



BROOKS MEMORIAL
LIBRARY

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LIBRARY

FIVE-YEAR PLAN

2007 - 2011

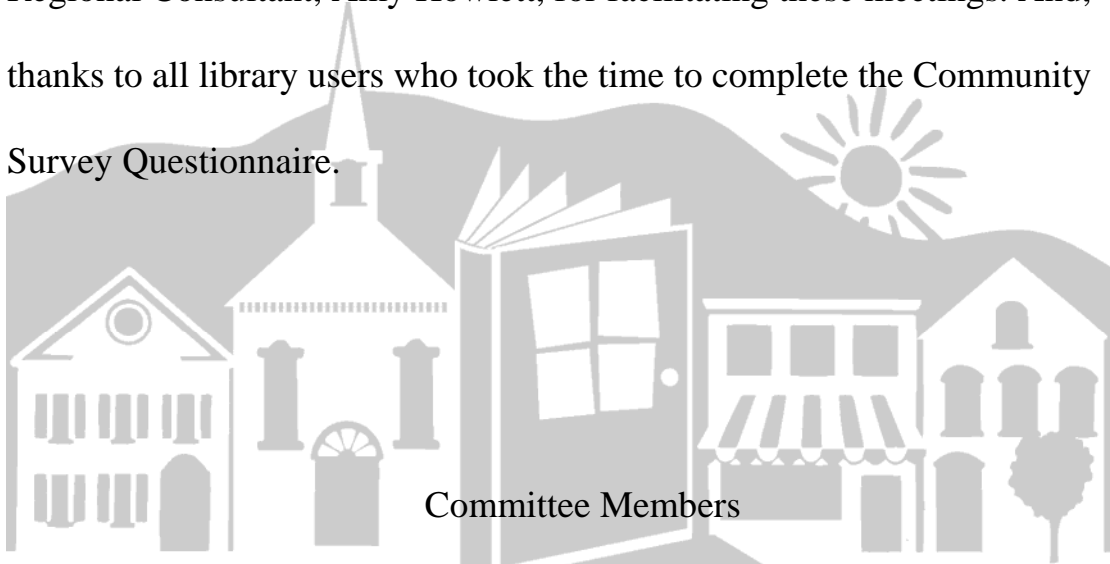
CONTINUING THE COLLECTIONS,
CONNECTIONS, AND
COLLABORATIONS

OCTOBER 2007

Acknowledgments

The committee would like to thank former Trustee, Marshall Wheelock, for his contribution to the demographics section of this report.

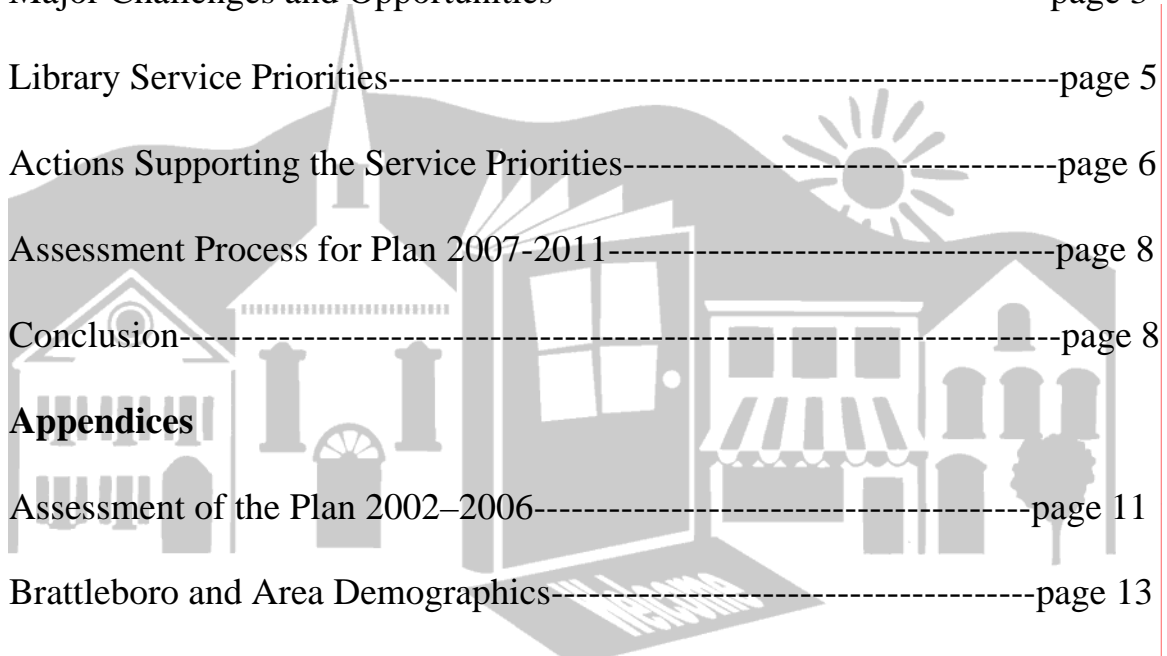
Thanks to all staff and citizens who participated in forums to help provide vital input for the Plan, and to Vermont Department of Libraries Regional Consultant, Amy Howlett, for facilitating these meetings. And, thanks to all library users who took the time to complete the Community Survey Questionnaire.



Committee Members

Barbara Brown, Trustee
Jerry Carbone, Library director
Carol Greenberg, Trustee
Ronny Johnson, Citizen
John Nirenberg, Trustee
Laurie Richards, Trustee
Elizabeth Tannenbaum, Trustee
Ruth Unsicker, Citizen
Sara Warner-Phillips, Trustee

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Brooks Memorial Library

Founded 1882 as Brattleboro's public library

Mission Statement, 2007-2011

*The mission of Brooks Memorial Library
is to support collections and services
that serve the learning, information, personal enrichment, and leisure needs
of people of all ages
in the Brattleboro community.*

To pursue this mission, the library

- Provides access to basic library services and resources;
 - Expands individual access to information through the use of current technologies;
 - Offers the assistance people need to find, evaluate, and use electronic and print information resources;
 - Creates conversation and collaborations with community leaders, organization, and individuals;

BML will also strive to foster community cultural life by hosting public meetings and exhibits, housing historic, fine arts, and civic collections; and providing spaces that attract adults, teens, and children to read, study, and browse.

