RANDALL LIBRARY

Strategic Plan, Fall 2023-2028

Table of Contents:

Appendix:
Survey Results
Demographic Profile: Stow, MA

Mission Statement:

The Randall Library is a strong community partner dedicated to providing free and universal access to technology, information, and culture while continually striving to be a welcoming place of connection, diversity, and enrichment.

Vision Statement:
The Randall Library will be an innovative collaborator by fostering community, expanding minds, and inspiring curiosity.

Welcome to The Randall Library

Nestled in the heart of Stow, Massachusetts, is the picturesque Randall Library, a cherished institution that embodies the camaraderie of the people and the essence of knowledge, culture, and discovery. Small but mighty, the Randall Library is an indispensable asset and plays a vital role in the socioeconomic fabric of Stow, integral in strengthening the sense of community, catering to a diverse population, and fostering an environment of inclusivity, learning, and community engagement.

The Randall Library building is a warm and welcoming space. Its small size allows for more personalized service and attention, creating a friendly atmosphere that fosters connections between the library staff and community members. As a hub for gathering, learning, and sharing, From early literacy programs for children to book clubs for adults and technology workshops for seniors, Randall Library caters to all age groups' educational, informational, and recreational needs and interests, fostering an informed and engaged citizenry.

A New Era

A successful strategic plan is a dynamic document that evolves with the changing needs of the community and the library. In the Randall Library's previous strategic plan, heavy emphasis was placed on building and facility needs and concerns, precisely the issues leading to the decision to renovate the Library completely. Understandably, many goals and objectives focused on a building that fundamentally would need a renovation. The 2023-2028 plan focuses on an entirely different but exciting and inspirational era for Randall.

This new plan recognizes that for much of the time, it will cover a period of chaos in a post-pandemic world. There will be construction, a temporary location, moves, storage, and lots of planning and re-planning. Patrons will have questions, concerns, comments, and feedback about the process. Uniquely, library and community trends for 2023 and beyond may or may not be what Randall Library works with when they reopen their beautiful new building.

However, this plan stands out for a commitment to the future of innovation just as much as it promises to continue the service excellence the patrons have come to expect. The new Randall Library building will address many issues discussed in the previous Strategic Plan. The Library will be more easily accessible to all community members, particularly those with disabilities. The structure will be ready to host enhanced technological capabilities, integrate them into library services, and better bridge the digital divide.

Too many goals can spread resources too thin, overwhelming staff and potentially compromising the quality of work. This Strategic Plan centers around fewer but more critical behind-the-scenes areas for the library to have the most significant impact. By focusing on these areas, staff can better manage workload, avoid burnout, and maintain higher quality and effectiveness in operations. Fewer goals allow for resource optimization and agile thinking as Randall transitions into their new library. This will enable them to pivot their strategies and resources more efficiently and be more responsive and adaptive.

The Planning Process

The Strategic Planning Process began in the spring of 2023. Library Director Tina McAndrew sought the services of Kelly Linehan, a Strategic Planning Consultant and Library Director. Together, they discussed the project's scope and reviewed strategic plans, best practices, and innovative ideas from other libraries to fine-tune the process for Randall.

Randall offered three patron focus groups online and a staff-only focus group. Multiple attendees shared their thoughts and concerns, with some patrons coming to more than one session. The Randall Library has a niche group of proud library supporters. After introducing each other and cementing the community feel, the first thing most shared were compliments about Randall and the staff; many spoke of signing up for a library card immediately after moving to Stow.

A comprehensive online and paper survey was available to patrons and the community. Full survey results are in the appendix.

Public focus groups had a small turnout overall, primarily retirees and working adults.

In each focus group, we started with the KARR exercise. KARR stands for Keep (what's working, what do we love), Acquire (what are other people doing/have that we love), Reinvent (what's a good idea that's not working right), Retire (what's not working at all or is obsolete): the goal is to allow everyone to feedback into these categories as a starting point to learn what the concerns are and for planning what we need. The facilitator is there to listen and take notes. All answers are recorded; there are no wrong answers and no editing. Sometimes, the same feedback was in different categories based on how people felt.

For the staff-only group, we also started with the KARR exercise without any Administration present so staff could share their thoughts unfiltered as much as possible. As a team, the staff discussed that we know what the library is capable of, what programs and services we could offer, and any current challenges. We also spoke more broadly about what Stow residents hope for their community so we would know how to service our residents best.

