East Greenwich Free Library
Knowledge is Priceless

Long-Range Plan
January 2023 – December 2028
Approved by the East Greenwich Free Library Board of Trustees
October 12, 2022

Community Analysis

East Greenwich is an historic seaside town in Kent County that values its history. Its library, founded in 1869, is a pillar and gem of the community. Established by townspeople who valued education, and augmented in 1914 by a man who invested his wealth and talent in the library in order to provide for fellow citizens, East Greenwich Free Library has continued on as an institution that enhances the cultural, educational, recreational, and professional life of the town's residents.

General Demographic Characteristics of East Greenwich
The population count estimate for the town as of 2021 was 14,204 (source: Census.gov). This represents an 8% increase from the 2010 census. East Greenwich ranks as the 26th most populous town or city in RI.

The median age is 43.8 (source: Censusreporter.org). Children under the age of 5 make up 5.8% of the population, while children under 18 comprise 25.6% of the population. People over the age of 65 make up 17.4% of the population. People between the ages of 18 and 65 make up 51.2% of the population.

 Public school enrollment as of the 2020-2021 school year was 2532. (source: *2022 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook*) The number of children enrolled in Early HeadStart is 6 . The number of children enrolled in HeadStart is 1. (source*: 2022 Rhode Island Kids Count Factbook*)

East Greenwich has 5,102 residences (source:Town of East Greenwich Tax Roll), 77.4% of which are owner occupied, with an average value of $457,700. East Greenwich's median gross rent (monthly contracted amount plus utilities and fuels) is $1,032 per month.

The median household income is $125,299 (source: Census.gov). This represents a 29.7% or $28,730 increase from 2013 ($96,569), when the Library's last long-range plan was written. 668 or 4.7% of East Greenwich residents live at or below the poverty level. (source: Census.gov).

Average household size is 2.57 persons. 93.5% of households own a computer and 90.2% households have broadband internet access.

Building

The library is 11,800 square feet on two floors. In FY22, the library was open 2,756 hours (53 hours/week). The staff logs 345.5 hours per week (177.5 librarians/168 support staff). The annual door count was 41,685.

Over the past two years, the building has had the following upgrades/improvements:
- The carpet was replaced in 2021 with grant funds from the Champlin Foundation
- Between 2021 and 2022, a moisture problem on the ground floor was solved through mold remediation; cleaning out unused, molding items; applying epoxy paint to several areas; regrading the area outside the library to improve drainage; replacing the front gutters, and replacing the carpet in high moisture/leak areas with linoleum.

Over the next five years, issues that must be addressed include a possible large repair or replacement of various HVAC components. The air conditioning system had a series of large, expensive breakdowns over the summer of 2022. Placing expensive patches on the system is not a sustainable solution.

The library uses incandescent light bulbs that burn out frequently and are not energy efficient. With predictions that heating and electricity costs will be increasing by over 50% in the next year alone, the library needs to explore more efficient, reliable lighting.

The masonry outside the library front door needs assessment and repair. We have had issues of loose cement and mortar, which could prove dangerous and problematic if not addressed.

Collections
The physical collection includes books, newspapers, magazines, DVDs, audiobooks, children's music CDs and several items that fit into the "other" category, such as a telescope, e-readers, and museum passes.
The total physical collection is 66,959 items. The breakdown is as follows:
- Books: 59,521
- Serials (magazines, journals, and newspapers): 750
- Audio items: 1866
- Video items: 4723
- Other physical items: 99

East Greenwich Free Library also has an electronic materials collection, made up of electronic ebooks and audiobooks purchased through the Ocean State Libraries Consortium
The total electronic materials collection (statewide) is 177,025. The breakdown is as follows:
- eAudio: 53,610
- eVideo: 1,870
- eBooks: 121,545

Circulation of our various collections for FY2022 was as follows:
- Annual physical item circulation: 137,750 (breakdown below)
  - Print: 119,121

- ○ Audio: 4,143
- ○ Video: 14,449
- ○ Other: 37
- Annual electronic materials circulation (statewide): 39,468 (breakdown below)
  - ○ eAudio: 12,889
  - ○ eVideo: 181
  - ○ eBook: 23,405

Finally, East Greenwich Free Library also has an electronic resources collection, made up of statewide databases and locally purchased database subscriptions, including Hoopla and Freading. Annual usage of all statewide and local databases is 3,619,510.

