

AUBURN PUBLIC LIBRARY | STRATEGIC PLAN 2021-2025

~ OUTCOMES REPORT ~

REPORT: To Auburn Town Manager, Edward Kazanovicz

FROM: Library Director, Jean E. Collins

DATE: April 2023 | Updated August 2024

OVERVIEW

The following report reflects outcomes from not only from the Goals identified in the 2021-2025 Library Strategic Plan, but also from other initiatives not specifically stated in the 2021-2025 Plan. The current Library Director, Dr. Jean E. Collins, has served in the position of Director for the past 9.2 years. The Library Director is a direct report to the Auburn Town Manager. Once reviewed and approved by the Town Manager, this report is made available to the Board of Trustees and to all members of the public, and is posted on the Library and Town of Auburn website.

It is important to note that during this report time frame the pandemic was a significant disruption to traditional services, impacting staff levels, budgets, in-Library patron visits, operations, and much more, compromising the trajectory for all of our programs and services. Rather than ‘wait it out’ through the pandemic, however, the administration and staff of the Auburn Public Library redirected and realigned services and resources, continuously serving the public through extensive curbside services; remote provision and patron engagement in programs; Library-staff video-taping of stories to children; and we communicated to patrons through customized websites, emails, phone calls, significant expansion of e-content options, and other methods of continued service and resources to our patrons. We also developed and provided more than 3,700 literacy packets for children available via curbside pickup and in-house provision. The Auburn Public Library was spotlighted in a Mass Municipal Association (MMA) newsletter for our innovative and patron-focused efforts during the pandemic.

Lest we forget!

The timeline of significant in-person service disruptions for Auburn Public Library is listed below.

Added note: We distributed more than 30,000 materials via curbside alone. In addition, we *received* approximately that same number, for a total approximating 60,000 curbside books, magazines, and media. We scrupulously adhered to all CDC and State guidelines, thoroughly sanitizing every single item, and also wrapping them for privacy during curbside pickup.

Timeline of COVID Closures and Re-openings | 2020-Present

Begin	End	Status
3/16/2020	4/2/2021	Closed to the public, curbside pickup
4/5/2021	5/7/2020	Open to the public by appointment
5/10/2021	1/4/2022	Open to the public
1/5/2022	2/19/2022	Closed to the public, curbside pickup
2/22/2022	Present	Open to the public

* *Goals, Objectives, and Outcomes:* Many outcomes are relevant to or listed as multiple goals and objectives. At times, outcomes may be cross-referenced to eliminate duplication of content.

GOAL 1

Offer high quality, diverse, and informational programs, services, and resources that interest community members of all ages

OBJECTIVES

- 1.1 Deliver informational, entertaining programs that support literacy, life-long learning, and community engagement.
- 1.2 Present a diverse array of programs, services, and resources that appeal to children, teens, adults, and family groups

1.3 Develop programs and services that meet the community’s evolving needs

***Supporting Narrative for GOAL 1**

Children’s programs at all levels were redesigned to integrate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and a focus on Information Literacy (IL). The UDL framework integrates concepts that focus on three outcomes: (1) Multiple Means of Engagement; (2) Multiple Means of Expression; (3) Multiple Means of Action and Expression. The IL framework complements the UDL framework by incorporating information literacy, which comprises many and diverse elements of early literacy: listening comprehension, alphabet knowledge, phonological awareness, oral language, text comprehension, print awareness, written language, vocabulary, and language fluency and comprehension, to name a few. In age-appropriate formats, IL also integrates digital literacy, financial awareness, health and fitness literacies, social skills, environmental awareness, critical thinking literacies, and cultural and scientific literacy.

All programs, whether designed and presented in-house by Library staff or offered by knowledgeable and credentialed external presenters, as determined and assessed by the Director, are reviewed for integration and expression from the ‘menu’ of UDL and other literacies. These two models are highly inclusive to everyone, regardless of ability levels, learning challenges, or other diversities. We also integrate sensory learning through our curiosity boxes for toddlers at our weekly programs, which are extremely well received. Program diversity through positive representation helps build confidence and self-esteem for all children, and is at the forefront of our mission to children.

Our program designs often incorporate multi-media platforms that align with themes from puppet shows, program-aligned crafts, outside walks, nature exploration, kite flying, experiments with water and sand, live animals, plants and nature, 3-D glasses, hands-on- engagement such as with earthworms and bugs, and creativity with working tie-dyed paints, to name a few.

