

# Long Range Plan

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2011 – 2015

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## Hingham Public Library



Plan approved by the Hingham Public Library Board of Trustees on: 11/17/2010

## Table of Contents

Introduction and Executive Summary	3- 4
Mission	5
Long Range Planning Committee/Trustees	6
Community Profile	7 - 9
History and Governance of the Library	10
Selective Fiscal Year 2010 Statistics	11 - 13
Plan Methodology	14 - 15
SWOT Analysis	16 – 20
Choosing Library Service Responses	21 – 26
Goals, Objectives and Activities	27 – 36
Fiscal Year 2011 Action Plan	36 - 37
<i>Reach Advisors</i> Survey Data	Appendix

## **Introduction**

This is the Hingham Public Library's fourth Long-Range Plan over the last twenty years. Thoughtful planning is always needful, of course, but today opportunity and challenge, rising expectations, and constricted resources confront us more strongly than ever as we enter an exciting time of change and transition for libraries everywhere. Our success or failure will be measured by how meaningful and relevant we continue to be with our residents with each passing year of this Plan.

This Plan serves to guide and facilitate the delivery and development of library services. It is not an agreement or contract to perform specific services or to deliver specific goods. The implementation of the Plan's goals, objectives and activities is subject to funding provided by or obtained by the Town of Hingham and the Board of Trustees of the Hingham Public Library. Approval of this Plan does not commit the current or future Boards of Trustees of the Library to the expenditure of funds or to a requirement to follow the Plan rigidly in the event circumstances change.

## **Executive Summary**

The Hingham Public Library's FY2011 – FY2015 Long Range Plan is intended to guide and describe the Library's priorities for the next five years. The Plan was developed through a series of meetings, data collections, literature surveys, and an on-line survey of patrons conducted by the New York-based consulting group Reach Advisors. The preponderance of this activity took place between mid-2009 and mid-2010. Participants included members of the public, focus groups (community forums), library staff, the Library Director, and the Library Trustees' Long Range Planning Committee. Information collected was examined to identify those goals considered to be most important to strengthen and improve the progress toward fulfillment of the Hingham Public Library's mission.

Two notable themes emerged in all of the discussions. First, Hingham's economic and cultural homogeneity, its shared aspirations and values, is at once its greatest strength and its greatest challenge. The lack of economic, social and cultural diversity within the Town can limit change and perhaps, limit understanding of the challenges of life beyond its borders. Second, the range of technological access and expertise represented in the Town brings rich opportunities as well as the need for assistance. Unquestionably Hingham has a highly skilled and technology savvy population in the broad sense but there are segments of the population, particularly the elderly, which do not share this expertise as universally. The Library is in a unique position to address issues of social and technological inclusion by building on the Library's role as a free and

open community center and refuge for people, ideas and culture.

The goals and objectives in this Plan do not address every need identified by the planning committee, and they do not include all of the work activities that the Library will undertake in the course of the next five years. Staff will work on providing excellent library services to all of our patrons, while focusing on the major goals identified here. The Library Administration in its leadership role will be responsive to emerging patron needs regardless of whether a particular need is identified or not identified in this Plan.

This Plan was written in a time of declining resources. We cannot predict the economic future of Hingham or its Library, but we must plan for the strong possibility that funding will remain at lowered levels for the short term despite the best efforts of the Trustees and Town officials. All the same, information-gathering, planning, and decision-making should continue in preparation for better economic times. This Plan can be a useful tool for prioritizing existing services rationally in a period of constricted revenue. Its fundamental purpose is to help manage the present and to engage the future in a systematic and informed way.

Five major goals were identified through the planning process. Each goal inevitably produced numerous objectives but only the major goals are listed here. They are:

1. Maintain and update library collections of high value responsive to the needs and interests of our users.
2. Continue to develop early literacy initiatives.
3. Improve services to young adults, primarily those in upper middle school.
4. Continue to add life-long learning opportunities for adults, particularly those individuals age 50 and older.
5. Improve operations support.
6. Expand, update and improve technology usage in support of patron needs and staff productivity.

## **MISSION**

Hingham Public Library will offer patrons responsive services delivered in an efficient and effective manner, and will

- Provide materials and services to contribute to and enhance the personal enrichment, enjoyment, and educational endeavors of its patrons.
- nurture personal growth, stimulate intellectual curiosity and encourage life-long learning;
- encourage early childhood literacy;
- enable individuals of all ages to explore their community and the world through cultural, artistic, historical and informational programs and displays;
- provide service on equal terms to all individuals in the community and work toward the development of the individual as a citizen and by example the removal of ignorance, intolerance and indifference in the community;
- be a community center and destination where residents of all ages can meet to exchange ideas, discuss issues and enjoy a non-partisan atmosphere;
- offer a diverse collection of print, media and electronic materials that meets patrons' recreational and educational needs and interests by including both popular current titles and literary classics.

To guide our work with each other and the community we serve, we value and are dedicated to the following:

- a well-trained, enthusiastic, and dedicated staff in a stimulating and collegial setting;
- quality service;
- respect for the individual, both staff members and the public;
- teamwork and collaboration with community and governmental organizations to deliver the best possible services;
- equal access to information;

- responsible stewardship of taxpayer and philanthropic resources;
- appropriate technology to extend, expand and enhance services for all our patrons;
- ongoing assessment of our services and work methods to ensure responsiveness to the community;
- active publicizing of our resources and services;
- a welcoming, inviting and safe building and grounds.

### **Long Range Planning Committee**

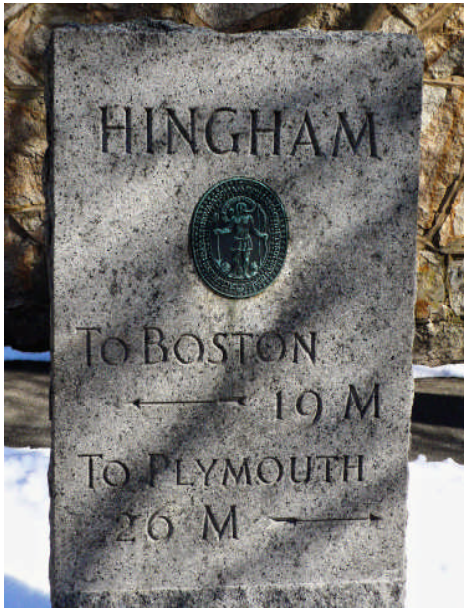
David Mehegan, Chairman  
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 Jo Ann Mitchell  
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## Hingham Community Profile



With a population of 21,747 Hingham and its is reflected in its many immaculately kept antique houses, including the "Old Ordinary" on Lincoln Street, which now houses the Hingham Historical Society Museum. Derby Academy, founded in 1784, is the oldest co-educational school in the country and Hingham's First Parish Old Ship Church is the oldest wooden structure in the country in continuous use as a place of worship. Hingham's six historic districts help the town maintain its unique character. Largely residential, Hingham has 7,368 housing units.

