



**SUNDERLAND PUBLIC LIBRARY LONG RANGE PLAN**

**2011-2016**

**20 School Street  
Sunderland, Massachusetts**

Approved September 20, 2010

Sheila McCormick, Library Director

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## **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Sunderland Public Library is a welcoming and lively center for lifelong learning, personal enrichment and community interaction. It is dedicated to serving Sunderland as a vital cultural resource and community center, and is cognizant of its role in promoting the value of reading and self expression to local youth. The Library responds to community needs as they evolve over time and strives to connect its users to ideas, to experiences and to others in the community and to the world at large.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the fall of 2009, the Library Director and Trustees of the Sunderland Public Library began planning the process for the development of a new long range plan. The planning process is part of our ongoing commitment of service to the community. Our aim is to identify and review community needs for library services, to evaluate present services and facilities in relation to these needs, and to identify improvements and new services that will fill those community needs. We seek to produce a working document of well-defined goals and objectives that will guide the library through the next five years.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Using the Public Library Associations guide *New Planning for Results* (2008) to frame the process, the Library Director and Trustees held a special planning meeting to determine our general approach and review the timetable devised by the Director. With a focus on soliciting community input, a sub-committee was formed to draft a library use survey. The survey was actively promoted in the library over the course of a six week period (each person who entered the library was encouraged to fill one out), and was accessible online through our website. It was also available for a limited time at two local markets. One of the most successful survey efforts involved staffing a table at the special state-wide Senate election held in January 2010. This was a great outreach effort and a terrific opportunity to survey non-library users, with Trustees, members of the Friends of the Library, and the Library Director taking turns at the table. A total of 547 completed surveys were collected, a tremendous response that produced a great deal of useful data. It should be noted that survey responses reported as percentages are based on the number of actual responses to a particular question (some participants did not answer every question).

To further solicit opinions from townspeople, we held two public forums for Sunderland residents, one on a weekday evening, the other on a Saturday morning. In addition to advertising the meetings in the library, on the local cable access channel, at town hall and other locations around town, we also sent invitations to a variety of townspeople, and to representatives from every committee, civic group, and town board. The meetings, which were attended by a total of 32 individuals, were led by an experienced group moderator.

The library director solicited staff input into the plan, and updated the trustees monthly at their regular meetings. The process deviated from the *New Planning for Results* in that we did not employ the focus on service responses. Rather, we combined the results of our two outreach efforts with previously targeted issues, ideas, and needs to arrive at the six overarching goals that will guide us in developing library programs and services to meet the needs of our library community. The Library Director wrote the plan, utilizing parts of the previous planning document, with input from the Trustees and staff. The plan was submitted to the Board of Trustees and approved on September 20, 2010.

## COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

Sunderland, with a population of 3,777, is in southern Franklin County, on the Connecticut River in Western Massachusetts' Pioneer Valley. The town, which was incorporated in 1718, has a rich agricultural history as well as many current working farms, with over 1,000 acres permanently protected for farming through the Agricultural Preservation Restriction program. Due to its proximity to the Five College area, Sunderland has increasingly attracted the faculty, staff, and students of these institutions. Today, residents with university or college connections comprise a significant percentage of the town's population. In the New England tradition, Sunderland is governed through town meeting, aided by elected boards and volunteer committees. Close proximity to Interstate 91 allows townspeople convenient commuting access to a wide radius of cities and towns.

The following is key data about the population of Sunderland and its characteristics:

- According to 2000 U.S. Census Bureau figures, there were 1,845 males and 1,932 females in Sunderland. 3,353 residents were White; 243 residents were Asian; 89 residents were African American; 189 were under 5 years of age; 318 were over 65 years of age. The median age was 29.7. Overall population density is low, with 275 people per square mile.
- 2008 town figures recorded 2,526 registered voters.
- 50.5 percent of residents over age 25 have a Bachelor's Degree or higher, as compared with the state average of 33.2 percent.
- According to City-data.com (2010) the 2008 median household income was \$48,106, well below the state median of \$65,877, with 14.9 percent of residents living below the poverty line.
- Sunderland's current residential tax rate is \$12.10 and its FY2011 operating budget is \$6,786,514.
- The median sales price of a single family home had risen from \$116,750 in 1996 to \$267,500 in 2005, and the average tax bill rose from \$2,015 to \$3,317.
- The total number of housing units in the 2000 Census was 1,668. Fifty-five percent of residential units are renter-occupied, the highest percentage of per capita rentals in the state outside the city of Boston. A controversial proposed 150-unit apartment development that would include 25 percent subsidized housing units has been opposed by the Town, and is currently in litigation.
- Sunderland households are smaller than the average for the county and state, which is partly a function of the large number of renters who live in town.

Population projections:

- According to data from the State Data Center at the University of Massachusetts, as summarized in the Town of Sunderland Housing Plan, town population is projected to be between 3,995 and 4,509 in 2010; and between 4,125 and 5,262 in 2020. This projected growth (between 9.2 and 39.3 percent) is greater than projected growth for Franklin County, continuing a trend of recent decades.

- Greatest growth—possibly 100 percent or more—is projected among residents aged 65 and older. The 45–64 age group is also expected to grow substantially (up to 50 percent or more), resulting in a considerable change in the makeup of the Sunderland population, which will grow significantly older. In the 1990 and 2000 census, the town had a relatively low percentage of population over age 44 (26.5 percent) compared to Franklin County and the state. That proportion may increase to 45.8 percent by 2020.

Sunderland’s 2009 Community Development Strategy prioritized several initiatives for attention: water source protection, open-space preservation, public transportation choice, and affordable senior housing. Protecting land and ecosystems is a high priority. In keeping with Sunderland’s history, the Sunderland Agricultural Commission represents agricultural interests in town, and provides advice related to agriculture, in addition to promoting farming and related activities, and farmland protection. The Code of Sunderland contains a “Right to Farm” bylaw designed to encourage the pursuit and protection of active agriculture. While the Community Preservation Act was adopted at Town Meeting in 2009, funding for the program was defeated by a vote of 299-255 at the Annual Town Election in 2010.

