

Holliston
Public Library

Strategic Plan
2017-2020

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Holliston Public Library is to enrich its community by connecting people to the world of ideas, information and imagination in order to support their work, education, personal growth and enjoyment.

COMMUNITY VISION

To empower the community of Holliston by providing opportunities to inspire life-long learning and love of reading.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Form of Government	Town Administrator Selectmen Open Town Meeting
Population (2013)	14162
Labor Force (2015)	7456
Unemployment Rate (2015)	3.8%
Per Capita Income (2012)	\$ 47, 418
Median Household Income	105,831
Number of households	4877
Expenditure per student	\$ 13,710
Median housing unit	\$ 390, 363
Average tax bill (2016)	\$ 7819
Number of registered voters (2012)	10, 507
Median resident age	42.9

The town of Holliston is a middle-class suburban community occupying 18.7 square miles, 25 miles from Boston. It is not a diverse community (95% white.) Originally a farming community founded in 1724, Holliston retains more of a small town, rural feeling than many of the more developed communities in the Metrowest area. The shoe industry was vital to the growth of the town in the 19th century but more recent business and industrial growth is limited by the lack of sewers. Residents carry much of the tax burden. Eighty-nine percent of workers are employed in white collar jobs and are well-educated, with 79% of adults over 25 having a Bachelor's degree and 36% holding graduate or professional degrees. The average commute to work is 30 minutes. Holliston has a high rate of owner-occupied single family homes, which tends to reflect stability in the local community.

There is public transportation in the form of a bus that links Holliston with Framingham and a commuter train stop in nearby Ashland. The fire department is on call and there is a very strong sense of volunteerism elsewhere as well. Service organizations promote community involvement and provide grants and aid to strengthen services for residents.

There is a clear desire for open space, parks, conservation and outdoor activities. Lake Winthrop has beaches and recreational areas. A concerted effort has been made to preserve a friendly, small-town atmosphere with quaint shops, summer concerts and local fairs and festivals. There are active theater groups. A number of senior housing projects have been developed in the last few years.

Holliston is heavily oriented towards families and education and a number of parent groups have a prominent presence. The school system is considered excellent with long-standing French Immersion and Montessori programs alongside traditional ones serving 2,819 students. Holliston is a place where both parents and children are more likely to develop social ties with other families, as well as find family-oriented services. Academic achievement is highly regarded. The town's overall crime rate is very low, making it one of the safest places to raise a family.

Holliston faces many of the same issues as surrounding towns: promoting the local business economy, planning for the growing number of senior citizens while serving the needs of the young, land development and providing services in a time of diminishing revenue from state and local sources.

LIBRARY PROFILE

The Holliston Public Library is housed in a three-story Carnegie building (built in 1904) with 9217 square feet of space located in downtown Holliston. The building is in the footprint of the land held by the Trustees and has no parking facilities of its own or room for expansion. The annual circulation is 181,325 with a collection of 73,437 and 7147 registered borrowers. The library is open 54 hours per week on the following schedule: Monday-Thursday from 10-8 pm, Friday from 10-6 pm and Saturday from 10-4 pm (10-1 in the summer.) After years of reduced hours due to budget constraints the library is finally able to have a consistent schedule from year to year that meets our patrons' basic needs. Although patrons sometimes request Sunday hours, there are never enough funds and the town is not willing to pay time and a half. All State Aid to Libraries grant funds are used for salaries. This practice has prevailed over a period of decades but the library trustees would prefer to use it to introduce and expand new services. The library consistently receives 16% of the library budget for materials from the town to meet the minimum for state certification.

An elected 6-member Board of Trustees governs the library. There are three professional librarians. The director and assistant director are full time and the children's librarian works 25 hours per week. The assistant director is also the head of technical services, and the young adult, reference and technology departments. The head of circulation and a cataloger are part-time para-professionals and there are 10 part-time library technicians and pages. All current staff members have worked at the library for at least three years (and most for much longer) and a close team-like atmosphere exists. There is no union. Two separate circulation desks require increased personnel costs but make the library more convenient to use. Volunteers are used extensively but not at the circulation desks

for reasons of confidentiality and computer security. There is no custodial or maintenance staff. A cleaning company is employed and the Holliston Highway Department and local contractors provide maintenance.

