Ipswich Public Library

Long Range Plan
FY2020-FY2022
# Table of Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval of the Board of Trustees</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ipswich Public Library Overview</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Statement</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Summary</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment of Community Needs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals and Objectives</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY2020 Action Plan</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A – Community Survey</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

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Community Planning Committee

Jennifer Breaker
Patty DiTullio
Gordon Harris
Diane Kelley
Ed Marsh
Michael McGrath
Larry Pszenny
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Doug Stewart
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Sarah Vickery

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We would also like to thank Beth Gallaway, Director of the Grafton (MA) Public Library, who served as consultant on this project, for her facilitation of our committee meetings and for her guidance in the planning process.
Approval of the Board of Trustees

The Ipswich Public Library Board of Library Trustees approved and adopted this Long Range Plan on September 10, 2018.
About the Ipswich Public Library

Hours of Service
The Library is open Monday through Wednesday from 9am to 8pm, and Thursday and Friday from 9am to 5pm. From Labor Day until the second weekend in June, we are open on Saturdays from 9am to 4pm. From Labor Day until Memorial Day we are open on Sundays from 1pm-4pm.

Personnel
Ipswich has nine fulltime employees as of FY19 (Library Director, Assistant Director, Children’s Librarian, Reference/Teen Librarian, Head of Circulation, Head of Technical Services, two Children’s Assistants, and a Circulation Assistant). All full-time employees work 37.5 hours per week, except one who works 30 hours per week. In addition, there are eight part-time employees who work fewer than 20 hours each. There are four professional librarians on staff (holding an MLS); all are full time.

Governance
There are nine appointed members of the Board of Trustees of the Ipswich Public Library, serving three-year terms. The Board of Trustees is responsible for setting policy and goals for the library. The Library Director is responsible for the day-to-day management of the Library. The Library Director reports to the Trustees as well as to the Town Manager. The library is part of a 36-community regional consortium that shares its materials through daily delivery.

Mission Statement
The Ipswich Public Library is a vital resource for ideas, information and recreation for all members of the community. The mission of the Ipswich Public Library is to provide information on topics of interest to the community and guidance in how to use and evaluate information sources; to promote learning and personal growth throughout life; to support the enjoyment of reading for pleasure as well as work and school; to preserve and make available for study the historical record of the Town of Ipswich.
Executive Summary

Why does the Ipswich Public Library need a strategic plan?

To be eligible to apply for any direct grants from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners under the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) program or any state-funded grants, such as construction, our library must complete a strategic plan and file it with the MBLC.

However, beyond meeting eligibility requirements for certain MBLC grant programs, strategic planning is a well-documented management tool for all types of organizations. A plan reflects the vision of what the library is and where it needs to go, and serves as a blueprint for the organization's growth.

Planning has been emphasized in libraries, particularly public libraries, for several decades. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners has seen its value as a management tool for libraries of all types. Libraries have repeatedly confirmed how important the process of completing a plan has been in their local efforts to gain recognition, funding, and staffing for accomplishing the goals and objectives set out in their plans.

Specifically, strategic planning:
- explains the library program to others
- identifies priorities, strengths, and weaknesses
- provides an anchor for the development of a budget
- articulates connections with the larger organization
- provides a blueprint for future development
- creates a clear sense of purpose
- provides the basis for ongoing evaluation

Ipswich is continually growing and changing, and library services must grow and change with the Town. It is time for us to look again to be sure that we are using our resources effectively to meet the shifting needs of our community, and that we define ways to maintain and increase library services while we plan for the future.

This Long Range Plan is the result of a process begun many months ago. It strives to bring focus to the library’s services over the next five years. While not inclusive of everything we do on a daily basis, this plan attempts to identify specific areas where the community has expressed a desire for us to strengthen and grow, while still maintaining all other services under our mission. It will guide the Library staff as they make library service and program decisions, and will guide the Trustees and Director as they allocate resources to achieve the most effective library services possible.

