



FORBES LIBRARY LONG RANGE PLAN

2007-2011

Northampton, Massachusetts

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Contact information:

Janet Moulding

Library Director

Forbes Library

Northampton, MA 01060

413-587-1016

CONTENTS

Mission Statement	Page 3
Introduction	Page 4
Methodology	Page 4
Acknowledgements	Page 6
Community Description	Page 7
Library Description	Page 9
Needs Assessment	Page 10
Goals, Objectives, and Activities	Page 14

MISSION STATEMENT

Forbes Library exists to provide a wide range of information and materials to all of the people of Northampton, using traditional and innovative technology, and to encourage and support the civic, intellectual, and cultural pursuits of the community. It strives to meet these objectives with continuous sensitivity to the changing needs of the community, and adapts its services to meet these needs. The Library also provides a friendly physical environment which can serve as a community meeting place and in which it encourages curiosity, free inquiry and lifelong learning; and endeavors to make the community aware of its resources and services.



Charles Edward Forbes endowed a library “to place within reach of the inhabitants of a town, in which I have lived long and pleasantly, the means of learning, if they are disposed to learn.” The library was opened in 1894 and serves as the public library for Northampton.

INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes a ten-month planning process during which an elaborate effort was made to assess the desires and expectations of the Northampton community for excellence in library services. The Long Range Plan contains the goals and objectives for library development in the next five years that reflect this interactive process. The Long Range Planning Committee sought to place the Library in the context of social and economic changes in Northampton and to recommend appropriate changes in Library policies, especially in the areas of community outreach, public access, and collection development.

Forbes Library opened in 1894 as a result of a bequest in the will of Judge Charles E. Forbes. Judge Forbes' vision for the Library remains in the foreground of planning its services: "It has been my aim to place within reach of the inhabitants of [the] town...the means of learning, if they are disposed to learn, the marvelous development of modern thought and to enable them to judge of the destiny of the race on scientific evidence, rather than on metaphysical evidence alone. The importance of education of the people cannot be overrated...."

By virtue of the will of President Calvin Coolidge, Forbes Library is also the repository for many of the papers and artifacts of the 30th President of the United States. In addition, the Library houses an important historical archive for Northampton (founded 1654) and Hampshire County.

The Library has evolved over 112 years into a major cultural center for the Northampton and regional communities, dedicated to improving the quality of life for all residents. It is distinguished by its architecturally handsome 19th C. building and an interior beautifully refurbished in 2001. The Library provides sources of current information, resources for learning and recreation, technical services, and programs serving a great variety of interests, frequently collaborating with schools and public service institutions.

METHODOLOGY

The Forbes Library Board of Trustees initiated the planning process with the appointment of a Long Range Planning Committee, chaired by library trustee Peter Rowe, charged with the development of a five-year plan. The committee was composed of library staff Janet Moulding, Lisa Downing, Hillary Garrett, Suzy Hoyt, Towle Leichliter, Adam Novitt, and Brian Tabor and community members Joan Cenedella, Marjorie Hess, Louise Kanus, and Laura Reed all of whom had a strong interest in Forbes.

The committee began its work in January 2006 and met at least monthly through August, with considerable e-mail communication between meetings. The PLA planning process, "*The New Planning for Results*," was used as a guide with modifications. From the start, the Long Range Planning Committee determined that this plan should be a community-

driven document. A subcommittee worked intensively to develop a comprehensive community survey, which became available both in paper and in online formats. It was also adapted as a telephone survey, which was conducted on two evenings. Copies of the survey were available not only in the library, but also at the Senior Center, the City Hall, some schools and several local places of business. A Spanish translation was also printed. The overall response to all of these efforts was gratifying. Close to 700 responses were received. A press release and good newspaper coverage helped our cause.

In addition to the survey, two public forums were held and two focus groups were conducted, the latter led by a professional consultant who volunteered for that purpose. One of the focus groups was for library staff members and the other was for invited community stakeholders representing city government, local media, educators and civic and business interests.

A senior Smith College student was hired to produce a statistical compilation of the survey results. Also, because the survey allowed for considerable additional comment, and Northampton residents were “vocal” in this respect, these remarks were captured in a separate summary document.

Yet another significant method to obtain community input was an outreach effort. Each member of the committee assumed the responsibility to interview by telephone or in person representative individuals in Northampton to obtain their views of library services and how they saw the library’s future development, especially with reference to their own organizations. Some of those interviewed were the Mayor, radio hosts, newspaper reporters, Girl Scout leaders, School Superintendent, Smith College library, Casa Latina, Council on Aging, etc.

