will guide our work toward maintaining a focus on our mission and vision of positioning the library as a vital center for learning, social and cultural connection for the City of Easthampton over the next four years. We also hoped to create a plan that will allow us to envision a new building space, rebuild services in a more resilient and inclusive manner post-Covid, and ensure that we are providing creative and vital services to all Easthampton residents.

We believe we have created a plan that will allow us to do that.

**Methodology**

Prior to the formation of the Strategic Planning Committee, the library director reviewed the previous Strategic Planning process and utilized training materials materials provided by the Massachusetts Library System. In Spring 2022, the Library Director and Corporators reached out to interested members of the community to recruit those interested in planning for the Library’s future.

This eight-person committee was charged with creating a new strategic plan for the library for the four year period of 2023-2026. All participants committed to a two meeting format, with additional information shared by email.

The committee adopted a framework for the long-range planning process created by staff of the Massachusetts Library System. The process was adapted from the Public Library Association’s *Planning for Results* community-based planning process, and satisfies the certification requirements of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

The first meeting was facilitated by Katya Schapiro, Library Director. It consisted of an overview of the strategic planning process and why it is necessary, a report from the library director on the community and library programs and trends, and an exercise on Library Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results (SOAR), led by Lisa Downing, Director of the Forbes Library in Northampton.

During September and October of 2022, the library disseminated a community feedback survey and invited library users and non-users to provide information to the library regarding what they like about the library, what they think could be better, and services they would like to see the library offer. The library offered this survey both online and in paper format. The Library Director then drafted the defined goals, along with objectives and an action plan for the library.

This draft was shared via email with the Committee, who reviewed it for clarity and, more importantly, for fidelity to the objectives laid out in the first meeting. The committee reviewed the draft plan and made minor revisions based on the community survey findings, then recommended the draft plan for approval to the Executive Board of the Public Library Association of Easthampton. The draft plan was submitted to the Executive Board on March 9, 2023. The final plan was approved by the Board on July 10, 2023 and submitted to the MBLC.

**Community Description**

HISTORY

The City of Easthampton is a community of 16,066 residents, covering 14 square miles and located below the Mount Tom Range in the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts. Easthampton is a residential and manufacturing community whose population has remained largely stable numerically since the year 2000. Easthampton has a growing arts community and the City’s Central Business District has remained an architecturally attractive and historically significant feature of the community.

The first European settlers arrived in the Easthampton area about 1664. In 1785, Easthampton incorporated as a town separate from Northampton and Southampton. The town was a farming community until the mid‑1800s, when manufacturing became the predominant industry. Innovations in cloth-covered buttons and the use of vulcanized rubber in woven goods by manufacturers in town helped solidify Easthampton as a leader in industry at the time. Today, Easthampton continues to be strong in the area of manufacturing with 32 manufacturing firms creating over 19% of the jobs in the City. A host of projects such as Eastworks, Mill 180, Paragon, One Cottage Street and The Brickyard all reuse mill space for both new businesses and private residences. Several new housing initiatives and long range improvement plans will reshape the look and utility of central Easthampton in the years to come.

GOVERNANCE

In April 1996 Easthampton became the second smallest city in Massachusetts when voters approved a new charter calling for a Mayor and Town Council form of government. The first mayor and nine‑member council were elected in July of 1996 and began work that September.

POPULATION PROFILE

The 2020/21 U.S. Census figures indicate a population of 16,022 in Easthampton. The census also reports that 15.2% of the population is under the age of eighteen. More than 58% of the population is between 18 and 64, and 23.4% is over age 65. According to census figures, 90% of residents are white, 5.8% are Hispanic or Latino, 1.9% are Asian, and 6.7% identify as multi-racial, with other races or ethnic groups making up the remainder of the population. The ancestry of Easthampton's White residents is predominately French Canadian, Polish, or Irish in descent. Many of these people came to Easthampton to work in the mills. Even today these groups are still evident in town ‑ the three Roman Catholic churches in Easthampton were often called the French, Irish, and Polish churches. However, 10.6% of the Easthampton population reported speaking a language other than English at home, a slight decrease from 2014 numbers but still an important language data point, and this number is likely to rise again when 2022/23 numbers are recorded.

