

Taunton
Public Library
Strategic Plan

2020



Taunton,
Massachusetts

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Mission Statement

The Taunton Public Library's Mission is to provide popular, educational, cultural, and recreational information and resources to its patrons and the community by recognizing Taunton's diverse, growing, and changing, population of life-time learners.

The Board of Trustees endorses the Library Bill of Rights as adopted by the American Library Association and the Freedom to Read Act.

Community Profile

Taunton Demographics:

Taunton, Massachusetts, is located 40 miles south of Boston, 10 miles north of Fall River and 18 miles east of Providence, it is situated on 48.4 square miles of land. This makes Taunton the third largest city by area in Massachusetts, and the twenty-first largest City by population according to the 2010 census.

Taunton is the Seat of Bristol County, making it home to Taunton Superior Courthouse and the Registry of Deeds building. Taunton is known as the Silver City for its contributions to the silver industry in the nineteenth century, recently Taunton has also been named the Christmas City for its grand display on the green during the holiday season.

As of 2017, Taunton has a population of 56,826 people. Population demographics from the 2010 census shows 3,523 children under five, 9,088 under eighteen and 7,569 people over sixty-five years of age. Median household income is reported at \$62,185, with residents' median age a 40.2 years. The average family size in Taunton is 3.2 people, 63.6% of these families live in owner-occupied housing, of these households 87.1% have computers and from 2014-2018, 80.2% have broadband internet in the home.

As of 2017, race and ethnicity demographics in Taunton is reported to be 81.5% White, 6.89 % Black or African American, 6.48% Hispanic or Latino, and 2.37% two or more races. Also, from 2017, the foreign-born population of Taunton is 13.8% of the city's population, which is slightly higher than the national average. Between 2014 and 2018, 2,289 veterans resided in Taunton, according to Data USA, the highest percentage of veterans in Taunton served in the Vietnam War followed closely in number by the Gulf Wars of the 1990s and early 2000s.

Taunton Massachusetts has a total of thirteen schools as of the 2019-2020 school year, these schools' range in grades PK-12. There are 8,036 students enrolled in Taunton schools, of these students, 62.7% identify as white, 17.8% African American, 12.7% Hispanic, 1.2% Asian, 0.2% Native American, 0.1% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander and 5.2% Multi-race or non-Hispanic. All student attendance for Taunton public schools is 93.9%.

As of 2019 Taunton Public Schools are making 'moderate progress toward' target goals for student achievement. MCAS averages for ELA in grade 10 are at a score 495 while Massachusetts has an overall rate of 506. Grade 10 mathematics score at 496 while Massachusetts has a score of 505. High school dropout rate for Taunton Massachusetts is 1.5%, and as of 2019-2020, the graduation rate for Taunton high school students is 89.7%, which is slightly higher than the overall rate for Massachusetts. In Taunton, plans after high school graduation are:

4 year private college	17.8%
4 year public college	29.5%
2 year private college	0.4%
2 year public college	33.7%
Workforce	7.9%
Military	2.2%
Unknown	5.5%

Adult education statistics of the city of Taunton shows that 84.3% of persons twenty-five and older have a high school diploma or higher while 21.6% of those residents have a bachelor's degree or higher.

The Taunton Public Library, which serves this diverse community, is located at the heart of the city in downtown Taunton. Situated at 12 Pleasant Street, around the corner from the Taunton Green, this is the singular location and serves the entire city population.

Library Description

Our History:

In 1866, Mayor Edmund Bennett urged the City Council of Taunton to fund the city's first free public library. Until this time, the city had three separate libraries: the Taunton Agricultural Library, the Taunton Social Library, and the Young Men's Library Association which all provided popular reading and leisure materials to their members. These three libraries agreed to combine their collections to establish a 4,060 volume base that grew to become the Taunton Public Library of today.