The library's collection is well-used. Our patrons are comfortable with print and electronic materials and collections. Some areas that need attention in our collections include
- Continuing work on the local history digitization project. The library's volunteer who used to do the work is retired.

- The library has ongoing work to replace materials labeling that is worn or faded. Staff has also worked to recatalog some of the DVD collection, as well as large print books in order to make both collections more accessible to the public. But there is more work to be done. In particular, the library needs to focus on one subject area at a time to ensure that it meets equity, diversity, and inclusion standards.

  For example, earlier in 2022, the Library's Children's Department utilized the skills of a student intern from the URI Graduate School of Library and Information Studies. Her work was to identify and recatalog any Native American spiritual or religious content that had been cataloged in the Dewey number for fairy tales. A seemingly small act of recognizing a different culture's spiritual practice as such and not a fairy tale, helps our community see all people as belonging and represented in their local library.

Services
East Greenwich Free Library had 5,730 registered card holders at the end of Fiscal 2022, representing 40% of the population.

Other annual service statistics are as follows:
- Annual Reference Transactions: 12,691
- Total programs: 100
- Total program attendance: 2,836
- Total self-directed activities: 52
- Total attendance for self-directed activities: 4,118
- Public Computers:16
- Annual Public Computer Usage: 2,779
- Wifi Usage Indoor and Outdoor: 4,740
- Annual Website Visits: 55,071

Our service statistics have increased since FY21, mostly as a result of pandemic restrictions being lifted or partially lifted. In order to continue to increase programming and services that patrons want and need, we will likely require more staff. At present, programs are planned and executed by a programming librarian. During programs, the librarian is in the event, conducting the activity or overseeing it (if it is a paid performer.) This leaves a service desk unattended. Unattended service desks do not send a message of good customer service to our patrons. In addition, staff is working to take more continuing education classes. Even if the classes are virtual, multi-tasking a class and staffing a service desk makes for mediocre or poor outcomes for both tasks. Moving the library forward in services will require more staff hours.

Our Friends of the Library group is currently in limbo. A good Friends group can provide resources and support to the library in the form of financial assistance, advocacy, and promotion. East Greenwich Free Library should explore the idea of reconstituting the Friends, ensuring that the group members understand their role and duties.

Analysis of the Survey conducted by Bryant University MBA Students
Between May and August, 2022, a team of Bryant University MBA students agreed to create, distribute, and compile information from a community survey. 6,200 surveys were distributed via email to library patrons and users of East Greenwich community services. Links to the survey were available on the Town of East Greenwich website, as well as the library's website. QR codes were made available in the Swift Community Center and in the library. 451 people responded to the survey.

A basic analysis of the survey demographic data indicates that the majority of survey respondents were married or partnered females with children, (no age range for children was asked) who live in town. They are either employed or retired. The average age range of survey respondents is 45-54 and over 65. Most tend to visit the library between once and twice a month. Of the 343 respondents with children, 211 said that the library supported their child's education. In open response questions, survey participants reported that they enjoyed reading with their children and that they appreciate the library's summer reading programs, storytimes, and study spaces.

The majority of respondents were aware that we provide traditional library materials (books, magazines, newspapers, DVDs) and that we hold book sales. They were also aware that we have programming for all ages and that we have computers, printers, scanners, and phone chargers for public use. The majority of people were also aware that we provide technology help and study space. Fewer people were aware of our arts and crafts programs or "grab and go" crafts. Also, fewer respondents were aware that we provide reference services, genealogy help, notary services and have a telescope for public use.