Sunderland is actively working to attract new businesses. The Sunderland Economic Development Committee seeks to identify parcels for potential commercial zoning and development, with the goal of increasing jobs and business opportunities. A Housing Plan aims to increase the affordable housing stock in town. Sunderland is actively seeking designation as a “Green Community”. An energy conservation and efficiency initiative seeks to increase energy efficiency in town buildings, and also encourages weatherization projects in private residences. As part of the focus on transportation issues, bike racks have been placed throughout town to facilitate bicycling as transportation. PVTAs buses are equipped with bicycle racks and circulate between Sunderland and Amherst every twenty minutes. The completion of a one mile-long sidewalk facilitates walking access to the elementary school, and recently completed sidewalks increase pedestrian access to Route 116 businesses.

Due to a confluence of reduced revenues, increased fixed expenses, and a failed override vote for FY10, the Town of Sunderland experienced decreased town services across the board. Some school programs were eliminated, most town departments reduced hours, salaries and services, residential trash pickup was dropped, and street lighting and snowplowing were significantly reduced.

Sunderland is a member of the Frontier Regional School District and sends middle and high school students to the regional secondary school located in neighboring South Deerfield. After many years of increasingly cramped quarters at the elementary school, Sunderland built a new school in a new location, which opened in September 1989. Until June 1993, the school library was staffed solely by volunteers and most materials were purchased with donated funds. In Fiscal Year 1994, the town budgeted money for a part-time paraprofessional school library position. In the fall of 2010, 175 students are expected to attend the elementary school.

In February 2003, a section of the roof over a third grade classroom of the Sunderland Elementary School collapsed. Reconstruction of the school building lasted throughout the summer and fall months. Children were bused to both the Whately Elementary School and Frontier Regional High School until the Sunderland Elementary School re-opened in November 2003.

The Town began the construction of a new Public Safety Complex in December 2002, sited just north of the Highway Department building. This complex, completed in February 2004, houses both the Sunderland Police and Fire Departments.

In March 2003, construction began on a new Town public library to alleviate severe space limitations and other shortcomings of the 100+-year-old Graves Memorial Library. The re-named Sunderland Public Library opened in its new building in April 2004.

## **LIBRARY DESCRIPTION**

Sunderland's tradition of library service began in 1794, and the Town has proudly provided its residents with free library service since 1878. Sunderland's first libraries were organized in the homes of residents and later secured space on the second floor of a store that stood on the corner of present-day School Street and North Main Street. That building burned in 1854. From 1869 to 1900, Sunderland's library was housed in a room on the second floor of the Old Town Hall. In 1900 the library acquired a new home in the Graves Memorial Library building, built with funds provided by Sunderland native John Long Graves.

The Graves Memorial Library was staffed by part-time non-professionals and volunteers until 1985, when the first part-time professional Librarian and a part-time assistant were hired. In 1987, the Town voted to establish the first full-time Library Director position. The Graves building served the Town well into 2004. In April of that year, the newly constructed and renamed Sunderland Public Library opened its doors. The construction of the building was the culmination of a planning process that began in the mid-1990's. In 2000, the library applied for a Massachusetts Public Library Construction Grant, which was awarded in 2001 and provided \$1,079,272 to the Town. This grant represented half of the cost of the building project. In September 2001, Sunderland voters agreed to fund the other half. Private contributions in the amount of \$170,000 completed the funding picture.

The current economic climate, characterized by reductions in state aid to towns, decreased town revenues, and rising school assessments, has exacted a heavy toll on the town, and in turn, on the library budget. Shouldering our share of the FY10 town budget reductions amounted to a 76 percent reduction in the library's expense account. As a result, cleaning services for the building were reduced by half, and the library relied entirely upon state aid and donations to fund supplies and materials purchasing. Consequently, growth in the Library collection has slowed considerably. Maintaining eligibility for state aid funding and state services has required a significant fund-raising effort as well as application to state officials for waivers of state-mandated local funding requirements.

## **GOVERNANCE**

The Library is a Town department governed by an elected nine-member Board of Library Trustees. The Board's authority is derived from Chapter 78, Sections 10 and 11 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Section 10 states in part that "the Board shall have the custody and management of the library...and of all property owned by the Town relating thereto. All money raised or appropriated by the Town for its support and maintenance shall be expended by the Board. All money or property which the Town may receive by gift or bequest shall be administered by the Board...." Responsibility for library management, collection development, and provision of library services to the public is delegated by the Board to the Library Director. The Library Director is appointed and directly responsible to the Board and is an employee of the Town of Sunderland.

## **STAFFING**

The Library Director and library staff work a total of 105 hours per week, for a full-time equivalent (FTE) of 2.8. The Library is currently staffed as follows:

Library Director - 37.5 hours per week. Responsible for all aspects of library management including planning, budgeting, acquisitions, technical services, grant management, equipment upkeep, adult, young adult and children's programming and services, circulation, and public relations and building management.

Head of Adult Services - 8.5 hours per week. Assists with circulation, overdue notices, Interlibrary Loan requests, materials' conversion, book processing, collection development and other duties as assigned by Director.

Head of Youth Services - 25 hours per week. Assists with circulation, overdue notices, Interlibrary Loan requests, collection development, book processing, planning and implementation of children's programs and services, and other duties as assigned by Director.

Head of Young Adult Services-10 hours per week. Assists with circulation. young adult collection development, planning and implementation of young adult services and programs, including the Young Adult Summer Reading Program, and other duties as assigned by Director.

Circulation Assistant – 14 hours per week. Assists with circulation, overdue notices, book repair, Interlibrary Loan requests and other duties as assigned by Director.

Circulation Assistant-10 hours per weeks. Assists with circulation, overdue notices, Interlibrary Loan requests and other duties as assigned by Director

Volunteers –Shelving, shelf reading and straightening, materials processing, and other duties as assigned by library staff.

## HOURS

The Sunderland Public Library is open forty hours per week. Its year-round hours of operation are:

Monday	10am - 8pm
Tuesday & Wednesday	1pm - 8pm
Thursday	Closed
Friday	10am - 7pm
Saturday	10am - 5pm
Sundays & Holidays	Closed

## COLLECTION DESCRIPTION

The Sunderland Public Library houses a predominantly popular collection, with new material, particularly adult fiction, being in high demand. Providing leisure reading materials for all ages remains a top priority. Library holdings total 36,834 items. Of the 26,825 books in the collection, 54 percent are adult titles, 39 percent are juvenile, and 7 percent are young adult. Adult items account for 51 percent of book circulation, with children's titles accounting for 43 percent and young adult circulation at 7 percent. This would indicate a need to increase children's new acquisitions, although the circulation figures align fairly closely with holdings.

