



Strategic Plan
2022-2027

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Welcome to the Goodnow Library Strategic Plan 2022-2027. “

“We love the Library”

“The Library is really important to me.”

“I enjoy living in Sudbury and want our library to be the best.”

“Very attached; the Library has always been there for me.”

“I believe in it and have benefitted from it.”

These are just a few of the kind words patrons said when asked to tell us about their beloved Goodnow Library.

Goodnow has always prioritized Strategic Planning. The 2017-2022 Strategic Plan contained a bright vision for the future, but was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. While filled with challenges, this time has allowed us an opportunity to revisit our vision of what a public library can and should be, particularly as we begin life in a post-pandemic world.

During our strategic planning process, patrons took the time to answer a lengthy survey about the Goodnow Library, everything from service to programs to parking to staffing. They were honest, but tempered any constructive feedback with strong expressions of love and pride toward the Goodnow and what a public library stands for.

In years past, our strategic plan had solid and meaningful goals, appropriate to public libraries our size. This plan is different. Its purpose is to act as a promise between the library and the community, to strengthen that relationship and serve patrons based directly on their feedback and comments. It recognizes the trends relevant to the post-pandemic world we live in today, and the changing needs of the Sudbury community.

Within these pages, we hope you see the blueprint for service minded growth, staffing strategies, structure, consistency and accountability that strengthens the foundation for Goodnow's future long-term success.

We hope these goals and ideas reignite a passion for Goodnow's potential and inspire all who read them.

The Planning Process

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) has long espoused the value of strategic planning as a management tool for libraries of all types and sizes, and requires an active plan on file in order to be eligible to apply for any direct grants from the MBLC under the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) or any state-funded grants.

The Strategic Planning process began in the summer of 2022. The Goodnow Library offered a survey to its patrons and community, primarily focused on general services to adults, teens and children. 442 people took the online survey, with 73% finishing the entire survey. Full survey results are shared in the appendix.

Additionally, we offered three patron focus groups, two online and one in person, and a staff-only focus group. Our public focus groups averaged 6 people per meeting, a mix of parents, retirees, and working adults. As highlighted earlier, it is clear that Sudbury residents love their library; they were quick to point out positives to counter any less than stellar feedback they shared.

In each public group, we started with the KARR exercise. KARR stands for Keep (what's working, what do we love), Acquire (what are other people doing/have that we love), Reinvent (what's a good idea that's not working right), Retire (what's not working at all or is obsolete): the goal is to give everyone an opportunity to brain dump into these categories as a starting point to learn what the concerns are and for planning what we need. The facilitator is there to listen and take notes. Everything is recorded, there are no wrong answers, no editing. Sometimes the same thing was in different categories based on how people personally felt.

For the staff-only group, we also started with the KARR exercise, with the Assistant Director and Office Manager present, and then we spoke without any Administration present so staff could share their thoughts unfiltered as much as possible.

In both groups, as we progressed through the KARR exercise, we followed up with some particular questions about recurring themes. As a team, staff discussed that we know what the library is capable of and what programs and services we could offer, as well as any current challenges. We also spoke in a broader sense about what Sudbury residents hope for their community so we would know how to best service our residents.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the following people for their support and feedback during the strategic planning process:

All the community members who responded to the “Goodnow Library Strategic Planning Survey”.

The Library Staff who took the time to participate in the focus group and share their honest and helpful feedback about the Goodnow Library, particularly behind the scenes.

Joanne Lee, Head of Reference Services, who compiled the community and demographic profile of Sudbury.

Board of Library Trustees:

Katina Fontes

Lily A. Gordon, Chair

Ingrid J. Mayyasi

Jean Nam

Barbara F. Pryor

Natalie Schlegel, Vice-Chair

Library Administration:

Esmé Green, Director

Emelia Thibeault, Office Supervisor

Karen Tobin, Assistant Director

All the Focus Group and Interview Participants, who were so thoughtful in their responses and generous with their time. It was a pleasure to speak with them.

