

A Plan
For the Future of the
Dartmouth Public Libraries

FY2007-FY2012

General Information

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Trustees

Ralph Schmarsow, Chair
Martha Munro, Vice Chair
Andrew M. Couto
Hope Atkinson
Kathryn M. Aisenberg
Edmund F. Tavares

Term Expires 2006
Term Expires 2006
Term Expires 2007
Term Expires 2008
Term Expires 2008
Term Expires 2007

Planning Committee

Kathy Aisenberg, Library Trustee
Lynne Antunes, Branch Librarian
Mary Ellen DeFrias, Library Patron
Janet Freedman, Library Patron
Denise Medeiros, Director of Libraries
Stephen Russell, Superintendent of Schools
Joseph Toomey, Town Planning Board
Audrey Quail, Administrative Assistant and Computer Coordinator

METHODOLOGY

The Dartmouth Libraries began this planning process by having two staff members, Lynne Antunes and Denise Medeiros, attend a four part series of workshops at SEMLS entitled Planning For Results. These workshops began in November of 2004 and were completed in May 2005. It was determined that the guidebook 'The New Planning For Results: A Streamlined Approach' by Sandra Nelson would be used as a reference guide for methodology. Staff read the Guidebook and set a planning timetable. The trustees established a planning committee that began meeting in June 2005. The planning committee was composed of the following Kathy Aisenberg, Library Trustee, Lynne Antunes, Branch Librarian, Mary Ellen DeFrias, Library Patron, Janet Freedman, Library Patron, Denise Medeiros, Director of Libraries, Stephen Russell, Superintendent of Schools, Joseph Toomey, Town Planning Board, and Audrey Quail, Administrative Assistant and Computer Coordinator.

The Planning Committee collected community data and library data to help determine the needs of the community. A community forum was held in July 2005 that was facilitated by Cheryl Bryan of SEMLS and attended by twenty-five stakeholders in the community. Attendees were asked to look at library trends and the community needs and choose from service responses. The Planning Committee reviewed responses by the public forum and drafted a mission statement that was approved by the Trustees. At subsequent meetings, the Committee developed goals and objectives that were approved by the Trustees. Professional staff developed the activities and implementation timeframe. The Trustees voted final acceptance of the plan in October 2005.

The Town of Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Description and History

The Town of Dartmouth is located on Buzzards Bay in Southeastern Massachusetts. The communities of Westport, Fall River, Freetown and New Bedford border it. Dartmouth is midway between Providence and Cape Cod. It is the fourth largest community in the Commonwealth at 61.53 square miles. “Topography is flat, with north/south running rivers, and an east/west coastline studded with estuaries and coves. (Dartmouth, Massachusetts, Bristol County Community Description, 1999.)

“The area was purchased from the Wampanoag Tribe in 1652 by land speculators in Plymouth. The first settlers arrived after 1660 and the Town was incorporated under its present name in 1664. The economy was based on agriculture and fishing, supplemented by mills, salt making, shipbuilding and whaling. After separation of New Bedford from “Old Dartmouth”, agriculture dominated until the 1900s. Summer resorts opened in the late 19th century.” (Dartmouth, Massachusetts, Bristol County Community Description.)

“Dartmouth is a very beautiful and desirable place to live in Southeastern Massachusetts. A community with its blend of rolling farmland along the coast and its woodland forest to the north creates one of the most beautiful environments...A Town with an excellent school system (a new Dartmouth High School opened in 2003 and the middle school moved into the former high school building, allowing the former middle school to open as a fifth elementary school), varied recreational opportunities, and strong commercial and industrial base, all contribute to a well-rounded community. Dartmouth’s total assessed valuation now exceeds 4-billion dollars, which is almost double in value to a little more than ten years ago. The Town now hosts a population of 32,000 year-round residents. Furthermore, during the day with student enrollment at the University and the workforce from the industrial and commercial businesses located in Town, daily transient population grows in excess of 50,000.” (Executive Administrator’s Report, 2003 Annual Town Report)

Dartmouth is divided into two geographical areas, which until recently were identified as South Dartmouth and North Dartmouth, by their individual zip codes. Now the entire town is “Dartmouth” with three zip codes. Both areas were previously very rural, with many farms. However, over the past three decades the farms have been subdivided into commercial and housing developments. Major companies such as Harvey Industries, American Medical Instruments, Titlelist and ZAPP U.S.A. employ significant numbers of Dartmouth and Southeastern Massachusetts residents contributing to a vibrant part of the town’s economy. The town’s commercial base continues to be strong, attracting numerous national companies and franchises to locate in the Faunce Corner Road and State Road Business Districts.

