

# Watertown Free Public Library Long Range Plan (FY2017-FY2022)

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## Mission Statement

The Watertown Free Public Library extends beyond its walls to connect people to ideas, information, education, creative opportunities, and to each other. While preserving the rich history of Watertown, the WFPL embraces the advancement of library service, inspires personal development, and promotes community. The library provides free recreation, entertainment, and enrichment. It welcomes and serves everyone.

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## Methodology

The Long Range Planning Process began in December of 2014. The activities of the committee are outlined below.

- Survey: A library survey was sent to all homeowners with their tax bills. The survey was also accessible through the library website and in print at the library. Patrons had until March 1 to complete the survey. A total of 676 responses were recorded.
- Staff Focus Groups: Staff members were divided into three groups on different days. Each group was led by a Department Head. Questions were asked from the following categories: patron experience, staff resources, the library's role, the library's image, and trends.
- Long Range Planning Committee: A group consisting of staff, Trustees, and community members formed in January. The committee met five times from January to May and once in September to review the final plan. The committee included:

Library Staff and Trustees:

Leone Cole, Library Director

Caitlin Browne, Assistant Library Director  
Michael Hanlon, Chairman of the Board of Trustees  
Timothy Tracy, Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees  
Raya Stern, Treasurer of the Board of Trustees  
Katherine Button, Secretary of the Board of Trustees  
Gracemarie LeBlanc, Trustee  
Carol Tierney, Trustee  
Karen Roubicek, Co-President of the Friends of Project Literacy  
Aimee Lambert, Adult Services Librarian  
Emily Miranda, Supervisor of Children's Services

Community Members:

Sheppard Ferguson  
Lani Gerson  
Leanne Hammonds  
Teddy Kokoros  
Cecilia Lenk, Town Councilor  
Penny Peoples  
Brian Worobey

- Subcommittees: The Long Range Planning Committee was broken into 3 subcommittees; technology, user needs, and focus groups.
- Communications consultant Niki Lamberg of Lamberg and Associates joined the planning committee for 3 meetings. Ms. Lamberg worked with the WFPL on various communications projects prior to the planning process. Her involvement in the Long Range Plan included lending her expertise of the organization and Watertown, planning and prioritizing committee meetings, and leading committee discussion.

- SWOT analysis led by Ms. Lamberg.
- Comprehensive plan review: The committee considered Watertown's comprehensive plan and invited Steve Magoon, Director of Community Development and Planning/Assistant Town Manager, to discuss and answer questions. The plan was passed in June of 2015 and covers the next 25 years.

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## User Needs

Watertown is a diverse community of 31,915 (2010 Census) inhabiting roughly 4 square miles along the Charles River. The median age of residents is currently 38 and is projected to increase over the next 25 years with the biggest growth in age being in the 65-75 age bracket. There are three public elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school that serves approximately 2,600 students.

69% of households earn incomes under \$99,000, 42% of which are between \$40,000 and \$99,000. 35-45% of households are considered cost burdened (pay more than 30% to housing) and 15-16% are severely cost burdened. 25% of households earn below \$40,000. With this in mind it is worth noting that Watertown's diversity is both ethnic and economic in nature.

Watertown residents speak over 35 languages with 25.9% of the population being foreign born.

In Fiscal Year 2015 the library had 398,398 visitors who checked out 637,211 items, 59% of which were books.

The library was renovated in 2006 and is ADA compliant.

Based on feedback from the community and staff, our users need (in no particular order):

- Timely access to current books, movies, and other library materials that match their personal interests
- A clean and welcoming facility in which they can conduct their library business whether it be for study, business, or pleasure

- Friendly, attentive, and knowledgeable staff
- Community gathering space for civic and social groups
- Quiet space for private study
- Ample parking with handicapped accessibility
- Instruction on technology, both library-specific and general (e.g. both Overdrive and Microsoft Office)
- Convenience
- Delivery service for the homebound
- Communication from the library about our services in a way that reaches them
- Library programs for all ages at times that work for their personal schedules
- Social engagement
- Access to computers, internet, wifi, scanning, and printing
- A well-organized website that is user friendly
- Online patron services (renewing cards online, checking out ebooks, etc.)
- Opportunities for educational and cultural development
- Entertainment
- Literacy services for non-native English speakers
- Inclusive services for people of differing physical and developmental abilities
- Librarians trained in user instruction
- Centralized place for community information

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### **Core Competencies**

We consider the areas in which we excel our core competencies. These are areas in which we continuously strive to excel by either maintaining the current service or implementing change for improvement. These competencies do not have specific goals outlined in this Long Range Plan, but are still considered priorities of service.