The median household income in 2017-2021 was $63,098; Just under 7.2% of the 2020 population fell below the poverty level. These numbers represent a small but definite increase in household income from 2014 numbers. Population trends in Easthampton indicate an aging and slightly more affluent population, which trends correspond to rising housing prices in the area. 94.4% of households had a home computer, and 90.7% had a broadband internet subscription (this statistic is of particular interest to the Library, as one of its core services is the provision of free computer and wifi use to those lacking these services).

SCHOOLS

In 2020, 95% of Easthampton's residents over 25 years of age have at a high school education, with 39.8% holding a Bachelor's degree or higher. As of September 2022, our three former elementary schools Center, Pepin, and Maple, along with the former White Brook Middle School, have been consolidated into Mountain View School. Mountain View School serves students in PreK-8th grade. Easthampton High School, opened in 2013, houses our students in 9th-12th grades.  Mountain View School and Easthampton High School are the newest school buildings in our area, ensuring that students in our city have access to the highest quality learning environments and state of the art facilities. Easthampton is also home to a public charter school (Hilltown Cooperative) for kindergarten through grade 8 students, and Easthampton students are also able to access the facilities of vocational schools in the region through school choice programs. In addition to its public schools, the community is home to the Williston Northampton School, a private secondary college prep school.

HEALTH

As of 2020, 9.8% of the Easthampton population identified as disabled, and 5.9% of the population under 65 years of age lacked health insurance.

**Library Description**

HISTORY

In 1792, the first Library Association of Easthampton was organized by the Reverend Payson Williston, a congregational minister, only seven years after the incorporation of the town. This social library had thirty stockholders and was housed in the parsonage. In 1841, that library merged with the Youth's Library Association and became known as the Easthampton Social Library Association.

In 1869, due to growing interest to extend library service to the general public, Samuel Williston – son of Reverend Williston and noted local industrialist - and a group of notable citizens of the town officially incorporated The Public Library Association of Easthampton and a financial appropriation was received from the town. In 1871, the Association was authorized to form and maintain a museum in concert with the library. Ten years later the library had outgrown its quarters in the Town Hall. Emily Williston, widow of the late Samuel Williston, responded with a major gift of $16,000 to construct a new library. Land was purchased and the well-known Boston architects Peabody and Stearns were hired to design the building. On February 23, 1881, the Public Library Association of Easthampton opened its new library facility to the public. This structure continues to house the library and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1987. On the occasion of the Library Association’s 125th anniversary, the Library was renamed the Emily Williston Memorial Library and Museum. In 2023, as the Library began work toward a closer financial and structural affiliation with the City of Easthampton, the library was once again renamed, as the Easthampton Public Library.

In 1930, the basement was renovated to provide space for a Youth Department as well as to update the heating system. The second major change to the building occurred in 1966 with the expansion of the Youth Department, the modernization of the adult section, and the creation of a staff work space. The first computer was purchased in 1988, which launched the library into the computer age of automated library services and operations. In 1995, the library became an affiliate, non‑circulating member of C/W MARS, a regional network of libraries for shared cataloging, reference, and interlibrary loans. The following year, 1996, the library was connected to the Internet. The library is currently a full member of the C/W MARS automation network and conducts resource sharing with the network’s other member libraries.

GOVERNANCE AND STAFFING

The Public Library Association of Easthampton (the Association) is a non‑profit tax‑exempt corporation under the provisions of the IRS and applicable to Massachusetts codes. The Association was established by the General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts under the provisions of Chapter 157 of the Special Acts of the Legislature in April 1869 to operate a public library for the people of Easthampton. The Association owns the land and library building.

The Association consists of up to 25 Corporators, who meet twice each year, and a Board of Directors that meets 6 additional times each year. The Board of Directors consist of no more than 15 members. The Association has four officers, President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Board of Directors also has two members appointed by the Mayor of Easthampton. These Mayoral appointees are also considered Corporators of the Association for the two year term in which they serve. The Headmaster of the Williston Northampton School serves as a member of the Board of Directors.

Responsibility for library management, collections, and provision of library services to the public is delegated by the Association to the library director. The director, appointed and directly responsible to the Association, is an employee, as is all the staff working at the library, of the Public Library Association of Easthampton.