The Children's Room, Technical Services, a public meeting room, mechanical rooms, storage and a staff room are located on the lower floor which has a separate entrance. The children's room and the meeting room are simply too small. There is virtually no room for growth and the play area and shelving are cramped. In addition to performances, Lego club, story hours, book groups and programs at various age levels meet all year. The families who use the library support and appreciate the services enormously and would like more. The Friends sponsor an annual Lego Festival which regularly sells out.

The young adult section of the library, "The Teen Zone", occupies a small but comfortable, open area on the 3rd floor. Teen programs have been poorly attended in the past but a small afterschool program which began in January featuring games, crafts and movies has been successful on a small scale. We would like to build upon this potential. Our young adult patrons are not strong users of non-print or electronic resources but they love to read.

The main floor houses adult fiction, non-print and magazines and newspapers along with reference and local history. All areas of the library are regularly weeded. There are no major space issues with the upper floors other than a need for more study and meeting rooms. The reference desk has been eliminated and comfortable sitting areas increased. A puzzle and coloring is set up for communal use.

The library receives few traditional reference questions but there is an increasing demand for technology help and reader's advisory services. The reference collection has been weeded and moved to the adult non-fiction section. One-on-one help with devices (e-readers, smart phones, tablets, etc) to access electronic resources is offered in both formal and informal sessions. Kindles and rokus are available to borrow. The library participates in Overdrive's Advantage program but the cost of titles is high and only bestsellers with long waiting lists are purchased. Many patrons wish the circulating collections were larger but feel the ability to borrow books from other libraries and ease of use of the Minuteman network helps fill many of their needs.

Twice monthly outreach to Mission Springs, a large elderly housing facility continues along with three book clubs, a wide variety of adult programming and One Book, One Holliston, our annual community reading program.

After annual drops in circulation over the past five years, circulation has increased 4.5% in FY'16. A concerted effort to provide more copies of current print bestsellers with longer loan periods and lower fines has been very popular. Physical non-print items such as compact discs and DVDs are used less each year as our patrons use streaming services from home. The rental collection of new films on DVD is funded by the Friends and pays for itself each year allowing the library to use town funds for TV series and non-

fiction films. The number of items sent to and borrowed from other libraries is 25,970 and 24,101 items, respectively. There are self-checkout stations on each floor.

The 10 computers to access the Internet and the online public access catalog (OPAC) are heavily used, with filtered access in the children's room. Computers are replaced every five years.

Upkeep of the building is still complicated and expensive in spite of regular maintenance. Large reserve fund transfers for unexpected repairs have been required. The shingled perimeter, brickwork, gutters and downspouts of the roof are in terrible shape. The HVAC system is 30 years old and costs thousands to repair each year. The carpeting (replaced in 2001) and interior of the building are shabby and fresh interior paint and plaster is needed (last done in 2002.) These costs have competed with requirements for certification on an annual basis. There are no dedicated parking spaces and the present structure occupies the entire footprint of the property. Lack of parking is the most frequent complaint on surveys.

Private funds remain the best way for us to introduce new services and upgrade equipment since state aid to libraries funds are used for salaries. We would like to begin to incorporate more ongoing and annual costs into our regular town budget (copier, web site, software, etc.) and restore town funding for items historically covered in pre-recession days. The library should become less dependent on fundraising. After many years of waivers for the funding portion of our certification we are now able to easily meet the MAR within the guideline set by the Finance Committee each year.

Strengths

Seasoned, open-minded staff

Library has a good reputation in community

Trustees, staff, Friends, volunteers work well-together with many of the same players

Library is small enough and cross-trained to make changes quickly as needed

Library use is increasing after several years of decreases

Collections are small and general but are timely, appropriate and well-used

Challenges

Funding in a time of economic uncertainty

Constant building problems

Rapid changes from traditional print to digital

Societal view of libraries as unneeded and outdated

Lack of space on first floor

Transitioning library to new needs of its patrons

Expanding on educational niches

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 2016-2019

BUILDING UTILIZATION & ACCESS

GOAL: The library will have adequate and secure space which can be used harmoniously by its many patrons.

