

HOLLISTON PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN

2020 - 2025



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The Strategic Plan was completed in March, 2020. The following statement was added by the Holliston Public Library Trustees at their meeting on May 6, 2020.

This long-range plan for the Holliston Public Library was prepared in early 2020, based on input from the Planning Committee, comprised of members of the Board of Library Trustees, library staff members and patrons and expresses what, at the time, was a reasonable set of plans and aspirations for the Library over the coming years. Our mission statement and vision have not changed, but in light of the drastic impact of the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting severe changes to the Town's finances, some of the anticipated improvements to the Library may need to be reconsidered. In a time of high unemployment and social distancing the Library will be an even more essential resource to our community—providing resources for those searching for employment, a vast array of electronic media for entertainment and education and, when it is safe to do so, a social gathering place. While some major ambitions--such as the acquisition of the TD Bank building--are now unlikely, it is still important to sketch out our vision of what we'd like our library to be in the future and to nimbly make those changes and improvements that *are* possible now for the benefit of our patrons and community.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Holliston Public Library is to enrich Holliston's citizens by linking them as members of the community in a safe, comfortable space and connecting them with the world of ideas, information and imagination in order to support their work, education, personal growth and enjoyment.

COMMUNITY VISION

To empower the community of Holliston by providing opportunities for personal growth and social interaction that will inspire life-long learning and a love of reading.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The town of Holliston is a middle-class suburban community with a population of 15,301, occupying 19 square miles, 22 miles from Boston. First settled in 1659 by Europeans from the Massachusetts Bay Puritans Colony, it was incorporated as a town in 1724 in honor of Thomas Hollis, a benefactor of Harvard College. Originally a farming community, Holliston retains more of a small town, rural feeling than many of the more developed communities in the Metrowest area. There is an agricultural commission, and a community farm advisory committee and the Bullard Memorial Farm Association preserves the old structures and way of life with several working commercial farms still operating. There are no big box stores or even a chain grocery shop.

The shoe industry was vital to the growth of the town in the nineteenth century but more recent business and industrial growth is limited by the complete lack of sewers. As a result, the town has been spared the growth problems of some other communities but residents carry much of the tax burden. Holliston is governed by open town meeting with three selectmen and a town administrator. It lacks a formal human resources department, town engineer or financial director but a sustainability coordinator and a facilities manager will be hired in 2020. Local aid is increasing but very slowly. Most town budgets increase by about 1% per year. Based on population projections, Holliston may be smaller in the future (12,026 by 3035.)

There are a number of defined neighborhoods in town including the East Holliston Historical District and Mudville which claims bragging rights to the famous American poem "Casey at the Bat" by Ernest Thayer. The Upper Charles Rail Trail, the 8 Arch Bridge, Stoddard and Goodwill Parks and the beach at Pleasure Point are all recreational attractions. The town owns a golf course and club house.

There is an active local business association and the Holliston Economic Development Committee works proactively to promote, encourage and facilitate the development of planned commercial and industrial growth. A guide to doing business in Holliston was created and distributed in 2019. A medical marijuana cultivation facility and a large automotive collision center opened in 2018.

In 2018, a major downtown traffic study was completed and traffic lights were installed on Route 16 making downtown safer. The town is within a short driving distance of Interstate 495 and the Massachusetts Turnpike. Residents who wish to take public transportation can do so at one of the nearby commuter rail stations located in Ashland, Natick, Framingham or Franklin. There is a bus that links Holliston with Framingham and Milford.

The fire department is on call and there is a very strong sense of volunteerism elsewhere as well. Service organizations promote community involvement and provide grants to strengthen services for residents. There is a clear desire for open space, parks, conservation and outdoor activities. A concerted effort has been made to preserve a friendly, small-town atmosphere with quaint shops, summer concerts, theater groups and

local fairs and festivals. The annual Celebrate Holliston in the fall brings everyone together for a parade and booths for every entity. Our Lady of Fatima shrine is a place of meditation and prayer along with churches and a synagogue. Mission Springs, a senior living facility, and several nursing homes serve the elderly. There are a few public housing units but not much rental property. A number of over fifty-five housing developments have cropped up in recent years drawing new seniors to town.