Patty DiTullio
Library Director
Assessment of Community Needs

Methodology

To gather information and write the Library’s new plan, the Library Director selected a process based on the American Library Association’s guide, The New Planning for Results. Trustees, residents, community stakeholders, library staff, and a consultant worked together to prepare this plan.

Various methods of data collection were used in the process. A community planning committee worked with the consultant in two community visioning workshops to identify trends and needs in the larger Ipswich community, and discuss ways that the library could either meet those needs, or be an agent/participant in community efforts to meet them. This group was comprised of representatives from the library trustees and Friends of the Library, town employees, and community members with insight that library staff may not have (for example, the VFW, business owners, etc.).

We also held focus groups for various specific constituencies (senior citizens, parents, teens, etc.) to gather feedback specific to those groups. These groups were led by the consultant, and not attended by library staff, so that participants could speak freely about library services and unmet needs. Finally, we conducted a community survey (informed by what we gathered in the focus groups) that we made available in the library and online.

In addition to the above activities, the library was awarded a federal grant in 2017 for a formal assessment of our local history collections and related services. The result of that assessment is a report with extensive recommendations for improvements. Careful consideration was also given to that data while preparing this Long Range Plan.

Over the summer, the Library Director and consultant reviewed the results of the planning committee, focus groups, and community survey, and worked to identify draft goals and objectives, which were then shared with staff for feedback and further input.

The Library Director then revised the document and presented a final draft to the Board of Library Trustees. The Board voted to approve the plan at their September 10, 2018 meeting.

Themes and Priorities

As we sifted through all the information gathered in the planning process, several themes emerged, including a commitment to traditional borrower services, an interest in cultural and intellectual pursuits, demand for varying types of gathering spaces, strong community partnerships, and a dedication to technology and innovation. We have used these themes as umbrellas under which to place our institutional priorities.

Before we began to set goals, we gave consideration to these priorities to determine how they have evolved over time, and how the Library can evolve to maintain them. As we embark on an ambitious new Long Range Plan, we take this opportunity to affirm our core priorities, with which we aligned our goals and objectives for the next three years.

Priority: Lifelong Learning, Ideas and Inspiration
The Library is more than a place where books are stored; we are a place where ideas are created, discovered, and shared. We nurture the love of learning, literacy, and intellectual curiosity, and are committed to maintaining traditional services and developing future innovations. We hold intellectual freedom, access to diverse perspectives, and materials which support the interests and needs of the community among our highest values.

Our collections, services, and programs reflect the broad and deep interests of our community. We strive to be responsive to the community’s needs across generations and cultures and to stay informed about the ever-evolving variety of library content available to patrons.

**Priority: Exemplary User Experience**

Through welcoming and comfortable public spaces, and an engaging digital environment, we provide access to a comprehensive range of resources. Residents will have physical spaces that meet their individual needs, whether they wish to gather and interact with others or to sit quietly and work or read.

We will provide a friendly, creative, and knowledgeable staff to support our patrons as they search for information, literature, and entertainment. The Library fosters a culture of exemplary customer service, where patrons are given the same quality of helpful attention in person, by phone, or online.

**Priority: Connection to the Digital World**

Online access and unrestricted connectivity are fundamental requirements of modern life. The Library will provide patrons with high-speed access to the digital world with no unnecessary restrictions or fees, to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing resources and services available through the Internet.

The Library is responsive to the ongoing changes in information services. The ways in which we experience books, gather information, and create content will continue to evolve and expand. We are committed to helping patrons navigate these changes, explore new formats, and experiment with innovative devices in an environment where both experts and novices are welcome.

**Priority: Community Connections**

The Library will aggregate community information from town and local agencies, promote civic involvement and discussion, and partner creatively with those agencies to provide the greatest depth of service to our patrons. We utilize strong, modern, and effective marketing and promotional tools to advertise the wealth of library services to current users and non-users.

The Library will be a central source for information about Ipswich’s past and present, and residents and visitors will have the resources they need to gain a richer understanding of the history and traditions of Ipswich. We will coordinate ease of access to and preservation of the art, artifacts, manuscripts, and other unique historical content in our collections, and highlight the resources that illuminate the uniqueness of the history of Ipswich.
Goals and Objectives

Goal 1.