In addition to these methods, the committee also looked at Northampton’s municipal profile to gather information on demographics, economics, and educational levels. The city’s website provided further information on the city’s Vision Statement and its current emphasis on a Sustainable Northampton – all of which provided some context for the Long Range Plan.

Taking all the data input from all of the above sources, a subcommittee identified needs and developed five major goals for the long range plan. Following a review by the entire committee, these were presented to the Forbes Library Board of Trustees in June. Upon approval, the committee went to work on objectives and activities, which were approved by the Trustees in July. Early in August, the library issued a press release, which drew an interview by the local newspaper. This gave the library the opportunity of reporting to the community the essential themes resulting from the survey data and an update on the plan’s progress.

Various members of the committee volunteered to write drafts of the narrative sections of the plan, e.g., introduction, community and library descriptions, needs assessment,

methodology and calendar. These were reviewed by the entire committee before inclusion in the final document.

In September the completed plan was presented to the Trustees for final approval before submission to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

The development of this long range plan was notable for two things: the extent of the input from a community that clearly loves its library, but wants it to be even better, and the considerable efforts of a committee, all of whose members were fully committed to actively going about the work of planning the future of Forbes Library.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Among the many who offered invaluable assistance to make this document possible, the Long Range Planning Committee would like to acknowledge:

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public library

COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

The City of Northampton is situated between the Connecticut River and the foothills of the Berkshires, 20 miles north of Springfield. Northampton is a small city with slightly more than 29,000 residents; it is the county seat of Hampshire County, and incorporates the villages of Florence and Leeds. Northampton offers a “sophisticated rural lifestyle” and has been voted “Number One Small Arts Community in America” by author John Villani and has been recognized as one of the top 25 arts destinations in the country by *American Style Magazine*. Northampton was the home of Abolitionist Sojourner Truth, President Calvin Coolidge, and the fiery Puritan preacher, Jonathan Edwards.

Northampton is a noted vibrant cultural center and retains an active, walkable urban core that attracts visitors and locals alike. The town center, located close to Forbes Library, has a wide selection of restaurants, shops, and theaters including the only municipally-owned theater in the state. The city center has many fine art galleries and Forbes is within walking distance of the Smith College Museum of Art. Northampton is noted for its large number of locally-owned businesses--many situated along its historic Main Street. The city is also served by the recently-renovated Lilly Library in Florence.

Northampton is located at the heart of the Five College Area with Smith College, the noted women's college, located directly across West Street from Forbes Library. Its proximity to the five colleges affords residents access to world-class educational opportunities, entertainment, and cultural activities that belie its rural setting. Many of these activities are underwritten by the colleges and are often offered free or at low cost. Northampton is a culturally rich, tolerant, and pleasant place to live. It is often known by its moniker “Paradise City” conferred on it by opera singer Jenny Lind in 1851. That this name has endured for over 150 years is not by accident.

Demographics:

Northampton closely follows Commonwealth norms. Its residents' earnings average \$24,022 compared to the Commonwealth average of \$25,952. The median household income is \$41,808--lower than the state median of \$50,502. About 63.5% of city

residents are employed in service industries, which include education and health care. The retail trade employs 14.6% of the population

Northampton's racial profile is 91.14% white compared to the Commonwealth average of 90.01% white. Other groups are represented in similar proportions to the constituency of the Commonwealth - 1.67% black and 4.1% Hispanic population as compared to 2.08% and 5.24% for the Commonwealth. Northampton's current median age is 37 with 17% of the population being under the age of 18 and 13.8% over the age of 65.

Notable Facts and Trends:

Northampton residents tend to be very highly educated. They are roughly twice as likely to have completed postgraduate work than Commonwealth residents in general. In fact, they are more likely to have completed a graduate or professional degree (25%) than to have completed a Bachelor's degree alone (21.1%).

The city has undergone tremendous increases in local property values recently. Most Northampton residents could not afford to purchase the house that they live in on their current income. As a result, Northampton now has a significant affordable housing gap. (The federal government considers housing affordable when it accounts for no more than 30% of household income.)

The rise in property values has led to a significant increase in conversion of rental units into condominiums, further increasing pressure on the rental market. Northampton has a vacancy rate of less than 5% on both unrented rental properties and houses for sale. Currently, rental costs are at or slightly above the means of the affordable mark for median income of city residents, according to the 2005 Northampton SDAT: Building Economic and Land Use Sustainability plan.

