Terryville Public Library

2020 – 2023 Strategic Plan

This project is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Connecticut State Library.
Letter from the Library Director

When you visit the Terryville Public Library, you are most often greeted by welcoming staff, ready with a friendly “hello” or an offer of assistance. We have connected residents to Plymouth, Terryville, Pequabuck and surrounding communities with resources, information, and each other since the Terryville Free Library was formed in 1895. We’ve offered circulating collections of materials in a variety of formats – both print and digital – and programming for all ages. Over the years, the Library has cultivated a neutral public space to allow residents to share knowledge and learn, foster community and socialize. The Library and staff have consistently worked to ensure that all patrons feel welcome, have free and open access to the information they need, and we’ve prioritized collaboration with other stakeholders in Plymouth.

We recognize, however, that as our community and world change, library services and programming need to evolve too. Assessing how we can best serve our patrons, young and old, is an iterative process. This strategic planning document is the result of a six-month long process to gather meaningful feedback from a broad spectrum of library users and non-users, community partners, staff, Library board members and Friends; to identify our critical services; to align our work with broader community goals; and further engage patrons as a result.

This work would not have been possible without funding from the Library Services and Technology Act and the support of the Connecticut State Library, Terryville Public Library Board of Directors, Friends of the Terryville Public Library, Library staff, and all those in our community who shared their time and insight with us! I am so grateful for their contributions!

Gretchen DelCegno
Library Director, Terryville Public Library

LIBRARY STAFF
Listed alphabetically
Diane Allaire, Circulation Clerk
Lisa Bilodeau, Administrative & Technical Services Assistant
Chandler Booth, Custodian
Aniyah Christopher, Library Page
Isabella Como, Library Page
Lisa Bower Courtney, Adult Services*
Cecelia Dias, Children's Librarian*
Julia Langeway, Library Assistant
Cara Peterson, Children's Assistant
Ann Savastio, Circulation Assistant
Molly Senior, Circulation Supervisor*

*Denotes a member of the Strategic Planning Task Force
Letter from the Library Board Chair

We are pleased to share the Terryville Public Library’s 2020-2023 Strategic Plan with you.

While the six-month process uncovered the challenges the library faces, it also highlighted the many, many strengths of our town library, including its outstanding staff and leadership, a strong, positive customer experience, excellent and diverse youth programming, and the active engagement of our dedicated Friends of the Terryville Library volunteer group.

This strategic planning document was developed with extensive community input and analysis. The process itself has proven that the library continues to serve as an essential carrier of important information for our entire community. The library board is grateful to all of our dedicated staff and volunteers as well as members of the community who participated in this major undertaking.

Going forward, this plan illustrates that the Terryville Public Library is well positioned to keep serving and expanding in its crucial role as a community hub.

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the Terryville Public Library. This document honors the hard work of that small group of dedicated citizens who joined together to create a free library for our small town. This ambitious plan also represents our strong commitment to the future of the Terryville Public Library.

By increasing community development, collaborating with local businesses and organizations, developing and implementing a plan to increase the number of public meetings held at the library, working with our community partners to create a unified town calendar of events and creating and expanding programming to target new audiences, we will continue to evolve, flourish and grow.

Jeannette Brodeur
Library Board of Trustees, Chair
Strategic Planning

The strategic planning process for the Terryville Public Library began in September of 2019 and concluded in February of 2020 with the development of the Terryville Public Library 2020–2023 Strategic Plan.

The Process
The strategic planning process included 7 community conversations in which key stakeholder groups were interviewed. In total, 38 individuals provided feedback from stakeholder groups that included the Library Board of Trustees, Library Staff, Seniors (defined as individuals age 65+), Community Partners, New Residents, Parents & Educators and an open community forum.

Key stakeholders from the community were interviewed in a one-on-one setting including the Plymouth Mayor, David V. Merchant and the President of the Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce, Cindy Bombard.

To ensure the maximum access to opinions in shaping this plan, paper and electronic surveys were utilized to fill gaps in access from the community at-large. A total of 55 electronic surveys were completed, in addition to 15 in-person surveys completed by library guests.

