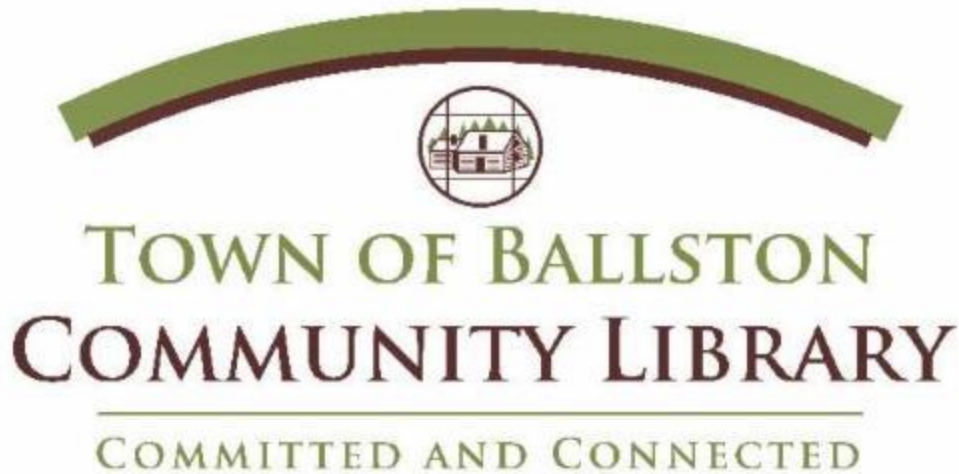


# Town of Ballston Community Library

## Strategic Plan

2017-2020



### Mission Statement

**The Town of Ballston Community Library shall develop and maintain facilities, resources, and services to meet the ongoing needs of all persons for education, personal enrichment, and recreation.**

### Community Vision

**The Town of Ballston Library shall be the center of knowledge and life enrichment for all members of the growing community.**

### Commitment to Excellence

**The library trustees will adopt policies to achieve long-range goals of recognition, support and sustainability for the library through excellent service, outreach and leadership.**

## Library Goals

1. The Library will be relevant and sustainable. It will continue to play a significant role in the community, will embrace a leadership role and provide input for community planning and activities.
2. The Library building will be a comfortable, welcoming and well-maintained facility.
3. The Library will be financially sustainable with adequate resources and budget to enable it to maintain current high level of services to the community.

## Summary of the Planning Process

The Town of Ballston Community Library Board of Trustees took the initiative to update the library's 2013-2016 Plan through the work of the Board of Trustee Long Range Planning Committee, community survey, community focus groups, and facilitated meetings.

Focus Group Meetings were held in June, 2016 to develop the direction the library should take over the next 3 years, 2017-2020. Agenda items included:

- each participant's vision of the library
- an evaluation of the library's strengths and areas of opportunity
- potential action steps to meet goals discussed

All agreed that the library should continue to be a community gathering place. This expands the mission of the library beyond traditional library services.

Participants in these meetings also had a common vision of the library as a safe, comfortable location, suitable for enrichment and recreation, for all ages.

Survey results, conducted in the summer and fall of 2016, clearly show the support for current library programs and services.

# Research Findings

## Indicators Found via Focus Groups

Facilitated focus groups were held on June 16, 2016 with Board, Staff, and Community members. The library serves the Town of Ballston as well as the Town of Charlton and both communities were represented. The library is in the Town of Ballston and the majority of users and financial support is from the Town of Ballston, subsidized by an annual contract with the Town of Charlton.

Conversations were held to develop the direction the library should take over the next 3-5 years. This included the individual vision of the library, the strengths and opportunities and potential action steps to meet those goals.

The Town of Ballston has no “downtown center,” village green, or central market place. A need was identified for the library, with its location, visibility, convenience, and signage, to serve as a community gathering place. The library was recognized as a safe, comfortable gathering place for all ages.

## Indicators found via Survey

Community surveys were distributed through the summer and fall of 2016.

Takeaways include:

- People are very satisfied with the service and products the library currently offers.
- The library is a very important community resource.
- All social media and other media outlets are needed to provide awareness of library services and programs (social networks and the internet as well as use of flyers, press releases and word of mouth.)
- Respondents were predominately over the age of 60, and comments from this group focused on increasing the comfort, lighting and shelf accessibility in the library.