A wide selection of popular adult magazines and a small number of young adult and children's subscriptions are available. FY10 Budget cuts resulted in the loss of funds for the purchase of periodical subscriptions. The library ran a highly successful Adopt-A-Magazine program, inviting library patrons to sponsor a magazine or newspaper. While the number of subscriptions dropped from 64 to 55, it was an opportunity to cancel less popular titles and add a few new subscriptions.

Through our membership in the resource sharing network, C/WMARS, our patrons have access to a digital catalog of 1,145 downloadable e-books, 1,848 downloadable audio books, and 249 downloadable videos. The library also loans four museum passes and a kill-a-watt meter that measures the electricity usage of household appliances.

The library's collection of educational and feature films is in high demand and circulates briskly. Maintaining an eclectic collection in good condition, with a balance between genre favorites, new releases and classics, is a high priority. There is also steady demand for audio books, primarily on CD. Once again, the current budget situation has slowed acquisitions in this area, but demand is high. This will be an area for targeted collection development in the future, with exploration of other formats, such as Playaways, designated as a goal when funding improves. Audiocassettes and videocassettes are no longer added to the collection. The audiocassette collection was aggressively weeded in fall 2009 to allow more room for expansion of DVDs.

The Children's Room offers a large and heavily used collection of picture books and easy readers, juvenile fiction and nonfiction, parenting books, board books and storybook kits, as well as juvenile audiovisual materials, and a small collection of Spanish language materials for children. The Young Adult room features an excellent collection of YA fiction (that fills a proportionately high number of Interlibrary Loan requests from other libraries), nonfiction, audio books, a small magazine selection, graphic novels and paperbacks.

We offer a sizeable collection of large print materials for adults and a small Local History and Reference collection that does not circulate but is available for in-library use. We retain daily newspapers for one month. Historically, the library's entire collection has grown yearly despite continual weeding of worn and outdated material. Growth, however, has slowed considerably in the last year due to severe budget cutbacks and the FY10 elimination of our materials budget. To put the decrease into perspective, consider that in FY08, the library spent \$30,208 on materials. In FY09, materials spending was \$24,709. In FY10, only \$17,904 was spent on materials. As a result, the new book selection is limited. Some money has been restored to this line for FY11, with the intention of focusing increased spending on adult fiction and juvenile materials in particular.

In years past, the Library relied on the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System rotating collection to supplement many parts of the library collection, particularly adult large print titles, and DVDs and audio books for all ages. With the loss of this service as the result of a state reorganization of the regional library system, we will need to investigate other exchange/borrowing opportunities to secure deposits of these items. While large print materials do circulate, circulation numbers are not especially high. Consequently, budget constraints prevent us from earmarking significant funds for this expensive format. Our membership in the resource sharing network, C/WMARS, allows our users to access collections throughout the state through an efficient Interlibrary Loan (ILL) system. Loan activity is high, with 11,052 ILL's received from other libraries and 6,790 provided to other libraries in FY2010. With the recent consolidation of regional library services into one statewide entity, The Massachusetts Library System, it remains to be seen how this will impact our operations, particularly in the areas of delivery, professional consultation and continuing education.

COLLECTION STATISTICS FY2010

		<u>TOTALS:</u>
BOOKS:		
Adult volumes	14,517	
Young adult volumes	1,887	
Children's volumes	<u>10,421</u>	
Total books:		26,825
AUDIO/VISUAL MATERIALS:		
Video	3,923	
Audio books	<u>1,145</u>	
Total AV material:		5,068
OTHER MATERIALS:		
Periodical volumes, downloadable content, etc		<u>4,941</u>
TOTAL LIBRARY HOLDINGS: .....		<b>36,834</b>

CIRCULATION STATISTICS FY2010

Adult & Young Adult books	19,689
Children's books	14,840
Periodicals	2,266
Videocassettes/DVDS	21,819
Audiobooks	3,202
Miscellaneous	<u>241</u>
Total circulation for all library materials: .....	<b>62,057</b>

Of the 62,057 items that circulated in FY2010, 34,072 items (54 percent) circulated to non-residents.

FY2010 SERVICES

- Number of Sunderland residents who were registered borrowers: 2,281 (62 percent)
- Attendance in library: 49,871 patrons
- Community Room reservations: 133 reservations
- Program attendance: 2,922 patrons

COMPARATIVE LIBRARY DATA (2008 Rankings Report, MBLC.)

The following comparison of usage data per capita for the Sunderland Public Library with per capita averages for libraries in its population group and overall provides an illustration of how the library compares with libraries throughout the state.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Sunderland per capita</u>	<u>Statewide median (same pop)</u>	<u>Rank out of 53 MA towns (same pop.)</u>	<u>Rank out of 370 MA towns (all pops.)</u>
Total holdings	9.51 items	8.21 items	20	67
Total direct circulation	14.46 items	8.44 items	18	69
Total circulation activity	16.33 items	10.72 items	18	65
Attendance	13.35	5.19	11	28

The library's per capita circulation and its per capita attendance are considerably above the state median.

## BUILDING FACILITIES

The Sunderland Public Library is a one-floor facility, offering excellent sightlines to most areas of the building from the centrally located circulation desk. This attribute is essential for a library with a small staff. The handicapped accessible building features a logical layout that functions well in the fulfillment of library service roles. Access to and from the parking area is easy and convenient. The new facility was designed to meet the anticipated needs of the library for a twenty-year period. While there is room for collection growth in the children's room, the young adult space is nearly full. Space for adult books will be reviewed to determine if additional shelving, removed and now in storage, should be reassembled in the stacks.

A generously sized Community Room (maximum seating capacity of 70) is available for use by the community, including Town and local organizations, as well as for regularly scheduled library programs. This handsome space can be closed off from the rest of the library with the use of large pocket doors or left open so that the room, with four study tables, can be used as an integral part of the library. The *Community Room Policy* permits the library to charge certain categories of users for use of the room, with the proceeds used to offset the costs of room maintenance. An adjacent kitchen that functions as a staff break room is also available to Community Room users.