- Excellent Customer Service
- Providing exhibit space for local artists in the Art Gallery
- Adding new media formats to the collection
- Assisting patrons to find materials that best suit their reading, watching, and listening preferences
- Maintaining a web presence that is current (social media, online news outlets, website)
- Clean and well maintained facilities
- Responsiveness to Community Needs
- Robust hours of operation
- Excellent library programming and services for all ages
- Providing community gathering space
- Project Literacy
- Technology infrastructure and security
- Budget advocacy and financial stewardship
- Adherence to American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights<sup>i</sup>
- Digitization of local history materials

## Goals and Objectives

**Goal 1: The library will be a welcoming and engaging physical and digital destination for all users.**

**Objective 1:** The library will reduce noise levels.

**Activity 1:** Administration will explore the feasibility of adding doors to the Periodicals Room.

**Activity 2:** Administration will research available options of noise reducing materials to add to the lobby.

**Objective 2:** The library will add private study areas.

**Activity 1:** Administration will explore the possibilities for funding any viable additional study space solution by December 2016.

**Objective 3:** The library will adapt to patron use of the physical space.

**Objective 4:** Library Administration and Trustees will evaluate library policies annually.

**Activity 1:** Library administration will create a schedule for policy review.

**Objective 5:** Library Administration will advocate for more parking.

**Activity 1:** Library staff will collect patron comments about parking for a six month period by June 2017. Comments will be reviewed by the Trustees and forwarded to the Town for consideration.

**Objective 6:** The library will have a well-organized and user friendly website that complies with ADA accessibility standards.

**Activity 1:** Teen Services will include reader's advisory tools by August 1, 2016.

**Activity 2:** Library staff will conduct a usability study of the newly redesigned website by August 1, 2016 and make any necessary changes to the site.

**Activity 3:** The mobile website will be evaluated for ease of use and usefulness by September 30, 2016.

**Objective 7:** The library will offer options for patrons whose schedules make it difficult to make it to the library during open hours.

**Objective 8:** Administration will anticipate building maintenance issues typical of a 10-15 year old building.

**Activity 1:** Administration will create a comprehensive preventative maintenance plan by December, 2016.

**Activity 2:** Custodians will receive training as necessary to keep the building clean and well maintained.

**Goal 2: The library will provide collections and services that meet current needs and anticipate future needs.**

**Objective 1:** Librarians will prioritize high demand and popular interest titles for purchase.

**Activity 1:** Librarians will purchase 1 digital copy for every 4 Watertown patron digital holds.

**Activity 2:** Library staff will evaluate movie and game collections to insure collection's growth and vitality, while investigating the provision of downloadable formats of these media on an ongoing basis.

**Activity 3:** Library staff will purchase more high demand books and movies and videogames to ensure greater availability, and to support better merchandise displays on an ongoing basis.

**Objective 2:** HATCH will maintain regular, posted hours of service.

**Activity 1:** The volunteer coordinator in conjunction with library administration will work with the town, Arsenal developers, and other stakeholders to identify a permanent space for HATCH and to staff it on a regular basis.

**Activity 2:** Library Administration and Trustees will seek out grant and town funding for HATCH.

**Objective 3:** Project Literacy will offer a range of options for learning English, developing literacy, and preparing for citizenship.

**Activity 1:** Project Literacy will train a minimum of 25 new tutors over the course of its fall and spring trainings.

**Objective 4:** Librarians will develop a collection strategy to complement the collection development policy.

**Activity 1:** Library staff will develop innovative ways to improve circulation of library materials, implementing weekly changes of displays, new reader's advisory tools, and other marketing tools.

**Activity 2:** The Teen Department will reallocate shelving space so as to increase room for high demand materials, specifically analyzing the non-fiction collections as to their viability by August 2016.

**Objective 5:** Adult Services will offer regular technology training for adults.

**Activity 1:** Librarians will receive training on user instruction by March, 2017.

**Objective 6:** Public computers will be up to date and have the software that patrons need and want.

**Activity 1:** Technical Services staff will evaluate the public computers and replace or upgrade as necessary on an ongoing basis

**Activity 2:** Library staff will be proactive in communicating feedback from patrons about technology needs to library decision makers.

