



**STRATEGIC LONG-RANGE PLAN  
FY2027-2032**

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## **BACKGROUND**

### **Community Profile**

The Town of Barnstable, located on Cape Cod, is made up of seven villages, including Barnstable Village where Sturgis Library is located. Each village has unique and significant cultural and historical qualities. Barnstable Village, with a year-round population of over 3,200 and a summer population that grows significantly, is located on the north side of the mid-Cape, with the village of West Barnstable to its west and Yarmouth Port to its east. It is home to the County seat and the County Courthouse complex. Route 6A, also known as Old King's Highway, runs through the Village, and the homes along 6A have retained their historic Cape Cod charm.

Barnstable Harbor, a beautiful and busy resource, is protected by Sandy Neck Barrier Beach. This beach and the surrounding 3,000-acre Great Marsh is the most extensive conservation area on Cape Cod outside of the Cape Cod National Seashore and it is the largest salt marsh complex on the Cape. There are numerous hiking trails throughout Barnstable Village and Cummaquid, including Mass Audubon's Long Pasture Wildlife Sanctuary. Fishing, boating, sailing, and swimming are primary recreational activities.

The Village supports a number of small businesses, including several well-known restaurants and the Hyannis Whale Watcher Cruises. Art and antique galleries and small bed-and-breakfast establishments line Route 6A.

St. Mary's Church and the Unitarian Church of Barnstable draw parishioners from around the Cape. Visitors and tourists can view art and sculpture exhibits at the Cape Cod Art Center, historical exhibits at the Barnstable Historical Society, and learn more about the legacy of the Coast Guard at the U.S. Coast Guard Heritage Museum. Tales of Cape Cod in the Old Colonial Courthouse sponsors lectures during the summer months, and the Barnstable Comedy Club offers a wide selection of plays throughout the season.

### **Library Profile**

Constructed in 1644 for the Reverend John Lothrop, one of the founders of Barnstable, the house which forms the original part of the Library is the oldest building housing a public library in the United States. The building is also one of the oldest houses remaining on Cape Cod. Since Reverend Lothrop used the front room of the house for public worship, another distinction of the Sturgis Library is that it is the oldest structure still standing in America where religious services were regularly held.

Library founder William Sturgis, a direct descendant of Reverend Lothrop, was born in the house in 1782. Sturgis went to sea at the age of 15 to help support the family after the death of his father. In 1810, he founded Bryant and Sturgis, a clipper ship company engaged in the Northwest and China trades. In 1863, after a successful career, Captain Sturgis willed his former home, plus \$15,000 in bonds, for the establishment of a library in the Village of Barnstable. The Library opened in 1867 with 1,300 volumes, many of which came from Sturgis' personal library.

Today, Sturgis Library is a thriving public library and research archive listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Library collections have grown to over 70,000 volumes, including traditional library resources (books, periodicals, e-audio and e-books, games, puzzles, a Library of Things, newspapers and digital resources) as well as extensive special collections. The special collections and archives consist of books, manuscripts, documents, deeds, photographs, maps, microfilm, electronic resources, and more, with a focus on Cape Cod history, genealogy, and the maritime trades.

Sturgis Library is one of seven independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit public libraries in the Town of Barnstable – one library in each of the seven villages. Each of the libraries receives only partial funding from the Town; they must raise the balance of their funding through appeals, donations, grants, bequests, and investment income. Sturgis Library will receive just over 40% of its operating funding from the Town of Barnstable in FY2026.

Sturgis Library’s circulation of library materials reached a peak in FY2016, and, like other libraries nationwide, circulation has decreased by approximately 20% since then. Each year we welcome between 50,000 to 55,000 visitors from all over the country and worldwide. Approximately one-quarter of our visitors come specifically to use our special collections or visit our historic building.

Sturgis Library plays a dual role in providing quality public library service to a small community, while also preserving and making available the history of the region to users across the country. A keen awareness of the importance of both these roles is reflected in our mission statement and in our strategic goals and objectives.

## **PLAN METHODOLOGY**

The following Strategic Long-Range Plan was developed and written by Library Director Lucy Loomis with input from Trustees, staff, and survey respondents. With this FY2027-2032 Plan, we continue the tradition of honoring the past while anticipating future Library needs.

