



**Strategic Plan
September 2020-2025**

**Approved by the Board of Directors
October 7, 2019**

Approved by MBLC Dec. 2019

- I. The following components are included in the Westfield Athenaeum's Strategic Plan for 2019 - 2024:
 - A. Mission Statement
 - B. Vision Statement
 - C. City Statistics
 - D. Methodology
 - E. Strategic Directions/Measurable Goals
 - F. Multi-year Objectives and Actions

II.

Strategic Planning Committee members:

Daniel Paquette, Former Director

Kate Deviny, Acting Director

Susan Drummey, Athenaeum Board of Directors

Pat Steele-Perkins, Athenaeum Board of Directors

Andrew Surprise, Westfield City Councilor

Linda Slozak, President, Friends of the Westfield Athenaeum

Joan Machahek, Friends of the Westfield Athenaeum

Joanne Picard, Patron and Friends of the Westfield Athenaeum

Katie Wiechec, Circulation Assistant

Ann Tumavicus, Technical Services Librarian

Liz Cashman, Reference Librarian

Olivia Eberli, Teen Librarian

Consultant: Kristi Chadwick, Planning Advisor, Massachusetts Library System (MLS)

City of Westfield Statistics

Population totaled 41,700 (2017) (a rise of about 600 people since 2010 Federal census). 91.01% of Westfield Ma residents were born in the United States, with 71.03% having been born in Massachusetts. 3.16% of residents are not US citizens. Of those not born in the United States, the largest percentage is from Europe. There are 33,510 adults, (6,624 of whom are seniors) in Westfield Ma. Westfield Ma Median Age =38; Men = 34.4; Female = 40.6.

Language 86.29% of Westfield MA residents speak only English, while 13.71% speak other languages. The non-English language spoken by the largest group is Other Indo-European, which is spoken by 8.7% of the population.

Veterans total 2,811 (1,071 from Vietnam, 667 from 2nd Gulf War, 512 from 1st Gulf War, 312 from Korea and 114 from World War II).

Employment status - 65.4% of the population are working. Westfield has a 61.1% employment rate and a 6.3% unemployment rate. According to the 2012 Economic Census, manufacturing continues to be an important industry sector for Westfield, employing more workers than another sector. The latest unemployment figures (2018) were 4.3% which is higher than the state's rate of 3.2%.

Racial makeup of the city was 92.8% White, 1.6% African American, 0.3% Native American, 1.3% Asian, 0.05% Pacific Islander, 2.2% from other races, and 1.8% from two or more races. Hispanic or Latino of any race were 7.5% of the population. (2010).

The education level varies from 3.12% of the population who have less than 9th grade education to 21.05% who have a Bachelor's degree. 4.79% of the population has between a 9th and 12th grade education; 30.86% are high school graduates; 18.84% have some college; 10.42% have an Associate's degree; 10.91% have a graduate degree.

Median household income in 2015 was \$61,053, and the per capita income was \$26,605. Males had a median income of \$38,316 versus \$27,459 for females. About 6.9% of families and 9% of the population were below the poverty line, including 16.2% of those under age 18 and 9.5% of those aged at 65 or over (2010). Overall the poverty rate is 8.46% with women carrying a higher rate than men at 9.13%. The city's poorest residents live in the densest parts of the City near the library.

Westfield's economy is growing- over 100 new businesses opened in the last decade, and as a result, both the number of businesses and jobs has increased. And the city's population has grown by 1% a year which is normal for Hampden County.

Registered Voters was 24,493 (2019)

School Enrollment was 5,341 (2019)

Income per capita was \$25,873 (2016)

Avg. tax bill is \$4,611 (fiscal 2019)

(Some data is from the City of Westfield's website, and comes from the 2010 census. City Data.com and Westfield Open Space and Recreation Long-range plan, Pioneer Valley Data provided the updated 2016-19 data.)

Located in the center of the downtown area, the Athenaeum is within a short walking distance (a mile or less) from a number of low and moderate income housing establishments (at least 9 locations with at least 15 units specifically suited for those with disabilities), including a teen homeless shelter and the Samaritan Inn. The Samaritan Inn is a quarter of a mile walk from the library and houses 31 residents. Many of the people who stay at the Samaritan Inn use the library on a regular basis to find assistance or employment, to stay connected by using our internet services and periodical collections, and sometimes just to have a warm place to go in the winter.

The downtown is becoming more populated with restaurants which cater, largely, to a lunch or breakfast crowd. The downtown is filled with small businesses, and banks, as well as the City's Gas and Electric department.

Westfield Athenaeum Mission Statement

To enrich the community of Westfield by providing open access to educational, cultural, recreational and informational resources and programs.