Library Service Priorities, 2007-2011

- Provide access to materials to read, view, and to listen for pleasure;
- Answer questions, and help patrons find, evaluate, and use information;
 - Create young readers and help support students;
 - Connect to the online world;
 - Inform citizens for lifelong learning;
- Provide access to welcoming physical and virtual spaces.

Brooks Memorial Library Five Year Plan, 2007-2011

The Mission Statement

The mission of Brooks Memorial Library is to support collections and services that serve the learning, information, personal enrichment, and leisure needs of people of all ages in the Brattleboro community.

The Planning Process

The Brooks Memorial Library Board of Trustees has the responsibility of reviewing the Library's mission and critical service priorities for each five-year planning cycle. Beginning in 1991, the Trustees have produced three viable plans, 1991-1996; 1997-2001; and 2002-2006. For each of these plans Trustees, staff, and community members have met over one year to draft a plan for the library that takes into account community needs, demographics, changing patterns of library use, and the impact of technology and financial constraints that have an effect on the quality and quantity of library services provided.

In the spring of 2006 Trustees expanded the standing planning committee and appointed new members. Trustees who served on the committee to evaluate the current plan, 2002 - 2006, continued to serve on the new committee. These trustees were Barbara Brown, Carol Greenberg, John Nirenberg, Elizabeth Tannenbaum, Laurie Richards, and Sara Warner-Phillips. Community members Ronny Johnson and Ruth Unsicker were also asked to join.

Following the Public Library Association's, *Planning for Results* method, a "plan for the Plan" was developed. *Planning for Results* would encompass the following strategies:

- Prepare—Decide level of effort; develop timetable.
- Envision—Scan the library; survey the community; determine community needs.
- Design—Revise the service priorities; and revise mission.
- Build—Revise goals; develop and select objectives.
- Implement—Assess resources; identify activities; revisit choices.
- Communicate—Draft plan; obtain final approval; publish; and distribute.

The Committee figured the level of effort would be sustained over an 18-month period and decided early on to start information gathering. This was to be done in three parts: Information from staff; information from an open community forum; and information solicited widely through a library user survey that was accessible both in print and online.

Beginning in April 2006 the Library staff was surveyed using a tool called S.W.O.T.--Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. Using a S.W.O.T worksheet. Amy Howlett, Vermont Department of Libraries Regional Consultant, facilitated questions to get discussion going about the issues.

The major findings are: the Library's strengths are its collection, its trained staff, its technology which includes Internet and wireless capability; its strong local history and genealogy collection, its use as a community center, and its credibility in the community. The weaknesses identified were lack of quiet study area and adequate teen space; difficult parking access; the difficulty in maintaining support of technology; and the funding constraints from the Town.

Opportunities identified were the acceptance of new technology innovations by staff and trustees; support for free access to computers and the Internet; and the possibility of finding new funding sources, such as the Vermont Library Association's legislative initiative for direct state funding for libraries.

The threats listed were the fact that the new technology stretches staff time and operational budgets; that many current library users are leery of and confused by the new technology; that Town government may not understand the library's potential and its needs; and that the Library, as other Town departments, relies so heavily on the property tax funding, which cannot meet all of its needs.

The next step in our scan was to schedule a community forum. Individuals received personal invitations and the event was also advertised in the *Brattleboro Reformer* and other media. The meeting was facilitated again by Amy Howlett and a survey instrument was distributed to all who attended, which asked the following questions: which services are you familiar; which services do you use; which services might you use if you knew more about them. Participants were also asked to rank the services important to them, and which ones they thought were important to the community. Demographic information was also collected.

Nineteen community members attended the forum in June 2006 and the priorities suggested were:

- Accessibility—Making services and programs of the library accessible for all levels of the community.
- Space—Reorganizing space so that activity areas and private areas are more separate and distinct.
- Collection—Maintaining the physical, core collection of books and other nonprint formats, while insuring that the online resources are viable.
- Public relations—Selling the Library's mission to local government and to the public to help maintain financial support.
- Other— Recognizing and supporting staff; addressing patron concerns regarding patron confidentiality as it relates to the U.S. Patriot Act.

The next step in gathering information was a community-wide survey. The committee adapted a recent survey designed by the Howe Library in Hanover, NH. The following questions on library use were asked:

1. In an average year, how often do you use the library in person or online (www.brooks.lib.vt.us)?
2. How do you use the Brooks Memorial Library?

3. What are the most important roles for BML in our community?
4. Please rank your experience with the Library according to the following criteria: 1=poor; 2=unsatisfactory; 3=satisfactory; 4=excellent; 5=outstanding; n/a=don't use.
5. Which Brooks Memorial Library online features have you used? [online catalog; My Account features; "Ask-a-Librarian;" etc.]
6. How do you learn about library events? [newspaper; *Brooks Reader*; flyer; etc.]
7. Does the Library need more of...? [books; nonprint; computers; magazines; etc.]
8. What is your age? [0-14; 15-19; 20-50; 51-65; 66-up]¹
9. Are you currently? [employed, retired, student, other]

The survey was available both online and in print from August 1 through October 15, 2006. More than 460 people responded, of which 137 were nonresidents. The results showed that:

- The top reasons for Library use: borrow books and nonprint; use reference services and resources; view an exhibit or art work; read newspapers and magazines.
- The most important roles for BML: provide materials (books and other nonprint media); serve children and parents to encourage their interest in reading and learning; and deliver comprehensive information and reference services both on site and online.
- Ranking of Library services and resources: too many to list, but all categories were rated from mid-satisfactory for the collection to mid-excellent for staff.