Auburn Public Library programs incorporate high standards that are also aligned with the Massachusetts Common Core State Standards as defined in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for K-12. Programs support life-long learning and curiosity; are informational and entertaining; and involve community engagement. We broadened our efforts to further develop STEM and STEAM programs during the past two years. Our programs are consistently rated very highly by our patrons. All components thoroughly and successfully address all objectives listed under GOAL 1.

GOAL 1: OUTCOME 1.1

PROGRAMS

Program Overview

- Provided more than 4,000 programs over 4 years (does not include pandemic time frame)
- Approximately 70% of all programs were designed, developed, and presented in-house
- More than 80% of our programs incur wait lists after the cap is reached. When possible, we further extend the cap or add a second (or third) session
- Attendance at all programs over four years: more than 35,000
- Web-based virtual programs during the pandemic: 397
- ALL programs are open to all members of the public free of charge.
- ALL patrons are welcome and encouraged to attend and engage in age or ability-appropriate programs, regardless of age, gender, abilities or disabilities, ethnicity, or any other category.
- Parents or care-givers who have questions about program format and inclusion are encouraged to contact the director – ALL programs are always inclusive and open to all!

Children’s Programs

- Literacy: UDL and IL: see ‘Supporting Narrative for Goal 1’ above. ALL children’s programs are designed with UDL and IL in mind
- All children’s programs include reading a story before, and sometimes after, the program as well
- All children’s programs include program-themed, Library created, take-home literacy packets
- Summer Reading Programs (SRP). All SRPs have been very successful; building interest and drawing increasingly large numbers of participants each year. Some statistics from the latest SRP, from summer 2024, are listed below. The Auburn Cultural Council and the Friends of the Library contribute significant funds toward programs and materials for the SPRs.

Summer 2024 Summer Reading Program was the highest level of participation ever!

2024 Summer Reading Registrations	361
Nature Discovery Scavenger Hunt Kits	703 Kits over 4 Weeks
Number of Hours Read by Participants	5,031.50 Hours
Breakdown into Minutes Read	301,890 Minutes
Age Range Average Age of Participants	Birth – Age 14 Average age: 6.5
Average Number of Hours Read Per Child	13.0

Total Visits for Reading Log Checks	1,346
Story Walk Visits	193
Participation by Town: Auburn 255 Barre 1 Boston 1 Charlton 2 Douglas 4 Dudley 6 Hudson 1 Leicester 3 Millbury 3 Out of State 3 Oxford 12 Rochdale 4 Southbridge 4 Spencer 2 Sturbridge 6 W Boylston 1 Webster 4 Westborough 2 Worcester 47	

GOAL 1: OUTCOME 1.2

DIVERSITY | IN PROGRAMS

A broad category sampling of our many diverse programs is listed below. As identified above, all programs are always free of charge at Auburn Public Library and are fully inclusive. It is important to recognize that a simple listing of programs is not completely reflective of the resource – all programs focus engagement with ALL patrons, regardless of ethnicity, gender, religion, age, or other potentially discriminating factors. It is also important to recognize that we welcome patrons under the umbrella of *neurodiversity* a term which encompasses autism, ADHD, dyslexia, Tourettes, dementia, mental health conditions and other intellectual disabilities. All members of the public are always encouraged to attend, and are welcomed and accommodated as appropriate to their needs and requests of parents or caregivers.

All program categories were offered to all age groups in age-appropriate formats

CATEGORIES

Science	Nature	Animals
Gardening	Plants	Health and Fitness
Literacy programs	Music	Performances
Food/Cooking	Nutrition	History
Holiday	Seasonal	School visits
Arts/Crafts	Summer Reading	Toddler programs
Pre-k programs	Kindergarten programs	Grade levels - various
Resume writing	Over 55 employment support series	Skilled craftsmen
Technology support	Arts	Cultural programs
Author visits	Community give-aways (petunias and tomatoes)	Community awareness
Family programs	Conservation / Recycling	Insects and worms
Butterfly kits	Writing workshops	

GOAL 1: OUTCOME 1.3

SERVICES and RESOURCES

Customized Web Sites | Response to COVID Restrictions

Two customized web-based platforms were developed to supplement our main library website during the pandemic:

- **Adults**
During the pandemic a customized website was developed to provide pandemic and COVID health-related information and resource listings from municipal, State, and Federal sources, for *adults*. Patrons visited this platform more than 4,200 times.
- **Children**
During the pandemic a customized website was developed for the purpose of providing Library staff video-taped stories, various engagements, and other information to *children*. Patrons visited these pages more than 36,000 times.