Westfield Athenaeum Vision Statement

The Westfield Athenaeum Library will be a welcoming, safe and easily accessible space for residents and visitors to come and explore their interests using our educational, recreational, cultural and informational resources.

The Athenaeum will be a hallmark institution where people will be inspired to read, explore and learn about the world in which we live.

Methodology

Beginning in February 2019, Director Daniel Paquette brought together a strategic planning committee that consisted of staff, Trustees, patrons and a City Councilor to form the Athenaeum's strategic plan. They met in February, after which Joanne Picard and Andrew Surprise created the survey. Daniel and Joanne met on April 3rd and reviewed the survey. Later Daniel gave the survey to some employees and Kristi Chadwick of MLS to review. After meeting again on May 1st, the survey was printed and provided at both circulation desks on May 13th and a link was added on our website and Facebook page. The survey was available through June 30th and 273 people completed the online survey while 179 completed the paper survey. (Addendum A).

Both the Strategic Planning Committee's first meeting in February and the staff meeting on June 17th brainstormed ideas, qualities and the direction of the Athenaeum using the SOAR exercise (Addendum B and C). In June, Kate Deviny took over directing the Strategic Plan and some planning members were added, as others had left. They met in July and August 23rd, and September 5th as the committee went over the surveys bringing out the salient points and synthesizing the data from the survey and SOAR exercises. Kristi Chadwick came out on July 31st and conducted a Community Vision with the public (Addendum D). The survey results and long-range plan were shared with both the staff and trustees for comments and edits through most of September, with a final editing on September 19th. The plan was approved by the Board of Trustees on October 7th.

The Strategic Planning Committee's thoughts were also informed by:
Library Services and Technology Act 5 Year Plan –MBLC 2017
The Future of Libraries and the Libraries of the Future – Grimm+ Parker
Dementia Friendly America – 2016
Key to Engaging Older Adults @ your library – ALA 2010
Libraries as media: Redefining a library in the digital age 2014
MLBC website

Survey Results Interpreted

This survey, like all surveys, has limitations. Some questions provided possible answers, while other questions were open-ended for which the patron generated the answer. Also 330 of the 452 responses were from our population of 41 years - older (73% of the responses). This makes the survey slightly skewed as the city's population of 41 years and older is only 41% of our population. This difference comes to bear when thinking of technology in the library. Our state report showed an increase in electronic information, while on the Survey, technology and computer use ranked 6th and 7th.

The open-ended questions predominantly match many of the multiple choice questions - showing that borrowing books, Interlibrary Loan, the atmosphere, staff, children's programming, accessibility, and community were of utmost importance. (Parking continues to be a problem.) The survey showed that many patrons think that our staff is doing a great job, providing excellent service, friendly and professional. Patrons mainly use the library to borrow items or browse, and often use our Interlibrary Loan service. Reading newspapers or magazines and attending a program were also major uses of our library.

The top 5 patron responses concerning what the library should focus on were: promote culture and local history, partner with local businesses and non-profits, afterschool homework help, better parking/hours, and increase creative resources.

ARIS Report Informing Our Major Objectives

The recent ARIS report showed that, although we are now back in our improved building, the circulation of adult items went down 1%, children's items went down 5% and teen circulation rose 13.5%. The lower results were probably predicated on having less shelf space and not all books were out of storage. The use of our local electronic collections, including eBooks and downloadable audio and video, doubled, and the use of network electronic collections also rose. The Athenaeum continues to circulate a number of items (17,700) to patrons who live elsewhere in Massachusetts.

The Athenaeum held 400 programs over the past year (68 teen, 77 adult, 255 children's) with over 8,000 people attending.

Lastly, the Athenaeum has 16,230 city citizens who are registered borrowers, which is 39% of our population.

Therefore –

In keeping with previous long-range plans, the survey and our Community Vision sessions, the Athenaeum will work towards becoming more of a community-based center as our vision statement propounds. The Athenaeum will build on our strengths of location and staff to provide an interactive center where citizens can find out about and discuss issues of the day, learn in a variety of ways and be entertained through our collections, classes and events.

Since the Athenaeum has been collecting City memorabilia for over 120 years, the library will focus on providing services that no other bookstore or other institution (even Amazon) can provide. Our Archivist will work with the Reference staff so that they have the knowledge to answer our local history questions. Reference staff will assist the Archivist in building displays and learn how to do more intensive research. As historical displays occur all over the library, the public will better understand the city's history and the treasures that the Athenaeum holds. Our recent 350th celebration this year proved the city's interest in local history and the Athenaeum provided most of the information for books, student work, and lectures generated this past year.

Staff technology training is a basic need for the Athenaeum since technology is normally 3 steps ahead of the average person. Staff will need to understand current and emerging technologies (and their platforms) and be able to assist our citizens with basic needs -- communicate with their families, apply for jobs and fill out federal, state, medical and financial forms online.