The participants used the SOAR process as a springboard for discussions. SOAR, which stands for **S**trengths, **O**pportunities, **A**spirations, and **R**esults, is “a profoundly positive approach to strategic thinking and planning that allows an organization to construct its future through collaboration, shared understanding, and a commitment to action.”<sup>1</sup> We conducted one SOAR session with Board members and staff and solicited responses from the community via both written and online surveys. We incorporated additional information gleaned from statistics, conversations with Library users and visitors, suggestions, anecdotal information, and day-to-day observations in drafting this plan.

## **PLAN OUTCOMES**

### **Themes**

In our SOAR sessions, we found that the themes that emerged in our previous Plan had not substantially changed but were emphasized again as the themes that should guide us for the next five years.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Thin Book of SOAR: Building Strengths-Based Strategy* by Jacqueline M. Stavros and Gina Hinrichs.

- **Community**

The Library serves as a place where all members of the community feel welcome and safe; where the public gathers together, formally or informally; where civic and cultural events and programs occur; and where residents and visitors can find information about the local area and provide feedback about what they need in a community gathering place. Community also comprises outreach to and collaboration with other groups and organizations.

- **Knowledge**

The Library serves as a center for visitors to seek out and gain knowledge in all its forms, including literacy, the arts, technology, science and the environment, history and culture, current events and more. Included in this concept is the knowledge imparted by staff, both in assisting users with finding what they seek as well as whatever personal knowledge they can share. The Library supports and promotes lifelong learning for all.

- **Historic Preservation**

The Library acts to preserve the diverse history of the region, including its own historic building and the archival collections in its care. Preservation in this case also includes acquiring historical materials for the collection, disseminating historical information to the community, and inviting community input that will become part of the historical record. It is important to preserve not only the historically significant stories of the day, but also the lesser known history of the people and places that make up Cape Cod and the Islands.

- **Technology and Innovation**

The Library acts as a portal for current and emerging technologies and service platforms. It will provide access to the Internet and digital resources, as well as information and training on specific systems and devices. It will also be a leader in adopting new vehicles for delivering library services to its users.

## **Mission Statement**

The previous iteration of the Sturgis Library mission statement was originally developed 15 years ago. When assessing the feedback from our current planning meetings, we determined that our mission statement was essentially sound, and only needed a few edits to bring it up to date.

*Sturgis Library, a historic public library in the village of Barnstable, provides resources and services to meet the needs of a diverse, contemporary community while preserving and promoting Cape Cod history and culture. The Library:*

- *Supports the lifelong pursuit of personal, vocational, cultural, and intellectual enrichment in both traditional and innovative ways, utilizing cutting-edge resources and technology.*
- *Fosters literacy, curiosity, engagement, and creativity in Library users of all ages.*
- *Provides a welcoming and safe space, promotes the free exchange of ideas, and serves as a community gathering place.*
- *Serves as a regional archive and research center for the study of Barnstable County, history, genealogy, and the maritime trades.*

## STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES, FY2027-FY2032

**GOAL 1 – Community:** *Provide an inviting, multifunctional community resource center for the village of Barnstable and surrounding area.*

**Objective 1:** Ensure that we have a professional, friendly, informed, and helpful staff, and provide them with the knowledge and training to effectively assist the public.

Action:

Staff will be encouraged to attend professional development and customer service training workshops offered by CLAMS and the Massachusetts Library System when pertinent.

Action:

Staff will offer readers’ advisory, reference and technology support to patrons, including “staff and patron picks” book displays, formal training workshops, and one-on-one assistance.

**Objective 2:** Offer a comfortable, welcoming, safe, and satisfying Library experience to diverse users with differing needs.

Action:

Using the results of a visit by a library space planner, and working with an architect, evaluate existing Library space and potential areas for improvement, plan for reconfiguration of existing space, and begin to consider the addition of flexible space in the future.

Action:

Maintain attractive, flexible, well-lit environment with comfortable, ADA-compliant seating and facilities.

Action:

Assess and evaluate the building for safety issues and take action where safety improvements are required. Work with local Fire and Police Departments to ensure that local, state, and national safety standards are being followed.