Museum Pass Initiative

We developed a unique website to provide information for our significantly expanded museum pass website

The Museum Pass website was developed in 2020 to provide informational needs and promotional platforms for our Library Museum Pass initiative. The website offers information about our museum options, ticket prices and visiting parameters. It also includes graphics of the museums and direct

links to each of the museums. Maps are also included. Museum flyers are also provided at the circulation desk, and patrons can review all museum options from the large touch screen television near the circulation desk.

- To-date, Museum Pass site access is at approximately 47,000 page hits.
- Our patrons have collectively saved more than \$61,000 in entry fees with the use of our passes.
- We currently offer 46 passes, more than twice as many as any other library in the State, including city and regional libraries. Prior to this initiative, the Library offered only 3 museum passes.
The most frequently requested passes, in no particular order, are: American Heritage; Animal Adventures Family and Rescue Zoo; Southwick Zoo; Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum; Boston Museum of Science; Magic Wings Butterfly Conservatory; Tower Hill Botanic Gardens; Worcester Art Museum; Ecotarium; Davis Farmland;

The diversity of our museum pass options, and which continuously evolve and expand, is summarized below by category percentages. The Museum Pass site is located from our home page, from our Constant Contact linked image, and by typing in <https://www.aplmuseumpasses.com>

- History | 34%
- Nature | 28%
- Children's | 11%
- Science | 6%
- Art/Culture | 21%

Additional Initiatives and Resources:

- Library of Things
- Storywalks (outside the Library in the back, and at the Auburn Mall)
- Teen advisory group
- Local history collection and assistance with patron research
- Assistance with technology including Libby™ app from well trained 'tech services' Library staff members. Assistance takes place in the Library as a walk-in service, via telephone, and/or with directional handouts. Patrons can also make an appointment with a tech services staff member if they need extensive assistance
- Provide space for patrons to work/study/meeting room, etc.
- Multiple book clubs (adult and children)
- School visits
- Knitting group

GOAL 2

Cultivate an operational culture of continuous improvement

OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 Foster strong collaborative governance relationships at the local, state, and federal levels
- 2.2 Attract and retain high quality staff committed to providing helpful, friendly customer service
- 2.3 Launch and support a strong Friends of the Auburn Public Library non-profit organization to fundraise in support of programs, equipment, and facilities

GOAL 2: OUTCOME 2.1

Strong collaborative governance, relationships, or supports

Local Levels and Schools

- Auburn Chamber of Commerce
- Auburn Mall
- Auburn Youth and Family Services
- Auburn Cultural Council
- Eddy Pond
- Auburn Public Schools: Auburn High School, Auburn Middle School, Swanson Intermediate School, Bryn Mawr Elementary School, Pakachoag Elementary School, and Bay Path Regional Technical Vocational High School

- RISE – Auburn Public Schools
- Short Term Volunteer Opportunities for AHS students and Auburn resident students who attend other schools
- The Library also supports the Town Senior Tax Write-off Volunteer option

State Levels

- Mass Board of Library Commissioners
- United Steelworker of America-Local 2936 Union
- The Library Director serves as on the Advisory Board for several organizations
 - CWMARS Library Directors Roundtables
 - Young Children with Families through the Mass Department of Education and Care and the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA)
 - STEM Beginnings Advisory Board
- The Library Director often attends the Library Legislative Day at the State House in Boston. She also participates in conferences and webinars from the American Library Association, CWMARS, Mass Library Association and others, and provides feedback via professional surveys to relevant organizations relating to library services and resources.

Town of Auburn Municipal Departments and Organizations

- Library Board of Trustees
- Auburn Senior Center
- Town of Auburn Board of Health
- Town of Auburn Department of Public Works
- Town of Auburn Finance Committee
- Town of Auburn Select Board through Town Manager
- Town Clerk
- Information Technology
- Police/Fire/Board of Health collaborations, including Earth Day programs, and COVID test resident pickup

GOAL 2: OUTCOME 2.2

HIGH QUALITY STAFF

Never before have library environments and cultures evolved so quickly and been so dynamic. The goals for Goal 2 remain consistent, but methods for achieving them will no doubt change over time. No strategies for accomplishing staffing goals are listed because a) this is an area to be left strictly to staff, and b) strategies should be as flexible as possible, as defined by *United for Libraries*¹.

It should be noted that the current Auburn Public Library staff of six ‘core’ employees (four administrators and two Senior Library Associates), as well as additional entry level staff serve the community with competency strengths in emotional intelligence and interpersonal communication skills; commitment to excellence in patron services; commitment to high quality and effective teamwork; continuously evolving skill sets; consistent high-level cross training; appropriate educational levels and continued education; and dedication to providing high quality services, programs, and resources. This group of dedicated employees have served, and continue to serve, the Auburn Public Library with a combined total of 62 years of experience and service from APL alone.