Holliston is heavily oriented towards families and education and a number of parent groups have a prominent presence. The school system is considered very good with long-standing French Immersion and Montessori programs alongside traditional ones. Many students from other communities attend Holliston schools under the “School Choice” program. The total per pupil expenditure was \$ 13,592, the lowest in the Metrowest area. Of the \$ 64,933,426 in the FY 2020 budget, 53.8% was for the school department. The school committee is currently seeking state funding for a new high school. The town is heavily dependent on state aid for education at 25.7%, above the Metrowest average of 20.5%. Teens and their parents frequently lament the lack of a recreational community center although some services are provided by the library and the parks department. Hopefully the town will address this problem in the near future.

Holliston faces many of the same issues as surrounding towns:

- promoting the local economy
- planning for the growing number of senior citizens while serving the needs of the young
- planning for land development and preserving nature
- providing services in a time of modest revenue from state and local sources
- prioritizing a small town feel and a safe, walkable downtown

These are some challenges the town will face, and hopefully solve, in the twenty-first century.

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Total population	15,301 (2018)	Average commute	37.2 minutes
Under 5	659	Occupation	
5-9 years	1130	Management, business, science & arts	59.1%
10-14 years	1256	Service	11.1%
15-19	959	Sales & Office	19.3%
20-24	605	Natural resources, construction and maintenance	5.6%
25-34	1206	Production, transportation	4.8%
35-44	2039		
45-54	2371	Median Income	\$ 118,993
55-59	1349		
60-64	821	Unemployment rate	2.5%
65-74	1300	Individuals below poverty level	1.4%
75-84	501	Residential tax rate	\$ 18.85/thousand
85 and over	284	Commercial tax rate	\$ 18.85/thousand
Median age	42.2 years	Single family price	\$ 460,000
White	92.2%	Total housing units	5224
African-American	1.3%	Median condo price	\$ 440,500
Asian	4.2%	High school diploma or more	96.6%
Other	.4%	Bachelor's degree or more	62.3%
# of students	2788	Average family tax bill	\$ 8497
Spending per pupil	\$ 13,710	Public school enrollment	2792 students

Sources: Greater Metrowest Economic Profile 2019; US Census Bureau and Framingham State University's Metrowest Economic Research Center.

LIBRARY PROFILE

Built in 1904, the Holliston Public Library is housed in a three-story Carnegie building with 9,217 square feet of space located in downtown Holliston. A 1985 addition doubled the space of the original structure but filled the entire footprint of the land owned by the town. The annual circulation is 181,325 with a collection of 73,437 and 7,147 registered borrowers. The library is open 54 hours per week on the following schedule: Monday-Thursday from 10-8 pm; Friday from 10-6 pm and Saturday from 10-4 pm (10-1 in the summer.) After years of reduced hours due to budget cuts, the library has a consistent schedule from year to year that meets patrons' basic needs. All State Aid to Libraries grant funds are used for salaries. This practice has prevailed over a period of decades but the library trustees and staff would prefer to use it to introduce and expand new services. The library consistently receives adequate funds to maintain state certification.

An elected 6-member Board of Trustees governs the library. The director, assistant director and children's librarian are full-time professional librarians. The assistant director is also the head of the technical services, young adult, reference and technology departments. The head of circulation and a cataloger are part-time para-professionals and there are 9 part-time library technicians and pages. There is a close team-like atmosphere and the staff is consistently rated as the best part of the library. There is no union. Two separate circulation desks increase personnel costs but make the library more convenient to use. Volunteers are used extensively but not at the circulation desks for reasons of confidentiality. There is no custodial staff. A cleaning company is employed and the highway department and local contractors provide maintenance and repair. This practice is both expensive and labor intensive.

The Children's Room, meeting rooms, mechanical rooms and storage space are located on the lower floor which has a separate, handicapped accessible entrance. The children's room is very small and in need of updating. There is no room for growth and the play and seating areas are cramped. To satisfy an acute need for more shelving, most seating was eliminated and shelves were installed in the lower lobby. Holiday collections must be kept in storage off-season.

