

Northport-East Northport Public Library

Long Range Strategic Plan 2021-2026

Introduction

As the world changes around us, so must the Library change in response to the needs of its patrons and community. Change in the way information is made available and accessed requires novel approaches to Library services and resources. This Plan is intended to provide the Library with direction and vision for the next five years while staying true to its traditional core values.

Mission

The Northport-East Northport Public Library exists to inform, educate and culturally enrich the residents of all ages of the district through the selection, organization, promotion and dissemination of all forms of expression.

Vision Statement

A literate world engaged in lifelong learning.

Library History

The Library's story began in 1880 with the founding of the Northport Literary and Social Union in the basement of the Presbyterian Church on Main Street. According to its constitution, the union aspired to "promote the literary culture of its members and to organize a library." Although its main activity was to host lively, weekly debates on current issues, from the start the union moved toward establishing its library. A library committee was in place by 1883 and during this year books were purchased, a librarian appointed, and a reading room opened in the Northport Journal building. In 1888, the union moved into a larger space in the Union Opera House on Union Place, incorporated, and renamed itself the Northport Literary and Library Union.

The Northport Literary and Library Union never lost sight of its goal of establishing a public library. But after 1888 it experienced sporadic financial and membership crises. It moved frequently in its search for suitable quarters for its library.

The union turned itself around at a 1907 membership meeting, when a proposal to dissolve the organization was met with resolve to reinvigorate membership. A decision was made to move into the new Bonner Building, centrally located on Main Street just east of Union Place. The following week sixty-one new members joined the union and a women's auxiliary formed to raise funds to maintain the library. After eliminating the five-cents-a-book loan fee for nonmembers in 1911, the union was recognized by the state as a free public library.

At the same time, the union worked toward finding a permanent home. In 1914, it received a ten thousand dollar library building grant after it had fulfilled the Carnegie Corporation's building site and funding requirements: The union had purchased a building lot on the corner of Main Street and Woodside Avenue with three thousand dollars raised through volunteer efforts in the community. It had guaranteed ongoing funding for the library through a resolution passed soundly at the annual school

meeting. The resolution included provisions for acceptance of the grant, the transfer of the library to the school district, a one thousand dollar annual tax appropriation for library operations, and the election of a board of trustees.

With Carnegie Corporation and community funding in place and the transfer of assets from the Literary Union under way, the Northport Public Library received its charter from the state in June 1914. Construction started on the new library building the following October.

The Northport Public Library shed its precarious, nomadic past in 1915 and settled into its new Carnegie building at 215 Main Street for a long period of stable service to the community.

The library aided the World War I effort through its participation in a program to send books to troops overseas. During the Depression, the library's downstairs meeting room became a women's workroom. Local women worked in shifts, earning \$2.50 a day mending donated clothing that was then distributed to families in need.

In 1939 East Northport residents formed the Library Association of East Northport to establish a public library in the community. As a letter from this group to the state department of education explains, "East Northport ... stretches far to house its 5,500 inhabitants. They are largely farmers, largely second generation Americans and of an extremely cosmopolitan aspect – Germans, Poles, Italians, Slavs ... A number of houses are being continually built in East Northport ... The community is growing steadily ... The problem of children and others traveling the three miles each way [to the Northport Public Library] is hard to surmount."

The school district offered six hundred dollars to help with initial costs and donated space in the old East Northport School, vacant since the year before when Larkfield School opened down the street. The East Northport Public Library opened as a branch of the Northport Public Library in June 1940 with 321 registered patrons and 1,200 books. During the first year, both the book collection and the number of residents with library cards doubled.

A fire destroyed the library in 1945. With help from the community, most of the books were saved. Boy Scouts played an important role by forming a book brigade to carry the books to a nearby store. For the next four years the library was housed in temporary quarters in the Leighton building across the street.

Damaged beyond repair, the school building was demolished and a new library building erected on the site in 1949. This building, expanded in 1966, served the community until the mid-1990s. By then it was too small to accommodate the growth of the community and the expansion of library services. In 1997, it was replaced at the same location by the present East Northport Public Library.

During World War II and in the years that followed, the Library took on new projects and strengthened its services. The Library did its part to support the war effort. It collected donations of books to send to the armed forces overseas. Red Cross volunteers used the Main Street library building meeting room to prepare surgical dressings. Wartime heating fuel shortages resulted in reduced library hours.