Dartmouth has many cultural offerings for its population. Highlights include UMASS Dartmouth, which has an extensive research library as well as the University Art Gallery. The Council on Aging serves approximately 6,000 elders through its many varied programs. Historic Districts such as Padanaram Village and Russells Mills offer insights into the town’s history.

Population

Since 1970, the population of Dartmouth has increased 49%. The major growth took place from 1970 - 1990 (44%). The rate of growth has slowed somewhat but new housing and commercial growth are expected to continue. Population in 1970 was 18,800; in 1980, 23,966; in 1990, 27,244; in 2000, 30,666; in 2003, 31,158. In the year 2025, the population projection is 37,034.

During the 1990's, Dartmouth grew from 27,244 persons to 30,666 persons, an increase of 3,422, or 12.56%.

Projected population growth rates from 2000-2010 is 10.16% and 2010-2020 is 9.22%.

The town Planning Board has a projected build out figure of 40,000.

Governance

A Representative Town Meeting, with a five-member Board of Selectmen elected to three-year terms, and an Executive Administrator, operates Town Government. Town Meeting members are elected to 3-year terms.

Demographics

	1990 Federal Census	2000 Federal Census
College Graduates	21.4%	30.9%
High School Graduates	66.9%	75.3%

Age

Over 65 years	15.7%	15.5%
18-64	62.3%	58.6%
5-17	16.9%	21.3%
0-4	4.9%	4.5%

Labor Force

Professionals	3,454	4,457
Farmers	247	63

School Population

Elementary Grades k-4	1,217	2,076
Middle School Grades 5-8	1,031	1,719
High School Grades 9-12	1,164	1,848
Regional Schools	265	346

There is a 16.4 student to teacher ratio. 90.6% of the Town's children are in public schools and there is a 0.8% dropout rate. 60% of high school graduates plan to go on to a 4-year college. 25.7% to a 2-year college and 6% going directly to work." (Ma. Department of Education)

Fiscal Status

Bond Rating A1	Avg. Tax Bill	\$2,241	
2004 Tax Rate \$8.35	Operating Budget	\$48,487,643	(2003 General Fund)

History of the Libraries

“The original Southworth Library was the Town’s first library, built in 1890 as a donation from a Dartmouth native, John Haywood Southworth, in memory of his father, Deacon John Southworth. 2,500 books to start the collection accompanied the gift of the building. The new Southworth Library, a two-story structure of 22,000 square feet, was opened in 1969. It was built entirely with Town funds....” In 1991 Southworth Library completed a Handicapped Accessibility Project, adding an elevator and making other improvements.

“The North Dartmouth Library, a 3,600 square foot building was opened in 1962. It houses over 33,000 items and is an important part of the North Dartmouth area of town. Russells Mills Village, which is on the Historic Register, is home to the small Russells Mills Library. Once the Town’s Main Library, at present it is only open 13 hours a week. This 1,000 square foot charming white building with its beautiful cupola has a sentimental place in the hearts of residents.... Russells Mills Library houses over 11,000 volumes.” (Dartmouth Public Libraries Library Description.)

“Until 1956, each library district had one trustee who acted as overseer of the library - made up the budget for the library and, when necessary, hired personnel. In fact, was responsible for the library as an entity. In March of that year, three additional members were added to the existing board of three and the libraries, which had been autonomous, became coordinated into one system.... The position of director was created to guide the destinies of all three libraries and to act as the liaison between the trustees and the staff.” (Chapter IV Dartmouth Public Libraries.)

Service Statistics

In 1969, the new Southworth Library’s Circulation was 54,596 with a population of 19,120, or 2.85 items per capita. In 1992, Southworth circulated 163,414 with a population of 27,145, or 6.02 items per capita. Circulation maintained a steady increase of 33% over 23 years after the new building was in place.