The library currently employs three full-time staff members, the Director and the Adult and Youth Services Coordinators, at 40 hours per week. Nine other part-time employees work a total of 155 hours per week. In addition, the library has a custodian, who works approximately 13 hours per week. The library engages volunteers year-round.

HOURS

The library is open a total of 54 hours per week. The library increased from 50 hours per week on September 7, 2013, when it reopened on Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Current year-round hours of operation are: Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 9:30 AM to 8:00 PM, Thursdays and Fridays from 9:30 AM to 6:00 PM, and Saturdays from 9:30 AM to 2:00 PM. The library is closed on Sundays.

FUNDING

Funding for the library comes from three sources: the City of Easthampton, the Association, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. The City of Easthampton appropriates funds on an annual basis to purchase library services for the residents of the City through a contractual arrangement with the Public Library Association of Easthampton, which does business as the Easthampton Public Library and Museum. Under the present contract, municipal funds, which currently cover 49% of the library’s total operating budget, can only be used for staff salaries and expenses related to library operations such as programs, library materials, equipment, and supplies. Funding from the City cannot be used to perform maintenance or repairs on the building. The Association supports the rest of the library’s operating budget, in conjunction with state aid funds utilized to purchase collection materials, supplemented by private contributions and occasional City and State earmarks or special allocations.

COLLECTIONS

At the end of the calendar year 2022, the library had:

Total holdings (physical and digital): 216,825

Holdings per capita:13.5

Annual circulation: 91,786 (physical) 34,957 (digital)

Circulation per capita: 7.9

Items loaned to other libraries: 9,164

Items provided by other libraries: 20,986

Total in person visitors: 42,482 (*this reflects a drop post Covid closure, as many patrons were or continue to limit their visits and use online alternative or curbside accesses, the remainder of the difference is school visits*)

Total number of registered borrowers: 7960

The Library has, along with the rest of the world, undergone a series of ups and downs over the period of the previous Strategic Plan, but despite a Covid-19 building closure of nearly 1.5 years, the institution has succeeded implementing many positive actions and changes, some planned and some as situation required. These include:

* Beginning to loan Mobile Hotspots, through a grant from MBLC which the Library has continued to fund. The Hotspots are circulating at capacity.
* ARPA Earmark of 50,000 from State Senator John Velis
* Supplemental allocations of Cannabis tax money ($30,000 in FY22 and $510,000 in FY23)
* HVAC system installed for improved building ventilation, with a special grant of $70,000 from the CPA.
* Receipt of a grant from Florence Savings Bank Charitable Foundation to put toward purchase of new furniture for the Youth Department.
* Restructuring of staff, including the introduction of a part time cataloging position, the increase of the Adult Services Position to a full-time benefited position, and the improvement of staff salaries to bring full-time staff in line with regional compensation averages, thus attracting and retaining quality personnel who might otherwise be hired elsewhere.
* Curbside pickup and printing instituted during building closure, which have also benefited patrons after the building re-opened.
* Patron delivery and outreach via the purchase and setup of a Book Bike (custom e-bike) and trailer. Bike delivery has become one of our most popular services.
* Addition of regular programming geared toward adults, including a bi-weekly drop-in crafting program, a graphic novel discussion group and computer classes for adults.
* Addition of new regular programs geared toward youth, including a Lego brick building club and programs geared toward babies and families with babies.

**Assessment of User Needs**

From Labor Day until October 15, 2022, the Library conducted a survey of the community to collect feedback from library users as well as non-users regarding what they like about the library, what could be improved and the reasons why non-users do not use the library. We offered the survey online as well as in paper format. Most respondents were willing to provide us with some demographic information and from that we know that 42.5% of the respondents were ages 31-50, 43.6% were over the age of 50 and 14% were below the age of 30.