Facilitator: Kelly Linehan

Library & Community Profile

Goodnow is a central destination for learning, pursuing interests, and meeting friends and neighbors. People come to see one another just as much as to learn from a program or enjoy a book.

Mission:

Improving lives through the power of information, ideas and innovation.

Vision:

The Goodnow Library will:

- Be a primary resource for learning and multiple forms of literacies
- Be socially equitable and accessible to all
- Be a valued community partner
- Be proactive and responsive to community needs

Demographic Information – Sudbury, MA

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Sudbury's population is currently estimated at **19,059** (as of July 1, 2021). Massachusetts population is currently at 6,984,723.

30.1% of people living in Sudbury are under 18 years old, indicating a high percentage of families with kids living in Sudbury (compared to 19.6% in Massachusetts). **15.4%** of seniors (over 65) reside in Sudbury (compared to 17% state wide).

Sudbury's population is predominantly white, at **83.9%** (compared to 80.6% in Massachusetts). Among the minority groups, Asian population is the highest at **10.8%** (7.2% state). African American population at **1.1%** (9% state), Hispanic or Latino at **2.5%** (12.4% state), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander at **0.1%** (same as state). **3.7%** identify as having two or more races (compared to 2.6% in Massachusetts).

According to the U.S. census, **12%** of Sudbury's population is foreign born (compared to 16.9% in Massachusetts). Between 2016 to 2020, **423** veterans resided in Sudbury (290,648 in the state).

The majority of residents in Sudbury are homeowners, at **91%** (compared to 62.5% in the state). The housing market has a median home value of **\$754,2000** (compared to \$398,800 in the state).

Between 2016-2020, there were **6,301** households in Sudbury (2,646,980 in Massachusetts). **13.5%** of households in Sudbury speak a language other than English at home (compared to 23.9% in the state). The average persons per household is **3.03%** (compared to 2.5% in the state).

The majority of Sudbury residents are highly educated. **98.9%** of people have high school degrees (compared to 91.1% in Massachusetts), and **79.7%** have a Bachelor's degree or higher (compared to 44.5% in the state).

3.8% of Sudbury residents (under 65) have a disability (compared to 7.9% in the state), only **0.6%** (under 65) of residents have no health insurance (compared to 3.5% in the state).

According to the latest U.S. census, **65.6%** of Sudbury's population (over 16) are in the workforce (67.1% in Massachusetts), and **58%** of female residents (over 16) work (compared to 63.4% in Massachusetts).

School Statistics in Sudbury: Department of Education’s School and District Profiles.

Lincoln-Sudbury Regional High School

In the current school year of 2021-2022, there is some racial diversity in Lincoln-Sudbury High School. **74.8%** of students are white (compared to 55.7% on a state level). Of the minority groups, Hispanic student population is at **5.7%** (compared to 23.1% state), African American at **5.8%** (9.3% state), Asian at **4.6%** (7.2% state), Native American at **0.1%** (0.2% state), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander at **0.1%** (same as state). **9%** of the student body identify as multi-race/non-Hispanic (compared to the state level of 4.3%).

When looking at enrollment at the high school by gender, **763** are female (compared to 442,763 state level) and **746** are male (compared to 467,772 state) and **4** are non-binary (compared to 994 state).

Public Elementary Schools, 2021-2022

- General John Nixon Elementary
- Israel Loring School (Elementary)
- Josiah Haynes Elementary
- Peter Noyes Elementary
- Ephraim Curtis Middle School

In the current school year of 2021-2022, **73.5%** of students are white (compared to 55.7% on a state level). Of the minority groups, Hispanic student population is at **5.7%** (compared to 23.1% state), African American at **3%** (9.3% state), Asian at **9.8%** (7.2% state), Native American at **0.1%** (0.2% state), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander at **0.1%** (same as state). **7.8%** of the student body identify as multi-race/non-Hispanic, which is high compared to the state level of 4.3%.

When looking at enrollment at the high school by gender, **1,200** are female (compared to 442,763 state level) and **1,314** are male (compared to 467,772 state) and **3** are non-binary (compared to 994 state).

