

**Memorial Hall Library  
Andover, Massachusetts  
[www.mhl.org](http://www.mhl.org)**

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# **Three Year Strategic Plan FY2011- FY2014**

**July 2010**



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2 North Main Street      Andover, MA 01810      978-623-8401

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## **Memorial Hall Library in 2010**



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Memorial Hall Library began serving the town of Andover on Memorial Day, 1873. Since then, the library has experienced four building additions. The 1987 addition, which doubled the size to 55,000 square feet, produced an architecturally beautiful building on four levels. Although the four levels are challenging in some respects, until recently the building met most of the library's space needs. However, the explosion of new materials formats, the space needs of technology, and the growing role of the library as community hub has resulted in library visitors competing for space with library materials. Another expansion of the library is not a realistic possibility in these economic times. Therefore, many of the action items in this plan are focused on finding more room for people of all ages to use their town library for multiple purposes, not just for a quick visit to pick up a couple of books.

The population of Andover is currently 34,000. Sprawling over 34 square miles at the intersection of Routes 495 and 93, Andover has a sizable tax base, above average income levels, excellent schools, and a well run municipal government. The town has historically supported its library well, and the library has benefited from this support by being awarded reference and interlibrary loan contracts to provide services to other libraries in Northeast Massachusetts. However, the current recession has resulted in a 28% cut in state library funding and these regional contracts are ending June 30, 2010. The result of the end of these contracts is that MHL will, by necessity, be even more strongly focused on working with our consortium (MVLC) to maintain the cooperative library programs that have been so beneficial to our patrons. Therefore, many of the action items in this plan reflect the end of the regional contracts, and the resultant narrower focus on Andover and MVLC.

The biggest challenge facing Memorial Hall Library, and indeed all town departments, is how to provide the excellent service our citizens have come to expect, in a time of declining revenues and stressed budgets. Library funding has decreased, and in FY10, for the first time, MHL had to apply for a waiver of the state certification requirements. This waiver was granted and the library qualified for state aid, but the pressure on our budget is not going away. Many of the action items in this plan reflect the need for the library to operate more efficiently, employing staff reorganizations and self-checkout technology to help us deliver quality services more economically.

In spite of these challenges, we expect to be able to continue to provide exemplary library service to our customers. We have many assets as a library, and it pays to note these assets. We will rely on them as we move forward with this Three Year Plan.

**Assets:**

- The strong support of Andover citizens
  - A talented and committed staff
  - A large popular materials library with “something for everyone”
  - Materials in Chinese and Russian
  - A strong program of children’s services
  - An after-school library “home” for Andover teens
  - An excellent reference department
  - Superior library technology
  - An active and successful FRIENDS group
  - A supportive and engaged Board of Library Trustees
  - The library director is part of the Town’s management team
  - A central location in the heart of Andover
  - A cultural center for citizens of all ages
  - A well earned reputation as a leader library that embraces “reengineering” to meet changing community needs
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## **Methodology**

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One standard methodology for developing a long range plan involves working with a committee comprised of librarians, trustees, educators, and other community representatives. One problem working with such a committee is that the non-library members have a difficult time envisioning what is possible in a library. Librarians, on the other hand, are aware of what other forward-looking libraries are doing – we are aware of what is possible.

However, what is crucial in forming a plan is assessing the needs of the stakeholders. Good librarians are aware of what their patrons need, but actually asking the patrons provides great insight and sometimes surprising data.

Therefore, for this plan, the Director worked primarily with her Department Heads, who meet weekly, to put together surveys, conduct focus groups, and work out the statements that form the structure for the plan's elements. As the Department Heads moved through the process, one crucial document, two crucial surveys, and input from several focus groups became the heart of the plan.

First, as a byproduct of rewriting our Mission Statement, we worked on defining what an excellent 21<sup>st</sup> century public library is. In defining what we strive to be, we found we had our overall goals.

Second, in conducting our community survey, our staff surveys, and our focus groups, we found we had our objectives.

Once we had the goals and objectives, the Action Items were developed from ideas culled from the surveys, the focus groups, and submitted by the entire staff.

The Action Items are in chart format and can easily be updated over the course of the three years.

The Plan will be shared with all stakeholders – staff, Trustees, Friends, patrons, town department heads, Selectmen, FinCom, and other interested organizations.

