



Falmouth Public Library Strategic Plan FY2022-FY2027

Falmouth Public Library

300 Main Street

Falmouth, MA 02540

LIBRARY DIRECTOR – Linda Collins

Hazel Atwood, Falmouth Public Librarian from 1958 to 1971, described Falmouth as a “Library-minded town.” This local support for the Library continues unabated in 2021. The Library appreciates the leadership and support of the elected Board of Library Trustees, that of the Town Administration, and of the two non-profit organizations, the Friends of the Library and the Library Support Fund. Most importantly, however, we appreciate the ongoing support and appreciation of the residents of the Town of Falmouth.

Through our conversations with local residents and examining the results of the 2021 library survey, we see both traditional and more innovative roles identified for the Library.

- It is no surprise that almost 90% of responders identified borrowing books and DVDs as their primary reason to visit the library. More than 46% asked for greater availability of new and best-selling titles in print. 39% expressed an interest in electronic access to books, movies, and music.
- More than 50% of library patrons asked for more programs and events related to culture and the arts. Over 35% asked that the Library continue to offer programs virtually for viewing at home.
- 50% identified the need for Library staff to be available to assist with research and searching. Instruction on basic technology skills and the use of other digital tools for adults were also mentioned as a need.
- 38% expressed the need for quiet study space and more room for community meetings.
- One third of the responders identified the preservation and digitization of unique Falmouth historical resources as an important mission of the library.

“It’s my go to place above all else”

BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

Library Trustees have a unique and vital role in the oversight, stewardship, and advocacy for the public library. Trustees gain their authority from legislative statute. The elected Board was granted the responsibility to elect a treasurer to manage all funds raised or appropriated by the Town of Falmouth for the public library by a vote at Town Meeting in March of 1902.

“A wonderful resource and an asset to our community”

TOWN OF FALMOUTH

The operating budget, appropriated by the Town of Falmouth, approved by the Board of Library Trustees, and voted on at the Annual Town Meeting, is then reviewed and certified by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners as meeting statutory and regulatory requirements to receive State Aid to Public Libraries, to participate in resource sharing across the state, and to be eligible for State and Federal grant funds.

"The Main Library is a beautiful welcoming place that is an anchor to our vital downtown area."

FRIENDS OF THE FALMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

Additional funding comes from the Friends of the Falmouth Public Library, established in 1992 as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. The Friends annual Wish List supports, among other things, Museum Passes, Children's Programs, Digital Collections, and Technology Support. The Friends are also willing to pitch in when unforeseen circumstances arise. The funds contributed by the Friends are, for the most part, earned at their annual book sale and through online sales.

"The library is the best address in Falmouth"

FALMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY SUPPORT FUND

The Library Support Fund was established in 2014 as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization to support large capital projects for the Library that are not covered by the town appropriation or other funding sources. The Support Fund also makes smaller grants to library staff for specific projects.

"A reason to choose Falmouth as a place to live"

VISION STATEMENT

The Falmouth Public Library - where inspiration, imagination, innovation and discovery come together to enrich lives and create a vibrant and informed community.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Falmouth Public Library engages and empowers the community through its programs, services, and collections that inform, educate, and entertain.

LIBRARY PRIORITIES

Priority 1: COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS AND CONNECTIONS

The Library will continue to sustain and build relationships with community groups and organizations to broaden the reach of library services throughout the Town. Staff will work to reach new communities and increase the visibility of the Library throughout the community.

- Look for opportunities to bring the library into the community
- Seek out partnerships with other community groups and Town departments
- Identify underserved residents of Falmouth and develop appropriate services
- Ensure that the diversity of our community is reflected in library collections and programming activities by integrating core values of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility
- Implement new ways to increase awareness and engage library users where they are, not waiting for them to come to the building for library services

Priority 2: A PLACE FOR DISCOVERY

The library is committed to providing the community with opportunities for learning and personal growth through print, digital, and online collections, as well as robust offerings of public programming.

- Continue to offer an array of programs that focus on educational, informational, arts and cultural opportunities for all ages
- Ensure that collections and programs reflect the broad interests and informational needs of the community
- Provide online and digital resources that will expand access within and beyond the physical buildings
- Contribute to the historic record of the community through ongoing conservations and digitization projects

Priority 3: SERVICE EXCELLENCE

The Library is committed to providing the community with high quality library services delivered by helpful, friendly, well-trained staff, and through library facilities that are welcoming, accessible, and comfortable.