Trends

There are three specific trends in the library world, and beyond, post-pandemic that the library should consider before any major actions or decisions are made over the next few years. These trends are particularly important for public libraries because it affects our patrons, our staff, and how we serve the community in the long term for both their needs and our own. They are all interconnected. Additionally, you will find links to a number of articles that address these topics in a broader sense.

Employee-Centered Organizations

The first trend centers around the employee and work life balance. It is imperative that we focus on making our work culture something positive and meaningful with healthy work/life boundaries. The NYT cited “The Great Resignation” indicating a trend in the post-pandemic world of employees leaving to pursue a different passion or workplace that was a better fit for the individual.

Related, the “Quiet Quitting” trend has been used to describe frustrated and burned out employees cutting back the fervor at which they previously did their work. Unrealistic expectations and standards are taking their toll on today’s workforce.

Public libraries must be prepared for the realities of a shifting work world. Flexibility for hours, work locations, childcare options, benefits and, in particular for libraries, addressing the rapid turnover and the need for flexible hiring practices and qualifications. Remote work policies must be researched and implemented.

It is also worth asking how the impact of an employee-centric world will manifest in a public library. The need for more training opportunities, online job application assistance, digital fluency, computer classes, resume help, and quiet work places, or even community work spaces for connection, must be planned.

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2022/06/01/quitting-time/>

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2022/08/21/quiet-quitting-what-to-know/>

<https://www.npr.org/2022/08/19/1117753535/quiet-quitting-work-tiktok>

<https://fortune.com/2022/07/21/great-resignation-40-percent-want-to-quit-where-a-re-they-going/>

<https://hbr.org/2022/06/the-great-resignation-stems-from-a-great-exploration>

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/13/business/great-resignation-jobs.html>

<https://www.edsmart.org/the-great-resignation-statistics/>

Online Experiences

The digital divide is real, and access to high speed, quality internet is not available to everyone. However, we know our expectations for service today are shaped by our online experiences. Digital fluency is no longer a requirement in today’s world. Amazon, Instacart, UberEats...in 2022 there is a convenient app for “that”, and we expect to get what we want when we want it. And, thanks to social media and our digital footprint, beyond the convenience aspect, we are being sold things we did not even know we wanted; unfettered access to unlimited options, with no need for an ID or physical payment like a credit card or cash.

While demographics show that lack of access to the internet or an education is less of a problem in Sudbury, it is worth noting that those who cannot access streaming services, or vet content appropriately are at serious risk of missing out on important civic and cultural conversations, further widening a growing chasm in the ability to foster connections in our own neighborhoods (physically or digitally), but also globally and beyond.

What does this mean for tomorrow's public library? In terms of this unlimited access, and the pressing need for immediate response times, it is worth looking at the Library's budget and exploring the ways we are being relied upon to provide this level of service while significantly understaffed and overworked. We must continue to simultaneously offer in-person and virtual experiences (and factor in associated costs). Physical audio-visual formats are being replaced with digital content that is not only more expensive to purchase, but publishers have put many limitations on multiple users. ties into our physical collections, space, and general services. This must be an area of continued focus.

<https://www.libraryjournal.com/story/three-trends-future>
<https://publiclibrariesonline.org/2016/10/the-library-of-the-future-is-coming-and-its-all-about-experience/>
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13614533.2022.2058174>
<https://publiclibrariesonline.org/2021/12/gazing-into-the-crystal-ball/>

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

Sudbury is predominantly a white community, and so is the Goodnow staff. As such, they must remain committed to educating themselves on topics surrounding diversity, equity, anti-racism, and inclusion, offering a more thoughtful, representative collection, programs and practices for the diversity that exists in the community.

This ties into the idea of employee-centered organizations. We want Sudbury to be able to recruit a diverse staff, and offer work life balance particularly suited to meet the new challenges of today's employees.