By the end of FY2022, library patrons of all ages and abilities can expect an outstanding user experience from their library that meets their individual needs and interests, whether they are accessing the library in person, online, or in the community.

FY2020 Objectives for Goal 1

• Library staff will work with a space design consultant and/or architect to develop a multi-year plan for adapting physical library spaces to meet evolving and varied user needs
• Based on the recommendations of the design consultant, the Library Director will develop a capital funding request for FY21 to implement improvements to the library facility
• The Library will launch a redesigned website to improve remote access for patrons
• The Library will update online registration for programs, museum passes, and room reservations
• The Library Director and Assistant Director will develop a formal marketing plan

FY2021 Objectives for Goal 1

• The Library Director will work with the Town Facilities Director on a capital project for redesign of the library’s reference spaces, and for additional quiet study spaces
• The Assistant Director will work with local agencies to expand and improve ESOL services
• Dual monitors will be installed at all service desks
• The Library Director will work with other Town departments on solutions to parking challenges
• The Children’s staff will attend professional development workshops related to space planning for youth services in public libraries, and visit other libraries for ideas
• The Library will create a “welcome wagon” packet to distribute to realtors
• A feasibility study will be conducted for expanding hours of service
• The Library Director will work with the Council on Aging to seek grant funding to improve and expand Homebound Delivery Service to the community

FY2022 Objectives for Goal 1

• The Library Director will work with the Town Facilities Director to implement a capital project for redesign of the children’s room
• The Library Director will work with the Town Facilities Director to implement a capital project for redesign of the circulation desk and related services
• The Library will seek funding to expand print marketing for patrons with limited online access
• The Library will design a model for “pop-up” library service at community events
• The Library Director will explore solutions to serving patrons with transportation issues
• The Library will offer an online book discussion group for remote users
• A major redesign of all signs and maps of library spaces will be implemented
• The Library Director will work with an ADA consultant to address remaining barriers to service for library users with differing abilities
• The Children’s room staff will create a packet to send to new babies in Ipswich
Goal 2.

By the end of FY2022, the Ipswich Public Library will foster and promote interest in the history of Ipswich by maintaining and facilitating access to its local history and genealogy research collections, and through collaborating with local partners to celebrate Ipswich history.

FY2020 Objectives for Goal 2

- The Library will seek funding to hire a part-time Archivist to work on preservation goals established by the 2018 Preservation Assessment
- The Archivist will write a long-range preservation plan for the local history collection
- The Library Director and Archivist will apply for an LSTA grant for preservation of library and archival materials, to achieve the goals of the long-range preservation plan
- The Library Director and Archivist will establish a roundtable for Ipswich history stakeholders, to meet quarterly to share ideas and work collaboratively

FY2021 Objectives for Goal 2

- The Archivist and Library Director will update the policies related to access and use of the local history collections
- The Archivist will update the finding aids to improve ease of use of history collections
- The Library will work with the Ipswich Museum to reach a permanent agreement regarding shared resources
- The Library will purchase new, updated equipment for viewing, printing, and scanning microfilm
- The Archivist will make a plan for digitization of suitable historical collections
- The Archivist will establish ongoing programs for patrons in local history research

FY2022 Objectives for Goal 2

- The Library will have 1 dedicated FTE for management and oversight of the local history collection and to assist patrons with research
- The Archivist will develop a joint, large-scale event with Ipswich historical museums and organizations, to be held on an annual basis
- The Library will have a dedicated line item in its annual budget for archival supplies and materials.
- The Library will create a marketing plan specific to the local history collection
- The Archivist and Children’s Librarian will develop youth programs to celebrate local history
- The Library will explore ways for volunteers to assist with local history research assistance
Goal 3.
By the end of FY2022, the residents of Ipswich will find leading-edge technology incorporated into the programs, services, and operations of the Ipswich Public Library.