The increase in property values is also skewing age demographics as older people with higher incomes and more savings move into town. The age group 45-55, has increased by over 85% in the past 20 years, according to the city's Community Quality Indicators report, while the age group 15-34 has significantly decreased. If current trends continue, this has the capacity to reshape the demographics of the city towards the higher wage earning 45-55 year - olds and towards gentrification in general. City planners have worked to create guidelines that will bolster what affordable housing exists by enacting dense zoning in the downtown area and by adopting mixed use zoning when building out new areas.

Northampton residents have always shown great interest in the environment and civic life. They recently passed the Community Preservation Act at the higher 2% surcharge rate, achieved a Tree City U.S.A. status from the National Arbor Day Foundation, and received an award for having citizens sign up for New England Greenstart, whereby residents pay a higher electricity rate to generate their power from renewable resources. In addition, the city has been acquiring land for preservation in excess of its goals. Northampton is in the midst of an ambitious sustainability planning process. All of this points to a community that values quality of life and is willing to support those values

fiscally and to organize around them socially. The Forbes Library fits well in this context and, as such, benefits from broad community support.

LIBRARY DESCRIPTION

The Forbes Library, situated near Northampton's popular downtown, opened in 1894, as a result of a bequest by Judge Charles E. Forbes, who wished to build a public library for the citizens of Northampton. The massive three-story stone building, which is on the Register of Historic Buildings, was designed by William Brocklesby to be completely fire proof with all steel framing and stone, slate, and copper exterior. A complete renovation of the interior was finished in 2001, accentuating many of the Forbes' unique features, such as the glass mezzanine floors, expansive spaces, and the Guastavino arches which actually support the second floor.

The first Librarian of Forbes was Charles Ammi Cutter, who previously created the Cutter Expansive Classification System while he was Librarian at the Boston Athenaeum. He implemented his system at Forbes Library, which is one of only five libraries in the world still using the Cutter System. Originally the library for the newly founded Smith College across the street, Forbes still maintains a close connection to its collegiate neighbor as well as to the vibrant town of Northampton. Northampton is home to two independent public libraries. Lilly Library with its own board of trustees, endowments, and charter is located in the Florence neighborhood of Northampton. Both libraries share city and state library support and their combined hours fulfill the state requirement for certification. Lilly Library is smaller and therefore more efficient to operate, but the libraries cooperate in as many ways as possible. Both are members of the resource sharing network of CWMARS and the Western Massachusetts Regional Library System (WMRLS) by which they share resources with all libraries in the region. Forbes and Lilly coordinate some programming, support each other's initiatives, and share certain resources, such as customer training workshops. Forbes Library depends upon the city for its operating budget, but its entire materials budget is supplied by endowment funds and library fundraising. The library received a construction grant from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners in 1998 which in part paid for the interior renovation. The library has received several humanities grants, preservation grants, local targeted grants for programs, and significant support from the Friends of Forbes Library. The Trustees have initiated an annual fund drive which will begin in the fall of 2006.

The Forbes collections and services are large and varied, including not only popular fiction and non-fiction, museum passes, large arts and music and children's departments, community meeting rooms, and an impressive art gallery, but also an extensive local history and genealogy collection for Hampshire County as well as the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum. Forbes also offers Northampton an array of programming and reference services for both children and adults, ranging from author readings, to music and dance demonstrations, dramatic readings and performances, to writing workshops, book and poetry discussion groups, garden tours, and film series. There is a meeting room and community room available for public use. Forbes was one

of the first public spaces offering free 24/7 wi-fi access and circulating laptops to the community. Catering to underserved populations of the community, Forbes offers an Outreach Program which delivers materials to nursing homes and the homebound. The reference department presents programs to community groups to connect them to the library's many targeted services. The library's website is extensive and heavily used with remote access databases and reference links.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Forbes Library is highly utilized; of the 46 libraries in our statewide population group, it ranks 10th in circulation statistics and 9th in attendance and reference questions answered. Forbes is well regarded by the community, both by those who use it and those who do not. Information derived from community surveys and focus groups reinforces the fact that the Library is recognized as an important cultural and educational resource. However, Forbes Library has also identified several ways to improve user experience, increase the degree to which the needs and interests of the community guide the growth and development of library services, and increase the awareness of library resources in the community at large.

The first stated goal, "All users will experience Forbes as welcoming, responsive and satisfying," recognizes that a trip to a library is more than just borrowing books. Improving user experience should include better signage which will increase patrons' understanding of Forbes' unique Cutter classification system. The Library also plans to improve the telecommunications system and create better brochures and pathfinders to help patrons. This forthcoming improvement in communication was inspired in large part by feedback from staff at focus groups which recognized the frustrations that patrons experience when using the Library.