Property market values dipped during the current economic recession but have been rebounding in 2010. Single family homes are typically priced in the \$500,000 range and above. Condominiums are available for \$265,000 and upward. Purchasing a home in Hingham continues to be a desirable goal but affordability remains a barrier to many prospective home buyers.



Hingham values its location on the water, with 21 miles of shoreline. Boating and recreational uses of the waterfront have a high profile. Construction of a new harbor park will further expand the public uses of Hingham Harbor. South Shore Country Club, owned by the town, provides additional recreation opportunities for residents. Other recreational areas include the 500-acre Bare Cove Park with biking and walking trails along the Back River; World's End, a 250-acre peninsula overlooking Hingham Harbor, affords breathtaking views of Boston; Wompatuck State Park encompasses 3,000 acres of woodland and is the largest public campground in the metropolitan Boston area.

Hingham is an upper middle-income, racially mostly white [96.9%], developed suburb whose working residents largely commute to Boston for employment. The majority of Hingham residents are employed in management and professional jobs followed by sales and other white-collar office jobs.

The Town's public schools, library and municipal services are near top performers as measured against their municipal population peers throughout the Commonwealth. The Town has a Aaa bond rating and maintains a quality and stable workforce. Information from: [www.hingham-ma.com](http://www.hingham-ma.com) .

## Selective Hingham to Commonwealth Comparisons

### Median age in 2008:

Hingham median age:  40.4 years  
 Massachusetts median age:  36.5 years



### Average household size 2008:

Hingham:  2.7 people  
 Massachusetts:  2.5 people

### Estimated median household income in 2008:

Hingham:  \$107,510  
 Massachusetts:  \$65,401

### Percentage of family households 2008:

Hingham:  76.2%  
 Massachusetts:  64.5%

Source: www.city-data.com

Age					
	Male		Female		Both
	% of Males	% of All	% of Females	% of All	% of All
0-9 years:	16.5%	7.8%	14.4%	7.6%	15.4%
10-19 years:	14.9%	7.1%	13.1%	6.9%	14%
20-29 years:	6.2%	2.9%	5.5%	2.9%	5.8%
30-39 years:	13.9%	6.5%	14%	7.4%	14%
40-49 years:	17.1%	8.1%	17.3%	9.1%	17.2%
50-59 years:	14.9%	7.1%	15.1%	8%	15%
60-69 years:	8.5%	4%	7.8%	4.1%	8.1%
70-79 years:	5.5%	2.6%	7%	3.7%	6.3%
80+ years:	2.5%	1.2%	5.6%	3%	4.2%
<b>All Ages:</b>	<b>Male:</b>	<b>47.2%</b>	<b>Female:</b>	<b>52.8%</b>	
<b>Median Ages:</b>		<b>39.1 yrs.</b>		<b>41.5 yrs.</b>	<b>40.4 yrs.</b>

Sources: Zipskinny.com & 2000 census data

## **History of the Hingham Public Library**

Resident Albert Fearing built the Town's first public library in 1869. Destroyed by fire in 1879, the original building was replaced in 1880 by a wooden structure in Hingham Center which served the Town until the current building opened in 1966. The new facility, erected in Fearing's memory, greatly enhanced the services the Library could provide and brought it into the modern age. This building was renovated and expanded in 2001 and reopened in January 2002. The Library now holds more than 165,000 books, magazines, DVDs, compact discs, and other materials. The Library also houses extensive print and electronic reference resources. Hingham's library is often at or near the top of its population category (15,000 – 24,999) for circulation, holdings and other service measurements. Hingham's extensive holdings and forward-looking services allow it to deliver quality services from toddler to senior citizen. An extraordinary 13,516 residents hold cards at their library, placing it statistically well above national and state averages.

The Library is a member of the Old Colony Library Network, an automated resource-sharing network serving towns south of Boston. The Library also is a member of the Massachusetts Library System. The Hingham Public Library serves a community of 20,052 and draws many non-resident patrons from neighboring towns.

## **Governance**

The Hingham Public Library incorporated on March 19, 1872 by a Special Act of the Massachusetts Legislature for the purpose of maintaining a public library in the Town of Hingham. Following the enactment in 1965 of an amendment to the 1872 Special Act, management of the Library has been vested in a Board of Trustees consisting of (a) the members of the corporation (no fewer than nine nor more than eleven in number), (b) the Chairman of the Board of Selectmen, the Superintendent of Schools, and the Treasurer of the Town, as trustees ex officio, (c) three residents of Hingham appointed by the Board of Selectmen, and (d) two residents of Hingham appointed by the Moderator. The Board of Trustees annually elects a President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary. The Board also maintains a number of standing committees, to facilitate policy development and service delivery.

The Board of Trustees hires a qualified/certified Library Director to oversee the management, operation and development of the Library.

## Selective Library Statistics for Fiscal Year 2010

### ***Budget***

#### Budgeted Sources of Revenue

Municipal Operating Budget	\$ 1,342,625 *
Library Corporation Funding	240,100
Total Library revenue	\$ 1,581,725

#### Budgeted Uses of Revenue

Municipally funded salaries	\$ 1,098,245
Municipally funded operating expenses	243,380
Library Corporation funded materials	200,500
Other Library Corporation expenses	39,600
Total budgeted uses of Library revenue	\$ 1,581,725

\*Municipal budget for library service is just under 2% of total town budget

**Fiscal Year 2010 Circulation Statistics**

<u>Resident</u>	<u>Non-resident</u>	<u>Non-certified</u>	<u>Outside OCLN</u>	<u>Out of State</u>	<u>Total</u>
335,832	76,246	21,035	4,614	120	437,847

FY 2010 total is 5% fewer circulations than total for FY 2009. Possibly attributable to 4 months of non-circulation to residents of decertified Hull.

