



ACTON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

LONG RANGE PLAN

FY2009 – FY2013

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Acton Memorial Library's FY2009-FY2013 Long Range Plan was developed through a series of meetings, data collections and activities that took place between May 2006 and May 2007. Information was solicited from patrons and library staff members, a community survey, and citizen participation in a community workshop.

All the data collected was examined to identify those goals considered to be most important to strengthen and improve the Library's services, while continuing to respond to the changing needs of a diverse population.

Ten general goals were identified and ranked as follows:

1. Improve operational support
2. Improve library collections
3. Increase technology support
4. Perform a facility assessment
5. Broaden public relation activities
6. Promote increased community programs
7. Improve young adult services
8. Improve senior services
9. Broaden community interfaces
10. Monitor community needs

This document defines and describes the selected goals, establishes the criteria to be used for measuring success in fulfilling these objectives, identifies the activities necessary to accomplish these roles and outlines the action plan for the years 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Methodology and data collection activities are briefly summarized within the text. Related appendices provide a documentation of the data collected.

The Acton Memorial Library Board of Trustees approved the FY2009-FY2013 Long Range Plan on 21 May 2007.

Long Range Planning Committee Members

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INTRODUCTION

In October 1994, The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners mandated that libraries must have approved Long Range Plans to apply for Federal funds.

The Acton Memorial Library immediately prepared their first of a series of Long Range Plans and has been able subsequently to receive a number of Federal and State Grants, (for example, the last building expansion, the Chinese language grant, and a web-site start-up) to help meet Acton's needs.

The Library has continued to have increasing annual circulation rates and Library use. At the same time there have been constraints on local budget support while the Library users increased their demand for services and technology.

In May of 2006 the Board of Trustees appointed a Long Range Planning Committee to develop a planning document to guide the Library for the next five years. The committee was charged with identifying how the Library serves the community and ways to improve the Library services.

The committee followed guidelines described in *The New Planning for Results*, American Library Association, 2001.

METHODOLOGY

The New Planning for Results, A Streamlined Approach by Sandra Nelson, for the Public Library Association, a subsection of the American Library Association was used as a guideline for preparing this FY2009-FY2013 Acton Memorial Library Long Range Plan.

The Long Range Planning (LRP) Committee, under the auspice of the Acton Memorial Library Trustees, established the set of tasks to be accomplished and a timetable.

The initial steps of data collection included the development of a community profile (Appendix A), the conduct of a community survey (Appendix B), and the development of a Library profile (Appendix C).

The community survey was made available to citizens both as a hard copy two-page questionnaire and through the Library's website. Questionnaire results were keyed into an electronic analysis program, SurveyMonkey. Results from the 560 responses were documented, including some 519 comments that had been added by the responders.

In addition, meetings with Library staff documented Library staff members' suggestions and opinions (Appendix D).

The LRP Committee conducted a community workshop, composed of citizens selected to represent a broad range of community organizations, interest groups, ages, and concerns (Appendix E).

After a general session, workshop participants were divided into groups. Each developed a list reflecting library areas or services which members felt were important. After lunch, group lists were combined and all workshop participants ranked the resultant listing. Each group had a recorder responsible for recording comments made by the group members.

Subsequent to the workshop, all the data was assembled and analyzed to identify commonality of subject and translated into preliminary goals. The data provided an invaluable insight into current and future population trends, current Library capabilities, and citizen perceptions of current and future Library services.

The Mission Statement was finalized and ten Goals, Objectives and associated Activities were developed. Taking into account resource limitations, the preliminary goals were first ranked by the Long Range Committee and then finalized by the Trustees. All ten goals, objectives and activities are presented in this report. The Acton Memorial Library Trustees selected the five most important ones (Goals 1-5) to be accomplished in the first three years of this plan, with the remaining five reserved for development in the last two years.

Subsequent to the workshop, a letter was sent to the workshop participants detailing the actions and listing the ten final goals and objectives.

A secondary use of the data was to extract items for immediate consideration by the Library Director. The Director developed a timeline of long range planning tasks, performed a workload assessment of the proposed activities, and is in the process of reviewing this material with the appropriate Library departments.

In special recognition, the Acton Memorial Library Director, Marcia Rich, is commended for her guidance and support. Her efforts to develop the community survey, finalize the goals, objectives and activities, her development of an activity time line and staff workload assessment have provided valuable contributions to the development of the plan.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Acton Memorial Library is to serve the informational, educational, and recreational needs of Acton residents of all ages and backgrounds. Recognizing the diversity of the community and the high level of demand, the Library supports the mission by developing collections in a variety of formats to meet known and anticipated community needs; strives to make residents aware of its services and collections, and to make those resources as accessible as possible both on-site and through electronic means. The Library strives, also, to use the Library resources of staff, technology and building accommodations to ensure their most efficient possible use.