Respondents also indicated the services and/or materials they would like to see at East Greenwich Library. Overwhelmingly, people who took the survey would like to see more book clubs. (Staff has also reported this anecdotally.) In addition, respondents wanted more open hours, access to a 3D printer, mobile hotspots, computer classes, and access to a fax machine.

For the most part, survey participants found the library accessible and stated that the parking situation does not affect the accessibility of the library in their eyes. It is of note that 103 of respondents reported that they think that the library is accessible to people living with disabilities.

When asked to rank the importance of various library offerings, participants responded as follows. (Where 1=most important and 5= least important):

      1=Materials
      2=Programs
      3=Computers and Printers
      4=Reference Help
      5=The library as a safe space

While the library wanted to focus on business owners as a group that may be underserved but might want and need library services, only 42 respondents identified as business owners. They did not have strong feelings about how the library could help them.

Based on information about the town and people of East Greenwich, information about the East Greenwich Library and information gathered from the Bryant University survey, we were able to create a community analysis that informs our development of the following strategic themes, goals and action items.

Long Range Plan
January 2023 – December 2028

East Greenwich Free Library Mission Statement

The mission of the East Greenwich Free Library is to provide comprehensive library service to enhance the cultural, educational, recreational, and professional life of the residents of East Greenwich and surrounding communities through the continuous collection and development of relevant materials and services.

East Greenwich Free Library Vision Statement

The East Greenwich Free Library seeks to be a welcoming space that serves all people equitably and with respect. It strives to provide new and innovative, as well as more traditional collections, programming, and services to serve the ever-changing educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs and wants of the East Greenwich community.

Commitment to Evaluation of Strategic Themes, Goals and Objectives

East Greenwich Free Library commits to using this Long Range Plan as a living document to guide it over the next five years. This plan will be evaluated by the Board of Trustees and the Director on an annual basis to track the library's progress.

Long Range Plan
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Themes, Goals, and Objectives

Strategic Theme 1
Provide a physical space that is safe, welcoming, and healthy for users and staff.

Goals
- **Supply adequate heating, cooling, lighting and ventilation in the library building.**
  - Objective/Action: research the health of the HVAC system, which has been experiencing problems with mechanical and control equipment that have cost the library over $10,000 in a year.
    - Resources needed:
      - Director and Building Manager time to contact and meet with vendors.
      - Monetary cost of bringing HVAC contractors into the building to assess problems and offer solutions.
      - Monetary cost of completing repairs or upgrades to the HVAC systems.
  - Objective/Action: consider the proposal to replace the library's incandescent lighting with energy-efficient, long-life LED lighting
    - Resources needed:
      - Director and staff time to manage service disruption and staff schedule disruption
      - Monetary cost of project, including separate cost for dumpster to discard waste, as the contractor does not provide that service
  - Objective/Action: Apply for a Champlin Grant to repair/upgrade outdated, inefficient, and worn HVAC and lighting systems
    - Resources needed:
      - Director time to gather information and write a grant proposal

- **Ensure that the building is accessible to all users**
  - Objective/Action: Provide more open hours
    - Resources needed:
      - Additional staff and funding to be open more hours
  - Objective/Action: Assess Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance relating to reasonable accommodations and larger, capital projects
    - Resources needed:
      - Staff time to research and stay up to date with reasonable accommodations.
      - Expenditures from operating budget to make reasonable accommodations that would cost less than a capital improvement

- - Objective/Action: Continue to offer day-to-day accommodations to patrons, such as curbside delivery if requested
    - Resources needed:
      - Staff time and effort to provide day-to-day accommodations

- **Make certain that the building's interior and exterior are safe for patrons and staff**
  - Objective/Action: Assess and make any necessary repairs to outside areas of the library, such as the front steps/ramp, the front patio, the side steps and the emergency exit area.
    - Resources needed:
      - Director and Building Manager time to contact and meet with vendors
      - Monetary cost of repairs and/or upgrades to ensure the safety of outside areas.
  - Objective/Action: Continually monitor storage spaces, especially storage spaces with exits for debris, unused items, etc. Remove any items that impede egress and/or cause a safety hazard.
    - Resources needed:
      - Staff time and assignment staff to monitor spaces
      - Staff time and possible small cost to remove unused items
  - Objective/Action: Continually monitor building for issues that may cause health and safety concerns, ie. dampness and mold, environmental allergens, etc. Take action to address any such issues
    - Resources needed:
      - Director, Building Manager, and staff time to monitor and assess building health
      - Monetary cost of repairs and/or upgrades to ensure safety inside the building.

