

Baker Free Library

2018-2022 Long Range Plan

adopted by the Baker Free Library Board of Trustees on 1/10/2018

Why a Strategic Plan?

Since the 1990s, the Baker Free Library has consistently developed and implemented a strategic plan of goals and objectives to maintain, improve, and innovate library services for the Bow community. Strategic plans provide a sense of direction, as well as measurable goals that can guide day-to-day decisions and direct the allocation of resources for the long term. This is particularly important for libraries, given the many different layers of governance and stakeholders. The purpose of this strategic plan is to coalesce the ideas, goals, and needs of staff, trustees, library users, and community members so that Town of Bow taxpayer money is spent efficiently and effectively.

National & State Libraries Overview

There are an estimated 119,487 public libraries in the United States, and 234 public libraries in the State of New Hampshire. While there are huge differences in geography, population, demographics, and culture between public libraries on a national scale, the Library Journal Budgets and Funding Survey Statistics (published in February of each year for the previous year) does yield data to help place Bow more specifically within the national stage:

- Two-thirds of the libraries rely on an annual appropriation from local government (which BFL does), while nearly a quarter of libraries are funded through an independent library district*.
- The South and Northeast are the least likely to depend on independent districts*, “...with Northeast libraries alone among all regions receiving higher budgets through local government.”
- The largest libraries in the nation, not surprisingly, receive the highest percentage of donations and receive the most grant funding.
- Tech budgets decreased for libraries serving populations of less than 10,000 – a drop of 7.8% since 2014. In comparison, the BFL budget for technology increased 7% in 2016/17 FY compared to 2015/16 FY.
- Public libraries who serve a population area of under 10,000 spend on average 8% of their total budget on materials for circulation, which is the same percentage for BFL in 2015 per the most recent NH Public Library Survey Statistics data.

Statistics for New Hampshire libraries are obtained through the NH Public Libraries Survey Statistics, submitted by New Hampshire libraries annually each spring for the previous fiscal year. 2015 statistics allow for the breakdown and comparison of libraries by population, and BFL fits into the 6,000 to 10,000 population category. There are 30 out of 234 public libraries in New Hampshire in that category (13%). The three libraries who are closest in population and library budget size to Bow are Stratham (Wiggin Memorial Library), Plaistow, and Gilford. The average percentage of the total library budget spent on materials in this population category is

10%, compared to 9% for BFL. Overall, for the population served, BFL has a high circulation and high use rate for all materials including print, downloadable, and electronic.

*Independent library districts are independent special purpose units of local government providing public library service to a defined geographic area that often encompasses multiple towns/villages/counties/cities. Residents within an independent library district vote directly on the library's budget and directly elect the Trustees that oversee the governance of the library.

Town of Bow Community Profile

Incorporated in 1727, the Town of Bow is located in central New Hampshire at the junction of Interstates I-89 & I-93, adjacent to Concord, the State Capital. Data from NH Employment Security lists Bow with a population of 7,645 individuals in 2015, and a median resident age of 45.7 years. According to 2010 US census data, 99.1% of residents are white. Compared to the state of New Hampshire, the town of Bow has a slightly higher rate of high school graduates (94.6%), and a 20% higher rate of those who have completed bachelor or graduate level degrees (49.2%). The per capita income is \$42,764, while the median Bow household income (\$102,847) is roughly \$27,000 higher than the median state income (\$76,260). Bow has a low rate of those who live below the poverty line (NH has the lowest rate in the nation as of 2017), as well as lower levels of unemployment. Overall, Bow residents tend to be well-educated and stable economically in comparison to both state and national statistics.

While the overall population of Bow did increase between 2000 and 2010, during that time Bow has seen the average family and household size marginally decrease. According to the 2015 NH Employment Security statistics for the Town of Bow, approximately 59% of the population is aged 20-64. Married couples comprise a majority of the residents of Bow. However, according to the 2010 US Census data, the percentage of those who are married has shifted from 81% to 71.2% while the number of householders living alone has nearly doubled (to 15.8%) since 2000. Nearly 6% of family households are headed by single parents.