Library staff consistently meet 100% compliance rates for State Ethics Training, and most are well versed in Open Meeting Law requirements, some of the MA General Laws, and Open Documents Law. Administrators and Senior Level Associates very familiar with the Charter and the Town by-laws. We also participate in all online cyber-security trainings scheduled by the Town of Auburn IT Department.

The [2021-2025 Library Strategic Plan Community Survey](#) identified Staff qualifications, knowledge, and patron services at: Helpfulness 94% | Professionalism 93% | Knowledge 94% | Friendliness 93%

Organizational Structure

Perhaps the most significant and essential future-focused strategy involves the restructuring and redesign of the organizational structure of the Library's internal governance, a direct, and very important relationship to Goal 2: Objective/Outcome 2.2.

The redesign, begun in 2017, paved the way for drawing and retaining high quality staff, as well as providing expanded opportunities for cross training, participating in webinars and other professional development opportunities, and reducing 'silo' operations. The redesign also provided methods of specialization in areas of Library operations, and provided opportunities for all staff, not just administrators, to gain higher levels of expertise. Increased skill levels significantly benefits our operational flow, effectiveness, and transparency, which is ultimately reflected with our patron services.

Public libraries must be recognized as both a business and a service. While most library missions remain relatively stable, the inputs and expected outcomes must be better aligned with a combination of a business model and a service model.

As libraries' 'place in the community' evolves, the previous structure at APL was not as effective as it might have been and was in need of a complete redesign. With extensive, multi-year turnover at the director levels, leadership was compromised and the Library was facing loss of State certification in 2015, creating a serious challenge for new leadership. Previous turnover had made it been challenging to maintain consistency, effective leadership, and sustainable, quality services that encompassed many areas, particularly in the areas of innovative technology and programming. The redesign was well thought-out between the current Director and discussed and supported by then Town Manager, Julie Jacobson. We began to migrate to that structure in 2017.

Our new model involved changes on two levels:

General Organizational Structure and the Children's Resources Model

General Organizational Structure

The previous structure was very top-down, which is autocratic and 'siloed arrangement, with all leadership and authorities focused on a director and an assistant director (AD). All other employees were subordinate to the top level, as direct reports to the AD and/or the Director. All subordinate employees were Union employees.

The redesign of the model combines a matrix organizational structure with a flattened, horizontal configuration that effectively addresses both the business and the service side of the modern public library, and is particularly effective at Auburn Public Library.

The strengths of the combined structures focus on and incorporates teamwork using cross-functional groups instead of vertical silos. The also enhances open communication and creates a dynamic work environment where resources can be easily shifted to accommodate what are often constantly shifting priorities. The flattened structure also ensures empowered self-management and beneficial decision making at additional levels.

The administrative level was expanded from two to a team of four, including the director. Senior Library Associates (Union position) work closely with administrators, as well as with all staff. Each administrator has authority responsibilities relevant to their positions. Each reports directly to the director but communicates as a team. As is often the case, and certainly is at APL, the more highly qualified the team members are, or are trained to be, the fewer staff that is needed, allowing operations to be at their most productive, effective, as well as a providing a professionally rewarding, inclusive work environment for staff members.

Union positions were combined and reduced from a multitude of part-time positions that did not routinely align with the rest of the team. Most positions are entry level, but each employee is cross-trained to be able to step into other areas if someone is out or if a position is not filled. This is highly effective, supporting efficient operations. This model allows for diversity, inclusive, equitable operational

management, and unity in team training and a gateway to preparedness for promotions. The relationship between Union and by-law employees is seamless, professional, and allows for streamlined operations and services, and for professional mentoring.

Children's Services Model

Most libraries use the traditional Children's Librarian model, whereby that person is responsible for children's programming, managing the children's room, and is the one who generally makes connections with the children and their caregivers. This makes sense when a children's room is on another level of the library or is otherwise separate from the main areas, or only one person (and sometimes an assistant) is knowledgeable and interested in being engaged with the children.

At APL our children's room is located directly across from the circulation desk at the entrance of the Library. This location offers wonderful opportunities for us as a team. On some, often multiple levels, everyone on staff is involved in some way with the children's room; the programs; assisting children with locating books; shelving; book suggestions and processing; collection development; cleaning and sanitizing the children's room; and preparing materials for related crafts and activities for children.