FY 2009-2013 GOALS, OBJECTIVES, ACTIVITIES

The Planning for Results guidelines call for the development of a limited number of broadly stated general goals, a limited number of general objectives under each goal, and an associated set of activities aimed at achieving individual objectives. These goals are distributed over the years covered in the plan, with the initial plan detailing the selected goals to be the focus of the first three years. After three years, the plan will be updated.

The results, the identified set of goals, objectives, and associated activities, listed by rank, as shown below.

1. OPERATIONS SUPPORT

Goal: Increase Library hours of operation outside normal work and school hours, increase staff, and increase collection building.

Objective 1. Increase the hours of operation to include operation on Thursday evenings and Sundays by the year 2010.

Activities

1. Prepare a projection of Library activity and improved hours of operation to cover the next three years.
2. Present the projection, on a yearly basis, to the Board of Selectmen and the Town Finance Committee as part of a state-of-the-library annual report.
3. Present the information to the Library support groups and to the residents.
4. Open the Library on Thursday evenings by the year 2009.
5. Open the Library for more Sundays by the year 2010.

Objective 2. Increase the number of staff by the equivalent of two full-time positions by the year 2011.

Activities

1. Prepare a projection of Library staff workloads covering the next three years.

2. Present the projection, on a yearly basis, to the Board of Selectmen and the Town Finance Committee as part of a state-of-the-library annual report.
3. Increase the Library staff by the equivalent of one Full Time Employee (FTE) by the year 2010.
4. Increase the Library staff by the equivalent of an additional FTE by the year 2011.

Objective 3. Increase the collections budget to reach the goal of having the Library's budget be equal to the average spending/per capita level for collections of the Minuteman Library Network over the years 2009-2011 and 10% above the average by the years 2013.

Activities

1. Develop a collection budget plan to increase the collection budget incrementally until it matches the average Minuteman Library Network's average of the year 2009.
2. Develop a collection budget plan to increase until to ten percent above the average Minuteman Library Network level of the year 2011.
3. Incorporate data into the annual state-of-the-library reports.

2. LIBRARY COLLECTIONS

Goal: Improve Library collections (including non-print materials), including visibility and access to materials.

Objective 1. Update and review the Library collection development and circulations policies every two years, starting in the year 2009.

Activities

1. Review existing policies, including:
 - a. The Grade 9-12 age collection
 - b. The availability of more popular books, including increasing the rental collection
 - c. Audio-visual materials
 - d. English as a second language (ESL) items
 - e. Large Print collection
 - f. Renewal time periods and limitations.

Objective 2. Improve the physical visibility of items of particular interest during the years 2009-2011.

Activities

1. Create Library displays of "best picks"
2. Solicit patrons for turret space display suggestions.

Objective 3. Improve access to the collections.

Activities

1. Weed the collections on a defined schedule.
2. Increase the number of kick-stools to enable easier shelf access.

Objective 4. Enlarge up to a maximum of three Library collections per year during the years of 2009, 2010, and 2011.

Activities

1. Identify three areas of collections, each to be increased by 12% in the year 2009.
2. Identify three additional areas of collections, each to be increased by 12% in the year 2010.
3. Identify three additional areas of collections, each to be increased by 12% in the year 2011.

3. TECHNOLOGY

Goal: Use technology to improve the website and on-site efficiency for all patrons and staff activities.

Objective 1. Improve patron access to technology by ten percent by the year 2010.

Activities

1. Offer a minimum of one new technology program/year during the years 2009-2011.
2. Review and expand as needed/possible access to existing technology.
3. Review the need for additional public workstations or other forms of access to the internet/library website a minimum of once a year.

Objective 2. Increase patron self-sufficiency and staff effectiveness by expanding patron self-service abilities during 2009 and 2010.

Activities

1. Implement a minimum of one self-checkout station by the end of 2009.
2. Implement online room reservation requests by the end of 2009.
3. Implement a second checkout station by the start of 2010.
4. Implement capabilities for online payment for fines and lost materials by the start of 2010.

Objective 3. Improve the Library's in-house technological capability to include selection and implementation of software to improve Library services by the end of FY 2010.

Activities

1. Annually assess information technology (IT) capability to provide and perform selection and implementation services.
2. Provide increased technology training, as required, for staff.
3. Develop a technology application plan, describing current applications and possible future applications, including expected benefits and potential impacts, by the end of 2009.

Objective 4. Improve the Library's website by the end of 2010.

Activities

1. Review current website capabilities to identify areas of improvements; for example, change to contents, temporary access, and increased links to network sources.
2. Implement revised website design by the end of 2010.

4. FACILITY ASSESSMENT

Goal: Review and improve the use of space within the building, including collection layouts.

