



312 Old Main Street
South Yarmouth, MA 02664
Jane N. Cain, Library Director

Strategic Plan

for Yarmouth Town Libraries

FY2016 – 2021

submitted to the

Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners

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Mission Statement

Yarmouth Town Libraries will provide expert assistance and up-to-date information resources broad enough to meet the informational, recreational and cultural needs of its residents and visitors to the community and to Cape Cod. The public will have access to, and increased awareness of, current topics and titles in multiple formats.

Yarmouth Town Libraries will inspire children to become lifelong readers and will support continuous learning for all ages.

Yarmouth Town Libraries will offer safe, accessible spaces, and opportunities for residents and library users to meet, formally and informally, in a variety of programs for all ages.

Vision Statement

The Yarmouth Town Libraries serve all residents of the community, as they seek facts and ideas for life, as they read for pleasure, as they become informed citizens of a free society, and as they prepare themselves for the future. Skilled library staff members develop collections, provide both local and remote resources, and efficiently manage the library in order to effectively meet the public's needs.

Yarmouth Town Libraries Strategic Planning Committee - 2014

Linda Callahan, South Yarmouth Library Association Vice President
Katherine (Kay) Delaney, Library Board and West Yarmouth Association Member
Charyn Tietge, Vice Chair, Town Library Board
Martha (Mitzi) Krueger, Library Staff
Jane Cain, Library Director

Town Library Board Members

Harris Contos, Chair
Charyn Tietge, Vice Chair
Sally Guadagno, Secretary
Robert Milne
Helen Niedermeier
Katherine (Kay) Delaney
Janet McDowell

Current Library Statistics

In FY2014, the **South Yarmouth Library** held 97,734 titles, including 52,377 books, 337 volumes of print periodicals, 3,305 audiobooks and music CDs, 6,580 video discs, and 35,135 miscellaneous materials (electronic and traditional games, e-books, kits, puzzles, etc.) The **West Yarmouth Library** holds 40,951 items in the same formats: 32,000 books; 211 print periodicals, 1,314 audiobooks and music CDs, 2,178 videos and 5,240 miscellaneous materials. The **Yarmouth Port Library**, since 2009 a privately funded Association library, has 37,836 items in its collection: 24,180 books, 198 volumes of print periodicals, 573 audiobooks, 1,976 videos and 10,909 miscellaneous materials.

FY 2014 PROGRAMS AND ATTENDANCE:

	Programs	Prog. Atten. Adults	Prog. Atten. 'Tweens & Teens	Prog. Atten. Children	Public Access Computer Sessions	Total Visits to Library
SY	365	2,379	20	2,554	40,300	132,833
WY	0	0	0	0	(incl. above)	21,489
YP	65	1,105	0	408	960	46,105

A Brief History of the Town of Yarmouth

Before the 17th century, several Wampanoag tribes lived peacefully in what are now the towns of Dennis and Yarmouth, the area then known as “Mattacheese” or Mattacheeset” meaning “planting lands” or “planting lands by the sea.” The Plymouth Colony court awarded land grants in Yarmouth to John Crowe, Thomas Howes, and Anthony Thacher in 1639, who incorporated the town, naming it for another seaside town in England. Within one year, about 25 mostly farming families had settled in the new town. By the late 17th century Yarmouth’s citizens began looking to the sea for commerce. Fishing, whaling, salt production, sailworks, shipbuilding, and packet transportation were important businesses in Yarmouth.

As in many Cape Cod communities, by the late 18th century, Yarmouth was a town of well-established villages, each with its own distinct character. The north side settlement, along the present Route 6A, evolved into 2 villages, Yarmouth to the east and Yarmouth Port to the west. On the south side, West Yarmouth remained small and rural in nature for generations. Friend’s Village, now South Yarmouth, was a hub of business activity.

