

**Reuben Hoar Public Library  
Littleton, MA  
Long Range Plan  
Fiscal Years 2015-2020**

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## **Mission**

Reuben Hoar Library - Connecting our community with each other and the world.

Read - To inspire Littleton to read, view, and listen.

Learn - To promote lifelong learning from birth through adulthood.

Meet - To create thriving spaces where the community connects, accesses library resources, and shares their stories.

Discover - To provide library collections that introduce ideas, build skills, support lifelong learning, and spark creativity.

## **Vision**

Reuben Hoar Library - The place you want to be!

The Reuben Hoar Library will become our community's favorite place from which to borrow books, films and music. We will strive to provide patrons of all ages with enhanced opportunities for reading, viewing, and listening by broadening our community partnerships. We will establish the library as the leading community center for early learning through educational play spaces, programs and materials. We will improve public access to our library by increasing open hours, improving our virtual presence for those who access library resources online and replacing/renovating/expanding our aging library. And we will provide more library materials for the public, including materials in new and emerging formats and by providing easier access to digital collections.

## Values

Reuben Hoar Library values...

### **Relationships:**

With the public, by providing friendly, professional staff, and personalized customer service at all times to all members of the community.

With the Library Board of Trustees, Friends of the Library, and other volunteers who dedicate their time, energy, and experience to help improve library services and connect us with the community.

With co-workers, by respecting each other's contributions and working together to foster efficiency, innovation, and creativity.

With the Town of Littleton, Merrimack Valley Library Consortium, other educational institutions, and community organizations, to collaborate and achieve common goals.

### **Responsiveness:**

To the changing needs of Reuben Hoar Library patrons, as we develop services and programs to maintain relevance and a sense of place in the community.

To new materials and changing formats and technologies as they emerge.

To the changing and challenging world around us and how this shapes delivery of library services.

### **Sustainability and Responsible Stewardship:**

Through thoughtful and efficient use of resources and public funds with the mandate to provide free basic library service to the community.

### **Intellectual Freedom and Privacy:**

The rights of every individual to both seek and receive information from all points of view without restriction, the right to confidential use of the library, and the right to privacy.

## Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people who attended and participated in the strategic planning meetings:

Kim Ahern	Alyson Jacobs
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Rob Brownson	Amy Tarlow-Lewis
Tom Coughlin	Judy White
Mary Lee Donovan	

We would like to thank the library staff and trustees for their participation in this process:

### **Trustees**

Mark Rambacher, Chair  
Laura Beltrami, Vice-Chair  
Peter Church, Treasurer  
Tryphena Reidy, Secretary  
Lynn Protaswoicki  
David Sill

### **Staff**

Samuel Alvarez, Director	Jenna Cantino
Andrea Curran	James Taber
Helen Graham	Margaret Geanisis
Diann Ouellette-Haduch	Julie Bernardi
Linda Schreiber	Sally Pendleton
Susan Palmer	Julie Fredericksen
Jeanne Sill	Betty Smith
Kip Roberson, Former Director	

We would like to thank the community members who participated in the community survey which helped us create our mission and vision statements and our long-term goals.

We would also like to thank library consultant Sunny Vandermark who facilitated the SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results) workshop; and Deborah Hoadley, library consultant for the Massachusetts Library System, who facilitated our community visioning workshop and provided guidance throughout the entire planning process.

### **Approval by the Board of Library Trustees**

The Reuben Hoar Library Board of Trustees accepted and adopted this Strategic Plan on <<insert date here>>.

## Methodology

The Reuben Hoar Library Board of Trustees and the Library Director started the search for people interested in serving on the Long-Range Planning Committee in early Fall 2013. We were able to engage 17 members of the public as well as the entire library staff and trustees to participate. Massachusetts Library System was contacted by the Library Director to discuss the process and to determine which portion of the process an MLS consultant would conduct.

We held two meetings on November 18 & 19, 2013. At the first meetings, conducted by library consultant Sunny Vandermark - one for the public and one for staff and trustees, the Library Director gave an overview of the community and what had been happening at the library. We then had a brainstorming session for the S.O.A.R. (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) exercise. The S.O.A.R. results were compiled by the consultant and were shared with all meeting participants.