*Fiscal Year Intra-network ILL Statistics [within OCLN]*

<u>Loans Sent</u>	<u>% diff w/FY09</u>	<u>Loans Received</u>	<u>% diff w/FY09</u>
72,777	-5%	44,666	-3%

**Holdings Profile based on July 1, 2010 Data**

<u>Materials</u>	<u>Adults/Young Adults</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Total</u>
Books	117,864	21,369	139,233
Magazines/Papers	811	130	941
Audio	13,139	630	13,769
Video	8,229	1,820	10,049
Downloadable Audio	828	0	828
Misc. Electronic Media	0	55	55
AV Kits	101	55	156
Totals	140,972	24,059	165,031

**Misc:**

Magazine subscriptions: 300 Adult/YA/Children titles

Locally licensed electronic databases: 8

Website Fiscal Year "hits": 1,492,299; Sessions: 172,089;  
Average daily sessions: 472

### ***Borrower Registrations***

Resident borrowers based on 2009 card-holder data: 13,516

All registered borrowers based on 2009 card-holder data: 14,476

### ***Fiscal Year 2010 Hours of Service***

Monday through Thursday 10 am – 9 pm

Closed Friday

Saturday 9 am – 5 pm

Sunday 1 pm – 5 pm \*

Open Hours per Week: 52 year round

Required for Commonwealth's Library Certification: 50

- Note: FY 2011 Sunday hours are not anticipated due to FY 2011 budget reductions

### ***Facility Description***

- 50,393 square feet (approximately 40,000 net usable)
- Built in 1965 and renovated/expanded in 2001
- Ninety-one dedicated parking spaces with 9 additional on Leavitt Street.
- Non-meeting room seating is 88
- Two meetings room (90 and 22 seats respectively) equipped with Internet access
- Three "quiet study" spaces for individual or small group use
- Meeting rooms were used 2,988 times exclusive of staff functions
- One computer training room for staff training and public instructional sessions
- Seventeen dedicated Internet workstations
- Ninety percent coverage of library by wireless network accessible to general public
- Three art galleries (two in Adult wing and one in Children's Room)
- Dedicated collection area for historical documents and artifacts
- Facility is 100% handicapped accessible and ADA compliant

## Plan Methodology

In late 2008 the Board of Trustees charged its Long Range Planning Committee (a standing committee of the Board) with the development of a new, multi-year Long Range Plan. Furthermore, the Plan was to meet the requirements for long range plans established by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

The Planning Committee consisted of the assigned Trustees and the Library Director. After several meetings the Planning Committee chose to loosely adapt the Public Library Association's method, "The New Planning for Results," to its task. Additionally, the Planning Committee added a tool to provide community involvement in the data gathering process. The Planning Committee called this supplementary tool a "Community Forum." Similar to the well-known focus group used by business and marketing, the forums consisted of gatherings of Hingham citizens, active in town affairs, from different segments of the community including:

- Arts and Culture
- Business and Civic
- Citizens over age 50
- Library Staff
- Citizens under age 20

The Forums, which met at the Library, were facilitated by David Mehegan, Chairman of the Long Range Planning Committee and former *Boston Globe* writer and editor. Several members of the Long-Range Planning Committee, as well as other Trustees and the Library Director were present for each of the Forums. Their roles were to listen and to record the proceedings. The Library Director also served as a resource for the participants to obtain library-specific information applicable to their deliberations.

These sessions were animated and lively. Members of the Committee and the Library Director were gratified and impressed by the participants' eagerness to contribute, their interest in the library as well as the Town, and their shrewd observations and practical ideas for enhancing the Library's service to the town. At the conclusion of the process, we believed that we had truly heard from the community. Although their ideas were diversified, one common fact was abundantly clear: ***The citizens of Hingham care deeply about their Library and want it to become better than ever.***

The Forums operated as guided group discussions that took their structure from the strategic planning exercise known as SWOT (more about this process ahead). The Planning Committee, however, exercised editorial license to allow for some less directed conversations to take place that didn't fit the SWOT's imprint exactly. After completing community and library-specific SWOTS, the Forum participants provided the Planning Committee with written, prioritized Service Responses (more about this coming also). Five Community Forums were organized to bring together people with some commonality of interest.

In addition to the Community Forums, the Library Director also spoke with the Town's Information Technology Manager about IT industry trends and further exchanged ideas about technology trends in libraries through the Old Colony Library Network's Committee on Innovation (COI). These conversations were supplemented by his readings from the professional literature on technology and libraries. The purpose of this activity was to connect future service activities to the technological environment ahead.

The Library also worked with the New York based strategy and research firm Reach Advisors to conduct an on-line patron survey. Reach Advisors' primary work focuses on emerging shifts in the consumer landscape. The Hingham Public Library was one of five area libraries invited to participate in the Reach Advisor's library survey. The other participants were Thomas Crane Library (Quincy), Milton Public Library, Duxbury Free Library and the Falmouth Public Library. All of the libraries benefited from Reach's pro bono work. Susie Wilkening, Senior Consultant and Curator of Museum Audiences with Reach Advisors, organized, oversaw and analyzed the survey data. Typically her work focuses on museums, state historical and humanities councils. Since the library survey was limited to on-line respondents and to what constitutes only a limited segment of the Library's core users it cannot be used to make definitive statements about library use. However, it does offer helpful insights and identifies satisfaction levels of the Library's "inner circle of users." The Hingham Public Library survey data is an attachment to this Plan. Data from the Plan is referenced largely in the discussion of Library Service Responses.

In preparing the Plan, the Library Director also used Library statistics, informal conversations with staff and volunteers, and trustees, and day-to-day observations to round out the planning process.

## SWOT Analysis

In the course of meeting with its Community Forums, the Long Range Planning Committee conducted a **SWOT Analysis** of the Community followed by the same exercise for the Library. SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats involved in running a business or governmental entity. SWOT's purpose is to help the entity focus its services, programs and resources where it is strongest and where the greatest opportunities lie.

The descriptions of the various SWOT components are straightforward:

*Strengths:* Assess areas in which the entity is already successful. The purpose is to elicit how to maintain and improve on existing successes.

*Weaknesses:* Assess areas in which the entity is not yet successful. The purpose is to elicit how to improve the entity's performance and how to mitigate the defects so as not to impede the entity's performance.

*Opportunities:* Assess factors outside the entity that could be acted upon to the entity's benefit.

*Threats:* Assess factors outside the entity that may hinder its success. Many threats are political and/or economic. External threats change quickly and require constant monitoring.

