

**Millis Public Library
Strategic Plan for Fiscal
Years 2026-2030**



MILLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEARS 2026-2030

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BOARD OF TRUSTEES' LETTER

Dear Millis Community Members,

Public libraries connect, inspire, and empower people. An exceptional library goes beyond lending books; it is a hub for learning, creativity, and collaboration. By offering digital literacy programs, hosting events, providing technology access, and serving as safe spaces for exploration and dialogue, libraries are increasingly essential to civic life.

Recognizing that libraries must continually adapt to meet the evolving needs of their communities, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) requires the Commonwealth's libraries to submit a current strategic plan to qualify for state grants. Developing a strategic plan enables libraries to assess their status and align their priorities with the community's needs over their plan's three- to five-year term. The Millis Public Library's strategic plan covers fiscal years 2026-2030.

After implementing its strategic plan for fiscal years 2021-2025, the Library introduced numerous new services. This included increased staffing on early release days, a new Part-Time Teen Services Assistant position, staff-wide training in readers' advisory and customer service, extended hours on Thursday and Friday evenings, and Saturday summer hours. In fiscal year 2024, Library circulation reached its highest level yet, and the use of its digital collection continues to grow.

During and after the COVID-19 pandemic, the Library implemented strategies to engage patrons and foster community. It strengthened its outreach and partnerships by participating in community events and initiatives focused on increasing philanthropy and community stewardship.

Through the collection of data and community feedback during this strategic planning process, the Millis Public Library (Library) confirmed that the Millis community is growing and changing, which means the Library must support a broader range of collections, programs, and services. Expanding outreach efforts remains a priority. Offering lifelong learning opportunities for residents of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities will always be part of the Library's strategic goals.

Embracing change while remaining true to its mission, the Library will continue to promote access and inclusion. Despite recent economic and funding challenges, the Library will maintain a steady path forward.

The Board of Trustees is truly grateful for the community's continued support of the Library and is fully committed to supporting the Library Director and staff as they implement this strategic plan.

People transform a library building into a community space where residents can come together to learn, enjoy, and enrich their lives. The Board of Trustees will continue to advocate for the resources necessary to achieve these goals so the Millis Public Library is a place for everyone.

Respectfully,

The Millis Public Library Board of Trustees

Becky Fong Hughes, Chairperson

Jennifer Farrar, Secretary

Jonathan Bernier

THE PLANNING PROCESS

In August of 2024, the Millis Public Library engaged the services of Barbara Alevras, of Sage Consulting Services, to embark on a process to create a five-year strategic plan for fiscal years 2026-2030.

After establishing our goals for the process and desired completion date, we developed a project plan and timeline.

We formed a Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC), inviting community members with diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Composed of 11 community members and Library Director Kim Tolson as chair, this committee contributed ideas and advice throughout the process of gathering community feedback and developing this document.

We conducted several community feedback exercises, including:

- Two Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results (SOAR) Exercises
- One Community Visioning Exercise
- Two Surveys (community and youth)
- Three Focus Groups

To complement the subjective data provided by community members, we collected community and library data and statistics. For details, refer to the Community Overview and Library Overview infographics.

The community feedback and objective data were analyzed and synthesized to highlight trends and patterns. These key learnings serve as the foundation for the goals and objectives presented in this Plan, as well as the mission and vision statements and the community vision statement developed by the SPAC.

MILLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS 2024-2025



COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

Town of Millis Community Overview

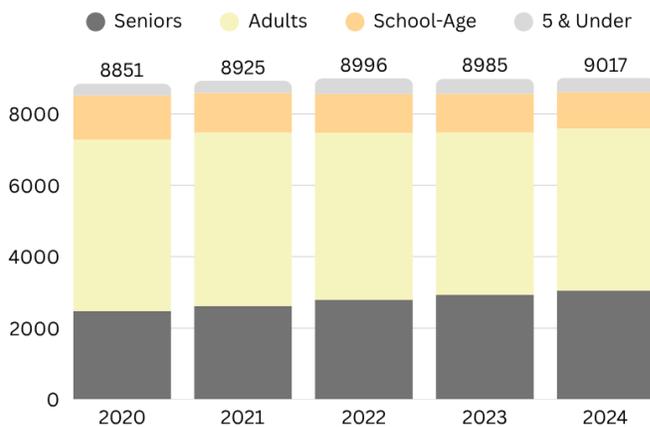
 **Population**
9,017



Population by Age

- Seniors (Aged 60+) **32.6%**
- Adults (19-59) **50.6%**
- School-aged Children **12.1%**
- Children Under 5 **4.7%**