After the war the Library added resources and services, in response to both a nationwide movement to improve libraries and the Northport-East Northport community's population surge. The Library's book collection grew from ten thousand volumes in 1945 to over forty thousand in 1960. During the same period, borrowers increased from two thousand to almost twelve thousand. Book displays, art exhibits,

and author talks became regular library activities. Both library buildings rearranged their limited space to accommodate separate children's rooms and enhanced their services to children with story hours and library tours for school children.

Fifty years after construction of the library building on Main Street, the Library faced seriously crowded conditions. The population served by the library district had grown from nine thousand five hundred in 1950 to twenty-eight thousand in 1960.

Members of the community voted in 1963 to purchase land for a new library at the corner of Laurel and Scudder Avenues. Soon after, they voted to build a twenty thousand square-foot library on this site and expand the library in East Northport.

Construction was completed in 1966. The Northport building included space for a special art book collection and a meeting room with seating for one hundred. The extension to the East Northport building added book stack areas that freed space for a larger children's room and for seating and reference resources in the adult area.

The spacious, new library facilities that opened in 1966 filled rapidly as the Library responded to the interests of the still-growing community and to a proliferation of media and information resources. The Library started to loan audiobooks in 1974 and videos in 1983. Audiocassette recordings joined long-playing records and both were replaced by compact discs in 1987. From the installation of a single computer on an experimental basis in 1982, computer access steadily expanded to include word processing and other software applications. In 1995 the Library offered Internet service in its buildings and dial-up access for those connecting from home.

The book collection grew as well. Special collections, such as large print, art, business, and Prime Time for seniors, were developed. Periodical and newspaper articles on microfilm, and electronic catalogs and databases increased access to information. The Library's membership in the Suffolk Cooperative Library System facilitated the loan of books and other materials from libraries throughout the county and indeed from all over the United States.

The Northport building's large meeting room enhanced the programming capabilities of the Library. It was in regular use by the adult and children's departments and also by community groups.

By 1986 library users, the board of trustees, and staff had come to the same conclusion: the Library needed larger and improved facilities. After exploring a range of options, the library board proposed a plan in 1995 to renovate and expand the Northport Library from twenty thousand to thirty-six thousand square feet and to build an entirely new twenty-thousand-square foot library on the site of the East Northport building. The community overwhelmingly approved a \$7.4 million bond issue to fund the project in September of that year.

The old East Northport building was removed in August 1996 to make way for the new library and a temporary library opened in a storefront on Larkfield Road. In November 1996, ground was broken for the Northport building expansion. The building closed in October 1997 as construction proceeded. The same month the dramatic new library in East Northport opened. As in the old building, there was a cozy seating area centered on a fireplace. In August 1998, the expansion project concluded with the opening of the nautically-themed Northport Library. Both buildings, designed by the architectural firm Beatty,

Harvey, and Associates, featured spacious reading areas, ample room for computers and resources in a variety of formats, attractive meeting rooms and trend-setting cafes.

The Northport-East Northport Public Library added a welcoming outdoor terrace to the Northport building in celebration of its 90th anniversary in 2004. With generous support from the community the Library Courtyard opened in 2005. A statue of the Little Prince from the book *The Little Prince*, written in Asharoken by French author Saint-Exupéry, was donated to the Library and installed in the courtyard in 2006.

The whimsical Bear Sculpture, carved in wood by its donor Frank Bono in 1997, returned to greet visitors to the East Northport Library as a bronze replica in 2007 in time for the building's tenth anniversary. Community support also sustained this project.

Additional services take the Library outside of its buildings. The Homeward Bound program offers home delivery of library materials to the homebound and visits to schools and senior centers bring librarians into the community. The Beach Bag Books, Read Ride Return and Little Free Libraries provide access to print materials in high-traffic areas and the Museum Pass program provides free admission to many fine museums on Long Island and in New York City.

Tropical storm Irene and Superstorm Sandy in 2011 and 2012 caused major damage and power outages in the community. Through its many resources, programs, and the provision of additional recharging stations for electronics and wireless access, the Library and its staff offered a sense of normalcy to residents who lost power or who needed help in locating emergency assistance.