## **Summary**

The Town of Ballston Community Library is a safe, secure, central gathering place that is important to the community. The culture of the library is one where all users are welcome and their needs are valued.

The Board values the staff and the need to retain them by providing a good work environment, and competitive compensation. The Board supports current services for children and seniors and hopes to grow services for tweens, and working families, as well as future library users of all ages.

The location of the library reinforces its presence as a community hub. The library is convenient, accessible and has adequate parking. The helpful, well-trained, and friendly staff is very important to users.

# Goals, Action Steps, and Measurements



## GOAL 1

**The library will be relevant, sustainable, and a center for enrichment for the community.**

### Action steps

- Continue to utilize the location of the library to increase visibility, recognition and brand awareness.
- Formalize a marketing strategy with monthly outreach using all media, ranging from traditional print newspapers and flyers to social media and online marketing, and reach beyond those in the “service area” to continue the demand for excellent programming.
- Increase recognition for existing partnerships, expand current partnering for programs and services. Utilize and track the outreach of partner organizations.
  - Identify library services and programs of interest to potential partner audiences.
  - Utilize multiple media outlets to reach larger target market.
  - Cross market library services to increase exposure to patrons.
  - Consider market partnerships with other libraries to expand library brand.
- Market specifically to new residents of the towns of Ballston and Charlton.

Build on current branding and marketing efforts to emphasize the positive impact that libraries have on the lives of community residents, the role of libraries in education, family life and life-long learning. Emphasize the positive impact the library has on both the Town of Ballston and Town of Charlton so residents will feel a sense of community and belonging.

## Measurement

- Utilize the free Public Library Association survey product, *Project Outcome*, or a similar tool for measurement and assessment.
- Number of users and new users, changes in services to target populations
- Increases in the programs and services offered with a corresponding increase in attendance from the Town of Ballston and Town of Charlton
- New card holders



## GOAL 2

**The Library building will be a comfortable, welcoming and well-maintained facility.**

### Action steps

#### *1. Operations and maintenance of library facility*

- Clarify relationship with the Town of Ballston and consider feasibility of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing roles and responsibility of Town and Library Board including both operation and maintenance of physical plant.
- Analyze facility operations budget and expenditures on a rolling five year basis in order to plan for future needs and increase efficiency.
- Review annual operations plan, schedule, and maintenance budget with the Town of Ballston.
- Identify repair and replacement funding sources for major systems.
- Review cost-savings and energy-efficiency potentials.
- Identify appropriate size and specifications, cost and potential funding source of an emergency generator.

### Measurement

- Monthly building operating and maintenance budget in place
- Availability of power and associated services in emergency situation



## Action steps

### *2. Library Use*

- Use survey responses and staff suggestions to prioritize enhancements to the building including lighting, furniture, and accessibility.
- Explore options for enhancing the young adult space and programming.
- Review and consider changing hours to accommodate different times and days of operation.
- Take advantage of proximity to schools in consideration of marketing and outreach for programming and new program planning.
- Increase marketing and awareness of available library space for town wide events, presentations and group meetings.

## Measurement

- Informal comments concerning ease of use, increase in in-house use by young adults, outside groups
- Informally survey, track, and measure impact.

## Action steps

### *3. Maintain current high quality of staff, services, and programs*

- Utilize SALS training and library training websites for staff development.
- Provide staff training goals and compensation scales with clear targets and incentives.
- Work actively toward providing competitive wages and benefits.
- Provide individual control over work areas.
- Clarify use of public spaces and public meeting rooms.

## Measurement

- Customer satisfaction survey comments
- Staff retention
- Development of policies governing use of library space for tutoring, individual and group meetings as well as quiet activities



### Goal 3

**The library will be financially sustainable with adequate resources and budget for staffing needs, services and facility.**

#### Action Steps

##### *Resource Development*

- Seek out and apply for relevant grants.
- Solicit donations.
- Partner with community organizations, businesses and individuals incorporating their interests.
- Reach out to current library users from Ballston and Charlton to assist in the promotion of the library and provide them with the advocacy tools they need.