The Circulation Desk and Staff Work Area provide adequate space for work-related tasks, however, additional work counter space would be welcome, as would additional shelving and storage for supplies and items awaiting processing. This is an open work area, which does result in work-related noise echoing throughout the library. An enclosed work area would eliminate the amount of ambient noise from collection processing and telephone calls. Checkout is available at two staff computers, although the desk is rarely staffed by more than one staff member at a time. Library policy does require that two staff members be available in the library during open hours. A fax machine is available for both staff and patron use, and public printing jobs are routed to the printer behind the circulation desk for pickup by the public.

A sunny café area welcomes a weekly drop-in coffee group, and is the designated area where patrons may consume food or beverages. Shelving adjacent to this space displays a large selection of adult periodicals and two waist-height shelving units showcase the library's new adult books. Two bulletin boards are available for library-approved posting of information related to community news and events. The adult wing of the library houses a large collection of DVDs and videocassettes as well as daily newspapers, audio books, Reference and Local History, large print books, and the fiction and non-fiction stacks. For adult patron use, there are eight networked public internet computers and additional study tables. A photocopier is available for public use.

The Children's Room is colorful and spacious, and features a number of age-appropriate reading and play areas and a separate children's bathroom. In addition to the main room, an adjacent Children's Activities Room is accessed through a pocket door. Child-sized tables suitable for craft activities seat twenty-four. This room is banked by childproofed craft supply cabinets and a sink. A built-in window seat offers a view of the town's recreational fields. The Activities Room receives ample natural lighting and is further enhanced by the bright color scheme of the flooring and furniture. Seven original drawings by the noted children's illustrator Mordecai Gerstein lend a playful atmosphere to the room. Four internet stations in the Children's Room are networked to the central printer. In order to prevent exposure to adult materials, each internet station is filtered using "Safe Eyes" software. There is also a public access computer for the library's online catalog.

The library features a separate Young Adult Room which affords young adults a measure of privacy, but with large glass windows that allow clear views into the room. The room is equipped with a study table that seats four, four comfortable chairs around a coffee table, and two "Safe Eyes" filtered internet stations. Outside of school hours, use of the room is restricted to grades 7 through 12, and adults who are seeking young adult materials.

At the extreme end of the adult wing is the Lane Family Reading Room. This comfortable reading room is the closest the library comes to a quiet study space. While we are primarily a popular library, it would be ideal to offer more choices for quiet study. 37 linear feet of wall space are given over to a revolving bimonthly art show. Exhibiting artists are chosen by the library's art Exhibit Committee, appointed by the Library's Board of Trustees. Furnishings throughout the library, in the arts and crafts style, are both sturdy and comfortable. Window seats, library study tables, armchairs and a small sofa create inviting areas for study and relaxation.

Though new, the building does require regular maintenance. Water infiltration during heavy downpours is an issue at the Community Room emergency exit. Discussion as to how to best address the problem is ongoing. In June of 2010, a volunteer crew spearheaded by Library Trustees removed three sets of mahogany library doors and transported them offsite for refinishing and restoration. The result is one of strong visual impact and a vastly improved appearance to all library entries. We do encounter recurring problems with the complicated automatic door mechanisms. This, too, is on the list of issues to be addressed in the future. Nevertheless, a number of maintenance issues were tackled in the spring of 2010, including re-painting the Community Room, paid for with Community Room rental fees, and sealing of the slate flooring.

The decision to include a geothermal energy system has served the community well. In spite of skyrocketing energy costs, the library saw only modest increases in its energy bills during its first years of operation. However, rising electricity costs can result in significant increases in our monthly utility bill. Utilizing donated electrician services, the Library was able to complete repair work on the geothermal pumps and effect changes in the mechanical room that should result in further improved efficiency and increased savings on electricity. The building runs on a series of complicated systems that require expert attention and regular maintenance.

## **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

The Sunderland Public Library is fortunate to benefit from a committed community, a supportive Friends of the Library group, an outstanding Board of Trustees, and a knowledgeable, experienced, personable staff. We have a beautiful, new building that is spacious and uncluttered. Entry into and throughout the building is easy and unimpeded, even for those in wheelchairs. We are, however, facing serious challenges on the funding front. Limited funds present the single most significant threat to current programs, facilities and services.

When the Library budget was reduced in FY2010, the Library community donated funds to sustain many of our materials purchases. The Friends of the Library rallied to save programs and materials. In recent years, we have also received annual donations from the Sunderland Woman's Club, Greenfield Cooperative Bank, and other town businesses. The Friends of the Library sponsor all of our programming, with the exception of those funded through the Sunderland Cultural Council (typically two per year). They have also purchased computers, equipment, and select materials such as museum passes and newspapers. This support allows us to continue to offer high quality programs and an extensive summer reading program for youth that is popular and well attended.

As part of this planning process, community focus groups and a library usage survey were employed to reach into the community to both assess our services and to solicit community input into the blueprint for the library's future. The information gathered will aid the Library in formulating, refining, and improving services to meet new and changing community needs.

The compiled survey results and focus group feedback helped us to pinpoint our areas of strength and also highlighted some weaknesses. The personal level of customer service offered is a big plus and a huge contributor to high levels of user satisfaction. Staff members know many patrons by name, and often have knowledge of their reading, listening and viewing interests. Our central location is advantageous, and helps

contribute to our role as a community center. We have a cooperative relationship with the Sunderland Elementary School that could, nevertheless, be strengthened, and more opportunities for outreach to Frontier Regional students should be investigated. The building was very highly rated in our user survey, with excellent marks for comfort and accessibility. Parking is plentiful and convenient.

Focus group attendees contributed many useful ideas, perceptions, and suggestions, some relating to the library specifically, many addressed to the town at large. When asked why people choose to live in Sunderland, many mentioned that location is key, and went on to describe what that means. Sunderland affords easy access to many destinations and is a convenient jumping off point. Proximity to the Interstate is advantageous. Outdoor opportunities abound. Open space is plentiful. Natural assets are many: the mountain, the river, the valley. In addition, they noted, bicycling is easy, sidewalks promote safe walking, crime is low, and schools are good. The conveniently located library is viewed as a huge asset, and there are many community institutions that invite volunteer involvement.

Attendees noted, with appreciation, Sunderland's agricultural history, and the current presence of active agriculture, which adds to the town's appeal. Sunderland's smallness is a virtue that facilitates participation and involvement in town politics and events. Because of this, participants feel that their efforts make a difference that contributes to the livability quotient of the town. Sunderland can boast of a cosmopolitan population residing in a beautiful rural setting, which is nonetheless surrounded by first class academic institutions, with all of the cultural benefits such institutions afford.