Forbes Library also seeks to improve customer service delivered by the staff. Generally, the public views Forbes' staff quite favorably, with 46% of patrons rating staff knowledge excellent and 41% rating it good. Many patrons also found staff friendly, with 37% rating friendliness excellent and 34% rating it good. There were, however, some troubling comments from the public forum and focus groups as well as some unfavorable comments on surveys. Examples include: "In my family's opinion, {customer service} is the biggest problem at Forbes" and "The staff seems too harried and overwhelmed a lot of the time." It is important to note that the majority of comments reported favorably on staff, but that Forbes takes these perceived shortcomings very seriously and will attempt to address them.

Other needs that may be less visible to the public include internal changes such as organizational restructuring to achieve better resource sharing within the Library. This involves improved staff training as well as cross training, which will improve user experience by creating seamless access to resources. The Library ranks 6th out of 46 for professional librarians per capita in our statewide population group. Forbes has the second largest collection of a library serving a community of our size. It has extensive

specialized collections in the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum, Hampshire Room for Local History, and an image archives. All of these resources are spread out in a sprawling 42,000 square foot building. Forbes new Information Services team will bring together its superb staff and collections to better serve its patrons, 57.9% of whom indicated that the reason they come to the Library is to conduct research and receive assistance.

This first goal also incorporates a variety of repairs and improvements to the historic building that will benefit patrons by making the building more accessible and insuring the preservation of the collections. The library has been in the process of major building envelope repairs for the last two years. These repairs have been identified as high priority by architects and engineers as a necessity to stabilize and preserve the exterior walls which will also protect the interior from water damage.

In 2005 the city installed parking meters in the library's lot. This was done primarily as a tool to control parking after years of complaints from patrons who could not find a place to park. Downtown shoppers and others often used the lot for long periods. With the implementation of the meters the parking shortage has been solved. However, patrons continue to be dissatisfied with the parking situation. Fifteen percent (15%) of people who listed a frustration mentioned parking. We are planning to make the building more accessible and the parking less frustrating through changes such as installing an exterior book drop and adding a second free 10-minute parking spot for quick in-and-out visits.

The second goal's purpose is to allow the needs of the community to guide the development and improvement of library services. There was an overwhelming response in the survey asking for more hours of operation, especially evening and weekend hours. The number one cause of frustration for patrons who responded to the community survey indicated that the current library hours are insufficient and 25% said that the reason they don't use the library is because the hours are not convenient. The library plans to respond by adding Sunday hours into our regular schedule and increasing evening hours incrementally. Also, regularizing the schedule over the course of the week will help patrons who commented on the "arbitrary" and "confusing" weekly schedule.

The public also wanted more programming and workshops, including film series, visiting scholars, and a general increase in exciting programs for all age groups. During the course of the past three years, programming at the library has increased by 200% and the response has been overwhelming. Attendance at programs has gone up by 134% in that same time period. Many of these people are new to the library and we have seen a corresponding increase in new cards and circulation statistics as a result.

Outreach is a very high priority for those who completed the survey. It found its way as a topic into every question. Outreach included bringing non-users into the library and considering the needs of minorities. One way we are planning to respond is to involve more of the community in programs by inviting organizations and businesses to present programs at the library and by creating targeted programming for populations like teens, Spanish-speaking, and the recently retired.

The library needs to develop a stronger partnership with the schools, especially since only the high school has a professional librarian. The other schools in the district are lacking a librarian to teach library and research skills. A joint position for a librarian to work both at the schools and at Forbes Library during after school hours would greatly improve collaboration. The library plans to invite teachers to the library for tours as well as expand upon the library orientation programs the library is currently offering for kindergarten, 2nd and 4th grade classes. We are also exploring the feasibility of barcoding school IDs and making parking provisions for students visiting the library.

Technology demands have dramatically increased. Twenty-two (22%) of survey respondents indicated that the number one reason they use the library is to use a computer and to access the internet. Almost eight percent (7.8%) said the reason they do not use the library is because there are not enough computers. We heard, too, from many people who would like computer training on such topics as how to use the internet and how to conduct research using the electronic databases. Almost 70% of the people who completed the survey indicated that they had high speed internet access at home, and 36% said that access to the databases from home or office was one of the most important aspects of the library. We need to continue to increase our offerings of technologies such as downloadable books and videos, research databases, and a content rich website to meet their needs.