The Planning Committee feels that the information elicited from the staff, the community forum, and the survey has provided it with an insight into community needs. That said, it should be acknowledged that there were some weaknesses and/or deficiencies in the survey and community forum. The process of eliciting community input must be constantly refined and new methods and events attempted in order to get more participation.

Major Challenges and Opportunities

In 2001, when the previous plan was conceived, there were two basic challenges identified: the technical challenges of updating our collection and refining and expanding services we offer the public; and maintaining the service levels and financial health of the institution.

In the past six years, these challenges were met by improving the Library's collections and addressing concerns over shelving space. The Trustees obtained a matching grant from the Thompson Trust for collection improvement, and matched it with funds raised from the Brattleboro community. In addition, the Vermont Public Library Foundation grants became available and these funds provided a windfall for BML that helped to expand the collection improvement project and also provided funds for nonprint purchases; furniture and shelving upgrades; two new circulation desks;

¹ The Planning Committee feels that better analysis of the survey results could have been done if the age group "20-50" and been broken down finer. Also, in the next iteration of the Plan, an attempt should be made to get more Library users involved in the community forum.

improvements in lighting; and cataloging of the special collections of fine arts objects and local history materials. A major computer system upgrade was also realized that brought the Library along to a state-of-the-art web catalog, making it much easier for Library users to access the resources from home.

According to *Plan 2002-2006*,

While the Freeman Grants will carry us along for the next few years the major challenge for the closing years of this plan and beyond may well be financial and not technical in nature. That said, any such challenge would engender opportunities to further explore the level of public support mentioned above, to review the way in which current staff is utilized and even to explore a greater usage of volunteer help.

The challenges for the next five years will be similar. The Library will again be faced with funding constraints from its primary support, tax funds through the Town of Brattleboro. In the FY 2008 budget, over \$10,000 was reduced from book, nonprint, and online resources. Our emphasis in the past seven years to both constrain the size of our collection through judicious weeding...provide quality, up-to-date resources in print, nonprint, and online formats will be difficult to continue. New funding sources will need to be identified for these collection improvement activities.

The staff and trustees of BML should watch the activities at the State level with the new study committee for State funding legislation promoted by the Vermont Library Association in 2007. Any funds from the legislature will enhance and not replace local funding, so maintenance of effort must be sustained.

In the near future the Library will also need to accommodate and take advantage of the new ways of using the web enabled by high-speed Internet connections, such as social networking sites and downloadable audio/video content, to address our users' needs in these areas. Providing this virtual access to content may also help meet the challenge of our limited shelving space, since we have simply run out of space for any type of physical growth in our collections.

Venturing into virtual spaces will also help us reach the millennial generation and younger, who are at risk of overlooking library resources. One of the challenges for this opportunity will be to integrate these services into our existing staff and/or recruit volunteers to do the same.

Parts of the Library's technology are aging, especially the Gates Foundation public-access computers, which are used to capacity every day. These workstations will need replacing in the next one or two years. An opportunity exploited several years ago was to take advantage of a donor's offer to install wi-fi service in the Library. The mezzanine tables are filled every day with wi-fi users, which takes pressure off the intensely used public-access computers. We will need to identify funding sources to help with the necessary hardware and software upgrades of the Gates Foundation computers.

The library as a venue of programs has been transformed in the past several years. Taking advantage of the opportunity offered by the Vermont Humanities Council to expand its successful *First Wednesdays* lecture series into southern Vermont, BML now

on the first Wednesday, October through May, closes its main reading room to traditional library services and reopens as a large lecture hall that attracts a full house for almost every event. The Friends of Brooks Memorial Library has been instrumental in providing the funds and raising funds from community corporate supporters for these lectures.

Library Service Priorities

The library service priorities, or goals, were formerly called *library service responses*, and are derived from the Public Library Association (PLA), which is a national organization that “...*enhances the development and effectiveness of public library staff and public library services....*”

In 2007, PLA revised the priorities into 17 different expressions of library usage. There is no magic number of service priorities a library can select. The number chosen is based on the resources available to the library and what they can manage.

Based on the data gathered in the planning process from staff, the Library Board, and the community, and using information gleaned from the survey, as well as examining various national and Vermont library trends, the Planning Committee adapted the 17 PLA service priorities and reduced them to 6 service priorities that the Committee felt best represented the primary usage at Brooks Memorial Library. The service priorities are:

1. Provide access to materials to read, view, and to listen for pleasure—BML users have resources to enhance their leisure time and any help necessary in choosing these resources. The resources may include books, magazines, nonprint media, digital materials, fine arts, and exhibits.
2. Answer questions, and help patrons find, evaluate, and use information—Library users will have available knowledgeable staff and sufficient online and print resources to answer questions on a wide array of topics and research interests. Users will also have access to information on critical issues that affect their lives
3. Create young readers and help support students—Library users in the pre-school years will have resources, programs, and services to help them read, write, and listen. K-12 students will have access to resources they need to succeed in school and to enrich their lives.
4. Connect to the online world—Library users will have high-speed/wireless access to the digital world to ensure that everyone can take advantage of the ever-growing digital resources through the Internet without restrictive economic or technological barriers.
5. Inform citizens for lifelong learning—Library users will have information they need to participate fully as global citizen and the resources needed to explore topics of personal interest to help them learn throughout their lives. The library will also be a source of information for community programs, services, and activities as well as a major source of Brattleboro local history and the primary source of genealogical information.

6. Provide access to welcoming physical and virtual spaces—Library users will have safe and comfortable physical spaces to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read. They will also have open and accessible library-oriented virtual social networking spaces.