Action:

Revise the Library’s Disaster and Safety Plan. Update contact information, procedures, and space information. Using information from the full plan, create a “quick and dirty” version for easy reference in the case of an emergency.

Action:

Train staff in all safety procedures and familiarize them with all aspects of building and systems safety. Have regular fire and emergency drills and engage the staff in assessing the building for safety improvements.

Action:

Explore the feasibility of creating an outdoor reading/gathering space on the land to the north of the rear parking lot.

Action:

Maintain the Library's unique gardens, including the rain garden, culinary corner, and native plantings. Update and replace plant markers and signage as needed.

**Objective 3:** Connect Library users with resources, with others, and with the community.

Action:

Offer a wide range of rich and compelling programming for diverse audiences with a variety of needs and interests.

Action:

Seek local, state, and other grant funding to support programming for all ages.

Action:

Regularly offer programs for multigenerational audiences.

Action:

Provide flexible space for formal and informal gatherings, meetings and workshops for groups of all sizes.

Action:

Request patron/community input into programming on a semiannual basis through newsletter and Library display queries, as well as through informal conversations.

Action:

Reach out to community partners (local nonprofits, businesses, schools, etc. – (see *Potential Community Partners* on page 13) to explore collaborative programming and targeted services and seek out innovative ways to expand/promote Library collections/services throughout community.

Action:

Promote online relationships and collaborations with users and fellow organizations through social media, the e-newsletter, and other online resources.

Action:

Engage in outreach to researchers, genealogists, and those with an interest in Cape Cod history.

Action:

Regularly check in with local and state genealogical and historical organizations (i.e. historical societies, Cape Cod and Falmouth Genealogical Societies, New England Historic Genealogical Society) to stay current with trends in genealogical and historical research.

Action:

Partner with a local artist to create a mural depicting the rich history of Barnstable Village.

Action:

Continue to offer scholarships to Barnstable students annually in partnership with the Cape Cod Foundation. Retain a Scholarship Committee made up of members from the Library and from the community.

**Objective 4:** Educate Library users and community members about the Library's 501(c)(3) nonprofit status and the need for private support, donations, and non-municipal funding.

Action:

Through a variety of venues (the e-newsletter, brochures, displays, conversations, letters, phone calls), provide information to the public about Library funding and the need for community support.

Action:

Increase donations to the Annual Appeal and expand our donor base.

Action:

Develop a Planned Giving program and create a Planned Giving brochure and web page.

**Objective 5:** Maintain a diverse, engaged, and effective Board of Trustees.

Action:

The Nominating Committee of the Board of Trustees, working with other Board members, will reach out to and recruit a diverse group of potential Trustees who bring a wide range of talent and experience to the Board.

Action:

The Board of Trustees will annually evaluate its Board goals and the goals of the Strategic Long-Range Plan. Goals may change or be added once progress toward meeting the goals is evaluated.

**GOAL 2 – Knowledge:** *Strengthen public perception of Sturgis Library as a comprehensive Knowledge Center*

**Objective 1:** Promote a love of reading, knowledge, learning, and ideas.

Action:

Provide comfortable spaces for individuals and families to engage in the act of reading.

Action:

Offer both traditional and nontraditional learning opportunities to users of all ages. Provide lectures, workshops, hands-on creative programs, field trips, outdoor activities, and patron-

led opportunities. Programs and events should be offered on a wide variety of topics, learning levels, and for a variety of ages, including multigenerational programs.

**Objective 2:** Provide a comprehensive, diverse, high quality collection of print, non-print, electronic and other materials for users of all ages and different access needs.

Action:

Staff will order materials from a variety of sources based on reviews, patron requests and suggestions, reader's advisory discussions, etc. The Library's Collection Development policy will be the guiding document for addition of materials to the collections and will be reviewed regularly.

Action:

Expand collections and resources outside the Library building and into the community – for example at our Little Free Libraries, through school collaboration, and other opportunities.

Action:

Continue to grow the "Library of Things" and purchase new materials based on user feedback.

**Objective 3:** Promote the Library's collections and resources to encourage lifelong learning and curiosity.

Action:

Highlight parts of the collection through exhibits, displays, and other promotional means. Brainstorm new ways of promoting staff and patron picks, topical titles, and "have you read this" lists.