## Composite SWOT for the Town of Hingham

The community forum participants made the following points about the Town of Hingham in the four SWOT categories:

### *Strengths*

- Residents are invested in community improvement/making things better
- Well-educated community values education and culture. Good for schools/library
- Residents generally are willing to support municipal services at reasonable levels as long as value is perceived
- Strong sense of volunteerism assures community involvement in government and in other community institutions
- Good zoning protects quality of life in community
- Excellent natural environment/beauty/open space/harbor

- Good schools, library, recreation and favorable perception of local government
- Good transportation options for residents to Quincy/Boston
- Residents expect quality in all aspects of community life and take pride in the town's many organizations and institutions
- Viable downtown business area; keeps community vibrant
- Good sports options for children and young adults
- Residents value the Town's history and historical assets
- Supports arts, music and theater
- Residents perceive the Town to be low crime and safe
- Overall quality of life for families is high

### *Weaknesses*

- Over-emphasis on "tradition" can be restrictive and limit potential positive change
- Lack of substantive racial and economic diversity can limit understanding of the greater world
- Lack of affordable housing will further homogenize community
- Seniors are being economically squeezed out of town as cost of maintaining a residence increases
- Increased traffic, especially on Routes 228 and 3A
- Town may be too big and complex to be run with a Town Meeting form of local government.
- Economic fragility of Downtown businesses
- Shrinking municipal budget may not meet needs and expectations of the community
- A tendency to segmentation in the community, so that different groups run in their own tracks and do not often relate to one another, or come together--except at the library.

### *Opportunities*

- Commuter rail tunnel cap—make use of creatively
- Build support for downtown merchants to increase their business viability—patronize them
- Increase tourism to better share our historical assets and simultaneously generate business for local merchants via visitors
- Integration of "green spaces" and historical assets of the Town produce good aesthetic
- Use green building technologies, particularly in public buildings, to allow the Town government to lead by example
- Shipyard will expand commercial opportunities and Town's tax base

- Take advantage of smart growth potential at Shipyard and in South Hingham Office/Industrial parks
- Town should encourage more public art through grants and philanthropy
- Regionalize governmental services if savings *and* service improvements can be realized

### *Threats*

- Aggressive commercial development—keep it manageable
- Shipyard residential growth and impact on Town demographics and Town’s infrastructure, particularly schools and public safety. Will residents participate in the Town or be isolated?
- Vigilance is needed to assure special interests don’t prevail over common good and common sense
- Traffic and congestion detract from quality of life and could make town less attractive to prospective home buyers
- The economy at large will determine much of what happens in Hingham’s future and at this time the economy isn’t very good. Instability is with us.
- Tax base is insufficient to maintain services at levels to which residents are accustomed. Fiscal restraints only will increase and not improve for a number of years, if at all
- Increased crime as jobs are lost and incomes decline
- Economy doesn’t bode well for spending on the arts
- Middle school over-crowding needs action or students’ education will suffer. Could hurt Town’s reputation for quality public education.

### **Composite SWOT for the Library**

The community forum participants made the following points about the Hingham Public Library in the four SWOT categories:

#### *Strengths*

- Strong resources (large, diverse and up to date collections)
- Good staff with strong customer service skills
- Good reputation and seen as one reason newcomers choose to live in Hingham
- Good building—comfortable, clean, and safe
- Still a value relative to cost
- Increasing focus on life-long learning is good considering the educational levels of residents of all ages
- Excellent programs for children
- Makes effective use of volunteers to deliver services

- Well-used—especially for traditional services. One of the busiest libraries in the Commonwealth
- Volunteer-run home delivery service is a positive for those in need
- Good cultural programs—author visits, concerts, lectures, classes, etc.
- Destination for families
- High visibility of galleries encourages appreciation of art and artists

### *Weaknesses*

- Funding stability is increasingly difficult to achieve and maintain
- Library needs a better performance venue such as a small auditorium — Whiton Room not well-suited for viewing or listening.
- More young adult/teen programs and services are needed. Better reader guidance for teens also
- Better hours—including Sundays and Fridays
- Parking at times can be inadequate
- Difficult building to staff and supervise because of its distributed character
- Inability to meet Commonwealth’s Municipal Appropriation Requirement/ Standard, particularly in a down economy. Sign of slippage?
- Inadequate signage, making it hard to find one’s way around

### *Opportunities*

- Improve layout and lighting in Young Adult area of the building
- Continue or increase reader guidance services for patrons—perceived as a value-added feature of library
- Continue/expand intergenerational learning opportunities (children/seniors)
- Help people better understand how to use the Library
- Look for alternative funding including fund-raising—especially if economy improves
- Build off public’s perception of the Library’s importance as a “place” in the community. People come to the Library voluntarily in large numbers.
- Recast Library staff functions as electronic resources come to play a larger role in library service
- Regionalize services or share services with other communities. Provide services to other communities for a fee?
- Improve marketing of library services
- Improve productivity through technology

## Threats

- Internet reduces the need for certain Library services (e.g. Reference Service)
- Competitive vulnerability from for-profit vendors, such as eBook providers
- Shrinking tax resources will make Library and services/hours increasingly vulnerable to budget reductions
- Budgetary reductions leading to reduced hours and staffing will damage the currently positive view of the Library. "What good is it if they are never open?"
- Ability of Library to keep up with technology and to dedicate funds to acquire new technology and train staff to use it effectively
- Loss of key staff through budget reductions could jeopardize continuity of mission and quality control
- Rising energy costs have the potential to destabilize Library budget
- Lack of an organized advocacy constituency similar to those that exist to support the public schools
- Poorly planned and executed regionalization efforts that are purely "bottom-line" driven

## Connecting the Community and Library SWOTS

The Long-Range Planning Committee believes the Community SWOT and the Library SWOT are very closely linked and it is worthwhile for planning purposes to isolate Community SWOT features also identified in the Library SWOT.

The Community SWOT identifies a well-educated public that values education and culture as *strength*. This "public" is a strong core constituency for the Library and for its on-going support. Similarly, the Library's connection to the artistic and cultural life of the community should cement its value with this constituency also. Overall the Library is viewed as an important element in the quality of life in Hingham and this perception, along with its positive reputation, may be important factors in assuring political and budgetary good will toward the Library during tough economic times.