For thirty years, the public library occupied the site of the former Taunton Social Library. In 1902, after requesting a grant from the Carnegie Cooperation of New York, the city received an award of \$70,000 to construct its present building. This new library opened its doors to the public on the evening of December 1, 1904, during a grand opening that was attended by over 5,000 people. As the library's collections grew, further space was needed and, in 1977, a brick addition was added to the building, creating the final structure the city knows today.

Our Library Today:

The library is governed by a six-member board of trustees appointed for staggered three year terms by the city council. By virtue of the office, the mayor acts as an ex-officio member. The board is responsible for working with library administration on fiscal management, personnel management, and establishing policies.

The library operates as a city department and receives its core funding through municipal funding. The library is also certified by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) and receives state aid through an annual grant. The Friends of the Taunton Public Library also provide additional funding to further enhance the library in areas that directly benefit the public.

Currently, the library has a staff of 39. This includes 20 full-time positions and 19 part-time positions. There is currently only one vacant full-time position. The full-time staff is composed of a director and an assistant director as well as four supervisors: youth services supervisor, technical services supervisor, reference services supervisor, and circulation supervisor. Each of these staff members have a MLS from an accredited college or university.

This library staff also includes an acquisitions librarian, a young adult librarian, and nine assistant positions: community outreach assistant, technical services assistant, cataloging assistant, audio visual assistant, reference assistant, interlibrary loan assistant, circulation assistant, children's assistant, and acquisitions assistant. All these remaining staff have either a full BA or associate's degree. There are also two full-time custodians and one full-time security coordinator.

The Taunton Public Library is open 64 hours per week from fall through spring. From Monday through Friday, the hours of operation are 9 am to 8 pm, and Saturday the hours are 9 am to 6 pm. During the summer, hours are reduced to 55 hours a week by closing on Saturdays.

The library offers a variety of programs throughout the year that reflect the community's interests and needs. There are programs targeted at all age groups, from birth through adulthood. Those developed and run by the library are typically reoccurring programs held on a weekly or monthly basis. Many additional programs are seasonal, vary depending on interest, and may be conducted by a performer or an expert in the area being discussed. The library also offers summer reading programs for all age groups each season. Once a month, the Friends of the Taunton Public Library also hold a Saturday book sale as well as a Thursday evening program

for the community. Several outside groups also come to the library to use the auditorium for their public meetings.

Collection and Circulation:

The library’s holdings total approximately 253,201 items, with the largest portion being adult non-fiction. The overall collection is broken into three categories: adult, young adult, and children’s. Our adult collection contains all adult fiction, non-fiction, and reference materials. Each collection has several distinct subcategories with their according materials: books, print periodicals and newspapers, audio, video, e-books, downloadable audio and video, microforms, and miscellaneous.

<i>Main Library Collections:</i>	Total Materials:
<i>Adult Collection</i>	205,348
<i>Children’s Collection</i>	37,929
<i>Young Adult Collection</i>	9,924
TOTAL	253,201

<i>Collection Subcategories:</i>	Total Materials Across Library:
<i>Books</i>	175,185
<i>Print periodicals, newspapers, and other print serials</i>	798
<i>Audio (compact discs, cassettes, etc.)</i>	4,138
<i>Video (VHS, Blu-ray, DVDs, etc.)</i>	6,959
<i>E-books</i>	50,490
<i>Downloadable audio (audiobooks, music, etc.)</i>	10,651
<i>Downloadable video</i>	668
<i>Microforms (fiche, rolls, etc.)</i>	3,964
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	249

Total Circulation for FY 2019 was 163,361. This number accounts for the total adult circulation of 90,695 items, the total children’s circulation of 65,844 items, and the total Young Adult circulation of 6,858 items. Interlibrary loans received from other libraries totaled 33,982, and loans provided to other libraries totaled 35,603. Non-resident circulation was 17,691. The Taunton Public Library is also a member of the SAILS Library Network, and participates in reciprocal borrowing privileges.

