

Weston Public Library

Strategic Plan 2015-2018

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Weston Public Library – Strategic Plan

1. Mission Statement

The mission of the Weston Public Library is to provide a broad range of informational, educational, technological, social and recreational resources to serve the diverse needs of the community. *Adopted 1993; Reaffirmed 2002; Revised February 3, 2015*

2. Vision Statement

The Weston Public Library aspires to be a vibrant and meaningful physical and digital destination that supports the evolving needs of our patrons in the 21st century.

3. Values Statement

Our values include:

- Fostering traditional and technological literacies
- Nurturing lifelong learning and personal growth
- Encouraging opportunities for social and cultural interaction and discovery
- Building a strong sense of community in Weston
- Maintaining a physical library space that continues to meet patron needs
- Leveraging our knowledgeable staff to support diverse initiatives for our patrons
- Providing professional development opportunities for staff to remain current as libraries evolve

4. Town of Weston, CT

The Weston Public Library serves a population of approximately 10,000 people. Due to the nature of the community, the population is not expected to increase significantly. The demographic breakdown of the Town according to United States Census data is as follows:

Age	2000 Census	2010 Census
Under 5	8.0%	4.1%
5-14	20.8%	21.8%
15-24	7.1%	12.8%
25-44	25.5%	17.2%
45-64	29.0%	33.2%
65+	9.7%	11.0%

Over 80% of the population age 25+ has a bachelor’s degree or higher. Over 85% of the working age population commutes to work with a mean commuting time of 41.3 minutes. The median household income in Weston is \$213,423, which is significantly higher than the median household income for Fairfield County (\$82,614) and for the State of Connecticut (\$69,519).¹ The Town supports a K-12 school system that is recognized as one of the top school systems in the state.

The 2010 Town Plan of Conservation and Development noted a recurring “desire for additional services and places to gather as a community.”² The plan also notes that 45% of participating residents desired additional resources and services at the Library, while only 26% did not favor additional resources, 14% had no opinion, and 11% did not use the Library.

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Of the current populace, approximately 66% of residents have registered for Library cards.³ This information, in coordination with the demographic data from the United States Census, reflects a community that values education, lifelong learning, and the library specifically.

5. Weston Public Library - History

The Library is a central resource for Weston residents. The hallmarks of the Library are its location and the friendly, small-town feel the staff creates for residents.

The Weston Public Library was founded in 1935 and was housed in the basement of the Horace C. Hurlbutt, Jr. School. In 1950, the Library was moved to a larger room on the first floor of the school where it continued to support the school and the general public. The current Library building was completed in 1963 and has had two subsequent additions. The original Library consisted of 6,742 sf (including a small mechanical basement and mezzanine). Expansion projects in 1985 and 1994 increased the total square footage to 14,152 sf. With parts of the building now 20 to 50 years old and shifts in how patrons use library space, there is significant need to improve the Library's overall design and infrastructure. This need has become particularly apparent with the influx of patrons, including students after school, as well as during the recent storms in 2011 and 2012, when the Library's lack of seating and electrical outlets has been problematic.

6. Strategic Plan - Information Gathering: Process and Results

Over the past 2 years, the Weston Public Library Board of Trustees has been discussing Space and Strategic Planning. In preparation for the Library renovation project announced last year and to inform the development of its three-year Strategic Plan, the Board launched a community needs assessment in February 2014. With the guidance of a facilitator, the Library Board hosted two focus groups and one community forum. The focus groups each consisted of 10-12 Weston residents chosen to represent a demographic range. The community forum was open to all Weston residents. To gather supplemental feedback, the Board created a survey that was disseminated at the Library, Town Hall, various town agencies, and through the Library's website. This three-part community needs assessment provided valuable inputs critical to informing the goals of the strategic plan as did initial discussions with Library staff and Board members prior to launching the community needs assessment. After reviewing the output of the assessment, several general themes emerged.

Themes

- The desire for an updated physical plant that enhances the Library as a community center
- Improved physical and digital collections
- Increased community outreach
- Additional educational and recreational services and programming

The Library Board established a Strategic Planning Committee to develop the plan based on the themes established through the community needs assessment and staff input. The Committee used these themes to prioritize and provide focus to the strategic plan, and identified the following categories in order to develop a plan of action (see Appendix for greater detail):

- I. Physical improvements
- II. Technology
- III. Education
- IV. Community

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Last, and as part of the overall process, the Library applied for a State Library Construction Grant in August 2014, to seek enhanced financial resources for the update of the physical plant. In November 2014, the Weston Public Library was awarded \$368,000 to be allocated for code compliance, handicapped accessibility, and emergency preparedness.

7. Strategic Plan – Prospective Evaluation and Management

The Strategic Planning Committee intends to monitor the plan outlined in the Appendix. The Committee will update the Board of Trustees on the status of the plan, including associated accomplishments and/or issues that have emerged. This update will transpire annually or on an as-needed basis.

From a longer-term perspective, the Library Board will conduct a user satisfaction survey at the conclusion of the three year plan in order to inform future strategic planning activities as well as to gather additional input/feedback from our patrons.

It should be highlighted that given the rapidly changing nature of libraries, this plan is meant to serve as a framework that will guide, but not limit, the Library's services. Staff will evaluate emerging trends, services, and equipment and recommend any new technology or services to the Strategic Planning Committee, Technology Planning Committee, and the Library Board as appropriate.

The Library Board recognizes that within its current budget and at its current staffing level, it is constrained with respect to the breadth of services that may be provided at this time. The Library Board and the Director will continue to monitor staffing levels.