For the first ten years, circulation increased from 54,596 to 97,672, a 55% increase. The new building attracted new users to the library.

The following service statistics are for all the Dartmouth Libraries including Southworth, North Dartmouth and Russells Mills.

	Municipal Appropriation	Registered Borrowers	Circulation	Holdings
FY96	609,631	15,284	241,031	101,176
FY97	624,991	16,272	238,418	101,029
FY98	762,284	17,139	234,259	103,249

From FY96 to FY98 Registered borrowers increased by 12.1%. Municipal Appropriation has increased by 25%.

	Municipal Appropriation	Registered Borrowers	Circulation	Holdings
FY99	815,936	14,509	229,061	104,564
FY00	859,555	14,623	238,351	103,597
FY01	907,037	16,072	235,274	107,013
FY02	949,063	16,954	225,827	110,963
FY03	963,394	17,882	234,685	113,458
FY04	975,819	18,736	238,564	115,104

From FY99 to FY04 Circulation increased by 4.1%. Registered borrowers increased by 29.1%. Municipal Appropriation increased by 20%

66.3% of the population holds library cards. There are 3.69 volumes per capita. The turnover rate (circulation divided by holdings) is 2.07. These measures show that Dartmouth citizens are aware of, use and support their library.

Materials owned by the libraries are supplemented by interlibrary loan and network transactions from the automated network SAILS. The library system is a member of the Southeastern Massachusetts Regional Library System.

Assessment of User Needs

The members of the planning committee examined the input received from the community at the public forum, reviewed current conditions in the community, listed community needs, and reviewed current library services and data to complete and assessment of user needs.

The major good points about existing library services were:

- Excellent cooperation between schools and the public libraries
- Welcoming staff
- Good reference services
- SAILS network resource sharing
- Availability of interlibrary loan
- A quality, balanced collection
- An increase in active card holders
- Increased circulation
- Increased use of computers
- Increased use of library web site
- Increased municipal appropriation

Some suggested improvements to library services were:

- Creating a library foundation to diversify income sources
- Wireless computer access
- More hours open
- Education classes on information resources
- Technology instruction
- Book clubs
- New technologies
- Improvement of physical facilities
- Create reading nooks
- Additional meeting room space
- Information literacy
- Increased access to library resources
- Outreach to parents of young children
- Increased funding
- Increased staffing

Currently the main library, Southworth, is fully handicapped accessible in compliance with ADA. The North Dartmouth Branch is partially accessible. It meets all ADA requirements except for the bathroom facility. The North Branch Library is currently on the state construction waiting list and is to be replaced with a new facility. The Russells Mills Branch Library is not handicapped accessible but the Dartmouth Library Foundation, Inc. is applying for Community Preservation Funding and handicapped accessibility will be addressed as preservation activities begin on this historic structure.

MISSION STATEMENT

Dartmouth residents of all ages, abilities and economic levels will have access to innovative library services, delivered in an efficient and effective manner, that will:

- Provide an environment for people to meet and interact with others in the community and to participate in conversation about community issues.
- Provide the information services needed to answer their questions related to work, school, and personal life.
- Develop their ability to find, evaluate and use information effectively.
- Provide materials, programs and services needed to meet their recreational needs.

Goal 1: All residents of Dartmouth will have access to the resources needed to answer their questions related to work, school and personal life.

Objective: Create a user-friendly web site with adequate informational resources

Task: Train staff to use web site

Task: Establish web site committee

Task: Explore methods of sending press releases and the library newsletter electronically

Implementation Timeframe:

- A web site committee will be established by the beginning of FY07
- All staff will have had training on the web site by the end of FY07
- All press releases and newsletter will be sent out electronically in FY07

Objective: Continue to select materials covering a broad range of topics with an emphasis on materials of special interest locally and the new “recommended” collection.

