

East Longmeadow Public  
Library  
Strategic Plan  
FY2025 – FY2029

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## Introduction

The East Longmeadow Public Library began the strategic planning process in November 2023, and concluded the process in June 2024. The fiscal year for the library runs from July 1<sup>st</sup> until June 31<sup>st</sup> and this plan begins on July 1, 2024, and ends on June 30, 2029. The methodology and needs assessment are part of this document and will outline the ways in which information was gathered and analyzed to create this strategic plan.

## Acknowledgements

There are a lot of people we would like to thank for being part of this strategic planning process. There were 16 people who attended the Community Focus group. They included:

Grace Barone, ERC5 Town Chamber of Commerce  
Tom Behan, Historical Commission Chair  
Teresa Bendzinski, East Longmeadow Cultural Council  
Thomas D. Christensen, Town Manager  
Kathy Coffey, Volunteer  
Adele Hill, Rotary Club  
Michelle Jones, Patron  
Erin Koebler, Council on Aging Director  
Maureen LaBranche, Programmer  
Katherine McGonigle, Library Director  
Amy Pawle, Board of Library Trustees  
Kristen Savaria, Technical Services Librarian  
Gordon Smith, Superintendent of Schools  
Bev Steele, First Congregational Church  
Linda Twyeffort, Friends of the East Longmeadow Public Library  
Jenny Voight, Programmer  
Mark Williams, Police Chief

We also want to thank all the people who took the survey. There were 441 responses and the summary report can be found in Exhibit A.

We want to thank Deb Hoadley, Consultant from Hoadley Consulting, for facilitating the Community Focus Group and assisting with the survey and the writing of this plan. We also want to thank Kristi Chadwick, Consultant from the Massachusetts Library System, for facilitating the Staff Focus Group.

## Strategic Plan Approval

The East Longmeadow Public Library's Strategic Plan FY25-FY29 was reviewed and approved on August 21, 2024 by the following people:

Cynthia MacNaught, Chair Library Board of Trustees  
Amy Pawle, Vice Chair Library Board of Trustees  
Larry Bauman, Secretary Library Board of Trustees  
Nancy O'Connor, Trustee Library Board of Trustees  
David Boucher, Trustee Library Board of Trustees  
Jean Cintolo, Trustee Library Board of Trustees

Thomas D. Christensen, Town Manager

The Strategic Plan was then submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners for approval.

## Methodology

To gather information, two targeted focus groups and a community-wide survey, available in both print and online formats, were utilized. The survey was accessible to all community members from May 9, 2024, through May 31, 2024. It was promoted on the library's website, included in the library's monthly emails, and distributed as paper copies. Additionally, the survey was emailed to the Town of East Longmeadow employees, emailed to the East Longmeadow School community, and distributed as paper copies at the Pleasant View Senior Center. The survey received 441 responses, allowing us to be 95% confident (with a 4.5% margin of error) that the results are representative of the broader community.

Initial meetings included discussions with Library Director Katherine McGonigle, the Steering Committee, and library consultant Deb Hoadley from Hoadley Consulting. Ms. Hoadley collaborated with the Steering Committee to develop and analyze the survey. She facilitated a Community Focus Group with 16 community leaders and library staff, utilizing a S.O.A.R. (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) exercise to explore the library's role and address community challenges and visions. Ms. Hoadley also led a Steering Committee retreat session to develop the main components of the plan. Additionally, Kristi Chadwick, a Consultant for the Massachusetts Library System (MLS), facilitated a Staff Focus Group, guiding them through a S.O.A.R. exercise to evaluate library services.

## Needs Assessment

The needs assessment aims to identify the current and future needs of the East Longmeadow community as they pertain to library services. This comprehensive evaluation includes data from surveys, focus groups, and community meetings to inform the strategic planning process. The library offers a wide range of services, including book lending, digital resources, programs for all ages, and community space. Recent enhancements include the library being open year-round on

Saturdays and becoming a "fine-free" institution. Popular services include book lending, children's programs, and use of library spaces for study and meetings.

East Longmeadow is a community with a population that includes a significant number of older adults and families with children. The town was recently designated as an Age and Dementia Friendly Community by the AARP and Dementia Friendly Massachusetts. East Longmeadow is presently exploring ways to create more attainable housing and realigning town center priorities with the community's values. These changes highlight the need for tailored library services to support different age groups and evolving community dynamics.

Stakeholders, including community members, library staff, and local leaders, were engaged through surveys and focus groups. The community-wide survey garnered 441 responses, providing a robust dataset with a 95% confidence level and a 4.5% margin of error. Focus groups included discussions on the library's strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results (S.O.A.R. analysis). Key community needs identified include:

- Expanded outreach and partnerships within the community.
- Improved accessibility and usability of library spaces.
- Enhanced technology and digital resources.
- More diverse and frequent programming, especially for teens and older adults.

Here are the key findings from the S.O.A.R. exercises:

- **Strengths:** Friendly staff, community engagement, flexible services.
- **Opportunities:** Home delivery services, more training and educational programs, increased community collaborations.
- **Aspirations:** Becoming a central hub for community activities and lifelong learning and having the staff capacity to meet these new initiatives. Creating a library that is functional, well-maintained and provides for multiple uses of the space.
- **Results:** Improved service delivery, increased community satisfaction, enhanced library usage, and sustainability of library services.

Addressing the identified needs will enable the East Longmeadow Public Library to better serve its community, ensuring it remains a vital resource for information, lifelong learning, and community engagement. These key findings have been integrated into the library's strategic plan to create a responsive and future-focused library.