Clearly the major *weakness* and *threat* the Library faces is the already stressed municipal budget that shows no clear signs of improvement for at least several more years. The unstable budgetary environment will make managing the path to a broader array of electronic services supported by a technically skilled staff all the more problematic.

While the economic climate truncates some of the *opportunities* for the Library, there are reasons to believe the tax base will increase through controlled commercial development at the Shipyard and through office park development in

South Hingham. Rising tax revenues from such sources will not eliminate budgetary pressures for the Library but they may lessen their intensity. The Town's interest in "green technologies" also may offset some of the rising operational energy costs plaguing the library and all municipal departments. However, unless grants cover the full or partial implementation costs of "green solutions" at the Library it will be a large out of pocket funding cost for the Town that may have a long payback horizon (7-10 years). Further automation of the Library may bring increased productivity for the existing workforce. Acquisition and implementation costs, however, may be barriers to introducing technology driven efficiencies as quickly as needed.

## Choosing Library Service Responses

Forum participants were invited to choose and rank from among ten Service Responses culled from a larger list of possible responses prescribed in the Public Library Association's (PLA) planning process. Not all participants returned their worksheets but many did and a workable sampling became available.

*Definition of Service Response:* A service response is what a library does for, or offers to, the public in an effort to meet a set of well-defined community needs.

The Long Range Planning Committee took editorial license to prescreen which Service Responses were applicable to the Hingham community and to simplify the amount of information our participants would need to consider in Forum sessions. Our process considered 10 of the possible 18 PLA responses in our planning. Below is the list of possible Service Responses considered:

**Be an Informed Citizen: Local, National, and World Affairs** Residents will have the information they need to support and promote democracy, to fulfill their civic responsibilities at the local, state, and national levels, and to fully participate in community decision-making.

**Create Young Readers: Early Literacy** Preschool children will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen.

**Express Creativity: Create and Share Content** Residents will have the services and support they need to express themselves by creating original print, video, audio, or visual content in a real-world or online environment.

**Get Facts Fast: Ready Reference** Residents will have someone to answer their questions on a wide array of topics of personal interest.

**Satisfy Curiosity: Life-long Learning** Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

**Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure**

Residents will have materials and programs that excite their imaginations and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences.

**Understand How to Find, Evaluate, and Use Information: Information Fluency**

Residents will know when they need information to resolve an issue or answer a question and will have the skills to search for, locate, evaluate, and effectively use information to meet their needs.

**Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces**

Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking.

Participants' responses were highly clustered around the following:

- **Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces**
- **Create Young Readers: Early Literacy**
- **Satisfy Curiosity: Life-long Learning**
- **Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure**

*Visit a Comfortable Place* received the greatest support followed by *Create Young Readers*. Tied for third were the responses *Satisfy Curiosity: Life-long Learning* and *Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure*. Other responses received some support but no readily identifiable clustering of interest emerged.

In this on-line era the nearly universal support for the response *Visiting a Comfortable Place* may surprise those who subscribe to the notion that the physical "library" is an anachronism. Those who work in libraries or use them know that the physical library is busier than ever. In Hingham's case, circulation and foot traffic statistics illustrate this well. Hingham's circulation in Fiscal Year 2009 reached 462,000 direct loans and over 292,000 people visited the Library. Five years earlier the Library had a circulation of 446,289 and approximately 280,000 visitors. The Library's current circulation is approximately 33% higher than that of pre-renovation figures in 2001. In the Reach Advisors 2010 survey of HPL's core patrons 41% of them visit at least once per week and another 37% visit 2-3 times per month. Considering use of public libraries is a purely voluntary activity, Hingham's statistics are very robust.

Over the years, the Hingham Public Library through its policies, programs and building amenities has internalized the thinking of urban sociologist Ray Oldenburg. Oldenburg writes about the importance of informal public gathering places. In his book *The Great Good Place*, Oldenburg demonstrates why these

gathering places are essential to community and public life. He argues libraries, bars, coffee shops, general stores, and other “third places” (in contrast to the first and second places of home and work, or perhaps school in the case of students), are central to local democracy and community vitality. By exploring how these places work and what roles they serve, Oldenburg believes they promote social equality by leveling the status of guests, provide a setting for grassroots involvement, create habits of public association, and offer psychological support to individuals and communities. As a primary “third place” and destination of choice for many in our community, the library becomes a social crossroads for the community and adds to its cohesiveness. The physical library as a place to hold books and other library materials most likely will decline over time but its importance as “place” will continue to evolve and grow as a cultural and learning center, especially as the “baby boomers” have the time to pursue life-long learning and more intensive involvement in community experiences. The recent Reach Advisors survey suggests 76% percent of HPL’s core users come to the library because “it provides resources to feed my curiosity and my love of learning.” If anything, the user population favoring this aspect of the Library’s services will increase steadily over the next five to ten years.

Residents emphasizing *Visiting a Comfortable Place* also expect the Library to provide a safe and welcoming physical space to meet and interact with others. Alternatively, they expect too to find appropriate spaces to sit quietly, read and research.

Very closely allied with this idea of place is access to reliable and well-supported technology for the purposes of communication, research and information acquisition. Public libraries stand out as one of the few community institutions capable of addressing the computing and information needs of all kinds of users, from seniors who have never touched a keyboard to young entrepreneurs launching a new eBusinesses strategy. Hingham’s Internet workstations and its wireless Internet access for users with their own laptops and handheld Internet-enabled WI-FI devices are in constant use and often over-subscribed. Adequate bandwidth is sure to emerge as a serious issue in the next five years for our users. *This issue deserves our attention and expeditious resolution.*

The Library’s electronic resources are in demand and its role in assisting residents in managing in the digital world continues to grow. In a very fundamental way, libraries continue to do what they always have done—connect people to the information they want and need to succeed. Hingham has readily adapted to its new role as a “one-stop shop” in the digital world by serving job seekers, by helping the public navigate eGovernment and eCommerce and all the while continuing to support learners at all stages of their lives.

Successful implementation of library as place often is marked by inclusion of art, a good sense of design, the aforementioned up-to-date technology and formal/structured learning opportunities. In short, success will be viewed as larger than the straight-forward delivery of goods and services and come to be re-defined by *the kind and quality of experience* the Library offers residents. Our Library appears to be on the right path but it will take vision, facile management and a sustained financial commitment to keep the concept vital and relevant. This will be especially important in the area of technology.