In both groups, as we progressed through the KARR exercise, we followed up with some particular questions about recurring themes.

Community Profile

Stow, Massachusetts, is a quaint suburban town of approximately 7,200 residents. With a rich history and strong community bonds, Stow boasts a unique socioeconomic makeup that blends economic stability, diverse housing options, and abundant natural vistas, like parks, trails, farms, and apple orchards.

The median household income in Stow is higher than the state average, reflecting a stable economy that fosters a comfortable standard of living for its residents[1]. The town's proximity to major economic centers like Boston and Worcester attracts professionals seeking a suburban retreat without sacrificing career opportunities. An influx of young families and working individuals have contributed to the town's growth and vitality.

Stow's housing options cater to a broad spectrum of socioeconomic backgrounds, ensuring everyone can find a place to call home and include a mix of older homes, newer, and apartment complexes. The town's commitment to intelligent zoning and thoughtful development encourages responsible growth, preserving its natural beauty while accommodating the evolving needs of its residents, particularly the residential tax base due to a lack of commerce and affordable housing, which many noted during our focus groups.

Stow's commitment to preserving natural landscapes is evident in its numerous parks, conservation areas, and outdoor recreational opportunities. Residents and visitors can immerse themselves in nature by exploring the miles of walking trails, canoeing in scenic waters, and picnicking in beautiful open spaces. This emphasis on nature enhances the town's appeal and promotes an active and healthy lifestyle among its residents.

The educational landscape in Stow is equally commendable, further enriching the town's socioeconomic fabric. The town's public school system, part of the Nashoba Regional School District, is renowned for its academic excellence and nurturing environment. Fall 2023, they are hosting a special town meeting to discuss a new high school project. This commitment to education ensures that children in Stow receive a high-quality education, setting them up for success.

Stow's vibrant community spirit is evident in its various events and activities throughout the year. It proved the minute the focus groups started, with introductions and connections being the first order of business before delving into library topics. Local farmers' markets, arts festivals, and cultural celebrations foster a sense of togetherness, celebrating the town's diversity and nurturing a deep understanding of belonging among its residents. The town's official Historical Commission and Historical Society preserve Stow's rich heritage, showcasing its historical artifacts and documents and promoting a solid connection to the town's past.

Demographics (Brief)

According to the U.S. Census, **26.5%** of people living in Stow are under 18 years old…indicating a high percentage of families with kids living in Stow (compared to 19.5% in Massachusetts). **16.3%** of seniors (over 65) reside in Stow (compared to 17.4% statewide).

The Stow population is predominantly white at **84.8%** (compared to 79.8% in Massachusetts). Among the minority groups, the Asian population is the highest at **5.5%** 7.5% state). African American population is at **2.6%** (9.3% state), and Hispanic or Latino at **.9%** (12.8% state). **3.8%** identify as having two or more races (compared to 2.7% in Massachusetts).

Most residents in Stow are homeowners at **85.5%** (compared to 62.4% in the state). The housing market has a median home value of **$555,200** (compared to $424,700 in the state).

The majority of Stow residents are highly educated. **98.9%** of people have high school degrees (compared to 91.2% in Massachusetts), and **75.3% have** a Bachelor's degree or higher (compared to 45.2% in the state).

A complete demographic profile of Stow is available in the appendix.

Feedback Assessment: Library Love

I'm in love with the Library. I love the Library.

Library went above and beyond in the pandemic. I'm so appreciative. They were there.

The staff is fantastic; they do a lot with a little and make magic. It's a challenging space. They do the best they can with what they have.

The bulletin board is hysterical - it tells you what day it is and silly fun facts like National Cat Day.

Customer service is a 14 out of 10, professional, kind, lovely, timely sense of humor.

Staff must be happy they're a team doing an exceptional job.
Exceptional.

The Randall Library team is lucky to work for patrons who value and love their library and the town of Stow. Listening to the feedback from the patrons, we heard their love and pride for the Randall Library and its team and how excellent the service is at the Library.

Additionally, patrons shared how they appreciate many "beautiful" things in Stow, not only the natural beauty and charm but also the Council on Aging, Town Hall, and their helpful staff, as well as a feeling of welcome when families move here.