Action:

Design programs that explore or promote aspects of both the circulating and archival collections. Work with local schools, historical societies, and museums to collaborate on projects matching curriculum and collection strengths.

Action:

Maintain comprehensive and easily accessible information about Library collections/resources on the Library's website, through promotional material, and in-house pamphlets and brochures. Upgrade the website on a regular basis to improve functionality and integrate new technologies.

Action:

Provide staff assistance with research for users of all ages and different access needs. Strive to provide patrons with satisfactory answers to their inquiry or referrals to another resource. Reference service will be provided in person, by phone, and via email.

Action:

Provide reader's advisory services through multiple means—staff, print resources, displays, links on website, social media, etc. Engage Library users and community members in sharing their feedback to enhance the reader's advisory experience.

Action:

Provide an annual reading challenge to patrons of all ages to promote reading in new subject areas, trying new genres, and discovering new favorite books.

Action:

Provide outreach services to area public and private schools as well as the homeschooling community. Offer in-Library visits and workshops for schools and homeschooling families to introduce them to our resources.

**Objective 4:** Seek increased funding for the Library's regular and special collections.

Action:

Staff will apply for local, state, federal and special grants to enhance Library collections.

Action:

The Board of Trustees and Library Director will seek donations from Library users and members of the community to enhance Library collections, including bequests, one-time donations, memorial gifts, and monies given to increase our investment account. Staff will keep a "wish list" of fundable items on an ongoing basis.

**GOAL 3 – Historic preservation:** *Continue to be the leading repository in the country of original materials and resources on Barnstable and Cape Cod history, genealogy, and the maritime trades.*

**Objective 1:** Ensure a safe, accessible environment for Sturgis Library's historical and special collections.

Action:

Monitor archival collections and process/conservate new acquisitions in an appropriate and timely fashion.

Action:

Provide duplicate/digital copies of often used but fragile resources.

Action:

Seek funding to maintain and expand special collections archival storage (e.g. archival storage boxes, map cases, specialty storage for fragile items, etc.).

**Objective 2:** Connect the collections and the community by making historical resources relevant to all users.

Action:

Use programming and promotional materials to connect current residents with Barnstable's past, including displays of parts of the archival collection, collaboration with schools, other historical organizations, and family associations, and programs by historians and residents who have personal family history in Barnstable and Cape Cod.

Action:

Promote opportunities for volunteers, students, and others to connect with our collections through projects, programs, workshops, etc.

Action:

Host a "Mass Memories" type of event where members of the community can come and bring photographs and print items of local historical significance to be scanned and added to the Library's archival collections.

**Objective 3:** Preserve the historical features of the Sturgis Library building and grounds.

Action:

Maintain and protect the 1644-1867 wing and its artifacts, including the building structure, original floorboards and 19<sup>th</sup> century windows, Lothrop Bible and other objects, so that users can continue to experience the building's unique architecture and history.

Action:

Invite small groups to take a "Behind the Scenes" tour of the historic building and archives to educate visitors about the Library's rich history and collections.

Action:

Regularly review the Library's Emergency and Disaster Plan and update as needed.

Action:

Seek local, state, and other grant funding to help to preserve and maintain the Library's building and grounds.

**Objective 4:** Provide sufficient funding and staffing to ensure that our historic collections and building are maintained and preserved.

Action:

Train all staff, regardless of their job title, on the use of the special collections and archives.

Action:

Seek new funding sources through bequests, grants, donations, planned giving, etc.

**GOAL 4 – Technology and Innovation:** *Act as a central resource for current and emerging technologies and library service platforms.*

**Objective 1:** Provide access to reliable, high-speed Internet service, mobile hotspots, and other technology.

Action:

Maintain and regularly update Internet access, public access computers, 24/7 WiFi, printers, scanners, photocopiers, and hotspots for public use.

Action:

Provide access to downloadable resources including movies, eBooks, audiobooks and other content as it emerges. Work with CLAMS and other libraries on Cape Cod to maximize access to electronic and digital resources.

**Objective 2:** Educate the public about emerging technologies.

Action:

Offer technology training classes or one-on-one assistance for the public, using staff and/or volunteer resources.