Over the past twenty years, priorities in the Town have included the creation of a town center; expansion and renovation of the library building; expansion of the tax base through a water/sewer project designed to attract greater private investment and the creation of new permanent jobs; the construction of a new Public Safety Building; and the continued strong support of a highly-regarded school system.

Baker Free Library Profile

In 1912, Congressman Henry M. Baker, cousin of Mary Baker Eddy, donated \$10,000 and the land next to his family home on South Street to the Town of Bow for the creation of a public library. The new Baker Free Library was dedicated two years later at its present site. The Library has been an important part of the community's cultural life for over 100 years.

In 1967 an addition was completed and served the needs of the growing Bow community for 30 additional years. In September 1999 the first floor of the 1967 addition was demolished to make way for the current addition and renovation of the original building. The Library's usable public space expanded by 5,200 square feet to a total of 9,333 square feet. On October 21, 2000 the

new addition and renovated original building were rededicated. The facility provides seating for quiet study, Internet access, an automated catalog and circulation system, and a friendly staff receptive to suggestions for improvements.

In 2008 the library trustees and staff made a concerted effort to obtain community feedback about the potential uses for the unfinished lower level space in the library building. After numerous surveys and focus groups, plans were developed for meeting space, technology space, and storage of historic Bow materials. The library trustees committed to raising half of the project costs, with the other half obtained through town warrant. In 2015, Phase 1 of the project was completed (encompassing the 1967 Lower Level spaces) and in 2017 Phase II was completed (the 2000 addition Lower Level spaces). This project allowed approximately 6,900 square feet of basement space to be converted to usable community space.

Total circulation of materials in 2016 exceeded 96,000 items, and our foot traffic in the building increased in 2016 to an average of 236 people per day, a 7% increase over daily foot traffic in 2015. Over 60% of Bow residents are library card holders, and they borrowed over \$1.4 million dollars' worth of materials in 2016 alone. Card holders do not have to come to the library building to take advantage of digital resources, since many services can be accessed through the library's web site www.bowbakerfreelibrary.org. In addition, increased outreach to the three Bow schools, White Rock Senior Living, and numerous community organizations has fostered exciting collaborations and partnerships that stretch community tax dollars and provide the best services possible for residents.

Baker Free Library Mission Statement

The Baker Free Library serves the informational, educational, and leisure needs of the residents of Bow. It promotes, develops, and maintains open access to the facilities, resources, and services available locally and through inter-library networks. Baker Free Library assures an environment that stimulates knowledge, culture, and the pure enjoyment of reading.

2018-2022 Strategies and Goals

The goals listed underneath each strategy are not in priority order, and are simply listed as the goals within that strategy. The Board of Trustees, with the Director and staff, will continually monitor and revise the top priorities for each strategic area based on current needs, staffing, and monies available. Reviews by the Board of Trustees will occur quarterly.

BUSINESS SUPPORT: Provides business-friendly services to encourage the growth of new and current businesses in Bow in order to expand our tax base and enhance our quality of life.

1. Establish a regular annual communication with Bow businesses about Bow employees and free library cards
2. Continue partnering with Bow businesses and regional businesses regarding Summer Reading Program sponsorship in the form of dollars, prizes, or in-kind donations

3. Continue to market and promote the library as co-working space for a small rental fee through regional entities such as the Concord Chamber of Commerce
4. Expand partnerships with business rentals to include not just the monetary rental transaction, but also a service/product give-back to the residents during rental period
5. Engage with the Bow Economic Development Commission and the Community Development Department to discuss ways in which the library can help promote a business-friendly atmosphere in Bow

COLLABORATION: Reaching out into the community to create partnerships that enhance the quality of life, availability of resources, and efficient use of tax dollars for our town residents.