<i>Main Library Collections:</i>	Total Circulating Items:
<i>Adult Collection</i>	90,695
<i>Children’s Collection</i>	65,844
<i>Young Adult Collection</i>	6,858
TOTAL	163,361

<i>Collection Subcategories:</i>	Total Circulation Across Library:
<i>Books</i>	97,331

<i>Print periodicals, newspapers, and other print serials</i>	620
<i>Audio (compact discs, cassettes, etc.)</i>	7,917
<i>Video (VHS, Blu-ray, DVDs, etc.)</i>	35,780
<i>E-books</i>	11,685
<i>Downloadable audio (audiobooks, music, etc.)</i>	5,557
<i>Downloadable video</i>	33
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	1,434

The Planning Process

In the early spring of 2020, the library organized a committee library staff to meet and make arrangements to complete our strategic plan. We recognized that in order to successfully maintain our strong services and to answer the demands of a growing community, we needed a coherent series of attainable goals and objectives. In order to develop this, the committee obtained data by speaking with patrons, other staff, and members of the community. Patrons were urged to complete one of our anonymous surveys. By these means, we were able to understand why patrons typically visit their library, how often, what services they utilize, and what changes or improvements could be made to meet our community's needs.

This plan was developed by a committee comprised of several library staff members, with assistance from the Taunton Public Library trustees. The committee worked together to gather and analyze data, identify library needs, and prepare drafts of this plan. All trustees served as the review committee, acting upon the director's recommendations and approving elements of the plan as they were developed. This plan was officially accepted by the library and the board of trustees in October, 2020.

The plan as follows will serve as a blueprint to guide library service development for the next four years. The plan is not static; it will be reviewed and revised as needed to keep pace with the changing world and the needs of our community.

Together with the contributions from patrons and the library community, the committee has laid out our core goals and objectives for the library. These objectives are focused on the necessary steps that we must take in order to improve the overall quality of library services.

User Needs Assessment

In the spring of 2020, the library conducted two surveys in order to collect information from the public that would advise the creation of this plan. With the data gathered, we were able to assess the needs of our community in order recognize how we can better serve them in the future.

Results showed that those completing the first survey were predominantly 50 years old and up. The second survey, which was available online, received responses from a younger group, with the most responses coming from respondents who were 35 to 44. In both surveys, we found otherwise similar results for many responses; the main reason these patrons come to the library is to check out materials. Programming the second most frequent response when we asked why the respondent typically visited the library. Many patrons are parents or grandparents that bring children to the library for playtime or programs. Other frequent responses to this question include visiting the library to use the computer, for faxing services, for printing services, to work on homework assignments, to apply for jobs, access historical materials, or to simply interact with the helpful staff.

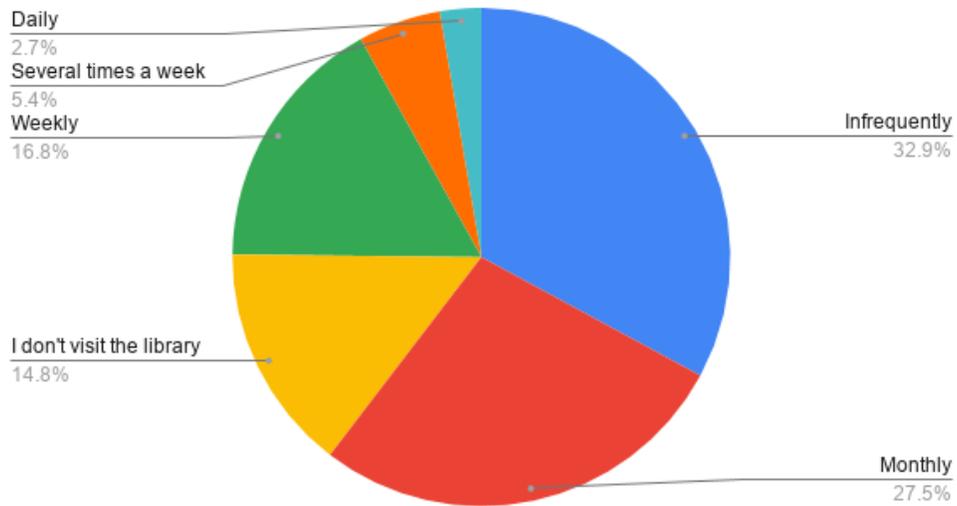
Through these surveys, we also discovered how patrons learn about the programs and events the library offers. In many cases, patrons rely on information posted online or flyers displayed in the library to discover what programs are taking place. When asking how frequently patrons visit the library, results showed that many visit infrequently or on a monthly basis.

