

STRATEGIC PLAN

2023 - 2028



Morrill Memorial Library

Norwood, MA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	Page 3
Letter from the Library Director	Page 5
Letter from the Board of Trustees	Page 6
Executive Summary	Page 7
Our Community	Page 8
Library History	Page 9
The Value of Strategic Planning	Page 10
Planning Methodology	Page 11
User Needs Assessment	Page 13
Mission and Vision	Page 14
Our Strategic Plan	Page 15

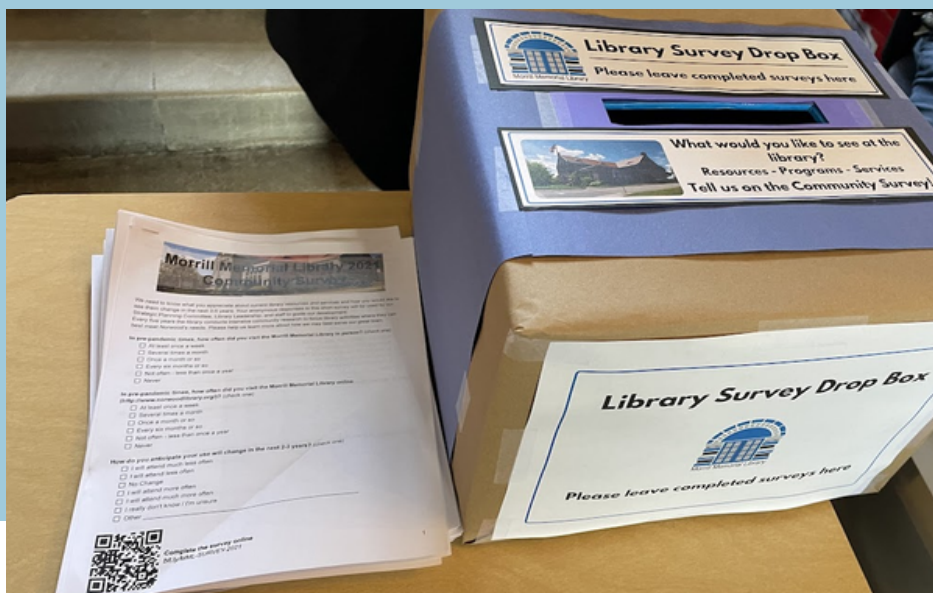
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the members of the Morrill Memorial Library Strategic Plan Steering Committee for the time, energy, and commitment they provided throughout the planning process.

We would also like to thank the hundreds of Norwood community members who completed our library survey as well as those who participated in our various focus group sessions, including students at Norwood High School who also completed a separate online survey. You all contributed significantly to the process by sharing your thoughts, experiences, and ideas. The SOAR sessions (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) in which you participated were thoughtful, dynamic, and motivating.

Additionally, we would like to share our appreciation for the dedicated efforts of the Morrill Memorial Library staff who enthusiastically participated in brainstorming and SOAR sessions, suggesting a wide variety of potential future activities, partnerships, and programs, as well as the members of the Board of Library Trustees who remained engaged throughout the process.

Most importantly, we would like to say thank you to the patrons of the Morrill Memorial Library, who each day permit us to provide resources and services that educate, entertain, and inspire.



Strategic Plan Steering Committee

Geoffrey Baguma, Sarah Begg, Pam Chubet, Marguerite Cummings, Dipti Dawda, Brian DeFelice, Cindy Derrane, Andi Goetchius, Marcie Pastorio, Lydia Sampson, Kate Tigue, and Brianna Whelan

Morrill Memorial Library Board of Trustees

Marguerite Cummings (Chair), Sarah Begg, John R. Hall, Jr., George Michalec, Donna Montgomery (Vice Chair), and Sheri McLeish

Library Director

Clayton Cheever

Assistant Director

Lydia Sampson

Massachusetts Library System

Kristi Chadwick

Community Paradigm Associates

Bernard F. Lynch, Managing Principal
Sharon Flaherty, Principal

LIBRARY COMMUNITY LISTENING WORKSHOPS

Your input is needed to make sure the library is aligned with Norwood's future. We are creating a long-range plan and want it to reflect your needs and desires. Please come to one of the following listening sessions and let us know how we can best serve you:

FRIDAY MORNING: NOVEMBER 5 FROM 10 A.M.- 12 NOON

SATURDAY MORNING: NOVEMBER 6 FROM 9:30- 11:30 A.M.