Toward the end of the 19th century, West Yarmouth, with its hundreds of acres of rural land and large stretches of sandy beaches, was a prime target for developers who moved in to create summer communities. Tourism became an important industry in Yarmouth’s economic development. With tourism came development. (Summarized from Marion Vuilleumier’s The Town Of Yarmouth, Massachusetts: A History, 1639 – 1989)

From 25 families in 1639, Yarmouth’s year round population in the twenty-first century is nearly 24,000.

Description of Town of Yarmouth:

The 2014 Yarmouth, MA, population is 23,820. There are 986 people per square mile (population density).

Family in Yarmouth, MA

The median age is 51.5. The US median is 37.2. Nearly one third of the population of Yarmouth, like most towns on Cape Cod, is over the age of 65.

53.38% of people in Yarmouth, MA, are married. 12.92% are divorced.

The average household size is 2.04 people. 17.96% of people are married, with children. 13.30% have children, but are single.

Race in Yarmouth, MA

94.03% of people are white, 2.38% are black, 1.25% are Asian, 0.16% are Native American, and 0.34% claim 'other.' 2.39% of the people in Yarmouth, MA, claim hispanic ethnicity.

Sources of data: Original research and analysis by Sperling's Best Places / Fast Forward, Inc., U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey Current Population Survey, Educational Testing Service and ACT, Inc. National Center for Education Statistics and other sources.

The Community

Yarmouth is located in the mid-Cape area, the third largest of the 15 towns on Cape Cod. It celebrated its 375th birthday this year. Yarmouth is bordered on the east by the Town of Dennis, on the west by Barnstable, on the north by Cape Cod Bay, and on the South by Nantucket Sound. Yarmouth's location makes it a popular tourist attraction.

Within its 24 square mile area, there are six public schools: four elementary, one middle school, and one regional high school, the latter shared with the adjacent Town of Dennis. There is a private parochial school in South Yarmouth, and private nursery schools in each of the three villages. Seven Protestant, three Catholic, one Episcopal, and one Society of Friends provide church services.

This year, Yarmouth was deemed an Age-Friendly community by the World Health Organization – a community that supports a thriving older population. Yarmouth's Council on Aging provides classes in a wide range of subjects. The high school offers a continuing education program for adults. Yarmouth Recreation Department offers a wide variety of recreational activities for the town. With its 14 beaches, four golf courses, the variety of accommodations along the six mile stretch of Route 28 on the south side and the historic charm of Route 6A on the north side, Yarmouth offers much to visitors and residents alike.

The Town of Yarmouth is governed by a five-member Board of Selectmen. A full-time Town Administrator administers their policies. An annual Town Meeting is held each April.

The population of Yarmouth doubles during the summer months with an influx of tourists and other summer visitors, like most resort communities. During the past several years, that population also increases during what are called the “shoulder seasons,” extending the summer season into late spring and early fall.

The tax rate for FY 2015 is \$10.19 per thousand dollars of assessed evaluation. (This is \$1.47 less than the tax rate back in 2002.) The municipal budget is approximately \$82,000,000, including the school budget. The FY2015 town appropriation for the library system is \$662,921. The library received State Aid in FY 2014 of \$21,373.

Library History

There are three libraries in the Town of Yarmouth. The histories of all three bear a certain similarity; all began as small reading associations in the mid to late nineteenth century, and later incorporated as libraries: Yarmouth Port in 1866, South Yarmouth in 1869, and West Yarmouth in 1891. South Yarmouth Library is located in an historic homestead, built circa 1830. There have been five additions to the library, the latest in 1990 when a new children’s room, meeting room and an elevator for handicapped access was added. The South Yarmouth Library Association owned the building until 1998, when it turned over the management of the facility to the town. This is the location of administrative offices for the South Yarmouth and West Yarmouth Library branches.

The West Yarmouth Library was founded in 1863 and is still located on its original site. In 1891, the West Yarmouth Library Association was formed to maintain the library. In 1965, a new building, funded by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Castonguay, in honor of their daughter Ann, was built and in 1971, the Castonguays provided the funds to build a wing for the library. The current West Yarmouth Library is the only one of the three community library buildings that was originally built as a library.