*Creating young Readers: Early Childhood Literacy* focuses library resources on pre-school and elementary school children with the intention of creating programs and services designed to support readiness to learn to read, write and listen. Early literacy refers to what children know about reading and writing before they actually learn to read and write. It is not the teaching of reading but instead involves the building of a foundation for reading. This response is about the planting of seeds for life-long learning, the awakening of imagination, and the widening of child's mind and spirit.

Public libraries, including the Hingham Public Library, have traditionally offered early literacy programming to preschool children in the form of story times. Through the use of a wide range of high-quality picture books, songs, poetry, finger plays, puppets and crafts, public libraries have been making literacy fun for years! They have created inviting spaces for children to enjoy literacy-rich, hands-on experiences in an interactive and caring environment. Many public libraries also have provided tips for parents and caregivers on how to select and use age appropriate materials for their children. By capturing a child's interest and imagination early, librarians believe that they help children discover that literacy can be an enjoyable and valued part of their lives. Librarians believe that young children who also become regular library users will benefit from the meaningful early literacy experiences available through story times. They also believe that this will allow children to develop the early literacy, communication and social skills needed to be ready to learn by the time they enter school.

The Hingham Public Library has focused on early childhood literacy for over forty years. Very rarely, however, did our librarians speak of this activity as "childhood literacy." To them it was simply instilling a love of books and words that would carry the child forward in academic and social settings. Whatever one chooses to call it, the Hingham Public Library will continue to be a critical cornerstone in preparing children for academic success.

The responses *Satisfying Curiosity: Life-long Learning* and *Stimulating Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure* were tied for our third most frequently mentioned service response. The Life-Long Learning response

suggests residents should have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and to engage in continuous learning. The Stimulating Imagination response speaks more to individualized use of the recreational aspects of the library. A close-up examination of these two responses indicates some overlap but *Stimulating Imagination* has less overt formality to its delivery whereas the *Life-long Learning* response may invoke more formal learning experiences built upon organized classes and lectures.

Life-long learning will be especially important to the baby boomers that are now retiring or are on the cusp of retiring. Boomers most likely will redefine what it means to grow older and change the character of "retirement." Unless the current poor economy extends the necessity of boomers to stay on the job full-time, Boomers will create a new life stage between career and old age. Harkening back to their youth baby boomers may turn their golden years into an intense time of social activism, volunteerism, and life-long learning. Opportunities for libraries will abound. Reach Advisors' survey tells us the Library's adult core users are well educated, with 84% of them having a college or graduate school degree.

While there is good potential affinity for well-educated Boomers to become library users, our Library cannot assume this will occur without purposeful outreach on the part of Library managers. Boomers will challenge libraries to become learning catalysts in their communities. The Library, as a result of this challenge, may wish to adopt some of the characteristics of a "learning center," blending the classroom with the resources of a modern library. The Library as "place" will become increasingly important in allowing residents to become life-long learners to flourish in small groups or individually. The Hingham Public Library must pick up the pace with regard to technology as the Boomers and their successors will be technology savvy and will expect to find an environment in which technology is well-supported by an informed and above average tech-skilled staff. At this time, there is significant room for improvement with regard to technology and its support at our library.

In recent years Hingham has been partnering with the Osher Life Long Learning Institute [OLLI] at UMass-Boston to deliver life-long learning classes and workshops to the 55 and over segment of our population. OLLI's purpose is to provide college-level classes to its participants in a more relaxed educational setting than the conventional college or university. Attendance at the Hingham Public Library location has been nothing short of spectacular, suggesting to library planners that there is a growing unmet need coupled to an opportunity to develop successful and valued services. Hingham's well-educated older population is a natural for this potential growth area of library service.

The *Stimulate Imagination* response has been at the core of the Hingham Public Library's very successful program since the mid-1960s. Through this response residents will have materials and programs that excite their imaginations and provide pleasurable reading, viewing, and listening experiences. Indeed, this is our calling card in the library field. Building popular collections and augmenting them by collection depth builds a capacity to support more formal learning through the college level, especially in the arts and humanities. Enhancing this response are many art displays, concerts, lectures and films. One could reasonably expect us to be comfortable with this service response far into the future.

One can reasonably anticipate the *Life-Long Learning* and *Stimulate Imagination* responses to also facilitate a shift in the public library from aggregator, collector and organizer of externally produced content to an institution with the potential and capability to produce and publish its own content for local users. Technology will make this possible along with alliances with local access TV, the Town's Senior Center and other entities serving adults and children in a manner consistent with the Library's mission. The possibilities are vast and currently untapped.

## Plan Goals, Objectives and Activities

### 1- Library Collections

Goal: Timely provision of collections of contemporary interest and enduring value to borrowers.

Objective 1 – Borrower waiting time for receipt of requested materials will decrease in the first year of the Plan and hold constant or improve in subsequent years. FY 2010 will be the base year for establishing the average current wait time. *This objective will be carried out as a collaboration of the Library Director, Head of Reference and Adult Services, Associate Librarian-Cataloging and the Circulation Supervisor.*

#### Activities:

- For bestsellers, maintain a ratio of one copy for every four holds in queue.
- Cataloging will check orders arriving and any in-demand items will be flagged for expedited handling.
- Holds arriving via delivery will be processed on the day of arrival and patron shall be notified of arrival no later than one business day.
- Rental copies of bestseller titles will be added as needed by the Head of Reference & Adult Services to make the “for pay” an attractive alternative to placing a hold for the “free” copy.
- The Library Director will explore the cost-effectiveness and the staff “overhead” associated with the use of commercial “best seller rental plans” for the free circulating collection. Study to be completed by the end of the first year of the Plan.
- The Library Director will increase the budget for drm-free (drm = digital rights management) eBooks by 10 % in each year of the Plan. Funds are to be reallocated from print circulating book budget.

Objective 2 – Improve the physical layout for display of new books/bestsellers near the circulation desk by FY 2012. The purpose of this objective is to enhance the presentation and marketing of books. *This objective will be overseen by a team of the Library Director, Circulation Supervisor and the Head of Reference and Adult Services.*

Activities:

- By the end of the FY 2011 have a new layout plan inclusive of shelving, furniture, signage and budget for consideration.
- Obtain budgetary approval in the FY 2012 of the Plan.
- Assuming budgetary approval, implement the new layout in FY 2013.