GOAL 2: OUTCOME 2.3

FRIENDS of the AUBURN PUBLIC LIBRARY

We enthusiastically welcomed and supported the re-launch of Friends of the Auburn Public Library in October of 2021, in as many ways as possible. Due to conflicts of interest, the Library Director and staff cannot participate in governance or fund raising, but were able to assist in many other ways, as detailed below:

- Created a template and tab for the Friends on the Library website and post information as requested
- Provide space, tables, and chairs for monthly Friends meetings
- Allocated space and shelving for book collections
- Director attends all meetings to provide liaison information and guidance as requested
- Assisted with provision of carts, tables, and other materials for book sales
- Created space in the foyer for ongoing book sales
- All printing for Friends' information and flyers is offered free of charge for all Friends-related flyers, posters, and other information
- Provide reference to the Friends to patrons when requested
- Collect donations at the circulation desk
- Constructed/ provided ramp to the garage for ease in moving book carts (DPW built)
- Provided book trucks for storing and sorting
- Provided aprons and tables for use during book sales
- Support fund raising initiatives, such as the tea party and book sales

We are very grateful and appreciative of the time and efforts of the Friends!

GOAL 3

Maintain a comprehensive, current, and accessible collection that satisfies varied community needs and interests

OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 Curate an extensive collection of traditional and non-traditional books, materials, and resources for all age
- 3.2 Grow and enhance the contemporary and classic children's and teen collections
- 3.3 Provide access to popular or significant titles in diverse formats

GOAL 3: OUTCOMES 3.1

NON-TRADITIONAL RESOURCES

- Museum Passes – an extensive non-traditional resource and service, identified in Goal 1: 1.3
- Vox Books™ | Books that Talk | and WonderBooks Children's books with built-in readers (No-traditional)
The APL offers more than 400 titles, including dual language fiction and non-fiction, including dual languages for Spanish/English and Chinese/English. Vox books circulate at a consistent, robust rate of over 100 per week.

- Access to NewsBank™ was realigned and offered remote access
- Auburn Advantage – e-content available to Auburn card holders before Consortium patrons
- Access to more than 3,000 digital magazines through our website
- Wowbrary™ – book resource options displayed and promoted through banners on our website
- Staff picks on website at intervals
- Library of Things
- Access to databases and other digital content linked through our website
- The BBC Landmark Video Collection

TRADITIONAL MATERIALS – CHILDREN’S

- The children’s collection had never been fully inventoried and shelving arrangements were not ideal. Many titles were outdated, torn, or otherwise damaged. To address this, a robust, highly structured (and ongoing) inventory was implemented in 2018.
- We expanded the reading level sections in the Children’s room, from three levels to seven, to accommodate focused identification of appropriate reading levels for children.

Children’s books are now shelved in consecutive alignment; children can easily move from Reader 1 to Reader 2 to Reader 3; Graphic Novel selections were significantly expanded and assessed and shelved in three categories: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced and are now easily located; Early Reader Chapter books, Chapter books; Biography; and Non-fiction are exhibited in traditional and front-facing displays. Braille and Spanish language sections are currently under review for expansion.
- In addition, changing seasonal and holiday titles are prominently displayed in a central location. The board books have been extensively (and continuously) weeded and updated, and the collection expanded. Juvenile chapter books are now easily identified with two separate reading level categories, arranged alphabetically by author. All children’s materials are consistently reviewed for damage and replacement, and new titles added consistently to ensure a robust, relevant collection. Suggestions are always welcome from patrons of any age!
- A media wall was installed at the back of the children’s room for easy browsing for children’s DVD titles.
- The Children’s Room expansion provides a much needed 800 additional square feet, for children ages 6-12. The area includes approximately 10,000 age-appropriate books; a Lego table and wall; Interactive technology board; Light-design board; bean bag seating; table technology interactive game boards such as chess and Monopoly, and others. The room is finished except for 3 additional book cases and some seating and additional individual and shared resources. The area also includes special areas in support of the Auburn Public Schools’ summer reading.

TRADITIONAL MATERIALS – TEENS AND ADULTS

- New book section updated and repositioned to a more central location: Includes Fiction and Non-Fiction and Large Print
- Mystery and Science Fiction updated
- New section developed: Non-Fiction Browsing
- Teen section vigorously weeded and expanded with more current, relevant titles, including addition of graphic novels and anime.
- Gardening and cookbooks collections were updated and expanded
- The travel section is currently under review
- Large print books were evaluated, updated, and re-shelved along one wall instead of three different areas
- Paperbacks were expanded and moved to one central location, arranged by author
- Expanded contemporary titles; assessed and expanded classics as appropriate to our holdings’ capacity
- Nonfiction sections weeded to create a more vibrant/current collection
- Magazine section was realigned and titles were reevaluated. Once the proposed sunroom addition is ready, creating much needed space, many more print titles will be added on movable magazine racks in the sunroom

OTHER

- Shelves in the adult section were reorganized according to the alphabet; they previously were not organized accordingly and it was confusing to patrons to locate the appropriate section
- Signage was added throughout the Library for classification identification
- Expanded diversity and cultural titles in all formats and collection levels were added
- Made the collection completely accessible during the pandemic through curbside pickup and with added e-content
- The Board of Trustees initiative, with the Library Director, jointly developed a Collection Development Policy

- Foyer and in-Library displays focusing on cultural or related topics (i.e. Black History month, Daughters of the Revolution, etc.) are created and displayed
- Weeding, discarding, replacement, and new titles take place in all categories on an on-going basis throughout the year. This also includes media.

