

Deborah Rawson Memorial Library

Strategic Plan 2022-2025



Throughout the history of Jericho and Underhill, libraries have been seen as an important community need and resource. Whether just a few bookshelves in a private home or the 5,000 square foot Deborah Rawson Memorial Library (DRML), the result has been well received and utilized by the communities it serves³. This was evident during the pandemic as the DRML pivoted to provide resources to the community in new ways such as curbside pick-up and Zoom program offerings.

As the combined population of Jericho and Underhill continues to grow, 8,233 (5,104 Jericho, 3,129 Underhill) in the 2020 U.S. Census,¹ the use and changes in the nature of requests to the library have also grown. Currently, there are many requests that the library cannot meet due to lack of facility or program capacity.

Considering the changing needs of the community, the DRML Board of Trustees formed a strategic planning committee in May 2022. It was tasked to develop a plan to meet the current and near future needs of the two communities DRML serves. The committee developed a survey to obtain input from the population served by the DRML. The survey was available to stakeholders including DRML staff, past and present Board members, town officials and committees, as well as the general public.

The Board decided that this plan would encompass a three-year evolving and adaptable window which could meet the changing needs of the community. The plan would always be open to accept input from the public to assure that the plan remains in line with current community needs. Measurements of goals would reflect a baseline, measure progress, and have an end point. Measurements will be reported to the Board of Trustees monthly by the Implementation Committee. The Board will annually complete a formal review and update of the plan to ensure its continuance. There has been excellent work outlined in the previous strategic plan² and extension³ which can be built upon in the latest plan without having to repeat the previous work.



¹ <https://vcgi.vermont.gov/data-release/2020-census-data>

² DRML Long Range Plan FY2011-12 to FY2015-16. Adopted by the library Board of Trustees 9/15/2011.

³ DRML Long Range Plan Extension FY 17/18 to FY 19/20. Adopted by the library Board of Trustees 6/15/2017.

The 2022-2025 strategic plan has two major goals:

- 1) The library continues to be a resource for people to feel engaged in the community; and
- 2) Strengthen the library's digital infrastructure, as well as its digital and technological collections.

These goals link to the vision and mission of the library and have measurable outcomes that will be reported on a regular basis. The initial three-year evolving plan will serve as a kickoff plan that provides guidance to the implementation process that the Board and library administration will put in place to make the goals of the strategic plan a reality. The plan will have the flexibility to grow and change as needed.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Deborah Rawson Memorial Library provides community access to information, ideas and enriching experiences

VISION STATEMENT

Growing together as a community: a place to learn, to share and to create

EQUITY DIVERSITY INCLUSION STATEMENT

The Deborah Rawson Memorial Library is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion to make everyone in our community feel safe and welcome here

DRML Strategic Plan Goal 1: The library continues to be a resource for people to feel engaged in the community

What attributes does the library already address? Input from the library staff, Board and community, can be summarized in three major items:

- 1) a welcoming, knowledgeable and helpful staff;
- 2) a comfortable, pleasant space to be in; and
- 3) programs that bring together people with mutual interests.

A welcoming staff is a product of the work culture. It is maintained by the shared values of the staff and a leadership that sets and supports those values. This is highly valued, but it is an ongoing process of the operations of the library and not something addressed through a strategic plan.

The attention of this goal is on items 2 and 3: space and programs. Input was obtained by surveys and interviews of the staff, Board, and community members that supported this focus and gave numerous specific examples. The list addressing space identifies areas of focus intended to guide the priorities of the implementation process. The list addressing programs are examples of the many that have already been suggested and will continue to be developed over time.

Sub Goal 1: Increase the number and variety of programs

Examples:

For Adults

- Offer evening programs to get people into the library when it is slower
- Offer programs using community members' skills and experiences

For Youth

- Solicit new program ideas from school aged youth
- Offer more for babies and preschoolers
- Provide opportunities for new parents to meet and socialize

Measurements:

- Number of evening programs and attendance increases
- Variety of programs increases
- Attendance to youth and family programs increases

Sub Goal 2: Increase physical space and maximize efficiency of usage.

Objectives:

- Increase personal and work space for staff
- Create individual spaces that are only used as quiet spaces
- Increase number and variety of meeting spaces
- Improve/increase space for physical collections
- Increase storage space
- Create separate program spaces
- Increase children's room with a separate checkout desk

Measurements:

- Positive staff response to questions regarding the space they have for work, breaks and personal belongings
- Community utilization of individual spaces
- Community utilization of quiet spaces
- Community utilization of meeting spaces
- Collections are fully displayed
- Storage is not spilling into other spaces
- Increased utilization of program spaces and fewer group size limitations
- Children's area adequate for use and family checkout

DRML Strategic Plan Goal 2: Strengthen the library’s digital infrastructure, as well as its digital and technological collections.

This goal was formed around input from the Board, the staff, and the community, that focused on the following items:

- Growing our e-library collections
- Addressing the digital access divide in our towns
- Providing training for current and new technology and tools

The DRML’s digital offerings through e-book, audio book, and the potential addition of streaming services are high value offerings to the community and are regularly maintained and expanded.

The areas of growth in this goal revolve around the last two items: working to close the digital access divide between those with access to high-speed internet at home and those who do not have that access at home. This extends to offering training for both staff and patrons on how to use devices for library services, and offering the use and training on 21st century tools. This is outlined in the following examples.

Examples:

- Expand Wi-Fi coverage because the entire building is not currently adequately covered (*Infrastructure*)
- Boost internet speed to handle the increase in users and devices (*Infrastructure*)
- Continue technology education offerings for staff to keep up with patron needs, and seek to add an IT person to the staff (*Education*)
- Build and promote a robust e-book, audiobook and streaming TV/movie collection as requested by patrons and as use of books on CD, for example, is reduced (*Collections*)
- Keep up to date on new technology and tools, such as makerspace equipment like 3D printers, and training on their use (*Equipment*)

Measurements:

- Monitor use of technology and demands for new technology by looking at usage, circulation and programming statistics