Objective 3 – Present to the Library Board of Trustees reports on the “Preservation of Historical Documents and Artifacts” and a prioritized plan addressing enhanced access to the Library’s historical-room assets by FY 2013. The second presentation *may* include a discussion of resource digitization. *This objective will be overseen through the collaboration of the Library Director and the Reference Department.*

Activities:

- Present “Preservation” study to Board of Trustees Operations Committee in Fiscal Year 2011 and hold subsequent discussion with full Board to consider action steps.
- Present enhanced access plan to Board of Trustees Operations Committee in Fiscal Year 2012 of the Plan and hold subsequent discussion with full Board to consider action steps in FY 2013.

Objective 4 – Reference Department presents an action plan for reducing the Fiscal Year 2012 expenditure on “print reference resources” by 25 % using the Fiscal Year 2011 budget as the budget base. *This objective will be overseen by the Head of Reference and Adult Services and her staff with limited input from the Library Director.* Note: Some of the funds will be reallocated to electronic reference services.

Activities:

- Reference Department plans a reduction of print reference expenditure by 25% in FY 2012 and presents it to Library Director for review, possible modification and implementation approval.
- After implementation of the plan in FY 2012, Reference Staff will evaluate existing print inventory and remove all outdated and non-essential print items from inventory no later than mid-FY 2013.
- By the end of the first quarter of FY 2014, the Reference Department in conjunction with the Library Director shall make recommendations on the reallocation of space within the Reference Department to Board of Trustees Operations Committee. Operations Committee makes recommendations to full Board by mid-FY2014.

Objective 5 – Develop a plan addressing a five year phase-out of physical non-book media acquisitions for the Library’s AV Department and Children’s Services by no later than mid-FY 2012. *This objective will be overseen by the Head of AV Services, Children’s Librarian or her designee, one member of the Reference Staff and the Library Director.*

Activities:

- Research trends in media collections and present an informational report to the full Board of Trustees at its May 2011 meeting. Presented by the Head of AV Services.
- Formulate a transition strategy for increased adoption of electronic downloadable media to replace legacy physical media for presentation to Board of Trustees Operations Committee no later than the end of FY 2012. Strategy developed and presented by the “team” assigned.
- Begin implementation of phased reduced spending on physical media in FY 2012 and continue through FY 2016.
- In FY 2013 monitor legacy media for interest and usage and consider removal of items no longer meeting criteria to be established.

- By the end of FY 2014 have tentative recommendations on the reallocation of current spaces dedicated to physical media for the Library Director and Trustees Operational Committee.

## **2 - Creating Young Readers – Early Literacy**

Goal: Parents and caregivers will find increased materials and programming to encourage and assist children in developing early literacy skills.

Objective – By FY 2013 at least 10% of the “Early Reader Collection” will be comprised of books for very early readers (i.e. Bob books, sight word books). *This objective will be overseen by the Children’s Librarian.*

### Activities:

- Select and acquire very early reader books over FY 2011 and FY 2012.
- In FY2011 and onward create annotated bibliographies and purchase reproducible literacy workbooks to encourage early literacy at home.
- Staff will place added focus on reader’s advisory work aimed at parent and caregivers of pre-readers in FY 2011 and onward.
- Add new story time in mid-FY 2011 structured specifically for babies age 0-2. Purpose is to teach parents and caregivers techniques and activities to encourage early literacy in the home.
- Create and deliver an annual workshop for parents and caregivers on read aloud techniques, maximizing use of the library’s resources to support early literacy and helping the child to transition through growing reading levels and interests.

### **3 -Young Adult Services**

Goal: Improve physical space for Young Adult Services.

Objective – Review space dedicated to YA resources and activities and present recommendations for improvement by FY2012. *This objective will be overseen by the Children’s Librarian with the collaboration of the Library Director.*

#### Activities:

- Explore how physical space for young adult collection and activities could be made more attractive and functional. Present Plan to Library Director by FY 2012.
- Library Director presents plan and budgetary recommendations to Operations and Finance Committees for consideration by first quarter of FY 2012.
- Library Director and Finance Committee consider and seek funding for proposed changes in FY 2013, if desired.
- Implement recommended and funded changes by the end of FY 2014.

Goal: Offer additional programming and recreational reading guidance to young adults (ages 12 – 16).

Objective – By the end of FY 2013 young adult circulation will increase by 5% and young adult program attendance will increase by 10%.

#### Activities:

- Host four young adult book group meetings each calendar year beginning in 2011.
- Design a ‘read-alike’ book displays beginning in FY 2012.
- Create four new annotated bibliographies, for use of young adults, each FY of the plan.
- Expand the Junior Volunteer program to provide teens with opportunities for multi-media creation and development.

## **4 – Life-long Learning**

Goal: Provide educational and cultural programming that is valued by the community and results in sustained usage of the Library and forms the basis for adult life-long learning.

Objective - Increase the number of educational and cultural programs offered to adults to at least thirty per year beginning in FY 2011 and to maintain or increase that number throughout the Plan. *This objective will be overseen by the Library Director and Head of Reference & Adult Services.*

### Activities:

- Design and deliver 30 or more programs intended for mature learners featuring content/subject matter involving literature, art, music, science and technology in each fiscal year of the Plan.
- Identify and implement at least four collaborations in each fiscal year with the OLLI [Osher Life-Long Learning Institute at UMass-Boston and/or other prospective partners].
- Library staff and cable volunteers produce four (4) cable shows with life-long learning content in FY 2011 and each year thereafter.

## **5 – Operations Support**

Goal: Provide an inviting, safe, well-maintained and appropriately staffed facility with open hours of greatest convenience to the community.

Objective 1: Restore Sunday afternoons to the Library's operating schedule by FY 2013. *This objective will be pursued by the Library Director and the Trustees Human Resources and Finance Committees.*

Activities:

- In FY 2011 the Library Director prepares budgetary and scheduling options for the Trustees to achieve this objective.
- Board of Trustees advocates for Sunday hours in the formulation of the FY 2013 budget which will be submitted in the fall of calendar 2012.
- Assuming Sunday funding is approved, open Sunday afternoons beginning September 2012.

Objective 2: By FY 2014 allocate staff in the most effective way to serve patron needs by conducting an assessment of professional/technical staff positions to determine whether these positions should be recast and reorganized to better serve patrons in an environment increasingly linked to rapid technological change. *This objective will be pursued by the Library Director, the Trustees Human Resources Committee and representatives of the Library's union.*

Activities:

- Library Director prepares a staffing projection and re-defined position descriptions/relationships to best serve users expectations of "next generation services." This projection will come from the *Library Director* in FY 2011.
- *Trustees, the Library Director and the Library's professional staff representatives* work to establish a framework for discussion of new staffing relationships and duties presented by the Library Director. FY 2012.
- *Trustees, Director and Union work with Town Personnel Board* to bring about the new staffing relationships and duties. FY 2013.
- *Subject to approval, Library Director* implements new staffing relationships and duties. FY 2014.