Letter from the Library Director

As a new Director, I was excited to embark upon our strategic planning process. It has been a great way to get to understand Norwood's history, appreciate the nuances of the present day, and listen to dreams about where we can grow together.

I am incredibly proud of the community members who comprised our planning committee. They absorbed lots of information from many sources, processed it through their own personal and organizational experiences, and helped define a future we can all be proud to strive to achieve. Our revised mission and vision clarify our values. Our strategic priorities make clear how we can best continue to make the most significant impact in the lives of the greatest number of Norwood's residents.

One of the primary elements of the Morrill Memorial Library that attracted me to accept my leadership position here is the incredible staff. My respect and admiration of the staff has only grown since I began. Their contributions are imprinted upon this plan, from the research phases all the way through to the carefully considered objectives. I'm very much looking forward to moving into the next implementation phase of this process and discovering the exciting actions that will help us fulfill these lofty goals.

All we do here is supported by the steady leadership of our Board of Trustees. Their careful attention to detail and passion for what makes our library such an incredible community jewel is embodied throughout our work.

Humbly yours,
Clayton Cheever
Director of the Morrill Memorial Library



Letter from the Library Trustees



It is our pleasure to share with the greater Norwood community this strategic plan to help guide the library's efforts for the next five years. The mission, vision, strategic priorities, and goals are the core components that, when seen to fruition, will provide everything within the library's ability to contribute to the best possible future for our town. We want to acknowledge how this plan reflects the needs and desires of the greater community, the collective wisdom of our amazing library staff, the bold, passionate leadership of our library director, and the steady experience and guidance of the consultants who each helped contribute to this document. It is not intended to be published and forgotten, but rather actively guide annual action plans, quarterly reviews, monthly reporting, and the everyday activities of the library. We are proud of our history, and eagerly moving forward towards even better tomorrows.

Marguerite Cummings
Chair of the Board of Library Trustees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Morrill Memorial Library Strategic Plan for 2023-2028 was developed during a 16-month planning process involving significant input from stakeholders and extensive internal discussions. The process included analyzing feedback from the various focus groups and survey responses, reviewing myriad Town of Norwood and Norwood Public Schools plans and documents, revisiting the library's past long-range plans, and considering current trends and future needs.

Following analysis and discussion of the gathered information, the Morrill Memorial Library Strategic Plan Steering Committee developed a list of potential priorities. That initial list of 24 priorities was eventually winnowed to the five priorities contained within our Strategic Plan for 2023-2028. Those priorities are:

- Create young readers: Early literacy
- Inspire curiosity: Lifelong learning and in-depth research
- Embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Empower informed citizens: Local, national, and world affairs
- Provide a comfortable place to visit: Physical and virtual spaces



OUR COMMUNITY

Norwood is an inclusive community of 31,611 that residents say feels more like a small town than a bustling suburb as neighbors are quick to assist each other and to volunteer in the community. It is a proudly diverse community, with approximately 66 different languages spoken in its schools.

Norwood's history shows a strong pattern of immigration and assimilation. When first settled in the 18th century, it was known as South Dedham. What was initially a farming community evolved in the 19th century to include a number of industries including tanneries and later printing businesses. The strong industrial base attracted immigrants looking for occupations and a welcoming community in which to live.

Over the years, English farmers were joined by people from Europe, the Middle East, and more recently from Russia, India, and other countries. Neighborhoods where immigrants settled supported stores and places of worship, reflecting their tastes and traditions. Nearly 22% of Norwood residents speak another language other than English at home.

Norwood residents care deeply about their community, taking pride in its welcoming atmosphere, stability, and management. There is an emphasis on conservative practicality along with strong support of inclusivity and community progress. Taxes in Norwood are relatively low compared to surrounding towns. Residents show concern for the health and well-being of others, public education and services for seniors are appreciated and supported, and the town's fiscal stability is valued.

Norwood gives truth to its motto of *"The town everyone returns to..."* as many people who have been raised in Norwood try to remain in the community or seek to return as they begin to raise their own families.



LIBRARY HISTORY

In 1790, when the area was known as South Dedham, Reverend Jabez Chickering began loaning his collection of 95 books to his parishioners. This collection - housed in a single bookcase - was Norwood's first library.