**Objective 7:** The library will provide services for patrons with special needs.

**Activity 1:** The homebound delivery service will be evaluated and expanded where needed.

**Activity 2:** Library staff will connect with Watertown's assisted living facilities.

**Objective 8:** Librarians will be advocates of information literacy.

**Activity 1:** Librarians will develop instruction guides for parents to assist their children in evaluating online resources. This will be shared with the Watertown Public Schools librarians.

**Objective 9:** The library will curate a local history collection that considers Watertown's past, present, and future.

**Activity 1:** Library staff will identify and fill gaps in the current collection.

**Goal 3: Patron interaction with the library will increase through varied forms of community engagement.**

**Objective 1:** The Community Engagement Specialist will adhere to a Social Media Strategy by July 2016.

**Objective 2:** Library staff will adhere to a WFPL Communications Style Guide.

**Activity 1:** The Community Engagement Specialist will complete a WFPL style guide for all web-based communication by September 2016.

**Objective 3:** The Community Engagement Specialist will continuously identify media outlets that will reach different types of existing and potential library patrons.

**Objective 4:** The library will form collaborative relationships with local businesses and organizations in order to find out about new opportunities to engage the community.

**Objective 5:** Public service staff will participate in Watertown community events every year.

**Activity 1:** Staff members will represent the library at Faire on the Square in September 2017.

**Activity 2:** Librarians and the Community Engagement Specialist will collaborate to identify appropriate future events to attend by August 2017.

**Objective 6:** The library will cosponsor a program or event with at least one town department or organization at least once a year.

**Activity 1:** The Children's Department will partner with Watertown Community Gardens during Summer Reading 2016.

**Objective 7:** The library will consider programming that is primarily for social engagement.

**Activity 1:** The library will host at least 3 programs for social engagement by October 2017.

**Activity 2:** The community engagement specialist will document our existing programs, including photographs, quotes, and stories. These will be published in order to encourage more social interaction at our existing programs

**Activity 3:** The library will monitor national library trends in order to identify social programming which might suit the interests of the Watertown community

**Activity 4:** The community engagement specialist will work with staff members who participate in the creation of library programming in order to consider ways to incorporate more social engagement into the library's programming

**Objective 8:** The library will create a staff messaging guide.

**Objective 9:** The library will work with other Town Departments for efficiency of town services.

**Activity 1:** Staff will engage Watertown Adult Education before the fall 2016 Adult Education Catalog is published.

**Activity 2:** Youth services librarians will contact Watertown schools monthly during the school year for academic support and summer reading collaboration.

**Objective 10:** The library will host annual fundraising events.

**Activity 1:** The 2017 5K fundraiser will have 200 participants and 1 major sponsor.

**Objective 10:** The library will participate in creating a town wide Community Calendar.

**Activity 1:** The Library will further research the feasibility of a library run town-wide community events calendar by December 2016.

**Goal 4: The library will have an organizational culture that is innovative, participatory, and grows community leaders.**

**Objective 1:** Administration will advocate for robust staffing.

**Objective 2:** Library leadership will encourage innovation of service from all levels of staff.

**Activity 1:** Administration and Department Heads will evaluate the effectiveness of internal communication practices.

**Objective 2:** Library staff will receive training that inspires excellence.

**Objective 3:** Library staff will use 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills as defined<sup>ii</sup> by the Institute for Museums and Library Services (IMLS)

**Activity 1:** Library staff will develop a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Guide that defines aspects of the IMLS definitions that are most important at the Watertown Free Public Library.

**Objective 4:** The library will always excel in the “core competencies” mentioned in this plan.

**Activity 1:** Circulation staff will receive semi-annual customer service training.

**Activity 2:** The library will continue with its Skillbuild program to promote creative problem solving.

**Objective 5:** Library Leadership will identify development opportunities for staff members.

**Objective 6:** Library staff will know current library trends

**Activity 1:** Library Department Heads will redefine library performance measures to match current library trends and use.

**Activity 2:** Administration will select one staff member to attend ALA Annual Conference in Chicago in 2017.

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<sup>i</sup> “Library Bill of Rights” <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill> (September 9, 2015)

<sup>ii</sup> “Museums, Libraries, and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills” [http://www.imls.gov/about/21st\\_century\\_skills\\_list.aspx](http://www.imls.gov/about/21st_century_skills_list.aspx) (September 9, 2015).