



SUMMARY:

Our plan over the next five years is to increase our value to all Yarmouth's citizens by broadening free access to books, computers, the internet, study space and new and creative programming. If we do this well, we're confident the library can continue to be the hub of the community and its intellectual and civic keystone.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS:

1. Maintain and expand access to a well-balanced collection of materials and resources.
2. Foster strong relationships with all community members and create opportunities to actively participate in the library.
3. Provide a trusted environment for recreational, intellectual and cultural enrichment for the entire community.
4. Develop improved communications to better disseminate information about the library and encourage feedback from the community.
5. Deliver a high level of customer service and create a welcoming and accessible environment for all.

SELECTED ACTIONABLE OBJECTIVES:

- Join Minerva, a fifty-library consortium with access to over seven million downloadable items.
- Extend library hours.
- Offer expanded programming for adults and children, both independently and in concert with community groups.
- Increase volunteering opportunities.
- Improve library communications, and use email and social media to connect more effectively with the public.
- Develop services for local businesses.
- Assess new technologies and make them available to patrons.

"Since we moved here, the library has been a dependable, welcoming, community-oriented place for us. It's been essential in helping us feel more integrated in Yarmouth life."

(Quote from Strategic Planning questionnaire.)





MERRILL MEMORIAL LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN 2017 - 2021 OVERVIEW

Expanding Horizons, Building Community
On-site, On-line, Year-round

Background:

Merrill Memorial Library recently went through a significant renovation. The third floor received a major overhaul, the building's systems were modernized and brought into compliance, and a new covered entryway was added. The library now has 18,000 square feet of space, 7,500 cardholders and a permanent collection of 44,000 items. In 2015 our patrons borrowed 115,000 physical assets and 4,300 digital downloads. Community groups used the library's public space on eighty-seven occasions, and the library held forty programs. Amongst these was the exhibit "Celebrating Chip Chadbourn", a retrospective of the work of a well-known local artist that was a joint venture with Yarmouth Arts. Perhaps most important of all, four hundred children participated in the 2015 Summer Reading Program.

This Strategic Plan was initiated by the library's Board of Trustees who formed a Strategic Planning Committee of concerned citizens. The latter embarked on a thorough process of public input gathering. This included conducting community forums, focus groups, patron surveys for both adults and teens, and individual interviews with community leaders. The committee was particularly interested in the opinions of the library staff. Additionally, the directors of seven high-performance Maine libraries were interviewed to ascertain the steps they had taken to create successful institutions.

Purpose of the Plan:

The operation of the library is guided by its mission, vision and core principles (the latter being consistent with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights). Building on those foundations, this document outlines the strategic direction that the library will follow over the next five years (and beyond) as MML endeavors to better serve its community, meet the needs of all its patrons and embrace the changing role that libraries play in twenty-first-century society. The plan has a strong focus on the expansion of programming and services, and on building community partnerships.



Mission:

Merrill Memorial Library is a public library that makes available to all members of the community a broad range of materials, services and information. The mission of the library is to provide our patrons with educational, recreational and cultural enrichment, and opportunities for independent learning and personal and professional growth.

The Library Trustees and staff support this mission by providing an environment that is welcoming, stimulating, respectful and supportive.

Vision:

Merrill Memorial Library aspires to be the physical and intellectual anchor of Main Street, providing both space and opportunities to bring our community closer, elevate conversations and support positive change while preserving the small town heart and soul of Yarmouth. We strive to serve our community in both traditional and innovative ways, recognizing that which is common to all of us and unique in each of us, broadening the horizons of all who enter our doors and bringing the best the world has to offer to each and every member of our community.



Core Principles:

Consistent with the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, Merrill Memorial Library provides a wide variety of books and library resources for patrons of all ages; furnishes materials and information that are diverse and present many viewpoints; challenges censorship; encourages and supports free expression and free access to ideas; is free and accessible to everyone; makes space available for exhibits, meetings and other use-space that is available on an equitable basis for all.