25% of respondents reported using the library at least once a week, with another 15% visiting the library 2-3 times a week. Another 28% of respondents reported visiting the library at least once a month. 27% of respondents reported accessing library services remotely a few times a week, with many more doing so once a week or a few times a month. 62% of this usage was ebooks and audiobooks, with the runners up being online databases and streaming video. 80 people responded to the question, “If you never visit the Easthampton Public Library, tell us some reasons why.” Almost 40% of these responses were in the “Other” category, with many responses telling us that the respondents visit another library, typically either the Forbes Library in Northampton or the Edwards Library in Southampton, or that the library is not accessible to them. The second and third most common answer to this question was that patrons are cautious/avoidant of indoor spaces due to Covid-19, and that the Library’s hours are not convenient.

The lack of parking was a very common response to the question, “What do you like least about the Easthampton Public Library?” Most people cited their frustration with not being able to find convenient parking outside of the building. The next two most frequent responses to this question related to the lack of space in the building. Most people cited the small space as a problem, with just as many people citing the lack of private space to work or study, as well as lack of meeting rooms and places to plug in their laptops or other devices as reasons why they are unhappy with the Library. Lack of accessibility – no room for wheelchairs between the stacks and lack of a way to get wheelchairs or strollers into the basement where the children’s room and public restrooms are – were also commonly cited problems with the library.

The most common reasons people cited for coming to the library were to browse the collection (63%) and to pick up holds (53%). Use of wireless internet (18%) was the next most common response, with bringing a child to a program (16%) and use of the public computers as the next most common responses (Staff noted that although this population is unlikely to return often or answer the survey, a significant portion of our traffic is folks coming in from the RMV to print documentation).

 In a different question we presented a list of services that the library currently offers and asked respondents to choose up to five that they thought were most important. Interlibrary loan was rated as the most important service the library should offer with almost 62% of the respondents choosing this. Having computers available for the public to use (54%), obtaining help from library staff (30%), offering programs for children (55%), offering summer reading programs for children (32%), offering downloadable ebooks and audiobooks (53%), and offering wireless internet access (36%) were the other highly rated services.

We offered a list of potential new services that the library could offer and asked the community to select up to five services that they would like to see the library offer, or to suggest other services not in the list. Providing a community meeting space topped the list with 49% of people wishing for this service. Offering a domestic tool collection (kitchen gadgets, garden tools, etc.) for loan was second most popular (45%), coding classes for children or teens (26.4%), writing groups and book groups (27% and 35%) rounding out the top grouping of responses.

We also asked survey respondents about the library’s current hours and other times of day or days of the week when the library is not open but should be. 38% of the respondents would like to see the library stay open later on Saturdays and there was very strong interest in seeing the library open for some part of Sunday. 27% of respondents wanted to see the library open on Sunday afternoons and 46% of respondents wanted to see the library open on Sunday mornings. There was strong understanding that the library’s current budget cannot support adding open hours to our already very generous open hour schedule. There was extremely strong support for the idea of the library shifting some of the current open hours around to allow for extended service on Saturday afternoons or open hours on Sunday, with 114 people responding that they felt the library could close earlier on one of the evenings it is open late to allow the library to be open other times.

In the comments from the community survey as well as the results from the SOAR exercise with the planning committee, the staff was highly rated as a strong and important part of service that the library offers to the community. Staff was overwhelmingly rated as welcoming, knowledgeable and providers of excellent customer service. Most comments from the community cited their love of the staff and how friendly and helpful they perceived the staff to be. Patrons particularly and vocally appreciated our delivery and selection services (including those that replaced browsing during the building closure, and the staff members who facilitates those.

Lack of parking, lack of space within the building for people to work, lack of appropriate space to provide programs and community gathering spaces, and lack of space for a broader, more suitable collection of materials of all types to meet the needs of a community the size of Easthampton were all needs that came out in the community survey (with 38% of respondents highlighting a need for more content from under-represented creators) as well as the SOAR exercise with the planning committee. Lack of financial resources to address all of these deficits was also a strong theme from the planning committee. This plan endeavors to address all of these deficits while also envisioning ways for the library and the Public Library Association of Easthampton to realize greater financial support for the expansion of library services, programs and collections to better serve the community of Easthampton.