Population Trends

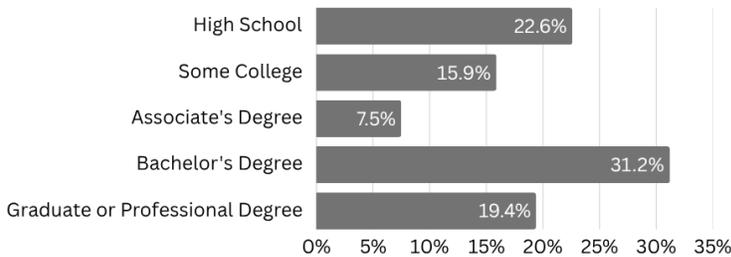


 **Households**
3,383 Average of **3** People Per Household

Race & Ethnicity

White Alone	87.0%
Asian Alone	4.0%
Black Alone	1.3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander Alone	1.0%
Two or More Races	6.3%
Hispanic or Latino	2.0%

Education Attainment



Income	Millis	Norfolk County
	Per Capita Income	\$68,284
Median Household Income	\$149,021	\$126,497
% of People in Poverty	4.9%	7.7%

Unemployment Rate

Millis, MA **3.8%**
Norfolk County, MA **3.9%**
Massachusetts **4.1%**



LIBRARY OVERVIEW

Millis Public Library Fiscal Year 2024 Overview



Hours Open:
55 Hours per Week

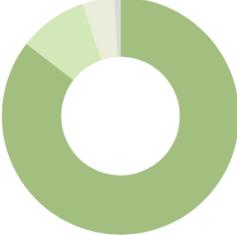
Staff:
Average of 3.98 Staff per Open Hour



Circulation

- Physical **130,763**
- Digital **31,516**

Physical Collection



51,539 Items Available in the Library

- Books & Magazines **85.4%**
- DVD & Blu-Ray **9.4%**
- Audiobooks & Music **4.3%**
- Other (games, tools, technology, museum passes, etc.) **0.8%**

484 New This Year!

4,452
Library Card Holders



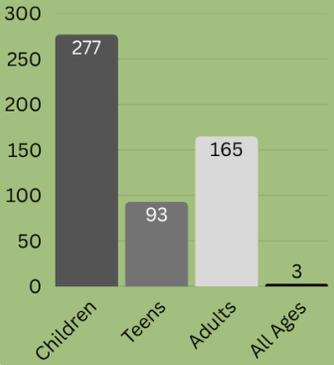
Digital Collection

- eBooks **96,706**
- eAudiobooks **46,051**

4,493 New items Added Last Year

Programs and Events

- 538 Programs Offered
- 10,047 Total Attendees



Age Group	Attendees
Children	277
Teens	93
Adults	165
All Ages	3



Visitors to the Library

- 68,806 Visitors in FY24
- Meeting and study rooms used **2,091** times

Library Building

- Built in **2013**
- 17,800** Square Feet
- 3** Meeting Rooms
- 2** Study Rooms



Questions ?

Staff answered **7,214** questions related to books, movies, history, genealogy, Library services, and more!

Technology Use

- 2,392** Computer Sessions (desktop and laptop)
- 38,500** WiFi Sessions
- 65** Hotspot Checkouts



OUR PLAN

Community Vision Statement

The Library’s twelve-member Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC) formulated a series of vision statements that encapsulate the aspiration for an ideal Millis. The final Community Vision Statement reflects the statement SPAC members believe our Library can most effectively support and positively influence. Our Community Vision Statement can be found on the next page.

