



Topsham Public Library

Long-Range Plan 2025-2028



Letter from the Director



Greetings one and all!

On behalf of the Topsham Public Library, I am pleased to present our Long-Range Plan for 2025-2028.

Within these pages, we will endeavor to paint a picture of how the future of the Topsham Public Library (TPL) will look as it evolves over the next three years. We will continue to meet the changing needs of our community through information access, fostering strong connections, and supporting education for all ages.

As this was my first time going through this process at TPL, I found the input and insight particularly illuminating. It became clear that the staff is one of our most valuable assets and that they in turn love working with each of you. Looking to the future, our staff's focus will remain on providing exceptional service through books, programming, and conversation, as well as meeting people where they are, not only in the building but also at the schools and in their homes.

Through the implementation of this strategic plan and our collective efforts, our physical and digital collections will offer informational resources and recreational reading options better tailored to meet community interests and needs. We will also highlight our beautiful grounds and provide ways for you all to enjoy them more, whether by exploring the woods or learning about the plants in our garden.

In our ongoing efforts to support the community, this plan contains goals to enhance infrastructure, programming, collections and partnerships. TPL is getting back to its roots, in the literal sense of outdoor events, and in the metaphorical sense of continuing to put the community at the center of all we do. I hope you will remain on this journey with us as we actively pursue connection and enrichment.

As always, I look forward to seeing you in the stacks!

Katherine Webber

Planning Process

Beginning in October 2024, a committee of 13 individuals made up of library trustees, staff, and community members met to begin drafting Topsham Public Library's 2025-28 Long-Range Plan. This group reviewed the previous plan's goals to determine whether they were met, and if any unmet goals are still relevant to the library's mission over the next three years.

Both the committee and staff performed assessments of the library's current strengths, present opportunities, future aspirations, and desired results. After that, we surveyed members of the community and staff to gain insight into what the library is doing well and what areas for improvement exist. The results of the survey laid the groundwork for understanding what the overarching service priorities of the library should be. These, in turn, informed what goals were needed to help fulfill the informational, educational, and recreational needs of the Topsham community.

A special thank you to Deb Clark at the Maine State Library who helped us start and guided our efforts.

Thank you to everyone on the staff and to those in the community who provided vital feedback to assist with this process.

And finally, thank you to the following committee members who contributed their time and energy to creating this plan.

Erin Arneson
Emily Biedrzycki
Steve Diamond
Phil Dostie
Kelley Glidden
Heather Helenora

Patricia Maloney
Deb O'Neil
Stephanie Slawson
Don Stein
Barbara Swiderski
Assistant Director Steve Bouchard

Mission

The Topsham Public Library connects people with resources, programs, and each other to stimulate personal growth, enrich minds, and support community.

Vision

To sustain an informed, dynamic, and engaged community.

Survey Design

Over a month-long period, the Long-Range Planning Committee solicited responses to our community survey from users and non-users of the library. At the end, we had 161 participants who offered insight to their use of the library and its services, programs, and materials. We were interested to know what keeps our patrons coming to visit and what both our users and non-users thought the library should prioritize over the next three years.

During this same time frame, we gave a similar survey to staff to learn what they liked about how the library supports the community. We also sought to understand the staff's experience of working at TPL and hear their suggestions for improving staff space and work life.

Some of the highlights from the community survey are listed below, followed by priorities identified by both staff and community members.

Community Survey Results

79% of respondents were Topsham residents and cardholders

59% of people visit the library at least once per month

57.5% of respondents were students, teachers, or parents of MSAD75

Program requests:

- Crafting or skills
- Community events
- Local history
- Food & cooking
- Book clubs

Top reasons for coming to the library:

- Borrowing books, DVDs, and video games
- Attending programs
- Annual book sale
- Viewing the art gallery

Priorities from Survey Respondents



Areas of Focus

Space & Design

Collections

Programming & Outreach



Goal 1

Make the library into a more welcoming and accessible community destination

Objectives

- Audit the outdoor space to develop a cost-conscious list of recommendations for improvement
- Present a broader range of outdoor programs for all ages
- Assess patron and staff perspectives about the strengths and weaknesses of the library building and identify potential changes
- Make the website 100% ADA-compliant and easier for patrons to navigate

Goal 2

Provide improved access to a collection of physical and digital materials that better meets community expectations

Objectives

- Explore ways to better tailor the collections to patron interests and needs
- Provide better support to help patrons use CloudLibrary more effectively
- Assess other digital platforms for content and affordability as potential supplements to CloudLibrary

Goal 3

Enhance the community's engagement with programs at TPL

Objectives

- Provide programs appealing to a broader range of age groups and interests
- Make TPL programs and services more visible to the community



Goal 4

Leverage community partnerships and outreach to provide more opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities to connect with the library

Objectives

- Revitalize and expand the TPL book delivery program with volunteers
- Explore where and how programming for seniors could be expanded
- Explore the feasibility of providing volunteers to read to local Pre-K students
- Develop a more active partnership with local schools