GOAL 3: OUTCOMES 3.2

CHILDREN'S AND TEEN'S COLLECTIONS

- The contemporary collections are reviewed and expanded or weeded as needed on an ongoing basis
- The classic collection in the children's collection was weeded extensively for relevancy, and updated as appropriate
- The teens' collection was extensively assessed and reorganized, adding more graphic novel content and other series as promoted in teen reading literature and from review of holds placed for teen materials.
- Redesign of the teen area is currently under way

GOAL 3: OUTCOMES 3.3

DIVERSE FORMATS

- Vox books
- Wonder Books
- Auburn Advantage e-content
- E-content
- E-magazines
- E-media
- E-audio
- Books on CD
- CDs
- DVDs

GOAL 4

Support the use of innovative technologies that enhance community members' lives

OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 Offer the community access to modern technology devices, resources, programs, and services
- 4.2 Continuously strengthen the staff's technical competencies
- 4.3 Pursue technology that increases operational efficiency and effectiveness

GOAL 4: OUTCOMES 4.1

ACCESS TO DEVICES AND INFORMATION

- Stocard™ – Library card phone app for ease of card storage and checkout: Scanners recalibrated to support new technology
- Through the purchase of movable storage racks, the Library utilizes off-shelf storage for most holiday and other seasonal titles, to free up space for collection updates
- All Library staff were provided with Town of Auburn email addresses; previously they were using email addresses from CWMARS, which meant content was not stored on Town servers.
- The Director requested several share drives for ease in sharing, and protecting, documents that must be shared for effective operations.
- QR codes – used in various promotional capacities and varied purposes
- Constant Contact™
Constant Contact is our email distribution list for promotion of our programs. This list has grown considerably, currently at 1,194 *households*. At a consistent 48%, our click rate is higher than the industry norm of 39%. Each patrons registers individually to Constant Contact; the Library does not migrate registrations from other data sets, and does not share registration lists.
- MESH™ Technology
APL was the second library in the CWARS system of approximately 150 libraries to incorporate MESH technology, which 'blankets' the Library with wi-fi access throughout the building. In addition, access is accessible to about 80' outside the building. This improved wi-fi access from a daily drop/loss of connectivity of an average of two dozen each day to 0, and has remained constant. The wi-fi strength is also sufficient to extend to the proposed sunroom expansion

- Museum Pass digital touch screen tv mounted and available near the circulation desk for all patrons
- High quality digital televisions in Merriam Room for multi-media program support
- Computer software in the public area and in the staff areas are updated on a regular basis, in partnership with the Town's IT department
- High quality digital television in children's room to promote programs and books
- Museum pass website available from Library home page and Constant Contact
- Digital sign: Since the deployment of our digital lawn sign in Fall 2019 we have provided the community with broad, timely support for programs, weather conditions, Town-wide cancellations or reminders, time and temperature, town meeting reminders, Board of Health notices, and many other communications relevant to the community.
- We replaced the outdoor Auburn Public Library sign over the entry with a back-lit one. The one previously located there was relocated to the side of the building, visible from the Auburn Mall area
- Scanners connected to public computers for use: assistance is provided by tech services staff when required
- Wowbrary™ Library Website Banners
- Updated Library logo / branded
We retired the long-serving Library logo to a newer, more relevant design. The design is incorporated as our new brand on new library cards and on our promotions, websites, letterheads, etc.
- Pandemic / 2 customized websites
- Multi-media programs for children
- Remote access for NewsBank™ resources
- Provide links to popular federal and state tax documents and forms via the Library website, as well as in print
- Update staff and public computers on an implemented regular 3-year rotational basis. The Director ensures funds are available through various sources, including capital budgeting, as submitted and expended by the Director. The Director works closely with Auburn's IT director and staff, ensuring regularly scheduled replacement of software and hardware, and that an updated technology map is provided to CWMARS, as contractually required.
- New (staff) ipads for use during programs; for video recording; and floor-based catalog look-ups
- Ipads are scheduled to be wall mounted once the children's room is expanded, for easy access to catalog look ups for patron use
- Technology Wall and Game board in Expansion area
- Virtual Reality equipment for teens
- The Library's access to CWMARS ensures we also update all cataloging and other resources that are part of the CWMARS platform. The platform is an open-source, necessitating continuous updates and training, which we adhere to.
- The long-serving website was redesigned in summer of 2024. Content is currently being written and expanded.