At the same time, many attendees expressed their interest in striving toward a greater sense of community in town, with more opportunities for social networking and community interaction. They cited the lack of a town center, communication issues that result in uncoordinated information delivery, and the need for more ways to connect with others in the community as the town's biggest weaknesses.

It was noted that Route 116 changed where the center of town was, historically speaking, and that the town lacks a "core". Group attendees would like to see more businesses in town (car wash, pharmacy, gym, for example), and feel that people need and want a reason to come to the town center. "Give them a reason, and they will come" one attendee noted. There is an expressed need for convenient (that is, local) services, since currently, people must leave town to fulfill many basic needs. The question was asked, "Can we develop local energy, transportation, food sources?"

It was suggested that Sunderland "re-tool" what exists, by devising creative uses for town spaces/buildings and by seeking out grant money to develop a community center. The potential of further developing the school parcel was suggested, as well as the idea of acquiring adjacent properties in the center of town to create more of a core. The groups felt that the challenge of creating stronger community bonds can be hindered by cultural barriers, physical isolation, transportation issues, funding deficits, and limited avenues for "spreading the word". The groups elaborated on these issues with the following observations and suggestions:

1) Cultural barriers:

The traditional "New England reserve" can be a barrier to engagement. It was also noted that 55 percent of town residents live in apartments and stay less than five years. The high number of apartment dwellers and the student population can result in a somewhat transient population. How can these groups be better integrated into the community?

2) Communication:

Many residents are unaware of the multitude of offerings in town. There is a need for enhanced avenues for disseminating information about town events and activities. The cost of cable may prevent some residents from viewing cable access listings, where many activities are advertised. Some version of central advertising for all town activities, such as a town newsletter

or town-wide calendar would be beneficial, as would marquee advertising in the center of town. It was noted that the access road to the school is heavily traveled and could be a good spot for town event signage.

### 3) Transportation:

Spread the word about the bus system, which is viewed as a huge plus. At the same time, some felt that access to bus routes needs improvement. Fees on buses going north may discourage usage of those routes. Residents without cars may feel isolated in town. Transportation can be a particular challenge for seniors, a group that needs more services in general.

### 4) Funding:

Budget challenges have impacted all town services in recent years. The library budget was radically reduced in FY2010, resulting in the loss of our materials budget. Purchasing of books, periodicals, DVDs and essential supplies plummeted. The library operates with a skeleton staff, which affects services and programs. Building maintenance issues are sometimes deferred because of repair costs.

It was noted by many participants that people make connections through activities. A mechanism for sharing interests, skills or hobbies could promote the establishment of stronger community ties among residents. There was huge support for the idea of a clearinghouse/publication listing talents and skills of residents, whether as a town Yellow Pages or some sort of energy bank entity. Making this information accessible allows connections to be made, matching skills to fill local needs.

Additional ideas and suggestions voiced at the meetings are:

- Community Band
- Community Stroll
- Bartering/time bank
- Center for community music, dance, singing
- Town blog and information kiosks around town
- Dog park
- Birding club
- Park & Ride
- Mentoring opportunities
- Satellite gym in Sunderland by partnering with a larger organization (i.e. YMCA)
- More organized recreational activities
- Youth/elder connections
- Central community complex
- Strengthened connections with Frontier Regional School

The library was described as being the nerve center of the town, and is viewed as fulfilling the function of a community center more than any other town entity. "Libraries expand people's lives", one participant commented, adding that the varied ages of library patrons makes it a unique destination in town. Another participant is concerned that many people lack a concrete concept of what a library is and how it can be used. Outreach and education about our services and programs should be strengthened. Suggestions for library programs and services include:

- Gardening programs
- Invite elementary school teachers to read at the library
- Fundraisers: silent auction/dog wash/car wash
- Games night: cards, Bridge; Cribbage; Scrabble

- Citizenship tutoring
- Foreign language conversation groups
- Knitting groups
- Read aloud to seniors
- Foreign language reading group
- Support groups
- More teen outreach/involvement
- Connections with South Deerfield Senior Center
- Design library poster advertising services
- New and unusual games for kids
- Library as clearing house for town events
- Regular community potluck
- Tool exchange/cookware exchange
- Musical instrument loans
- Partnering w/ other groups to disperse information
- Increased public relations

The Library Use Survey netted us a wealth of information. Of those surveyed, 34 percent reported that their library usage had increased in the last year, 56 percent cited no change, and 10 percent said their usage had decreased. Books still lead the way in popularity. 372 respondents come to the library for books, followed by 232 who come for movies, 122 for audio books, 110 come to attend a program, 106 visit to use computers and 105 patrons come for magazines. Only 9 percent felt that additional hours would allow them to visit the library more often, with Sunday afternoon being the most popular option. Of those who participated in the survey, 73 percent are Sunderland residents, 53 percent use our website (a lower than expected figure), and 83 percent have internet access at home. 51 percent visit the library weekly or more, 22 percent come monthly, 20 percent seldom come, and 7 percent never visit the library.

Approximately 20 percent of library users are under age 12; 9 percent are teenagers; 46 percent are between the ages of 36 and 65; 7 percent are over 65. When asked what respondents liked most about the library, 35 percent cited the staff, 15 percent named the building, 13 percent cited access and the same percent named atmosphere. Only 9 percent cited the collection. When given a chance to rate our services, highest marks went to Interlibrary Loan, the Community Room, and Staff. In fact, the vast majority of our collections, programs and services received a high percentage of "A" grades. The exceptions were recorded books, movies and new materials. This is not a surprising result, given the drastic reduction in new purchases during the previous year, due to budget cuts. While the adult book collection rated "A" from 46 percent and "B" from 41 percent of respondents, this number should be higher. This is an area targeted for improvement, along with increased spending on audio books and DVDs. Circulation of video items accounted for 27 percent of our overall circulation. Patrons are clearly demanding more DVDs and more recorded books. Please see the appendix for more complete survey results.