Forbes has always been a community center and we intend to expand that role. A comfortable atmosphere was ranked as the most important aspect of the library in our survey, followed closely by the attractiveness of the interior. We have included plans to

I would love to see Forbes become even more of a community resource. I can easily imagine meeting friends at a coffee spot on the grounds there, and the idea that kids could come to do homework with some guidance or to use a teen drop-in center sounds great.

-- Comment from survey

pursue adding a café to the library as well as a teen space. These unique destinations would broaden the appeal of the library. At the same time it is clear that we need to maintain quiet spaces for people to read and research at the library. Quiet reading areas were rated as most important by 44% of the people who took our survey.

The recent addition of the Friends of Forbes Community Room is an example of how Forbes Library is transforming itself to become more of a

community center. During 2006, with a generous donation from the Friends of Forbes Library, we were able to renovate a space on the ground level as a meeting room that can accommodate up to fifty people. Besides being used for library programs it is also available for the public to use to hold meetings and other kinds of community gatherings.

Forbes needs to find additional ways to increase its involvement with local organizations, building bridges with schools and cultural, social and business groups. This is part of an overall move to increase integration with the community as a whole. Part of the planning process included calling other service, business and governmental organizations to ask how the library could better serve the community. Even this small bit of outreach demonstrated clearly that there is opportunity for partnerships that can increase the reach

and relevance of the library to the community at large. Our plan includes provisions to offer display and programming space as well as continue our dialog through speaking engagements, guided tours, and targeted services.

Forbes' third goal is to increase community awareness of our offerings. Support from the community that is both broad and deep is essential to our mission. Forbes offers a host of valuable services and a staff that is eager and willing to serve. We recognize that many people who are potential patrons simply are not aware of the services that Forbes offers today. This became clear as we listened to feedback from the survey and the focus groups. Participants consistently asked for things that we already offer. This was echoed in the outreach phone calls we made. The library needs to make the community much more aware of what it offers. We are planning to do that through a variety of traditional and creative ways, such as producing new brochures and adding a "did you know" section to our website. We also plan on hosting a library card drive each September during National Library Card Month. Publicity will be ongoing and will take advantage of local radio and cable TV outlets.

Goal IV emphasizes the critical need for increased funding for Forbes' public services and places responsibility on the Board of Trustees for strengthening community financial support. Usage of the library has increased astronomically in almost every way possible in the past five years. The library's budget has only increased eighteen percent (18%) during this same time period. While the city funds the library's operating budget and maintains the building, the library relies on endowment income for the materials budget. Without added fundraising this amount would be insufficient to meet the state's minimum requirement for certification.

	2001	2006	Percentage Increase
Children's Circulation	54,350	100,562	85%
Total Circulation	257,928	337,586	30%
Inter-Library Loan Activity	3,819	44,735	1070%
Non-resident Circulation	69,640	102,241	47%
Internet Access Computers	8	21	162%
Children's Programs	4	923	23,000%
Attendance at Children's Programs	280	10,031	3,482%
Young Adult & Adult Programs	57	560	882%
Attendance at Young Adult & Adult Programs	556	9751	1654%

In addition, the Board of Trustees has agreed to a self-evaluation regarding its governance structure to assure that it is effectively fulfilling the mission of the Library (Goal V).

Goal I: All Library users will experience Forbes as welcoming, responsive, and satisfying.

Objective 1

Make the Forbes Library easier to use by improving communications.

- a. Improve signage throughout the library, with maps, floor plans, handouts, brochures, directions, and stack labels. One specific activity will be to develop materials to make the Cutter Classification System more transparent and easier to use. In September 2006 a signage committee, appointed by the Director, will consider design and installation strategies and identify funding sources. Project to be completed by September 2007.
- b. Earmark funds in FY2008 to upgrade the telephone system (including an automated menu, more lines, and transfer capability) the upgrade to be in place by December 2007.
- c. Install a Public Access Computer on the mezzanine from which patrons can access the online catalogue. To be completed by September 2006 with funds from the current budget.
- d. Director will appoint a committee in January 2008 to explore feasibility of adding a welcome/information desk, analyzing the greeter program piloted this spring and proposing funding and design by FY2009.

Objective 2

Optimize patron interaction with a friendly and well-informed staff.

- a. Begin to hold staff meetings in Fall 2006 to gather ideas on ways to improve patron-staff relations. Apply for LSTA grant funds in FY2007 to continue funding of Customer Service Training for staff over a period of 12 months.
- b. In Fall 2006 and annually thereafter, prepare a list of staff development needs and opportunities based on suggestions from department heads and staff and develop process (including annual staff reviews and staff time management procedures) and funding to support them.