During the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic of 2019, the library transitioned all of its in-person programming to online platforms and greatly expanded its participation in collections of electronic books, audiobooks, magazines and movies. The appearance inside the building was also altered by the installation of Plexiglas partitions, a reduction in seating capacity, and the requirement for patrons and staff to wear facemasks. Meeting rooms became quarantine spaces for returned items and storage areas for excess furniture to reduce building capacity.

The Northport-East Northport Public Library looks back over a century of service with appreciation to the determined residents who brought libraries to Northport and East Northport. It looks forward to continuing its tradition of meeting the educational, informational and cultural needs of the community by providing innovative, superior library service.

Library Overview

The Library serves the 36,113 residents (2010 United States Census) of the Northport-East Northport Union Free School District. As of 2020, the Library had 21,838 cardholders. The Library is governed by an elected five-member Board of Trustees whose monthly meetings are open to the public. The Library employs a qualified director who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the Library. The Library employs professional librarians and support staff to assist providing the services outlined in this document. The Library is funded primarily through local tax assessments and receives some supplemental income through grants, contributions, private donations, bequests, fees and interest payments. The Library has a set of bylaws that govern the Library's structure and an extensive set of policies that govern the Library's operations.

Library Plan of Service

The Library uses the following standards to define its public service priorities:

- Safety
 - Library patrons are safe and secure when they visit and use the Library's services
- Privacy and Respect
 - Library patrons are confident that their privacy will be maintained and that their concerns and beliefs will be respected
- Courtesy
 - Library patrons are treated with dignity, proper decorum and a willingness to be of assistance
- Accuracy
 - Library staff strive to provide patrons with the most accurate information

Reference Services

The Library is committed to providing patrons with a means to access informational, educational and recreational materials. A staff of professional librarians is available and equipped with the resources necessary to assist patrons in accessing informational, educational and recreational materials and facilitating research pursuits.

Collections

The Library collects and assesses materials to meet the informational, educational and recreational needs of our community. Community needs are continually assessed through the review of population demographics, evaluation of the collection usage, observation of community interests and activities, and cognizance of other services and programs available in the community.

The Library does not collect in-depth in any one subject area, with the exception of special collections. Interlibrary cooperative agreements enhance individual patron research pursuits by granting access to public and academic library collections throughout the United States. Format and access are considered when making material selections.

Computers and Technology

The Library will provide a broad array of computer and technology services. These services will include public access to:

- computers with Internet access and various software programs
- onsite Wi-Fi and remote hot spots
- scanning stations
- color and black/white printers including Wi-Fi printing
- fax machines
- photocopiers
- document magnifiers
- online film, music and eBook collections, databases, study help and research tools

Circulation

The Library will lend materials to patrons who live within the Library's service area or those qualified for direct access and/or interlibrary loan. The Library will follow the direct access and/or interlibrary loan rules set forth in the Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) Resource Sharing Code and will comply with all sections of New York State Department of Education NYCRR 90.3. The Library will issue a Library card to any resident within its service area who fills out an application and provides the necessary proof of residency. Patrons with Library cards will be able to request, reserve and renew materials, access a list of Library holdings, borrow materials from other libraries, and access their Library card account either from within the Library or remotely.

Staff

The Library will employ a helpful customer-service oriented staff that will include professional librarians and support staff. Staff members will be well informed about the Library's services, programs and policies. Staff development will be encouraged and facilitated through opportunities for professional growth and training.

Programming

The Library will offer a wide variety of programming for patrons of all ages. In accordance with the Library's policies, meeting spaces will be available for community-based, not-for-profit groups.

Special Services

The Library will offer a number of special services to the community. These will include, but are not limited to, reader's advisory, interlibrary loans, community outreach, homebound delivery, basic English language classes, materials (braille and talking books) for people with disabilities through the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, literacy training and citizenship.

Promotion of Library Services

The Library will inform the community about its services and programs through newsletters, a website, social media, tours of the Library and additional methods.

Fiscal Responsibility

The Library recognizes and acknowledges the important responsibility to taxpayers to be prudent and accountable with the community's investment in the Library. The Library will develop and utilize an array of financial procedures and internal controls to ensure that all Library funds are well invested.