##### *Friends of the Library*

- Welcome Friends to Library Trustees Board meetings and encourage that their voice be heard in library discussions.
- Identify ways to show greater appreciation and recognition for Friends support of library goals.

#### Measurement

- Number of grant applications
- Increased participation of Friends at Library meetings and functions

# ADDENDUM

## FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY

Survey results are available upon request

### Town of Ballston Community Library

#### Focus Groups, June 16, 2016

Focus Group Meetings were held in June, 2016 to develop the direction the library should take over the next 3 years, 2017-2020. The agenda included:

- the individual vision of the library as institution
- the strengths and opportunities facing the library
- potential action steps to meet goals discussed

All agreed on the need for a community space for the Town of Ballston and sense of downtown center. There is a generally accepted vision of the library as a safe and comfortable gathering place for all ages. In addition, there is a universal sense that residents of both Ballston and Town of Charlton are unaware of all the excellent services and programs that the library currently provides.

#### Town of Ballston Community Library Board Members

Vision: The Town of Ballston Community Library is a safe, secure central gathering place of importance to the community.

Values: The Board highly values the staff and the need to retain them, values the support and services provided for children and seniors.

Concerns: There is a growing concern over *fiscal sustainability*. The Town of Charlton has decreased their support, with the current costs of operations increasing. Future impact of increased minimum wage and repair and operation of the physical plant adds to the cost burden. Another concern expressed was their *ability to maintain Library physical plant*. All wanted a clear memo of understanding with the Town delineating responsibility for the building, security issues and cost.

#### Library Needs and Growth Areas:

- year round services for teens and young adults, ages 12-30.
- Increased community outreach, publicity and positive branding of the library
- increase engagement / relationship with Friends of the Library
- clarify MOU with Town concerning building facility

#### Opportunities:

- Programming for high school students to read with young children
- Partnering with school music program for student community service credit
- Outreach programs for greater engagement of Charlton residents promoting music, Friends coffees in Charlton, grow book talk programs in evening hours.
- Partnering to increase variety and audience for programs both in Charlton and at the library: collaborate with book store for author talks, businesses that offer painting classes, craft classes, candle workshop, increase the use of community rooms for existing organizations so that the library is a gathering place for all and becomes a community hub.

#### Town of Ballston Community Library Staff

Vision: The library is a welcoming place offering great programming and individualized service

Values: The staff highly values the ability to provide personal service and programming for all age groups

#### Concerns, Needs and Growth areas

- There is a service gap for users *30 to 50 years of age*. The staff felt this demographic is hard to capture since they are very involved in their family life, work and school obligations.
- Changes in the library building has resulted in areas that lack illumination. Staff indicated the need for better lighting, easier ways to find popular materials, and more inviting places to sit and read.

#### Opportunities:

- Programming featuring speakers and authors, historical programs, museum passes,
- New tech/ equipment available to tweens and young adults for individual use
- Increased instruction on use of e-content and device transfer for adults
- Communications:
  - Expand outreach currently used for children's programs for adult programming
  - Greater visibility of in house flyers and use of media
  - Expand ease of use on website
- Greater advertising for new acquisitions
- Utilize Electronic sign as much as possible

Comments from the Director- Continue to communicate that the library values people, values new ideas and can accommodate change. Advance the engagement of community leaders so they regard the library as an important community resource.

### Community Members

Two residents of Charlton attended who were library users, one woman in her 20s who uses the book program, and one retired business man. Town of Ballston residents included a non user and new resident senior who attends book programs, a working mother involved with the Town, a new resident with teens, a business owner and school librarian.

### Vision and Strengths of the Library:

- The *location* of the library next to the school reinforces its presence as a community hub. Having the holiday tree lighting there is a positive example of a gathering place for community residents. The library is convenient with good parking.
- *Staff* is friendly and helpful

### Opportunities:

- The number of Charlton users are increasing and new residents include professionals, who are likely to value the library.
- The library has many positive programs and services to promote and should use all available media.
- The area contains many types of community groups for cross programming to capture different users and expand outreach.
- The library space for young adults can be used for teen only movies and events, and can be transformed into a “bookstore like” area
- Proximity to school for student volunteers
- Space for community meetings and gatherings such as Community Vision Presentation

All welcomed the opportunity to provide input and direction for the Town of Ballston Community Library planning process.