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## **Mission / Vision / Core Values Statements**

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### **OUR MISSION**

Memorial Hall Library's mission is to be an exceptional and innovative public library for the Andover community. The library provides materials in a wide variety of formats, as well as the space, technology, programs, and staffing essential to providing 21<sup>st</sup> century public library service.

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### **OUR VISION**

Memorial Hall Library is a community partner dedicated to helping the Town of Andover and its citizens realize their full potential. Library patrons experience Memorial Hall Library as a responsive, vital resource meeting their individual needs and offering a memorable and personal library experience. Lives are enriched through a lifelong relationship with ideas, art, literature, information, and technology.

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### **OUR CORE VALUES**

#### ***EQUALITY***

Free, fair, and equal access for all

#### ***RESPECT***

For our customers, for each other, for privacy and confidentiality, for our institutional history, for the materials, space and funds entrusted to us

#### ***JOY***

Of reading, of service, of diversity, of innovation

#### ***COMMUNITY***

Creating a culture of community and belonging for the staff and for the citizens of our town, at all stages of their lives

#### ***FREEDOM***

To know, to excel, to learn, to lead

#### ***DEMOCRACY***

To fulfill the library's role as a fundamental institution in a democratic society

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## What is a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Public Library

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- **One stop “free shopping mall”** for a wide variety of popular library materials and formats that instruct, enlighten, and entertain
- **Vibrant, attractive, and busy public space**, with designated areas for quiet study
- **Civic hub** that connects people to jobs, local information, news, education, services, health information, friends, family, and community
  - **Computer center**, providing free and open Internet access and computer help from trained reference staff
  - **Cultural and arts center**, offering exhibits, programs and events for children, teens, and adults
  - **Literacy center**, sustaining citizens in their lifelong pursuit of learning and personal growth through reading, writing, thinking and exploring
  - **Preservation center**, providing access to resources about the community’s historical heritage
  - **Community partner**, forging links with local government, local groups, and other libraries to enhance the quality of life for all citizens
  - **Common meeting and gathering place** where individuals, groups, and families can interact in a neutral and comfortable environment
  - **Effective promoter/marketer** of what the library offers as a civic hub
- **Virtual, as well as a physical space**, offering library services to remote as well as in-house patrons, through a content-rich web page, shared electronic catalog, research databases, e-content, and online access to trained reference staff
- **Dynamic institution**, always adapting to meet the changing needs of the community
  - Service oriented institution, cognizant of the time pressures of the busy modern world
  - Free and open service in the middle of a world of fees
  - Defender of intellectual freedom and individual privacy
  - Advocate for an open internet, with a free flow of information, while still respecting intellectual property rights
  - Champion of free enterprise and individual initiative, facilitating the acquisition of the skills and knowledge needed to compete in a global economy
- **Cheerleader for the new information age** and its enduring value to a democratic society
  - Developer of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, including the high level of information literacy needed to succeed
  - Technology and innovation playground, a place to try out new technologies
  - Embracer of social networking and collaboration tools
  - Teacher of the safe use of technology
- **Developer of strategies that deliver library services more effectively and economically**
  - Environmentally aware organization, working towards a sustainable environment
  - Enthusiastic adopter of technological solutions to improve efficiency
  - Challenger of the status quo, always developing more cost-effective staffing and service models and structures

## Goals/Objectives/Action Items

**Goal # 1:**

**Memorial Hall Library is a one stop, “free shopping mall” for a wide variety of popular library materials and formats that instruct, enlighten, and entertain.**

Objective	Action Item	FYStart	Finish
A. To emphasize popular, in-demand items in collection development decisions	▪ Reassess reference budget in light of the change in “regional” responsibilities	2011	
	▪ Examine serials and microform subscriptions and eliminate subscriptions no longer necessary to the collection	2011	
	▪ Increase the amount of e-book content available remotely	2011	
B. To reduce the size of the collection, where appropriate, to accommodate more heavily used materials and formats, and more patron work space	▪ Aggressively weed those items that are no longer being used, are out-of-date, are in poor condition or don’t meet current publishing standards (typography/layout/design)	2011	
	▪ Determine collection size goals for various subjects and formats and weed accordingly	2011	
	▪ Eliminate the remains of the videocassette collection	2011	

**Goal # 2: Memorial Hall Library is a vibrant, attractive, free, and busy public space, with designated areas for quiet study.**