Auburn Advantage

- Libby: e-reader app for downloading and reading digital content (migrated from OverDrive)
OverDrive Advantage allows the Auburn Public Library to offer additional e-book and e-audio titles exclusively for our patrons, while still allowing continued access to titles shared with other libraries in the network. This means our patrons will have reduced wait times on popular titles, additional titles that may not be included in the shared collection, and custom collections of titles developed specifically for our community.

We began using Overdrive Advantage in December 2018.

In that time we have purchased a total of 2,375 items (2,597 unique titles.)

There have been a total of 18,008 checkouts on our Overdrive Advantage collection (134,683 checkouts by Auburn patrons on all titles owned in the consortium).

OUTCOMES | Access to Information

We promote information and resources via the following platforms:

- Worcester Central Kids Calendar
- Constant Contact (currently 789 households)
- Library website
- Town social media
- Town calendar
- Library calendar
- Town calendar
- Town Newsletter/Auburn Account
- Friends of the Library
- Presenters' websites
- Daily in-person conversations with our patrons
- Welcome visits from RISE special needs group from the High School

- Auburn School Newsletter
- In partnership with: Town of Auburn Board of Health, Town Clerk’s Office, Department of Public Works, and the Senior Center
- In-house Library program flyer
- Story Walk | Auburn Mall
- Digital sign
- Through Auburn Cultural Council applications and award listings

We also promote and connect with the community via:

- Reading/participating at Auburn school
- Auburn Youth and Family Services
- Auburn Summer Recreational Camp
- We currently support four book clubs, as well as partnering with the high school for book club resources
- The Director provide extensive information to the Library Board of Trustees throughout the year, as identified below in GOAL 5: Outcome 5.3

GOAL 5

Increase community awareness of Library programs, resources, and services

OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 Enhance existing Library branding initiatives and build on marketing best practices
- 5.2 Advertise Library offerings broadly across varied, popular marketing channels
- 5.3 Ensure municipal boards, commissions, and local organizations recognize the Library’s value

GOAL 5: OUTCOMES 5.1

Branding initiatives and marketing

Identified in other outcomes

GOAL 5: OUTCOMES 5.2

Identified in Identified in other outcomes

GOAL 5: OUTCOMES 5.3

Ensure municipal boards, commissions, and local organizations recognize the Library’s value

Over the course of more than nine years of Library management by the current director, the following reports, budgets, communications, newsletters and other documents have been provided to the Library Board of Trustees, and/or to other departments as appropriate. All compliances have been met or exceeded for Union Collective Bargaining Agreements, Annual Resource Information Survey (ARIS), Mass Board of Library Commissioners State Financial Reporting, various contractual obligations, and CWMARS.

Nine Town of Auburn Annual Reports	Nine ARIS (Annual Resource Information Sharing) Reports to MBLC
Nine MBLC Financial Reports	More than one hundred Director monthly reports and supplemental reports to the BOT and the public
BOS information relayed by Town Manager to Board of Selectman as appropriate	Director attends all Town meetings and represents the Library as needed
Thirty eight Newsletters	The Library Director has applied for and received over \$720,000 in grants
Various other reports and surveys provided to the BOT	Budgets: Nine annual budgets; nine capital budgets
6.976 invoices	The Friends of the Library provide positive outreach to the community
439 multi page bill schedules	
Professional, collaborative, and productive relationship with United Steelworkers of America – Local 2936	Ten presentations or requests to Finance Committee for budget approval or budget transfers

GOAL 6

Maintain a safe, welcoming, comfortable, and inclusive facility and grounds

OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 Optimize interior and exterior spaces to meet diverse, evolving operational and community needs
- 6.2 Expand the Library's physical footprint to increase programming opportunities and flexibility