# East Longmeadow's Strategic Plan FY25-FY29

## Mission Statement

**(The library's purpose and why it exists):**

*The East Longmeadow Public Library supports lifelong learning, literacy, and cultural enrichment by providing access to information, knowledge, and ideas through its collections, services and programs.*

## Vision Statement

**(Aspirations for our library):**

*The East Longmeadow Public Library aims to be central to the town's growth and development, responsive to the needs of the community, and committed to quality service through positive interactions and a welcoming environment for all.*

## Value Statement

**(What the library believes in):**

*The East Longmeadow Public Library values are those held by the American Library Association (ALA):*

*Access*

*Equity*

*Intellectual Freedom & Privacy*

*Public Good*

*Sustainability*

## Strategic Priorities & Goals:

### Strategic Priority 1: Partnerships & Community Relationships

*Expand and strengthen existing partnerships to position the library as the community hub.*

#### Goals

*Goal 1: Broaden relationships with East Longmeadow public schools, preschools, daycares, and homeschool families.*

*Goal 2: Coordinate with local nonprofits, community organizations, and town departments to foster ongoing and key seasonal events and programmatic offerings.*

*Goal 3: Promote the library's value as a partner on issues impacting town residents by having a "seat at the table" on policies and projects related to town initiatives.*

## Strategic Priority 2: Access to Library Resources, Services and Programs

*Improve efficiencies in the delivery of library services and establish sustainable and impactful programs, services, and collections tailored to meet community needs.*

### Goals

*Goal 1: Develop and coordinate the implementation, and evaluation of all in-person and virtual library programs.*

*Goal 2: Expand promotion of and access to borrowable items and downloadable materials (eBooks, eAudiobooks, online magazines), and databases.*

*Goal 3: Conduct an internal audit of current physical collection to ensure it is reflective of the community.*

## Strategic Priority 3: Facility Improvements

*Create a welcoming, accessible, and functional library.*

### Goals

*Goal 1: Investigate ways to redesign the public use spaces with dedicated areas for people to work, study, read and gather.*

*Goal 2: Provide furniture that is comfortable and functional with the input of library users.*

*Goal 4: Continue to address maintenance issues of the building with the town.*

## Strategic Priority 4: Organizational Capacity

*Maintain the library's position of a successful and user-friendly town library.*

### Goals

*Goal 1: Continue to hire and retain staff for specific positions to ensure quality service and teamwork.*

*Goal 2: Implement comprehensive staff training programs focused on mission alignment and collaborative practices.*

*Goal 3: Equip staff with the latest tools and resources to improve service delivery and user experience.*

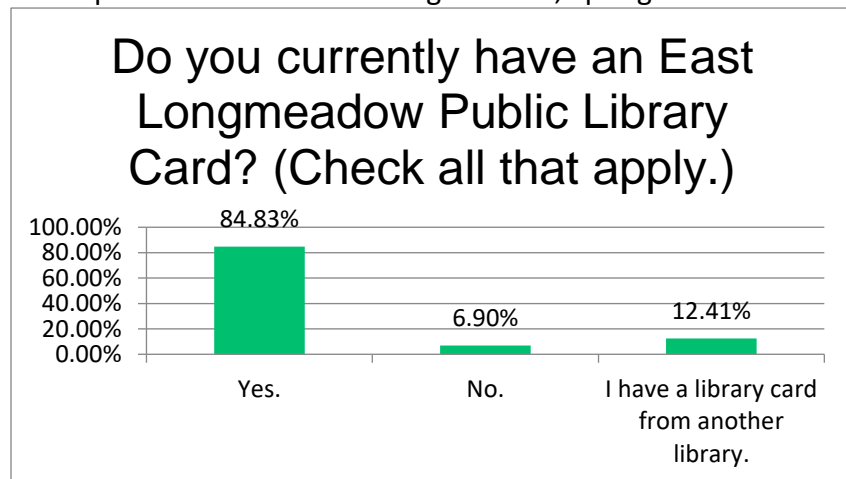
*Goal 4: Active participation by all staff in community engagement initiatives to strengthen library-community connections.*

## Exhibit A: Survey Summary

There were 441 total responses to the survey. Statistically, based on a population sample size of 25,569 (removing the under 18 population), there is a 95% confidence rate with a 4.5% margin of error. We can be 95% sure that the population would select an answer within a certain range, and we can expect the survey results to reflect the views of the most of the population.

### Q1: Do you currently have an East Longmeadow Public Library Card? (Check all that apply.)

There were 369 responses for yes, 30 for no and 54 that had library cards from another library. The top 3 towns listed were Longmeadow, Springfield and Wilbraham



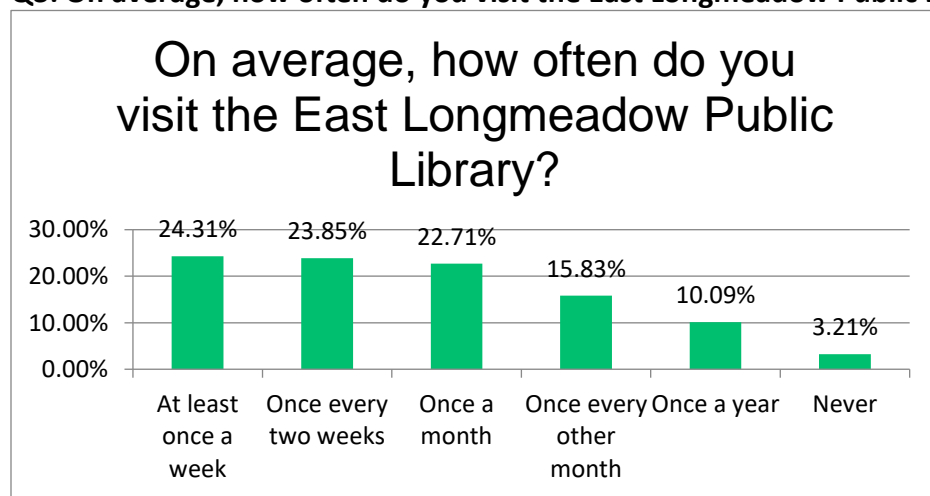
### Q2: What town/city do you currently live in?