Opportunities

First, investing in and renovating their library shows a committed community, Town Administration, Trustees, and Library users. In the patrons' words, the library is an asset; most expressed excitement over the pending renovation, with some tempered disappointment the footprint would remain the same. This type of enthusiasm is essential for long-term library support and success.

The Stow community represented a strong sense of community pride. Thanks to its size, Randall has the flexibility and potential to offer niche programming and collections specifically catered to specific age groups, cultural backgrounds, or areas of interest to Stow residents, cementing its position as the community hub of Stow. This tailored approach ensures that library resources and activities resonate with the community, leading to greater participation and satisfaction.

Despite its small size, Randall Library stands at the forefront of technology and innovation. Recognizing the importance of digital resources in the modern world, the library offers a wide array of e-books, online databases, and digital materials to cater to the diverse needs of its patrons. This commitment to staying current with technological advancements ensures that Stow's residents have access to cutting-edge resources, promoting digital literacy and bridging the digital divide within the community.

These opportunities highlight Randall Library's unique and valuable role in its community, contributing to education, cultural enrichment, and social cohesion.

Challenges:

Concerns were raised by the patrons during the focus groups, some consistent with managing a small public library and some problems exacerbated by the Randall Library's unique features and a pending renovation. Like many smaller libraries, Randall needs help balancing resource allocation and fulfilling the demands of a growing community. As the town continues to attract newcomers seeking its unique charm, it is necessary to ensure that affordable housing options remain accessible to all. Factoring into that housing concern, many residents shared concerns about limited water resources and the continued quality.

This balance requires thoughtful planning and community involvement; the community has proven its love for the Library in its decision to renovate the current building, making it more accessible and vibrant for years to come. As the town's population evolves, the library must continue to adapt its services and offerings to meet the changing needs of its patrons. Adequate funding and support from the town's administration and community are essential to sustain and enhance the library's impact on Stow's socioeconomic landscape.

First, the small staff size and the amount of work the library can and does accomplish are mismatched. Small organizations often need more staff and capacity. Realistically, staffing must increase to most effectively serve the community, particularly once the new building opens.

Interestingly, in line with that, for a smaller library, Randall has an overwhelming number of support organizations behind the scenes. Seven publicly elected Trustees serve 3-year staggered terms overseeing the Library Director and policies, equating to 1.5 Trustees for every staff member.

The Library's annual budget provided by the Town of Stow covers the salaries of library employees, the cost of the maintenance of the physical plant, Minuteman Library Network membership expenses, office supplies, and the purchase of some of the library's digital and printed materials. Trustees also manage the Randall Library Trust, which annually disburses funds to purchase library materials only.

- The Randall Library Friends Association: The Friends group promotes library use and interests through active fundraising. The Randall Library Friends Association is the financial sponsor of the Library's Summer Reading Program and children's programs, museum passes, adult programs, and the purchase of additional items that falls outside the funding the Town's library budget provides.

- Hale High School Fund: The Hale Fund supports the Hale Reference Room by maintaining the print collection and providing online digital content through annual disbursements from a longstanding endowment.

- Second Century Fund: This is an independent fundraising organization to assist the Randall Library financially. Randall Library patrons directly benefit from these organizations in funding library materials with unique offerings and traditional services.

Because of this unbalanced ratio between support and action-able staff, it is vital to focus on aligning goals, streamlining policies and priorities, procedures, and fine-tuning collaboration to promote a cohesive team culture.

While it's not uncommon for different library stakeholders to have limited awareness of each other's activities, fostering better communication and collaboration can be beneficial.

As the Randall Library embraces its future, it does so with a deep sense of pride in its past, appreciation and respect for its patrons, and a dedication to fostering an inclusive and prosperous community for generations to come. As Stow continues to grow and evolve, the Randall Library remains steadfast in its commitment to providing access to information, promoting education, and serving as a unifying force that strengthens the bonds within the community.

Coupled with recurring themes and priorities analyzed in the feedback from patrons and staff alike, we have assessed key takeaways to focus on as goals. These goals balance thoughtful planning, community involvement, and a streamlined operations management plan.