Yet, even within these limitations, the department is very active. There are scheduled playgroups three times per week and performances, Lego club, story hours. STEM programs for various age levels meet all year. In 2019, the Friends received a \$ 30K gift for young adult and children's programming to be used over a period of years. This has greatly expanded activities and made the library much more vibrant and relevant. There is a strong desire for a community center in town but so far efforts to create one have been unsuccessful. The library has made continued efforts to play a part with recreational programming such as gaming, crafts, cooking lessons, music and art activities. Our patrons especially enjoy Saturday morning activities, movie screenings on school holidays and family game night. At least one parenting program is offered per year and a mindfulness series for kids has complimented efforts in the schools to support

emotional wellness. There is a small collection of current bestsellers for parents who find it difficult to browse the adult collection on the main floor. The addition of many multiple “Read it Now” copies of popular titles has been a hit and there has been huge growth in graphic novel use. Puzzles, kits and Wonder books are recent additions.

The young adult section of the library, “The Teen Zone”, occupies a comfortable but very small, open area on the third floor, on the mezzanine. There are occasionally conflicts due to noise filtering down to the main floor after school. A separate area in another part of the library would be ideal. An afterschool program featuring crafts, movies and stand-alone programs on gaming and cooking has been successful in recent years. We would like to continue to build upon this potential. Our young adult patrons are not yet strong users of non-print or electronic resources but they love to read. Adult and young adult non-fiction is interfiled on the third floor. There are a small enclosed study with a door and reading areas with comfortable furniture.

The main floor houses adult fiction, non-print, magazines and newspapers along with local history. All areas of the library are regularly weeded. There are no major space issues with the upper floors other than a need for more study/ meeting rooms and a larger teen space. The reference desk and collection has been eliminated and comfortable sitting areas increased. A puzzle table is set up for communal use.

The library receives few traditional reference questions but there is an increasing demand for help for technology and reader’s advisory services. One-on-one help with devices (e-readers, smart phones, tablets, etc.) to access electronic resources is offered in both formal and informal sessions. Kindles, chargers and roku with multiple streaming services are available to borrow. The library participates in Overdrive’s Advantage program within the limits of its budget. A “Read It Now” collection of popular print and audio bestsellers is leased to help contain reserve lists. Even new items circulate for three weeks which makes patrons very happy. Some wish the circulating collections were larger but feel the ability to borrow books from other libraries helps fill most of their needs. Automatic renewal began in January and has been very popular. The WIFI was recently strengthened.

Twice monthly outreach to Mission Springs, a large senior living facility, exists along with two in-house book clubs, a wide variety of adult programming and One Book, One Holliston, our annual community reading program. The library serves over 20 private local book clubs, obtaining multiple copies for their readers. We regularly sponsor author talks in person or via Skype. The library sponsors a book club and monthly teaching sessions on electronic resources at the senior center. Joint programming with other town departments and the historical society has been very successful.

Physical non-print items such as compact discs and DVDs are used less each year as our patrons increasingly stream services from home. Hoopla was recently launched. The rental collection of new films on DVD is funded by the Friends and pays for itself each year allowing the library to use town funds for TV series and non-fiction films. The number of items sent to and borrowed from other libraries is 25,970 and 24,101 items,

respectively. There are self-checkout stations on each floor. The 9 computers to access the Internet and the online public access catalog (OPAC) are available, with filtered access in the children's room. Computers are replaced every five years by the town. There is an Ipad in the children's room.

Upkeep of the building is still complicated and expensive in spite of regular maintenance. However, much progress has been made in the last five years. The basement ceiling, roof, air conditioning, exterior paint, burglar and fire alarms and boiler have all been replaced. Yet, the carpet (2001) and interior paint (2002) are very worn and unsightly. The horsehair plaster in the 1904 section is crumbling due to past roof leaks and must be replaced. A sizable piece of the old stone work in the 1904 section fell two years ago and an engineering study showed the need for extensive repair. The exterior concrete stairs at the main entrance are cracked and pitted. Portions of the air handling unit need replacement and the thermostats do not function. Roof supports in the 1985 portion of the building collapsed in 2018 necessitating a complete reconstruction of the ceiling and trusses in 2018-2019. A significant portion of the library was closed during this period but the staff continued to provide regular hours, services and programs. There is no dedicated parking and patrons use spaces owned by TD Bank (which is for sale) or on the street. Lack of parking is a frequent complaint.

