

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Holliston Public Library is to enrich its community by connecting people to the world of ideas, information and imagination in order to support their work, education, personal growth and enjoyment.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

The town of Holliston is a middle-class suburban community with a population of 14,894 occupying 18.7 square miles, 25 miles from Boston . Originally a farming community founded in 1724, Holliston retains more of a small town, rural feeling than many of the more developed communities in the Metrowest area. The shoe industry was vital to the growth of the town in the 19th century but more recent business and industrial growth is still very limited by the lack of sewers. As a result, the town has been spared the growth problems of some other communities but residents carry much of the tax burden. The town is governed by open town meeting with three Selectmen and a town administrator.

There is public transportation in the form of a bus that links Holliston with Framingham and a commuter train stop in nearby Ashland. The fire department is on call and there is a very strong sense of volunteerism elsewhere as well. Service organizations promote community involvement and provide grants and aid to strengthen services for residents. The historical society, senior center and cable access channel are all very active. There is a clear desire for open space, parks, conservation and outdoor activities. Lake Winthrop has beaches and recreational areas. A concerted effort has been made to preserve a friendly, small-town atmosphere with quaint shops, summer concerts and local fairs and festivals. There are active theater groups. Our Lady of Fatima shrine is a place of meditation and prayer along with churches and a synagogue. Mission Springs, a senior living facility, and Holliston Manor Nursing serve the elderly.

Holliston is heavily oriented towards families and education and a number of parent groups have a prominent presence. The school system is considered excellent with long-standing French Immersion and Montessori programs (one of only two in Massachusetts) alongside traditional ones serving 2,864 students. A little over 20% of the population attended the public schools in 2009 and the graduation rate is 95.3%. Many students from other communities attend Holliston schools under the “School Choice” program. The total per pupil expenditure was \$ 11,604, the second lowest in the Metrowest area. Of the \$ 49,484,039 in the FY 2010 budget, \$ 26,633,526 (54%) was for schools. In 2010, an override of \$ 986,500 for FY 2011 passed, the majority of which benefited the schools with smaller amounts going to the library and other municipal departments. Of the four schools, all are new or renovated in the last decade.

The median age of the town population is 39.3 years with the following breakdown by age: age 0-19: 4265; ages 20-39: 2613; ages 40-59: 5102; ages 61 and over: 1850. Statistically, the under 19 population is expected to decrease and the senior citizen population stated to increase in the next 10-20 years. Demographically, the town is

mainly white (96.3%) with 50.6% holding a bachelor's degree or higher. There are 5,538 households, with a median household income of \$ 92,404. Of the employed persons over 16, the majority are classified as working as managers or professionals. The unemployment rate is 7%, identical to the rate for the Metrowest area but below the state average (10%.) Average wages are \$ 53,800. The average assessed value of a single family home is \$394,400 with condominiums at \$ 166,900 and the assessed value is \$16.31/1000, one of the highest in the Metrowest region. Only 4.1% of housing units are subsidized. The average tax bill totals \$6,434. Of Holliston's total town revenue, 63% comes from tax levy. In FY 2009, Holliston had the highest state aid per capita in the Metrowest region at 23.4%, \$ 723 with other towns averaging \$ 432. New growth decreased 41% in FY '10 and a similar drop is anticipated for next year. State aid decreased 9.7% in the same period.

Holliston faces many of the same issues as surrounding towns: promoting the local economy, planning for the growing number of senior citizens while serving the needs of the young, planning for land development and providing services in a time of diminishing revenue from state and local sources.

LIBRARY PROFILE

The Holliston Public Library is housed in a three-story Carnegie building (built 1904) with 9217 square feet of space located in downtown Holliston. The building is in the footprint of the land held by the Trustees and has no parking facilities of its own or room for expansion. The annual circulation is 213,075 with a collection of 69,553 and 7603 registered borrowers. The library is open 43 hours per week, 3 hours above the state required minimum, on the following schedule: Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 11-6 pm; Tuesday and Thursday, 11-8 pm and Saturday, 10-2 pm. This schedule is a reduction of 20 hours per week from five years ago. Attempts to restore popular Sunday hours have not been successful. All State Aid to Libraries grant funds are used for salaries. This practice is unlikely to change given the present economic outlook.

An elected 6-member Board of Trustees governs the library. Of 4 full-time professional librarians—Director, Assistant Director/Head of Technical Services/Young Adult, Children's and Reference --only the director remains full time. The Head of Circulation and a cataloger are para-professionals and there are 10 part-time library technicians and pages. All current staff members have worked at the library for at least four years (and most for much longer) and a close team-like atmosphere exists. The staff is well-trained and very dedicated to the library and its patrons. There is no union. Two separate circulation desks requires increased personnel costs. Volunteers are used extensively but not at the circulation desks for reasons of confidentiality and computer security. There is no custodial or maintenance staff. A cleaning company is employed and the Holliston Highway Department and local contractors provide maintenance.