FY2020 Objectives for Goal 3
- The Library will launch a new website design, train staff in its use, and establish staff expectations for updates and new content
- The Assistant Library Director will develop an updated and expanded menu of technology instruction to offer to the public that addresses both one-on-one assistance and topical learning, and an accompanying marketing plan
- The Children’s Librarian and children’s staff will attend professional development workshops related to technology integration for youth services in public libraries
- The Library will offer an app (or equivalent current technology) through which patron account functions (catalog, renewals, requests) can be accessed
- The Library will introduce automated sign-in procedures for public workstations

FY2021 Objectives for Goal 3
- The Assistant Director will purchase five more Chromebooks for in-library use
- The library will expand its digital offerings to include streaming video services
- The Library will purchase and loan e-readers
- The Library will conduct a feasibility study for patron self-checkout service
- The Assistant Library Director will research third-party fax service options
- The Assistant Library Director will work with MVLC and Town IT to develop an ongoing technology plan that includes replacement schedules and allows for implementation of emerging technologies
- A minimum of two additional public Internet stations will be added

FY2022 Objectives for Goal 3
- The Assistant Library Director will launch an annual community survey to monitor and respond to the community’s appetite for technologies or services that are cost-prohibitive to individuals, but of interest to a broad range of library users, and make recommendations for purchase or implementation
- The Archivist will expand the local history content available through the library’s website
- The Library will offer an online personal reading recommendation service
- The Library will introduce an online book discussion group
- The Library will introduce a series of public programs on how to evaluate information for accuracy and bias
Goal 4.

By the end of FY2022, the residents of Ipswich will see increased benefits from the unique skills, expertise, and professionalism of the staff members of the Ipswich Public Library.

**FY2020 Objectives for Goal 4**

- Beginning in 2020, staff will participate in at least one training, workshop, or conference annually related to their job description
- All department heads will attend regular Library Consortium meetings related to their roles, and disseminate information from those meetings to the rest of the Ipswich staff
- The Library Director and Board of Trustees will update all existing library policies and approve them on an annual basis, revising and updating as necessary
- The Assistant Library Director will create a comprehensive program for the recruitment, screening, training, and supervision of volunteers.
- The Library Director and Assistant Library Director will evaluate the effectiveness of internal staff tools (such as wikis, scheduling software, and other clearinghouses) and make needed changes and improvements

**FY2021 Objectives for Goal 4**

- The Assistant Library Director will conduct regular training sessions for new volunteers
- The Library Director will introduce annual staff evaluations and goal-setting with all staff
- The Library Director will work with Town Human Resources to update all job descriptions
- The Library will close at least one day each year for staff development and training
- A plan will be created for ongoing customer service development and training for all staff
- An annual customer service survey will be implemented to solicit patron feedback
- The Library Director will serve in a leadership role in a professional organization at the regional or state level

**FY2022 Objectives for Goal 4**

- Technology competencies will be created for all staff members and related training will be planned and implemented by the Assistant Library Director
- The staff break room will be renovated to better meet staff needs
- CPR, defibrillator, and Narcan training will be made available to all interested staff
- All staff spaces will be evaluated for ergonomic improvements and improved accordingly
Goal 5.
By the end of FY2022, the Ipswich Public Library will be a true community hub and a leader in information about the town, modeling new methods of communication, creating varied forums for sharing information, and building networks with other town organizations.

FY2020 Objectives for Goal 5
- Reference staff will update and maintain the Community Information Center monthly to add current, accurate information about local services and organizations, and remove dated materials
- The Library will work with the VFW and other area organizations to create an ongoing series of programs of interest to veterans, including intergenerational programs with the library’s children’s department
- Starting in 2020, the Reference Librarian will create at least two research pathfinders per year for our website, on topics such as citizenship, local transportation information, tax preparation, job seeking, etc.
- The Library Director and Archivist will establish a roundtable for Ipswich history stakeholders, to meet quarterly to share ideas and work collaboratively