Gifts and fundraising remain the most reliable sources to introduce new services and upgrade equipment and furniture. However, we have been successful in transferring a number of ongoing costs from the Friends into our regular town budget (copier, web site, software, World Cat membership, Tixkeeper, etc.) The library would like to become less dependent on fundraising. The Friends and other local organizations provide all funds for museum passes, programs, furniture, equipment and rental DVDs.

The staff, trustees and volunteers would like to continue to make the library a prominent part of life in 21st century Holliston.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

BUILDING UTILIZATION & ACCESS

GOAL: The library will have adequate and secure space which can be used harmoniously as a community resource and gathering space.

OBJECTIVE A: To make the library a welcoming place for all library users in a safe and pleasant environment.

ACTIONS

1. Create a rolling five-year plan for building maintenance and upkeep.
1. Repair the stonework on the front of the building & front steps. (\$ 20K)
2. Install an automatic door at the entrance to the lower level. (\$ 5K)
3. Paint the interior of the library and repair plaster. (\$10K)
4. Replace the carpeting. (\$20K)
5. Update the disaster plan.
6. Review the existing building security system in order to upgrade it as necessary, including the installation of cameras.
7. Repair or purchase new air handling unit. (\$ 10,000--\$ 35,000)

OBJECTIVE B: To provide for future library services to the Town of Holliston

ACTIONS

1. Use the information in the 2020 space planning study to plan for:
 - a. additional space for children's services including, but not limited to:
 - a larger play area
 - parent/caregiver area
 - outdoor space
 - storytime/craft room
 - social gathering area
 - homework/study space
 - b. more small meeting rooms
 - c. a dedicated room for tweens and teens with a makerspace and gaming equipment
 - d. a drive-up book return
2. Continue to work with the town to acquire TD Bank building land adjacent to the library for the expansion of library services and for parking.
3. Investigate further expansion for future needs in preparation for applying for a Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners when the next grant cycle is announced.

OBJECTIVE C: To maintain a schedule of hours that is useful to most patrons.

ACTIONS

1. Continue to document the need for earlier or later hours.
2. Add hours as the budget permits.

COLLECTIONS

GOAL: The library collection will be up to date and in a format to meet the evolving needs of its users in the 21st century.

OBJECTIVE A: To investigate and implement alternatives to physical collections.

ACTIONS

1. Review the current collection development policy to inform future collection development including purchasing and deaccessioning decisions.
2. Identify and take action on the portions of the print collection that must be strengthened and those that may be deaccessioned using circulation data.
3. Expand the selection of E Books and audio books.
4. Digitize local history resources.

OBJECTIVE B: To continue to strengthen the tangible collection as needed for all ages.

ACTIONS

- a. Expand graphic novels at all levels.
- b. Add to the Teens and 'Tweens offerings.
- c. Add non-book resources including board games and puzzles.
- d. Increase the browsing collection for popular titles.

PROGRAMMING

GOAL: Programs, services and collections will meet the informational and entertainment needs of our patrons.

OBJECTIVE A: To increase the amount and variety of programming for young people.

ACTIONS

1. Provide or adapt programming for young people with special needs.
2. Provide art and STEM programs for Young Adults.
3. Build on the strengths of existing programming for pre-kindergarten children.
4. Explore LSTA grants annually and apply for at least one that meets Holliston's needs.

OBJECTIVE B: To offer formal and informal collaborations between knowledgeable volunteers and patrons interested in acquiring skills.

ACTIONS

1. Restore the foreign language conversation group.
2. Add to the series of "Learn It" program which features experienced volunteers teaching hands-on skills.

OBJECTIVE C: To expand popular book club offerings led by volunteers.