For the next 100 years, a growing collection of books was housed in various town buildings but never had a home of its own. In 1872, Norwood became a town, and the book collection became its public library. Francis Tinker, a member of the original Board of Trustees, was Norwood's first librarian.



The Morrill Memorial Library was first built when private citizen and businessman George H. Morrill and his wife Louisa hired an architect to construct a library in Norwood that was nearly a duplicate of the public library in Augusta, Maine – the Lithgow Library and Reading Room, finished in 1896.

The Morrill Memorial Library was named in loving memory of their daughter, Sarah Bond Morrill, who died in 1895 at the age of 23 of typhoid. Her father said she was “a woman of fine education and literary tastes...”, according to an 1897 article in the Norwood Advertiser and Review. Architect Joseph H. Neal of Pittsburgh designed the Romanesque-style granite building which featured stained glass, elegant mahogany woodwork and furnishings. A rear wing was added to the building in 1928, thanks to a gift from Alice Morrill Plimpton, Sarah’s sister.

In 1965, following years of discussion, a modern front addition designed by Korslund, LeNormand and Quann allowed the library’s collection and services to expand greatly as the library was doubled in size. Boston architects CBT/Childs Bertman Tseckares completed a renovation of the entire structure in 2001. Their work unified the building’s three existing spaces, keeping the beauty of the 1898 design while creating a beautiful and accessible interior with modernized systems, upgraded wiring, and more useable space. Today, patrons and staff benefit by using every inch of the library.

THE VALUE OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Strategic planning is a critical process designed to aid organizations in achieving success by setting priorities, stating goals, and determining objectives. It allows us to focus our energies and resources, work to strengthen our operations, and engage our staff and patrons. Strategic planning empowers us to make the greatest possible impact through the collaborative process of developing our mission, vision, goals, and objectives. This living document will serve to guide our library's activities for the next five years and ensure that library employees are working toward common goals.

Having a strategic plan can also assist in explaining the library's programming to others and serves as an anchor for the development of the annual budget. It creates a clear sense of purpose and provides a basis for ongoing evaluation.

After determining the priorities for our 2023-2028 strategic plan, we worked to ensure that SMART goals were set, in that our goals are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound. The goals are intended to focus attention and resources on what has been determined to be most important so the library can be successful in achieving its priorities during the Strategic Plan's five-year period.



OUR PLANNING METHODOLOGY

In creating our Strategic Plan for 2023-2028, we employed a highly collaborative and inclusive process conducted over a 16-month period that provided us with valuable and insightful input from library employees, Library Trustees, members of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, Norwood High School students, and the Norwood community. The 16-month process was longer than initially anticipated due to scheduling challenges and disruptions related to the global pandemic along with a change in the directorship and subsequent expansion of the process parameters designed to secure enhanced community involvement.

One of the first steps was to contract with consulting firm Community Paradigm Associates to assist in myriad ways, including facilitating robust discussion sessions with a variety of groups and coalescing the many thoughts, opinions, and recommendations gathered. A staff development day was held on June 11, 2021 with library employees during which Kristi Chadwick of the Massachusetts Library System facilitated a brainstorming SOAR (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, Results) session. The Board of Library Trustees provided valuable input and general guidance. A 12-member Strategic Plan Steering Committee, which included two members of the Board of Trustees, was created to assist with brainstorming and in reaching out to various community groups to secure increased participation.

A comprehensive online survey was marketed to the community via library and town websites, social media, local media, cable access, posters, and postcards for seven weeks. The survey was also widely distributed in paper format with responses added to the online results. There were a total of 314 responses. Respondents were asked to rate current library services and materials and to share recommendations for new or improved services and materials. A separate online survey was completed by 22 Norwood High School students and results of both surveys are included in the Appendix. We also solicited community feedback via various whiteboards at the library to aid in understanding patrons' preferred services and materials as well as to secure patrons' recommendations.

Four in-person community focus group sessions were held on October 18 and 19, 2021 and November 5 and 6, 2021 at the library. Additionally, we conducted a virtual SOAR focus group session on February 3, 2022 with 36 students from two classes at Norwood High School to secure input from the 14-18 age group.

The information gathered was analyzed and discussed in detail, along with current trends, how the library might be affected by those trends and possible

roles for the library in the community, as the Steering Committee worked to determine the library's priorities for the next five years. After the priorities were determined, staff worked together to develop goals and objectives.