Objective A: To continue to make the library a safe and pleasant environment.

1. Plan for and obtain funding to replace the outer perimeter of the library roof. (\$60-110K)
2. Develop strategies to renovate the library to provide more room for the children's room and more small meeting rooms.
3. Upgrade the HVAC system. (\$ 30K)
4. Replace the burglar alarm. (\$ 3K)
5. Repair the stonework on the front of the building. (\$ 5K)
6. Install an automatic door at the entrance to the lower level. (\$ 5K)
7. Paint the interior of the library and repair plaster. (\$3500)
8. Replace the carpeting. (\$20K)
9. Update the disaster plan and host a fire prevention class for the staff.
10. Begin to investigate the possibility of the town acquiring land adjacent to the library for parking.
11. Obtain a door for the magazine room to turn it into a conference room.
12. Replace the ceiling in technical services and the staff room (\$2500)
13. Continue to investigate further expansion for future needs.

Objective B: To maintain a schedule of hours that is useful to the majority of our patrons.

1. Survey our patrons every 2 years to determine their needs for library hours and make appropriate changes within the limits of the library budget.

COLLECTIONS

GOAL: The library collection will be up to date and in a format to meet the changing needs of its users in the 21st century.

Objective A: To investigate and implement alternatives to physical collections.

1. Investigate and implement, if possible, streaming music and films.
2. Work with the Holliston Historical Society to make resources in both collections available in digital form.
3. Investigate joining the Commonwealth E-book Collection.

PROGRAMMING

GOAL: Our patrons will have access to programs that entertain and teach.

Objective A: To offer formal and informal collaborations between knowledgeable volunteers and patrons interested in acquiring skills.

1. Offer a monthly knitting club.
2. Begin a foreign language conversation group.
3. Start a series of “Learn It” program which features experienced volunteers teaching hands-on skills.

Objective B: To expand popular book club offerings led by volunteers.

1. Offer a classic book discussion group.
2. Investigate a Great Decisions discussion group.
3. Start a mystery/thriller book club.
4. Restart the Senior Center book club with a volunteer.

Objective C: To offer programs on topics patrons have requested.

1. Offer at least one concert per year.
2. Increase the number of author programs.
3. Host a trivia night.

4. Co-sponsor a program of historical interest with the Holliston Historical Society once per year.
5. Continue and expand Crafter-School for tweens and teens.
6. Write a Holliston Cultural Council grant to fund adult programming.

TECHNOLOGY

GOAL: Our patrons will have access to technology and will be able to use the library's electronic services.

Objective A: To provide equipment and services that help our patrons use technology and the library effectively.

1. Update all computers over 5 years old.
2. Add wireless printing
3. Add color printing.
4. Add a computer or tablet to the young adult section to be used in-house.

Objective B: To inform our patrons about electronic services and help them become proficient at using these services.

1. Continue to promote and emphasize the Boston Public Library e-card.
2. Offer frequent hands-on programs on using services BPL offers such as Lynda.com, Hoopla, Zinio, Freegal, etc and e-books and downloadable audio.
3. Investigate and implement, if appropriate, addition of Ancestry.com.
4. Investigate and implement, if appropriate, addition of film to digital conversion equipment.
5. Explore more opportunities for presenting services with Holliston Cable Access Television.

Objective C: To continue to use technology to promote the library and its services to our patrons.

1. Create and maintain an Instagram account.
2. Learn how to use the Commonwealth Events calendar from the Mass Center for the Book to market our programs.

YOUTH SERVICES

GOAL: Programs, services and collections for children will meet the needs of our patrons.

Objective A: To increase the amount of children's programming.

1. Work with the Friends and Trustees to increase the amount of funding for children's programming.
2. Provide STEM programming.
3. Host a library sleepover.
4. Continue to work with the Friends on making the Trail Story on the Holliston portion of the Upper Charles Trail a reality.
5. Create a community heroes story hour and an evening story time.
6. Present at least one parenting program per year.
7. Provide a preschool program to help children become familiar with the library as they prepare for school.

