

Thomas Memorial Library Strategic Planning 2024-2025

Agenda for Meeting #2 – 6:30 – 8:30 PM, 10/17/24

SWOT, Mission, Vision

1. SWOT – 30 min.
 - a. Rejoin & finish clustering related items
 - b. General sense of which might be the most beneficial to focus on
2. Mission – Begin to identify potential core elements for the mission statement
3. Vision – Initial visions for the library in 2029

Meeting Norms (for all meetings):

- Start and end on time
- Actively participate
- Allow others to finish their thoughts
- Hold facilitator accountable
- Be candid and respectful—assume good intentions

Please review the Flip Charts and also Tim's notes below before the next meeting. There are clues everywhere for things that might become elements of the library's mission, vision, values, objectives, strategies, or measures of success. Sort through it for the ideas you think might be worthy and maybe make some notes to yourself for reference in the next meeting and/or future meetings.

Flip Charts from Meeting #1

What we hope to get out of Strategic Planning Process

Road map to contain all possibilities

Contribute to something big and sustainable

Create something I enjoy

Guidance for our team to deliver on needs

Community perception of the library

Deeper understanding of public libraries

Understand my roles clearly

Discover programming growth opportunities

Better understand uses and what people value

Continue providing value to the community

Provide information and feed love of reading

Clear staff view – today & future

How best to position the library

Support library & each other

Ensure library as an institution – Freedom of information

Sustainable fiscal health

Strengths (not yet clustered)

No fines for overdue
Beautiful Space
Strong supporting Foundation (org.)
Robust slate of regular programs
Resource sharing – ILL, Minerva, Digital Resources – Part of family-based libraries
Partnership with neighboring libraries (also an opportunity)
Engaged & supportive community
Motivated to help people (not bottom-line oriented) to self-educate/personal growth
Library is asset to community
Large, diverse inventory of books & other resources
Poetry Room
Backgrounds of staff
✓ Serving young families with toddlers & Children's Section with no tech
All services are free

Weaknesses (not yet clustered)

Potentially go too far trying to help – need compassionate boundaries
Not a good, dedicated Teen Space
Marketing services and programs – Idea: Outreach for more exposure
Services to people with disabilities – e.g. no sign language
No Internet access for people under 13
Parents with kids can't serve their own needs
Serving non-English speakers – Idea: Reorganize collection
Cloud Library (Scarborough has both – w/Libby)
Not reaching ages 18 – 30
Staff is not health-savvy – need time for training for health situations and helpfulness

Opportunities (Clustered)

Cluster 1:

Proximity to schools
Central community location

Cluster 2:

Building Community (Community Building) – connecting forms strong relationships
Libraries seen as irrelevant
Restore former users
New movers to Cape

Other:

Robust Zoom programming
New staff

Threats (Clustered)

Cluster 1:

- Not enough space for all user programming (e.g. Teens)
- Town budget cuts
- Basketball court & loss of parking, when parking is barely sufficient today

Cluster 2:

- Project 2025 – If it happens, staffs are at risk & library could be limited
- Hate
- Populous divided politically
- Misinformation/Disinformation/Misperceived

Cluster 3:

- AI
- Technology
- Resources for Research
- Internet

Other:

- Perception that “Library is books” and is outdated and now irrelevant

Parking – Thoughts that came up but were not included in the topical flip charts

Who should we serve & help? (age, location, etc.)

Cape Elizabeth is Target Audience, but we help others too

Spate of recent staffing changes alienated some

Set priorities for Resource Allocation

Trend: Emphasize meeting spaces & connectivity

How well does TML adapt to change?

Whither Zoom?

Whether to try to attract new Cape users – getting 30 new users a month now

Facilitator’s Elements of a Strategic Plan:

Mission of the library: Raison d’etre

Values of the library: Character of the library, what we value and expect in ourselves and our partners, how we do business, what is most important to us.

Vision: Where you aspire to be in 5 years

Objectives/Goals: 4 – 6 objectives that will deliver the Vision

Strategies: An initial set of strategies for each objective that can achieve the Objective (these are changeable throughout the 5-year time horizon of the plan as new and better ideas arise and/or there are external changes of consequence)

Measures of Success: What we agree to measure over the 5-year period and what level of achievement constitutes success in reaching our vision. Best practice: 5-year target for each measure, then, once plan is adopted, set Annual success goals for each measure and manage to those Annual Goals.

Tim Blackstone Notes from Meeting 1 (more detail here than in Flip Charts)

Present: Rachel, Sarah, Allison, Sasha, Megan, Bradley, Tim, Patience

Absent: Liz, Reed

Convene the meeting and process (Rachel) – 10 minutes

(introductions)

What a Strategic Plan is and how it is used, a brief process overview and suggested meeting norms (norms optional) – 20 minutes

Think of strategic planning as a pyramid

Pyramid (top to bottom): **vision, objectives/goals, strategies, tactics** (not included in the plan)

“If you achieve the *objectives*, you will reach your 5 year *vision*...”