ACTIONS

1. Start a mystery/thriller book club.
2. Start a cookbook club.

OBJECTIVE D: To offer programs on topics patrons have requested.

ACTIONS

1. Provide an increased variety of programs from diverse cultures, particularly those reflecting Holliston's community members.
2. Host a trivia night.
3. Continue to provide joint programs with other town organizations.
4. Investigate the possibility of providing joint programs with neighboring libraries with the intent of presenting at least one per year.
5. Continue to provide weekend programming.

TECHNOLOGY

GOAL: Our patrons will have access to technology and will be able to use the library's electronic services.

OBJECTIVE A: To provide equipment and services that help our patrons use technology and the library effectively.

ACTIONS

1. Add a computer or tablet to the young adult section to be used in-house.
2. Ensure that school-provided devices (e.g. Chrome Books) work seamlessly between schools and library.
3. Provide mobile hot-spots for loan.
4. Provide public access to a laminator.
5. Explore and implement, if possible, the use of assistive listening devices for patrons attending programs.

OBJECTIVE B: To inform our patrons about electronic services and help them become proficient at using these services.

ACTIONS

1. Upgrade the library website.
2. Expand training in accessing and using E Books and audio books.
3. Provide basic tech support for patrons using devices to access the collection.
4. Provide online registration for programs.

OUTREACH

GOAL: Information about the library and the resources, services and activities it provides will be brought to the attention of all citizens of Holliston in a regular and consistent manner.

OBJECTIVE A: To strengthen the use of technology to promote the library and its services to our patrons.

ACTIONS

1. Continue to employ social media regularly to provide publicity for events and offerings.
2. Develop a system to promote E Books and other digital resources especially to children and young adults.
3. Communicate with local news organizations to inform the public about library events and services.

OBJECTIVE B: To strengthen the connection between the library and other town departments and organizations.

ACTIONS

1. Implement a consistent outreach program to visit local preschools and nurseries to share resources and to encourage visits to the library.
2. Continue to work with schools to support the needs of students and teachers and to provide information about available resources.
3. Continue to provide support to the Senior Center.
4. Broaden and strengthen cooperation with other town organizations and business to provide resources and to develop programs.

TIMELINE

	FY 21	FY 22	FY23	FY 24	FY 25
BUILDING UTILIZATION AND ACCESS					
Repair stonework (\$ 20K)			X		
Install automatic door (\$ 5K)			X		
Paint interior, repair plaster. (\$10,000)	X				
Replace carpeting. (\$20K)	X				
Update disaster plan.		X			
Review building security, upgrade as necessary, including cameras.	X				
Repair or purchase new air handling unit. (\$ 10,000--\$ 35,000)		X			
Act on space planning study	X	X			
Work on TD Bank acquisition	X				
Investigate expansion for future needs		X			
Apply for Planning Grant/Construction grants		X		X	
Document need for extended hours.					X
Add hours as the budget permits.					X
Design and implement a drive-up book return				X	
COLLECTIONS					
Review collection development policy		X			
Using circulation data identify and take action on the portions of the print collection that must be strengthened and those that may be deaccessioned.		X			
Expand selection of E Books and audio books	X	X			
Expand graphic novels at all levels	X	X			
Add to the Teens and ‘Tweens offerings	X	X			
Add non-book resources	X	X			
Increase popular browsing collection	X	X			
PROGRAMMING					
Provide special needs programming				X	
Provide art and STEM programs	X	X			
Build on the strengths of the existing programming for pre-kindergarten children.			X		
Explore, apply for LSTA grants	X				

Restore foreign language group.	X				
Add to "Learn It"		X			
Start a mystery/thriller book club.		X			
Start a cookbook club.	X				
Diverse cultures.	X	X	X	X	X
Trivia night.		X			
Joint programs with town organizations.	X	X	X	X	X
Investigate joint programs with neighboring libraries		X			
Continue weekend programming.	X	X	X	X	X
TECHNOLOGY					
YA computer/tablet	X				
Ensure seamlessness school/library devices	X				
Provide mobile hot-spots for loan.			X		
Provide public access to a laminator.	X				
Explore, implement assistive listening			X		
Upgrade the library website.			X		
Expand training E Books/audio books.	X	X			
Provide basic tech support for patrons using devices to access the collection.	X	X	X	X	X
Provide online registration for programs.	X				
OUTREACH					
Employ social media for publicity	X	X	X	X	X
Promote other digital resources		X			
Communicate with local newspapers	X				
Outreach to preschools and nurseries		X			
Work with schools			X		
Support Senior Center.		X			
Broaden and strengthen cooperation with other town organizations and business	X	X	X	X	X