- **Furnish users with adequate space to meet, gather and study**
  - Objective/Action: Continue to offer space throughout the building and in the Community Room to users who are working and studying. Continue to offer spaces for tutors and their students.
    - Resources needed:
      - None
  - Objective/Action: Review best practices and legal obligations regarding use of meeting spaces in public libraries. Ensure that groups who use meeting spaces and the public are aware of the library's neutrality in booking outside groups. Being prepared for protests, social media comments and possible press attention as a result of booking a group with a contentious message/philosophy.
    - Resources needed:
      - Director time to learn best practices and legal obligations –through interaction with colleagues around the state and continuing education sessions (likely that CE sessions will be offered given that a 200 person protest centered around a group using a library meeting room took place outside a RI library in September, 2022)

Strategic Theme 2
Curate and maintain a collection that is timely, accurate, and reflects the needs and wants of the community.

Goals
- **Follow a collection management policy in the acquisition, cataloging, maintenance and deaccessioning of materials**
  - Objective/Action: Assess collection management policy and purchasing habits regularly to ensure that the library is collecting, maintaining, and deaccessioning materials according to current knowledge and standards in library science as well as community wants and needs.
    - Resources needed:
      - Director and staff time to assess policy on a regular basis. Staff time and expertise to ensure that collection management is done according to policy and best practices.
  - Objective/Action: Ensure that cataloging keeps equity, diversity and inclusion in mind. Change any cataloging that is outdated, insensitive, or inaccurate.
    - Resources needed:
      - Director and staff time and expertise to stay on top of and change any problematic cataloging
  - Objective/Action: Ensure that collection keeps equity, diversity, and inclusion in mind. Make a concerted effort to collect materials by authors who represent groups who are marginalized because of disabilities, learning differences, race, etc. Collect materials with characters that are from marginalized groups and contain plots and themes that normalize characters with differences.
    - Resources needed:
      - Staff time and expertise to be aware of and purchase materials by underrepresented authors and featuring underrepresented characters
  - Objective/Action: Ensure that library staff continue to value and respond to user and other community (schools, support groups, etc) suggestions for materials purchases based on content and format
    - Resources needed:
      - Staff time and expertise to consider a purchase suggestion, determine if the purchase would meet selection criteria, and purchase the item if appropriate.
  - Objective/Action: Ensure that the library has a robust policy on objections to inclusion or exclusion.
    - Resources needed:

- Director and staff time and expertise to assess existing policy and update policy based on the Librarian's Code of Ethics, the Library Bill of Rights, and intellectual freedom literature.
    - ○ Objective/Action: Ensure that staff continually assesses materials purchases and removals based on the goal of growing and maintaining a balanced collection. Ensure that the library fights external and self-censorship in the collection.
        - ■ Resources needed:
            - ● Director and staff time and expertise to approach the collection always with intellectual freedom and the Library BIll of Rights in mind.

- **Ensure that the library keeps abreast of new and emerging trends in content and format and responds accordingly**
    - ○ Objective/Action: Continue to use professional review media (*Library Journal, School Library Journal*, etc) as well as user recommendations to guide purchases (for content and format).
        - ■ Resources needed:
            - ● Staff time and expertise to understand and follow valid trends in publishing that users request and/or may be beneficial to library users. (e.g: electronic books, DVDs, audiobooks, etc. that may be downloaded; graphic novels; trending fiction themes and authors)
    - ○ Objective/Action: Ensure that the library is serving the number of patrons who use and prefer electronic content that they may download to and access through their mobile devices.
        - ■ Resources needed:
            - ● More of the book/AV budget to be spent on OSL eZone purchases. East Greenwich residents are avid eZone users. Our financial contribution to eZone does not reflect that. Most libraries that have high eZone usage contribute more funding to the statewide collection.
            - ● Ensuring that we continue to fund Hoopla, our on-demand content platform. It is expensive, but it is well-used.
    - ○ Objective/Action: Recruit and train a volunteer or assign and train a paid staff member to update and maintain the library's digital history archive. This will require intense training as one of the main pieces of equipment in digitization is the large format, professional scanner.
        - ■ Resources needed:
            - ● Director and staff time to recruit and train personnel
            - ● Possible monetary expenditure if it is necessary to use the services of the company from whom we purchased the scanner for training.