The Yarmouth Port library was founded in 1866. In 1871 the Yarmouth Port Library Association was formed to manage the library. Over the years, three additions were added: in 1881, in 1951 and in 1958. The Yarmouth Port Library is privately owned and managed by the Yarmouth Port Library Association.

Until 1994 when the Town Library Board was formed, each of the three libraries operated as independent entities, each governed by a board of trustees, with its own head librarian independently administering its own budget. Town Meeting approved the installation of a seven person Library Board appointed by the selectmen in August of 1994. The selectmen appointed a Library Commission to study the issues and its report was published in 1995 with the recommendation that there be one centrally managed public library department. Currently, the Town Library Board acts in an advisory capacity to the Board of Selectmen and establishes broad library policies. The Board is composed of seven at-large members.

In 1996 the Town voted to approve a Proposition 2 ½ override that effectively increased the library’s budget by 60%. The override added 4.5 full-time positions to the staff, increased the materials budget substantially, and provided funding for public access computers. The override brought Yarmouth libraries up to the average level of municipal funding for other Cape libraries.

In May of 1999, the Town Library Board commissioned a study of the present library system to ascertain space requirements to meet determined service needs. The study considered several options for improving

library services. The Board reached consensus that their recommendation would be to expand the South Yarmouth Library and to retain two village libraries at West Yarmouth and Yarmouth Port.

In 2005, a Town vote to approve matching funds for a planning and design grant for the renovation or new construction for library facilities was narrowly defeated.

After the national economic downturn in 2008, appropriations for the Town Libraries were cut substantially. At that time, 3.5 library staff positions were lost and management and financial responsibility for the Yarmouth Port branch was turned back to a private Association. Yarmouth now has two public library branches: at West and at South.

Any plan for the renovation or construction of new, more efficient, library space has been on hold for most of the last decade, as our local, State and national economies slowly improve.

When the population of Yarmouth reaches 25,000 (2000 census places the town's population at 24,809; 2010 census: 24,373; 2014 census: 23,820*), the library must increase hours of opening to 63 unduplicated hours of service per week. This new requirement will have budget and staffing implications. We are, as are most Cape Cod towns, watching our population numbers closely.

Sources of data: Burt Sperling's Best Places web site, accessed August 27, 2014.

Community Input Methodology:

With the goal of securing broad input from community residents of all ages and interests, we began early this year to create lists of invitees to participate in two planning sessions and we secured a date for a fall "recap" community meeting.

Participants names were suggested by our Town Library Board, the South Yarmouth Library Association/Friends group and the West Yarmouth Library Association members. Library staff, many of whom have worked at the Library for over 10 years, suggested many town residents who could provide insight. We sought library users and non-users. The Library Director also conferred with Town Hall representatives to gather suggestions for municipal department involvement. Participants were selected with an effort to represent the three communities, Yarmouth Port, South and West Yarmouth.

In the late spring, on May 28 and June 18, we hosted two facilitated focus group meetings, attended by a variety of community members representing each of the three Yarmouth villages, different ages and different socio-economic groups. Cheryl Bryan, former Library Director and active member of a variety of library organizations in Massachusetts and New England, now a consultant, organized and facilitated the interactive meetings. Her expertise was valuable in keeping the meetings objective, seeking a "big picture," and moving through a variety of topics.

The first meeting had 22 participants and was held at the South Yarmouth branch, and the second meeting garnered participation by 18 of those participants who met at the West Yarmouth branch. Each meeting lasted for 2 hours. This dialog continued with a wrap-up in September, held at the Yarmouth Senior Center in West Yarmouth. At that session, there were 35 residents in attendance, half of whom (by a show of hands) were new to our planning process – they had not participated in either focus group.