<https://www.ala.org/pla/initiatives/edi/calltoaction>
<https://www.wgbh.org/news/commentary/2021/11/29/want-to-secure-our-democracy-stand-with-librarians>
<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/21/style/libraries-outdoor-public-space.html>

Feedback Assessment:

Many kind words and moving stories were shared about the Goodnow Library and its team. There is no question that Goodnow is the community heart of Sudbury. However, there were a few recurring themes and priorities analyzed in the feedback from patrons and staff alike from which we have assessed four key takeaways.

Each takeaway connects with the trends mentioned earlier in the plan, and is used to create specific goals and action items for the Goodnow Library. Our goal is to structure this plan with clarity and actionable items to make tangible progress, and for that purpose we are focusing on these specific areas. This does not mean that any other elements not mentioned here are less important, unnecessary, or will not be addressed.

Customer Service

Primarily, the largest area of concern mentioned by patrons in the focus groups was customer service and ways the library could be made more inviting and engaging for patrons. In the survey, results leaned toward the positive, but enough responses were scattered to back up the in person feedback that service has room for growth.

It was mentioned by almost every person in the focus groups that staff generally never look up or greet them when they come in, although some patrons mentioned staff were eventually helpful when asked directly. The answer was a resounding “no” when we asked if staff initiate contact or assistance in any way, even though a majority of patrons mentioned that they were here every week and see the same staff each time.

Collection Development

In the survey results, the top three most important parts of the Goodnow Library were materials, ILL (InterLibrary Loan) and help from librarians. In person, reviews of the collection were mixed. There was some criticism of the history/non-fiction collections, tempered by a realistic understanding that perhaps some of the more esoteric materials mentioned belonged in an academic library, not necessarily a public library. Goodnow received an average 4.5 stars, but the comments revealed issues with the collections.

49% of respondents “sometimes” find what they want. Approximately 180 respondents said the reason the library didn’t have something they wanted was because it was checked out (as opposed to not owning). Quite a few people mentioned wanting a longer check out time (and summer Sunday hours). Of the percentages of Sudbury residents using other libraries, the major reason was “better materials”.

While it is not expected that patrons understand all the nuances of collection development, anecdotally, every patron asked was unable to explain any part of how the process worked in terms of purchasing, the book budget, patron requests or even consortium sharing. They quoted typically a two week wait time for items available at other libraries and excessively long wait times for digital materials, to the point where one person mentioned they had to miss a book group at the Goodnow because Goodnow was not able to get her a copy of the book (physical or digital) in time.

This is covered in trends as well, in terms of the immediate access to materials that many people are now used to and will expect, if not now, than in the very immediate future.

Community

The need for community and wanting to connect with other residents was moving to hear. During the focus groups, residents introduced themselves and connected readily with one another. Everyone expressed their desire to continue to have a welcoming social space to connect with one other and support the community. There was a lot of

pride expressed about Sudbury and its residents.

Communication:

A number of patrons mentioned they felt they didn't hear from the library and don't generally know what is happening. There was a lot of confusion about the Friends versus the Foundation. Other than booklists, the highest percentage of survey respondents didn't know about Goodnow's DEI initiative. It was pointed out that there was no signage indicating the strategic planning process was happening, or that focus groups were scheduled.

During the focus groups, when users of the library were asked very simple questions about their visits, they had vague answers as if they were not really sure about the process or who does work at the library. This is not unusual in and of itself, but coupled with the other needs, it should be addressed.

Finally, it is important to note many patrons shared stories about how the library is having budgetary issues. When pressed about whether this was something they factually knew or was anecdotal, each one said they assumed the library was facing budgetary concerns based on some of the issues they experienced. Specifically staff presenting as over-worked, with poor customer service and long wait times for materials or a lack of materials available. They also assumed that the self-checkouts indicated staff did not want to be approached. This miscommunication is something that needs to be addressed in a variety of ways.

The Plan

Goal 1:

Goodnow Library offers an outstanding Public Service Experience for all visitors.

Objective 1: Create new public service standards expected from all Goodnow staff.