While the results of these surveys allow us to recognize that programming and borrowable materials are the principal draw for our patrons, we also learned that these are also the areas we could still improve upon. In the comments section of this survey, we received many requests for what patrons would hope to see more of at the library. Recurrent results included:

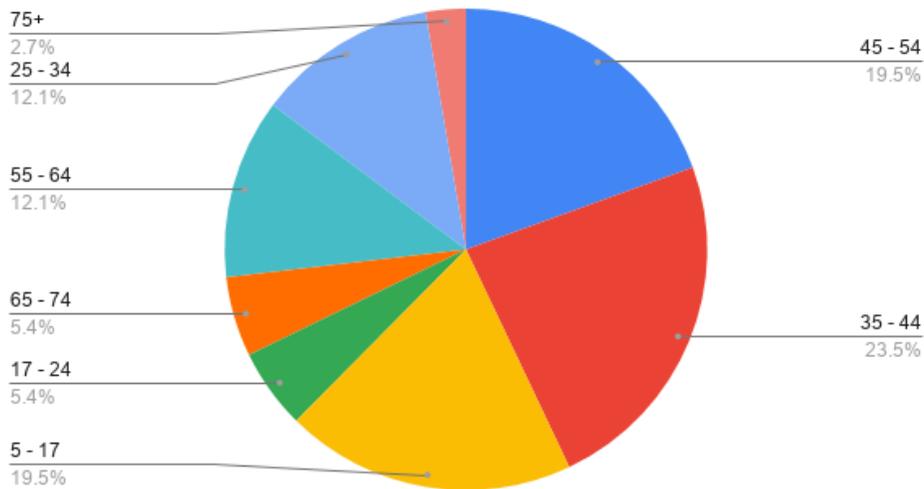
- More frequent and diverse programs

- More programs for certain age groups (such as young adults, middle grade children, and older adults)
- Better advertised programs, so that patrons do not miss what is going on at the library
- More information or programs on how to access and use resources the library offers
- Better signage in order to locate books
- More services based on patron needs and interest offered
- Updated furniture and fixtures throughout the library
- New technology for both checkout and in-house use

"How often do you visit the Taunton Public Library?"



"How old are you?"



Goals and Objectives

In response to the previous survey results, public input, and committee discussions, we have clearly identified a few broad categories in which improvements should be made in order to strengthen the library as a whole. These include:

- Programming
- Collection Development
- Outreach
- Fundraising
- Staff Development

By recognizing these main areas in need of improvement or expansion, we have compiled a list of objectives and corresponding actions that the library will strive to complete in the coming years. Due to developments in technology and the needs of our growing community, the role of libraries is ever changing. We strive to provide new services to the public while also building upon our strengths. Our core goals for the future include actions that will allow us to better meet the public's needs for the future. The goals as follows are not fixed; each objective will be evaluated as we make progress and appropriately amended as needed. This plan covers FY 2021 through 2025.

Goal 1: Programming – To increase, strengthen, and expand programming.

Objective 1: Develop new programs that target a more diverse audience.