Another major consideration and point of significant discussion was the COVID-19 pandemic and its past and future impact on library services. Will the desire for virtual programming decrease, remain static, or increase as local concern regarding COVID-19 eases? Responses to related questions indicate community members are interested in continuing with a combination of in-person and virtual programming and services to assist with social interaction, as a place for quiet study, for ease of use, and for patron convenience. This will require careful consideration and balance to provide the appropriate mix of in-person and virtual opportunities.

This strategic plan is designed to actively guide our annual action plans, quarterly reviews, monthly reporting, and daily activities of the library. We do our best to plan for the future in all of our long-term planning efforts, but unanticipated changes in technology, culture, the economy, and other factors, can require immediate responsiveness. Thus, our annual action plans are developed with the understanding, as clearly demonstrated by the global pandemic, that we must always remain nimble and able to pivot as necessary to best serve the community.



We will submit our Action Plan for 2023 by December 1, 2022.

USER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Our planning methodology, explained on the prior two pages, details the brainstorming sessions, outreach to various community groups, and trend discussions that were conducted as part of ascertaining the needs of the Norwood community. Additionally, we reviewed U.S. Census demographic information and U.S. Census estimates. As there is no recent master plan covering all of Norwood, we reviewed relevant information contained within the Norwood Public Schools Strategic Plan update for SY2021-SY2022, the Town of Norwood Open Space and Recreation Plan 2020 as well as the town's most recent Housing Production Plan 2014-2018 and the 2011 master plan for the downtown.

The town's 2004 economic plan envisioned an aging Norwood population in 2022 and, while there is a significant senior population (16.7%), the reality is more complex. In recent years, families and commuters, searching for housing that is affordable and for ease of transportation, have moved into Norwood and the Town remains highly attractive to a number of immigrant communities. Norwood is a mature community with little space for new housing development; however, after experiencing a leveling off of population during the past 20 years which followed decades of decline, Norwood has seen its population increase nearly 8% since 2019. While approximately 80% of the population is over 18, there is an anticipated increase in children as younger families are moving into town. This shows a continuing need of services for young readers.

Our strategic plans in prior years focused on a variety of community and library needs. In 2004-2008, the plan focused on both restoring excellent library services to the community in what was then the new building and completing the interior and exterior plans for the building. The 2010-2015 plan focused on continuing that service and maintaining the facility. In 2016-2021, focus was placed on changes in library service and technology, the traditional culture and emerging diversity of our community, and planning for the future. In this 2023-2028 Strategic Plan, we place a renewed emphasis on literacy, learning, and empowering patrons, and seek to provide comfortable and welcoming spaces for all. Additionally, as Norwood continues to experience a growing cultural diversity, embracing many groups, the library will continue its emphasis on cultural awareness and understanding as well as on diversity, equity, inclusion, and making the library a welcoming space for everyone.

OUR MISSION

The Morrill Memorial Library is a vital community center which provides innovative and effective services to all users to enrich their lives with cultural, educational, and recreational programs and materials.

OUR VISION

The Morrill Memorial Library will be a welcoming, inclusive hub accessible to all. Through strategic partnership with local organizations, the library will anticipate and fulfill community members' aspirations.



OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Our Priorities, Goals, and Objectives

Priority 1 - Create young readers: Early literacy

Children from birth to age 8 will have resources (programs, services, and materials) designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn.

Goal 1: The library will provide opportunities for young children to build pre-literacy skills.

Objective 01: Each year children ages 0-8 will have the opportunity to engage with at least 100 library activities that build pre-literacy skills.

Objective 02: Each year 3,000 children ages 0-5 and their parents/care providers will attend early literacy programs sponsored by the library.

Objective 03: Each year at least 60,000 physical items for children ages 0-8 will be borrowed.

Goal 2: The library will support community connections for parents and caregivers.

Objective 04: Each quarter the library will offer at least one program for adults on parenting, caregiving, or child development topics.

Goal 3: The library will provide a safe environment for play and exploration.

Objective 05: Each year at least 90% of parents and caregivers surveyed will report that they find the library to be a safe place for their children ages 0-8 to play and explore.

Priority 2 - Inspire curiosity: lifelong learning and in-depth research

Residents (patrons/community members) will have convenient and engaging resources and programs that inspire curiosity and support individual growth.

Goal 1: Teens, adults, and seniors will find resources and services readily available.