In total, feedback was provided by 132 individuals regarding the Terryville Public Library.

Funding for the Process
Funding for this project is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Connecticut State Library.

PROCESS HIGHLIGHTS
• 6 Month Process
• 7 Community Conversations
• 38 Stakeholder Interviews Completed
• 55 Electronic Surveys Completed
• 15 In-Person Surveys Completed
• 2 Key Stakeholder One-on-One Interviews Completed
• 22 Staff and Trustees
• 132 total individuals surveyed
Contextual Analysis

As a part of the Strategic Planning Process for the Terryville Public Library, several Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats were identified based on stakeholder feedback and market analysis. This forms the basis of our contextual analysis.

**Strengths**
The process uncovered several strengths that the Terryville Public Library can leverage in pursuit of its mission. It was overwhelmingly determined that the key strengths of the Library include the organization’s staff and leadership, a strong customer experience, robust youth programming and the active engagement of the Friends of Terryville Public Library volunteer group.

The process also uncovered that the Library routinely draws guests from outside of Plymouth/Terryville due to the cozy feel and Library experience. These are unique differentiators that separate the Library from other libraries throughout the region.

**Weaknesses**
The process uncovered a few weaknesses easily addressed through short- and long-term planning. These included geographic challenges due to the distance from the Library to the Fall Mountain and Lake Plymouth sections of town.

The Library also faces public perception challenges common to community-based organizations – a lack of basic understanding by residents of the services the Library provides, their relevance and availability. This is compounded by the lack of traditional, local communication channels accessible by Library staff and leadership. At the time of plan development, the town’s local newspaper is experiencing operational instability. Feedback during several community conversations reveal that it consistently has served as a key channel in communicating with town residents.

In addition, the Library faced a common challenge in bridging the gap of Tween programming. Tweens (children ages 9–12) represent an interruption in service at most libraries due to changing interests between youth and their teen years.
Contextual Analysis

Finally, some in our community perceive that the Library has insufficient or inaccessible parking. This perception is supported by the reality of poor lighting in one of the available parking lots as well as the absence of high visibility signage guiding patrons to available parking lots.

Threats
The process uncovered a few threats also common to libraries and non-profit organizations. Libraries were founded to increase access to physical books and materials. As information has become more prevalent in digital formats and/or online, many residents are unaware that libraries offer free access to downloadable and/or streaming content. In addition, Municipal Funding and the impact of the State Budget pose threats to programming, hours of operating and staffing levels on an annual basis.

Finally, the Terryville Public Library faces challenges in the form of capacity and its ability to deliver programs due to limited space and the hours it is open.

Opportunities
The process uncovered numerous opportunities that were tested in stakeholder interviews.

Leading as a community hub
Terryville/Plymouth lacks a community hub that draws together residents across demographic groups. The Terryville Public Library is positioned to fill that gap in the community and already has access to numerous segments of the population.

Evolving our digital experience
The library can position itself for the future by successfully integrating additional digital media with our physical collection. This will help to retain existing users and expand user engagement to new audiences.

OPPORTUNITIES
- Leading as a community hub
- Evolving our digital experience
- Expanding programming
- Pursuing facility improvements
- Expanding outreach and partnerships
Contextual Analysis

Expanding programming
The Library serves an audience that includes youth, families, seniors and all groups in-between. During the process, opportunities to reach and expand the depth of audiences were exposed. These include the expansion of programming for tweens (a hard to reach group), youth with special needs who struggle to find programming options, co-programming for adults that would parallel youth programming, and maker programs targeting all age groups.

Pursuing facility improvements
During the process it was identified that the Library facility could benefit from improved space utilization, a facility renovation and/or an expansion. It was noted that dedicated space could potentially increase utilization among groups (e.g. tweens) who desire their own space targeting their specific interests.

Expanding outreach and partnerships
Opportunities were identified to expand the library’s reach through two primary methods. First, developing an Advisory Board to extend the library’s relationships within the community and its access to resources. Second, developing partnerships and collaborations with organizations throughout the region to expand the Library’s content, customer base and brand recognition/reach.