- Support a knowledgeable, technology-savvy, service-oriented staff, to ensure the public's success in the use of the Library's collection and resources
- Ensure the Library and library grounds serve as welcoming community gathering spaces
- Provide technology resources that are current, well-maintained, and able to meet the changing needs of the community

- Assess Library facilities on a regular basis for their ability to support the delivery of services to the community
- Develop opportunities to enhance Library spaces, collections, and services that will support all ages

Priority 4: SUSTAINING CORE RESPONSIBILITIES

The library is committed to sustaining and expanding the use of core library services that are important to the community. Reading, learning, personal growth and exploration remain central to the Library's mission.

- Provide the community with free access to all collections and programs by removing all barriers
- Support the professional staff as responsible stewards of the library's financial and physical resources
- Maintain current collections in content and format, fulfilling the Library's role as a trusted information source and community resource
- Confirm that the Library is guided by the American Library Association Code of Ethics, Freedom to Read and Freedom to View, and State laws regarding Patron Confidentiality

STRATEGIC PROCESS DESCRIPTION

The Library had intended to initiate its strategic planning in the spring of 2020, retaining the services of a library consultant to assist with the project. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the start date was delayed until November 2020, when the library administration and the Board of Library Trustees decided that the work be resumed.

A six member Working Group, with representatives from the Board of Library Trustees, the Friends of the Library, community representatives, and library administration, was created to provide project guidance and advice to the Library Director and the consultant. All project work was conducted virtually via Zoom. The Working Group field-tested the focus group questions and process before the four focus groups were held.



Falmouth Public Library Rotunda

Staff were introduced to the process and given the opportunity to respond to the questions asked during the focus groups. The Working Group provided valuable feedback on the survey, which was then distributed to the community via a variety of electronic means and paper copies. The survey focused on assessing current use and inviting input on future service enhancements. The Working Group then met to review a draft of priorities and provide additional feedback on improvements to the Plan. Results of the survey and the list of priorities were shared with the staff for their input. Throughout the process, the Library Trustees were updated on the progress at their monthly meetings. The new Strategic Plan was approved for adoption and submission to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners at the May 25, 2021 special meeting of the Library Board of Trustees.

TIMELINE

April 2020	Initial start date for planning project; consultant services retained, but project delayed due to COVID
November 10, 2020	Trustees and Director decide to proceed
November 19, 2020	Working Group convenes via Zoom for first meeting
December 2-7, 2020	Community Focus Groups
December 9, 2020	Working Group review of key themes, survey distribution plan
February 9, 2021	Board of Library Trustees project update
March 1-15, 2021	Survey
March 22, 2021	Working Group reviews draft Plan
March 22 – 26, 2021	Library Staff meeting to present/review themes and priorities
April 20, 2021	Draft Plan presented to Board of Trustees
May 25, 2021	Board of Library Trustees votes adoption of the 2022-2027 Strategic Plan for submittal to MA Board of Library Commissioners
November 2021	Completion of the FY 2022 Action Plan

COMMUNITY AND FALMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY PROFILE

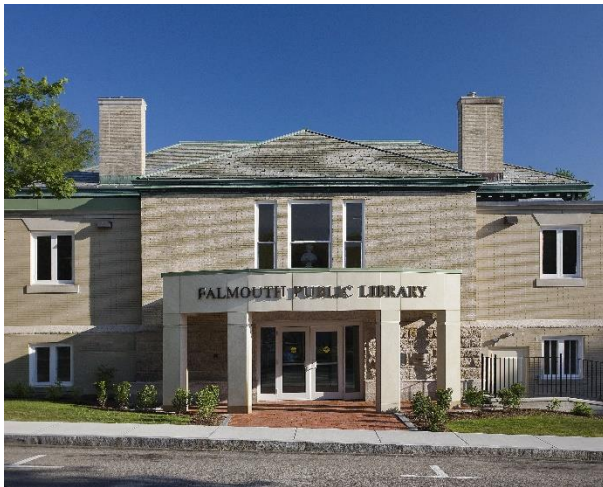
TOWN OF FALMOUTH

The town of Falmouth is located 70 miles south of Boston and 70 miles east of Providence, RI. It boasts 68 miles of shoreline and is the second largest town on Cape Cod. Its unique resources make it a desirable place for retirees and a popular destination for vacationers. Falmouth's economic base is characterized by a strong retail and service sector with a

modest industrial segment. The Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution, the Marine Biological Laboratory, the US Coast Guard Station, and the Falmouth Hospital bring special services and diversity to the town.