METHODOLOGY

The planning process began in November, 2019 with a series of focus groups facilitated by Library Consultant Mary Braney. Staff, Trustees, Library Friends and young patrons were invited to a series of meetings using the SOAR method, eliciting input about the library's strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results, to draw from participants a vision of future library goals. All sessions were well attended with the two public forums attracting over thirty-five participants each. All age levels, from school children through seniors represented a cross-section of the town at each event.

Simultaneously a community survey was developed, deployed electronically via the library website and mailed in hard copy with the town census. Over one-thousand-one hundred responses, including participation from twenty-six percent of respondents who use the library less than twice per year, shared their thoughts and insights.

In February, 2020 a Strategic Planning Committee consisting of 11 members was convened by Library Director Leslie McDonnell. Trustees, staff, Friends and patrons met with Ms. McDonnell and Ms. Braney to begin the review of the expiring plan and provide input into the new one. After reviewing all that had been accomplished, they turned to the Vision and Mission statements and decided upon revisions. At the committee's second meeting in March, 2020 they examined the draft of the five-year plan presented by Ms. McDonnell and Ms. Braney and made recommendations for additions and revisions. They also approved the revised vision and mission statements.

A third meeting was scheduled for March 17, 2020 to allow the committee to review the completed draft. Due to circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 protocols the meeting was cancelled. The draft was submitted for review electronically. Comments were received and processed. The document was accepted on June 6, 2020.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Hilary Bresnahan, Patron

Ed Foss, Patron

Bill Heuer, Friend of the Library

Lisa Jobe, Patron

Jennifer Keen, Assistant Library Director

Gregory Lamb, Patron

Kiki Landsdale, Patron

Leslie McDonnell, Library Director

Leslie Negri, Citizen Representative, Patron

Gwenyth Swain, Patron

Kristy Wiwczar, Patron

Mary Braney, Library Consultant, *ex officio*

SUMMARY OF SOAR FOCUS GROUPS' FEEDBACK

STRENGTHS

Primary strengths praised by all groups were the staff, the location, the collection, the programs and the patrons. Staff members were cited for helpfulness, knowledge and friendliness. The location downtown was recognized as convenient to all and an important “anchor” to the town center helping to keep it “vibrant”. The collection received praise for its size, especially given the library’s limited resources, its diversity in content and its attention to the needs of children, young adults and adults. Recognition of the ancillary resources provided by membership in the Minuteman network and access to interlibrary loan and delivery services was mentioned in the public forums and by trustees and staff. Programming, both that provided by individual presenters and that which is ongoing, for example family movie night, was also commended for the number and variety presented for all ages.

Participants acknowledged the meaningful use of the beautiful historic building citing not only the architectural elements but also the “climate”. Everyone is made to feel welcome. Reading is encouraged. Technology provided is appropriate and useful. Tweens dubbed it “cozy”. Also identified was the way that the library fits into the community, support for and by other organizations and the cooperation among town departments.

OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities that could be seized are to have additional and more varied spaces, more parking, a larger collection and additional and more varied programming for all ages. The largest consensus is that the building itself needs to be maintained and updated regularly. Ensuring that the physical plant and mechanicals are kept up and running, digital needs are state-of-the-art, bathrooms and elevators are updated, and paint, carpet and furnishings are attended to before they become shabby was brought up in every session. Specific space needs including seating, meeting rooms, storage and staff work areas were repeatedly called out. The need for parking virtually goes without saying. All groups except the YA suggested exploring the possibility of purchasing the TD Bank building east of the library and possibly the property and building on the west side.