Objective B: To increase the browsing collection for popular titles.

1. Start a juvenile Read It Now collection of multiple copies to create a larger browsing collection and fill on the spot requests.
2. Increase the number of graphic novels in the juvenile and young adult sections including more multiple copies of popular titles.

Objective C: To make the library a welcoming place for young families, grandparents and new library users.

1. Create welcome bags for children who have received their library card.
3. Create kits that can be borrowed and used to enjoy nature and the scientific world.

METHODOLOGY

This planning process began in spring 2016 with a committee made up of library personnel, representatives from the Friends, Trustees and volunteers as well as patrons.

We used the three meeting outline provided by the Mass Library System including orientation/SOAR exercise; Visioning; and Survey Results. The Board of Library Trustees decided to create a 3 year plan due to the speed with which libraries are changing in the 21st century.

Asking other town officials to join the committee has not worked especially well in the past. It was difficult to get attendance and input. This time we chose to meet with them separately and it worked much better. Meetings were conducted with the town administration and leaders from Parks and Recreation, the Holliston Historical Commission, the Holliston Historical Society, Youth and Family Services, school administration and the Senior Center. This enabled us to discuss possible ways we could work with them in the future.

A survey of patrons and non-users was central to gather information on the perceived quality of our present services and new ones that might be used in the future. We used an online survey from Survey Monkey in May 2016. A separate survey for teens was developed with the help of Rishi Khettry, a high school student. This worked very smoothly and 618 adult surveys and 32 teen surveys, 8.3% of our registered borrowers. The Friends of the Library offered a free chance to win an electronic device.

The Planning Committee

Marylou DeStefano, patron

Marilyn Franklin, Volunteer

Bill Heuer, Library Trustee

Jennifer Keen, Assistant Director

Rishi Khettry, National Honor Society student

Leslie McDonnell, Library Director

Eric Miller, patron

Bob Ostrow, Friends of the Library

Tammy Page, Head of Circulation

Kara Peterson, patron

Amy Porter, Staff

Laura Raney, patron

Elina Robinson, patron

TIMELINE

	FY 17	FY 18	FY 19		
<i>BUILDING UTILIZATION/ACCESS</i>					
Roof		X			
Strategies to renovate			X		
HVAC	X				
Burglar alarm		X			
Stonework		X			
Automatic door	X				
Paint interior			X		
Carpeting			X		
Disaster plan/fire prevention	X				
Land for parking			X		
Door for magazine room	X				
Ceiling in tech services		X			
Hours survey		X			
<i>COLLECTIONS</i>					
Streaming music/film	X	X	X		
Digitize local history resources			X		
Investigate Commonwealth E-books	X	X			
<i>PROGRAMMING</i>					
Knitting club	X				
Foreign language conversation group		X			
Learn It! groups	X	X	X		
Classic book group	X				
Great Decisions		X			
Mystery book group	X				
Senior Center book club	X				
Concerts	X	X	X		
Author programs	X	X	X		
Trivia night	X				
Program with historical society		X			
Crafter-School	X	X	X		
Cultural Council grant	X	X	X		

TECHNOLOGY					
Update computers			X		
Wireless printing	X				
Color printing	X				
Computer in YA		X			
Promote BPL e-card	X	X	X		
Instruction in BPL services	X	X	X		
Ancestry.com	X				
Conversion equipment	X				
Instagram		X			
Commonwealth Events	X				
YOUTH SERVICES					
Increase children's programming	X	X	X		
STEM	X	X	X		
Sleepover		X			
Trail Story	X				
Hero/evening story time	X				
Parenting program	X	X	X		
Preschool program	X	X	X		
Juvenile Read It Now collection	X	X	X		
Increase graphic novels	X	X	X		
Welcome bags		X			
Science/nature kits		X			

HOLLISTON PUBLIC LIBRARY SURVEY

What is your age? 13-17 ___ 18-29 ___ 30-39 ___ 40-49 ___ 50-59 ___
60-69 ___ 70+ ___

How often do you use the Holliston Public Library?

