

Webster Public Library Strengthening Community Connections

2017 - 2020 Long Range Plan

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Acknowledgements

The Webster Public Library's 2017-2020 Long Range Plan was developed through a collaborative planning process that included involvement by a range of library and community stakeholders. Reflecting the library's commitment to the community, this plan signifies the library's efforts to anticipate the changing needs of our community over the next three years and how best to meet those needs. The Board of Trustees will consider the recommendations made by the committee.

To facilitate the process and oversee the plan's development, a Long Range Planning Committee was convened. Members of the committee contributed their time, energy and perspectives to create a plan that will guide the library's future direction and enhancement. The Library Board of Trustees would like to thank everyone who participated in this important effort.

Committee Members:

Terri Bennett, WPL Director
Eileen Brookins, WPL Trustee
Mary Carlin, community member
Elaine Davis, WPL Friend
Sarah Dennison, community member
Beverly Haynes, WPL staff

Colleen Hernandez, WPL staff
Tony Hubbard, WPL Trustee
Peter Knapp, WPL Trustee
Terry McCarthy, WCSD
Jason Poole, WPL staff
Hannah Ralston, WPL staff

Library Leadership

The Webster Public Library is an independent entity, with operational funding provided through the Town of Webster. The Board of Trustees works with the Town Board through the annual budget process. This organizational structure helps to ensure that the public library meets the needs of the community and that the services and programs reflect a wise investment of taxpayer dollars.

The Webster Public Library is guided by the work of three independent, but inter-related, organizations.

The Board of Trustees is a seven-member volunteer board that oversees and governs the library's operations, staff and finances as required by New York State Education Law.

The Friends of the Webster Public Library is a non-profit, volunteer group committed to advocacy and fundraising to expand programming and offerings for all library users. Their efforts enhance and expand the library's role in the community.

The Webster Library Foundation solicits public and private funds that build the library's endowment for special projects and undertakings not supported by taxpayer money. The

Foundation collaborates with the Board and staff to determine how Foundation funds will be utilized.

Planning Process

The library's long-range planning process was designed to capture the ideas and feedback from diverse stakeholders. The committee met four times and reviewed Amy Garmer's thorough article from the Aspen Institute entitled "Libraries in the Exponential Age – Moving from the Edge of Innovation to the Center of Community" as well as Gina Millsap's insights from the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library on "Future-Proofing Libraries".

Committee members were informed of the collections and services provided by the Webster Public Library and informed of how the library fits into the Monroe County Library System and the Town of Webster. In addition, they reviewed from the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 demographics for the community. Notes from workshops that staff attended were shared: "Sustainable Thinking for the Future of Libraries" and WNYLRC REAL Conference that discussed the library user experience.

SWOT (strengths/weaknesses/opportunities/threats) analysis* was conducted by several groups: WPL Board of Trustees, WPL Friends, Circulation Staff, Reference Staff, Children's Department Staff, and the Management Group. Charts were compiled from each session including the common themes from each category. Please see Appendix B for results of the SWOT analysis.

Recommendations

The committee decided to focus on opportunities with the following categories for the Board of Trustees to consider:

1. Outreach – the Webster Public Library (WPL) will broaden its outreach and develop strategic partnerships to increase awareness and usage. Turning outward will allow us to leverage resources and extend our reach. Areas to consider but are not limited to: businesses, Webster Central School District, and community groups.

Example: One example of our current outreach efforts is our presence at the Webster's Joe Obie Farmers' Market. Once per month, the library sets up a tent and an informational table at the market with book drawings and crafts for children. When a patron wins a book drawing, they have to visit the library to pick up the book. This strategy allows us to draw more visitors to the library who may not have previously visited before finding us at the farmers' market.

New Outreach Idea: Webster is home to several vibrant senior living communities. The two adult librarians, who are also library Tech Tutors, would like to expand our outreach efforts to these areas of the community by organizing informational sessions and on-location Tech Tutor appointments at the senior living facilities.

2. Programming – the WPL will offer programs and activities that provide the community with a wide range of educational, cultural and social experiences. Recognizing the always improving technology, WPL will continue utilizing new technologies to stay

relevant in this ever-changing information sharing age. The library will be a lifelong learning organization supporting community enrichment.

Examples: The library currently offers events for visitors of all ages. Our Children's Department attracts the majority of our program attendees with vibrant story times, live music, guest storytellers, and family crafts. We have also seen a growth in our tween and teen program offerings and attendance over the past year, and will continue to expand in this department.