Action:

Promote new library technologies through Library PR outlets (web site, social media, e-newsletter, & handouts), including links to third-party information articles and critical reviews.

Action:

Work with users to troubleshoot technology challenges and help them gain competence and comfort with new technology.

Action:

Ensure staff has appropriate, up-to-date training on and familiarity with current and emerging technologies.

**Objective 3:** Seek out innovative technologies that enhance current services and integrate new service and communications models into existing operations.

Action:

Encourage staff to attend workshops dealing with new and emerging systems/models. Be on the forefront of CLAMS libraries adopting new models, including acting as network beta testers for assessing new equipment and software.

**Action:**

Investigate integrating a makerspace into the Library when considering future renovation plans. Makerspaces are a collaborative, community-focused workspace providing access to tools, technology, and space for people to design, prototype, and create projects, ranging from high-tech (3D printers, laser cutters, CNC mills) to low-tech (sewing, woodworking, crafts).

**Objective 4:** Seek funding for testing and implementing new technologies, including hardware, software, staff training, staff administration, etc.

**Action:**

Apply for grants and seek donations for testing, training, and using new technologies.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

### **Using, Promoting, and Updating the Plan**

The Plan will be used to guide the Board of Trustees and staff in providing services to the community over the next five years.

- The Plan will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval in the spring of 2026.
- The approved plan will be submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners no later than October 1, 2026.
- An Executive Summary of the plan will be shared with and publicized to the community, and copies made available in the Library and on the Library's website.
- The Board and Staff will regularly review the plan for progress towards goals and objectives and submit an updated action plan if we wish to apply for LSTA grants in any given year.
- An updated action plan will be submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners by December 1<sup>st</sup> each year.

### **Evaluation Measures**

We will use the following evaluation measures to monitor our progress towards our goals and objectives:

- Number of visitors at the Library
- Number of visitors to the historic section of the Library
- Number of program and event attendees
- Circulation statistics
- In-house use of Library materials, particularly our archives
- Feedback from visitors via formal surveys and personal interactions
- Empirical evidence of improvement in the quality of life of our patrons and visitors
- Empirical evidence of the value of Library services to the Village and Town
- Online visits to our website
- Use counts on our digital newspaper archive and other online resources

- Undertaking benchmarking exercises comparing various measurements (circulation, salaries, etc.) with other libraries on the Cape and Islands
- Assessing our budget and financial reports to assure that we are on track throughout the year

### **Potential Community Partners**

The following community partners were identified during the planning process as potential collaborators:

- Arts Foundation of Cape Cod
- Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC)
- Barnstable Adult Community Center
- Barnstable Comedy Club
- Barnstable Council on Aging
- Barnstable Fire Department
- Barnstable Historical Society and other Cape and regional historical societies
- Barnstable Land Trust
- Barnstable Village Association
- Cape Abilities
- Cape and Islands Historical Association
- Cape Cod Art Center
- Cape Cod Commission
- Cape Cod Genealogical Society
- Cape Cod Museum of Art and other Cape and local museums
- Cape Cod Museum Trail
- Cultural Center of Cape Cod
- Friends of Barnstable Harbor
- Libraries and research archives on Cape Cod, around the state, and across the country
- Local churches, community groups, and businesses
- Maritime organizations
- Musicians, artists, performers, and others from the cultural community
- Schools, homeschoolers, educators, and educational organizations
- Tales of Cape Cod

## APPENDIX

### STURGIS LIBRARY SOAR EXERCISE WITH BOARD AND STAFF

#### STRENGTHS

- Professional/welcoming/nonjudgmental staff and Director, attention to detail, teamwork, great customer service, responsiveness, helpful, kind
- Continuing education for staff made a priority
- Unique, historic building and collections
- Impressive genealogy, Cape Cod history and maritime collections
- Heritage and history – history “mecca”
- Strong programs – quantity and quality
- Welcoming, safe atmosphere
- Invested Board – supportive
- Status in community
- Financially stable
- Building well taken care of
- Offers good services
- Is a community center – a meeting and gathering place
- Has great exhibits
- PR and communication – e-newsletter
- Connections with Lothrop, Sturgis, and other related families
- Access to resources outside the Library
- Positive patrons and community – engaged in activities
- Village feel but not stuck in the past
- “Open doors, open arms”
- Active and engaging children’s activities
- Has great reputation