East Longmeadow – 359

Longmeadow – 11

Springfield/Longmeadow - 37

### Q3: On average, how often do you visit the East Longmeadow Public Library?





**Q4: What are your main reasons for using the library? (Check all that apply)**

Answer Choices	Responses	
Check out books or other physical materials (DVDs, audio books, magazines, etc.)	80.37%	344
Request books from other libraries	37.85%	162
Attend children's programs	31.31%	134
Find a quiet place to work, study or read	26.87%	115
Borrow downloadable eBooks and audiobooks (Libby, Hoopla)	26.17%	112
Borrow a museum pass	23.83%	102
Attend adult programs	20.09%	86
Use the copier, printer, and/or fax machine	15.65%	67
Get help from Library staff	13.79%	59
Use Library computers to access the Internet or for other software	10.51%	45
Visit with friends	10.05%	43
Use restrooms	10.05%	43
Use the Library's wireless network	8.64%	37
Use the online resources (Transparent Languages, AtoZ database, Consumer Reports, NovelistPlus, etc.)	7.01%	30
Borrow something from the Library of Things	6.54%	28
Attend a meeting not sponsored by the Library (outside organization)	6.54%	28
To get information for school	6.54%	28
Read the newspapers and/or magazines	6.31%	27
Borrow kits	6.31%	27
Attend teen programs	4.91%	21
Borrow a Mobile Hot Spot	3.74%	16
Give or receive tutoring services	2.80%	12
Use historical materials in the Local History Room	2.34%	10

The other reason people mentioned using the library was the visit the children's area.

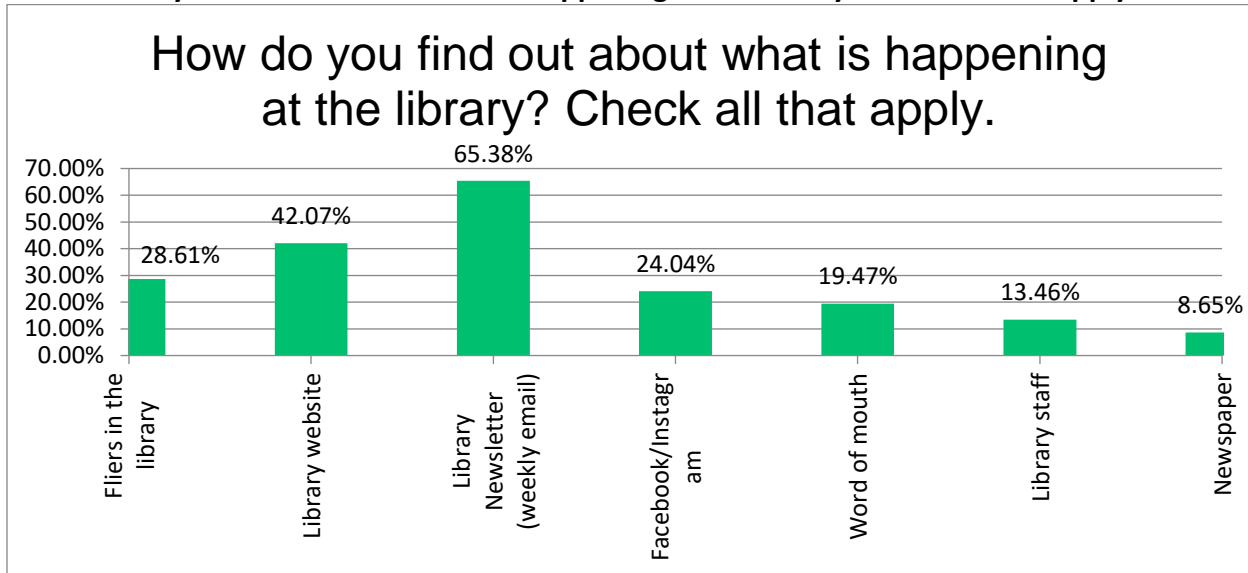
**Q5: If you do not use the library regularly, why not? (Check all that apply.)**

Answer Choices	Responses	
I am too busy and don't have time to go to the library.	40.46%	53
I buy my own books and other reading materials.	28.24%	37
I use the Library's eResources.	26.72%	35
Hours are not convenient.	15.27%	20
I use a neighboring town's public library.	12.21%	16
They do not offer programs of interest to me.	10.69%	14
I don't know what the library has to offer me.	6.11%	8
It is hard for me to get to the library due to lack of transportation.	5.34%	7
I don't have a library card.	3.82%	5
The library does not have the books, movies, magazines or other material that I am interested in borrowing.	2.29%	3

I need Home Delivery services to access Library materials.	2.29%	3
The library charged fines or fees (the library no longer charges fines).	0.76%	1

The other reason people mentioned not visiting was that their children were older now.