Appendix B—MPL Community Vision Statement Report 2024 presents the full community visioning exercise results.

Vision and Mission Statements

The Library’s vision and mission statements are the foundation of this strategic plan. They provide clarity, purpose, and direction for the Library’s work.

The Vision Statement expresses our long-term aspirations. It paints a picture of the future we seek to create—a community where everyone has access to knowledge, learning, and connection. The statement is meant to inspire and guide, offering a broad and forward-looking perspective that informs strategic decisions and long-range planning.

The Mission Statement defines the Library’s fundamental purpose. It describes the crucial role the Library fulfills in the community, who we serve, and our primary focus areas. The mission grounds our daily activities, ensuring that every program, service, and initiative aligns with the Library’s commitments.

The vision and mission work together to ensure coherence between long-term goals and daily operations. They are not merely statements but tools that guide thoughtful decision-making and ensure the Library remains responsive, inclusive, and relevant to the evolving needs of the community.





Vision & Mission Statements



COMMUNITY VISION STATEMENT

Millis offers diverse, inclusive, and equitable academic, vocational, and cultural learning opportunities that embrace traditional and alternative learning methods, enhance personal growth, support social and emotional well-being, and inspire curiosity, creativity, and a love for lifelong learning.

VISION STATEMENT

The Millis Public Library is central to the community, connecting people with information and resources, supporting individual growth and education, and providing an inclusive and inspiring space to gather, connect, and engage.

MISSION STATEMENT

To inspire lifelong learning and build community by providing a safe and welcoming space where people of all backgrounds can access resources and services that engage the imagination, foster literacy, inspire intellectual curiosity, and broaden cultural perspectives.

Strategic Goals

The strategic goals outlined in this Plan identify the Library's top priorities for the next five years.

Grounded in community input, staff insight, and an analysis of current trends and needs, these goals serve as a roadmap for developing programs, enhancing services, investing in technology, forming partnerships, and initiating staff projects. They will help ensure our work aligns with the Library's mission and vision.

Though broad, these goals are supported by objectives and actionable strategies that ensure progress is both meaningful and accountable. They are not intended to capture every activity the Library undertakes. Rather, they highlight areas of highest strategic significance—those that will promote growth, encourage innovation, and strengthen the Library's role as a vital resource and community connector.

By setting these goals, the Library reaffirms its commitment to equitable access, innovation, and responsive service, ensuring we continue to meet the evolving needs of our community.



Strategic Goals and Supporting Objectives

GOAL 1

COMMUNITY HUB: The Library will maintain welcoming, comfortable, and accessible physical and digital spaces.

Supporting Objectives:

- 1.1. Optimize indoor and outdoor spaces to accommodate a variety of community needs and demographics.
- 1.2. Minimize the Library's impact on the environment.
- 1.3. Offer fiscally responsible open hours that are convenient to the community.
- 1.4. Redesign the Library website to enhance functionality and accessibility.

Strategic Goals and Supporting Objectives (cont.)

GOAL 2

IMPROVED ACCESS: The Library will provide equitable access to programs and services.

Supporting Objectives:

- 2.1. Offer more programs in a variety of formats and locations.
- 2.2. Bring Library resources to those facing barriers to visiting the Library in person.
- 2.3. Pursue outreach opportunities at community events and off-site locations.

GOAL 3

ENHANCED VISIBILITY: The Library will expand the visibility of and support for Library services in the community.

Supporting Objectives:

- 3.1. Build and strengthen collaborative relationships with town departments, schools, community groups, and neighboring towns.
- 3.2. Update Library branding to create strong, recognizable, and consistent marketing materials.
- 3.3. Enhance and focus Library marketing initiatives using best practices and effective strategies for targeting diverse demographic groups.
- 3.4. Increase community advocacy and support for the Library and its initiatives.

GOAL 4

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT: The Library will create opportunities community members to engage meaningfully with one another.

Supporting Objectives:

- 4.1. Create additional volunteer opportunities for teens and adults.
- 4.2. Expand the programs, resources, and services offered to teens (grades 6-12).
- 4.3. Modify the programming schedule to serve intended audiences better.