OPPORTUNITIES
• Leading as a community hub
• Evolving our digital experience
• Expanding programming
• Pursuing facility improvements
• Expanding outreach and partnerships
Location

The Terryville Public Library is located in the Town of Plymouth. Plymouth covers an area of 22 square miles located in Central Connecticut. The town is divided into the villages of Terryville, Plymouth and Pequabuck.

The town is further divided in that Plymouth residents more closely identifying with the Town of Thomaston and Fall Mountain residents identifying with Bristol due to geographic proximity and convenience.

Overall, the town includes 4,842 households, population projected at 12,218 in 2020 and a working-class population with a median household income of $73,430. This is supported by a median home price of $193,400 and a rate of 24% of the population that holds a Bachelor’s Degree.

Demographically, the median age is 44 years old. There are currently 1,429 enrolled in the K-12 school system. There are 1,917 seniors in the town. This equates to 28% of the population composed of youth and seniors. Working age adults (18-65) comprise 72% of the population.

Plymouth is a small town with proximity to mid-size metro areas including Bristol, Waterbury and Torrington. As such, the town lacks the amenities that major metros boast. The town does not have a dedicated senior center or youth club nor meeting space for the town’s nonprofit and business organizations. There is also no centralized community calendar and the local newspaper is experiencing instability in operations.
Key Findings

Several key findings emerged from the strategic planning process.

Facility
Although the staff found the Library space constraining for programs, guests liked the cozy feel of the space. This was a major contributor to the library's differentiation and a decision point as to why they choose to patronize the Terryville Public Library.

Excellence
The Library excels in two key areas – youth programming and customer experience. Users who cited these areas of high-performance identified library staff and leadership as a driver of both. Youth programming is a key operational function in that new patrons are often engaged through participation in youth programming. Patrons are often retained through customer experience.

Community Hub
The Library currently serves as an informal community hub for many groups and serves a diverse population of youth, adults, seniors and families. For many, the Library serves as a connection to information, creates social connections and enables and supports access to information.

Relevance
The strategic planning process determined that the Library is not losing relevance – rather transitioning to include more digital resources. It has a strong foundation in community history and a source of connection for community members. Human connection and access to information never lose relevance.

Community Support
The Library provides support for community members in ways that other organizations aren’t interested in providing. For example, the Library provides digital literacy support for adults and seniors who have difficulty accessing internet-based information or using digital devices. This is a service unlikely to face competition within the local community and extremely unlikely to face competition by for-profit technology companies like Apple.
Strategy
The mission of the Terryville Public Library is to provide free access to high-quality information in a variety of formats, innovative programming and educational opportunities for all library patrons.
Core Values

Core values are a driver of any organization and help to guide decision making for staff and leadership.

Free Access
The Terryville Public Library offers free, open and equal access to education and information through resources and programming. The organization serves as an inclusive knowledge hub that encourages the diversity of guests, to improve skills and increase knowledge.

Community Leadership and Development
The Terryville Public Library is a community anchor. The Library provides access to educational resources, information and content – a key driver of social mobility, personal and community development. The Library also serves as a non-partisan community center, where residents can connect with each other.

Collaboration
The Terryville Public Library collaborates with for- and non-profit organizations throughout the region and state to deliver programs and provide access to information.

Innovation
The Terryville Public Library is a constantly evolving organization that must keep pace with technological advancements and methods for accessing information to fulfill its mission for its patrons.

Steward of Public Funds
The Terryville Public Library is primarily funded by Municipal and State grants. As such, the library is committed to ensuring all funding is used responsibly and in the best interests of the community.
Strategic Initiatives - People

The Terryville Public Library has identified the following goals and initiatives related to staff and relationships.

**Culture of Opportunity**
Goal: Inspire and cultivate a culture of opportunity through resources and programming driven by community need with open, free and equal access.

Tactics
• Increase digital literacy programming for all ages.
• Enhance services and programming to contribute to school success and workforce development.
• Actively seek grant funding to expand and enhance programming and services for all age groups.

