

EXCERPTS FROM LIBRARY LONG-RANGE PLANS AND THE TOWN'S MASTER PLAN

(Pertinent sections are highlighted in **BOLD**.)

1. Excerpt from the Wayland Free Public Library Long-Range Plan FY13-17:

Goal IV: The Library will strive to be perceived as a community center -- the Town's Living Room -- that is an attractive, safe, comfortable, and welcoming place for Wayland residents to meet, work, learn, and interact with others.

2. Excerpts from the Wayland Free Public Library Long-Range Plan FY18-20:

INTRODUCTION

In spite of the internet, social media, smart phones, Amazon.com, and wide-spread conjectures that libraries were soon going to fade away, libraries nation-wide have continued to thrive in the 21st century. That is certainly true here in Wayland where last year alone the library logged over 110,000 visitors, circulated over 221,000 library items, and hosted 475 library programs that were attended by over 8,000 people.

However, the inadequate existing building at 5 Concord Road hampers the delivery of modern library services. After the library renovated and moderately expanded its building in 1988, usage skyrocketed. It is now very evident that **more space is required in order to provide the level of service that most library patrons want**. During the course of the planning process for this Long Range Plan, the community made it clear that they wanted much more from their library than a means to borrow books. A welcoming, skilled staff to lead them to the materials they need was high on the list, as was a variety of educational, cultural, and recreational programs geared to the local community. **Residents also want a comfortable, more spacious facility where they can borrow materials, participate in enlightening programs, and interact with their neighbors.**

Recognizing this need, Wayland's Fall 2015 Town Meeting funded a Planning and Design Study that would allow the Town to apply for a library construction grant from the State. That study is now underway. Should the Board of Library Trustees and the Town choose to move forward, the Town will be ready to apply for a grant in January 2017 under the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program, in what will be a very competitive process.

THE LIBRARY AND THE COMMUNITY

...Major library expansions are supposed to last twenty years, but by 2001 the Library Trustees and staff could see that the library once again had a number of space and building problems that promised to worsen over time. Between 2003 and 2014, the Library Trustees commissioned or participated in no fewer than three architectural studies looking at the feasibility of expanding the current facility or moving to new quarters. In the spring of 2015, the library hired a consultant and developed a written building program which spells out the space and programmatic needs for the library for the next 20 years. In the fall of the same year, Town Meeting appropriated \$150,000 for a Planning and Design Study to assist the Trustees prepare to submit an application for a Library Construction Grant to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in January of 2017. The architectural firm of Tappé Associates has been hired to conduct the study.

Over the past fifteen years, the library has been frustrated in its attempts to expand, but that has not hindered the staff and Trustees from providing excellent service to the community. A founder of the now 43-member Minuteman Library Network, the library has kept pace with technological changes, experimented and remained innovative, and invested in the upkeep and appearance of the historic building. Our needs assessment clearly showed that while the need for more space poses serious limitations, library users are very happy with the Wayland Library. ...

METHODOLOGY

In early 2015 the Wayland Free Public Library formed a volunteer citizens' advisory committee, the Library Planning Committee (LPC), to evaluate the existing library space and program to determine whether the Library Trustees should take advantage of the anticipated 2016-2017 MBLC's Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP) grant round. Part of the charge to the LPC was to review the Library's current Long-Range Plan. Other key parts of their charge were to educate themselves about the requirements of the MPLCP, to make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees about whether and how to go forward with a Massachusetts Public Library Construction grant application, and to help organize data in preparation for a grant application in FY2017.

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Also in early 2015, the library hired the UMass Donahue Institute (UMDI) to gain a better understanding of the programs and services that Wayland residents expect from their library in the 21st century and **to assess their level of support for efforts to deal with the space limitations of the current facility.** UMDI conducted a detailed survey of residents in March 2015. The survey resulted in 875 responses, significantly more than the 358 needed to reach the common survey research standard of a 95% confidence level. The survey provided significant insight into the demographic profile of library users, **as well as a strong sense of their support for existing library programs and**

services and their desires for the future. Survey results can be found on the Library's website at: <http://waylandlibrary.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/WFPL-PP-Final-to-post.pdf>

NEEDS ASSESSMENT/SOAR EXERCISES

The evaluation relied on 2010 census data, library usage figures, and two separate studies by the UMDI. This data served as background to the input received from the four SOAR exercise sessions. What follows in the next few paragraphs is a brief summary of the major findings of those sessions. It is encouraging to see how similarly the library is viewed by the vast majority of participants.

Both the LPC and the public listed the caliber of the library staff as a major strength. When asked to respond to this, the staff said that they gain satisfaction by being helpful, and credited an overall commitment to customer service that permeates the organization. Members from all groups also praised the quality of the library's collections, especially the children's collections. In spite of great appreciation, there was minor disagreement. Some community members indicated they visited other libraries for a wider selection of materials; **others said they appreciated the freer access to materials they found in other nearby towns due to more spacious facilities.** While there was high praise from all groups for the quality and diversity of library programming, here, too, there were several who asked for more programs, and for better promotion/publicity for what is offered. Residents specifically mentioned a need for more programs focused on children, technology, and topics of local interest. Staff indicated a strong desire to do more in this area but named time and **space constraints** as barriers. At the staff session, some time was spent brainstorming ways to reallocate staff so that more time could be dedicated towards planning and presenting programs.