Goal 1: Elevate [Rebrand] Randall Library as the Heart of the Community

Objective 1: Engage the Community in Shaping the Library's Future
Action Items:
- Create a structured feedback program encouraging community members to provide input on library programs and services.
- Form community advisory groups comprising diverse representatives from different demographics and interests and engage these groups in meaningful discussions to actively involve them in shaping the library's future.
- Regularly review the feedback received and implement actionable suggestions and improvements to demonstrate transparency in addressing community concerns.

Objective 2: Foster Civic Engagement and Collaboration
Action Items:
- Initiate collaborations with Town departments, local organizations, schools, and businesses.
- Explore joint projects and events that benefit the library and the community to strengthen civic engagement.

Objective 3: Emphasize the Library's Role as a Community Gathering Space
Action Items:
- Implement a library-sponsored Story walk in various outdoor spaces, providing an interactive literary experience for community members.
- Regularly organize storytelling and cultural activities with recreation events and key recreation spots.
- Establish a "Library of Things" collection focused on outdoor equipment, tools, and resources that promote exploration and enjoyment of Stow's outdoor spaces.
- Work with Town leaders to investigate the process and potential of becoming an official Dementia Friendly Community.

Objective 4: Illustrate the Library's Role in Lifelong Learning and Funding Opportunities
Action Items:
- Showcase the library's diverse resources and services for children, students, professionals, and seniors.
- Emphasize the role of libraries as facilitators of lifelong learning and personal development.
- Seek additional funding through grant opportunities and partnerships with local organizations and businesses.
- Develop compelling grant proposals that align with the library's strategic objectives and community needs.

Goal 2: Streamline Operational Processes and Systems to Optimize Resource Allocation and Efficiency.

Objective 1: Identify and Invest in Critical Activities and Initiatives
Action Items:
- Explore preprocessing options for physical materials to streamline handling and reduce staff time spent on manual tasks.
- Create standardized and efficient operating procedures (SOPs) for key tasks and processes.
- Train staff on the SOPs to ensure consistent and streamlined execution.
- Conduct a Comprehensive Policy and Procedure Audit
- Identify areas for improvement, consolidation, or elimination to avoid duplication and unnecessary work.
- Update and revise policies and procedures based on the audit findings.
- Ensure the revised documents are clear, concise, and aligned with the organization's strategic objectives.
- Educate and train staff on new policies and implementation.
- Encourage cross-department collaboration to identify redundancies and explore opportunities for process streamlining.

Goal 3: Enhance Community Engagement and Support for the New Building Project

Objective 1: Highlight the Benefits and Positive Community Impact
Action Items:
- Develop clear and persuasive messages emphasizing the positive community impact of a well-funded and updated library.
- Highlight how the new building project aligns with the library's mission and strategic goals.
- Conduct targeted outreach to engage stakeholders, including community members, local businesses, and government officials.
- To reach a broader audience, use various communication channels, such as town hall meetings, presentations, and social media.
- Analyze feedback from patrons and staff during the assessment phase and develop action plans to address concerns and incorporate relevant suggestions into the project's implementation.

Objective 2: Demonstrate the Value and Return on Investment
Action Items:
- Conduct surveys and gather testimonials from community members who have benefited from library services.
- Showcase stories that illustrate the positive impact of the library on individuals and the community as a whole.
- Publicize key usage statistics, such as the number of patrons, circulation numbers, and program attendance.

- Provide data illustrating the library's role in supporting literacy, education, workforce development, and community engagement.
- Create annual impact reports demonstrating how the library's services and resources provide value to the community.
- Highlight cost savings and the benefits of having a well-funded library versus individual access to costly resources.

Goal 4: Develop an Effective Communication Plan and Progress Tracking for the New Building Project

Objective 1: Develop a Comprehensive Communication Plan and Timeline
Action Items:
- Define clear communication goals for the new building project, including stakeholder engagement and progress updates.
- Develop a comprehensive Communication Plan that outlines the communication channels, key messages, and target audiences.
- Include strategies for addressing concerns and keeping stakeholders informed about project progress.

Objective 2: Create a Timeline for the Building Project:
Action Items:
- Develop a detailed timeline that outlines the phases and milestones of the building project.
- Establish mechanisms for tracking progress and milestones throughout the building project.
- Provide regular updates to stakeholders to keep them informed of project developments.

