

# NEWBURYPORT PUBLIC LIBRARY

*Preserving the Past – Shaping the Present – Inspiring the Future*



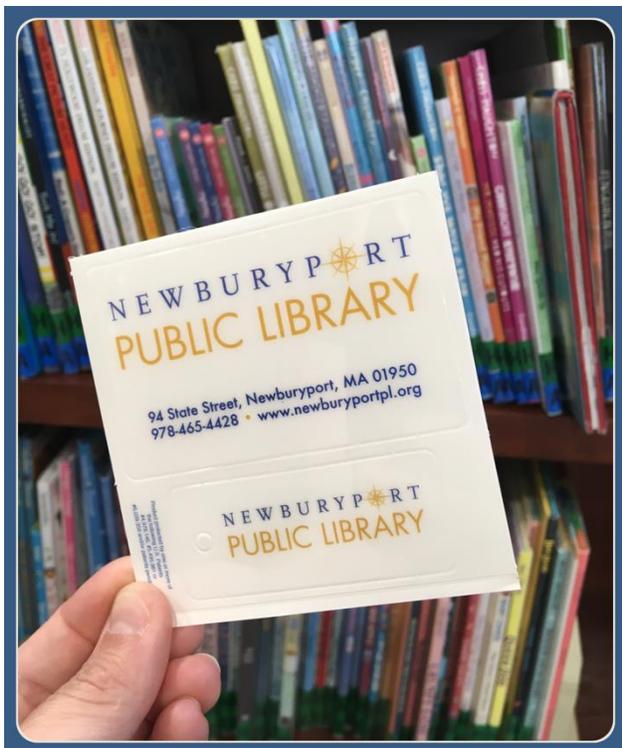
## STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2021–2024

**Submitted by:**

NEWBURYPORT  
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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# Newburyport Public Library Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021–2024

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## **INTRODUCTION**

One of the ten oldest libraries in Massachusetts, the Newburyport Public Library serves a small city of almost 18,000 people. The Library is a popular local resource that strives to deliver high quality, high value programs and services to its community.

While the Newburyport Public Library (NPL) respects and honors residents' interest in traditional library offerings (e.g., books), it recognizes that libraries are transforming into community spaces—places where people gather to read, work, study, and socialize. Public libraries are evolving learning and entertainment centers that provide free access to a diverse array of innovative resources and services.

To position itself as a dynamic, thriving, and valued community asset, the NPL spent the spring and summer of 2019 assessing its status and soliciting community input regarding potential new and improved programs and services. A strategic plan was developed that identifies how the NPL will allocate its resources over the next four years to meet community needs.

The *Newburyport Public Library Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021 – 2024* is an aspirational and flexible guide to the Library's continued organizational success. The *Strategic Plan* details the planning process; identifies what the Library wants to accomplish; and prioritizes the tasks that will enable the Library to meet its ambitious goals. The Strategic Plan is designed to accommodate and adapt to changes that will occur during the four-year term.

Proactively pursuing the *Strategic Plan's* innovative initiatives that expand and enhance its offerings will ensure that the NPL offers interesting and accessible programs, services, and resources well into the future.

Meeting these strategic goals will enable the Library to exceed expectations, expand its user base, and most importantly, remain relevant—to add value—to the lives of the community members it serves.

## **THE PLANNING PROCESS**

In February 2019, the NPL hired strategic planning consultant Barbara Alevras of Sage Consulting Services, to be a guide through the planning process, to facilitate a series of planning exercises, to oversee the collection and analysis of performance data and community feedback, and to assist with drafting the strategic plan document.

After establishing the planning project goals, major activities, key stakeholders, and timeline, the Library developed a detailed planning process (see *Appendix B—Strategic Planning Process Flowchart*).

Throughout the spring of 2019, the Library solicited community feedback via a series of exercises designed to assess its performance and identify future needs. These activities included:

- **Two Strengths-Opportunities-Aspirations-Results (SOAR) Exercises**
- **One Community Visioning Exercise**
- **Two Surveys** (staff and community)
- **Two Focus Groups** (families, businesses)

In addition to the feedback collected, the Library compiled and reviewed city demographic and NPL statistics. This data enabled the Library to identify trends, summarize the information collected, and incorporate the results into a document that offers a profile of the community and the Library (see *Appendix A—Community and Library Profile*).

The feedback and data were analyzed, synthesized, and summarized. It provides the basis for the mission statement, goals, objectives, and tactics (specific tasks) included in this *Strategic Plan*.

## **THE RESULTS**

More than 525 people contributed feedback.

A detailed review and analysis of the feedback received throughout the planning process resulted in the identification of the following seven focus areas:

- **ADMINISTRATION** (staff, policies, and procedures)
- **COLLECTIONS** (books, media, digital materials etc.)
- **FACILITY** (physical space, furniture, aesthetics, layout)
- **MARKETING** (branding, communications, and outreach)
- **PROGRAMS** (activities and events)
- **SERVICES** (reference, business, museum passes, etc.)
- **TECHNOLOGY** (devices, tutorials, operational applications)

Numerous creative ideas were received in each planning activity. Where possible, these ideas were incorporated into the Library's *Strategic Plan* and its *Action Plan*.