**Outreach and Partnerships**
Goal: Increase the number of value-added partnerships and organizational outreach to develop and increase access to programming and resources.

Tactics
• Increase meaningful collaborations with local businesses and community organizations.
• Increase engagement with Lake Plymound and the Fall Mountain residents.
• Develop an implementation plan to increase the number of public meetings at the library.
• Establish an Advisory Board to inform Library services and programming.
Strategic Initiatives - Place

The Terryville Public Library has identified the following goals and initiatives related to the physical and virtual environment.

**Facility Improvements**

Goal: Improve the facility’s usability while maintaining a cozy, small library feel.

**Tactics**

- Conduct a Space Needs and Utilization Study to assess the existing library facility and make recommendations for rearranging, renovating and/or expanding the space.
- Create and designate areas for quiet study, small group conversation or collaboration.
- Improve access to and visibility of parking.
- Improve the accessibility of the local history collection.

**Digital and Technology Improvements**

Goal: Increase our capacity to meet patron computing needs and provide opportunities to explore new technologies.

**Tactics**

- Create a sustainable technology improvement plan to meet patron computing needs.
- Rearrange the public computer center to increase usability for small group interaction.
- Curate a collection of STEM supplies for self-directed exploration and staff-directed programming for all ages.

**Public Communications and Brand Awareness**

Goal: Increase the visibility of the Terryville Public Library throughout the community.

**Tactics**

- Utilize new communications channels to broadcast the Library’s brand and messaging
- Develop advocates from among Library stakeholders and partners to extend the Library’s reach.
Strategic Initiatives - Platform

The Terryville Public Library has identified the following initiatives related to its relevance within the community.

Community Hub
Goal: Establish the Terryville Public Library as a community hub – an organization that unifies all the groups within the community regardless of age, political affiliation or social membership.

Tactics
• Work with local partners to create a calendar of community events hosted by the Library.
• Expand community development by co-hosting leadership trainings and economic development initiatives and offering grant writing courses for local non-profits.
• Reach new audiences within the community by expanding programming and developing co-programming targeting youth and parents.
• Increase meaningful collaborations with local businesses and community organizations.
• Develop an implementation plan to increase the number of public meetings at the library.
Key Performance Indicators

The Terryville Public Library will use the following Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) as a measure of ongoing success.

**Lead/User Generation**
- # of youth programs held

**Engagement**
- # of in-person library visitors
- # of digital library visitors (website traffic)

**Community Engagement**
- % of town population that holds active library cards

**Audience Segmentation**
- # of people who attend adult programs
- # of people who attend senior programs
- # of people who attend special needs programs (e.g. autism, developmental disabilities, etc.)

**Depth of Engagement**
- # of website page visits per user
- # of people accessing wi-fi
- Circulation per library card held (segmented by digital vs. physical)

**Brand Reach**
- # of email subscribers
- # of website visitors
- # of total library visitors
- # of total program attendees

**Growth**
- # of new library cards issued
- # of new website visitors (new vs. returning)
- # of new program attendees

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**Total Circulation**
- 43,796

**Total Digital Circulation**
- 3,676

**Total Digital Audio Circulation**
- 1,925

**Total Program Participation**
- 6,029

**Children’s Program Participation**
- 4,958

**Teen Program Participation**
- 360

**Adult Program Participation**
- 711

**Total Interlibrary Loans**
- 4,212

**Library Cardholders**
- 3,074

**Computer Sessions**
- 5,793

**Total WiFi Sessions**
- 4,092

**Reference Questions Answered**
- 2,093

**All Library Programs**
- 299

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**Total Circulation**

**Total Digital Circulation**

**Total Digital Audio Circulation**

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**Total Program Participation**

**Children’s Program Participation**

**Teen Program Participation**

**Adult Program Participation**

**Total Interlibrary Loans**

**Library Cardholders**

**Computer Sessions**

**Total WiFi Sessions**

**Reference Questions Answered**

**All Library Programs**