**GOALS and OBJECTIVES**

**Young Adults & Children**

**GOAL 1: Young adults enjoy a spacious area dedicated to their needs and providing them with collections, programs and opportunities to creatively and safely engage with each other and the community**

Objective: Create an inviting and comfortable place for young adults to gather together

* + Activity: Redecorate and change up the design in the Youth area, in need of a refresh now that several years have passed since the renovation. (year 1)
	+ Activity: Hire a part-time, dedicated Young Adult Librarian—possibly converting Senior Library Assistant position. This goal was included in the previous strategic plan, but delayed by Covid-19 and other budgetary choices. (year 1)
	+ Activity: Re-invigorate teen programming at the Library, grow a new teen group after the previous one’s natural progression was interrupted by Covid (years 1-4)
	+ Activity: Add public access computers for use by Young Adults (years 2-3)
	+ Activity: Increase the hours for the Young Adult Librarian to full-time (year 4)

Objective: Increase amount of programming relevant to Young Adult interests

* + Activity: Hire a part-time, dedicated Young Adult Librarian (year 2)
	+ Activity: Increase the amount of programming dedicated to Young Adult interests with the advice of the Teen Advisory Committee (years 2-4)
	+ Activity: Partner with staff at Easthampton High School (and Williston Northampton School) to develop collaborative programming (year 2)
	+ Activity: Increase the hours for the Young Adult Librarian to full-time (year 4)

Objective: Expand the Young Adult collection to include a broader range of materials and topics

* + Activity: Develop and begin carrying out a collection development plan which provides variety and exciting choices in the collection for Young Adults (years 1-4)
	+ Increase Teen materials budget, especially for games (year 2)
	+ Activity: Hire a part-time, dedicated Young Adult Librarian (year 2)
	+ Activity: Increase the hours for the Young Adult Librarian to full-time (year 4)

**GOAL 2: Create and maintain an inviting children’s area of the Library that offers robust programming for children ages 0-11**

Objective: Maintain and expand the inviting nature of the Children’s spaces in the Library

* + Activity: Refresh play area and carpeting (year 1)
	+ Activity: Develop opportunities for children and families to engage in newly configured children’s area (years 1-4)
	+ Activity: Increase storage capacity to better organize and store toys and craft materials (years 2-3)
	+ Plan and design a welcoming and flexible Children’s space with increased seating, accessibility, computer access, and play space in the projected new space (Years 1-3)

Objective: Offer more robust and diverse range of programming for children ages 0-11

* + Activity: Add regular Saturday story time to Library programming schedule (year 2)
	+ Activity: Add programs geared toward the interest and needs of children ages 0-3 (years 1)
	+ Activity: Expand partnerships with various organizations, such as after school or alternative schooling programs, to promote literacy for children though book groups and other activities (years 1-2)
	+ Activity: Design youth spaces to facilitate more independent usage, in the form of play spaces, tutoring areas, spaces for creative exploration and seating, and Youth computer access

**Facility**

**GOAL 3: The fully accessible modern library building with plentiful parking, accessible spaces, up to date computer and audio-visual resources, and functional/plentiful programming and community meeting space which the residents of Easthampton deserve, is in the planning stages, and residents and municipal officials are united with the library Board of Directors in the effort to make it happen.**

Objective: Identify a location and develop a design for an expanded, modern library

* Activity: Board of Directors tasks the Building committee with developing messaging regarding the need for an expanded, modern library facility in order to build excitement for the project among City residents (year 1)
* Activity: Library and BOD work with a full-time fundraiser to plan a robust Capital Campaign that supports the building plan (years 1-2)
* Activity: Board of Directors and Library Director consult with Building Consultant staff at the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners to show interest in the next Planning and Design grant round (year 1)
* Activity: BOD, Library Director, Friends, etc… create a structured and robust activist campaign to grow local support for Library funding and expansion (years 1-2)
* Activity: Board of Directors appoints a committee to work on and submit an application for a Planning and Design grant (year 1)
* BOD, Library Director, and City Officials and Advisors create a plan to take advantage of the generous building donation on offer from Easthampton Savings Bank, in order to move quickly to ensure that the Library can renovate and inhabit the space and remain a downtown essential service.