Actions Supporting the Service Priorities

In each past Library plan, stretching back to 1991, there have been actions associated with the service priorities. The actions that implement the service priorities are developed by the library director and staff in consultation with the Planning Committee and ultimately are endorsed by the Library Board of Trustees. The actions to be completed for the next two years are as follows:

1. Evaluate Library users' suggestions for items to add to the collection, and purchase as available shelf space and budget funds will allow.
2. Promote programming in collaboration with other community organizations that will lead to higher usage of the Library and its resources.
3. Make it easier and more transparent to use the Library's web site and online catalog.
4. Provide training to staff in house or through workshops to enhance knowledge of the collection, both print and online.
5. Promote lectures and other life-long learning opportunities with community organizations that address the critical issues in the community, state, region, or world.
6. Insure acquisitions funds to support sufficient online and print resources.
7. Keep the juvenile picture book collection responsive and vital to users by weeding and replacing essential titles.
8. Keep the juvenile nonfiction collection responsive and vital to users by weeding and replacing essential titles. Sections considered will be those not reviewed since 2002.
9. Juvenile staff join CAYAL (Children and Young Adult Librarians Section) of the Vermont Library Association and attend at least one workshop in 2007-2008.
10. Recruit and hire Teen services employee to oversee the teen room and promote teen-oriented programs, such as a teen advisory board.
11. Promote new programming for children birth to 5 through the use of story hours, rhyme time, and other literacy activities.

12. Promote new programming for children 5 to 12 through the use of craft tables, games, performances, and other creative ways to lure parents and children to the Library.
13. Identify at least one local organization new to the Library with which to collaborate on new programming.
14. Produce a Welcome to Your Library orientation packet for new patrons.
15. Board of Trustees Technology Committee review and revise the BML Technology Plan and assess hardware, software, and bandwidth needs for the next five years.
16. Recruit volunteer(s) to offer training to the public on basic computer literacy skills such as email and web searching, and also social networking activities such as using a blog reader and blogging.
17. Increase awareness of the Library's electronic resources through print media such as newspaper articles in the *Reformer*, *Brattleboro Commons*, or *Vermont Observer*; or online postings RAMP, ibrattleboro.com, and BML's email list.
18. Promote the Library's electronic resources through the new Welcome to Your Library orientation packets.
19. Investigate the feasibility of using online chat or instant messaging (IM), or by having a Reference librarian presence on a social networking site, as a way to extend the Library's resources, especially to the digital generation.
20. Recruit volunteer(s) knowledgeable about virtual social networking sites to assist staff in designing, participating, and promoting social networking activities at the Library.
21. Continue to offer and promote the Vermont Humanities Council's First Wednesdays lecture series through 2008.
22. Inform the public by providing programming on critical local, national, and global issues.
23. Recruit a volunteer to assist the Library Director in all facets –planning, coordination, and publicity—of programming for adults.
24. Provide a site and equipment for citizens to access DVD recordings of Brattleboro Selectboard meetings.
25. With BCTV, explore the possibility of recording and distributing electronically all of the Library's educational programming.
26. Continue public art exhibits and, where feasible, host an art topic lecture on Gallery Walk night.

27. Actively promote Library resources by creating bibliographies, recommended reading lists, and displays by using the online catalog and the designated resource display area.
28. Promote the activities of BML and all Windham County libraries through web calendar Eventkeeper.
29. Insure that front-line staff is comfortable with basic hardware troubleshooting in order to assist patrons on public-access computers.
30. Insure that staff is comfortable with the newly revised Library Behavior Code through staff meetings and postings on staff blog.
31. Explore options for providing a space for the public for quiet study.
32. Enhance ability of users to self-navigate in the building by designing consistent style, font, and materials for all labels and signage where needed.
33. Enhance viewing of public art: Recover old display panels with new fabric; modify panels' feet for positioning at ends of the nonprint media shelving.
34. Enhance viewing of the Fine Arts collection by updating the walking tour brochure.
35. Update the appraisal of the Fine Arts collection for insurance purposes.
36. To better organize and protect stored fine arts objects, upgrade the storage room for more efficient use of space.

Assessment Process for Plan 2007-2011

In May of each year the Planning Committee will receive an assessment report from the Library Director, who will look at the progress of the service priorities and actions for the past year. The assessment will examine the status of the actions and identify those that were completed and what their outcomes were. The report will also identify those actions that should be revised for the following year. New actions in support of the service priorities also will be developed during this time by the Library Director and staff as part of the performance evaluation process.

This report will be reviewed by the Committee and then sent to the Library Board of Trustees in June, when a new cycle for the actions to support service priorities will be initiated.

Conclusion

Brattleboro has been blessed with a strong and committed public library service since 1882. This support should continue into the foreseeable future. Nationally, libraries came out on top when the public assessed the performance of local institutions. Forty-five percent give an "A" grade to their local community for maintaining well-run libraries.

More than 8 in 10 Americans believe that keeping library services free should be a very high priority. Having enough current books for children; enough reference materials; friendly, knowledgeable library staff; and good programs for children, adults, and teens are also considered absolute essentials for libraries.²

Libraries in the 21st century must grapple with the challenges presented by competing information sources and providers. Never before has there been such an array of digital forces that can both undercut and also enhance library services.

Google, Yahoo, Amazon, and Wikipedia will innovate and perhaps threaten certain library services. But there is a reason why Google Book Search is digitizing millions of books from the world's largest libraries. Most of the world's knowledge is still not accessible electronically. While the Internet complements libraries, it will not replace them. And surveys show that although users seem to trust search engines and seem to be accurate, libraries are seen as more trustworthy.

Further, surveys show that people believe the library "brand" is the book, which also accounts for a low awareness among the public of online library catalogs and other online resources. So libraries must do a better job at explaining and promoting these other digital value-added services that seem to be hidden to our users.³

As our services continue to support traditional library "book" activities, BML must also strive to embrace, define, and market the library's relevance in the changing and dynamic infosphere. We hope to do both in this Five-Year Plan: promote the book as well as the other formats, including online and digital, to meet the diverse needs of our community.