Objective 3

Establish rationale and explore feasibility of new service initiatives.

- a. Director will appoint a committee including members of city's youth commission in January 2007 to explore adding a dedicated teen space (see Goal 2, Objective 3h) to the library. The committee will report out by FY2008.
- b. Director will convene a committee to explore the feasibility of creating space for a café. Report out by end of FY2007.

Objective 4

Create more seamless access to library resources.

- a. Over the next year, complete plans to restructure and integrate Reference and Arts & Music department functions into a single Information Services Team. Phase 1 to be fully functional by January 2007 including cross-training and formalized joint scheduling procedures. During the next phase, Information Services team members will identify and formalize staff specializations

Objective 5

To address building issues, the Director will convene a building improvements committee in January 2007 to make recommendations on process, staffing, and timetable for improvements to the physical environment and parking accommodations. This committee will look at funding sources, including Community Preservation Act funds, a recent private bequest to the library, and the potential of an annual fund drive.

Improvements to be completed in the next five years include:

- a. Refurbish Children's Room (see Goal II, objective 4, activity for more details) beginning in FY2008
- b. Install automatic opener on front door by end of FY2007
- c. Install exterior book drop in the rear of the building by end of FY2007.
- d. Improve lighting in foyer and first floor by end of FY2008.
- e. Improve climate control for Special Collections by end of FY2008.
- f. Complete building envelope, which is in process, by FY2010.
- g. Director and Trustees will advocate for CPA funds to improve energy efficiency with the city's CPA committee, to make the building more environmentally sustainable by FY2010
- h. In FY2008, Director to work with Parking Superintendent to address public dissatisfaction with parking situation and to establish library policies to make parking regulations easier for patrons to observe. A report of findings and progress to be made available to the public by May 2008.

Goal II: The needs and interests of the community will guide the development and improvement of library services.

Objective 1

Beginning in FY2007, Director and Trustees will improve the library's hours in response to overwhelming request by the public as evidenced by the Long Range Plan Community Survey conducting in spring 2006.

- a. In FY2007, Director will make the hours more consistent during the course of the week so that they are easier to remember.
- b. Beginning in fall 2006, the library will offer four Sunday hours from September-May.
- c. As a goal to be realized over the FY2007-FY2011 budget years, Director will work to increase evening hours.

Objective 2

Increase by 5% annually the attendance at programs for adults by varying the types of programs offered by the library, targeting both library users and non-users.

- a. Prepare 5 standard training workshops to be offered to the public by library staff on basic in-library technology use. (Examples: the catalog; using a reference database; understanding the Cutter Classification System; how to place a hold, searching techniques, etc.) Offer these on a regularly scheduled basis beginning January 2007 and advertise them vigorously.
- b. Establish a technology “help desk” service for library patrons to fulfill the patrons’ needs for computer hardware and software advice, consultation, and troubleshooting in FY2008.
- c. Conduct a wide variety of public programs and program series to appeal to diverse populations within the community, with an eye toward attracting current non-users of the library beginning in FY2008. (Examples: sports night, comedy night; Latino-oriented; issues-oriented, musical genres; Baby Boomers night, etc.) Success of the programs to be measured by patron evaluation.
- d. Complete the renovations of the Community Room as a space available for a wide variety of library programming as well as a place for outside groups to meet by the end of FY2007. Once completed the room will be able to accommodate up to 50 people and will offer kitchenette facilities, flexible and lightweight furniture, variety of lighting options, and an array of audio-visual equipment.

Objective 3

Expand community partnerships to include civic, cultural, social and business associations/organizations.

- a. By February 2007 begin discussions with Council on Aging director on ways the library can serve seniors in the new Senior Center building. Offer at least four programs annually at the Center. (Example: book talks, latest cookbooks/cuisine. etc.) Assist Center initially in setting up a small library collection with book deposits from Forbes, including large print and audio books, etc.