While one of the strengths cited was the collection, especially with limited funding, nonetheless participants would like to take advantage of the opportunity to enlarge the collection. The YA group was very specific – they would like the library to purchase all the books in any given series and more graphic novels. Other statements were more general, suggesting both print and non-print resources for all ages. Programming was also mentioned by all groups as a strength and they would also like to see more of it for all ages, perhaps in conjunction with other Holliston groups or libraries from other towns.

ASPIRATIONS

The aspirations, the hopes for improvement going forward, were twofold. First, the concrete, based on the opportunities that were identified. Participants expressed the desire to have the issues around the building itself, both infrastructure and use, followed up on and planned for. This included environmentally sensitive concerns. Second, and more strikingly, participants embraced a larger issue than brick-and-mortar needs. Participants would like the library to continue to enlarge upon its presence in Holliston as a community space, a multi-generational place where people can socialize together, work together and be a place where all – children, teens, families and seniors – are willing to come to and are welcomed. Flexibility is key.

RESULTS

Measurable indicators of success are:

- Greater circulation of materials, both traditional books, etc. and digital
- More foot traffic
- New and different users
- More vehicle traffic
- Open more hours
- Full meeting spaces and conference rooms
- More parking
- Increased program attendance
- More funding from the town and from private sources
- Potential to generate income by renting space
- More programming overall for children, YA and adults, but especially for
 - Families with young children
 - Those whose first language is not English
 - Those who attend programs at other libraries

IF MONEY WERE NO OBJECT

When encouraged to dream big most of the suggestions related to the building and basic functions. Some related to programming. The following were highlights.

- Larger, more flexible building
- Parking
- Larger budget
- Café
- Streaming services
- Social space
- Outdoor space
- Continuing education for adults
- Become a community center

SURVEY

HOLLISTON PUBLIC LIBRARY SURVEY January, 2020

What is your age? 13-17 ___ 18-29 ___ 30-39 ___ 40-49 ___ 50-59 ___ 60-69 ___ 70+

How often do you use the Holliston Public Library?

More than once per week ___ Weekly ___ Monthly ___ 3-4 times/year ___ 1-2 times/year
 ___ Rarely ___

**If the frequency has increased or decreased or if you rarely use the library, can you tell us why?
 To help us determine what library services are important and could be improved in a new or
 expanded facility, rate the following**

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Un-important	Very Un-important
Social gathering space (bistro tables & chairs)					
Outdoor space					
Dedicated Teen area					
Additional electrical outlets/charging station					
More and varied children's programs					
More & varied young adult/'tween/teen programs					
More help with technology & using devices					
More and varied adult programs					
Additional and more convenient parking					
Better lighting and acoustics					
Larger Children's Room with craft/activity space					
Business space with copy machine, scanner, etc.					
Makerspace/creative space/workshop space.					
More staff to assist you					
Larger, more secure play area					
Meeting spaces for community events					
After hours meeting space					
Visits to preschools/day care					
Drive-up book drop					
More small meeting rooms					
Parent/caregiver space in the Children's Room					
Extended evening hours					
Extended weekend hours					
Performance space for library/community programs					
Increased cooperation with schools					
Art gallery display with lighting and security					

Which of the following would YOU PERSONALLY use if available? Check all that apply.

Assistive listening devices for programs		Hoopla (streaming service for libraries)	
Mobile hotspots		Online registration for programs	
Laptops/I-pads to borrow		Laminator	
Cookbook club		Community experts to teach skills	
Automatic door at handicapped entrance		Digitized local history resources	

Are there other specific programs or services you wish we offered?
 If the teen section were expanded, which of the following would **YOU OR YOUR CHILD PERSONALLY** use?