The 2020 Census reports a population of 30,993 year-round residents. The Town's population more than triples in the summer months. According to the census data Falmouth is 91.4 % white, 1.9% black, 1.84% Asian, and .68% Native American. The largest segment of the population is between the ages of fifty-five and sixty-five, 9,926 residents are seniors. Falmouth residents are well educated with 45% of those over the age of twenty-five having a Bachelor's Degree or higher, and 25% with some college or an Associate's Degree.

The Falmouth Public Library consists of the Main Library in Falmouth Center and two branches located in the villages of East and North Falmouth. The Main Library is located in the center of the downtown commercial area on Main Street.



Katherine Lee Bates Road Entrance

The Library is governed by a seven-member board of trustees elected for three-year terms on a staggered basis. The Board meets once a month in open meetings and sets policy and operational standards for the library as well as fiscal and facilities oversight. The library is a municipal library and, as such, is a town department within the town's governmental structure.

As a town department the Library receives its core funding through taxes. The Board of Library Trustees, the Friends of the Falmouth Public Library, and the Library Support Fund generously provide funding to enhance library

services and facilities throughout the year. The library is certified by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) and receives annual state aid.

The Falmouth Public Library is a member of the Cape Libraries Automated Material Sharing network (CLAMS) sharing collection resources among Cape and Island libraries. The Main Library provides all library services to the town including reference, interlibrary loan, and extensive fiction and non-fiction collections available in various formats. Public access computers, children's services, and extensive programming for all ages are provided at the Main Library. The Main Library also provides three meeting rooms for use by the community and the library. The Falmouth Public Library houses the largest and most comprehensive collection of all the libraries on the Cape and Islands. Two library branches in the East and North Falmouth villages, provide residents with a collection of current, high demand, high interest materials for reading, listening, and viewing.

The Library has a professional staff of nine librarians with Master of Library and Information Science degrees and twenty-eight library assistants. The library offers wireless public

Internet access to patrons. This is especially valuable to our tourist population who may need the Internet to conduct business or answer email, but who do not have Internet access in their rental cottages, inns or motels.

The Library has a popular Homebound Program with more than sixty-five residents served on a regular basis by the Homebound Librarian. The library also provides a variety of programs for children, teens, and adults on a regular basis. Programs are funded by the Board of Library Trustees, the Friends of the Falmouth Public Library, and the Library Support Fund.

The Library has strong connections with other community organizations, including a long-standing relationship with the Falmouth Genealogical Society. Volunteers from the Genealogical Society are available once a week to work with patrons seeking genealogical information either from the print collection or by using electronic databases. The library also partners with the Falmouth Public Schools and the Falmouth Hospital, and with the Woods Hole Institutions to present informative scientific programs in the Library. The Library also partners with Eight Cousins, the local independent bookstore, to bring authors to the library.

The library has established a program of digitizing items of local and historical interest. Using Community Preservation Committee funds, the library digitized the town's Annual Reports and the *Falmouth Enterprise* newspaper from 1896 through 1962. Currently collections are being inventoried to identify other items of local interest to digitize. New technologies and community expectations have demanded that libraries not only provide new services to the public, but also provide well-established services in very different ways.

FALMOUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY BOARD OF TRUSTEES:

Jenifer Alai, Recording Secretary

Kathryn Elder, Treasurer

Judith Fenwick, Chair

Lucy Helfrich

Lindsay Hopewood, Corresponding Secretary

Kathie Mount

Sylvia Szulkin, Vice Chair



East Falmouth Branch Library

LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION:

Library Director – Linda Collins

Library Assistant Director – Jennifer Woodward

STRATEGIC PLANNING METHODOLOGY

The Board of Library Trustees of the Falmouth Public Library launched the strategic planning process in November of 2020 with the creation of a Strategic Planning Committee:

WORKING GROUP:

Jenifer Alai, Library Trustee
Linda Collins, Library Director
Judith Fenwick, Chair, Library Trustees
Suzie Hauptman, Director, Falmouth
Human Services
Ruth Kowal, Library Consultant
Lenny Miele, Friends of the Library
Jennifer Woodward, Library Assistant
Director



North Falmouth Branch Library

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS:

Four community focus groups met in December 2020 to establish and test the questions for the more broadly circulated survey.

SURVEY:

The Survey was shared during the first two weeks of March 2021 on the Library website and the e-newsletter, via social media, and through invitations from the Friends of the Library and the Falmouth Senior Center. Other town groups distributed the survey through their organizations including the Village Associations and the School PTOs. Requests for participation were also included on community Facebook sites. This publicity resulted in well over five-hundred returns.