- b. Convene a Spanish Language Advisory Group in February 2007, with appropriate representation from library staff and community members, to devise ways to improve library services to the Latino community. Charge the group with planning at least 2 family programs within the following six months and advising on significant materials purchases for this target group. (Examples: Latin music styles, literature from the Spanish-speaking world). Explore ways some services might be provided off-site, e.g., storytelling and book talk programs.
- c. Each month, beginning in FY2008, invite a civic or business association or local agency to hold a meeting in the Community Room and offer to prepare a list of references or sources appropriate to the program topic of the meeting.
- d. Beginning in FY2008 library staff members and trustees will strive to get onto the programs of civic and business organizations at least twice each year to give brief talks at their meetings about relevant library services and/or give short talks on books significant to the organization, e.g., offering a demonstration of the ReferenceUSA database which contains a wealth of information about businesses and markets to the Chamber of Commerce.
- e. Offer training workshops to small business, civic, and nonprofit organizations, including start-ups, (Examples: writing business plans, appropriate technology use, business reference materials, funding sources, and marketing) beginning in FY2009.
- f. Contact organizations and agencies who offer educational programs free or at low price and set up informational programs for adults, children and families. (Examples: Red Cross, MSPCA, local elected officials, historical societies, Valley CDC, science museum, etc.) Aim for one such program per month beginning in FY2008.
- g. Beginning in spring 2007, offer display/exhibit space to nonprofit local organizations, associations and agencies to allow them to inform the public of their programs and services.
- h. Beginning in FY2007, work cooperatively with Lilly Library in Florence Center to maximize services to all community members. This will include collaboration and coordination of programming; promoting each other's services; and joint staff training.

Objective 4

Provide children and teens with an enjoyable library environment that is inviting, family-friendly, easy to use and enriched with attractive materials of good quality.

- a. Refurbish the Children's Room, creating comfortable physical spaces where parents and children together can interact with library materials in FY2008.

- b. Revise, update and create attractive signage and arrangement of collections in children's room in FY2007.
- c. Increase by 50 the number of children's Spanish language print and non-print materials in FY2007.
- d. Increase children's program attendance by 5% annually, offering variety in programming, and including programs and events that target identified non-user groups offer programs targeted to teens during the summer in 2007.
- e. Explore the feasibility of offering 2 family programs off-site, at low-income housing and/or a neighborhood school, for example, beginning in FY2008.
- f. Install 2 new computers in the children's area, stocking them with entertaining educational software and programs relevant to the elementary school curriculum in FY2008.
- g. Create a teen space in the library apart from the children's room and stock it with books and non-print materials of interest to teens as well as two computer listening stations beginning in FY2010. Enlist help of a teen advisory group (see Goal I, Objective 3a) in making this space attractive to the teen population.
- h. Begin to expand and strengthen partnership with Northampton schools.
 - i. Invite administrators and/or teacher groups from each school to attend a reception at the library to describe library services for students and discuss ways school and library might cooperate to better serve students' needs starting in FY2008.
 - ii. Invite new teachers in September 2007 to a reception to discuss ways the library can assist them. Repeat annually.
 - iii. During FY2007, attend a Wednesday morning coffee hour at Jackson Street School to discuss with parents and teachers ways to help students utilize library services successfully.
 - iv. In FY2008, Director to establish a committee charged with continuing to develop ways to liaison with the schools and ensure an evolving and mutually beneficial relationship.
 - v. Explore ways to barcode student IDs and make parking provisions for students visiting the library in FY2007.
 - vi. Review school curricula at elementary and secondary levels, and through collection development and working with teachers, provide relevant materials for student projects and research in FY2008.

- vii. Work with school administration to create a job-share reference librarian's position for schools and Forbes Library to serve students with the emphasis to be on teaching library/research/information literacy skills beginning in FY2010.
- viii. Increase the number of elementary and secondary students holding library cards by 15% by the end of FY2008.
- ix. Have children's room staff visit elementary school classrooms once each month, program to be planned cooperatively with teachers beginning in FY2010.
- x. Increase the number of class groups visiting Forbes for library orientation by 5% annually in FY2007 by expanding teacher awareness of tours currently being offered to kindergarten, 2nd and 4th grade classes.
- xi. Explore with school department the feasibility of setting up software that will allow teachers to directly email assignments to the library beginning in FY2010.
- i. Conduct a study and make recommendations to the building improvements committee to ease access for school buses visiting the library during FY2008.

Objective 5

Expand the audio and video collections in response to user demand. Improve print collections to be more literary, have more depth and more currency.

- a. Increase size of books-on-cd collection by 10% annually beginning in FY2008.
- b. Increase size of DVD collection by 10% annually beginning in FY2008.
- c. Begin offering a circulating collection of MP3/IPOD players loaded with audio-books in FY2008.
- d. Update reference collection to satisfy the curriculum needs of students doing research projects beginning in FY2007.
- e. Create a simple paper and electronic form for patrons to suggest materials for purchase and promote it vigorously in FY2007.

Objective 6

Update and review progress of Long Range Plan.

- a. Director will convene a committee to conduct an annual review and revision of the Long Range Plan beginning in calendar year 2007.

