



CONNECT. CREATE. GROW.

Lynnfield
PUBLIC LIBRARY



Lynnfield Public Library Strategic Plan

Fiscal Year 2024–2028



Lynnfield
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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Photos: Samantha Totman

Message from the Library Director

It is with great anticipation that I share our library’s new strategic plan. As the new library director, I have been looking forward to beginning the strategic planning process and finding out more about how the library can play a central role in meeting the needs of the community.

There have been a number of changes in Lynnfield and in our library services since our last strategic plan, including demographic changes in Lynnfield’s population, the town’s infrastructure, school renovations completed, and a new library website. The most exciting news came this July when the Lynnfield Public Library was awarded a provisional Library Construction Grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC). This is certainly an exciting time to be the Director of the Lynnfield Public Library! First and foremost, the Lynnfield Public Library is YOUR library, and I want to build connections and learn how we can “Connect, Create, and Grow” together. During the strategic planning process, there were several SOAR sessions with the community, which stands for Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results. I loved hearing all of the positive feedback, and was even more excited to read through the opportunities and aspirations to learn how the library could better meet the wants and needs of Lynnfield residents. These discussions enabled us to think of ways to innovate library services through technology, physical spaces, staff development, programming, and more.

I’ve been thinking a lot about a quote from R. David Lankes: “Bad libraries build collections. Good libraries build services (of which a collection is only one). Great libraries build communities.” This is what I want for the future of the Lynnfield Public Library. What I heard in the meetings and read in the survey responses tells me that Lynnfield wants the same: more community and civic engagement, more connection with town departments and community groups, more accessible physical services and digital offerings, and for the library to be an entry point for new residents looking to learn more about their town. You want library staff out in the community meeting you where you are, offering more diverse and interesting programming, better technology, to support access and resources for all ages, and to be a safe space to share ideas and meet your friends and neighbors.

I want to thank the Strategic Planning Committee members, Board of Library Trustees, Library staff, and community members who took the time to fill out the library survey. Through your invaluable feedback, we have been able to create a dynamic, flexible plan that will help guide us through the next five years. This plan is both practical and aspirational. The Trustees, Staff, and I are thrilled to get started using the plan to better inform our decisions about the future of library services.

Abigail Porter
Library Director

Acknowledgements

The Lynnfield Public Library would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the members of the Lynnfield Public Library Strategic Planning Committee for all of the time, energy, and thoughtful feedback they shared during this process. The Board of Trustees, Staff, and I would also like to thank everyone who took the time out of their busy day to fill out our survey. Your feedback is invaluable.

Additionally, we would like to thank our very insightful staff who eagerly shared their thoughts and brainstormed new ideas. As the people who most represent the library to the Lynnfield community and will be implementing the plan, the staff's input was indispensable. We would also like to thank the Lynnfield Public Library Board of Trustees who remained engaged throughout the process and who provided excellent feedback and leadership. We also want to thank our consultant, Deborah Hoadley, for all her guidance and hard work steering us through this process.

Most importantly, we want to thank all of the Lynnfield Public Library patrons who visit the library every day to use the resources, services, and materials and attend programs. It is a pleasure to serve you.



Photo: Marita Klements

**STRATEGIC PLANNING
COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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LIBRARY DIRECTOR

Abigail Porter

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Marita Klements

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Deborah Hoadley,
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Photo: Katherine Decker

Planning & Methodology

At the beginning of 2023, the Lynnfield Public Library Board of Trustees voted to begin the strategic planning process. Library Director Abigail Porter sent out an email to several planning consultants requesting proposals. A group of community members, staff, and Library Trustees interviewed candidates. In early spring, the Board voted to accept a proposal from Deborah Hoadley of Hoadley Consulting. A project timeline was set up to meet the deadline to submit the library's strategic plan to the MBLC on October 1, 2023.

In late May 2023, Library Director Abigail Porter, Assistant Director Marita Klements, and Ms. Hoadley met to discuss community demographics, library statistics, previous long-range plan goals, impacts for the future (including an anticipated building grant to support a new library building), community members to serve on the Strategic Planning Committee, and dates to meet.

In addition to the Strategic Planning Committee, Ms. Hoadley also facilitated two additional focus groups. The first was held on June 2, 2023, with library staff and the second was held on July 25, 2023, with the Library Board of Trustees. During both of these focus groups, there were discussions and brainstorming about the library and the Town of Lynnfield. It was mentioned there were plans underway by the town to create a vision plan, called *Lynnfield 2040: Shaping Our Future Today*. As the library plan begins to take shape, a look at what the town is identifying as priorities and goals will be considered.