Becoming a more active community center will require that staff identify and know how to take care of a wide variety of common problems. This includes staff understanding and

identifying a wide variety of behaviors that patrons may show in distress (dementia, confusion, panic, anger, drug use, diabetes episodes or heart attacks and overdoses). This will require ongoing staff training for their comfort level and for proper patron care.

Increasing the use of the Athenaeum is vital to its growth and funding as well as fulfilling our mission statement and vision. The recent renovations have beautifully recreated our space. Our location at the center of the city makes us the perfect spot to meet, and the cleanliness and spaciousness create an ambiance that patrons enjoy. By providing more seating, increasing programming and classes, as well as putting more information on our website and on social media, the Athenaeum will meet Westfield citizens where their interests lie and continue to foster the community center base. Communication is always an imperative as we expand our services and introduce new participants to our forums, programs and services.

(Costs and source of funds are listed after items that require such.)

Major Objectives

1. Become more of a Community-Based Center
2. Celebrate culture and local history
3. Increase use of virtual and physical library
4. Increase Technology and Staff training
5. Improve communication

Objectives and Steps

1. Community-Based Center

- A. Hold forums on local issues by having speakers, and showing Independent, documentaries, and popular films with discussions
 - ☐ Purchase viewing rights -estimated costs \$250 per year – Source: Friends
- B. Work with Literacy Network, Westfield State University (WSU), library members, and other agencies to provide classes that provide education in a wide variety of levels-Americanization, English Second Language(ESL) , painting, crafts, Sign Language, job training, for example.
 - ☐ Pay for professionals or secure experienced volunteers - estimated costs \$2,000 per year – Source: Cultural Council grants and Friends donations
 - a) Have college students present their dissertations
 - b) Ask local educators to hold chats introducing their philosophy, favorite subjects, discoveries
 - c) Ask City Department Heads to explain licenses needed or how their department can assist citizens or functions within the city
 - d) Ask City Councilors to hold chats on citizens' issues
 - e) Ask local medical professionals to discuss care, or some aspect of their field
 - f) Encourage patrons to hold classes on chess, knitting, model building, etc.
 - g) Invite business owners to speak about their company
- C. Tie a display area to National Months (Diabetes, Alzheimer's, Cancer, etc.) to bring greater awareness of library resources. Also provide programming on these topics.
- D. Collaborate with YMCA, Assisted Living facilities, Westfield Senior Center, WSU, Boys and Girls Club, churches, and schools on programs

- E. Work with the City to be a resource when a disaster hits- power outage, heat wave.
 - a) Meet with Emergency Management director
 - ☐ Requires purchase of extra power strips and bottled water supply-estimated costs: \$70 per event – Source: Friends of the Westfield Athenaeum
- F. Evaluate yearly the increase of programs, feedback and attendance; scale or shift emphasis to meet goals

Community-Based Center Schedule

Year 1

- Show Independent, documentaries, and popular films with discussions
- Provide ESL, American Sign Language and Spanish classes

Year 2

- Work with Literacy Network and other agencies to provide education
- Ask City Councilors and City Department heads to hold chats on citizen issues or explain how their department works
- Encourage patrons to hold classes on chess, knitting, model building
- Invite business owners to introduce their business to the community

Year 3

- Ask medical professionals to discuss care, or some aspect of their field
- Ask educators to hold chats introducing their philosophy, favorite subjects or recent find
- Tie displays to National Months (Diabetes, Alzheimer’s, Cancer, etc.) and link to medical professional talks

Year 4

- Have local college students present their dissertations
- Work with the City to be a resource when a disaster hits

Year 5

- Collaborate with YMCA, Arbors, Westfield Senior Center, WSU, Boys and Girls Club, churches, and schools on programs

2. Celebrate Culture and Local History

- A. Integrate museum into Rand Art Museum
- B. Train the Reference staff to better understand the Archives and when and how to provide access
- C. Add more local histories and timelines to Edwin Online
- D. Create historical spotlight displays
- E. Hold History Chats to allow locals to tell of their experiences in Westfield
- F. Train Staff on video-taping and audio-recording of local history
- G. Purchase audio equipment - estimated cost \$900-Source: Smith Strong Fund
- H. Make these recordings available on our website
 - ☐ Purchase software and training to upload videos onto our website - estimated cost \$250–Source: Smith Strong Fund
 - a. Digitize local diaries and newspapers
 - ☐ Purchase or rent digitization equipment -Estimated cost \$1,000 – source: Smith Strong Fund
 - b. Provide genealogy classes
 - c. Crowd-source the transcription of local diaries

- d. Schedule Archivist visits to school classrooms, bringing appropriate artifacts to the era or subject being taught
 - ☐ Purchase proper suitcases to carry materials -Estimated cost \$150 -Source: Smith Strong Fund