² *Long Overdue: A Fresh Look at Public Attitudes About Libraries in the 21st Century* (Americans for Libraries Council, 2006)

³ *Perceptions of Libraries and Information Resources : A Report to the OCLC Membership* (OCLC, Online Computer Library Center, 2005)

Appendices

Assessment of Plan 2002-2006

Brattleboro and Area Demographics

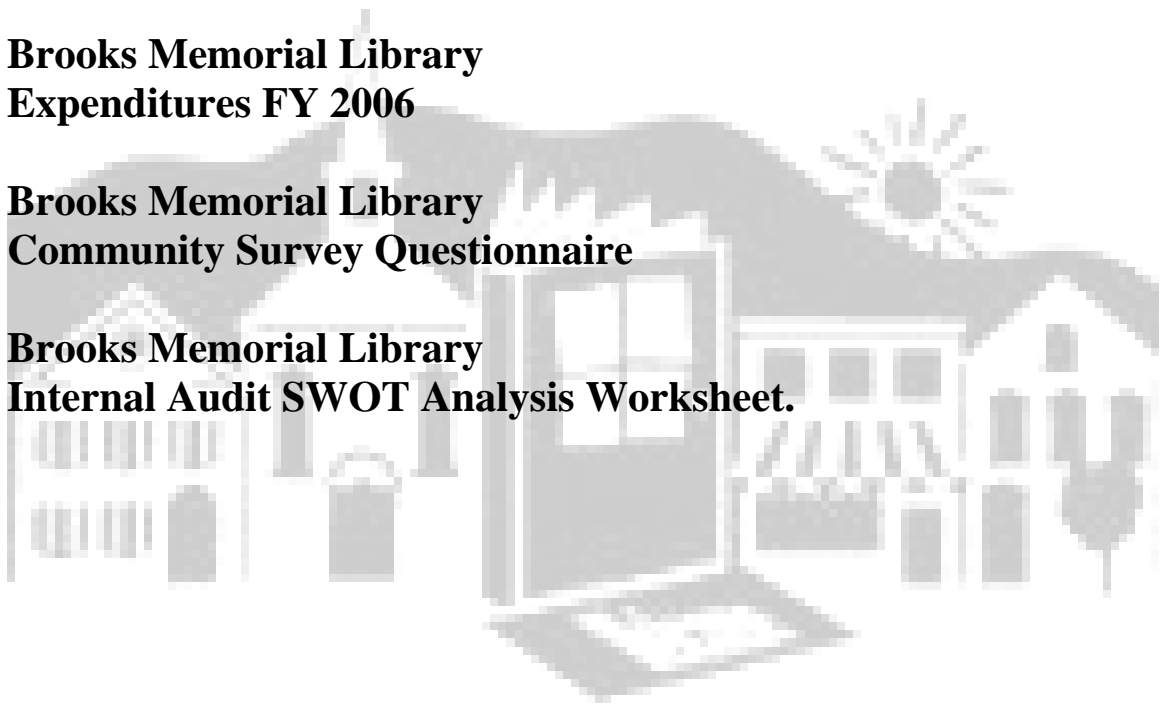
**Brooks Memorial Library
Statistical Profile—2002 to 2006**

**Brooks Memorial Library
Revenues FY 2006**

**Brooks Memorial Library
Expenditures FY 2006**

**Brooks Memorial Library
Community Survey Questionnaire**

**Brooks Memorial Library
Internal Audit SWOT Analysis Worksheet.**



Appendices

Assessment of the Plan 2002-2006

The 2002-2006 *Five Year Plan* was an ambitious and exciting document, outlining plans for a new multimedia center, an upgraded electronic catalog, continued improvement of the print and nonprint collections as well as the beginnings of establishing a Young Adult area. It was decided that a review of the Library's progress on a regular basis would keep the document active and the goals fresh. Guided by the Library's mission, the Library Director formulated new actions and objectives over the course of the plan, continuing the commitment to create tangible results from the *Five Year Plan's* goals. Below are highlights of the 2002-2006 plan's successes and challenges.

Goal 1: Library users of all ages will find the appropriate assistance and up-to-date, dependable resources for answering questions on a broad array of topics including, among others, business, careers, consumerism, health, applied science and technology, how-to, travel, language, literature, biography, history, genealogy, and the arts.

- Provided patrons, with training classes for using the Internet
 - >Electronic resources such as *Novelist* promoted
- Worked to reduce the copyright age of the collection, implementing a weeding and replacement schedule that is in place on an on-going basis.
 - >Replaced 24% of missing or lost non-fiction titles
- Replaced lost and damaged important fiction titles.
- Cataloged and made electronically accessible all local historical and genealogical resources that were not in the library's database.
- Cataloged and photographed Fine Arts collection.
- Cataloged Local history room and genealogical resources.
- Increased InterLibrary Loan service.
 - >BML became the largest public library lender in the ILL system in Vermont for both loaned and borrowed volumes

Goal 2: Library users of all ages will have adequate access to popular recreational reading for pleasure as well as resources – both print and electronic – concerning topics of current interest to stimulate their thinking and satisfy their need for information.

- Purchased new display units for non-print resources.
- Made web catalog available with lists of new titles, including the web catalog's Hot Title's feature.
- Added five new databases to the Library's resources, including the *Oxford English Dictionary* and *Books In Print*.
- Developed a Teen area, increased YA titles, improved shelving, and increased YA materials' transactions by 100 transactions per month.
- Hired a Teen Outreach Coordinator.
- Continued to repair or replace worn editions of high demand missing titles as funds allowed.
- Increased inventory of audio, video, and musical CDs. Goal was to increase by 50%.
 - >The inventory was increased from 3489 to 5234 items.

- Developed a system online to track ILL and patron's request status.

Goal 3: Library users of all ages will have opportunities to help them develop skills to access and evaluate both print and electronic resources.