There were three Strategic Planning Committee meetings held from mid-June through the beginning of August 2023.

- The first meeting took a look at the SOAR of the library and how the library could meet the needs of the residents while looking ahead to the future.
- The second meeting focused on the community and what current issues and challenges are facing community members, as well as what they would like to see in the future for their town.
- The third meeting was a recap of all the meetings and a summary report of the community survey, which was done mostly in the month of July.

During this meeting, the participants also discussed the current mission of the library and helped to create a new framework for future mission and vision statements and top priorities the library should focus on over the next five years. A public survey was created and distributed in July after gathering information and feedback from the focus groups. A total of 280 responses were collected. Director Porter, Assistant Director Klements, and Ms. Hoadley reviewed all the data and pulled together the parts of the strategic plan: Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Values, Strategic Priorities, and Goals. The Strategic Plan Fiscal Year (FY)2024-FY2028 was formally approved by the Library Board of Trustees in September 2023.

User Needs Assessment

Over the past six months, multiple meetings were held to identify what the Lynnfield community wants and needs from its public library. Data were collected through these focus groups and the community survey. Based on these results, five overarching priorities were identified along with a multitude of ideas to pursue in the next five years. Each priority and goal represents a component of the community's vision for the future of the Lynnfield Public Library. While it is listed as the third priority, the building and new building plan has a strong presence throughout the entire plan. On July 13, 2023, the library received a provisional construction grant of over 8 million dollars from the MBLC to help build a brand new twenty-first-century library to meet the needs of the Lynnfield community. In addition to the 8 million dollars, the MBLC also awarded the library \$883,672 dollars to help offset rising construction costs. On October 16, 2023, there will be a Town Meeting where the community must vote to decide whether or not to move forward on this project. It must pass by a two-thirds majority. If the vote passes, we will move on to a ballot vote in early December to approve a debt exclusion for the total project cost. After both of these votes, the project will move into planning the final design.



Other priorities include creating connections and partnerships with organizations, businesses, and individuals to support meeting the needs of the community; increasing awareness of what the library offers; providing diverse, relevant materials and programs to support literacy and lifelong learning; and implementing staff development and opportunities for staff to support community outreach and engagement. A summary of all the data collected during the focus group meetings can be found in Appendix A. Appendix B contains a summary of the survey results.

Strategic Plan FY2024 – 2028

Approved September 11, 2023 by the Lynnfield Public Library Board of Trustees

LIBRARY'S MISSION

Our Library ensures free, equitable access to traditional and innovative resources, services and programs, which fosters a love of reading, inspires lifelong learning, promotes culture and encourages connections among all community members.

LIBRARY'S VISION

Our Library will facilitate connections by being a safe, welcoming and inclusive cultural center where people will gather and share ideas, interests and knowledge.

LIBRARY'S VALUES

Our Library upholds the freedom of information, the foundations of literacy and reading, the patron's right to privacy, and the basic tenets of democracy.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. **Connections**

Provide opportunities for town departments, educational institutions, community organizations, businesses and individuals to connect with the library and each other to support meeting the needs of the community.

2. **Communication & Outreach**

Increase awareness of what the library provides the community.

3. **Building**

Provide facilities that meet the needs of the 21st century.

4. **Collections & Programs**

Ensure the library provides a diverse, relevant range of materials and programming to support literacy and lifelong learning.

5. **Staff**

Implement strategies to support the director and increase staff development and build teams that support community outreach and engagement.



Photo: Samantha Totman



Photo: Samantha Totman



Photo: Alexandra Lambright

Lynnfield Public Library

GOALS

Connections

To be an active part of the community, the Lynnfield Public Library will connect with community organizations and partners and be a central source of information.

Goal 1.1: Continue to connect and collaborate with town departments, educational institutions, community organizations, and businesses.

Goal 1.2: Create spaces for the community to gather and come together around shared ideas, skills, and knowledge.

Goal 1.3: Promote connections between families and residents to meet and support one another.

Communication & Outreach

To raise the perception of the Lynnfield Public Library as a vibrant, economical, valuable, and meaningful community resource.

Goal 2.1: Investigate the concept of a centralized calendar for the community by coordinating with other town departments and organizations.

Goal 2.2: Find new ways to reach populations not currently reached through traditional library promotion.

Goal 2.3: Seek opportunities to bring the services of the library beyond the physical building.

Goal 2.4: Promote the economic value and sustainability the library provides to Lynnfield residents.