1. Friends of the Baker Free Library
 - a. Promote Friends events in library media outlets (web site, eNewsletter, FB, etc.)
 - b. Maintain the museum pass program
2. Department Heads/Town Boards & Commissions
 - a. Director to regularly attend department head meetings to share information about library activities and issues
 - b. Continue to partner with town departments to offer Town Halloween Party (Parks & Rec), Holiday Tree Lighting/Santa Visit (all depts.), Easter Egg Hunt (Parks & Rec) and continue to publicize other department offerings/notices
 - c. Offer the library as a meeting space to any Bow department, board, and commission
 - d. Continue collaboration with Bow Heritage Commission to use the Baker Heritage Room for storage and public access to historic documents and artifacts related to Bow's history
3. SAU #67 (Bow and Dunbarton Schools)
 - a. Continue to offer classes/workshops/book groups at the elementary, middle and high school campuses on a regular basis throughout the school year
 - b. Re-institute meeting with the Bow School Librarians at least three times a year to discuss common issues/problems and resource sharing
 - c. Formalize process with SAU #67 to provide BFL library cards to all new students enrolled in Bow schools in September each year
 - d. Partner with Bow High School to promote the creation of a CCTV channel for the Town of Bow
 - e. Research feasibility of a library book drop at each of the three Bow schools
 - f. Explore more digital collaboration with the school district in order to cut down on redundancy of resources

4. Bow Non-Profits (PTO; Men's Club; Garden Club; Rotary; Girl Scouts & Boy Scouts; etc.)
 - a. Continue to promote Bow non-profit group activities in the monthly library eNewsletter, the library digital sign, and the White Rock digital sign
 - b. Offer to speak at group meetings on topic related to technology, reading, authors, or any other topic of interest to the group that relates to libraries, information, and life-long learning
 - c. Promote the library as a meeting space to any Bow non-profit

5. White Rock Senior Living
 - a. Continue to offer two facilitated book groups on a monthly basis at White Rock
 - b. Continue to offer the book delivery service to White Rock residents
 - c. Collaborate with the Happy Hookers group to promote their weekly meetings, the annual hat & mitten drive, and the Books for Bingo sessions at White Rock
 - d. Explore the possibility of a weekly White Rock van drop off/pick up of WR residents at the library
 - e. Explore additional ways in which the library can provide services to White Rock residents at the facility through regular communication with the facility manager

6. Higher Education Institutions (NHTI; UNH Law School; Granite State College)
 - a. Explore ways to collaborate to offer resources to Bow residents attending these institutions
 - b. Explore potential partnerships with these institutions to conduct joint programming at BFL and on their Concord campuses

LEARNING: Meeting the information needs of our customers using a variety of formats and technologies when appropriate and desired.

1. Continue to consistently evaluate the technology needs of Bow residents and how we can provide resources for those needs
 - a. Continue to pursue annual feedback from residents on specific topics, with a major survey on BFL services/resources to take place during November 2020.
 - b. Continue to provide regular classes/workshops on technology and/or specific devices/software based on resident needs
 - c. Explore the feasibility of offering online live or recorded webinars to enhance adult and teen learning opportunities
 - d. Regularly evaluate the purpose and use of BFL social media outlets, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, monthly eNewsletter, etc
 - e. Create new BFL Technology Plan for replacement of computers/hardware
 - f. Examine feasibility of expanding bandwidth for public Internet service