Most participants were aware of the library's pursuit of a grant to renovate or replace the library building, leading to **many comments on space issues.** All groups viewed the library building as a beautiful facility much loved by the community, but at the same time, **very limited in terms of space, parking, and susceptibility to flooding. The need for more meeting space, of varying sizes, was recognized by all who spoke to the issue.** Given the library's central location, visual, and sentimental appeal to the community, several expressed hope that the library's needs could be accommodated on the current site. Others wondered if such a solution, if feasible, would prove very expensive. Some pointed out that if the current facility is upgraded, steps should be taken to deal with traffic congestion at the entrance to the parking lot.

Some community members asked for more emphasis on technology, with expanded electronic resources and more training opportunities. Once again, **space limitations were mentioned,** but so were the possible use of mobile devices and portable furnishings that might help mitigate this problem.

Possibly the most important finding verbalized in one way or another by all groups was the recognition of the library's role as the central gathering place for the community. Patrons are drawn to the facility by the services provided, they are made to feel welcome by staff, and they appreciate the ambiance, in spite of its limitations. Complete notes from all four SOAR sessions can be found in the Appendix.

Although the 2015 UMDI survey did not capture significant input from residents who do not use the library, it provided excellent insight into the interests, needs, and aspirations of those who do. The feedback gained from the four SOAR sessions mirrored almost exactly the findings of the UMDI. Together, these two different research exercises identified the exact same list of priorities. *Goal 1 addresses physical space issues, as follows:*

GOAL 1: PHYSICAL SPACE AND FACILITIES

To provide space of sufficient size, design and aesthetic to enhance the wide spectrum of programs and services offered by the WFPL.

(Finding: Patrons are disappointed by a lack of sufficient space and lack of enough high quality/suitable space.)

Objective 1:

To receive an MBLC construction grant in FY2018 and open a greatly enhanced facility in FY2020.

Objective 2:

If grant is awarded to develop a plan to provide the highest level of service possible during library construction

Objective 3:

If construction application fails or the Town rejects funding, focus efforts on maximizing utilization of existing space.

3. Excerpts from the Town of Wayland's most current Master Plan, created in 2004:

(Note: There has not been an updated plan since 2004 although the plan was reviewed by a committee in 2010 with no change relative to the library.)

Wayland Master Plan, Page 79, Public Facilities and Services

7.3.3 Social and Cultural Facilities

Wayland Public Library Concord Road (Route 126) The Wayland Public Library is located on Concord Road (Route 126) near the intersection of Old Sudbury Road (Route 27) in Wayland Center. The building, constructed in 1900, is a handsome three-level masonry structure with a classic rotunda reading room and stack mezzanine. The Library, which includes an elevator, is accessible to the disabled. A major one-story reading room addition and lower level were constructed in 1988. At that time, the original part of the Library was completely renovated as

well. The main level of the Library includes circulation, reading rooms, reference, collections, computer stations, video and DVD shelves, and an administrative office. The lower level includes the Children's Library, administrative offices, technical services, staff room, restrooms, display areas, and a meeting room with kitchenette, known as the Raytheon Room. The Library also stores surplus books for book sales at the nearby Railroad Freight Shed. The Library has approximately 69 seats to accommodate patrons. For a Town the size of Wayland, conventional national standards call for 7 seats per 1,000 population. By this common standard, the Library exceeds the recommended size.

In FY 2002, the Library recorded 8,828 borrowers and had a total circulation of 240,330 print and non-print items. This represents a very high utilization rate by the Town's citizenry because registered borrowers constitute almost 75% of the Town's population. A total of 7,866 volumes and non-print acquisitions were added to the Library's inventory in FY 2002. The Library also participates in the Minuteman Library Network (MLN) interlibrary loan automated network. This increase in circulation follows the pattern of recent years, which has seen circulation steadily increasing, but at a modest pace. The Library is staffed by approximately 7 full-time employees.

Because of the growing demand for services, increasing circulation, and the expansion of computer use and electronic media since the addition was constructed in 1988, there are currently space shortages for books, computer stations, non-print items, and seating in the Children's Library. Additionally, there is no young adult area. There is also significant scheduling demand by many committees, groups and organizations for use of the Library's only meeting room. The meeting room closes at 9:00 p.m. due to the unavailability of night custodians.

The Library prepares an annual plan for library needs and is required to prepare a Long Range Plan for the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissions. As part of a 3-5 year Comprehensive Plan, the volunteer Library Planning Committee prepared a survey and conducted focus group meetings in 2001 to determine the services and improvements most desired by Wayland residents and schools. **Some of the primary suggestions included a meeting room with a separate exterior entrance so that it could be used after 9:00 p.m. Additional small meeting rooms, an expanded Children's Library, and quiet study areas.**