The Children's Room, Technical Services, a public meeting room, mechanical rooms, storage and a staff room are located on the lower floor. The main floor houses adult fiction, non-print and magazines and newspapers along with reference and local history. The young adult collection, adult non-fiction and a single study room occupy the 3rd level. The collection is weeded regularly and there are no major space issues. The local history collection is still largely uncataloged. The children's room is a bit small but the existing space is used efficiently and is warm and inviting to families. In addition to performances and storyhours, 4 book groups at various age levels meet during the school year. The families who use the library are generous with their time and support and appreciate the services enormously.

The young adult section of the library, "The Teen Zone", occupies a comfortable, open area on the 3rd floor and is the fastest growing area of the library. The demand for a bigger collection and more readers' advisory services in this area is being met and the result has been huge leaps in circulation. Teen programs have been eliminated due to low attendance except for the monthly Teen Zone Book Group, which has a small but enthusiastic attendance.

Reference has been weeded and is much more up-to-date. The reference librarian is also the technology coordinator. The library is seeing less traditional reference questions and more demand for computer help, reader's advisory and aid with homework. Cooperation with the schools through their librarians is maintained but advance notice of assignments is uneven. Many patrons wish the circulating collections were larger but feel the ability to borrow books from other libraries and ease of use of the Minuteman network helps fill many of their needs. Bi-weekly outreach to Mission Springs, a large elderly housing facility continues along with a monthly history book club, both run by volunteers.

Circulation has increased 17% over the last 5 years with approximately a third of that growth coming from non-print media. The fastest growing areas are large type and young adult. The number of items sent to and borrowed from other libraries has stabilized at 28,000 and 23,000 items, respectively. A number of labor saving practices have necessarily been put in place to help with an increasing workload and decreasing staff availability, including self-checkout and printed circulation, hold and transit slips. Holliston has the second highest circulation per FTE in its population group of 51 libraries statewide. We are excited about moving to online delivery of audio and video.

The thirteen computers to access the Internet and the online public access catalog (OPAC) are heavily used, with both filtered and unfiltered access. Email, word processing, Powerpoint and spreadsheets can be used through most computers. Nearly all OPAC use is done from home. Grants and gifts from the Friends of the Library and private sources funded the complete updating of all computers in 2008. This has been a tremendous improvement for both staff and the public. The library subscribes to a language database in addition to offering those funded by the state and Minuteman network but usage of databases in general tends to be low in Holliston.

Upkeep of the building is still complicated and expensive in spite of regular maintenance. Large reserve fund transfers for unexpected repairs have been frequently required. High electrical costs have leveled off and we have begun to see some savings on gas by using the wall radiators as our main source of heat. These costs have competed with the need to meet the requirements for certification on an annual basis. The rubber roof was replaced in 2009 and the shingled perimeter and eaves must be addressed soon. The carpeting and paint are now nearly 9 years old (but have held up well) and the flooring has been replaced as well as the main front door. The lower level door must be replaced in the future.

The library has received several waivers for the funding requirement portion of the state standards and meets the hours and materials requirements each year. As of 2011, the library is \$ 11,000 short of the MAR, with an appropriated budget of \$ 429,718 or .846% of the total town budget, well below the 1.36% average for similar sized libraries. Meeting recent town budget guideline has been challenging in the face of decreasing appropriations. The library has had to resort to unpaid furloughs and reduction and elimination of professional positions in order to meet those guidelines. The Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen are committed to ensuring the library's certification and an override vote in 2010 preserved the children's librarian position. The library receives tremendous support from the Friends of the Library, local groups and individual patrons. The Friends pay for all programming, some materials, the web site, some passes and furniture. They also purchase most new feature films on DVD for which patrons pay \$1 per day to rent. This program supports future purchases of popular films and classics and has been a big success. The local garden club maintains the exterior garden space. Private funds remains the best way for us to introduce new services and upgrade equipment.

Strengths

Seasoned, open-minded staff

Library has a good reputation in community

Trustees, staff, Friends, volunteers work well-together with many of the same players

Library is small enough and cross-trained to make changes quickly as needed

Library use is increasing

Collections are small and general but are timely and appropriate

Fundraising has been largely successful

Challenges

Funding in a time of economic uncertainty

Dwindling of professional staff

Constant building and equipment problems

Rapid changes from traditional print to digital

Societal view of libraries as unneeded and outdated

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES 2010-2015

BUILDING UTILIZATION & ACCESS

GOAL: The library will have adequate and secure space which can be used harmoniously by its many patrons.

Objective A: To continue to make the library a safe and pleasant environment.

1. Plan for and obtain funding to repair the eaves and outer perimeter of the library roof.
2. Develop strategies to manage growth in the children's room including a preliminary design plan and funding suggestions if appropriate.
3. Prepare plans for upgrading aging systems such as HVAC, burglar alarm, fire alarm, etc.
4. Update the disaster plan.