Throughout the summer, there was a community Library survey available at both branches of the Town libraries, at a condominium complex in town, and on line. We received nearly 300 surveys and those were tabulated by a volunteer and reviewed by the Library Director and some Library staff.

In the Appendices to this document are results from each focus group meeting, first a list of S.O.A.R. ideas (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and [desired] Results) shared in a brainstorming exercise, and then, a summary of prioritized ideas (hopes, desires) of the planning group, and third, a list of goals to satisfy the prioritized needs.

What We Heard:

Four themes emerged from the brainstorming sessions and discussions about Yarmouth's Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and (desired) Results S.O.A.R. exercises. Certain ideas were repeated, overlapped and became the focus of a Strategic Plan. Those four conclusive themes allowed us to develop goals and objectives around the following ideas:

Intergenerational Activities

Based on lively discussions about what an ideal community should be and how the library could contribute to that ideal condition, people want more events in town that they can attend and participate in with family. Ideally, the events are nearby, and located in venues convenient to a variety of neighborhoods.

Ideas such as "Olde Home Day," or an annual community gathering open to all ages were suggested. It is an active community, and people want learning opportunities and to increase their cultural experience and awareness. Outdoor walking trails and paths would be welcome. The Library is seen as an important place for such activities and could be a perfect destination.

Funding

Members of the focus group sessions, and especially those who attended the fall "wrap up" were very vocal about the need for better, updated facilities, more access to technology, and more hours that the libraries stay open. Currently, the West Yarmouth branch is open only on weekdays year round, and only for 5 hours each day. Many people asked for longer hours and mentioned the need for Library services during weekends and evenings.

Commons

Cape Cod has much to offer in educational opportunities – at local schools and colleges and at nearby libraries. Yarmouth residents want to be part of that learning culture and want their library to offer more lectures by experts or authors and a large variety of cultural events.

Community

Yarmouth residents want their library to be a strong element in the community – a place of pride and a comfortable destination for them to meet friends, take visitors or family members and share all the Library has to offer. They want to be proud of their Library and its contribution to a strong local community and to our democracy at large.

In conjunction with the prioritized goals and objectives that were the result of our community input, library staff and board members have developed action items for the future.

Yarmouth Town Library Department
Long-Range Strategic Plan ~ FY2016-FY2021 ~ Goals and Objectives

Goal One: Yarmouth Library will strive to provide open and accessible space with meeting places; infrastructure to support ongoing programs and services, and provide comfortable furniture for the public.

Objective 1.1: Library staff, in cooperation with related municipal departments, will evaluate all sites in the Yarmouth Library Department for accessibility, efficiency and potential meeting spaces. Library Director will provide written evaluations to the Library's governing board in FY 2016.

- a) Director, Principal Office Assistant and two Department Heads will begin evaluation by September 21, 2015, following busy summer season.
- b) Report to Library Board by December 31, 2015.
- c) Library Board and Director report to Board of Selectmen by February 28, 2016.

Objective 1.2: Library staff will assess furnishings for comfort and ability to support growing technology demands. Furniture inventories and assessments will be prepared for each library in FY 2016.

- a) Library staff will begin organized review of professional literature in the area of space planning, September 2015.
- b) Throughout 2015-16, Library Director will review space planning documents from previous assessments.
- c) Report on furnishings and technology to Library Board by December 31, 2015, in conjunction with space evaluation.
- d) Library Board and Director report to Board of Selectmen by June 1, 2016.

Goal Two: Library leadership will work to build consensus regarding library needs in the community and provide a platform to demonstrate library support.

Objective 2.1: By FY 2018, Library will be funded to state standard, removing the need for annual certification waiver.

- a) Library Director will meet with Finance Committee and Assistant Town Administrator with comparative data to other communities the size and demographic composition of Yarmouth by November 1, 2016.
- b) Library Director and Library Board will negotiate best method to rebuild funding: consider referenda, petitions, special funding warrant articles at Town Meeting, spring 2017.
- c) Library Director, Association leadership and Library Board will recruit at least two community groups: one to plan library programs (as requested repeatedly throughout focus group and survey results); one to begin advocacy for improved Library funding, facilities and staff development during FY 2016.