General comments on the library were overwhelmingly favorable. "This library surprises me with wonderful things on a daily basis", commented one patron. People noted that the library is conveniently located, has a great staff, a comfortable atmosphere, fast and efficient Interlibrary Loan, and a clean, well-organized building. We were often encouraged to "keep doing what you're doing", with much appreciation expressed for the community center role the library fills. On the other hand, there was also constructive and helpful criticism. Recurring comments referred to the need for more adult programming, an improved adult book and movie collection, a need for weekend children's programs, more quiet study areas, and expanded services for seniors. Note was also made of loud staff conversations, the small selection of audio books, slow computers, and a need to revise and expand the website. The surveys confirmed the need for increased marketing and

publicity for the library. Several respondents expressed interest in services that are already offered at the library, such as downloadable audio books and e-books.

The Massachusetts Library Association (MLA) has established, "Standards for Public Library Services to Children in Massachusetts". These guidelines encourage libraries to work to achieve the following benchmarks:

- Establish a separate space for children's services.
- Employ at least one qualified librarian who is responsible for services to children.
- Provide a collection of diverse materials in various formats.
- Develop and provide information services for children.
- Plan and implement a variety of programs which excite children about literature, information, technology, and promote library use.
- Continually publicize the resources and services of the children's department.
- Cooperate with other community agencies serving children.
- Implement the Massachusetts Library Association Salary Schedule.
- Allocate sufficient funding to accomplish the above aims.

The Sunderland Public Library meets all but the final two standards, both related to funding. As previously stated, materials funding has been dramatically reduced, there is no programming budget (all programs are funded by outside organizations), and staffing is at a bare minimum. Nevertheless, an impressive roster of programming is planned each year, with a regularly scheduled Friday Preschool Story Hour, seasonal movie series', an action-packed summer reading program, and other special programs throughout the year.

MLA has also established standards for service to young adults, with suggested practices that are much the same as those listed above for children's services. Once again, the Sunderland Public Library meets many of the suggested benchmarks. However, we do not maintain a web presence specifically geared toward this age group, we do not have sufficient funding for programming, collections and staffing, and our Young Adult Advisory Board needs to be reinvigorated, so that young adults are more involved in the planning of services and programs. Despite this fact, an enviable lineup of programs and activities is available to young adults, including a lively summer reading program, an annual Yankees/Red Sox outdoor screening, and various other programs geared toward this age group. New avenues for publicizing young adult services must be explored. The position of Head of Young Adult Services is a ten hour per week position, with approximately half of that time spent staffing the circulation desk. Ideally, the hours of this position should be expanded to allow for greater concentration on, and outreach for these services.

While the state aid program administered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners imposes standards related to minimum hours open, educational level of library director, materials expenditure and municipal appropriation, they do not provide standards for staffing or holdings. The Wisconsin Public Library Standards are widely respected voluntary standards that define levels of service as related to holdings, staffing, hours open, and expenditures. These standards are used to evaluate collections and resources and produce two sets of recommendations: one based on actual municipal population and another based on estimated service population (calculated by an equation factoring in circulation percentages to non-residents). The charts that follow show Sunderland service levels (using FY10 figures) compared to the Wisconsin Standards.

Employing these standards and basing our service on the actual town population of 3,777, the Sunderland Public Library is below the basic level of service for full-time equivalent employees, periodical subscriptions, hours open, and materials expenditures. However, we are between the basic and moderate levels for number of print volumes owned, at the moderate level for audio recordings owned and for total collection size, and at

the excellent level for video recordings owned. Interestingly, our video recording collection received very average marks on our user survey (perhaps our videocassette collection skews these numbers upward without improving our collection, critically speaking). The same conclusion could probably be drawn with regards to audio recordings. Audio cassettes, with rather low circulation and limited appeal, do swell the audio holdings.

In reality, the service population figure probably more accurately reflects the size of the population served by the Sunderland Public Library. The Library is valued not just by town residents, but by visitors from neighboring towns. Roughly half of our circulation is to nonresidents, attributable to our comfortable, appealing building, convenient location (considerable commuting traffic travels through Sunderland on Route 116), easy parking, friendly staff, and reputation for excellent service. The Nonresident Circulation Offset is a significant portion of our state aid award, and reimburses us for usage by nonresidents (the benefits of this traffic to local businesses and to the town in general are, of course, much harder to calculate). Using this higher population figure, the results change, with staff FTE, print volumes held, periodical titles received, hours open, and materials expenditures all falling below the basic level. In fact, materials expenditures is less than half that recommended for basic levels of service. Audio recordings owned are nearly at the moderate level, and overall collection size is near the high end of the basic level. Video recordings owned are nearly at the excellent level.

## **Service Targets for Sunderland Public Library**

Based on Municipal Population

The service targets listed below are based on quantitative standards included in the Wisconsin Public Library Standards. Reported for each standard is the effort required to achieve basic, moderate, enhanced or excellent levels of service in a library with a municipal population of 3777 people.

	Sunderland Levels	Basic Level	Moderate Level	Enhanced Level	Excellent Level
Staff FTE	2.8	3.40	3.78	4.53	6.04
Volumes Held (Print)	26,825	24,173	29,838	35,126	44,569
Periodical Titles Received	55	79	97	127	162
Audio Recordings Held	1,427	944	1,246	1,964	2,304
Video Recordings Held	3,923	1,662	2,115	2,644	3,739
Hours Open per Week	40	44	50	53	58
Materials Expenditures	\$16,830	\$23,531	\$32,558	\$36,864	\$51,367
Collection Size (Print, Audio & Video)	33,514	26,817	32,860	38,903	50,234

**Service Targets for Sunderland Public Library**

Based on Service population

The service targets listed below are based on quantitative standards included in the Wisconsin Public Library Standards. Reported for each standard is the effort required to achieve basic, moderate, or excellent levels of service in a library with a service population of 8210 people.