Objective B: To maintain a schedule of hours that is useful to the majority of our patrons.

1. Survey our patrons every 2 years to determine their needs for library hours and make appropriate changes within the limits of the library budget.
2. Investigate the possibility of opening earlier at least some mornings each week in FY '12 and expanding to full Saturdays. Continue to add hours whenever possible as funding becomes available.
3. Create a plan to streamline tasks at both circulation desks with the aim to increase hours and improve customer service. Include considering the following elements: creating one central checkout, expanding self-checkout and rescheduling processing of delivery.

COLLECTIONS

GOAL: The library collection will be up to date and in a format to meet the changing needs of its users in the 21st century.

Objective A: To investigate and implement if possible downloadable music.

Objective B: To investigate and implement if possible downloadable films.

Objective C: To investigate and implement if possible E-books.

Objective D: To improve resources for young adults.

1. Survey teens on their needs and preferences in films and add more titles in this area.
2. Expand the graphic novel collection.
3. Create a staff/patron recommended area in the Teen Zone.

Objective E: To make the local history resources easier to access and use.

1. Complete cataloging of the archives materials in the Bourne Room with the help of an intern.
2. Work with the Holliston Historical Society to make resources in both collections available in digital form.
3. Work with the town in housing historical documents at the library where they can be preserved and used by the public.

Objective F: To make blue-ray DVDs available to our patrons.

Objective G: To create a Wii collection for children.

Objective H: To keep the children's nonfiction resources updated and relevant while creating more shelving space for other materials.

1. Weed the juvenile non-fiction collection.
2. Evaluate, weed and reallocate, if necessary, the juvenile reference collection.

PATRON SERVICES

GOAL: Our patrons will have the services they need and the funding will be used where it will do the most good.

Objective A: To provide appropriate reference services for our patrons.

1. Evaluate the rapidly changing role of reference in the small 21st century library.
2. Identify portions of the collection that can be eliminated, stored or made circulating, reallocating space and funds for other purposes.
3. Evaluate the reference budget and make changes to best serve our patrons.
4. Evaluate the reference librarian's job description and duties and make changes to best serve our patrons.

Objective B: To improve readers' advisory services for all ages.

1. Investigate adding Kidpak and Teenpak to the library's web site for children and young adults to learn more about good books, reading and authors.
2. Create a plan to provide more coverage of the reference desk when the reference librarian is not on duty to field questions and provide help to our patrons.
3. Provide more training for the professional staff to improve readers' advisory in all departments of the library.

Objective C: To start an online book club and/or email book reviews for adults.

TECHNOLOGY

Objective A: To add a scanner and CD burner for patron use.

Objective B: To upgrade all computers which are more than 5 years old.

METHODOLOGY

This planning process began in Spring 2010 with a committee made up of library personnel, representatives from other organizations and the schools as well as patrons, library trustees and Friends of the Library. The same structure was used for the present plan as that done in 2005. A survey of patrons and non-users was central to gather information on the perceived quality of our services and new services that might be used in the future. We used an online survey from Zoomerang in June/July 2010. Paper surveys were put into the electronic survey as they were received to automate all the tabulations. This worked very smoothly and 381 surveys were returned, about 5% of our registered borrowers. The Friends of the Library offered a free chance to win an electronic device for each survey returned (one per person over 12.)

Winnie Carey, Holliston schools

Dan Mades, President, Holliston Historical Society

Kevin Robert Malone, Library patron and volunteer

Leslie McDonnell, Library Director

Michelle Milligan, Friend of the Library

Margaret Perkins, Reference Librarian

Rachel Pollinger, high school student, patron

Cathy Soucy, Library Trustee

TIMELINE

	FY 11	FY 12	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15
<i>BUILDING UTILIZATION/ACCESS</i>					
Repair eaves/roof	X	X	X		
Space in children's room	X	X			X
Upgrade systems		X	X		
Upgrade disaster plan		X			
Hours survey			X		X
Earlier openings/full Saturdays	X	X	X	X	X
Streamline tasks	X	X			
<i>COLLECTIONS</i>					
Downloadable music		X			
Downloadable films			X		
E-books			X		
Survey teens on films/add titles	X				
Expand graphic novels	X	X			
Create recommended area	X				
Catalog local history		X			
Digitize resources		X	X		
House documents		X			
Blue-ray		X			
Wii for children		X			
Weed juvenile nonfiction	X	X	X		
Reevaluate juvenile reference		X			
<i>PATRON SERVICES</i>					
Evaluate reference services	X	X			
Weed/reallocate reference collection	X	X			
Evaluate reference budget	X	X			
Reevaluate reference librarian job description	X	X			
Kidpak/Teenpak		X			
Readers' advisory services		X			
Readers' advisory training		X	X	X	

Online book club/email reviews		X	X		
<i>TECHNOLOGY</i>					
Scanner/CD burner	X				
Upgrade computers				X	X