Outside of the pyramid is **mission** (long term statement) and **values** (character of the organization, look for in employees, partners)

Beneath it all, **measures of success**...

Five years from now, you will be reviewing and updating, not starting from scratch

“How did we do last time?”

Mission and values should not change within the 5 years

Within the pyramid, the farther down you go, the more changeable (e.g., strategies)

We will be doing mission and values within this process

If all goes well, we’ll be done with this process next spring

Could incorporate in the next FY (starts in summer)

If we make it a 5 year plan, would be 2025-2029

All of the elements of the plan interact with each other, it is non-linear

Nothing is final in the pyramid until the final version of the plan

Why now?

Prior to Rachel, the library committee has wanted to do it for a long time

Useful to create alignment between the library, committee, and foundation

The cohesiveness of those organizations hasn’t existed

Hoping for strategic planning to be an organic process where we are working on it together

Use the final plan as a grounding lens when confronted with options

Meeting norms:

- Start and end on time
- Actively participate
- Allow others to finish their thoughts
- Hold facilitator accountable
- Be candid and respectful—assume good intentions

We'll be starting with situational analysis tonight
Taking a look at where the library is today, followed by a SWOT analysis
Next meeting will be mission and vision, followed by a gap analysis
Before every meeting you will get an agenda and notes from the last meeting

Team Icebreaker: "What do you hope to get out of this process?" – 15 minutes

Rachel: A roadmap, a container for what we do so I don't feel overwhelmed by the possibilities, but still feel *excited* about the possibilities.

Sarah: To contribute to something that lasts far beyond myself, to helping with the sustainability of something. Being new to this library, I'm looking forward to being part of the process of creating something I enjoy.

Allison: We have a new team in family engagement—hoping the strategic plan will offer a guide for our team to evaluate the resources we are providing, how we meet the needs of the community. Hoping to get a better understanding of how the community sees the library.

Sasha: Coming from working in academic libraries, I'm looking for a deeper understanding of how public libraries could and should work. Personally, I hope to get a better understanding of what my priorities should be.

Megan: I'm constantly impressed with the current programs—through this, hoping to see what new opportunities are out there for growth and resources. To echo Allison, excited about the data around how the library is used and what patrons value the most—from a foundation perspective this is important as well. *Addendum:* To ensure the financial health of the library, its sustainability.

Bradley: From the foundation lens, we are working to make sure the future of the library is strong through funding—I'm excited to be a part of creating strategies to make sure the library is valuable to the community. It is important to ensure access to information, and a love of curiosity and reading.

Tim: I hope that this process equips the library staff with a clearer view of where the library is today, and more importantly, a map for where it could go in the future. I'm hoping the strategic plan provides a sense of how to best position the library to further its role as a vital member of the community—as a place to explore, to learn, and to exchange ideas.

Patience: In my role as committee member, I hope this process supports the library team—that the strategic plan gives them a plan to refer to, a direction to help them focus. In the bigger picture, I want to ensure the library as an institution remains relevant, that the freedom of knowledge remains

Current service offerings, key performance data, survey commentary (Rachel) – 25 minutes

For those who weren't there, we had one person at the listening session last week
Most folks chose to use the survey and response boxes over the summer
At last check, i think that 168 people had responded to the survey
The summary document that Tim provided consolidates qualitative survey feedback into themes
It was nice to see that some of the things that we have started to do are being seen
Some of those things began when Allison and Sasha started
Also saw that things that we identified internally as gaps are also things that people noted
For instance, programs for elementary school kids, events that would attract younger adults
We have those things in mind as well
It's trickier to know *how* to attract those audiences, but we are focusing in the right area
It feels like there is alignment with what we are seeing in the survey

(referring to survey data and other qualitative data received in-library)

Rachel divided the feedback into realms: **access, programs, resources, marketing**
Wanted to comment on these at a high level

Access

Hours - People talked about our hours, they want Sunday hours, they want us to open earlier, etc. It's interesting—after COVID we DID shorten our hours based on analysis of use, based on circulation figures, computer use—it wasn't worth being open after 7pm. We still have staff come in at 9am, it gives the staff more time to prepare for the day, get things set up. We had heard zero feedback prior to this survey.