GOAL 5

EXPANDED LEARNING: The Library will serve as a critical community resource for self-improvement and learning.

Supporting Objectives:

- 5.1. Offer a broad variety of high quality, diverse, and informative programs that support lifelong learning, literacy, and cultural exploration.
- 5.2. Increase programs, services, and collections for English Language Learners and non-English speakers.
- 5.3. Offer robust physical and digital collections and resources that reflect community members' diverse backgrounds, interests, and needs.

Annual Action Plans

Annually, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners mandates that libraries submit an Action Plan for the next fiscal year to maintain eligibility for grant funding. The Millis Public Library's Action Plan will detail specific activities, target dates, and responsible task owners in alignment with this Strategic Plan's goals and objectives.

Measuring and Communicating Our Progress

Progress toward goals and objectives will be included in the Director's Report at monthly Board of Trustee Meetings. The Library Director will periodically update staff during staff meetings. Goals and objectives will be reviewed annually as part of our process to create an action plan for the upcoming fiscal year and during the annual goal setting for individual staff members. Each year, highlights of achievements will be shared with the Town Administrator, Select Board, and Finance Committee and will be shared online on our website and posted on social media.

PLAN APPROVAL

On June 10, 2025, the Library's three-member Board of Trustees unanimously approved this *Strategic Plan*.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

- Becky Fong Hughes, Chair
- Jennifer Farrar, Secretary
- Jonathan Bernier

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to everyone who contributed their time and thoughts throughout the planning process. Thank you to all who participated in a focus group, completed a survey, or shared ideas with us.

We would like to extend a special thank you to the following individuals, who served on the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee.

Strategic Planning Advisory Committee

- Jonathan Bernier
- Elise Molloy
- Christine Sooklal
- Peter Berube
- Komal Prem
- Edith Wilson
- Joyce Boiardi
- Ellen Rosenfeld
- Patricia Yetman
- Mike Carter
- Laura Satta

We would also like to thank the following Library staff who participated in the planning process through SOAR and values exercises.

Millis Public Library Staff

- Rebecca Appelbaum • Esther Davis • Rachel Silverman
- Kim Borst • Karen Mortimer • Terri Wickham
- Mary Carney-Philips • Fatima Neville

Finally, we would like to thank Barbara Alevras, of Sage Consulting Services, for guiding the Library through this process.

Thank you all for your contributions to the creation of this guiding document.



FINAL THOUGHTS

We deeply appreciate all the feedback we received during the strategic planning process. This document will serve as a guide for Library administration, staff, and Trustees as we continue to focus on providing a welcoming environment and quality services to the community. We are committed to the continued growth and improvement of the Millis Public Library.



MILLIS PUBLIC LIBRARY

APPENDICES

Following is a list of Strategic Plan document appendices. They are available for download and review at the following link: www.millislibrary.org/strategic-plan

Appendix A—MPL Community and Library Profiles 2025: This document presents key Millis community statistics, a brief overview of the Millis Public Library, and Library statistics related to our collections, programs, and services.

Appendix B—MPL Community Vision Statement Report 2024: The report presents a prioritized list of the final community vision statements drafted by the Library’s Strategic Planning Advisory Committee (SPAC).

Appendix C—MPL Community Survey 2024 Results Summary Report: The community survey was conducted from early December 2024 through early January 2025. Respondents’ feedback is presented in addition to summary results, graphs, and charts.

Appendix D—MPL Focus Groups Summary Report 2025: Three focus groups with 20 community members were conducted in January and February 2025.

Appendix E—MPL Staff SOAR Exercise Summary Report 2025: This report documents the results of an environmental assessment of the Library’s strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results. This SOAR exercise was conducted with the Library’s staff.

Appendix F—MPL SPAC SOAR Exercise Summary Results Report 2024: This report documents the results of an environmental assessment of the Library’s strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results conducted with Millis Public Library’s SPAC members.

Appendix G—MPL Youth Survey 2024 Results Summary Report: The youth survey was conducted from early December 2024 through early January 2025. Respondents’ feedback is presented in addition to summary results, graphs, and charts.