**Q6: How do you find out about what is happening at the library? Check all that apply.**



**Q7: How would you rate the following?**

Top 3 Highest Satisfaction Categories:

1. Overall Customer Service at the Library: 93.46% satisfaction (73.60% very satisfied + 19.86% satisfied)
2. Accessibility (ability to access areas inside and outside the building): 71.50% satisfaction (47.90% very satisfied + 23.60% satisfied)
3. Library Policies: 76.65% satisfaction (47.17% very satisfied + 29.48% satisfied)

Bottom 3 Lowest Satisfaction Categories:

1. Technology Help: 37.98% satisfaction (25.24% very satisfied + 12.74% satisfied)
2. Copy and Print Services: 35.37% satisfaction (20.75% very satisfied + 14.62% satisfied)
3. Library's Public Computers: 37.29% satisfaction (23.04% very satisfied + 14.25% satisfied)

Here are some areas where people commented on why they were not as satisfied with a category:

Technology and Printing Facilities:

- "Faxing cost and only being able to print in color on the 2nd floor printer is disappointing."
- "It is very difficult to print and would recommend putting up fliers."
- "I wish the museum passes were able to be checked out online (or at least be able to see what's available)."

Accessibility and Resource Availability:

- "Couldn't figure out downloadable books. Hoopla said to ask library to get it."
- "I am not sure if I am not looking in the right sections, but I haven't found as many age appropriate books (2.5) for my son as I expected."
- "Sometimes the library doesn't have access to books I want."

**Q8: How satisfied are you with the accessibility and usability of our library spaces?**

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Overall use of the library spaces	52.30%	38.01%	7.51%	1.45%	0.73%
Children's room	51.77%	30.56%	15.91%	0.51%	1.26%
Restrooms	50.12%	34.79%	12.41%	1.70%	0.97%
Community Room	49.64%	33.33%	15.09%	0.73%	1.22%
First floor browsing area	48.40%	34.89%	15.72%	0.25%	0.74%
Second floor seating area	46.13%	33.92%	17.96%	0.75%	1.25%
Conference room	41.41%	30.05%	26.52%	0.25%	1.77%
Parking lot	37.98%	42.79%	11.54%	6.01%	1.68%
Computer area	37.79%	30.33%	29.05%	0.26%	2.57%
Study rooms	36.25%	25.96%	33.42%	1.54%	2.83%
Teen area	33.78%	24.73%	36.70%	1.06%	3.72%
Outdoor space	28.89%	30.40%	29.90%	9.05%	1.76%

**Q9: Related to the question above about the accessibility and usability of the library spaces. What improvements would make these spaces more welcoming and useful to you?**

**Space Utilization and Environment:**

- Outdoor and Quiet Spaces: "I would love to see maybe one day an outdoor patio for reading when the weather is nice."
- Study and Meeting Rooms: "Need more study rooms or quiet areas for teens to work at."
- Children and Teen Spaces: "The teen space isn't well stocked with items to keep teens interested in visiting rather than walking around town."

**Technology and Resources:**

- Technology for Remote Work and Study: "Make it more accommodative to people who WFH. Bring more technology/programming/coding books in."
- Library Catalog and System: "Having a more organized catalog of where things are."
- Digital and Physical Collections: "I really find the space useful and don't need any real changes."

**Staff Interactions and Service:**

- Staff Friendliness and Helpfulness: "Like all libraries for me, this is a wonderful place to be with VERY helpful staff."

**Community and Program Engagement:**

- Program Offerings and Accessibility: "Outdoor events. Outdoor Hiking Club. Wine Tasting at somewhere local."
- Community Space Utilization: "Stop pushing library policy when people from the community want to use the space for meetings and events."

**Accessibility and Comfort:**

- Physical Accessibility: "The electric charging takes up the easier to access parking, as someone with an intermittent disability that does not have a handicapped plate and a small child, it has become harder to easily access the library."
- Comfort and Amenities: "More comfy chairs and couches to make it feel like home."

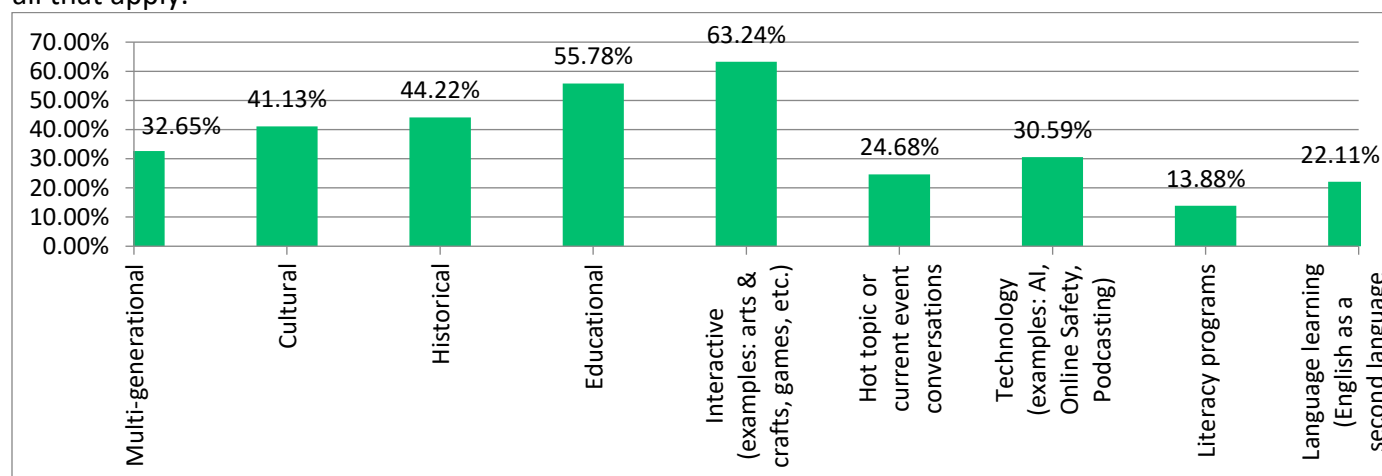
**Q10: The second floor of the library offers a unique opportunity for focused work and relaxation. What type of arrangements would best meet your needs? Check all that apply.**