Objective 1. Investigate the possibility of a grant and, if possible, prepare a grant request to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for

assistance in facilities assessment by the end of 2009.

Activities

1. Submit a letter of intent to conduct an assessment of the Library's use of space by the end of 2009.
2. Submit a grant application in 2010. Assuming a successful grant application, engage a professional Library design consultant to conduct the review.
3. Review the suggested changes by mid-year of 2011.
4. Implement changes as appropriate and within budget constraints by the end of 2011.

Objective 2. Assess the use of Library spaces, including physical layout, safety and noise control, with special emphasis on the lobby, young adult, children's and staff circulation areas; collection arrangement and display; restrooms and signage by the year 2011.

Activities

1. Conduct functional assessments of selected Library operations and spaces to document and establish a database of current operations prior to 2011.
2. If the grant application has not been successful, review the assessments to identify potential changes.
3. Implement selected changes to Library safety, as appropriate.
4. Implement selected interior signage that allows users to self-navigate through the building.
5. Implement agreed upon changes to the children's department storage capability.
6. Decrease staff manual actions of collection handling by 5% in the year 2011.
7. Improve restroom facilities, if required, to address current patron comments.

Objective 3. Initiate coordination with the Town's Municipal Properties Department to identify and develop plans for potential improvements in HVAC, lighting and energy conservation in 2011.

Activities

1. Suggest changes to improve Library lighting and methods of achieving improvements, as applicable.
2. Suggest changes to improve the Library's energy consumption and methods of achieving improvements, as applicable.
3. Suggest changes to improve the efficiency of the Library's heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems and methods of achieving improvements, as applicable.

5. PUBLIC RELATIONS

Goal: Increase the Library's visibility in the community to provide a broader awareness of Library activities, resources and services.

Objective 1. Broaden distribution of information to include schools, residents of all ages, on-line users, and on-site patrons.

Activities

1. Implement Constant Contact (opt-in mail service) by the end of 2009.
2. Develop a comprehensive summary of services and resources, make it available online, and place it in a highly visible location in the Library by early 2010.
3. Through publicity, emphasize the ability to access online at any time the online public catalog, individual library user accounts, and some databases by early 2010.
4. Provide a library information table at a minimum of two major Town events/year.
5. Prepare material for the Municipal Quarterly Report (accompanies tax bills) with a goal of having at least one article/year included.
6. Develop a schedule of service and collections to be submitted to newspapers in rotation.
7. Prepare material for the Council on Aging Newspaper, with a goal of at least four articles/year.

Objective 2. Develop and implement a comprehensive publicity and public relations programs by the year 2011.

Activities

1. Submit a letter of intent (the first step of a competitive grant application) to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners to develop a model publicity and public relations program before the end of 2011.
2. Submit a grant application.
3. If application is successful, begin grant activities, including the engagement of a public relations consultant to review current methods and distribution of information on library services and resources and prepare an action plan.
4. Complete the plan's implementation.

6. COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Goal: Provide and promote programs to meet community needs.

Objective 1. Increase the number of programs to at least six adult programs annually.

Activities

1. Establish working groups to identify and/or organize programs.
2. Working in coordination with the Acton Memorial Library Foundation, obtain two local business's support of community programs/year.
3. Offer a minimum of one local author presentation/year

Objective 2. Improve promotion of all library programs by adding a minimum of two additional sources of information distribution.

Activities

(See activities outlined in Public Relations, Objective 1.)

7. YOUNG ADULT SERVICES

Goal: Improve materials and services, including consideration of space arrangements, staff time allocation, and awareness of young adult on-line resources.

Objective 1. Devote additional staff hours to young adult services.

Activities

1. Obtain staffing increase for a young adult librarian.
2. Review and identify deficiencies of young adult collection and locations and recommend changes.
3. Provide instruction to school librarians on Minuteman Network Library (MNL) databases and other MNL resources.
4. Provide instruction on non-online library research techniques to young adults.
5. Link school websites to Library websites, if feasible.

Objective 2. Make available and publicize, both on-line and at the Library, a list of young adult research websites.

Activities

1. Prepare a list of young adult research websites.
2. Display the list in the young adult section of the Library.
3. Present the list on the Library's website.

8. SENIOR SERVICES

Goal: Improve Library services for Acton's senior citizens, including improvements in on-line access, home delivery of materials, and on-site capabilities.

Objective 1. Increase awareness of current senior citizen library services by creating and supporting sources of information additional to that provided in local newspapers.

Activities

1. Promote library services to seniors regularly through the Council on Aging (COA) Newsletter and flyers sent to the Senior Center, Robbins Park, and Nursing Homes located in Acton.
2. Provide a library staffer to speak on Library services to seniors at the Senior Center and Robbins Park.
3. Publish home delivery services to seniors in local newspapers at least quarterly/year.