Goal 5: Improve Internal Communication and Engagement for Effective Stakeholder Collaboration

Objective 1: Generate a Comprehensive Communication Plan
Action Items:
- Develop a comprehensive communication plan outlining strategies for effectively communicating the library's strategic plan to internal and external stakeholders.
- Identify key messaging, target audiences, communication channels, and a timeline for dissemination.
- Involve stakeholders in planning to build support, gather input, and foster collaboration.

Objective 2: Enhance Communication and Coordination Between Boards
Action Items:
- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each board, outlining their specific areas of focus and decision-making authority. Ensure boards have a shared understanding of their respective functions.

- Foster a culture of trust and collaboration by promoting open and transparent communication between the Board of Trustees, the Friends group, and other relevant boards related to Randall Library by establishing annual meetings, joint sessions, or designated communication channels for information sharing and collaboration.
- Determine Communication Protocols: the frequency and format of communication, response times, confidentiality, and the sharing of critical information.
- Appoint board members or representatives as liaisons between the boards to facilitate communication and information sharing and serve as conduits for exchanging updates, proposals, and feedback.
- Clarify the distribution of meeting agendas, materials, and minutes so all boards can access the same information and stay informed.

Objective 3: Foster a Culture of Collaboration and Active Listening
Action Items:
- Actively seek input and collaboration from both boards when addressing significant issues or making critical decisions.
- Utilize digital tools and platforms to enhance communication between boards, including virtual meeting platforms, collaborative document sharing, and online communication channels.
- Foster a constructive dialogue and inclusivity culture by hosting professional development on active listening (or other board-related executive training).

Goal 6: Develop a comprehensive 5-year staffing and organizational chart that aligns staff positions with projected future use, demands, and strategic goals while emphasizing staff training and professional development.

Objective 1: Assess and Optimize Workflows and Processes
Action Items:
- Conduct a thorough evaluation of current workflows and processes within the organization to identify inefficiencies and areas for improvement.
- Analyze how staffing structure and role changes may impact workflow efficiency and effectiveness.
- Propose adjustments to streamline processes and enhance productivity.

Objective 2: Conduct a Needs Assessment for Future Demands
Action Items:
- Conduct a comprehensive Needs Assessment to forecast future demands on staff time.
- Reach out to other libraries that have undergone renovations to review their process for staff growth.
- Consider factors such as anticipated growth, new initiatives, changing programs or services, technological advancements, and potential shifts in demand.
- Utilize the Needs Assessment to determine the organization's future staffing requirements.

Objective 3: Define Key Roles and Responsibilities
Action Items:
- ● Clearly define the key roles and responsibilities required to meet the library's future needs.
- ● Identify specific functions and expertise necessary for each position.
- ● Outline essential qualifications, experience levels, and specialized certifications or knowledge required.

Objective 4: Prioritize Staff Training and Development
Action Items:
- ● Embed staff training and professional development as a crucial component of the staffing plan.
- ● Assess current staff skill sets and identify areas where training can empower the library team to meet objectives effectively.
- ● Develop a comprehensive training program and budget that addresses identified skill gaps and prepares staff for future challenges and opportunities.
- ● Determine areas where specialized expertise is required to support future initiatives or programs (e.g., technology, marketing, data analysis, grant writing, and project management).
- ● Evaluate whether existing staff can fulfill these specialized roles or if new positions need to be created.
- ● Investigate the potential of collaborating with staff at neighboring libraries.
- ● Balance the use of external expertise through hiring or training existing staff to build a versatile and capable team.

Goal 7: Integrate Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (EDIB) as core tenets of all Library operations.

Objective 1: Complete a Comprehensive Collection Audit for EDIB Titles
Action Items:
- ● Utilize appropriate EDIB criteria and tools to evaluate the representation of various cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, and LGBTQ+ identities in the collection.
- ● Identify gaps in representation and work towards diversifying the collection to better reflect the community's diverse perspectives.

Objective 2: Standardize EDIB Review for All Library Content
Action Items:
- ● Establish clear standards and guidelines to ensure that all content planning and creation, including programming, speakers, series, art displays, and promotions, are audited for EDIB representation.

Objective 3: Enhance Staff's EDIB Knowledge through Training
Action Items:
- ● Provide comprehensive training for library staff in EDIB areas.