Objective	Action Item	FYStart	Finish
A. To make Level Two quieter (a SILENT study area), more attractive, and more usable	▪ Move the Chinese and Russian collections to the Ground Floor	2012	
	▪ Reconfigure and refurnish the November Club Room area	2012	
B. To provide quiet options in other parts of the library	▪ Make the Ground Floor a “Quiet Area”, as opposed to the “Silent” Area on Level 2	2012	
	▪ Investigate possibilities and costs of soundproof individual	2013	

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Objective	Action Item	FYStart	Finish
	study carrels in various locations		
C. To update worn and shabby library furniture and carpeting	▪ Replace beige carpeting throughout the building	2011	
	▪ Replace library upholstered chairs on Level 1 and 2	2012	
	▪ Request a CIP article for a CR Circulation Desk that works with patron self-check	2013	
	▪ Refresh Lower Level entrance and hallway	2011	
	▪ Install new lower library magazine shelving to replace high wood shelving in poor condition	2011	

**Goal # 3: Memorial Hall Library is a civic hub that connects people to jobs, news, education, services, health information, friends, family and community**

Objective	Action Item	FYStart	Finish
A. To be Andover's public computer center, providing free Internet access and help from trained staff	▪ Provide more power outlets and study space for patrons using our WiFi and their own devices	2012	
	▪ Install a simple-to-use public scanning station	2011	
B. To be Andover's cultural and arts center, offering exhibits, programs, and events for children, teens and adults	▪ Implement web-based meeting booking software	2011	
	▪ Update Memorial Hall to 21 <sup>st</sup> century standards – HVAC, A/V presentation and recording, lighting, noise control, sound system	2012	
	▪ Update Activity Room to be able to show DVDs and play Wii	2011	
	▪ Optimize availability of meeting room space for CR programs and consider future expansion options	2011	
	▪ Investigate options for optimizing Teen Room space	2012	
	▪ Run 2 <sup>nd</sup> <i>Andover Reads</i> galaxy of programs	2011	
	▪ CR and Teen staff better promote Tween programs	2011	
	▪ Offer more Open Houses, like Memorial Hollywood	2011	
C. To be Andover's literacy center, sustaining citizens in their pursuit of learning and	▪ Work with Conversational English group to start a <i>New Reader</i> collection	2011	

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<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action Item</b>	<b>FYStart</b>	<b>Finish</b>
personal growth through reading, writing, thinking, and exploring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop new mediated Interlibrary Loan policies and procedures necessitated by the new Massachusetts Regional Library System requirements</li> </ul>	2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide more seating space for people using the library to read, study, and compute</li> </ul>	2012	
D. To be a preservation center, providing access to resources about the community's historical heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a plan for digitizing Andover materials and resources, including indexing local newspapers</li> </ul>	2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expand the scope and depth of the Andover Wiki</li> </ul>	2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consider changing glass wall of the Andover Room to solid wall to hang valuable pictures or for more shelving</li> </ul>	2013	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to explore collaboration opportunities with Andover Historical Society and other local agencies</li> </ul>	2011	
E. To be a community partner, forging links with local government, local groups, local schools, and other libraries to enhance the quality of life for all citizens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Take a very active role in strengthening MVLC in light of the demise of the regional library system</li> </ul>	2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue to provide staff the opportunity to participate in statewide organizations, such as MLA and the new MLS</li> </ul>	2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lead MVLC libraries in purchasing online content collectively (Safari Tech Books Online)</li> </ul>	2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the Town leadership to advance the goals and objectives of the Town</li> </ul>	2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with Andover Public Schools on the proposed Russian/Chinese language grant</li> </ul>	2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the FRIENDS on new fundraising, outreach, and publicity projects</li> </ul>	2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with FACT to clean up the pocket park on the north side of the library</li> </ul>	2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with local garden clubs and the Town Parks Division to improve landscaping around the library</li> </ul>	2011	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with the Senior Center and volunteers to provide outreach to shut-ins and the elderly</li> </ul>	2012	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish relationship with the new Superintendent of Schools and work on collaborative projects with the</li> </ul>	2011	