It should be noted that due to the types of services the Library provides, quantitative measurements do not always accurately depict the impact of programs and services.

Appendix - Weston Public Library Goals and Objectives

I. Physical

- **Goal P1 - Patrons will have well maintained, welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly to work or read.**
 - ✓ *Objective P1A - Interior renovation will provide patrons with an updated and comfortable environment and will satisfy patron needs based on community needs assessment results.*
 - Measurement P1A –Higher gate counts over time due to increased foot traffic.
 - ✓ *Objective P1B - Interior renovation will provide patrons with a variety of seating and gathering locations that encourage both individual study/quiet reflection and small group meeting/gathering areas while seeking to manage noise levels.*
 - Measurement P1B - Higher gate counts over time and increased room reservations for the purpose of group study/learning.
 - ✓ *Objective P1C - Interior renovation will provide for future flexibility so that the Library can adapt to meet patrons' changing needs.*
 - Measurement P1C - Flexibility in newly designed seating areas will allow patrons to rearrange seating to meet their individual or group needs. Infrastructure and interior design will allow for rearrangement of interior spaces, with minimal financial impact, as patron needs change.

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II. Technology

- **Goal T1 – Patrons will find enhanced and expanded technology that improves access to the Library’s educational and recreational resources.**
 - ✓ *Objective T1A - Patrons will have 24/7 access to an up-to-date collection of high quality educational and recreational electronic resources through the Library website.*
 - Measurement T1A – Increased usage statistics of the Library’s website and individual digital resources over time.
 - ✓ *Objective T1B - Library staff will investigate, evaluate, and receive continuing education in electronic resources available to public libraries to ensure that the Library offers patrons resources that meet the educational and recreational needs of the entire community within the budget framework. Key to success in this area will be staff support for patrons in the use of their own and the Library’s electronic resources.*
 - Measurement T1B – Increased use of electronic resources and reference inquiries over time.

- **Goal T2 - Provide technology-related library services that meet the needs of patrons and local organizations.**
 - ✓ *Objective T2A - The renovation will create environments that promote collaborative learning and co-working by incorporating resource sharing and presentation technology that can be used by all members of the community, including students for projects, residents for businesses or personal endeavors, and local groups for meetings.*
 - Measurement T2A – Increase in reservations for meeting spaces by the indicated groups over time.
 - ✓ *Objective T2B - Staff will investigate and evaluate trends in library technology of interest to patrons, as indicated during the community needs assessment process and subsequent evaluations, in order to determine the possibility of implementation within existing budget and staff constraints.*
 - Measurement T2B – Increase in access to technology for patrons and attendance in individual and group technology-related educational programs.
 - ✓ *Objective T2C - Patrons will find an increased number of power outlets available in popular areas of the Library for charging portable devices, and will stay in the Library for longer periods of time, taking better advantage of all Library resources, especially during times of crisis.*
 - Measurement T2C - Higher gate counts over time due to increased foot traffic.

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III. Education

- **Goal E1 - Patrons will have the resources and support they need to pursue both self-directed and structured learning.**
 - ✓ *Objective E1A - Patrons who are seeking to educate themselves will find relevant and current print and digital materials and will have the necessary support from a well-informed staff.*
 - Measurement E1A – Increase in collection use and reference inquiries over time.
 - ✓ *Objective E1B - The Library will continue to support the educational, recreational, and cultural programs the Friends provide patrons and will supplement them within existing budget and staff constraints.*
 - Measurement E1B – Increase in the number of formal (group) and informal (one-on-one) educational programs offered at the Library over time.
 - ✓ *Objective E1C – Patrons of all ages will have access to a broader range of classes, seminars, performances, and workshops through Library partnerships with Town and community agencies and organizations.*
 - Measurement E1C – A wider range of programming with an associated increase in attendance over time.

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IV. Community

- **Goal C1 – Patrons will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by the Library and other community agencies and organizations, as resources permit.**
 - ✓ *Objective C1A – Patrons will have access to information about community educational, recreational, and cultural events. A synergistic relationship among Library and Town organizations/agencies will forge a Library character that is central to the identity of Weston.*
 - Measurement C1A – Increase in visits to the Library website over time with the community viewing the Library as the central place for information.
 - ✓ *Objective C1B - The Library will continue its marketing efforts through available print and electronic resources and investigate new methods of marketing electronically to patrons.*
 - Measurement C1B – Increase in resource use, program attendance, and activity on social media and marketing platforms.

- **Goal C2 - The Library will serve as the intellectual and social hub of the community.**
 - ✓ *Objective C2A – Patrons will continue to experience exceptional, personalized customer service and Library staff will heed patron comments, interests, and concerns when building the collection and adding services and resources.*
 - Measurement C2A – Increase in patron base and satisfaction with services.
 - ✓ *Objective C2B - The Library will continue to provide a venue for community organization meetings and programs and will seek ways to enhance community events by providing additional resources and services that will facilitate the creation and sharing of ideas.*
 - Measurement C2B – Increase in room reservations and requests for technology and resources over time.
 - ✓ *Objective C2C – Patrons will use the café and new seating areas created through the renovation in formal and informal meetings and gatherings to encourage learning and social experiences.*
 - Measurement C2C - Higher gate counts over time due to increased foot traffic and increased patron satisfaction as the Library grows as a comfortable and welcoming community destination.

Footnotes

1 Statistics provided by the U.S. Census Bureau American FactFinder

<http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>.

2 *Town of Weston 2010 Plan of Conservation and Development*

<http://www.westonct.gov/media/file/TownPlanPostSubmissionv4-6-21-10WebVersion.pdf>.

3 Weston Public Library Integrated Library System statistic.