- Promote BML as a place to learn the Internet.
 - >Developed and presented workshops for using new databases, using new Multi-media Room.
 - >Developed and presented workshops for using the Library's selection of online resources.
- Upgraded the Library catalog to include a web based interface.
- Trained staff to use new web-based Library system.
- Trained staff to use new online databases and resources.
- Continued to monitor staff knowledge and update trainings for new resources as necessary.
- Upgraded the Meeting Room as part of a grant, converting it into a multimedia center.

Goal 4: Library users of all ages will have access to programs, services, materials, art exhibits, and informational displays to enhance their love of learning. The Library will provide opportunities for artists and organizations in the community to display art and information.

- Promoted programs for all ages, though the goal of promoting up to 100 new programs was not achieved due to budget constraints.
- Developed new programs using the capabilities of the new Multi-media Room.
- Was chosen as the Windham County venue for the *First Wednesdays* Programs sponsored by the Vermont Humanities Council.
- Did not achieve goal of promoting 2 new teen programs because of budgeting constraints.
- Collaborated with organizations (new to the library), including Alliance for Building Communities, United Way of Windham County, Windham Childcare Association, home-schooling groups, the Brattleboro Literary Festival, and many others.

Goal 5: The Library will provide a safe and welcoming place where individuals and organizations will have access to bulletin boards and meeting spaces.

- Improved lighting in stacks, study areas, stairwells, and the Multimedia Room.

Brattleboro and Area Demographics

Brattleboro, with a population of just under 12,000, is the seventh largest urban area in the nation's most rural state. It is the first town encountered by those entering the state by I-91 from the south or by Route 9 from the east.

Located on the west bank of the Connecticut River, it occupies a series of terraces and hills rising to the west and the riverine valleys formed by the Connecticut and West Rivers and the Whetstone Brook.

Since its settlement in the last half of the 18th century, Brattleboro has benefited from the communication and transportation opportunities provided by the two rivers and later by the railroads and highways that were built alongside them. Together with the water power provided by the Whetstone, they enabled the town to develop a mixed economy based on agriculture, light industry (with some emphasis on printing and book making), and tourism. Today, agriculture does not play much of a role in the town's economic life and light industry is no longer a growing factor. Like many towns in the state and much of the Northeast Brattleboro relies more and more on tourism and the commercial and service sectors.

Brattleboro is the marketing, employment and cultural center for much of Windham County, and Brattleboro's economy is strongly affected by what happens in the rest of the county. Both the town and the county have shown a decrease in population during the first five years of this century while the state as a whole has enjoyed a small increase. The declines are not statistically significant, but they do take on added meaning when compared to recent trends. The county gained 6% in population during the previous decade (1990 to 2000) while the town's population has been slowly but steadily decreasing since the 1970s. In addition, the percentage of the population over 65 is higher in Brattleboro at 16% than it is for the county (14%) or the state (12%).

Brattleboro's population also is highly transient in nature and has a low degree of racial diversity. In the 2000 census, 32% of the residents reported that they had been living in a different town or city within the last five years and 54% indicated they had been born outside the state. In addition, over 96% claimed a racial background of "white."

From 1995 to 2004 there has been a net loss in private-sector jobs in the county. While the loss was less than 1%, it does reflect a reversal of the previous slow but measurable job growth.

In 2005 the median Adjusted Gross Income (income less allowed deductions) for those filing income tax returns in Brattleboro was \$25,629 while for the state it was \$30,141. By contrast, in the surrounding towns it was \$38,410 in Vernon, \$35,627 in Dummerston, \$33,852 in Marlboro, \$31,352 in Guilford, and \$27,510 in Putney. With the exception of Marlboro, these towns comprise the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union (WSESU) and as such share overall school administration and a union high school. They are also the towns with which Brattleboro shares the closest political, economic and social ties.

During the past five years (2000 – 2005), the percentage of children in the area served by the WSESU under five years of age who are living in poverty has risen from 12% to 15%, while the rates for the county and the state have held even in the 10% range. In 1999 the percentage of children in families receiving food stamps was 14.9% for the WSESU, the county, and the state. Today that percentage is 12.1% for the state, 13.7% for the county and 16.3% for the WSESU. Currently, 42% of the children who attend the Green Street School, 51% of those at the Academy School, and 63% of those at the Oak Grove School qualify for free and reduced lunch rates. To qualify the child must come from a family that is at or below 130% of the federal poverty level.

Based on figures from the Vermont Housing Council Windham County has the second highest housing costs in the state. It trails only Chittenden County (and the Burlington Metropolitan area that is accounted for separately).

Brattleboro has long valued the benefits of a quality education and provides generously for its public school system. While 15% of the population over 18 (based on the 2000 census) have not received a high school diploma, 18% have a bachelor's degree, and another 13% have a graduate or professional degree.

Based on the foregoing, several conclusions present themselves.

1. The economy of the county and the town are growing at a slower rate than in the past and slower than in the state and the nation as a whole. With a declining population the town's median Adjusted Gross Income has slipped further behind that of the state. The percentage of children living near or below the poverty level has increased markedly in the past five years.
2. Any additional slowdown in the economy coupled with the current high property-tax rate (still at or near the highest in the state), and the stagnant grand list, will make it increasingly difficult to raise additional funds to support the Library and other Town services through tax dollars.
3. There will continue to be a growing demand for the services that the Library provides. The low median Adjusted Gross Income for the town and percentage of children under the poverty level indicates that a significant proportion of the population is severely restricted in its ability to privately access many of the services (books, Internet access, etc.) that BML offers.
4. The Library will continue, of necessity, to rely on the town for its basic budgetary needs. As the Town faces increasing pressure on its tax base BML could well find itself facing a relative decline in the financial support from the town. As it seeks to respond to such an eventuality, one resource could well be the 31% of the population with a Bachelor's degree or advanced degree. This segment of the population should contain a higher proportion of both those who appreciate the role of the Library in the community and those with the ability to provide additional support.⁴

⁴ U. S. Census Bureau – Profile of Demographic Characteristics maps.vcgi.org – Brattleboro Profile
Vermont Housing Council – Between a Rock and a Hard Place, Housing and Wages in Vermont 2002.