The second meeting was held on December 8, 2013. This meeting involved reaction and review of the S.O.A.R. results and another brainstorming session, conducted by MLS consultant Deborah Hoadley, was held to come up with some community vision statements. This session was much harder than the S.O.A.R. workshop, as people were unsure how their visions for the entire community would translate into how the library could position itself to fit with these vision statements. However, during a voting procedure where participants were allowed to vote on where they thought the library could have the greatest impact, it became clearer as to where the exercise was heading. This led to the development of four categories that were then placed in a hierarchy, with the most votes first. From these categories, four draft goals were created. These results were compiled by the MLS consultant and shared with the committee, Trustees and staff members.

During December and January, a Community Survey was created and distributed. It was available at the library and online through the library's website. The survey was promoted in the local media, on social media, in the library newsletter, and on flyers posted throughout the library and Town Hall. The online version was hosted and maintained by Survey Monkey. Paper copies of the survey were loaded onto the online version by library staff. The survey deadline was January 31, 2014.

On July 7, 2014 the Library Board of Trustees reviewed and crafted new library mission, vision, and values statements. Using all of the collected data, the Library Director worked with the Trustees to develop the goals, objectives and actions for the long-range plan. From July thru September, the Library Director and Trustees reviewed, wrote, and edited this document for final approval by the Trustees.

## Community Overview

Littleton has traditionally been a small town located on major regional crossroads. In Colonial times the Great Road passed through town on the way to Boston. Now each day thousands of commuters and other travelers hurry along Routes 495, 2, 119, and 110. This easy access to regional employment and markets makes Littleton a convenient place to live and an attractive place to locate a business. Townspeople think of Littleton as a rural community of starter homes where families can build a good life. In recent years, however, the town has experienced escalating housing prices, so that the profile of the local population is shifting toward higher incomes. A person driving around Littleton still sees open fields, woods, and other scenes that give the impression of a rural setting, but in fact the remaining undeveloped lands in town are contained in a relatively small number of large parcels. Market response to the demand for homes in this attractive community is placing increased pressure on remaining undeveloped lands. As easily developed lands become scarcer, there are increasing proposals to site new structures on "marginal" lands that have physical constraints such as being close to wetlands.

Littleton's growth management goals and objectives call for maintaining as rural a town character as possible – but with high quality amenities and services. There is the intent to focus business development in certain areas that will strengthen the Town Center, tap the good access to Routes 119 and 495, and minimize impacts on other areas of town. Increased opportunities for recreation are a high priority of townspeople. There is growing awareness of the need for proactive conservation of key undeveloped parcels of land. There is also increasing concern about groups of residents who are being priced out of living in Littleton. Townspeople want to minimize the impacts of through-traffic and divert the regional flow to outside of Littleton wherever possible.

## **Implementing and Monitoring Our Strategic Plan**

The Library's strategic plan is comprehensive and focused, giving the Trustees and staff a strong foundation upon which to build quality library services for the Littleton community. To achieve our vision of success, we must move the plan into meaningful action, transforming these goals and objectives into steps that can be achieved and measured.

The implementation phase is the follow-through on the plan. In this phase the library will create operational work plans; annually, the library director and board of trustees will establish an annual action plan. Staff at all levels will also reflect the plan's goals and objectives in their individual objectives and activities. Annual reports will document our progress and milestones. Finally, the library will adopt an assessment framework to report on progress. Assessment will include community feedback, management tools and metrics.

This approach will ensure passion and commitment to the plan, and will ensure that the plan is moving forward.

## Goals & Objectives

### Goal 1

Provide a comfortable, safe, diverse and welcoming multipurpose library space that offers opportunities for all ages.