- The survey was answered in almost equal parts by responders from East Falmouth and Falmouth. There were fewer responders from North Falmouth, West Falmouth, and Woods Hole.
- The majority of responders were over age 65.
- Only 3% of responders had never used the Main Library.
- Two thirds of the responders report using the library either once a week or a few times a month and report staying in the library up to 30 minutes.
- The most often used space in the Main Library is the Adult Collections Room followed by the Children's Room.

SURVEY RESULTS:

What percentage of your needs are met by this location?

LOCATION	Up to 100%	Up to 75%	Up to 50%	Up to 25%
Main Library	68%	20%	6%	6%
East Branch	27%	12%	11%	50%
North Branch	37%	19%	11%	33%

I visit the Library:

A few times a week or more	13%
About once a week	32%
A few times a month	27%
Once a month	8%
Less than once a month	13%
Never	7%

When I visit the Library I usually stay:

15 minutes or less	24%
Up to 30 minutes	47%
Up to an hour	21%
An hour or more	8%

Thinking about the Main Library, and the East and North Branches, on a scale of 1 to 3, with 1 being the most important, rank the following statement. This table indicates the percentage of responders who ranked the statement with a number one.

90%	458	Borrowing Books, DVDs, CDs, etc.
49%	221	Library staff available to assist with research and searching
39%	171	Downloading digital books, music, movies, etc.
38%	169	Museum Passes
38%	161	Separate quiet areas
36%	151	Partnership with the schools
36%	149	Internet access
33%	146	Large community meeting rooms
34%	144	Programs and classes for adults
32%	141	Programs and classes for children
32%	134	Partnerships with community organizations
29%	126	Small community meeting rooms
27%	115	Computers, printers, other technology
26%	109	Assistance with using technology and equipment

24%	97	Programs and classes for teens
18%	74	Job and career resources
17%	72	Art exhibit space
14%	57	Books, DVDs, CDs, etc. in languages other than English
7%	31	Gaming space and equipment

Members of my household would use the Library more often if there were:

56%	223	Arts and cultural programs such as lecture, concerts, and movies for all ages
46%	184	More availability of new and best-selling titles in print
34%	136	Offer Library programs virtually for watching at home
33%	130	Preserving and digitizing unique Falmouth historical resources
31%	124	Programs to teach people of all ages how to use digital tools
31%	122	Programs that do NOT involve technology, i.e., craft programs, storytellers, dance
29%	113	More availability of new and best-selling titles in digital format
23%	93	Online learning opportunities
21%	85	Information about town and government services
18%	71	Items for hands-on learning (board games, musical instruments, etc)
15%	59	Inter-generational programming
14%	54	Workspace for mobile workers and entrepreneurs
12%	48	Digital equipment such as microphones and cameras, etc.
12%	46	STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) programs
11%	45	Connecting people to training and career development resources
9%	37	Programs directed towards people in their 20s and 30s
8%	34	Technology items to loan, such as mobile hotspots, laptops, and tablets
7%	29	Literacy and basic technology skills for adults
5%	20	More curriculum-related resources and homework help for school age children
5%	19	Early literacy programs
3%	11	English as a Second Language resources or instruction

SUGGESTIONS – a small selection of the many suggestions we received to the question,

Are there new or different services you would like to see the Falmouth Public Library offer to you and the community?

- The ability to download music to add to my playlist
- I would love to see the main library utilize the outdoor space on library lawn more often
- More story walks, outdoor story times, yoga... there are so many possibilities!
- More open hours, especially Sunday

- Speakers with flower and vegetable gardening know how for successful growing
 - Instruction on how to take more advantage of the digital collections
 - Consider purchasing a piano and hosting a music series and lending musical instruments
 - More evening hours/programs for those who work 9-5
 - More Lifelong Learning programs
 - A Library of Things, I especially want to be able to borrow a telescope
 - Recently retired – more learning opportunities
 - It would be great to have a town drop box in the library
 - Larger Book Nook
 - Ability to access classic films digitally
 - Non-quiet areas to read books and magazines with family
 - More technology training
 - More focus on adult continuous learning activities
 - Private study rooms, semi-private entrepreneurial work spaces
 - Open a little coffee tea area with classical music pumped in
 - Out of town newspapers
 - More genealogy resources
 - Arrange foreign language DVDs by language
 - Social justice resources
 - I love the idea of being able to borrow tools, like sewing machines.
 - A Teen Book Club
 - Stable, reliable internet/wifi service
 - Expand your hours as much as possible
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Approved by the Falmouth Public Library Board of Trustees

Chairperson, Judith Fenwick _____ Date _____