FY2021 Objectives for Goal 5
- Reference staff will hold a focus group with area service providers such as police, the Council on Aging, and other social service agencies to gather information in order to create a consistent procedure for resource and referral to services offered by other community organizations.
- The children’s department will create and maintain a community page on the website for local information and services of interest to families and children
- The Library will introduce “After Hours” social networking events 2-3 times per year

FY2022 Objectives for Goal 5
- The Library will produce at least one PSA annually for local cable, to promote services or highlight achievements.
- The Library Director and/or Assistant Director will speak at least one event annually to promote library services
- The Library will conduct a training or workshop for other community organizations in the use of using technology to better serve their constituencies
- Starting in 2021, the children’s staff will host an annual open house for the public to learn about area providers of early childhood services such as childcare, playgroups, etc.
**Goal 6.**
By the end of FY2022, the library will be a leader in lifelong learning for Ipswich, providing diverse collections, meaningful activities, programs and events that foster growth, self-development, and exposure to ideas, art, cultures and current issues.

**FY2020 Objectives for Goal 6**
- The Library will develop a series of programs related to services for the opioid crisis, including offerings planned by the children’s staff specific to supporting affected children and families
- Library staff will shift the adult non-fiction collection and adjust shelving to accommodate oversized items on lower shelves of corresponding ranges
- Beginning in the fall 2020, the Reference Librarian and Children’s staff will offer a “Back to School” open house to share information about library resources
- The Library’s collection development policy will be updated to include a specified timetable for weeding of the collection
- The library will continue to host two notable authors each year, as part of the Johnson Author Series, which is funded by the Friends of the Library

**FY2021 Objectives for Goal 6**
- The Assistant Director will evaluate all in-house display spaces and make recommendations for changes and new furnishings
- Conduct feasibility study for developing a “Library of Things,” to include items like sewing machines, tools, electronic equipment, cake pans, etc.
- The Library will launch a monthly documentary film screening and discussion
- Offer a staff training on weeding for all staff with collection management responsibilities
- The Library will conduct reader’s advisory training for all front-line staff
- The Reference librarian will plan information sessions for teens and parents who are planning for college, such as essay writing assistance and financing workshops

**FY2022 Objectives for Goal 6**
- Beginning in 2022, the library will recruit local adult educators to teach free academic courses at the library on variety of topics
- The Reference Librarian will evaluate consumer medical information materials and electronic resources and make recommendations for changes and additions
- The Children’s Librarian will seek grant funding or a sponsorship for ongoing parenting workshops, under a branded umbrella
- The Library will partner with the Ipswich Museum to host lectures related to current exhibits
- The Library will recruit and train volunteers for a “check out an expert” program
- Beginning in 2022, the Library will host moderated community forums on various topics at least annually
FY2020 Action Plan

FY2020 Objectives for Goal 1 – User Experience
- Library staff will work with a space design consultant and/or architect to develop a multi-year plan for adapting physical library spaces to meet evolving and varied user needs
- Based on the recommendations of the design consultant, the Library Director will develop a capital funding request for FY21 to implement improvements to the library facility
- The Library will launch a redesigned website to improve remote access for patrons
- The Library will update online registration for programs, museum passes, and room reservations
- The Library Director and Assistant Director will develop a formal marketing plan

FY2020 Objectives for Goal 2 – Local History
- The Library will seek funding to hire a part-time Archivist to work on preservation goals established by the 2018 Preservation Assessment
- The Archivist will write a long-range preservation plan for the local history collection
- The Library Director and Archivist will apply for an LSTA grant for preservation of library and archival materials, to achieve the goals of the long-range preservation plan
- The Library Director and Archivist will establish a roundtable for Ipswich history stakeholders, to meet quarterly to share ideas and work collaboratively

FY2020 Objectives for Goal 3 – Technology
- The Library will launch a new website design, train staff in its use, and establish staff expectations for updates and new content
- The Assistant Library Director will develop an updated and expanded menu of technology instruction to offer to the public that addresses both one-on-one assistance and topical learning, and an accompanying marketing plan
- The Children’s Librarian and children’s staff will attend professional development workshops related to technology integration for youth services in public libraries
- The Library will offer an app (or equivalent current technology) through which patron account functions (catalog, renewals, requests) can be accessed
- The Library will introduce automated sign-in procedures for public workstations