Goal III: The community's awareness of library services and resources will be strengthened.

Objective 1

Increase the library's internet presence to raise public awareness among users and non-users.

- a. The library staff will launch a blog or wiki that will be updated at least once a week by Spring 2007. It will include events, announcements, explanations of changes in services, and new or under-utilized services.
- b. Add a "Did you know?" feature to the library's website that will be updated monthly to inform patrons about library services in FY2007.
- c. Continue to expand number of email subscribers to events mailing lists by 5% annually beginning in FY2007.

Objective 2

Expand the use and availability of printed publicity to raise public awareness among users and non-users.

- a. Produce a new series of brochures, including revised library overviews geared for particular audiences (e.g. visitors, parents, seniors) in FY2007.
- b. Every library department will also produce brochures and other types of handouts related to specialized topics for that department to be reported on annually at the September Department Head's meeting beginning in FY 2008.
- c. Produce a quarterly newsletter that will be available in the library, on the website, and at various locations identified as most pertinent around the city by the end of FY2009
- d. Propose a regular library guest column to be shared with Lilly Library published by the Daily Hampshire Gazette (either in its online website or paper version).
- e. In FY2008 raise funds to provide monthly paid advertising of library services in the Daily Hampshire Gazette.
- f. Develop a form for staff to submit press releases to Patron Services Librarian by December 2006.

Objective 3

Develop regular communications with key stakeholders in the community as a gateway for disseminating information and remaining responsive to the community.

- a. In FY2007 develop a schedule for department heads from public service departments to identify community stakeholders and establish a schedule for maintaining regular communications to be reported on at the May 2008 Department Heads' meeting.
- b. Host a media night annually, beginning in FY2008 for local media staff members. Event will include a library tour and the

opportunity for library staff to share new and exciting services and programs.

Objective 4

Expand the use of Cable TV and Radio to raise public awareness among users and non-users.

- a. Formalize monthly schedule of library programs and air this on the local cable access channel (Comcast) in FY2008.
- b. Produce ten new public service announcements annually about library services and programs to be distributed to local AM and FM radio stations, including WHMP, WMUA, WRSI, WOZQ, WAMH, WTTT, and WXOJ beginning in FY2007.

Objective 5

Increase the number of library card holders in the community.

- a. Celebrate National Library Card Month annually in September with publicity, and special events to encourage non-users to sign up for a library card beginning in FY2008.

Objective 6

Develop permanent funding for publicity and public relations.

- a. Add a \$1,000 line item into budget to support Forbes publicity beginning in FY2008.
- b. Revise staff job descriptions to include specific responsibilities regarding raising awareness/bringing in new users/documenting publicity to targeted groups (kids, genealogists, etc) in FY2009.
- c. Apply for a John and James Knight Foundation grant (call for proposals in September 2007—grants will be awarded in 2008) for ideas and ways to improve lives of people where they live and work.

Goal IV: The Board of Trustees of the Forbes Library will ensure the long term financial security and address immediate financial needs of the library

Objective 1

Strengthen community support for Forbes Library to ensure that public funds are available to maintain core functions and the physical plant efficiently, protect the library's collections and provide proven, state-of-the-art technology.

- a. Support the objectives outlined in Goal 3.

Objective 2

Continue to pursue non-municipal funding sources

- a. Support staff in seeking grant funding.
- b. Continue annual fund drive by committee of Trustees, Friends of the Forbes Library representatives and volunteers
- c. Based on ongoing grant funded archival assessments, continue to improve Forbes Library's special collections including Coolidge, local history, and genealogy in both areas of preservation and access.
- d. Set up a municipal account to be eligible to receive Public Libraries Fund monies.

Objective 3

Attempt to establish and maintain staff wages at levels on parity with staffs at comparable libraries.

- a. Annually as the library's budget is developed, salaries at comparable libraries will be analyzed.

Goal V: The Board of Trustees of Forbes Library will update its governance structure to more effectively fulfill the mission of the Library.

Objective 1

The Board will explore the feasibility of updating its governance structure.

- a. The Board will reappraise its size and structure with reference to the will of Judge Charles Forbes.
- b. The Board will consider by what means vacant Trustee positions might be filled more efficiently consistent with the Board's legal requirements.
- c. The Board will investigate by what legal means by-laws could be created to govern its procedures.
- d. As part of its governance structure, the Board will develop and implement a methodology for assessing the maintenance, replacement and capital needs of Library buildings, grounds and technology infrastructure utilizing the information collected for the city's required six year projection.