Gaming equipment		More books for tweens	
Maker Space to be creative		Quiet study rooms	
More help choosing books		More e-books/audio	
Art programs		STEM programs	
Other (be specific)			

Do you currently use free electronic books, downloadable audio or digital magazines through the library?

yes no **If you do not, why not?**

Didn't know it was available		I purchase e-books		Long waiting lists	
Prefer print		I purchase audio		Not enough selection	
Don't own a device		I purchase digital magazines		Other (be specific)	
Too hard to use		Do not know how to use			

How likely are you to use free e-books/downloadable audio in the near future? Likely Not likely

The library building is in need of repair and upgrade. The land it occupies now *may only be used* for a library and the current structure takes up the entire footprint. We can apply for state construction grant funds in the next 3-4 years. Typical awards are about 40% of eligible project costs with the town and private donations funding the remainder. The timeline is about 8-10 years. Please rank below from 1 – 7, in order of importance to you, the elements you would like considered in studying the future of the library building. Use each number only once.

Remain in the same location	
Purchase the TD Bank property to allow for future expansion and parking	
Purchase other adjacent properties if/when they become available	
Preserve the Carnegie building but consider major alterations to the 1984 portion to create additional space	
Demolish the existing library and rebuild on same site	
Build a new library on a different site	
Repair the existing building to keep the library operating without changing the space inside or the parking.	

Do you use other libraries? Why?

What things do you think our library does well?

What things do you find frustrating?

Other comments:

To enter the drawing for the Kindle Fire or Roku please list your contact information.

Name _____ email or phone _____

TO TAKE THIS SURVEY ONLINE GO TO Hollistonlibrary.org and select the SURVEY link.

SURVEY RESULTS SUMMARY

One thousand one hundred fifty-one (1,151) individuals responded to the survey which was posted online on the library web page and mailed out with the 2020 town census in January. Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents were over forty years of age, and approximately twenty percent (20%) represented each decade between 40 and 70 and over. Just under fourteen percent (13.6%) identified as 30-39. Twenty-nine percent (29%) use the library monthly, twenty-four percent (24%) weekly and thirteen percent (12.7%) rarely.

Overall requests for new services in order of priority are:

- Online registration for programs
- Community experts to teach skills
- Mobile hotspots to borrow
- Hoopla subscription (which will be implemented in 2020 using a donation from the Friends of the Library)
- Access to a laminator
- Digitized local history resources
- Cookbook club
- Automatic door at handicapped entrance
- Laptops and/or Ipads to borrow
- Assistive listening devices for programs

Other comments noted the need for more and more varied hours as well as suggestions for many different types of programs for all ages, held at times on evenings and weekends to accommodate working adults.

The highest rated request for new or improved services was for community meeting space. Programming for teens and ‘tweens, children and adults was next followed by extended weekend hours and dedicated teen space. Less important but still highly ranked were increased cooperation with schools, more evening hours, electrical outlets and charging stations and a larger children’s room with craft area. Business space, social gathering space and makerspace were lower on the scale.

In answer to the question “If the teen section were expanded, which of the following would YOU OR YOUR CHILD PERSONALLY use?” Responses were, in order of preference:

- Quiet study rooms
- Art programs
- STEM programs
- Maker space
- More books for tweens
- More e-books and audio books
- More help choosing books
- More gaming equipment

One third of those who replied currently use downloadable materials. Those who don't indicated that they prefer print, that they didn't know about the service or how to use it or that it was difficult to use. Two thirds stated in a follow-up question that they would use the service in the future.

Responses overwhelmingly favored keeping the library in the center of town, citing its value in centering and anchoring the community. They also agreed that purchasing available adjacent property for future expansion was desirable. It was important to most to preserve the Carnegie section of the building. Few favored simply updating the existing structure and suffering the parking inconvenience.

Fifty-nine percent (59%) of respondents use other libraries, many because of convenience to workplaces. Replies also cited programs, collection size and content inviting spaces and hours open as enticements to use other facilities.

The overwhelming response to the question "What do you think our library does well?" was Staff! Praise for the knowledge and willing helpfulness at all levels was consistent and effusive. Programming, especially children's programming, and access to the Minuteman network and its benefits were also frequently mentioned. Frustrations include parking, an old and tired building, lack of meeting room space and inconvenient hours.

The question soliciting any additional comments ranged from specifics about the Holliston Library captured above to philosophical ideas on the future of libraries. One comment that sums up many is, "Libraries of the future must focus on community activities".