Celebrate Culture and Local History Schedule

Year 1

- Create spotlight displays of either historical or ethnic history
- Hold History Chats to have citizens tell of their experiences, collect that local history
- Provide genealogy classes and begin training Reference staff

Year 2

- Further the Reference staff's understanding of the Archives and develop their ability to be docents in the Edwin Smith Museum
- Staff training on video-taping and audio recording of local history
- Research digitizing newspapers, costs, and metadata and any preparation needed
- Add Athenaeum timeline to Edwin Online

Year 3

- Begin digitizing local newspapers and diaries
- Add local histories, diaries, and city timeline to Edwin Online
- Crowd-source transcription of local diaries

Year 4

- Continue digitizing local newspapers and diaries and integrate these onto Edwin Online
- Re-evaluate Edwin Online as a port of information; adjust format or software as needed

Year 5

- Research and purchase software that allows for local newspapers to live on Edwin Online free for citizens
- Create Archival kits to take to schools

3. Technology and Staff Training

- A. Provide internet, computer courses, job search classes and classes for seniors
- B. Train staff on emerging and current technology to assist patrons
- C. Train staff on best practices of handling patrons with aging or mental health issues and emergencies
 - ☐ Provide staff time off or training half days throughout the years- estimated cost- minimal, can change staffing around, ask Friends
- D. Provide staff with educational seminars and webinars to assist them in their duties and further their career
 - ☐ Provide staff time off desk -Estimated cost- minimal, can change staffing around
- E. Train staff on CPR, Heimlich maneuver, administering Naloxone, and identifying drug crisis. Provide a defibrillator and training – (KEVS Foundation)

- Provide more comfortable seating and purchase more power strips
- Create Afterschool homework help with staff
- Research bookstore cataloging methods and schemas

Year 2

- Designate a staff person to coordinate volunteers and honor students
- Expand Afterschool homework help with honor students
- Expand volunteer opportunities for helping with homework
- Explore nearby parking possibilities
- Train staff on Facetime so that they can answer Reference questions during work hours
- Open half-days on Saturdays in July and August
- Begin working on bookstore cataloging of non-fiction in Adult area

Year 3

- Expand Afterschool help to higher grades using college students and the education department there
- Apply for LSTA grant for tweens and teens
- Work on bookstore-style cataloging in Children's area
- Begin raising money for Makerspace; research grant possibilities

Year 4

- Review seating and electrical connectivity in final phase of remodeling the Athenaeum
- Finish Bookstore cataloging- review signage
- Create more parking spaces
- Design Makerspace area of the library; review types of training the staff or volunteers will need for Makerspace; reassign as necessary

Year 5

- Build and outfit Makerspace with volunteers, trainings for staff, volunteers, and users
- Review comfortable seating areas of the library; refurbish or replace as necessary

5. Improve communication

- Update website for mobile application - create a Westfield Athenaeum app; keeping in mind the senior citizens and phone users
- Improve signage, including digital displays of events, provide better spaces for other community events and services
- Continue to use social media and adapt others as warranted
- Consider a city-based calendar and encourage its wide-spread use
- Cross post on City and other non-profit calendars
- Bulletin board just for local services for those in need- battered women, Autism, homeless, young mothers, drug addition, suicide help, etc.
- Provide intellectual freedom to knowledge, champion identifying the truth, equal and free access to all
 - Provide a wider variety of newspapers and magazines

Improved Communication Schedule

Year 1

- Install display monitors for events at both circulation desks
 - ☐ Estimated cost \$500- Source: Friends
- Cross post on City and other non-profit calendars
- Set up a bulletin board dedicated to local services
- Expand newspapers and magazines
- Review internal space for signs for events

Year 2

- Research website design, allow for staff training
- Analyze social media and other portals where Westfield citizens get their information; adapt as necessary and provide staff training
- Install an exterior lighted sign for library events
 - ☐ Estimated costs \$1,500-\$2,500 – Source: Friends
- Work with WSU or Academy students to design a Westfield Athenaeum app or widget
- Create a fact-check resources and evaluating sources page on our website,

Year 3

- Rework or redesign website for ease of use on phones and by seniors
- Work with Westfield State University Communications majors to find our best communication paths or methods
- Work with the City and other non-profits to have a city-wide calendar
- Research and purchase games which promote critical thinking for Children and Adults
- Hold comparison lectures where two sides of a position are discussed

Year 4

- Analyze social media and other portals where Westfield citizens get their information; adapt as necessary and provide staff training
- Provide links on our website to help the public evaluate Internet information

Year 5

- Purchase walkie-talkies or other hardware to allow instant communication between staff or consider an intercom system
- Review social media, website and other media for best coverages