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<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action Item</b>	<b>FYStart</b>	<b>Finish</b>
	schools		
	▪ Support computer networking at Andover Youth Services	2011	
	▪ Provide more services and support to Homeschooling groups	2011	
F. To be a common meeting and gathering place where individuals, groups, and families can interact in a neutral and comfortable environment	▪ Develop strategies to increase parking availability, including the Pearson Street properties	2012	
	▪ Optimize use of social networking tools (Facebook, Twitter, SOPAC) to build online interaction & community	2012	
	▪ Reorganize schedules to open Thursday evenings, so Memorial Hall is available again on Thursdays for community meetings and events as well as for regular library use	2011	
G. To be an effective promoter/marketer of what the library offers as a civic hub	▪ Develop a marketing plan for the library (branding, web site redesign, etc.) that will increase community awareness of library services and programs, and reach new audiences and new residents	2011	
	▪ Update design and use of MHL-Mail, including special alerts for children's programming and services	2012	
	▪ Purchase, with the financial support of the FRIENDS, a new in-house print station to handle our publicity and outreach needs	2011	
	▪ Investigate installation of digital signage	2012	
	▪ Redesign library cards, also making available key cards	2012	
	▪ Redesign library gift plates	2012	

**Goal # 4: Memorial Hall Library is a virtual, as well as a physical space, offering library services to remote as well as in-house patrons.**

Objective	Action Item	FYStart	Finish
A. Redesign the library's web page <a href="http://www.mhl.org">www.mhl.org</a> , using open source software	▪ Appoint and empower web redesign committee	2011	
	▪ Roll out new web page, with functionality for the mobil web	2012	
B. Add functionality to mhl.org	▪ Add online program registrations for CR and Teen Room	2011	
	▪ Add online Summer Reading functionality	2011	
	▪ Enhance the Reading Room content	2011	
	▪ Update the online Collection Development Manual	2011	
C. Work with MVLC on the implementation of Evergreen	▪ Incorporate SOPAC (social networking) features in the new catalog		
	▪ Have MHL staff serve on all Evergreen committees	2011	

**Goal # 5: Memorial Hall Library is a dynamic institution, always adapting to meet the changing needs of the community.**

Objective	Action Item	FYStart	Finish
A. Institute Roaming Reference	▪ Determine how Roaming Reference will work at MHL	2011	
	▪ Train Circulation staff to help patrons on the floor once patron self-check frees them somewhat from the desk	2012	
	▪ Train Reference staff in basic Circulation functions	2012	
B. Develop strategies to educate patrons about using the ever-changing services of the library and finding resources in the library	▪ Install catalog look-up stations in the stacks	2012	
	▪ Explore the feasibility of staffing an Info Desk at the Lower Level entrance, at least some of the time	2011	
	▪ Improve signage in the Children's Room	2012	
C. Encourage and train staff to be excited and involved in providing excellent customer service	▪ Involve more staff in materials purchasing decisions, taking advantage of their wide expertise and interests	2012	
	▪ Involve staff as much as possible in committees and teams to implement these action items	2011	

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<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action Item</b>	<b>FYStart</b>	<b>Finish</b>
	▪ Provide more training opportunities for staff, including Staff Development days and workshops	2011	
	▪ Cross train staff wherever possible to increase job satisfaction	2012	
	▪ Develop structures for better feedback to staff on their performance	2012	
	▪ Make sure staff have time to read their work email and respond to it	2011	
	▪ Take every opportunity to recognize staff for their achievements	2011	
D. Evaluate and reorganize print reference	▪ Move reference collection to the reference desk side of the stairwell	2011	
	▪ Weed or move seldom-used reference sources to the mezzanine and keep or dispose of accordingly	2011	
	▪ Assess value of Civil War and old children's books on the mezzanine and make decisions as to disposition	2012	
E. Improve services to busy patrons	▪ Investigate feasibility and options for providing mail delivery of materials for a fee	2012	
	▪ Investigate other locations, such as a dumpster, for easier and neater donation drop-off	2011	
	▪ Make it possible for Reference to do "simple" checkout of materials	2011	
	▪ Investigate adding other points of service (like kiosk at train station)	2012	
F. Update policies, where necessary, to meet changing community needs and values	▪ Create realistic cell phone use policy	2012	
	▪ Develop and use "No Log" exercise to improve customer service, removing unnecessary barriers to superior customer service	2011	
G. To be more environmentally aware	▪ Develop strategies for energy efficiency and a sustainable environment	2011	

**Goal # 6: Memorial Hall Library is a cheerleader for the new information age and its enduring value to a democratic society.**