Building

To expand the Lynnfield Public Library's role as a welcoming, safe, accessible, and useful space to meet the needs of all community members and staff.

Goal 3.1: Provide accessible, functional, safe, and welcoming physical spaces with dedicated areas for a variety of activities for various age groups, including programming, meetings, and quiet study.

Goal 3.2: Ensure safety coming and leaving the library grounds.

Goal 3.3: Investigate creative ways to use exterior space.

Goal 3.4: Maintain current facility by repairing and replacing existing operational systems in order to update infrastructure and technology.

GOALS (CONTINUED)

Collections & Programs

To provide diverse, relevant, and engaging collections and programs for all ages of the community.

Goal 4.1: Maintain and develop collections that reflect the diversity and interests of the community.

Goal 4.2: Seek new ways to partner with educational institutions, community groups, and town departments to provide enriched services and programs to support and better meet the needs of the community.

Goal 4.3: Provide new opportunities to engage teens and young families, as well as programs that encourage intergenerational participation.

Staff

To ensure the Lynnfield Public Library has quality, knowledgeable, customer-centric staff to carry out the mission and vision of the library.

Goal 5.1: Ensure staff are supported in their needs and job satisfaction by creating a work environment that is welcoming and productive.

Goal 5.2: Support and encourage staff to participate in or attend community activities and events.

Goal 5.3: Provide training and professional development opportunities to ensure staff is knowledgeable, forward-looking, and inclusive in providing materials, services and programs to the community.



Appendix A

This is a summary of the facilitated SOAR exercise and community visioning discussions conducted with each of the focus groups. These are the main categories and themes that emerged.

Strengths

- Staff – cohesive, resilient, friendly
- Collections – Library of Things, Historical & Genealogy collections, good size collection for area
- Central location of building
- Friends of the Library
- Children’s programs
- Technology – app, website, social media

Opportunities

- Adult programs
- Partner and outreach to other town departments, schools, organizations, groups, businesses
- Promotion of what the library does
- Pop-up libraries* - presence in the community outside the library
- Accessibility

*This is also aspirational if it is actually setting up a library elsewhere in the community, not just a few hours of having a “library” or being at an event.

Aspirations

- Physical building that meets multiple needs
- Large meeting space – community and library use
- Quiet study space
- Staff areas
- Storage
- Eliminate basement and water issues
- Safer to access building (parking and traffic)

Library vehicle – idea similar to pop-up library; homebound service; present at events

Diverse/variety/hours of programs for all ages

Library for all (new families, new demographics in town, etc.)

Results

New building = library is essential and beneficial for whole community

Everyone knows what is going on at the library and in the community

Stronger partnerships

Staff feel valued – professional development; areas to work; areas for breaks

Funded to provide what is needed for the community

Community Discussions

Town facilities – plan for the future, cohesive and comprehensive plan for infrastructure

Competition for priorities in town

Sustainability

Accessibility

Civic/community involvement – sense of pride

No barriers – easier to participate and feel welcomed

Teens – space and activities

Central communication

Key words to describe the desired future of Lynnfield

Inclusion

Engagement

Cultural balance

Sustainable

Collaboration

Outreach

Communication

Education

Generations together

Appendix B

Here are the highlights from the community survey.

Of the 279 responses:

- 41.6% come to the library at least once per month
- 26.5% come to the library 2-3 times per month
- 17% come to the library 5 or more times per month
- 5.8% do not come to the library, but use our digital resources

Of those who do not use the library:

- 44% use the library's digital resources from home
- 17% use another library
- 16% find parking at the library to be an issue
- 4% cannot get to the library easily

Of those who responded, here is how they want to use the library:

- 50% of respondents want to use the library to meet other people and share experiences.
- 39% of respondents want to use the library as a quiet space to read, work or study.
- 32% of respondents want to use the library as a meeting space for their group or organization.

Some notable comments:

“Libraries are a wonderful thing. There is no way to not benefit from them as long as they are available.”

“[The staff] is so helpful- goes above and beyond to accommodate.”

“No parking, it is a dangerously old building that we have been putting Band-Aids on for too long”

“Host gatherings that are larger than the Meeting House can hold, find rehearsal space for any kind of local performance outside the schools, host art classes.”

The comments submitted fell into several categories:

The vast majority were about the need for more space for meetings and programs.