Action Items:

- Offer professional staff training on general customer service by the end of FY23.
- Convene staff to review all public policies with a customer-centric focus (primarily, service, efficiency and effectiveness).
- Work with managers to ensure consistent adherence to new standards and clear consequences.
- Subsequently offer specialized customer service training for specific age groups/population data points: Children (2024) /Teens (2025)/Seniors (2026).

Objective 2: Increase patron satisfaction.

Action Items:

- Measure and publicize statistics/results for all circulation functions each year to ensure effectiveness.
- Track and publicize data surrounding delivery times and quantities.
- Build efficient talking points about typical library processes for patrons interested in the behind the scenes work or have process time concerns.
- Maintain awareness of the public's perception of Goodnow Library. Create an annual customer service survey to gather more specific data.

Objective 3: Ensure Goodnow is a welcome and accessible physical space.

Action Items:

- Solicit feedback on placement of self-checkouts, furniture, room use and accessibility.
- Make improvements as guided by patron feedback.
- Invest in directional signage improvements.

Goal 2:

Goodnow Library uses a cohesive communication model that empowers and supports both patrons and staff.

Objective 1: Rewrite the Library's Mission and Vision statement.

Objective 2: The Library will create an external communication plan.

Action Items:

- Hire a marketing firm to audit our current communications and assist with templates for the future.
- Create brand standards for all information leaving the library.
- Create a new template for the Annual Report and mail next iteration to all residents of Sudbury.
- Take advantage of those who drive to the Goodnow and regularly employ the sandwich/lawn sign notices about programs, events and services.

Objective 3: The Library will create an internal communication plan.

Action Items:

- Create SOP (Standard Operating Procedures) for all major internal processes like hiring, onboarding, scheduling, public service, etc. Share with staff.

- Meet with key stakeholders. Review all policies and procedures to ensure they are useful in empowering our staff; update as needed.
- Develop a maintenance and review schedule for P&P Manual.

Goal 3:

Goodnow Library provides unrestricted access to information, programs and resources to satisfy our community's intellectual and recreational needs and lifelong learning, enriching our community's quality of life and enjoyment.

Objective 1: Reduce wait times associated with popular physical and digital materials.

Action Items:

- Review and record data on wait times across collections for an accurate starting point; aim to reduce wait times at a specific percentage.
- Study other libraries methodologies on multiple copy purchasing.
- Relevant staff should take specific training on Overdrive's Advantage purchasing and cost-per-circ purchasing options, and become fluent in Boston Public Library's e-card benefits.

Objective 2: Clarify process and create an SOP for patron requests for purchase. Publicize SOP for transparency and consistency.

Objective: Anticipate and accommodate changing formats for audio-visual materials.

Action Items:

- Develop a 5 year plan for physical AV materials and space, digital AV materials, and streaming services.

Objective: Improve use of statistical analysis in collection development to increase circulation and publicize findings.

Action Item:

- Introduce geo-mapping to circulation and census data and analyze results.

Goal 4:

Goodnow leadership is focused on adaptive, flexible staffing protocols and a meaningful work culture experience that addresses the changing needs of employees

Objective 1: Invest in the potential of the team. See also: Goal 2

Action Items:

- Staff will reflect and create "Core Values" for all Goodnow employees.
- Administration will hire a consultant to help create the DEI hiring checklist and specific goals to expand the diversity of the team.
- Encourage attendance at national conferences; participation in MLN committees.
- Provide training on customer service, DEI, accessibility.
- Book all staff meetings twice yearly, including periodic offsite retreats.
- Improve staff technical and analytical skills.
- Administration will research remote and flexible work policies.
- Examine any fee based system or financial drawback to the hiring process: qualifications, requirements, process, etc.

Objective 2: Identify gaps between current and future operations.

Action Items:

- Analyze current library functions and feasibility. Define service strategies.
- Determine staffing implications to fulfill strategies.
- Improve productivity with cross functional teams.
- Review circulation transaction data. Reorganize workflow around strategic times.

Objective 3: Identify gaps between current staffing and future needs.