Answer Choices	Responses	
Comfortable seating for reading. This would include furniture such as armchairs or couches to provide a cozy environment for reading, allowing individuals to relax and immerse themselves in their books or other materials.	76.16%	262
Small, regular height circular tables for 1-2 people. Works well for individual or small group study sessions, collaboration on projects, or simply enjoying a quiet space for reading and reflection.	46.51%	160
Seating with built-in desks. Great for those who need a dedicated space for writing, note-taking, or working on laptops or tablets. It provides a stable surface for tasks that require more surface area.	36.63%	126
Computer workstations. Essential For patrons who need access to library resources, online databases, or for those who prefer to work on computers rather than personal devices. They provide a designated space for research, writing, and other digital tasks.	36.34%	125
Long tables for up to 4 people. Perfect for small study groups or individuals who need a bit more space for spreading out books and materials.	34.01%	117
High top tables for 1-2 people. Ideal for those who prefer to work while standing or for quick solo study sessions.	22.97%	79

**Q11: How satisfied are you with the current programming options available at the library?**

	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Children's Programming (ages 0-5)	40.37%	25.13%	30.48%	2.94%	1.07%
Children's Programming (ages 6-10)	34.36%	28.49%	33.80%	1.96%	1.40%
Teen Programming (11-17)	21.26%	21.55%	52.01%	2.87%	2.30%
Adult Programming (ages 18+)	28.39%	35.94%	31.25%	3.65%	0.78%

**Q12:** Please check the programs you would be most likely to attend if the library offered it. Check all that apply.



#### Educational and Skill-Building Programs:

- Tutoring and Literacy: "Tutoring or extra reading programs for elementary aged."
- Language and Practical Skills: "I would especially attend language classes or historical events."
- Financial Literacy and Technology: "Expand the IT help for seniors."

#### Creative and Cultural Activities:

- Arts and Crafts: "I'd love more adult programs: art, crafts, health related, healthy yoga, tai chi, meditation, plant-based cooking."
- Music and Performing Arts: "Music-renting instruments? Intro classes to get a taste of kinds of instruments a few at a time."

#### Community and Social Engagement:

- Family and Special Needs Activities: "wellness, movement, social groups for parents to meet other parents especially of kids with disabilities."
- Themed Conversations and Social Groups: "Themed conversations where people can share their unique stories and perspectives with the focus on just listening and learning from one another's experiences."

#### Special Interest and Hobby Groups:

- Gardening and Outdoor Activities: "Gardening programs."
- Writing and Book Clubs: "A writing center would be beneficial... More help with I phone camera program on valuable books program..gardening."

#### Q13: How interested are you in the following potential library services?

	Extremely interested	Very interested	Somewhat interested	Not so interested	Not at all interested
One-on One Librarian Services	7.83%	8.84%	32.83%	27.53%	22.98%
Home Delivery Service	12.47%	10.72%	27.68%	25.94%	23.19%
Self-service locker outside the building (pick up 24/7)	14.11%	16.83%	26.98%	17.33%	24.75%

Self-service checkout station	16.30%	19.01%	25.43%	19.26%	20.00%
Technology Training (example: using digital tools such as computers, smartphones, apps)	17.40%	13.24%	25.00%	20.10%	24.26%

**Q14: The library offers museum passes for library patrons and we would like to hear from you what other passes you would like the library to consider offering.**

**Here is a top ten list:**

**Mystic Aquarium:** 7 mentions

**Connecticut Science Center:** 7 mentions

**Boston Aquarium:** 4 mentions

**Museum of Science, Boston:** 3 mentions

**Southwick Zoo:** 3 mentions

**Lupa Zoo:** 3 mentions

**Old Sturbridge Village:** 2 mentions

**Connecticut Trolley Museum:** 2 mentions

**Springfield Museums:** 2 mentions

**Q15: Reflecting on our outreach efforts, such as collaborations with local schools, town departments, and community groups, how effectively do you think the library is serving the broader community's needs? What additional partnerships or outreach initiatives would you recommend?**

Here are five (5) that were mentioned:

Partnership with Storrs Library and Local Communities that House the Elderly

- Collaboration with Storrs Library and communities housing the elderly to enhance outreach and program offerings.

Collaboration with East Longmeadow Schools

- Strong engagement with local schools to encourage reading and community involvement, including school visits and coordinated events.

Engagement with East Longmeadow Government Groups

- Interaction with local planning and school boards to align library services with community planning and educational needs.

Partnership with Local Historical Societies and Community Organizations

- Collaborative efforts with town historical societies, Lions Clubs, Community Services, and Garden Clubs to expand the library's community engagement and support.