#### OPPORTUNITIES

- Increased/stronger financial support
- Sustain mission and services
- Adjusting our offerings to reflect changing tastes and technology
- Keep our offerings current and interesting
- Role in providing direction in research
- Educate patrons about resources
- Raise visibility of Library on and off the Cape – communicate our strengths and value to the community
- Informational Open House
- Promote genealogy and special collections
- How to make our history come alive
- Field trips related to programs
- Be adventurous
- Make the Library a hub of in-person connections

- Continuously look at new ways to use our existing space
- Ensure that our valued staff members are compensated appropriately

#### ASPIRATIONS

- Develop property behind parking lot (look up deed restriction), perhaps as a shaded sitting/reading/gathering area
- Expand endowment
- Explore building expansion and relocation of spaces
- Attract younger people to the Board
- Keep print books relevant
- Make the building user friendly by adjusting and adding on spaces
- Communicate our successes more broadly
- Communicate our fundraising needs
- Identify untapped volunteers
- Retain our role as a community center – the heart of the village
- Create a legacy or planned giving program
- Value everyone

#### RESULTS

- Library as a social space, attracting more young people and providing more multi-generational activities
- Increase in patron visits, funding, staff salaries, demand for programs, circulation, use of archives, and positive feedback
- Highest paid staff, active and engaged Board
- New ideas for successful fundraising strategies

## RESULTS OF ONLINE SURVEY

### APPROXIMATELY 50 PEOPLE RESPONDING

#### How often do you visit the Library?

- Weekly 50%
- Monthly 22.5%
- Rarely 17.5%
- Daily 5%
- Never 5%

#### If you don't visit the Library, or don't visit often, what are the main reasons?

- Location is not convenient 25%
- Lack of time 20%
- Prefer digital resources 10%
- Library hours are not convenient 5%
- Other reasons were that they did not live locally but were Library supporters, they use other libraries, and they aren't big readers but enjoy the building.

**What are the primary reasons you visit the Library?**

- Borrow books or other materials 74%
- Attend programs/events 72%
- Use computers 20%
- Use meeting rooms 15%
- Study or work 8%
- Other reasons they visit the Library are to use the special collections, sit and read, donate books, do research, attend meetings, and visit with people.

**How would you rate the helpfulness of the staff?**

- Very helpful 98%
- Helpful 2%
- Comments included:
  - The Sturgis Library staff make every visit a joy
  - Always pleasant, kind, and helpful – wonderful!
  - Always going the extra mile to help find what I need
  - Knowledgeable, efficient, and personable
  - They're the best!

**How satisfied are you with the Library's collection of books and other materials?**

- Very satisfied 76%
- Satisfied 19%
- Neutral 5%
- Comments included that if the Library doesn't have a book, they can get it through CLAMS or the Commonwealth Catalog, and we have strong nature and cookbook collections.

**How satisfied are you with the programs and events offered at the Library?**

- Very satisfied 76%
- Satisfied 16%
- Neutral 8%

**What types of services, programs, or events would you like to see more of at the Library?**

- More on gardening and design
- More programs related to our genealogical and special collections
- More online services
- Technology programs
- More space for children
- Better seating areas for adults
- A dedicated reading room
- More evening programs
- More arts and crafts programs
- More music
- A film series with commentary
- Civics courses
- History of Massachusetts

**Thinking about the Library building and grounds, what changes or additions would enhance the visitor experience?**

- We appreciate your stewardship of this historic treasure
- I enjoy the warmth and originality and find it homey and interesting
- Love the addition of the “Dog Stick Library even though I don’t have a dog!”
- It is fantastic and a village gem
- Outdoor tables in a garden setting (5 respondents)
- Expanded children’s area (3 respondents)
- Space for quiet adult reading

**If you could name only one thing you value most about Sturgis Library, what would it be?**

- Fabulous, helpful, friendly staff (17 respondents)
- Community center – an anchor in the village (8 respondents)
- Lovely historic building and grounds (5 respondents)
- Genealogical resources, special collections, and archives