FY2020 Objectives for Goal 4 – Professional Development
- Beginning in 2020, staff will participate in at least one training, workshop, or conference annually related to their job description
- All department heads will attend regular Library Consortium meetings related to their roles, and disseminate information from those meetings to the rest of the Ipswich staff
- The Library Director and Board of Trustees will update all existing library policies and approve them on an annual basis, revising and updating as necessary
- The Assistant Library Director will create a comprehensive program for the recruitment, screening, training, and supervision of volunteers.
- The Library Director and Assistant Library Director will evaluate the effectiveness of internal staff tools (such as wikis, scheduling software, and other clearinghouses) and make needed changes and improvements
FY2020 Objectives for Goal 5 – Community Connections

- Reference staff will update and maintain the Community Information Center monthly to add current, accurate information about local services and organizations, and remove dated materials
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- The Library Director and Archivist will establish a roundtable for Ipswich history stakeholders, to meet quarterly to share ideas and work collaboratively

FY2020 Objectives for Goal 6 – Lifelong Learning

- The Library will develop a series of programs related to services for the opioid crisis, including offerings planned by the children’s staff specific to supporting affected children and families
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- The library will continue to host two notable authors each year, as part of the Johnson Author Series, which is funded by the Friends of the Library
Appendix A - Community Survey

Ipswich Public Library Strategic Planning Survey

Please take a moment to answer this brief survey about the library. All questions are optional.

1. On average, how often do you visit the library?

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<th>Daily</th>
<th>Weekly</th>
<th>Monthly</th>
<th>Less than once a month</th>
<th>Never</th>
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2. How would you rate each of the following library services?

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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Don’t know/Not applicable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Customer service</td>
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<td>Collection (books, DVDs, music, newspapers, etc.)</td>
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<td>Programs (classes, storytimes, events, etc.)</td>
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<td>Online services (website, catalog, research databases, etc.)</td>
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<td>ILL (Inter-library loan, requesting books from other libraries)</td>
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<td>Library policies</td>
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<td>Computers and printers</td>
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<td>Internet access</td>
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<td>Facility and spaces</td>
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<td>Hours of operation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall, how would you rate the library?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
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<td>Somewhat Important</td>
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<td>Borrowing materials (books, DVDs, music, etc.)</td>
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<td>Reference (research assistance from librarians)</td>
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<td>Programs for adults</td>
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<td>Programs for children and families</td>
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<td>Computers and printers</td>
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<td>Copying and scanning services</td>
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<td>Assistance and instruction in technology</td>
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<td>Study rooms/quiet areas</td>
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<td>Community meeting rooms</td>
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<td>Internet access</td>
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<td>ILL (Inter-library loans from other libraries)</td>
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<td>Local history archives</td>
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<td>Local history lectures</td>
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<td>Municipal information</td>
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<td>Consumer information</td>
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<td>Medical information</td>
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<td>Online services (language learning, catalog, research databases, etc.)</td>
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<td>Newspapers and magazines</td>
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<td>Overall, how important is the library to you and your family?</td>
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4. How do you typically find out about library programs? Check all that apply.

☐ Library website
☐ Social media
☐ Newspaper
☐ Library newsletter
☐ Signs or flyers in the library
☐ Word of mouth
☐ Library staff
☐ Don’t know/Not applicable
☐ Other: ______________________________

5. What do you value most about the library?

6. How could the library or its services be improved?

7. How does the library benefit you or the community?

8. How do you feel the library should prioritize the following service roles, according to their importance to the community at large? (Please rank in order from 1-5)

___ Public access to technology and online resources
___ Local history preservation and education
___ Spaces for individual work and group meetings
___ Lifelong learning: enrichment and cultural programs
___ Clearinghouse of information about community, organizations and services

9. Is there anything else you feel we should know as we plan for the coming years?

10. Please enter your email address here to be entered in a raffle to win a $100 gift card to the Hart House:

__________________________________________________________________