GOAL 6: OUTCOMES 6.1

CHILDREN'S ROOM

- Repainted all glass borders from 'dated' blue to neutral tone
- Reduced height of book units for important line-of-sight to all areas of the children's room
- Resurfaced all book shelves in wood to cover dated metal shelving
- Completely revised several areas of collection to enhance visibility and accessibility
- Incorporated signage and coding for ease in shelving and reading ability levels
- Created the "Vox" corner
- Mounted a digital television in the children's room to provide program and book information as well as some photos of children at programs, as authorized by legal guardians
- Scheduled a quarterly maintenance schedule with a professional for cleaning the carpet
- Removed all dated or negative-tone signs
- Painted the children's room
- Use ipads to assist patrons
- New blinds on all replacement windows
- Worked with BOT to revise the children's room policy
- Updated the children's bathrooms and signage
- Housekeeping Corner
- Numerous learning/playing toys for multiple ages
- Lego tables, Lego wall, and Train table
- Digital Wall
- Digital game board
- Coloring tables
- Family oriented Clics™ table

LIBRARY – GENERAL

- Outdoor ramp updated
- Multiple custom built book shelves for the Children's Room and the Children's Room Expansion area
- Ceiling tiles replaced at foyer and just beyond in the entry way
- Remodeled all five bathrooms
- New, cushioned chairs were purchased from State Aid funds to replace the hard, uncomfortable ones previously used
- Movable shelving units were purchased through grant funds to help alleviate storage concerns
- Library staff work areas were completely redesigned, cleaned, and decluttered for enhanced operational flow:
 - new desks were provided for staff
 - better task and overhead lighting
 - replaced non-working AC units
 - cleaned and decluttered entire work area
 - updated the break area with windows, blinds, and resurfacing food cabinet
 - opened up areas between cataloging and larger work room area,
 - painted the entire work area
 - DPW installed several work and shelving areas upon request by the Director,
 - director's office was constructed
 - built corner shelving units for Auburn Public Schools' summer reading titles. During the summer month, these titles may be borrowed only by students in the Auburn Public Schools. All books are coded to that effect in the system
 - 'holds' area redesigned and relocated to promote efficiency;
 - cataloging area redesigned for efficiency and work flow that integrates with other steps in the process
 - second half-floor was constructed in the garage for increased storage capacity
 - Friends' work area was cleaned and prepared by Library staff

- dawn to dusk lighting was installed over the garage area

LIBRARY – EXTERNAL

- DPW ensures the Library is plowed, mowed, trimmed, repaired, etc. and is extremely responsive to requests
- Painted bench and picnic tables at back of Library
- Installed a stage at the back of the Library for programs during pandemic when crowd sizes were restricted indoors The back yard of the Library has been utilized numerous times for programs of all sizes and for holiday-themed parades
- Grant-funded outside sound system purchased

GOAL 6: OUTCOME 6.2

LIBRARY EXPANSION

- The Director collaborates with the Town Manager, DPW Director, and others to coordinate the proposed Library sunroom expansion, and keeps the BOT apprised, anticipating additional input from selected Board member(s)
- The proposed sunroom expansion incorporates pathways, a bridge, an update to Goddard Park, benches outside the Library, lighting along the pathways and bridges, parking lot reconfigurations, ‘sprinkling’ the Library building, removing windows, and a host of other elements that must be planned accordingly. The process is moving forward with the bid process for the site work at the time of this writing.

UPDATED MERRIAM ROOM

- Painted throughout
- Coat hooks installed
- Carpet replaced the worn floor
- New ceiling tiles
- New lighting – capacity to turn on or off by grid (3 grids)
- Ceiling microphones installed
- Sound system installed
- Refinished the stage
- Purchased all new chairs for audience use
- Two digital televisions
- Installed coat hooks for patron use
- Installed new energy efficient lighting throughout library
- Replaced approximately half of the windows
- Developed a children’s room carpet cleaning schedule with a professional carpet cleaner
- Contracted with a professional glass cleaner for the entry set of doors and the windows separating the children’s areas
- Replaced several rooftop AC units
- Scheduled regular maintenance for heating/cooling unit
- Replaced water heater
- Complied with all insurance safety requirements
- Installed a new boiler
- Installed a ‘museum pass’ television near the circulation desk for patron use to explore the museum passes

Per the APA Guide to Strategic Plans, “No strategies for accomplishing these goals are listed because a) this is an area to be left strictly to staff, and b) strategies should be as flexible as possible. Never before has the library’s environment been so dynamic. The goals remain consistent, but methods for achieving them will no doubt change over time.”

1. “A Library Board’s Practical Guide To Strategic Planning” published by United for Libraries, a division of the American Library Association.

As with any research or report, the culmination of the information provided should lead to ‘next steps’, furthering the knowledge and in this case expanding the resources and services to patrons. The next strategic Plan will build upon the groundwork detailed here, and continue the evolution of the mission and vision of the Auburn Public Library.

September 2024 | Respectfully submitted, Dr. Jean E. Collins, Library Director