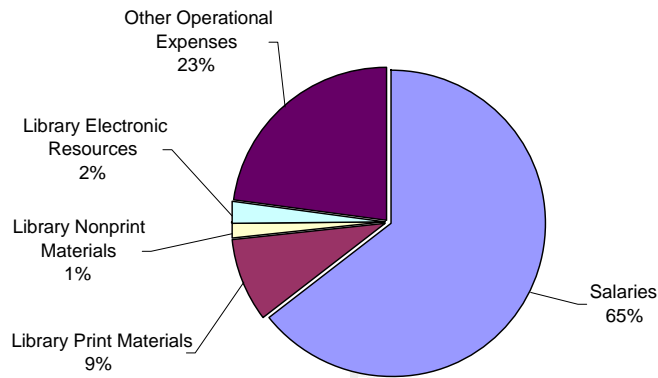
NOTES



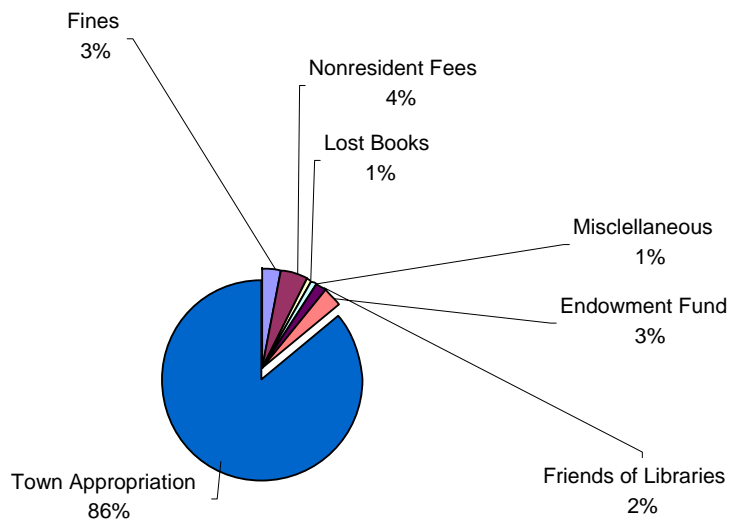
BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY STATISTICAL PROFILE 2002-2006

YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
BOOK VOLUMES					
NUMBER IN LIBRARY JAN 1	70,722	71,237	66,700	67,793	70,016
ACCESSIONED DURING THE YEAR	4,962	5,364	4,759	3,910	3,128
BOOKS WITHDRAWN	(4,447)	(9,901)	(3,666)	(1,687)	(3,056)
NUMBER IN LIBRARY DEC 31	71,237	66,700	67,793	70,016	70,088
NON-PRINT MEDIA					
NUMBER IN LIBRARY JAN 1	3,975	4,335	5,229	5,957	6,310
ACCESSIONED DURING THE YEAR	545	1,014	898	666	440
NUMBER WITHDRAWN	(185)	(120)	(170)	(313)	(330)
NUMBER IN LIBRARY DEC 31	4,335	5,229	5,957	6,310	6,420
CIRCULATION					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
ADULT & YOUNG ADULT BOOKS	87,510	87,707	90,639	88,866	88,656
ADULT & YOUNG ADULT NON-PRINT	N/A	N/A	N/A	25,913	24,929
JUVENILE BOOKS	54,698	55,187	52,053	50,333	55,790
JUVENILE NONPRINT	N/A	N/A	N/A	13,384	13,474
MAGAZINES	6,663	6,553	5,413	7,093	7,145
NON-PRINT[VIDEOS, AUDIO-CASSETTES, PHONO,CD,DVD]	26,879	32,604	39,152	above	above
TOTAL CIRCULATION AS OF DEC 31	175,750	182,051	187,257	185,589	189,994
ACTIVE REGISTRATIONS SINCE 1/1/2004					
					2006
BRATTLEBORO ADULT	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	5,269
BRATTLEBORO JUVENILE	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	1,021
BRATTLEBORO YOUNG ADULT	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	101
NONRESIDENT	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	1,174
OTHER[COMPUTER USE, LIBRARIES]	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	308
TOTAL ACTIVE REGISTRATIONS DEC 31	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	XXXXXXXX	7,873
MISCELLANEOUS STATISTICS					
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
REFERENCE QUESTIONS	12,984	15,049	18,100	19,673	20,738
VISITS TO LIBRARY	N/A	N/A	N/A	149,154	176,857
VISITS TO LIBRARY'S WEB SITE	N/A	N/A	N/A	25,656	30,897
ONLINE CATALOG SEARCHES	N/A	N/A	N/A	133,962	135,073
ONLINE DATABASES SEARCHES[REMOTE & IN-HOUSE]	14,706	22,093	25,983	35,750	49,216
PUBLIC INTERNET COMPUTER[# OF HOURS]	9,134	10,463	10,389	10,541	9,394
ATTENDANCE AT LIBRARY PROGRAMS	N/A	N/A	3,491	7,071	8,553
VOLUNTEER HOURS	1,832	2,088	2,570	2,749	3,198