#### Objectives

1. Ensure that all public and staff areas are welcoming, useful and fun.
  - a. All who enter the library will be welcomed
2. Develop a clear vision and needs assessment/building program for a future library space that serves all community members.
  - a. Achieved through the implementation of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners' Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program - Planning & Design grant.
3. Create flexible, versatile, and creative spaces for all ages.
  - a. Create a comfortable space with areas for quiet leisure reading and individual study.
  - b. Create space specifically designed to meet the needs of young adults and teens.
  - c. Provide areas for group meetings and study groups.
4. Improve public access to library services by increasing library open hours to meet community demand.
  - a. Meet community expectations for open hours by developing a schedule for the library based on local demand and state and national standards. Explore possibility of adding Sunday hours beginning in FY17.
    - i. Research standards, best practices, and recent survey responses and develop a schedule.
  - b. Develop a staffing plan to support proposed library open hours.
    - i. Assess current staff resources and develop a plan that effectively deploys current staff and proposes necessary additional staff resources.
5. Prepare a report for the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee including rationale for library open hours and a FY17 budget proposal for necessary staff.
6. Continue to engage community members and Town officials in a process to create a facility that meets required library space needs. Upon completion of the Planning & Design grant, research funding mechanisms for the expanded/renovated/new library space - including the possibility of an MBLC Construction grant.

## Goal 2

The Library will be the community's go-to place for information, entertainment, research and technology.

### Objectives

1. The library's broad collections sustain the needs and enriches the lives of our patrons
  - a. The library's collection development policy will be reviewed annually and updated by all staff involved in selection and cataloging
  - b. Selection processes, standing orders, budget and circulation figures will be reviewed annually to improve use of resources
2. The Library's collections will support the reading, listening, and viewing habits of Littleton patrons of all ages
  - a. The library will make every effort to retrieve or purchase materials for patrons as quickly as possible.
  - b. Displays will highlight materials in demand and encourage use of older but related/relevant materials
  - c. Improve and enhance the collection through the acceptance of donations and pursuit of grants and private funds
3. The Library will provide proactive patron advisory services
  - a. Library staff locations and responsibilities at the desk will be assess and physical space reoriented to provide proactive services
  - b. Display areas and locations will be regularly assessed and changed to attract the attention of patrons
  - c. Online displays, newsletter, and social media will be used to connect library resources with patrons.
4. The Library's ebranch will be seamless 24/7 and support an online active community
  - a. The website, catalog and digital collections will be on at all times. Digital collections will be prominently promoted
  - b. Presence in social media will be current and available at all times
  - c. The Library's wi-fi will be available at all times for use on library grounds and will be reviewed with Littleton police each year to see if loitering is a concern
  - d. The library's marketing plan will include current calendar of events, online, print and signage strategies

### Goal 3

Improve/promote the visibility of the library to increase awareness of library offerings, programs and community wide events.

#### Objectives

1. All visitors will be welcomed and informed of our resources through a variety of communication methods
  - a. Library website will be updated regularly
  - b. Signage will be posted throughout the library
  - c. The newsletter will continue to be emailed monthly
  - d. Print flyers/posters will be posted around town (Town House, Schools, Supermarkets, etc.)
  - e. Press releases will be sent to Littleton Independent, Action Unlimited, Lowell Sun, Boston Globe West, and Worcester Telegram & Gazette
  - f. The Library will have a presence on Littleton Community Television

### Goal 4

Provide lifelong learning opportunities through a broad spectrum of dynamic programming

#### Objectives

1. Offer programs that cover a broad spectrum of community interests and attract new users to the library
  - a. Annually sponsor Littleton Reads
  - b. Work with the Friends to bring in speakers and special programs
  - c. Annually partner with local organizations (Littleton Conservation Trust, Littleton Community Farm, Historical Society, etc.)to offer programs of local interest
2. Continue to promote awareness of programs and services
3. Form alliances/partnerships with local businesses and groups to expand program options
4. Provide educational programs to support a person's ability to be a knowledgeable and well-informed citizen
5. Provide educational programs supporting civic responsibility, health, wealth, food, environmental, and other life choices
6. Promote the use of the Couper Room as a venue for free, non-profit, individuals, and local activities that do not conflict with library functions

## Goal 5

The Library will work in concert with schools, town departments, and community organizations to support their research and informational needs