Action	Responsible Person/Entity	Anticipated Completion
Research new programming that targets underserved portions of the population	Program supervisor	Ongoing
Implement one new program for teens/young adults to be held on a periodic basis	Young Adult Librarian, program supervisor	FY 2022
Use survey results and public input to identify 1-3 possible new programs that can be feasibly implemented by the library in the next three years	Director, planning committee, Community Outreach Assistant, Friends of Taunton Public Library	FY 2022

Objective 2: Make the public more aware of the programs and services currently offered.

Action	Responsible Person/Entity	Anticipated Completion
Continuously peruse new avenues to promote our programming	Director, Youth Services, Young Adult Librarian, Community Outreach Assistant	Ongoing
Implement new techniques to regularly advertise programs through social media and other digital resources	Director, Young Adult Librarian, Community	FY 2023

	Outreach Librarian, Reference Department	
Investigate new paths to reach parts of the community who may not be on social media or who do not visit the library frequently, and implement new practices	Reference Department, all staff	FY 2023
Develop regular workshops for how to use the library's resources	Reference Department	FY 2023

Objective 3: Encourage members of library staff to organize and run programs.

Action	Responsible Person/Entity	Anticipated Completion
Continue to motivate library staff to develop their own programs based on their own interests and skills	Director, department supervisors, all staff	Ongoing
Further develop staff skills and talents by enrolling in appropriate courses, webinars, and workshops	Director, department supervisors, all staff	Ongoing/as needed
Provide staff with necessary equipment, such as tablets, laptops, and other up to date technology for facilitating library programs	Director, Assistant Director	FY 2023

Goal 2: Collection Development – To further develop library collections with appropriate materials for a modern community and to adequately maintain the current collections and increase circulation.

Objective 1: Maintain library collections that are accessible and responsive to community needs and interests.

Action	Responsible Person/Entity	Anticipated Completion
Continue to purchase relevant and current print materials based on patron interest and need	Director, Acquisitions Librarian, Youth Services Supervisor, Young Adult Librarian	Ongoing
Ensure all materials currently in collection are relevant, contain accurate information from reliable sources, and are in usable condition	Director, Assistant Director, department supervisors	Ongoing
Implement plan for preservation, digitization, or reformatting of historical documents in order to bring them to an online audience	Reference Supervisor, Reference Assistant	FY 2022

Objective 2: Develop a collection of new materials that reflect modern times and technology.

Action	Responsible Person/Entity	Anticipated Completion
Investigate and purchase at least one new type of technology for potential check out (such as tablets, chrome books, kindles, mobile hotspots, video games)	Director, Youth Services, Young Adult Librarian	Ongoing/FY 2023
Investigate unexpected materials based on patron interest and purchase at least one new kit for checkout (such as baking pans, STEM kits, arts and crafts projects, “Tiebrary” ties)	Director, Youth Services, Reference Department	Ongoing/FY 2023

Objective 3: Promote library resources to the public in order to spread awareness of library offerings and increase circulation.

Action	Responsible Person/Entity	Anticipated Completion
Implement schedule to regularly advertise arrival of new materials on social media and library website	Purchasing librarians who can promote associating materials	Ongoing/FY 2022
Identify 1-3 new avenues for informing the public of all unique, but underutilized, resources the library offers	Youth Services, Circulation Department, Reference Department	FY 2022
Develop 1-3 new workshops or programs that utilize the library’s available resources and teach the public how to use these resources	Reference Department, Youth Services	FY 2024

Goal 3: Outreach – To increase our efforts to link the library and the community it serves, by forming strong connections with schools, local businesses, other city departments, and other organizations.

Objective 1: Strengthen and utilize previously established connections with organizations in the community.