Action Items:

- Benchmark staffing and budget data at comparable libraries.
- Create a five year staffing organization chart with personnel costs.
- Administration will commit to advocating for the staff when working with the town and provide updates on progress.

Goal 5:

Goodnow Library is focused on adaptive programming, services and policies to meet the ever changing needs of our community.

Objective: Work with Minuteman for data on cardholders who have not been back to the library since pre-pandemic.

Action Items:

- Issue personal invitations to come back.
- Connect with patrons via technology of their choosing.

Objective: Identify and launch new programming in-person and virtually that draws crowds.

Action items:

- Create Programming baseline metrics to continually improve. Adjust as necessary.
- Develop guidelines for collaboration and partnerships, with an emphasis on DEI standards.
- Seek alternative funding sources. Aim for a minimum of 2 programming grants each year.

Objective: Create and post a DEI statement

Action Items:

- Deep dive into underserved demographic analysis : create targeted outreach/ map core services with an emphasis of DEI standards, investigating users and nonusers.

Objective: Invest in "24/7" and Mobile Library Concepts

Action Items:

- Investigate the potential to offer delivery services/24 hour smart lockers.
- Enhance website capabilities to expand access to services online (room booking, museum passes, library cards, etc.)
- Promote e-magazine resources and investigate lending devices exclusively for magazines.
- Market and promote our transition from online services to a 24/7 branch model.

Goal 6:

The Goodnow Library NOW Lab is a leader for future-focused, sustainable, STEM programming and classes for the Sudbury community.

Objective: Hire a full-time NOW Lab coordinator (see Goal 4: DEI hiring checklist)

Objective: Clarify the goals and purpose of the NOW Lab.

Action Items:

- Staff will be given an opportunity to visit other Makerspaces for tours.
- Research feasibility of expanding the concept of the NOW Lab to include creative software, or software used by work from home employees, entrepreneurs, students, start ups, etc.
- Offer more media editing tools, virtual meeting spots, virtual reality platforms, etc.
- Organize and train a robust program of local volunteer teachers and presenters.

Objective: Emphasize sustainability, Library-wide.

Action Items:

- Create Library-wide policies that emphasize recycling and reusing materials.
- Invest in solar panels.
- Install electric vehicle charging stations in parking lot.
- Set a goal to become a [climate resilience hub](#), level 2.
- Research steps and requirements to become a zero waste library.
- Connect sustainability to grant and funding opportunities.

Goal 7:

Goodnow Library is the social hub for the Sudbury community.

Objective: Promote and invest in Sudbury's unique history and cultural contributions.

Action Items:

- Rework the Goodnow "History & Profile" component for the website. Highlight specific data points of interests (e.g. budget allocations; circulation; "fun" stats)
- Hire an Archivist (see Goal 4: DEI hiring checklist).
- Plan to invest in inhouse/Sudbury content creations, promoting local artists, authors, and innovators (also tied into Goal 7) with a particular focus on DEI.
- Hire or designate a Community Liaison Librarian/Coordinator.

Objective: Increase library visibility at other locations.

Action Items:

- Create a community outreach plan and narrow down specific outreach locations like assisted living facilities, recreation events, etc. Investigate the possibility of assigning a staff liaison to each outreach location for relationship building and communication.
- Host community group leaders monthly to collaborate, offer feedback and program ideas.
- Add a library sponsored Storywalk to various outdoor spaces.
- Expand our live storytime at events throughout Sudbury (like the farmers market).

Appendix:

Goodnow Strategic Plan Survey 2022 results:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-qiEZ4YgQmn8Lkc4hW4XFoQ_3D_3D/

Demographic Information – Sudbury, MA

United States Census Bureau, Quickfacts – Sudbury.

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sudburytownmiddlesexcountymassachusetts>

United States Census Bureau, Quickfacts – Massachusetts.

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/MA>

City Data. <https://www.city-data.com/city/Sudbury-Massachusetts.html>

Department of Education, School and District Profiles (high school)

<https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=06950505&orgtypecode=6>

Department of Education, School and District Profiles (elementary and middle schools)

<https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=02880000&orgtypecode>