**GOAL 4: The library’s main floor is spacious, attractive, accessible, and inviting to the general public.**

Objective: Public reading areas are comfortable and more flexible for all users

* Activity: Ensure that all tables and chairs allow for the best possible ADA compliance (year 1)
* Activity: Reconfigure seating/stacks to allow for more usable patron spaces (year 1-2)
* Activity: Revisit patron behavior policies to remove potentially discriminatory language

Objective: Main floor is brighter and more efficient for browsing or studying

* Activity: Improve lighting on Main Floor (year 2)
* Activity: Update signage and desk placement to increase confidence on entry (i.e. where does one return books?) and create a more intuitive flow for patron use.(year 1)

**Administrative & Support:**

**GOAL 5: The library has a budget that provides for excellent services, full staffing, current reading and viewing materials, and programs that attract the community to the library.**

Objective: Develop a plan for increased funding and support from the City of Easthampton, possibly through a potential reorganization of the Library governance structure.

* Activity: Library Director and BOD will continue to maintain a strong working relationship with the Mayor and City Council, and develop closer relationships with department heads around the City, with the specific goal of more interdepartmental support and collaboration, leading to cost sharing when there are shared goals.
* Activity: Library Director and BOD and local advocates will continue to be a vocal presence in public forums, and will invite the public to join in advocacy to ensure that the need for Library funding is consistently demonstrated, heard, and prioritized.
* Activity: The Library will submit a full and realistic budget that seeks City support for all current staffing, operating and programming costs, as well as for adding new staff and services needed by the community (years 1-4)
* Activity: Library will request increased funding to cover 80% of total Library operating budget by year 2025.
* The City and the Library will work together to reduce duplicated costs and missed networking opportunities caused by the Library not being a City department. Over time, the Library and City will revisit the Contract of Services and expand opportunities for the City to provide in-kind services to the Library (i.e. health care, benefits, accounting, IT, public works assistance) to promote a closer relationship and more cost-effective service model.

**GOAL 6: The Board of Directors of the Easthampton Public Library will continue to find more expansive, effective, professionalized, and creative ways to raise funds for the operation of the library and expansion of services.**

Objective: Expand fundraising efforts to more fully fund the staffing and operations of the library

* Activity: Refine message regarding the role of the Public Library Association of Easthampton in relation to the library and library services (year 1)
* Activity: Utilize generous donation from Cider House Media to redesign and streamline the Library’s website (year 1)
* Create and execute a timeline for implementing the Library name change from the Emily Williston Memorial Library to the Easthampton Public Library. (year 1)
* Activity: Create more detailed information regarding the Public Library Association of Easthampton, including information on Corporators and Board Members, and disseminate information via library website, in printed materials and through meetings with community groups (years 1-2)
* Activity: Partner with independent fundraising consultant to re-organize and professionalize Library fundraising program for Annual Fund (year 1)
* Activity: Partner with other community organizations, such as Easthampton Council on Aging, Easthampton Learning Foundation, or the Easthampton Community Center, to hold a large event for donors to attend. (year 2)
* Activity: Explore foundation databases, state resources and other sources for potential grants to fund new initiatives (years 1-4)

Objective: Increase the hours of key staff currently employed by the library to full-time and add more staff positions to boost programs and services

* Activity: Add part-time Young Adult Librarian position (year 2)
* Activity: Add part-time Outreach Services position (year 2)
* Activity: Increase hours for part-time Cataloger position (year 1)
* Activity: Expand part-time Cataloger position and increase portfolio to include collection maintenance, moving toward the eventual creation of a full-time Circulation Manager/Cataloger position. (Year 2-3)
* Activity: Increase Senior Library Assistant, Youth Services position to full-time (year 3)
* Activity: Increase Young Adult Librarian position to full-time (year 4)

**Adult Services and Technology:**

**GOAL 7: Adults of all ages enjoy collections, services, programs and other resources relevant to their interests and needs.**

Objective: Increase amount of programming relevant to the interests of adults of all ages and expand collection reach:

* Activity: Develop programming specific to the interests of adults ages 19-30 (years 1-4)
* Activity: Develop and begin carrying out a collection development plan which provides variety and exciting choices in the collection for adults and supports the programming offered by the library (years 1-4)
* Activity: Expand the library’s reach into the community with unique services for adults by working with representatives of local land trusts and garden enthusiasts, to create an outdoor community/pollinator garden for patron enjoyment and education—working with the City’s BEE initiative (year 2)
* Activity: Explore collaboration with the local reuse and recycling groups to create, store and manage a household tool lending program (year 1)
* Activity: Obtain grant and/or donations of household tools for tool lending program (year 2)
* Activity: Implement household tool lending program (year 3)
* Activity: Re-visit the collection plan for Large Print buying to expand the range of titles (year 1)