4. Promote home delivery services to seniors through Meals on Wheels drivers and local clergy.
5. Prepare articles for the Council On Aging newsletter, with a goal of having at least four articles included per year.

Objective 2. Improve access to Library materials by making adjustments to Library displays, shelving and signage.

Activities

1. Have Turret area displays of large print materials at least once a year.
2. Promote the availability of large print terminal displays on signs at large print shelving.
3. Promote availability of elevator in Library.
4. Rearrange space so that large print is not on shelves on bottom or top of stacks.

9. COMMUNITY INTERFACES

Goal: Communicate with other community boards and/or organizations to identify ways and methods by which the Library can better support or cooperate with them.

Objective 1. Establish ways and methods to convey Library needs and status information to the Board of Selectmen and the Town Finance Committee.

Activities

1. Establish a point of contact with the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee.
2. Provide a yearly state-of-the-library presentation to the Boards, including information relating to the Library's three-year projections of staff and budget.

Objective 2. Improve communication with the School Districts (Regional Acton-Boxborough and Acton Public Schools).

Activities

1. Prepare a statement of Library services for presentation to the school committees.

2. Obtain information from school committees and/or school librarians, teachers and other school personnel on how the Acton Memorial Library could improve service to them.

Objective 3. Establish ways and methods with the Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council, The Council on Aging and the Acton Garden Club to provide Library support and space, as applicable.

Activities

1. Encourage the Acton-Boxborough Arts Council to present a minimum of one event/year at the Library.
2. Encourage the Acton Garden Club to present a minimum of one event every other year at the Library.
3. In conjunction with the Council On Aging, provide at least one adult program per year specifically addressed to senior citizens.

10. MONITORING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Goal: Maintain awareness of Library user opinions, comments and interests through the use of periodic surveys and other means.

Objective 1. Obtain and incorporate short-term feedback on library services and collections into current services, to the greatest extent possible.

Activities

1. Establish a comment/suggestion box or notebook.
3. Use feedback obtained from Foundation donors to identify potential needs.

Objective 2. Obtain regular, in-depth feedback on Library collection and services by the conduct of community-wide surveys every eighteen to twenty-four months.

Activities

1. Revise and re-issue the survey performed in 2006 and examine differences.
2. Re-issue the survey every two years afterwards.

3. Identify differences between the survey results and integrate changes to Library operation, as applicable and within budget constraints.
4. Using new library service "trends" as applicable, adjust library resources and/or services, beginning with those that fall within the current budget resources.

FY2009 ACTION PLAN

Prepare/present state-of-the-Library Report
Increase Library Thursday evening openings
Develop a collection building budget plan
Submit a letter of intent for a facility assessment grant
Implement one self-checkout station
Implement Constant Contact (opt-in mail service)
Review need for additional public workstations
Implement online room reservation requests
Offer two new adult programs
Strengthen three selected collections
Highlight visibility of three selected collections
Offer one new technical training program
Conduct functional analyses of selected operations
Create display of "best picks"
Provide an information table at two town events
Prepare materials for Municipal Quarterly and COA newsletter
Review existing Library policies and upgrade, as required
Review need for additional IT staff support
Provide technology training to staff, as required

FY2010 ACTION PLAN

Prepare/present an updated state-of-the -Library report

Increase Library Sunday openings

Increase staff by equivalent of 1 FTE

Implement an additional self -checkout station

Implement online payment for fees/lost materials

Publicize ability to access on-line capabilities at all times

Develop a summary of Library services and resources for prominent display

Apply for a grant to perform a facility assessment

Continue to conduct functional analyses of selected Library activities

Strengthen three additional collections

Provide Turret display of large print materials

Develop a technology application plan

Offer one new technology program and two new adult programs

Assess need for additional IT capability

Provide technical training for staff, as required

Review website capabilities and update, as required

Provide information table at two Town events

Prepare material for inclusion in Municipal Quarterly and COA newsletter

Provide displays of large print terminal availability

Review need for 0additional public workstations

Update and re-issue Library user survey

FY2011 ACTION PLAN

Prepare/present update/present state-of-the-Library presentation

Increase staff by equivalent of one FTE

Review recommended facility assessment changes and begin implementation, as appropriate

Submit a letter of intent to obtain a grant to create a model PR plan

Continue to conduct functional analyses of selected Library operations

Strengthen three additional collections

Offer one new technology program

Offer one new adult program

Provide technology training to staff, as required

Review need for additional public workstations

Review need for additional IT support

Decrease requirements for manual collection handling by 5%

Initiate coordination with Municipal Properties Department to review the Library's lighting, HVAC systems with the objective of obtaining increased efficiency

Update the Library's summary of services and resources

Provide information table at two Town events

Prepare material for Municipal Quarterly and other publications