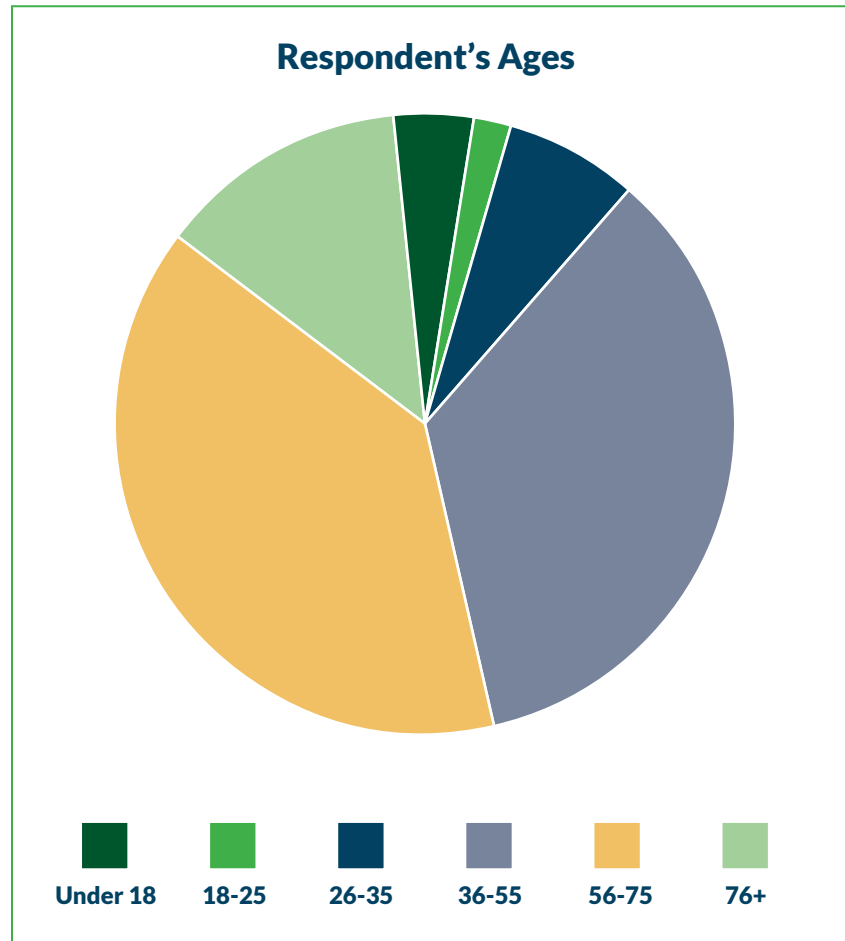
The second highest number of comments were about our library programs, suggestions for different activities patrons would like to see in the library, suggestions for what times of the day and week programs would be welcome, etc.

Other topics that were widely commented on were:

Parking: insufficient and unsafe

The fiction room in the basement (that it is damp, dreary, and prone to flooding)

General concerns about the library facility, insufficient space, electrical outlets, dated, etc.





I Love My Library Because...

I love how the library gives my family access to a world of knowledge via books, ebooks, audiobooks. The staff recommends great reads & is always so helpful in getting books from other libraries if needed.

I love to read books to Mitsy!

Dear Jennifer Team, You are the best! Thank you for making a visit to your library a great experience. Thank you for getting new books so quickly. Wish all children good health & happiness. Best wishes, Frank

The books and the staff

I Love the library because I like CVS COLORING!

I love to get books with Alex at the library

I always appreciate the librarian locating books from other libraries. It's quite helpful when you are members of a Book Club. Thank you!

We do read and they love and coloring and playdoh

I love the library because I love books!

story time - wes

MS JOON + MS ALLY - Logan

KENNEDY I love books and coloring

WE LOVE THE Childrens books and the STAFF! DENI HA R D

I love coming here because I LOVE books! I am

I Love coming here with Mi Mi NIKKA

I Love MiMi and coming to the library

The thing I Love about the library is its a BAND

I Love the Books

I love to read

I love reading books with Mitsy!

Impeding

Hard-working staff making the best of what they have

of kus it is fun n. Lily kanasta

I Love Books

"Ava" Story time

the books yes

HELP ME

I love to get books at the library I love to color at the library

the Perot

You can read

To pick out Books

Photos: Samantha Totman

*We love the Childrens books
and the staff!*

– Deni

*The staff is always so courteous and willing
to help. Their friendliness and welcoming
greetings create a hospitable environment.
They deserve praise! <3*

– Lucy

*I love coming here because
I love books!*

– Liam

*I love how the Library gives my family access to a world of
knowledge via books, ebooks, audiobooks... The staff recom-
mends great reads and is always so helpful in getting books
from other libraries if needed.*

– Frank

*It is very quiet
and relaxing.*

– Vic



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