Summary reports highlighting trends and ideas derived from each feedback activity are available for review as appendices to this document (see *Appendices* on page 8). The target audience(s) and number of participants per feedback mechanism are presented in *Appendix B—Strategic Planning Process Flowchart*.

# **THE PLAN**

## **Community Vision Statements**

The NPL's *Strategic Plan* supports the following prioritized community vision statements:

- Newburyport offers a wide variety of academic, vocational, and life skills-related lifelong learning opportunities.
- Newburyport encourages respectful, strong citizen involvement in the community.
- Newburyport values and promotes local cultural institutions and programs that appeal to all ages.

## **NPL Mission Statement**

Newburyport Public Library is a community hub that inspires and empowers all to access knowledge, culture, and social connections.



## Goals and Objectives

Using the community vision statements and mission statement as guiding principles, the NPL developed an ambitious list of strategic goals and supporting objectives. The following goals address needs expressed by both the community and library staff in the SOARs, focus groups, and surveys. These goals and objectives will enable the NPL to effectively prioritize and allocate its resources (funds, staff time, etc.) during the next four years.

### **GOAL 1 - RESOURCES: Provide robust services, programs, and collections.**

- 1.1 Ensure access to current and enhanced technology.
- 1.2 Expand programming options for all patrons.
- 1.3 Ensure access to diversified collections.

### **GOAL 2 - COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS: Increase awareness and use of the Library and its resources.**

- 2.1 Develop a comprehensive marketing plan.
- 2.2 Develop collaborative community partnerships.
- 2.3 Expand outreach efforts.

### **GOAL 3 - DYNAMIC COMMUNITY SPACE: Make the Library a welcoming and comfortable space that meets changing community needs.**

- 3.1 Maintain and modify the library facility to meet community needs.
- 3.2 Staff ensure a positive successful Library user experience.

## Action Plans

The NPL develops an annual *Action Plan* made up of specific activities and strategies designed to help the Library achieve its strategic goals. The Action Plan captures new initiatives and tasks designed to support the NPL's specific objectives and to address changing needs.

The *Action Plan* is updated annually and kept on file at the MBLC. To view the *Action Plan*, see *Appendix H—Newburyport Public Library Action Plan Fiscal Years 2021-2024*.

## Evaluation

The Head Librarian will report on progress made toward achieving the *Strategic Plan's* goals and objectives to the Library's Board of Directors at their monthly meetings.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS' APPROVAL**

On October 2, 2019, Newburyport Public Library's Board of Directors unanimously approved this *Strategic Plan*. Directors in attendance:

Kathy Carey  
James T. Connolly  
Marcia Edson  
Gary Gorski  
Sarah Holden

Sarah Spalding  
Giselle Stevens, *Recording Secretary*  
Susan Shefte  
Elizabeth Valeriani

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The NPL *Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2021–2024* marks the culmination of eight months of work by the NPL staff and numerous members of the Newburyport community.

The time and support received from the Strategic Planning Advisory Group, the Board of Directors, the Friends of the Newburyport Public Library Board, and the NPL staff is greatly appreciated. The NPL is especially grateful for the detailed feedback provided by the Newburyport community. Their input played a critical role in the process of crafting a plan that addresses residents' evolving needs.

## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

The Newburyport Public Library is honored to be a place where tradition and innovation intersect. The Library is committed to building community and enriching the lives of everyone we serve. We strive to meet the needs of our patrons by being an open, adaptable, inclusive and collaborative institution that offers diverse programs, services, and collections. We love what we do. This *Strategic Plan* will guide the Library to ensure continued improvement and success in fulfilling its mission.



## APPENDICES

**Appendix A—Community and Library Profile:** This document presents a demographic profile of Newburyport, the Library’s history, and statistics related to the Library’s services and programs.

**Appendix B—Strategic Planning Process Flowchart:** The flowchart visually depicts the Library’s planning methodology, including the timeline, assessment mechanisms, and process participants.

**Appendix C—SOAR Summary Results 2019:** This report documents the results of an environmental assessment of the NPL’s strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results.

**Appendix D—Community Survey Summary Results 2019:** The community survey was conducted for three weeks in June 2019 via SurveyMonkey. The raw data and narrative comments are presented in addition to summary graphs and charts.

**Appendix E—Staff Survey Summary Results 2019:** The staff survey was conducted in April 2019 via SurveyMonkey. The raw data and narrative comments are presented in addition to summary graphs and charts.

**Appendix F—Focus Group Summary Results 2019:** The focus groups were conducted in May 2019. The questions posed and a summary of participants’ input is presented.

**Appendix G—Community Vision Statements:** In May 2019, 20 community members representing diverse local constituencies brainstormed a series of community vision statements reflecting the ideal Newburyport. Then, the group prioritized the vision statements that the Library can reasonably and positively impact.

**Appendix H—Newburyport Public Library Action Plan Fiscal Years 2021-2022:** The Library’s *Action Plan* presents specific tasks scheduled for completion during the *Strategic Plan*’s four-year term.

*Appendices are available on request. Please contact the Head Librarian for additional information: (978) 465-4428 x222*