BML Expenditures FY 2006



BML Revenue FY 2006

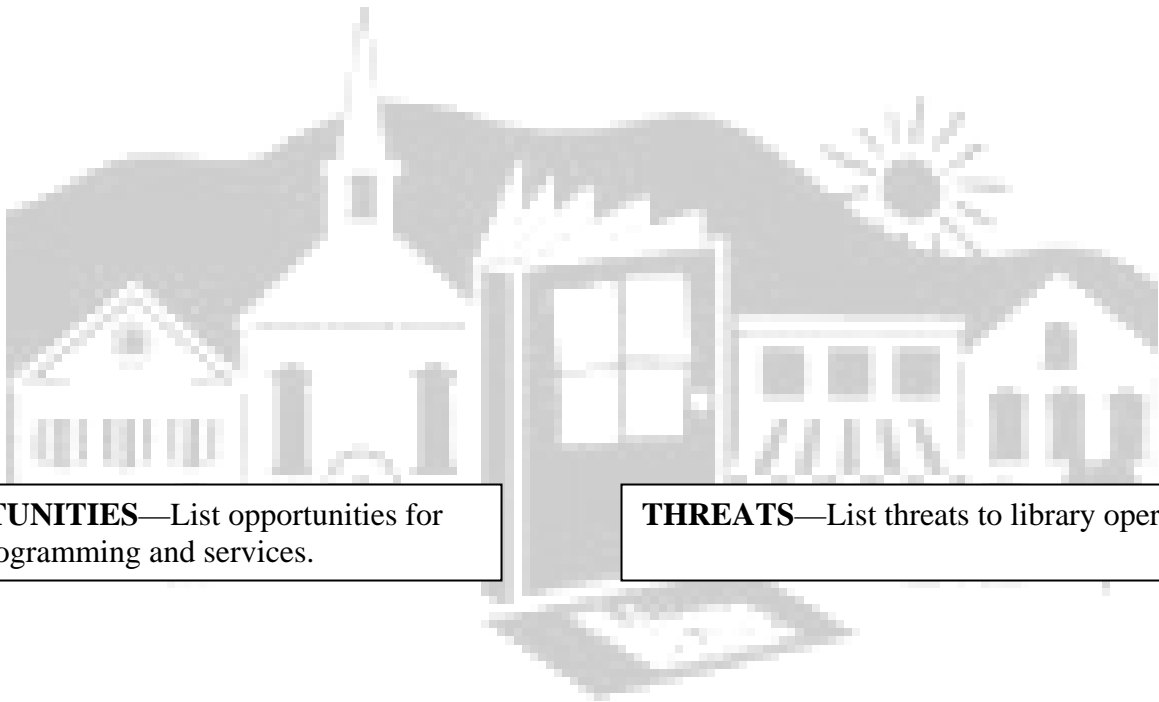


**INTERNAL LIBRARY AUDIT
SWOT ANALYSIS WORKSHEET**

STRENGTHS—List positive characteristics of the library

WEAKNESSES—List negative characteristics of the library

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OPPORTUNITIES—List opportunities for library programming and services.

THREATS—List threats to library operation

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Brooks Memorial Library Community Survey

REVISING THE LIBRARY'S FIVE YEAR PLAN, 2007-2011

The library's current third five year plan, 2002-2006, is being updated this year and library stakeholders can help with input on the current services the library offers.

Library Trustees conducted a community forum on Thursday, June 8 for this input. If you were unable to attend the forum please help us by completing the following survey.

The Trustees' Planning Committee will use this data to help them revise the roles, goals, and objectives the staff and trustees will emphasize in the upcoming years.

- The current five year plan has been updated each year since 2003. The plan and annual assessments are available on the library's web site,
<http://www.brooks.lib.vt.us/library.htm#fiveyear>.

**PLEASE RETURN TO BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY OR COMPLETE SURVEY
ONLINE AT www.brooks.lib.vt.us, AND CLICK ON [LIBRARY COMMUNITY
SURVEY](#)**

**1. In an average year, how often do you use the library in person or online
(www.brooks.lib.vt.us)?**

IN PERSON

- a. 1 to 5 times
- b. 6 to 9 times
- c. 10 to 20 times
- d. >20 times
- e. > 50 times
- f. not at all

ONLINE

- g. 1 to 5 times
- h. 6 to 9 times
- i. 10 to 20 times
- j. >20 times
- k. > 50 times
- l. not at all

2. How do you use the Brooks Memorial Library? Circle all that apply.

b. Availability of library materials 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ n/a ___
Please comment:

c. Library staff 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ n/a ___
Please comment:

d. Online catalog 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ n/a ___
Please comment:

e. Other Library databases 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ n/a ___
Please comment:

f. Signs (information/direction) in the library 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ n/a ___
Please comment:

g. Reference services 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ n/a ___
Please comment:

h. Interlibrary loan services 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ n/a ___
Please comment:

i. Public access Internet computers 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ n/a ___
Please comment:

j. Library sponsored programs (lectures; reading/discussion; children's or teen programs)
1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ n/a ___
Please comment:

k. Comfortable library environment 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 ___ 4 ___ 5 ___ n/a ___
Please comment:

5. Which Brooks Memorial Library online features have you used? Circle all that apply.

- a. Online catalog
- b. My Account feature of the catalog
- c. "Kids Catalog Web"
(special catalog interface for children)
- d. "Ask a Librarian"
- e. Library online databases
- f. Library online calendar
- g. Children's Room page
- h. Library RSS feed
- i. Library teen blog
- j. Contact Library staff member
- k. None
- l. Other?

Please Comment:



6. How do you learn about library events? Circle all that apply.

a. Newspaper article or advertisement

e. Word of mouth

b. *The Brooks Reader* (Friends of Library newsletter)

f. Radio/BCTV

c. Poster / flyer

g. Other? Please Specify:

d. Library website

7. Does the library need more...? CIRCLE THE 4 OF HIGHEST SIGNIFICANCE to you.

a. Computers

f. Magazines

b. Books

g. Library programs

c. DVDs/Video

h. Meeting areas

d. Audiobook CDs

i. User assistance

e. Music CD's

j. Other? Please Specify:

8. What is your age? 0-14 15-19 20-50 51-65 66-up

9. Are you currently...? Employed Retired Student Other

10. Do you have a Brooks Memorial Library card? Yes No

11. What is your town of residence? _____

12. Please add any other general comments you would like to express about the library and its services.

Use additional sheet if necessary.

MAIL SURVEY BACK TO BROOKS MEMORIAL LIBRARY, 224 MAIN ST.,
BRATTLEBORO VT 05301,

OR

DROP OFF AT THE LIBRARY BY SEPTEMBER 30, 2006.

THANK YOU FOR TAKING OUR SURVEY