**GOAL 8: The library provides wider range of service to adults with limited ability to come to the library.**

Objective: Expand Home Delivery Service and other services for patrons not on site

* + Activity: Partner with Council on Aging and Easthampton neighbors to connect patrons with in home tech support that allows them to take full advantage of our digital services (Year 1)
	+ Activity: Expand Home delivery service and train additional staff members (Year 1)
	+ Activity: Add part-time Outreach Services position (year 2)
	+ Activity: Seek grant funding to refurbish Book Bike and trailer (year 1-2)

**GOAL 9: The library provides opportunities for people of all ages to learn and use technology.**

Objective: Utilizing the library’s Laptop Lab, offer more robust and diverse range of technology programs geared toward people of all ages

* + Activity: Explore options for increasing internet bandwidth at library (year 1)
	+ Activity: Increase internet bandwidth at the library (years 1-2)
	+ Activity: Explore funding to purchase updated laptops to replace obsolescing machines (year 1)
	+ Activity: Purchase and make available newer laptops for patron use (year 3)
	+ Activity: Establish computer coding classes for children, teens and adults (years 1-2)
	+ Activity: Expand regular one-on-one technology tutoring time to the public, partnering with local community groups to do so (years 1-2)
	+ Activity: Investigate options for purchasing addition assistive technology (screen readers, magnifiers, etc) for the Library (year 1)
	+ Activity: Pursue outside funding or budget for assistive technology purchases and promotion (years 2-3)

Objective: Expand useful and sustainable technology lending program at library

* + Activity: Purchase and lend additional Mobile Hotspots (year 1)
	+ Activity: Partner with community groups (Easthampton Media?) to select and curate a useful selection of additional materials for community lending (year 1)
	+ Activity: Seek grant to purchase technology for technology lending program (year 2)
	+ Activity: Purchase additional materials for and establish technology lending program (year 3)

**GOAL 10: The Library’s Historical and Museum collections are made accessible to researchers and to all members of the public, and staff time is devoted to the use and maintenance of these collections.**

**Objective: Properly document, catalog, and safely display museum and historical collections on site at the EWML.**

* Activity: BOD Museum Committee creates a comprehensive catalogue of Museum and Historical holdings, using previous partial efforts toward this goal (year 1)
* Activity: Museum Committee formulates a Collection Policy for Museum and Historical Collections, and a protocol for access to said materials for the public. This may entail collaboration with Easthampton’s other major archival entity, the Historical Society. (year 1)
* Activity: Museum Committee establishes guidelines for the care and maintenance of collections going forward. (year 1)
* Activity: All Museum and Historical holdings are either deaccessioned, sold, or moved into appropriate and accessible housing onsite at the EWML. (years 2-3)
* Activity: Budget for EWML staff time to be devoted to the care, upkeep, and public sharing of Museum and Historical items. (year 3-4)

**Objective: Enable some or all of the physical spaces of the EWML to become display areas for Museum and Historical Collections and/or Art or Educational collections of relevance to the Library’s cultural and educational missions.**

* Activity: Exhibition Committee creates a policy and protocol for the acquisition or loan as well as the care and disposal of items to be displayed in the EWML building, including permanent installations and short term exhibitions or various kinds. (year 1)
* Activity: Exhibition Policy is shared publicly, and guided by these principles, the EWML returns to offering exhibitions of local artistic, cultural, historical, and educational interest. (Years 2-4)
* Activity: Dedicated staff time from programming staff as well as outreach staff is devoted to the execution and upkeep of exhibitions. (Years (2-4)

**GOAL 11: Expand the collection’s reach and explore the curation of a wider range of resources and resource presentation models that better reflects the community as a whole.**

**Objective: Purchase or otherwise include databases that highlight resources relevant to and created/curated by underserved populations, including speakers of languages other than English, Native American residents of the area, and others.**

* Activity: Work with local experts to locate database services and catalog curation resources that highlight under-represented creators. (year 1-2)
* Activity: Increase purchase of materials for speakers of languages other than English, for all ages (year 1-2)
* Activity: Solicit community feedback about weaker spots in the collection, including sheet music and similar niche interest loci (year 1)

SOAR Results

Easthampton Public Library and Museum

Strategic Planning Committee: April 2022

**STRENGTHS**

\*\*amazing staff w/ high ed. Level and skills, good people skills

Tech support from staff

\*enthusiasm for wanting to help – not just a job (vocational awe alert!)