More than once per week ___ Weekly ___ Monthly ___ 3-4 times/year ___ 1-2 times/year ___ Rarely ___

If the frequency has increased or decreased or if you rarely use the library, can you tell us why?

The library building is in need of extensive repair and upgrade. Considering that most other town buildings, including schools, have been renovated in the recent past, the condition of the current facility is not up to those same standards and should reflect the future role of the Holliston Public Library in our community.

Please circle below the option for which you would be mostly likely to vote “yes” to fund in a town election. **CHOOSE ONE.**

- 1) Build a new library at a new location or move to a different site that would have ample parking, but would be OUTSIDE OF DOWNTOWN Holliston.
- 2) Renovate the existing building, including structural improvements, to fit the needs of the community for the future and to maximize the space available with the understanding that the amount of parking would not change.
- 3) Repair the existing building only enough to keep the facility operating and without changing the space inside or the amount of parking.

Which of the following new services would YOU PERSONALLY be likely to use if the library offered them? Check all that apply.

Wireless printing		Video games	
Foreign language conversation groups		Film to digital conversion	
Ancestry.com		More small rooms for quiet study/meetings	
STEAM programs for kids (Science-Technology-Engineering-Arts-Math)		Graphic novels for adults	
Streaming video (like Netflix)		Learning groups for beginners led by skilled volunteers	
Streaming music (like iTunes)		Kits to help kids explore nature & science	
Library sleepover for kids		Tablets to borrow	
Evening story time		Color printing	
Concerts		3D printing	
Bridge or card game club		Trivia night	

Which of the following discussion groups would YOU PERSONALLY (or your children) attend if offered?

Science Fiction/fantasy FOR KIDS		Poetry group—appreciation and/or writing	
Science Fiction/fantasy FOR ADULTS		Great Decisions (public affairs) discussion	
Mystery/thriller for adults		Great Books (classics) discussion	
Graphic novels for kids		Other (specify)	

If the library were to circulate non-traditional items, which would YOU PERSONALLY be likely to use? Check all that apply.

Musical instruments		Metal detectors		American Girl doll kits	
Kitchen items (pans, etc.)		Tools		Sewing machines	
Board games		Puzzles		Telescopes	
Outdoor games		Electric meters			
Binoculars		Knitting needles			

Are there other items you would like to see available? Please be specific:

Do you currently use free electronic books and/or downloadable audio through the library?

___yes ___no **If you do not, why not?**

How likely are you to use free e-books/downloadable audio in the near future?

___Likely ___Not likely

Do you have a free Boston Public Library e-card? What have been your experiences using their services?

Are there specific programs or services you wish we offered?

Do you use other libraries? Why?

What things do you think our library does very well?

What things do you find frustrating?

Other comments:

HOLLISTON PUBLIC LIBRARY SURVEY FOR **TEENS**

What is your age? 13 ___ 14 ___ 15 ___ 16 ___ 17 ___ 18 ___

How often do you use the Holliston Public Library?

More than once per week ___ Weekly ___ Monthly ___ 3-4 times/year ___ 1-2 times/year ___ Rarely ___

If the frequency with which you use the library has increased or decreased or if you rarely use the library, can you tell us why?

The library building is in need of extensive repair and upgrade. Considering that most other town buildings, including schools, have been renovated in the recent past, the condition of the current facility is not up to those same standards and should reflect the future role of the Holliston Public Library in our community.

Please circle below the best option in your opinion. CHOOSE ONE.

- 1) Build a new library at a new location or move to a different site that would have ample parking, but would be OUTSIDE OF DOWNTOWN Holliston.
- 2) Renovate the existing building, including structural improvements, to fit the needs of the community for the future and to maximize the space available with the understanding that the amount of parking would not change.
- 3) Repair the existing building only enough to keep the facility operating and without changing the space inside or the amount of parking.

Which of the following new services would YOU PERSONALLY be likely to use if the library offered them? Check all that apply.