Objective	Action Item	FYStart	Finish
A. Provide help to those who need assistance in participating in the digital age	▪ Offer basic computer instruction to seniors and others	2011	
	▪ Provide robust computing resources and help to those on the other side of the digital divide	2011	
	▪ Work with students and the schools to develop information literacy skills	2011	
B. Provide support for parents concerned about their children's safe use of the Internet	▪ Conduct workshops for parents on safe use of the Internet	2011	
	▪ Provide a safe place for Teens to gather and use computers	2011	
C. Provide support to Town government on the use of social networking tools to increase citizen awareness and involvement	▪ Provide demonstrations of social networking tools that are appropriate for Town use	2011	
D. Create library apps for mobile devices	▪ Insure that Evergreen OPAC is usable on mobile devices	2012	

**Goal # 7: Memorial Hall Library is a developer of strategies that deliver library services more effectively and economically.**

Objective	Action Item	FYStart	Finish
A. Implement patron self-checkout to improve customer service and to operate more economically	▪ Organize a committee to determine what features to include in a self-checkout system (RFID security, payment, patron self-checkin)	2011	
	▪ Develop CIP article to purchase self-checkout systems	2011	
	▪ Implement self-checkout systems	2012	
	▪ Implement patron self-pickup of requests	2012	
	▪ Eliminate DVD rental charges to make SelfCheck more economical	2012	
B. Streamline internal record-keeping and processes	▪ Update and simplify budget line items	2011	
	▪ Automate pieces of the <i>Request for Payment</i> process	2011	
	▪ Investigate ways of improving the acquisitions workflow	2011	

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FY2011-FY2013*

Objective	Action Item	FYStart	Finish
	across all departments		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Examine and optimize staffing schedules and responsibilities to achieve efficiencies</li> </ul>	2011	
C. Always be aware that we work for the citizens of Andover who fund MHL at a level that meets their expectations of excellent library service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Look for every opportunity possible to deliver excellent library service in a cost-effective way</li> </ul>	2011	

## Updating and Evaluation

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The Action Items in this plan will be updated yearly at the start of the new fiscal year. The table of Action Items will have a field that comments on whether the Action Item has been completed, and if has not been completed, what progress has been made. New Action Items will be added yearly, as needed. Completed items will be documented in a separate table to provide a record of what was accomplished during the fiscal year.

Yearly, this plan will be updated with a written evaluation of how the plan has worked, and the plan will be modified as needed. Progress on the plan will be shared with the staff, as well as the Board of Trustees and the Town Manager.

At the end of the three year planning period, we will conduct another survey to evaluate if the actions we have taken have met customer needs and expectations.

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## Trustees Approval

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This plan was approved by the Board of Library Trustees on September 15, 2010. It was written by Beth Mazin, Director, in conjunction with the library's Department Heads and Trustees.



## Appendix

### ***Highlights of the 2010 Library Planning Survey Results***

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This page highlights the results of the Library Planning Survey that was given between January 25 and February 16, 2010.

956 surveys were collected. Of these, 351 were completed by hand and 605 were completed online. The profile of a typical survey respondent was a female Andover resident in her forties who uses the library at least twice a month, although a wide variety of other population segments also completed the survey.

- More than three-quarters of respondents (81%) indicated that the Thursday evening closings were not a problem for them.
- Nearly three-quarters of respondents (72%) said that they sometimes have trouble finding parking at the library; five percent said they always have trouble finding parking at the library.
- More than three-quarters of respondents (77%) felt the library buys enough print and non-print materials to meet their needs and expectation.
- For those who didn't, the top three kinds of materials they would like the library to purchase more of were DVDs (43%), Adult books (35%) and Books on CD (27%).
- More people prefer to have their materials checked out by staff (58%) rather than by themselves (42%).
- More than three-quarters of respondents (77%) indicated that they have requested items online.
- 98 percent of respondents felt they are treated with friendly respect when they use the library.
- In answering the question, "do you think MHL has enough of the following to make for an excellent library experience," the two items that got the highest proportion of "Yes" responses were "Quality of reference services" and "Friendly staff." The two that got the highest proportion of "No" responses were "Parking" and "Quiet study space."

**79% of respondents rated Memorial Hall Library "Excellent"**

**21% of respondents rated Memorial Hall Library "Good"**

**0% of respondents rated Memorial Hall Library "Fair" or "Poor"**

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