Increased profile of the library in recent years—more residents aware of library/library funding/library services

\*\*“third place/third space” vibe

\*community place – a place to go

User friendly/not intimidating

\*good atmosphere

Central location

Engaged, enthused, open-minded board/corporators

\*community programs

\*unique collections (hotspots, seed library, potential to build more on what we have)

Printing—supporting the entire RMV

Faxing

Children’s renovation – great improvement

\*outreach/visibility

\*\*community org collaborations

Library visits by students

\*\*\*place to go when you don’t have money

Free internet

Physical and digital collections

Public computers

\*public restrooms

Help with computers

Heat and AC

**OPPORTUNITIES**

**Page 1:**

\*\*barriers and policies need to be revisited (no sleeping, \*fines) ways to better serve

Volunteers to offer tutoring for young kids

Utilize youth to offer tech help 1 to 1 with seniors

Easthampton Neighbors—source of volunteers

Senior Tax Write-off (if EWML becomes a city dept)

\*\*combine more w/ aligned orgs – don’t duplicate, collaborate

\*Central info about the City

\*\*Dan/(Diane?) Kennedy of Northampton, project to optimize search engines to feature diversified results

Improve ‘history’ to include indigenous history of the area and more resources and connections to indigenous history and resources

\*\*Non-English collection, for browsers

\*local history research needs not being currently met (have the collection and not the staff, and the Historical Society is not active)

FEMA-disaster preparedness for community (be info professionals, climate tie in)

CREW

\*\*\*\*people with mobility issues cannot access the library

\*expand collection of sheet music

Growing library of things (tools, cookware, etc)

Makerspace

YA space – not enough staffing

\*community meeting spaces

**Page 2:**

\*effects of gentrification

\*more opportunities for people with no money

\*\*ways to bring the community together (vs. old vs. new)

Inviting newcomers – help with integration

Not all newcomers are affluent

Robin’s work at the Community Center

New traffic patterns + landscape lands – hugely impactful

(new school, loss of neighborhood schools, union st. project

**ASPIRATIONS**

\*\*\*\*Supporting least privileged among us

Great equalizer – provide resources and access

We need a free public space – who we are

\*how do we reach who we are not reaching/how do we KNOW who we’re not reaching

How do we know we are doing a good job?

\*aspirations vs outcomes

½ of Easthampton has a card—let’s go for the other half.

\*\*educational hub – empowering people to access

Connect users to opportunities/careers – start by providing info

What next?

Leveraging physical space

Let more people now about databases

\*reaching out to English language learners, build off school collaborations

Work w/ formerly incarcerated people

\*incorporate more social justice/activism for marginalized communities into programming (and practices)

Address climate change – working on a library collaboration to become a Climate Resilience Hub (CREW)

\*build upon tradition of youth programming, collaboration with adult staff

\*\*New building

Career development for staff

\*\*\*\*\*pay all staff a living wage w/ benefits

**RESULTS**

\*\*more cardholders, circs, increased stats

\*\*achievement of pay equity

Getting more funding

Plans in place for a new building

\*\*\*\*\*increased municipal funding

More fundraising, annual and capital (and a streamlined/professionalized/orderly fundraising structure and workflow with clear hierarchy of responsibilities and timelines)

More meeting space—being utilized

\*\*more partner orgs—more robust partnerships

Utilization of collections, spaces, programs

Resources meet the needs – space

\*\*increased literacy—financial, digital, resource, literal—in the community

Service providers contacting the library about what they are offering

Greater resource sharing—maps, resource guides

\*availability of passive resources (pamphlets, wallet cards, narcan)

Increasing staff specialization (through professional development)