

Somerville Public Library

Strategic Planning Focus Group



Trustees Meeting / June 25, 2024 / 2 hours

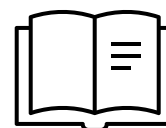
Library Director: Cathy Piantigini

Facilitator: Michelle Eberle, Massachusetts Library System

7 participants

Describe the library in one word:

- Community
- Books
- Support
- Inclusive
- Welcoming
- Community
- Space –safe space



Vision Statements:



Participants were led through a brief mindfulness activity and then asked to complete the statement: "I dream of a community where..."

"Families and friends can gather easily and feel like they have the resources and support that helps them learn and thrive. I dream of a Somerville where there's events or programs for the community to gather and learn about exciting new topics or celebrate."

"People are able to safely walk, bike, and use transportation to access top notch public facilities that are gathering points for a diverse and inclusive community."

"A diverse, affordable community where people can feel a sense of connection and have opportunities for self-development."

“Where the entire community has a place to come together and embrace and accept diversity of thought and expression and to celebrate each other.”

“There are more parking spaces, bigger library hangout spaces specifically for children, outdoor greenery and spending time with family and friends safely.”

“The community is pro-active with climate change, energy, solar panels, bike lanes, electric pumps, events for families, adults, and teens, and independent businesses.”

“There is food, housing, and green space for everyone and where newcomers feel welcome and understand the services available to them.”

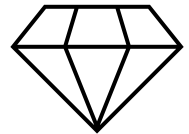
These statements are helpful for reviewing and updating your vision and mission statements.

Strengths: what we do best

What are the library's greatest strengths?

What do you value the most about the library?

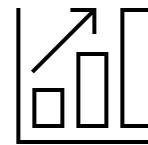
What is the library's greatest achievement in the last year or two?



- Books, programs, community space, museum passes, open to all, free
- Staff and team passionate and experience, existing and growing resources
- Availability of latest books
- Community events, classes, instruments, cake pans, museum passes, citizenship and ESL classes
- Librarians know you
- Commitment from staff and community
- Energetic staff
- Citizenship program
- Availability of what you want – ILL - network
- Support of City Council
- Great staff, strong collection of books and media, community programming, welcoming atmosphere
- Staff and materials
- Staff and library in general are innovative and responsive and proactive to the community needs
- Location – central and west and east – have their own local communities – response
- Access to new database
- Pajama story time

- Teen books – published
- Bite Club, teen cooking programs
- Hours are great
- Juneteenth
- Support to the community
- Laptop loan project
- Hotspots during pandemic
- Space – heating and cooling center
- Book a Librarian – tech.
- Free printing
- Always more things going on – proctor tests
- Social worker position – huge need
- Innovative – first library – pilot program
- Scavenger Hunt – photos of Somerville
- Comicon- Somerville Reads, series of programs engages community – tied together

Opportunities: trends, circumstances, potential partnerships



What are the best opportunities for the library?

What trends could work in the library's favor?

What community partnerships would be beneficial for the library to consider?

- Minimalism
- Children at high school – (teen issues) more collaboration – spaces and services – partnerships – need structure – next door – use library appropriately – programming – teens involved – collaboration is key – teen space is small
- Partnerships w/teen orgs.
- Somerville Open Studios – book art classes
- Sewing machines at W. Branch – fashion show with sewing classes
- Writing classes
- Trends – cyclist workshops at library –bike repair – safe riding – bike school – shops –community bike kitchen
- Remote work – Coffee – privacy – lunchtime programming for adults – yoga – spaces that people can check out
- More sustainability programing –Solar panels, motion sensors, homeowners, energy efficient, college waste awareness program
- Mothers Out Front
- Legal perspective – how can libraries connect people with legal information – how to find legal information? Connect with the housing office. Office hours at the

library. Build access to legal info and resources. Legal assistance for immigration.

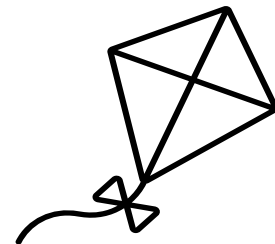
- Kids and kids' activities. All ½ day Wednesday schedule. School ends at 1 PM K-8th grade.
- Tweens
- High school theater group – perform in the auditorium
- Talent show
- Instrument petting zoo
- Museum passes. Expand to more places to support cultural institutions. Make it easier.
- ESL program is amazing. Language classes for other languages.
- So many people doing interesting work. Feature residents. Talking about their work. Speaker series.
- Meet the authors.
- Sustainability- less printing, more e-books, online
- Somerville Family Learning Collaborative – language emersion, Story time in Spanish
- Partnerships with school / rec and city departments – issues with teens – more partnerships
- Teen involvement in general
- Teen council
- Teens weigh in on strategic plan.
- Library already does a lot with the schools
- Space – teens – more of a dialogue about space

Aspirations: hopes and dreams for the library

What are your hopes and dreams for the future of the library?

What would you like the future to look like?

What projects, programs, resources, and services would support these dreams?



- Renovation
- More pop-up spaces
- More community program classes
- Better engagement with teens and teen partnerships
- Social work partnerships
- Space – more space
- Renovated building
- Think of library when think of community center – space reflects that

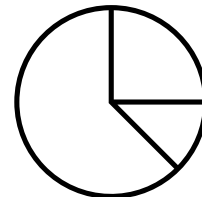
- More – more of it all – programming – collaboration w/ individuals and businesses
- w/businesses, individuals
- More space – E. Library
- More weekend programming
- Girls who Code – STEM
- More diverse books – Asian representation
- More inclusion of Library in planning process
- Library as a community center – expanded space
- Programs from other orgs.
- Adult education – partner w/library
- Renovation
- Maker space
- Podcast space – program- 3D printer
- Know more about people who don't use the library -
- Language access
- Signage in many languages – Language Line
- Competing interests for people – have a sense of better collaboration - know what else is going on in the city
- Be the hub
- Seniors – tech computers, yoga, accessible space, parking
- Library – heating and cooling center -

Results: measures of success

How will we know that the library is succeeding?

What measures will indicate the library is on track?

What will be different for stakeholders?



- Stats – # programs, orgs, city depts, attendance
- Knowing that we are serving new groups not currently using the library
- get in the City Master Plan
- Be on the radar with the city in general – with plans
- Made headway with teens – collaboration – teen focus group
- Not having to call police
- Have a plan – teens –how to tackle the issue

Wave a Magic Wand: My Dream Library



If you have one wish for the library, come true, what would that be?

- Green space, lawn, whole thing (CPL)
- Renovated space in Union Square
- A Maker Space – something for all ages – seniors
- Abundance
- Renovated Space- auditorium
- Well-supported
- Renovated space – coffee shop

Sticky note brainstorm: 5-7 ideas for services, resources, programs, partnership

For responses, please see the spreadsheet sent as a separate attachment.

Report submitted by Michelle Eberle, Consultant, Massachusetts Library System 7/8/24