Action	Responsible Person/Entity	Anticipated Completion
Continue to strengthen communications between Taunton schools and the library	Youth Services, Young Adult Librarian, Community Outreach Assistant	FY 2023
Visit local schools to sign up students for library cards, promote our resources, and build	Youth Services, Young Adult Librarian,	FY 2023

connections between school librarians and public librarians	Community Outreach Assistant	
Attend all applicable public events (such as school fairs, “what the city can do for you” events). Promote the library and set up a table with information and librarians willing to discuss services with the public	Director, Assistant Director Youth Services, Young Adult Librarian, Reference Department, Community Outreach Assistant, additional willing staff	Ongoing/when applicable
Implement 1-3 additional programs or events in tandem with the Council on Aging to connect with this key portion of the community	Director, Reference Department	FY 2024

Objective 2: Develop a consistent online presence through social media and the library website.

Action	Responsible Person/Entity	Anticipated Completion
Continue to maintain our website and contribute to our various social media accounts in order to reach our patrons online	Assistant Director	Ongoing
Remain accessible online through direct messages and emails, and ensure the public is aware that we are responsive and can assist them online as well as in person	Reference Department	Ongoing

Objective 3: Expand our reach to other areas of the community.

Action	Responsible Person/Entity	Anticipated Completion
Deliver materials to patrons who are homebound or do not have the ability to travel to the library to pick up materials, and promote this service to appropriate audiences (COA, assisted living facilities, elderly communities)	Circulation Department	Ongoing/FY 2024
Develop and maintain LaundReads program and increase public awareness of this service. Apply for applicable grants that will fund similar programs in order to purchase books and stations for laundromats	Reference Supervisor, Reference Department	FY 2024

Goal 4: Funding – To strengthen the library’s available funding in order to offer an improved library experience to the community.

Objective 1: Research and apply for all applicable grants and seek increased municipal funding.

Action	Responsible Person/Entity	Anticipated Completion
In order to make physical improvements to the library, apply for grants that allow us to purchase new furniture, seating, and fixtures, to make spaces more inviting, modern, and comfortable for the public	Director, Assistant Director, assisting grant writers	Ongoing/FY 2023
In order to increase programs offered, seek funding in order to purchase materials necessary to run our programs, or to hire outside performers or experts come to the library to lead an event	Director, Assistant Director	Ongoing/FY 2023
Recognize and respond to all appropriate grant opportunities that present themselves, and stay up to date on all necessary documents required for completing grant applications	Director, Assistant Director	Ongoing

Objective 2: Make new attempts to fundraise in the community and adhere to regular fundraising practices.

Action	Responsible Person/Entity	Anticipated Completion
Identify 1-3 new avenues for the Friends of the Taunton Public Library to fundraise for the library through their nonprofit group	Director, Assistant Director, Community Outreach Assistant, Friends of The Taunton Public Library	FY 2024
Establish methods and frequency for holding fundraising programs throughout the year, and create at least 1 fundraiser event in the community	Director, Assistant Director, Youth Services	FY 2024

Goal 5: Staff Development – To encourage and support staff so that they can continue to serve the community to their full potential.

Objective 1: Build staff skills and experience.

Action	Responsible Person/Entity	Anticipated Completion
Encourage staff participation in webinars, conferences, workshops, and other learning opportunities that will strengthen their skillset	Director, Assistant Director, department supervisors	Ongoing/FY 2022

Investigate 1-3 possible trainings in relevant areas of library services, including training on new technology and computer program use	Director, Assistant Director, department supervisors	FY 2023
Maintain library documents, guidelines, and encourage communications between staff in order to ensure all employees understand library goals and procedures	Director, Assistant Director, department supervisors	Ongoing

Objective 2: Ensure staff has resources needed to work remotely when necessary.

Action	Responsible Person/Entity	Anticipated Completion
Establish appropriate guidelines for working from home	Director, Assistant Director, department supervisors	FY 2022
Apply for applicable grants that would allow the library to purchase laptops and other equipment in order to facilitate working from home	Director, Assistant Director, assisting grant writers	FY 2023
Ensure staff has access to the programs, technology, and means of communication, which will allow employees to effectively complete their work from home	Director, Assistant Director, department supervisors	FY 2023