Accessibility - People with disabilities are an area we have identified where we can do better. Some people want ZOOM meetings back—I will say that I believe that these were regular ZOOM users for programs we no longer offer. It is worth thinking about how we offer programs for people who cannot get to the library; whether it is having community services pick people up, or some other approach. I don't have a bias against ZOOM, but it is difficult to have hybrid programs, to split attention between ZOOM and people in the room. We do want to make sure we have resources and purposeful programs for this population.

Programs

We had a variety of suggestions around programs for:

- Elementary school
- Teens
- Younger adults
- Seniors

...and people who want the library to have more clubs (like Lego Club)

Resources

Again, we had a variety of suggestions for resources that we should add/change, including:

- Museum passes to other/more museums
- Different media types for kids (like a Yoto card collection)
- Different audiobook services (important to note that this is largely outside of our control; we are in a resource sharing arrangement with the state—we might need to explain that to people)
- Tool borrowing library

...and others.

Marketing

Feel like we are seeing a trend in the responses of people not realizing what we have; for instance, that our printers are scanners—we don't say that anywhere. There appears to be a number of resources/programs that we have that people are not aware of.

Other

In addition to those four areas, we had a number of suggestions that don't fit neatly into a category, including:

- Adding a phone booth inside the library and/or allow people to be on their phones
- (Contradictory to the prior) Require patrons to lower their voices, create a quiet space
- Allow for easier group use of community spaces
- Have the library staff where larger, clearer name tags so they can be identified easily

...and others.

For use in future sessions, Rachel will share recent circulation numbers

(took a moment to look at quantitative data)

If you look at the quantitative data, there is a leaning towards resources, browsing, materials—how do we let those people know that we do programs as well?

Hoping the strategic plan will help us answer the question of whether we want to be all things to all people.

Break – 10 minutes

SWOT Analysis Exercise (including initial processing and prioritization) – 90 minutes

Strengths - internally focused, what you are doing well

Staff really care about what they do

Beautiful space, good facilities

Strong foundation (TMLF) support

Robust slate of weekly and monthly programs

Consortium (Minerva) and access to resources (ILL, digital resources)

Partnerships with neighboring libraries

Engaged and supportive community

Aren't bound to a bottom line—we're here to help people grow, no motivation towards profit
Library is an asset to the community
Have a large, diverse collection of books and resources (special collection of poetry)
Place where families with very young children come for free—we're a family place library
All our resources are free to the public
Growing user base—most new users are Capers

Weaknesses - internally focused, where you might want to shore things up

Community has negative impression of staffing changes from April
Not always clear where to stop when helping, setting compassionate boundaries
Don't have a good, dedicated, functional teen space
Marketing and awareness of services and programs
Services to people with disabilities—intellectual and developmental disabilities, no support for ASL, don't want to single/leave people out
Access to internet/computer for children under 13—we removed the machines downstairs
Serving non-english language speakers—we could reorganize the collection
Cloud Library(?)—it has been suggested that Libby is better(?)
Programming for the young and old, not reaching ages 18-30
Time for staff training when everyone can attend—active shooter, AD, EPI, Naloxone

Opportunities - externally focused, what is going on in the world around you

Proximity to schools for children / central location in the community
Partnerships with neighboring libraries
Building community / making strong connections, relationships / new residents
New, inexperienced staff on board
Restore former users / opportunity for outreach is out there / library seen as irrelevant
Robust ZOOM programming

Threats - externally focused, may impact your services

Limited parking / potential loss of additional spaces with basketball court
Limited space for programming / storage space for resources / spaces for breastfeeding, etc.
AI / technology in general
Election / Project 2025 / loss of funding / divided public / misinformation / disinformation / hate
Competition for municipal resources / finances
Perception of "library is a place for books"—outdated institution

PARKING LOT

Who do we serve? Who do we need to reach?
Cape Elizabeth is the target audience, but we help others as well
Spate of recent staffing changes alienated some
Are we trying to reach more vulnerable people? All people equally?
Set priorities for resource allocation
Trend emphasize meeting spaces and connectivity

How well does TML adapt to change?

Whither ZOOM?

Whether to try to attract new Cape users - we're currently getting about 30 new each month

Wrap up – 10 minutes

Strategic Planning Team

Staff

Rachel Davis, Library Director & Strategic Planning Leader

Sasha Kohan, Community Engagement Librarian

Allyson Frick, Family Engagement Librarian

Sarah Gabrielson, Family Engagement Assistant

Advisory Committee

Tim Blackstone, Chair

Reed Dyer

Liz Elliott

Patience Maloney

TML Foundation

Megan Bagdasarian

Bradley Russell

Facilitator

Will Plumley

Meeting Schedule

All meetings begin at 6:30 PM in the Library Conference Room

September 26, 2024

October 17, 2024

November 14, 2024

December 12, 2024

January 9, 2025

February 6, 2025

March 6, 2025

April 10, 2025