	Sunderland Levels	Basic Level	Moderate Level	Enhanced Level	Excellent Level
Staff FTE	2.8	3.28	4.11	4.93	6.57
Volumes Held (Print)	26,825	25,451	32,019	37,766	50,081
Periodical Titles Received	55	91	108	126	152
Audio Recordings Held	1,427	1,067	1,478	1,970	2,791
Video Recordings Held	3,923	1,806	2,299	3,120	3,941
Hours Open per Week	40	46	50	53	58
Materials Expenditures	\$16,830	\$31,773	\$40,640	\$42,692	\$56,567
Collection Size (Print, Audio & Video)	33,514	27,914	36,124	42,692	55,007

Restoring budget reductions is key to fulfilling our service roles, so that the library is more appropriately staffed, technology is maintained and updated, and collections are cultivated. In the future, we will focus on expanded programming to reach more children and adults, with the development of more programs geared specifically to the needs and interests of senior citizens. We must expand outreach to teens. Development of the adult book collection has suffered because of cutbacks, and time and focus needs to be directed to that area. Optimal maintenance and functioning of the physical facility must be ensured. We will continue to utilize our essential core of volunteers, while remaining mindful that volunteer efforts cannot replace experienced paid staff. The Sunderland Public Library faces, as do all libraries, competition from online bookstores and large bookstore chains that offer library-type services (such as Story Hour). Working to educate the public about the range of library services available, raising awareness within the community about the library in general, and mobilizing the community to be actively involved in promoting and supporting our services will be among our major goals in the coming years.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- I. **Provide access to library resources and services in an environment that is convenient, user-friendly, and welcoming to all.**
  - A. Continue, and improve upon, the tradition of friendly and knowledgeable personal service.
    1. Develop comprehensive procedures manual. 2011.
    2. Develop staff training manual. 2012.
    3. Encourage participation in continuing education opportunities (when available in reasonable proximity and free of charge, as scheduling allows).
    4. Investigate partnering with neighboring small libraries to apply for Customer Service LSTA grant or other type of customer service training. FY2013.
    5. Work to reduce ambient noise in circulation area. Ongoing.
      - a. Staff brainstorming and discussion.
      - b. Relocation of some tasks.
  - B. Maintain current library hours of operation.
    1. Increase staff hours. 2012.
    2. Increase staff pay. 2011.
      - a. Undertake wage survey of area libraries. 2011.
      - b. Present budget needs, relative to increases, to Select Board and Finance Committee. January 2011.
      - c. Ensure compliance with policy mandating two staff members in library at all times. Ongoing.
    3. Obtain funding for substitute coverage and staff training opportunities. 2011.
      - a. Present budget needs to Select Board and Finance Committee. January 2011.
    4. Continue to judiciously utilize volunteer force for appropriate tasks. Ongoing.
  - C. Optimize and facilitate ease of use of library services through effective policies.
    1. Review and update all library policies. Annually.
  - D. Integrate public opinion into library services as expressed on Library Use Survey.
    1. Create online suggestion box on website to continue to solicit opinion. 2011.
    2. Revitalize in-library suggestion box. 2011.
    3. Assess, prioritize and implement feasible suggestions from focus groups and survey. Ongoing.
  - E. Maintain and preserve physical facility.

1. Investigate possibilities for building maintenance person. 2012.
    - a. Present funding needs to Select Board and Finance Committee. January 2012.
  2. Investigate alternative energy sources to reduce electricity costs. 2012.
    - a. Consult with Energy Committee.
    - b. Research grant opportunities.
  3. Review deferred maintenance list and prioritize needs. 2011.
  4. Establish protocol for replacement of lamps throughout building. 2011.
  5. Investigate cost/feasibility of carbon dioxide sensors and new, fully programmable thermostats. 2012.
- F. Procure in-library signage for quick identification of collections and service areas.
1. Research possibility of funding through LSTA grant. 2012.
  2. Research signage options. 2012.
    - a. Solicit opinions from statewide library community.
    - b. Visit area libraries to view signage.
    - c. Consult vendors.
    - d. Read relevant library literature.
  3. Apply for LSTA grant, if feasible. FY2012.

## **II. Serve the community as a cultural center and community center.**

- A. Provide programming for all ages
1. Pursue grants for special programs. Annually.
    - a. Local Cultural Council Grants.
    - b. New England Cultural Council Grants.
    - c. Ezra Jack Keats program grant.
  2. Search for low cost programming. Ongoing.
    - a. Utilize community expertise.
    - b. Research clubs at Frontier Regional for programming potential. 2011.
  3. Host focus group for seniors to solicit input on appropriate programming. 2011.
  4. Increase year-round programming for children. Immediately.
    - a. Plan diverse roster of programs for a range of ages. Immediately.
    - b. Plan Saturday music series for preschoolers. 2011-2012.
    - c. Plan activity series for "tween" demographic. 2011-2012.
    - d. Initiate a Lego Club. 2011.
    - e. Plan Mother/Daughter book discussion group. 2012.
  5. Increase outreach efforts to teen community.
    - a. Re-invigorate Young Adult Advisory Group. 2011-2012.
      1. Recruit new members. 2011.
      2. Consult with Frontier Regional librarian. 2011.

3. Devise a contest to gain young adult attention. Annually.
  4. Investigate feasibility of young adult web page. 2012.
  5. Install suggestion box in Young Adult room. 2011.
  6. Involve young adults in program planning. Ongoing.
  - b. Produce book lists of new young adult titles. Monthly
  - c. Enforce Young Adult Room Use policy. Ongoing.
  - d. Seek permission to submit special programs for inclusion on Daily Announcements at Frontier Regional School. When appropriate.
- B. Continue to present regularly scheduled, quality art exhibits in the Lane Reading Room.
1. Publicize art exhibits in all local media. Ongoing
  2. Publicize exhibition opportunities. Twice yearly.
  3. Formalize procedures for scheduling and notification of artists. 2011.
- C. Continue to provide public meeting space in Community Room, as schedule of library events allows.
- D. Preserve local history materials. When grant funding becomes available.
- E. Reduce Director's hours at circulation desk, to enable pursuit by Director of above stated goals and objectives. When funding allows.

**III. Continue to develop and maintain a dynamic collection which meets the recreational, informational, and educational needs of the community.**

- A. Update Collection Development Policy to reflect new media and changing community needs and interests. 2011.
- B. Present a collection that is appealing and well organized.
1. Focus on adult fiction collection development in response to library use survey.
  2. Focus on DVD collection development in response to library use survey.
  3. Focus on audio book collection development in response to library use survey.
    - a. Investigate other audio formats such as Playaway. 2011.
    - b. Research cost, popularity, durability.
  4. Continue to satisfy high demand for bestsellers in a timely fashion.
    - a. Expand list of authors received on standing order. 2011.
  5. Reassess and possibly reassign the infrequently used reference collection. 2011.
  6. Perform annual weeding assessments to determine areas of need.
  7. Develop a music compact disc collection. 2011-2012.
    - a. Solicit patron donations.