Objective 3: By the end of FY 2011 the *Library Director* and a member of the Reference Staff will complete a "Disaster Recovery Plan" for the Library.

Activities:

- Library Director reviews draft with Fire Chief for input by March 2011. Revise/ incorporate as needed.
- Present plan to Trustees Operations Committee by April 2011. Revise as needed.
- Present Plan to full Board with Operations Committee assistance/support in May 2011.

Objective 4: By the end of calendar 2011 *Library Director* presents energy conservation and efficiencies to Board of Trustees for consideration.

Activities:

- Obtain energy study through *Source One* consultants and review with Trustees at November, 2011 Board meeting.
- Assess budgetary implications of report's findings by November/December 2011 and incorporate into FY 2012 Budget Draft.
- Implement recommendations as opportunity and budget allow.

Objective 5: By the May, 2011 Board of Trustees meeting the *Trustees Governance Committee* will develop and recommend Board By-law revisions for consideration at the September 2011 Trustees Meeting.

Activities:

- Governance Committee meets throughout FY 2011 as necessary to complete the revisions and present them to full Board at May 2011 meeting.
- Governance Committee seeks vote of revised by-laws at the September 2011 Board meeting.

Objective 6: In each fiscal year of the Plan, conduct audit of existing policies, modify where required or desired and advance new ones as needed. Present to Board by January of each year. *This objective will be overseen by the Library Director and staff with Trustee in-put/approval.*

Activities:

- Conduct audit in November/December
- Make list of recommended new policies, if needed by December

Objective 7: In each fiscal year of the Plan, conduct an annual fund drive in the month of November. *This objective will be overseen by the Board of Trustees' Development Committee.*

Activities:

- Approve campaign theme and schedule at September Board meeting.
- Compose appeal letter by October 31
- Print & mail appeal letter by 2nd week of November

## **6 – Technology**

Goal: Offer technology resources and tools to extend and enhance services to all library users on an equal access basis throughout the life of the Plan.

Objective 1: Re-organize the Library's website for improved functionality, aesthetics, reduced clutter, and enhanced content delivery by the close of FY 2011. *This objective will be overseen by the Children's Librarian in collaboration with the Library Director and Reference staff.*

Activities:

- Survey library sites and identify best features for emulation. Complete by October 2010.
- Work with Library's web design consultant to complete design changes by January, 2011.

Objective 2: Increase patron self-sufficiency and staff effectiveness by

expanding patron self-service capabilities by FY 2013. *Objective will be overseen by the Circulation Supervisor in collaboration with the Library Director.*

Activities:

- Implement one self-checkout station by the end of FY 2012 from Capital Outlay technology funding.
- Review the practicality and cost-effectiveness of on-line fee payments for implementation in FY 2014. Complete review by October, 2013.

Objective 3: Increase staff productivity through innovative but proven technology with a tentative focus on Radio Frequency Identification [RFID] by end of Fiscal Year 2013. *This objective will be undertaken by the Circulation Supervisor in collaboration with the Library Director.*

Activities:

- Survey market-place for productivity enhancing technologies available to libraries. Place special emphasis on RFID. Circulation Supervisor and Library Director make recommendations to Library Board of Trustees in late FY 2011.
- Secure support of Library Finance Committee for inclusion in FY 2012 Capital Outlay, October, 2011.
- Make report to Capital Outlay Committee in December, 2011.
- If funded, begin implementation in FY 2013 and complete at the conclusion of FY 2014.

Objective 4: Review alternatives to “aging” mechanical time-clock and make recommendations to Library Director and Board of Trustees by May, 2011. *This objective will be undertaken by the Library Business Administrator in consultation with the Library Director and with support from the Town’s IT Director.*

Activities:

- Survey market place for clock replacement options and develop budgets for purchase/installation/implementation.
- Place clock replacement project in FY 2013 budget cycle.
- Implement as close to July 1, 2012 as possible.

## Fiscal Year 2011 Action Plan

Abbreviations: ADM = Library Business Administrator; AV = Audiovisual Supervisor; CAT = Associate Librarian Cataloging; CH = Childrens Librarian; CS = Circulation Supervisor; LD = Library Director; REF/AD = Head of Reference & Adult Services; T = Trustees; TBD =To be determined.

### Activity

### Assigned to:

#### *Collection*

- Maintain copy ratio on holds of 4:1 CS
- Monitor arriving orders for expedited titles CAT
- Patrons notified in one business day for filled holds CS
- Expand Rental Collection for Bestsellers REF/AD
- Explore bestseller rental plans as alternative to own LD
- Increase funding for local eBooks LD
- Redesign New Book/Bestseller Display-Circ Area LD, CS, REF/AD
- In-depth Preservation Study Report to Board LD
- Report on media collection trends by May, 2011 AV

#### *Creating Young Readers – Early Literacy*

- Select and acquire more very early reader books CH
- Add new story time for babies 0-2 years of age CH
- Workshop for parents/caregivers on pre-reading techniques and activities CH

#### *Young Adult (YA)*

- YA location changes to physical layout and furnishings-draft CH
- Host four young adult book group meetings each calendar year beginning in 2011. CH

#### *Life-long Learning*

- Present 30 or more educational/cultural programs for Adults LD, REF/AD
- Schedule 4 collaborations with OLLI program LD, REF/AD
- Staff & cable volunteers produce 4 shows TBD

### *Operations*

- Provide Sunday scheduling/budgetary options to Trustees LD
- Redefine hierarchy of library jobs for "next gen service" LD
- Complete Disaster Recovery Plan LD and staff
- Energy conservation measures to Board by 1/1/2011 LD
- Governance Committee recommends By-Law revisions T
- Annual policy audit with revision updates and suggestions for new policies needed Trustees and Staff T and staff
- Development Comm. plans & carries out annual fund drive T

### *Technology*

- Redesign/improve Library website CH, LD, Ref. Staff
- Survey of productivity enhancing technology CS, LD
- Alternatives to aging mechanical time-clock ADM, IT, LD