Task: Hold regularly scheduled selection meetings

Task: Investigate adding electronic databases

Implementation Timeframe:

- Adult selection meeting will be held monthly in FY 07
- Juvenile selection meeting will be held bi-monthly in FY 07
- A proposal for the addition of two databases will be made by the end of FY07

Objective: Create additional online access

Task: Gather information on wireless networks

Task: Explore funding of a wireless network

Task: Work with SAILS on setting up a wireless network

Implementation Timeframe:

- All information gathering on wireless networks will be completed early in FY07
- Funding for a wireless network will be included in the FY07 budget
- SAILS will be contracted for installation of a wireless network before the end of FY07

Objective: Evaluate and consider the addition of new technologies and equipment

Task: Update the libraries' technology plan

Task: Explore the need for scanners, mp3 players, laptops, and a fax machine for public use

Implementation Timeframe:

- By the end of FY07 the technology plan will be updated
- By the end of FY07 a survey will have been completed determining hardware needs

Objective: Provide adequate facilities to allow sufficient access for all residents

Task: Continue to advocate for the replacement of the North Dartmouth Branch facility

Implementation Timeframe:

- Before the end of FY07 receive local funds needed to begin construction of new facility on Cross Road.

Goal 2: All residents of Dartmouth will have the opportunity to learn skills needed to find, evaluate and use information effectively.

Objective: Develop training programs that will help patrons find, evaluate and use information effectively.

Task: Work with school department in targeting library instruction to particular grade levels throughout the school district

Task: Design training programs on iBistro

Task: Explore priorities for training

Implementation Timeframe:

- Coordinate meetings with the school department to begin in the summer of FY07
- Hold monthly iBistro training programs beginning in the fall of FY07
- Survey the public on the need for other training programs such as databases, software, email, research skills

Objective: Provide adequate facilities to allow for sufficient training space

Task: Continue to advocate for the replacement of the North Dartmouth Branch facility

Implementation Timeframe:

- Before the end of FY07 receive local funds needed to begin construction of new facility on Cross Road.

Goal 3: All residents of Dartmouth will be provided with materials, programs and services needed to meet their recreational needs.

Objective: Continue to provide current activities such as story-time, wee read, community reading, summer reading, and expand to include more programs for teens and adults

Task: Add new lip sync component to summer reading program

Task: Hold on-going pre-school story-times, wee read and summer reading programs

Task: Explore teen programming by teens

Task: Develop a community reading program

Implementation Timeframe:

- The new lip sync component will be added in the summer programming of FY07
- Fall and winter sessions of story times will be held throughout FY07
- A meeting with the youth advocate will be held in the summer of FY07
- A community reading program will be held in the winter/spring of FY07

Objective: Select popular material to meet patron demand

Task: Develop methods to ensure that the appropriate number of materials and the most popular materials are available in a timely and efficient manner

Implementation Timeframe:

- By the end of FY07 new methods will be in place to ensure materials are available to meet patron demand.

Objective: Provide adequate facilities to allow for sufficient materials and programming space

Task: Continue to advocate for the replacement of the North Dartmouth Branch facility

Implementation Timeframe:

- Before the end of FY07 receive local funds needed to begin construction of new facility on Cross Road.

Goal 4: All residents of Dartmouth will be provided with opportunities to enhance their participation in civic life.

Objective: Make the libraries a community center that encourages active participation by all residents.

Task: Encourage local legislatures to hold office hours at the libraries.

Task: Work with DCTV to determine if live telecasting is possible

Task: Continue to collect town documents

Task: Plan program on online tax preparation.

Implementation Timeframe:

- At the beginning of FY07 local legislatures will be contacted regarding office hours
- In the summer of FY07 a meeting with DCTV will take place
- Ongoing efforts to continue to collect town documents will be made throughout FY07
- A program on online tax preparation will be held in the fall of FY07

Goal 5: All residents of Dartmouth will have an environment to meet and interact with others in the community.

Objective: To create a community atmosphere in the libraries

Task: Extend meeting room hours

Task: Add additional comfortable seating

Task: Investigate the improvement of lighting

Implementation Timeframe:

- Throughout FY07 meeting room hours will be extended three nights a week
- Comfortable seating areas will double in FY07
- By the end of FY07 a study of the lighting will be completed

Objective: To provide adequate facilities so that there is sufficient space for all residents to meet and interact.

Task: Continue to advocate for the replacement of the North Dartmouth Branch facility

Implementation Timeframe:

- Before the end of FY07 receive local funds needed to begin construction of new facility on Cross Road.