- g. Provide ongoing opportunities for library staff to obtain professional development in technology resources, and use the monthly staff meeting to consistently review one small aspect of our technology resources so that staff are up-to-date on all current offerings
 - h. Maintain and refine the library's web site to allow access to resources remotely and provide timely information to mobile and computer users
2. Continue to re-evaluate non-technology classes and workshops offered to all ages, beginning new programs when needed and ending programs that do not effectively or efficiently meet the needs of residents
 - a. Continue to pursue annual feedback from residents on specific topics, such as the Summer Reading Program
 - b. Create attendee evaluation methods for all age groups for series programs (Storytime, Active Listeners, Eager Readers, Rookie Readers, etc.)
 - c. Increase the number of adult workshops and classes offered through the use of local/town "experts"
 - d. Incorporate more Wellness programming into all ages classes (ex. Yoga classes free to community)
 - e. Explore if additional outreach opportunities are needed for the 55+ population as our median age in the town continues to increase
 3. Continue to monitor and refine physical collections in the building, with specific attention to high-circulating collections
 - a. Continue to examine print periodical collection every six months and compare with full-text and html versions of periodicals offered through the Ebsco databases (which patrons can access at home) in order to cut down on the number of print periodical subscriptions
 - b. As CD formats are used less, re-allocate resources to support other formats of music, CD audio books, and DVD content, weeding out the collection as appropriate
 - c. Continue to implement regular weeding schedule
 4. Work with the Bow Heritage Commission to augment and make available to the public any local history collections or resources related to Town of Bow
 5. Research the feasibility of a traveling library location in another town location (White Rock Senior Living? Hooksett end of town? New community building?)

PHYSICAL BUILDING: Bringing our community together in the library building.

1. Continue to offer the library building as neutral ground for community conversations about topics of concern to residents

2. Promote the use of all seven meeting rooms in the library by community non-profit and for-profit groups
3. Continue to re-assess traffic patterns and use patterns of existing library space to maximize both collections accessibility and community gathering space
 - a. Re-assess children's area and shelving, with the goal to create more seating and a more efficient use of wall and floor space
 - b. Re-configure the entrance new books display area to incorporate circular browsing kiosks with spaces for face-out books
 - c. Create new signage for the vestibule, interior stairway, and Lower Level areas
 - d. Re-design vestibule bulletin board and flyer display area
4. Continue to distribute Welcome Packets provided by the Bow Rotary to new residents
5. Trustees will review the parking agreements with neighboring businesses on an annual basis
6. Complete the furnishing of the Lower Level community space
7. Replace the outdoor BFL signage on South Street and Northeast Avenue
8. Research the feasibility of outdoor seating/picnic table
9. Research the feasibility and cost to install a drive-up book drop at an alternative location in town or here at library
10. Research the feasibility of offering food/drink for purchase in the Lower Level Café area (potentially partnering with a food service vendor)

SUSTAINABILITY: Collaborate with other organizations to grow a more diversified base of financial support for library services and resources that the community desires. Also includes active participation in local, state, and national discussions about the evolving nature of library services in support of community goals.

1. Baker Free Library Foundation
 - a. Transfer Lower Level website to Foundation
 - b. Work with Foundation to formalize a bequest process and an annual fund
 - c. Collaborate with the Foundation to create a library endowment fund (so annual interest from the fund can assist with library tax burden in a specific way)
2. Maintain status as a Passport Acceptance Agency and promote the use of the service to generate funds to support electronic media formats
3. Actively seek rentals and partnerships with local/regional businesses regarding our Lower Level spaces
4. Continue to market and promote the library as co-working space for a small rental fee through regional entities such as the Concord Chamber of Commerce

5. Library Director, Staff, and Trustees will continue to participate in local, state, and regional discussions about the evolving nature of library services in support of community goals
 - a. The Library Director will maintain membership in the NH Library Association, the American Library Association, the Public Library Association, and United for Libraries (Friends, Foundations, and Trustees organization)
 - b. Staff will be encouraged to seek professional development opportunities that will enhance their ability to address community needs and concerns.
 - c. The Library will continue to be an active member of the Hillstown Cooperative, collaborating with other libraries to test new services/resources in our communities

5. Rebranding Baker Free Library
 - a. Finalize new mission/vision statements for the Library in 2018
 - b. Design a new logo/tagline that supports the new mission/vision
 - c. Revise outdoor signage at South Street and Northeast Avenue to reflect new logo/tagline
 - d. Update all other digital/print resources to reflect new logo/tagline.