Objective 2.2: By FY 2018, Town appropriations will provide for adequate staffing to ensure knowledgeable experts who can support the Library program and activities. Currently down 3 full-time equivalents (FTEs) since FY 2009.

- a) Library Director, Library Board and Library Department Heads develop plan to educate the public on what a modern library does, beginning now.

- b) Analyze tasks; describe steps to efficient execution of goals, and again, compare staffing levels to libraries considered “right-sized.”
- c) Get out into the community with positive messages and images on successes at the Library.

Goal Three: The Library will serve as a hub for the collection of community information, will provide welcoming spaces for and plan a variety of intergenerational programming.

Objective 3.1: The Library staff will establish methods to consistently review, update and publish community information in a variety of print and digital formats. Library staff will aim to publish 10 notices each month in FY 2016.

- a) Develop teams of Library staff to share responsibility, including the Reference Librarian and Youth Services Librarian.
- b) Develop a “brain trust,” recruiting a variety of community members as stakeholders in suggesting and researching opportunities for programs for adults and teens at the Library.
- c) Publish community events, including those from other town departments, as part of Library’s communication effort.

Objective 3.2: The Library will sponsor and collaborate on a variety of educational and cultural programs to enrich the community and to increase community awareness of library services. There will be a minimum of six collaborative programs in FY 2016.

- a) Director and Department Heads will make an effort to attend local Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Tourism Board, Historical Society meetings and events in the community and talk with key people about sharing resources to put together programs.
- b) Yarmouth Town Libraries Director will work with Yarmouth Port Library Director to cooperate on hosting programs at a minimum of once each season.
- c) Working with Massachusetts Library System, Director and staff will investigate the possibility of distributing fliers through existing interlibrary loan van system.
- d) Library will participate in WHO Age-Friendly Community Study Committee at the Yarmouth Senior Center, as it develops ideas around building a thoughtful community that embraces aging.

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CONCLUSION:

Perhaps the most efficient way to look ahead starts with a “look back” to planning since the year 1999-2000, now 14-15 years in the past. Even then, there was consensus that the library facilities were inadequate to service the community. In addition, when library services to a community of nearly 25,000 are compared to other similarly-sized communities, it becomes clear that Yarmouth Town Libraries are inadequately funded. The situation has continued, and declined further as the result of the national economic slump of this decade. It will be the Library administration’s priority to get back to a better level of funding of the overall Library budget, to improve the materials budget and fund more programming.

With adequate funding, the Library will:

Services: Expand existing services for teens and adults, as well as provide greater awareness in our community about library programs and services for all ages.

Space: Reconfigure existing spaces, seeking more room for comfortable seating, quiet space, collaborative work space for the public and for the Library staff. The two Yarmouth public libraries are both cramped for space. Yarmouth ranks last among all Cape libraries in space per capita.

Funding: Advocate for the restoration of Library funding to State standard by FY 2016. The three goals established in this year’s planning show repeated issues, consistent with previous surveys and polls. People want:

- The libraries to be open more hours
- More trained and knowledgeable staff to service their requests
- Expanded services, particularly available titles

All of this takes adequate funding and a reasonable staffing level to allow sufficient “off-desk” time for Library Technicians and Senior Library Assistants to work together and plan. The first year of our FY 2016 – FY 2021 Strategic Plan will focus on regaining our financial footing in the municipal budget.

Following that progress, we can then focus on developing a plan to communicate to the residents of Yarmouth that proper funding of their Library will provide what they want and need in Library services: comfortable Library buildings, an energetic and engaged staff, improved programming and awareness thereof through useful communication.

Yarmouth Town Libraries can thrive again in the future.