Wireless printing		Trivia night	
Foreign language conversation groups		Learning groups for beginners led by skilled volunteers	
Science fiction/fantasy book club		Poetry group—appreciation and/or writing	
More small quiet study/meeting rooms		Great Decisions discussion group (world affairs)	
Streaming video (like Netflix)		Video games	
Streaming music (like iTunes)		Online book club	
Meeting space for after-school clubs		Tablets to borrow	
More small quiet study rooms		Color printing	
Concerts		3D printing	
Card game club		Mystery/thriller book group	
Coding		College test preparation (SAT/ACT)	
Classes on creating apps			

If the library were to circulate non-traditional items, which would YOU PERSONALLY be likely to use? Check all that apply.

Musical instruments		Binoculars		Knitting needles	
Tools		American Girl doll kits		Telescopes	
Board games		Metal detectors		Electric meters	
Outdoor games		Puzzles		Sewing machines	
Kitchen items (pans, etc.)					

Are there other items you would like to see available? Please be specific:

Do you currently use electronic books and/or downloadable audio through the library? ___yes ___no

If you do not, why not?

How likely are you to use e-books/downloadable audio in the near future? ___Likely ___Not likely

Are there specific programs or services you wish we offered?

Are there any museum passes we do not currently offer you would like to see added?

What things do you think our library does very well?

What things do you find frustrating?

Other comments:

Brief Summary of Survey Results

Most of the adults who answered the survey were between 30 and 60 years of age (17 for the teen survey). Most used the library on a weekly basis.

If frequency of use has changed, it was due to:

1. Now use electronic materials
2. Lack of time
3. Had kids or kids grew up
4. Combination of hours, working out of town, purchasing books, liking other libraries and the library being too small.

A clear majority of patrons wanted to renovate the existing building (63% of adults and 80% of teens) or make minimal repairs (13% of adults and 9% of teens.) Only 23% of adults and 9% of teens supported building a new structure.

New services generating the most interest were: wireless printing, color printing, STEM programs, concerts, learning groups, small rooms for meetings/study and nature kits for kids. Teens wanted more meeting/study spaces and college prep classes.

For new discussion groups, a classics book club and Great Decisions garnered the most interest for adults and science fiction/fantasy for teens.

Respondents were far less interested in borrowing non-traditional items than anticipated. Board games, telescopes and puzzles headed the list.

Regarding e-books and downloadable audiobooks, 62 % of adults and 80% of teens said they did not use them for the following reasons:

1. Like print and don't want to switch to electronic.
2. Lack of interest and forgetting it was available.
3. Did not know it was available, didn't have the equipment or did not know how to get help.
4. Use other sources like Amazon, hated the long reserve lists or found it difficult to use.

Most knew nothing about the Boston e-card. Some wanted to know more.

1. Those who used it, liked it—especially for Hoopla, foreign languages, databases, e-books, etc.
2. A few misunderstood question and thought they had to travel to Boston. Others were satisfied with MLN or weren't interested.

For new services:

Knitting club	ESL/GED	Outdoor movie nights
More museum passes	More French books for kids	Parenting/homeschool programs
Genealogy club	Lectures	Lego club weekly
Calligraphy	Diversity programs	Dance/art classes for kids
Adult Ed classes	Sunday hours	Shop/home Ec classes
More art shows	More hours	

Those who used other libraries did so to:

1. Take advantage of larger, more varied collections in bigger libraries or to pick up a book we did not own.
2. The selection, children's programs, space and buildings were nicer elsewhere.
3. Work in or visit another town frequently.

What things do you think our library does very well?

1. Customer service/knowledgeable, friendly staff
2. Children's programs
3. MLN, ability to borrow books
4. New books and recommended titles
5. One Book, One Holliston, multiple titles for book clubs, adult programming

What things do you find frustrating?

1. Parking, parking, parking
2. Lack of space/small collection of materials
3. Not enough children's programs
4. Long reserve lists/lack of multiple copies
5. Hours
6. Dated building/small children's room
7. Waiting list for e-books
8. Unfriendly staff