Collaboration with Local Health and Educational Institutions

- Proposed partnerships with Alzheimer programs, local colleges, and senior centers to provide targeted services and programs beneficial to specific community groups.

**Q16: What would you like to be able to do now that is not currently being offered anywhere in the community that the library could help you with?**

**Educational Classes and Workshops**

- "Teaching sewing, crochet, knitting for beginners and intermediate."
- "Less 'traditional' book clubs with a wider range of genres."
- "Microsoft program training, Excel training."

### **Youth and Family Programs**

- "More daytime programs for ages 5-11 homeschool kids."
- "More robust toddler groups for working parents who aren't available during the days."

### **Health and Wellness Initiatives**

- "Learning more about health care available for the elderly."
- "Health related topics, ideas, cooking, or exercise classes."
- "A support group for divorce/leaving difficult relationships."

### **Cultural and Historical Learning**

- "Learning more about history of Springfield and surrounding towns."
- "Learning more about social media."
- "Library sponsored bus trip to a museum. History club for adults."

### **Q17: Is there anything else you would like to share with us?**

Here are the top 5 categories with quotes to illustrate more details about what they want.

#### **Library Programs and Activities**

- "I bring my kids to do play with the toys but when they're there in the kids' area, I can't see the adult books. I would love to be able to look at the adult books while still being able to see them playing."
- "It would be nice to have more adult programs."
- "We loved the virtual yoga and cooking class that was available for kids."

#### **Staff Appreciation**

- "Very pleased with the library. The staff is always kind and helpful."
- "The staff of the Children's Room is one of the EL library's greatest resources."
- "You do a terrific job. You are my friends and I always love to talk to you."

#### **Facility and Accessibility Concerns**

- "New paper backs moved to first floor and expanded. Comfortable chairs that are not so low that make getting out for seniors very difficult."
- "Get books and DVDs off lower shelves. Add more shelves for new books."

#### **Suggestions for Improvement**

- "More children's board games and puzzles (300-500 pieces)."
- "I do not appreciate the presence of books with sexual agendas or the emphasis on woke subject matter in the area for babies and toddlers."
- "Would be nice to have some sort of healthy food or drink options to buy while at the library."

#### **Community and External Engagement**

- "I would be willing to volunteer my services in providing cybersecurity awareness to the community."
- "Have more marketing materials for what is going on at the library."
- "I've done some online Zoom classes with the Ashland Public Library (Wilbraham partners with them) on reducing food waste/green living. Perhaps partner with more libraries."

### **Q18: OPTIONAL: If you would like the chance to win a gift card for taking the survey, please enter your name and phone number.**

218 people left their contact information

## Exhibit B: Summary Reports

The following are two reports from the focus groups.

### **East Longmeadow Public Library Strategic Planning – Community Focus Group April 27, 2024**

Deb Hoadley led a group of sixteen (16) selected community group members through a S.O.A.R. (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results) exercise related to the library and also discussed changes, issues, challenges and visions for the community of East Longmeadow. Here are the summary results. Prior to the meeting an agenda was sent out to the group and included two articles related to the future trends in libraries today.

### **S.O.A.R.**

#### **Strengths:**

##### **Staff:**

- Know the children
- Collaborate
- Open and flexible
- Welcoming
- Kindness to patrons who need a place to go

##### **Partnerships:**

- Pathways for Parents partnership
- Outreach into the community – going out to community events beyond the library hours
- Participates in special drives (PJs)
- Collaboration with town department and are part of the discussion

##### **Collection:**

- Online resources and databases Good books
- Collection of things to borrow
- Museum passes

##### **Services:**

- Event calendars – both online and in print
- Volunteer opportunities
  - Middle School students in the summer to help with Summer Reading Program
  - SWAP program for seniors
- Computers

##### **Programs:**

- Book groups
- Story times
- Programming

##### **Building:**

- Location
- Areas of the library are welcoming – people are staying and reading and using the space
- Great community space used by outside organizations
- History Room



#### Miscellaneous:

- Afterschool kids feel comfortable coming to the library
- Friends of the Library
- Create an infographic of library statistics

#### **Opportunities:**

##### Services:

- Home delivery (for anyone who is homebound and needs it – new parents, medical issue, transportation)
- Community Calendar
- Library 411 – how to find resources within the library and the community
- Patrons able to suggest purchases for library of things
- How to use Novelist to find other recommended books to read – more trainings on how to do things in the library (YouTube video tutorials on website)

##### Programming:

- Programming for afterschool kids – is there a collaboration with Parks & Rec?
- More affinity groups – like interests coming together (Board games, crocheting, silent reading nights)
- Story times and programs and activities at different town departments (out of the library)

##### Building:

- Teen section – reconfigure 2<sup>nd</sup> floor space to allow more space for them

##### Partnerships:

- Volunteering for kids all year round – maybe teens teaching skills to seniors and older adults teaching or mentoring kids)
- Look at Assisted Living places and using their transportation - maybe for homebound delivery, residents coming to the library, people to volunteer.
- Businesses aware of the library and how they can work with the library and be more involved with what is going on (Bank – community service)
- Giving Back Community Wide Projects – businesses, organizations, churches, town departments come together with cohesive effort to collect things especially at holiday times.
  - Different drives can have drop off at library
- Find out what services the Senior Center needs – how can library support these needs
- Childcare centers – many of them have transportation – connect with library and maybe work together with assisted living centers