Appendix A

Notes from First Planning Meeting, Yarmouth Town Libraries, (abridged) May 28, 2014

Strengths – what we are doing right

Staff, volunteers
Trained staff
Good collection, access to CLAMS
Reference staff and resources
Museum passes
Children's programs
Publicity in newspapers
Yarmouth Reads (in the past)
Internet access/wireless
Public access computers

Opportunities – where we can improve

Reference resources in West Yarmouth
Increased hours
More social media: email blasts, announcements, facebook, twitter, instagram, reddit
Weekly newspaper column
Local TV video about library services
Use D-Y (High School) outdoor message board
More parking
More space for collections, staff, meeting rooms, windowed meeting area
Maker & doer programs
Street festivals
Play reading groups-or bring a reading
Lecture & special events (survey to determine topics)
More book groups
Weekend children's programs (for working parents)
Rainy day summer programs-contests, games, e.g., read-athon
Teen programs w/ at risk teens and alt. H.S.
Homework Center w/mentoring
Tweens workshops and classes
Programs & Services geared toward men
More fundraising, e.g., auctions to support library
or Short story, poetry, art competitions - pay to enter
Collaborations with community organizations
Collaborations with schools + among libraries
Distribute books to disadvantaged children

Aspirations – where we want to be

Restore funding to previous levels
Sufficient staff for more programs for all ages
Intergenerational programming
Teen programming
Family-centered programming
Commons, a place to convene and talk
Systematic and consistent communications with public about services and programs
Increased visibility and importance in community lives
Dedicated PR person to coordinate efforts
Brain trust to monitor and support programs among all villages in Yarmouth
Grant writing capability

Results – what we are aiming to achieve

Increased circulation of materials
Increased financial support
Realignment of space usage
Increased hits on library website
Increased use by teens & 'tweens
More: # of articles in paper
More: # of mentions on tv and radio
Chart responsibilities for programming, fundraising, and pr responsibilities
More: shared programs among town libraries
Capture how many people aren't getting ebooks, DVD's, and books without waiting
50/50 male/female in patrons, volunteers, and leaders

Appendix B:

Notes from Second Planning Meeting, Yarmouth Town Libraries, June 18, 2014 June 18, 2014

Four themes or priorities emerged from the brainstorming list of Yarmouth Town Libraries' Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and (desired) Results S.O.A.R. exercise. Certain ideas overlapped, and became the focus of a Strategic Plan:

Those four ideas or themes are Intergenerational Activities; Funding; Library as Commons; and Community-Building. These conclusions led to the exercise of developing 3 goals in each of those thematic areas.

Intergenerational Activities:

- The Library will provide a variety of programs for people of all ages.
- Have adequate staffing, to recruit knowledgeable experts (volunteer or paid) who can offer a variety of programs, to develop programming ideas and execute activities.
- Provide open and accessible space, comfortable furniture for a variety of programs.

Funding:

- Fund the Library to state standard (MAR); bring Library out of waiver status.
- Fund Materials line in the budget (MER) to avoid \$30,000 deficiency.
- Add 3 more FTEs, e.g., Adult Services, Technology, Assistant Director/Branch Manager, possibly Teen Librarian and Circulation Assistant.
- Issue press releases, letters to editor, etc., (electronic format, too) related to Library budget to build awareness.

Commons:

- Provide an up-to-date, open designed facility with meeting space and infrastructure to support ongoing programs & services.
- Provide a variety of programs to explore new technologies, share knowledge and broaden understanding in various areas of interest.
- Disseminate information to the community, using all available platforms, about ongoing Library programs and services.

Community:

- Offer an annual "community celebration," possibly hosted on the West Yarmouth Library lawn, featuring raffles, silent auction, refreshments, music by community musicians/students, outdoor story time, games, etc. "Founders' Day, Olde Home Day."
- Be an information hub for community events (for newcomers, visitors).
- Sponsor oral history sessions (also, intergenerational) – to strengthen community pride, knowledge of local history.

Appendix C: (see attached)