Objective 06: Each year at least 4,500 items (physical and electronic) for teens will be borrowed.

Objective 07: Each year at least 120,000 physical items for adults will be borrowed.

Objective 08: Each year online resources for adults will be used at least 70,000 times.

Objective 09: Each year at least 2,500 adults will attend library programs intended for adults.

Objective 10: Each year the number of Norwood adults receiving homebound delivery will increase by 10%.

Objective 11: 100% of patrons receiving homebound services will be contacted at least once a month.

Goal 2: Adults and seniors will be confident learners.

Objective 12: Each year at least 90% of adults and seniors surveyed will report that the library helped increase their confidence to be successful learners.

Objective 13: Each year at least 75% of Adult English Literacy Learners served by the library will report that the library has helped them to reach personal, educational, or advocational goals.

Goal 3: People ages 6+ will build skills, gain personal enrichment, and improve their lives.

Objective 14: At least once every month the library will offer programs specifically intended for school-age children (ages 6-11).

Objective 15: Each year library users age 9 and older will use at least 175,000 books and other library materials to improve their lives.

Objective 16: 75% of the adult English Language Learners served by the library (who pre and post test) will improve their English language competency skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) every year.

Priority 3 - Embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion

Residents will have materials, programs, and services that increase awareness and understanding of community differences (race, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, physical and mental stability, etc.) that promote equal opportunity, personal value, and belonging.

Goal 1: The collections, resources, and programs at the library will reflect the needs and diversity of the community.

Objective 17: Every year the library's use of a diversity audit tool will demonstrate that we have a collection that reflects at least 80% of the Norwood community.

Objective 18: At least twice a month the library will present programs that intentionally reflect different communities within Norwood.

Goal 2: Residents will feel like they belong.

Objective 19: Each year at least 90% of people surveyed will report that they feel welcome and enjoy visiting the library.

Objective 20: Each year at least 90% of people surveyed will report that they see themselves/their identities reflected in the library.

Goal 3: Residents will have a process by which perceived barriers to access will be identified and addressed.

Objective 21: At least twice each year a committee will seek to identify and review barriers to access and find ways to address them.



Priority 4 - Empower informed citizens: local, national, and world affairs

Residents will have the information they need to support and promote democracy, to fulfill their civic responsibilities, and to fully participate in community decision making.

Goal 1: Norwood teens and adults will have opportunities to learn about local, national, and world affairs through readily accessible programs and resources.

Objective 22: Each year at least 12 programs for teens and/or adults will be offered that provide information about local, national, and world affairs.

Objective 23: Each year at least 7,500 items (physical and digital) that provide information about local, national, and world affairs will be used by Norwood users.

Goal 2: Norwood teens and adults will develop and strengthen relationships with community organizations and leaders.

Objective 24: Every year the library will host public meetings with at least 30 unique community organizations.



Tuesday, July 26 at 2:00 p.m.

A Civil Rights Investigation:
Mississippi Burning 
Sheila Metha,
Education Specialist 
LBJ Presidential Library 

VIRTUAL PROGRAM
The Life Cycle of a Star
Presented by Caity Sullivan,
Volunteer
The Solar System Ambassador Program/
NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory

WEDNESDAY,
JULY 20
11:00 AM

Priority 5 - Provide a comfortable place to visit: Physical and virtual spaces

Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

Goal 1: Visitors to the library will appreciate a variety of comfortable and welcoming spaces to meet their individual needs.

Objective 25: Every year at least 90% of people surveyed will report that they feel comfortable when they visit the library.

Objective 26: Each year at least 90% of people surveyed will report that the library successfully met their individual (physical space) needs.

Goal 2: Online visitors will experience a digital environment conducive to usability, accessibility, and navigability.

Objective 27: Every year at least 90% of library website visitors who participate in a survey will report that their experience has successfully met their needs.

Goal 3: Spaces will adapt to changing technology and needs of library patrons.

Objective 28: Every month the average internet speed (upload and download) will be at least 200 Mbps.

Objective 29: Every month study rooms will be available to meet 95% of requests.

Objective 30: Every month library patrons will use public computing resources at least 2,000 times.





Morrill Memorial Library
33 Walpole Street
Norwood, MA 02062
781-769-0200

www.norwoodlibrary.org
@MorrillMemorialLibrary on Facebook
@Norwood_Library on Twitter
Visit our YouTube channel