#### Miscellaneous:

- Create an infographic of library statistics

#### **Aspirations:**

##### Services:

- Computer lab – flexible learning space for classes
- Library Vehicle – multi-use
- Book Bike
- Studio space / Makerspace / Creativity Space
  - Video and sound equipment for podcasts (cameras, light rings, etc.)
  - Children's ongoing craft room – build from recycled items
- More items in children's area to lend out

#### Building:

- Solar panels on a covered parking area
- Better energy efficiencies overall
- EV charging station (free)
- Library as a cooling and heating shelter
- Homework room – kids can be working, studying, being tutored
- Space and building assessment
  - Idea of a loft with a ramp
  - Roof repair
- Potential for town to use eminent domain spaces for library use
- Additional bike racks, scooter parking (locking up options)
- Investigate building safety
- Lighting options inside
- Electric shades (cooling, cut down on sun glare)

#### Partnerships:

- Satellite site for food pantry
- Quarterly conglomeration – this is what we will do and how it will be done – lots going on in the community in different place – related to community-wide events
- Potential to utilize community spaces at the new High School – coordination with the new building
- Bus routes to the library

#### Collection:

- Library of Things – help facilitate outdoor and recreation
  - Kayaks, tents, bike pumps, life jackets
  - Maps to various places for recreation (boat launch, trails)
- More museum passes
  - Mystic Museum
  - Hancock Shaker Village
  - Vouchers to go to places for a discount (places without a library pass program)

#### Programming:

- Summer Reading Program incentives
  - Raffles for tickets to various places (Six Flags, the train, Symphony Hall, athletic games)

#### Miscellaneous:

- BOT (using AI) to respond to inquiries and monitor social media

#### **Results:**

- Track and look at statistics to inform services
  - Quantify results
  - People will understand budget shortfalls
- Reduce cost of electricity
- Better awareness of what is available at the library and what it needs (staff, money, facility repairs)
- Improved public safety – reduced calls for misbehavior of youth
- Enrich the lives of the homebound
- Increased access for people who can't afford things
- Support literacy and education

- Foster lifelong learning – bridging the gap for all ages
- True community space
- More continued funding of the library – sustainable future
- Library is 1<sup>st</sup> place people think about to get information and get questions answered
- Library creates town pride and people will be more engaged and participate

## **COMMUNITY**

The group discussed the changes they have been seeing in the community, issues and challenges, and gaps in services. They also created community vision statements.

- Changes in demographics – specific groups may be using more of the services (especially older adults)
  - How are these services paid for?
- Community definition – Thinking about everyone; balance of who needs what and how much will it cost
- Communication needed about what is needed and how it will be done
- Diversity is a strength and a challenge – diversity is sometimes hidden and not always apparent
- 30% of kids in school are low income
- This is a community where people take care of each other – there is a strong volunteer corps
- Lots of community events and activities
- Population is stagnated and reducing
- Infrastructure needs – town departments capital improvement plan – both buildings and services
- Thoughts about how a lower birthrate nationally and locally will impact the pool of people that will be available to work in 20 years
- Loss of land and open space for building residential homes
  - More roads
  - Traffic
  - Safety concerns
  - Harder to get around town
- Lack of development for multi-use buildings (residential and commercial) – more tax revenue from commercial
  - Manufacturing industry – is this sustainable income for the town
- What does the community need for housing?
- Safety of the downtown
- Increased immigrant population – BUT a lack of diversity in the representation of who is serving on boards and committees and involvement in various groups
- Long waitlists for assisted living spaces – 31% of population is 60yr+ - expected to be 40% in 10 years
- What are the needs of the older adults who are aging in East Longmeadow?
- Lack of community spaces – indoor and outdoor

## **COMMUNITY VISIONS:**

My hope is to live in East Longmeadow where:

- There is affordable housing
- Birth to death – people stay here for generations to come
- Remain affordable for people moving into town

- The community remains having town-wide activities and events
- Schools continue to develop and have high caliber/quality of education
- Neighbors are tolerated and we learn from each other and have an exchange and sharing of cultures, lifestyles, etc.
- People can respectfully disagree
- Different groups can rally around a shared purpose
- People can walk around more – engage with each other
- Vibrant downtown center
- There is no reason to leave
- People are safe and the town remains safe
- Even if the town is growing it still feels like a small town and everyone belongs here
- New businesses and industries are welcomed
- There are opportunities to work here
- “The inclusive, proactive community has effective supports to meet diverse needs of the population with infrastructure, community engagement, learning and recreational opportunities to thrive in a healthy, safe environment.”

**ONE WORD** – each person gave one word they would like to hear people describe the town of East Longmeadow.

- |                     |              |               |
|---------------------|--------------|---------------|
| • Multigenerational | • Supportive | • Comfortable |
| • Peacefulness      | • Welcoming  | • Expansive   |
| • Thriving          | • Home       | • Safe        |
| • Vibrant           | • Community  | • Thoughtful  |
| • Engaging          | • Inclusive  |               |
| • Diverse           | • Family     |               |

**LIBRARY’S ROLE** – the library can play a supportive, partnership or priority role in meeting some of these community needs.