- b. Purchase appropriate display unit.
  - c. Advertise collection.
- C. Advocate for increased materials budget.
  - 1. Meet with Select Board and Finance Committee to present library needs. FY2011.
  - 2. Promote Adopt-a-magazine program annually. Each fall.
    - a. In-library display.
    - b. Email distribution list, website and cable notice.
- D. Publicize and promote C/WMARS digital collection of downloadable ebooks, audio books and video. 2011-2012.
  - 1. Utilize C/WMARS publicity materials and bookmarks.
  - 2. Create eye-catching link on website.
  - 3. Schedule series of digital catalog public training sessions. 2012.
- E. Showcase current library collection. Ongoing.
  - 1. Mount regular themed book displays.
  - 2. Optimize end-cap book display space.
  - 3. Establish link on website to list of all DVDs in collection.
  - 4. Creatively market Young Adult collection.
    - a. Invite student organized displays.
    - b. Research young adult marketing ideas in library literature.
    - c. Solicit teen title requests from teachers and students.

**IV. Maintain and improve library technology and provide easy access to information and resources using electronic media.**

- A. Advocate for technology funding. Annually.
  - 1. Work with Select Board and Finance Committee on budgeting issues.
- B. Work with technology consultant to formulate plans for technology updates.
  - 1. Employ consultant to perform regular computer maintenance. Monthly.
  - 2. Coordinate children's software offerings with elementary school software.
- C. Maintain the current number of public access computers.
  - 1. Replace circulation desk hardware every three years.
  - 2. Rotate old circulation computers to public areas.

3. Research grant opportunities for upgrading computers.
4. Maintain up-to-date computer inventory list.

D. Publicize expanded online reference database offerings. Ongoing.

1. Distribute information to schools
2. Send notification to Sunderland Elementary School newsletter.
3. Publicize on cable access, Library website, and signage at computers.

E. Review website for ease-of-use and potential enhancements. 2011.

1. Increase links to highlighted collections and book display titles.
2. List new acquisitions.
3. Post photographs of library news and events.
  - a. Secure signed releases, when necessary.

F. Provide basic online catalog workshops on:

1. Creating a library account. 2011.
2. Placing holds. 2011.
3. Downloading audio books and ebooks. 2011.

**V. Increase the visibility of the Library in the community.**

A. Improve public awareness of the Sunderland Public Library, its programs and services.

1. Design a library poster. 2011.
  - a. Enlist talents of a local graphic designer.
2. Create a library slogan. 2011.
  - a. Incorporate into library logo.
3. Design a library brochure. 2012.
  - a. Distribute to town businesses, daycare centers, community institutions.
  - b. Send to new residents.
  - c. Investigate sending with town census
4. Include library logo on all promotional materials. Ongoing.
5. Market library website. Ongoing.
  - a. List website address on all library materials.
6. Increase size of email distribution list. Ongoing.
  - a. Actively solicit new members at circulation desk.
  - b. Encourage all new cardholders to join list.
  - c. Consider inducements such as advance notice of pre-publication purchases to distribution list members.
7. Initiate town-wide library card campaign. Each fall.

8. Produce simple bi-fold flyer of children's services. 2011.
  - a. Distribute to area apartment complexes, daycare centers, preschools.
9. Arrange filming of Preschool Story Hour for cable access screening. 2012.
  - a. Contact Sunderland Cable Access Coordinator.
  - b. Secure publisher permission to tape story.
  - c. Secure signed release from any visible public members.
  - d. Schedule taping and airing.

B. Publicize news and events as widely as possible. Ongoing.

1. Send to all local media.
2. Flyers in Library.
3. Postings on white board in lobby.
4. Staff "hand-selling" programs.
5. Website listings.
6. Library calendar.
7. Email distribution list.
8. Sunderland and Deerfield cable access stations.
9. Flyers in local businesses.
10. Notice to Sunderland Elementary School newsletter.
11. Film library commercial for cable access screening.
  - a. Recruit high school talent to write and act in commercial.
  - b. Meet with Frontier Regional School principal to obtain teacher contact information (drama, video classes).
  - c. Meet with teachers to ascertain feasibility.
  - d. Enlist teachers to aid in coordination of effort.
  - e. Contact Sunderland Cable Access coordinator.
  - f. Rehearse, film, air product.

C. Increase cooperation and coordination with Sunderland Elementary School. 2011.

1. Meet with principal.
2. Meet with school librarian/technology specialist.
3. Arrange class visits to library.
4. Attend one school staff meeting.
5. Propose reciprocal website links.
6. Continue joint fundraising opportunities with PTA.

D. Increase cooperation and coordination with Frontier Regional School. 2011.

1. Meet with principal.
2. Propose collaboration by hosting Frontier talent: young poets and artists.

3. Meet with school librarian.
  4. Continue Summer Reading book loans. Each summer.
  5. Explore feasibility of extended library hours for teens during Frontier finals period. 2011.
- E. Develop partnerships with other town organizations.
1. Encourage Trustees and Friends of the Library to represent Library interests on other town committees. Ongoing.
  2. Enlist Trustees to visit community groups. Ongoing.
    - a. Woman's Club
    - b. Men's Club
    - c. Swampfield Historical Society
    - d. PTA
- F. Maintain close ties and open communication with Friends of the Library.
1. Library Director and Trustee Liaison will attend monthly Friends of the Library meeting.

**VI. Ensure efficient governance and financial security of the Sunderland Public Library.**

- A. Continue to inform the Personnel Committee, Finance Committee and Select Board about the benefits of library services and operations. Ongoing.
- B. Trustees will conduct a self-evaluation exercise. 2011.
- C. Trustees will attend regional workshops and seminars. When available.
- D. Trustees will research fundraising options. 2011.
  1. Library Foundation.
  2. Annual Fund.
  3. Coordinated fundraising with Friends of the Library.
  4. Donation opportunities to be publicized.
    - a. Opportunities for bequests, planned giving, etc. posted on website.
- E. Trustees will review Library By-laws and update as needed. 2011.
- F. New Trustees will receive an orientation packet.
  1. Create packet to include:
    - a. Library Policies.
    - b. Massachusetts Public Library Trustees Handbook.

- c. Library Bill of Rights.
- d. Current Library budget.
- e. Previous Trustee meeting minutes.

G. Trustees will advocate for an increased library budget that supports all previously stated goals. Ongoing.