Strategic Theme 3
Continue to provide programs and other services that inform, entertain, educate and uplift our community

Goals
- **Provide programs appeal to and attract all members of our community, not just the majority**
    - Objective/Action: Work with community groups to plan and execute displays that educate the public about issues such as learning differences, healthy aging, mental and emotional health, neurodiversity, etc.
        - Resources needed:
            - Staff time and expertise to seek out and meet with community members.
            - Staff time to work with community members to create displays and PR materials

- **Explore new and innovative trends in services and programming, while still providing traditional programming that community members want and need.**
    - Objective/Action: Attend conferences and meetings to seek out new ways of programming and offering services. Hear community suggestions and collaborate with library users and community members with special skills that can be turned into programming and/or services.
        - Resources needed:
            - Staff time to learn about and seek out new and innovative programming
            - Monetary expenditure for programming supplies and equipment, or fees to engage services of program providers (e.g. animal program providers, art instructors, STEM and STEAM instructors)
    - Objective/Action: Reinstitute programs and services from the past that are still wanted and needed, but may have been discontinued during the pandemic (e.g. book clubs for adults and the Friends)
        - Resources needed:
            - Staff time and expertise to facilitate monthly book club(s).
            - Director's time and expertise to recruit new Friends of the Library members

- **Build and maintain the library infrastructure and staffing to provide more programs and services**
- Objective/Action: The library departments that conduct programming are largely one-person operations when programming takes place. As we continue with the current level of programming and expand, the library needs to explore rearranging schedules or adding

staffing to ensure that service desks are staffed while librarians need to be out of the service area or building for programs and and events.

- ■ Resources needed:
  - ● Staff time and wages to cover service desks when other staff is out of the room for a program or event

- ● **Disseminate information about library programs, services and collections to the public**
  - ○ Objective/Action: Assign a staff member or members to be responsible for regular updates to our website and library's social media accounts to advertise and promote services that some residents may not expect.
    - ■ Resources needed:
      - ● Staff time and expertise to update social media
  - ○ Objective/Action: Increase the number of outreach events, including school/daycare visits, and a library presence at community events.
    - ■ Resources needed:
      - ● Staff time to set up and conduct outreach activities.
      - ● Extra personnel to staff desks.
      - ● Funding for outreach activities/supplies (e.g. tablecloth, swag,)

- ● **Provide current and relevant technology for users and staff**
  - ○ Objective/Action: Remain current with recommendations on new equipment and equipment/software updates from IT Manager, Ocean State Libraries and Office of Library and Information Services.
  - ○ Pursue grant funding to pay for technology updates
    - ■ Resources needed:
      - ● Staff time and expertise to learn about updates and recommendations
      - ● Staff time and expertise, as well as funding to update and replace outdated technology.
  - ○ Objective/Action: purchase technology equipment the community wants/needs including mobile hotspots and possibly a 3D printer and a public fax machine.
    - ■ Resources needed:
      - ● Funds expended on mobile hotspots, 3D printer, or public fax machine
      - ● Staff time and expertise to catalog, circulate, instruct patrons how to use, and recharge the hotspots. Staff time and expertise to use the 3D printer and schedule use by patrons. Staff time and expertise to instruct patrons how to use the public fax machine.
      - ● Funds expended on equipment supplies and repairs

East Greenwich Free Library
Long-Range Plan
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