- Sharing event calendars with the town (partnership)
- Learn what other organizations are doing and not duplicate services and programs (partnership/priority)
- Gathering of organizations and town departments to organize community needs all year (food, items, etc.) (partnership)
- Create space for difficult conversations (support)
  - Safe space for all ideas
  - Learn from each other
- Potluck dinners to bring people together – other ways like a street party (partnership/priority)
- Encourage personal interaction (support)
- Support “open” space to play – unstructured safe spaces (support)
- Create sensory spaces (priority)
- Testing space (support)
- Programs on how to be a US Citizen (priority)
- Continue to be a forward-facing community leader (priority)
- Look at ways to push out what the library is doing instead of pulling in (priority) – this is the perception of the library (priority)

- Continue to educate people about the resources the library has to offer (priority)
- Continue to ask people what they want and need in the community so the library can be responsive to those needs (priority)
- Build staff skills and provide professional development opportunities (priority)



**East Longmeadow Public Library Staff SOAR Exercise**  
**September 28, 2023**

**Strengths**

*"What are the library's strengths?"*

*"What have been some of the greatest accomplishments over the last five years?"*

*"How does the library already address community needs?"*

Our staff – patron service, learning resources, always something positive to say from patrons

Centrally located

Our programming – excellent teen programming, more diverse programming, for families, survey responses

Our patrons – enthusiastic, like the library, connections to people Healthy budget

Supportive Board and Friends group

Collection – focused on community needs

Our consortium and supporting organizations (CW MARS, MBLC) Great at finding things, love programs

Summer reading

The building

Good hours – range is good for people

Town manager is supportive

Lots of outreach and charitable programs/service - donation drives, food, giving tree

Dealing with COVID – programs, story time to go, sidewalk strolls, gave patrons what they needed and kept patrons with us, virtual programming

New director

Building improvements – new tables/chairs, paint, AV, teen furniture, more cameras

Expanding the Library of Things

Kits in Children's Dept/also Adult services

Chicks in the library!

Policies have been revised and made more solid (no food in the library) Technology in the library – good training and knowledge, staff training, support by town IT for infrastructure

Updated internal procedures – emergency plan, getting staff on same page, encouraged involvement

Volunteers – senior work, teens, welcome all abilities

Place for teens to hang out

Hub of our community – place for all ages, rare to find people who haven't come

Lots of returning patrons – and new patrons

Study rooms – space for remote work patrons

Place to learn about the town

Collaboration with Pathways

Secure internet connection for remote workers

Mobile printing

Better computer workstations for public – large display workstation

Fax machine

Museum passes

Publicity – ease of access for patrons, newsletter is great

Website is more user friendly

## **Opportunities**

*“What community needs and wants are not currently addressed by the library?”*

*“Are there current strengths that the library staff could leverage to increase impact?”*

Home delivery service

More space for private study, table dividers for privacy

Noise, some quieter space

Sensory friendly story time, space

Appropriate summertime temperatures – areas have extreme temps

Teen space – more enclosed, larger space, no program space near current teen area

Children's area – computer area after school is in use, lines for use, needs to be bigger

Bigger programming area

Outdoor space

Need for new high school

Closer integration with middle and high school – project knowledge ahead of time

Knowledge about town projects – information hub?

Still require teens to be 18 to get library card on their own  
Environmental issue – geese in playing fields  
More technology needed in the community – technology lab  
Council on Aging partnership – what else can we do?  
Parks and Recreation  
Masons help with Summer Reading  
Rotary Club  
Health Department  
Public Safety – parking lot  
More partnership with school – school librarians, test prep & databases  
Apple Place – family programming  
Work with bike repair shop?  
Connect with business side of town – not just donations, expand scavenger hunt  
Outreach about digital resources  
Work with 413  
Collaborate for school half day programs/work with rec dept/pizza place In-person  
foreign language programming  
Purchase expensive items for library – kits, LoT, museum passes  
More staff available, especially for weekend programming  
Use LSTA grants for funding new opportunities  
Work with town recycling for deaccessioning procedures – less staff time

## **Aspirations**

*“What are the aspirations of the staff?”*

*“How can East Longmeadow Public Library make a profound difference for the community?”*

Community garden – connect with garden club and collection STEM programming  
Safe space outside for programming  
Take over the local history room for more library needs Computer lab

More study space

Separate teen area – quiet and hangout space Buy the Romito’s space for (teen)  
annex Windows that open  
Substitute library staff

Shelving accessibility  
Non leaking roof  
Temperature control



More storage  
Shaded skylights – sun and heat  
Sound proofing 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> floor  
Staff bathroom & lounge renovation  
Access to all of the under staircase storage – reclaim storage Better paint colors

Better flooring  
Lobby redesign – better space use  
Add loft to open ceiling space  
New furniture for second floor, conference room  
Replace children's room cabinetry  
Self checkout  
Checkout where ever – digital checkout?  
Credit card payments  
Solar power – more eco-friendly  
Space for reshelving carts – new carts  
Holds pick up by patrons  
Children's workstation - added  
More staff, especially weekends  
Automated return system/sorter  
Circulation supervisor office – need for private space at times All supervisors need private space  
Space for Friends – maybe off-site?  
Updated plumbing and bathroom cleaning  
Library Janitor – Saturday custodial services

## **Results**

*“What are the outcomes for achieving aspirations?” “What does success for the library and its staff look like?”*

Improved patron experience  
Improved workflow  
Happy staff  
Greater patron independence  
More efficient building – long term sustainability More patrons using the library

More community cohesion  
Library is a whole community hub  
Resource needs of whole community are met  
No groups felt excluded when others are in the library

More excitement to work at library  
Lower stress levels for staff during certain times  
Pride in the library's work  
Technology needs met for community (competency, future thinking) More  
circulation  
More programming attendance

### **Final Thoughts/Questions**

Never stopped being proud of the library, whatever position held How do we set  
reasonable expectations on what we can achieve?