Responsiveness

The Library will strive to be responsive to all community needs and requests. Budgetary, facility and staffing constraints may prevent the Library from being able to fulfill all community wishes but they will not prevent the Library from studying and responding to requests.

Cooperative Partnering

The Library will attempt to maximize the community's investment by cooperatively sharing services where appropriate and cost-effective with neighboring libraries and other public service institutions. The

Library will maintain a membership in the Suffolk Cooperative Library System (SCLS) and take full advantage of the many services that SCLS provides to member libraries.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Increase use of Library services

- Promote literacy and education
 - Support early literacy initiatives
 - Expand STEAM based programming (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts & Math)
 - Cultivate resources that support local schools' curriculums
 - Ensure local educators are aware of the Library's ability to provide students with homework assistance, access to technology and collections
 - Offer age-appropriate instruction for students in the use of the Library and online resources
 - Review and respond to the need for resources for new Americans
- Educate patrons on current and emerging technologies
 - Offer educational workshops and one-on-one tutorials
 - Provide access to the equipment necessary to evaluate new technologies
- Increase attendance at Library programs
 - Market programs using Library website, newsletter, social media, signage, etc.
 - Work collaboratively with other local libraries, local schools, universities, organizations and businesses to offer creative programming
 - Encourage local artists and professionals to share their skills and knowledge in a Library program
- Promote awareness of Library services
 - Market Library services using Library website, newsletter, social media, signage, etc.
 - Participate in outreach opportunities in the community
 - Continue to build and maintain relationships with local news agencies to ensure coverage of Library events and needs
 - Offer tours and classes to inform the public of Library services
- Respond to changes in patrons' use of electronic resources
 - Track the circulation and usage of the Library's digital collection
 - Provide robust network and electric infrastructures

Goal 2: Support staff education in changing technologies and Library services

- Increase staff awareness of emerging trends in libraries
 - Support staff attendance at educational workshops
- Disseminate unique knowledge of Library services among staff
 - Offer staff-led training sessions and increase "train the trainers" opportunities
- Foster team-building
 - Create project-focused inter-departmental teams

Goal 3: Maintain a safe and welcoming environment

- Increase emergency preparedness

- Maintain scheduled security guards in the Library during all hours of service
- Offer emergency preparedness training
- Maintain sufficient security camera coverage
- Provide “panic buttons” to automatically alert staff to an emergency situation
- Establish safe rooms for staff to use in an emergency
- Assure clear, visible signage for emergency exits
- Improve ease of locating Library materials
 - Revise Library signage and collection identification
 - Update Library building maps
 - Promote Library tours
 - Create virtual Library tours accessible online
- Address the maintenance needs of the Library building and grounds
 - Develop an annual preventative maintenance schedule
 - Remodel public restrooms
 - Convert to higher efficiency equipment to reduce overhead costs
 - Invest in infrastructure upgrades

Goal 4: Maintain and grow the Library’s fiscal health

- Foster large donations, bequests and gifts to the Library
 - Promote literature encouraging donations, bequests and gifts to the Library
- Educate the community on the fiscal needs of the Library
 - Develop the Friends of the Library memberships and supportive functions
- Cultivate current and create new community partnerships
 - Encourage sponsorships of Library events and purchases

Goal 5: Connect individuals and groups to information, ideas and experiences.

- Solicit community feedback regarding Library programs and services
 - Expand patron survey opportunities
- Provide collections that are responsive to community needs
 - Review subject-centered circulation patterns
 - Categorize patron questions to develop expertise and resources in the areas that inquiries are being made
- Explore new opportunities to loan non-traditional library items
 - Evaluate the success of neighboring libraries non-traditional collections
 - Consider the uniqueness of our communities when building these collections
- Utilize technology to expand library’s reach
 - Simultaneously broadcast live programs in other building
 - Create collections of pre-recorded online demonstrations and trainings
 - Schedule “live” online presentations promoting library services

Conclusion

We look forward to working towards the goals set forth in this plan as well as continuing to highlight the role of the Library as the center of the community.

- Create additional space for group collaboration and engagement
 - Reconfigure shelving and seating areas to accommodate additional patrons
 - Enhance outside seating areas
- Collect information to make decisions about the future building needs
 - Document use of meeting rooms and Library common spaces
- Grow agency partnerships and host networking events at the Library
 - Expand upon successful organizational fairs hosted at the Library