### Objectives

1. Children's staff will connect with area daycares and preschools and reinforce the benefits of early language development and the resources and programs available at the library
2. Children's staff will partner with the schools to support curriculum needs, cultural extracurricular activities, and summer reading with strong collections and programming
3. Young adult staff will partner with the middle and high schools to build collections and services that meet Littleton teen and tween needs and provide support for curriculum and recreational needs
4. All library staff will partner with town departments and local community organizations to ensure collections and programs meet individual goals and support their efforts for community learning

## Goal 6

Maintain a capable and proud team who will continue to enthusiastically provide excellent services, programs, and resources to the community.

### Objectives

1. The Library will provide a high level of public service in a kind, efficacious, and forthcoming manner.
  - a. Staff will always present a friendly and professional disposition
  - b. Staff will respond to patrons' needs immediately and demonstrate excellent follow-through.
  - c. Staff will be as proactive in the delivery of services as possible, considering constraints
  - d. Staff will have a thorough knowledge of coworkers strengths to best assist patrons
2. Library management will emphasize staff morale, applaud staff achievement, and encourage staff professional development
  - a. The library will conduct at least four staff meetings per year
  - b. Trustees will be notified of staff achievements, celebrations and events so they may express their support to the staff
  - c. At least one staff meeting will include a guest speaker/trainer focusing on an area of staff development
  - d. All staff will receive annual performance reviews completed by the Library Director
  - e. Library Director will go through an annual performance review with the Board of Trustees
  - f. Encourage all library staff to attend at least one professional meeting/training/workshop every year

- g. Staff will be encouraged to self-train, train with other staff internally, or participate in professional training opportunities in technology, devices and other areas related to their areas of responsibility
  - h. Encourage staff to participate in user-group meetings and committees in network or professional associations
  - i. Library Director will attend at least one professional meeting a year and participate in professional organizations
3. The library will continue to be efficient, effective and responsive to the community's needs through the development and implementation of operations, financial management, policies and procedures
- a. Library policies and procedures will be reviewed annually
  - b. The annual budget request will reflect an efficiently-run organization's needs and will insure sufficient funds to operate the facility, support qualified staff and meet the community's needs
  - c. The public will have ample opportunity to make suggestions to improve the library through surveys, focus groups, suggestion boxes, email, social media, newsletter, and personal conversations
  - d. Staff job descriptions will reflect the responsibilities and demands of the current positions and the true needs of the library
    - i. All staff responsibilities and hours scheduled will be reviewed annually with adjustments made accordingly based on library needs
    - ii. All library job descriptions will be reviewed at least every two years with special attention to technology demands

## Goal 7

Provide library services and a diverse collection of library materials that directly reflect the needs of the community

### Objectives

1. Broaden library offerings to attract a more diverse patron base.
2. Develop a comprehensive plan for acquiring ongoing community input regarding services and materials.
3. Revise the library's collection development policy.
  - a. Address the demand for multiple copies of current bestsellers
  - b. Address the demand for eBooks and other electronic resources
  - c. Address the demand for a broader scope of reading choices.
4. Increase staffing to better assist patrons on a one-to-one basis.
5. Revise library open hours to reflect community needs

## Goal 8

Establish Reuben Hoar Library as the leading community center for early learning, where families read, play, and learn together.

### Objectives

1. Increase children's librarian's hours from 30 to 40 per week by FY18.
2. All staff will welcome children and their caregivers to the library and take great care to assist them
3. The children's room will be a friendly place with colorful decorations and displays, toys, and play spaces
4. The children's staff will encourage families to use the space for a variety of needs: to have fun, to meet, to hang out, and to do drop-in crafts
5. The children's room will be presented as lively, energetic, and interactive, where sound is welcomed
6. The children's collection will highlight a variety of subjects and provide readers' advisory resources and lists
7. Expand outreach services in the community to promote literacy
  - i. Target families with young children who do not use the Library
  - ii. Work with early childcare providers to introduce library services and materials
8. Continue to provide dynamic programming for children