New Programming Goals: Our area of opportunity with programming lies in drawing in new demographics to the library, and strengthening our bonds with other Webster organizations. As we continue to offer the programs that are already strongly established, we will also add more offerings geared towards millennials and other adults. We will expand our program offerings to the group homes in the area, and make stronger connections with the school district to expand our family offerings. Members of the community will be invited to share their knowledge, and explain how their community organizations can offer further resources related to the program topic.

3. Branding – the WPL will develop a brand strategy to better tell our story which might include a slogan, marketing and a new logo which better reflects the library as it is today. Community engagement tools such as surveys or focus groups might be considered to help identify branding needs.

Example: The library currently has an eclectic brand, with signage of varying type and design throughout the interior of the library, and several different versions of the library's logo available for use online and in print. Our marketing efforts are currently spread out between several different departments, allowing each department to best reach its intended audience. All of our branding and marketing efforts have thus far been managed in-house, relying on several talented members of our team.

New Branding Ideas: While our current branding and marketing strategies have served us well and capitalized on the talent of our team, after the library renovations we identified a need for a refresh of our library image, as well as a desire to invite outside perspective on the brand and identity of the library. Our hopes are to seek assistance from a professional brand developer in order to identify how we can fine tune our image and streamline our marketing procedures.

4. User Experience – the WPL will continue to enhance the user experience by providing exemplary customer service through staff training and development opportunities. We will also continue to evaluate and improve upon "the total library experience" - which is defined by every interaction a patron has with the library in person, over the phone, and online.

Example: Within the last few years, we have made a concentrated effort to improve library users' online experience. The library now has a new website, with a more colorful and easy-to-use interface. Patrons can now easily register for events, book a meeting space, and request a Tech Tutor through our seamlessly integrated LibCal system. The Webster Public Library is easy to find through Google, despite the many "Monroe Counties" and "Webster Libraries" throughout the nation. We are at the top of the search results thanks to our efforts in search engine optimization.

New User Experience Ideas: One area of user experience that the library would like to continue to improve upon is that of customer service. With service industries continuing to expand in the US, there will always be a wealth of new information and opportunities for innovative employee trainings. Recently, two of our staff members attended an advance customer service workshop, and they will be sharing what they learned with the WPL staff to help us improve our interactions with each other and with patrons. This is only one example of the many ways we intend to continue serving our library users to the best of our abilities.

Next Steps

This report is scheduled to be submitted to the Board of Trustees at its' October meeting and will act on the report's recommendations as it sees fit. The Director and staff will take the recommendations and formulate a work plan to accomplish the goals. The Director will include progress on approved recommendations in reports over the ensuing three years.

Appendix A - Fast Facts

Mission

We enhance our community's intellectual and creative pursuits by providing expertise in combination with an eclectic collection. We are committed to providing the highest quality of service at the greatest value in a comfortable and inclusive environment.

Fast Facts

Building:	45,246 square feet (2 nd largest public library in Monroe County). This is a leased facility, not town owned property. The referendum to renovate was a public vote held in 2001. The vote was 1,216 vs. 231. The cost to renovate was less than \$2,000,000. Major renovation in 2016 paid for primarily by Alan Gindi, owner, to place our entrance to the rear of the plaza.
Holdings:	241,795 (print and non-print)
Materials budget:	\$130,272
2016 budget:	\$2,026,311
Employees:	63 (10 FT)
Programs:	Children's: 347, attendance: 21,438 Teens: 45, attendance: 421 Adult: 175, attendance: 3,405
Door count:	349,182
Circulation:	958,801 (third behind Greece & Brighton)
Reference questions:	23,516
Computer usage:	32,239 sessions (does not include wi-fi usage)
Minimum weekly hours:	56
Days open:	316
Resident registered borrowers:	36,163 (Population of Webster 42,641) Non-resident registered borrowers: 348 (Out of county borrowers pay \$20 annual fee)

Appendix B – Results of SWOT Analysis

The following table illustrates the common, overlapping Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats of the Webster Public Library as identified by the six groups mentioned in the “Planning Process” section of this document.

Strengths What do you do well? What unique resources can you draw on? What do others see as your strengths?	Weaknesses What could you improve? Where do you have fewer resources than others? What are others likely to see as weaknesses?
Quality of staff X6 Space/facility x5 Children's programming x5 Collections x5 Friends of WPL x4	Parking x6 Space (too big, distance between circulation and reference, signage in & out, not walkable) x5 Budget (not enough NEW) x5
Opportunities What opportunities are open to you? What trends could you take advantage of? How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?	Threats What threats could harm you? What is your competition doing? What threats do your weaknesses expose you to?
Strengthen connections with WCSD & other community groups x6 Marketing (collections/staff/programs) x6 Expand programming for all ages x5 Grants x4	Staying relevant x6 Budget cuts x5 Parking x3

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