● Offer Reader's Advisory training focusing on EDIB awareness, sensitivity, and expertise so staff can recommend diverse and inclusive materials to library patrons.
● Foster ongoing learning through workshops, book discussions, or guest speakers to deepen staff understanding of EDIB topics and materials.

Objective 4: Promote ongoing Diversification of the Collection
Action Items:
● Collaborate with diverse community groups, local organizations, and experts to gather recommendations for EDIB-focused titles to add to the collection.
● Allocate budget and resources to acquire new materials that address representation gaps identified in the audit.

Objective 5: Promote EDIB Awareness
Action Items:
● Develop community outreach initiatives and educational programs that raise awareness of EDIB topics and the library's commitment to inclusion.

● Engage with local schools, colleges, and community organizations to promote the library's efforts and foster partnerships.

Objective 6: Monitor and Evaluate Progress
Action Items:
● Regularly assess the impact of EDIB initiatives on the library and the community.
● Collect feedback from patrons, staff, and community partners to gauge the effectiveness of EDIB efforts.
● Use evaluation results to refine and improve EDIB strategies over time.

Goal 8: Enhance the Randall Library's volunteer program to effectively meet the library's needs by attracting, engaging, and retaining dedicated individuals passionate about supporting Randall Library's mission.

Objective 1: Clearly Define Volunteer Roles and Responsibilities.
Action Items:
● Develop detailed job descriptions and guidelines for each volunteer role to ensure clarity and set expectations.
● Provide comprehensive training materials that enable volunteers to understand their specific tasks and the impact they can make.
● Offer role-specific training sessions, support, and resources to ensure volunteers' success.

Objective 2: Design a Comprehensive Recruitment Strategy to attract diverse volunteers through various channels, including the library's website, social media, community events, and local networks.
Action Items:
- Target outreach efforts to engage individuals from different demographics to ensure inclusivity.
- Collaborate with local schools to advertise open volunteer positions to students.

Objective 3: Create a recognition Program for Volunteers
Action Items:
- Implement a recognition program that celebrates volunteers' contributions, acknowledging annual achievements and milestones.
- Publicly appreciate volunteers through announcements, appreciation events, or awards to foster a sense of community and encourage continued involvement.
- Regularly share updates, newsletters, and success stories to showcase the impact of volunteer work on the library and the community.

Objective 4: Feedback and Input Gathering
Action Items:
- Actively seek volunteer input and feedback through surveys or focus groups to demonstrate that their opinions are valued and utilize feedback to improve the volunteer program and address any concerns or suggestions.

Objective 5: Offer Flexible Volunteer Opportunities:
Action Items
- Provide various flexible volunteer opportunities to accommodate different schedules and preferences.

Goal 9: Enhance Collection Development to Address Growing E-content Demand with a Focus on Access

Objective 1: Anticipate Ongoing Demand for Accessible and Current Collections
Action Items:
- Develop a sustainable funding plan that ensures continued support for AV collections while allocating a sufficient budget to meet the increasing demand for e-content across all populations.
- Consider reallocating resources and exploring potential cost-saving measures to maximize the e-content budget.
- Provide ongoing training to staff to enhance their ability to assist patrons in navigating and utilizing e-content.
- Offer comprehensive instruction and assistance programs for library patrons on effectively accessing and using downloadable materials, e-books, and digital resources.

Objective 2: Align Collection Priorities with Community Needs
Action Items:
- Assess Community Needs and Interests by conducting surveys, focus groups, or other interactive methods to gauge the community's preferences and interests in e-content materials.
- Use the gathered data to identify priority areas for acquiring digital resources that align with patron needs.
- Explore opportunities for cost-sharing and collaborative initiatives with neighboring libraries, leveraging collective resources to enhance the e-content collection.

Objective 3: Extend Access Beyond Physical Library Boundaries (particularly during the renovation)
Action Items:
- Expand Digital Resources and Online Databases by acquiring and promoting digital resources, online databases, e-books, and audiovisual materials to offer patrons access beyond regular library hours and physical boundaries.
- Ensure that the digital collection is accessible through user-friendly platforms and devices.
- Investigate installing library-supported hotspots in locations throughout Stow for ease of access.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following people for their support and feedback during the strategic planning process:

All the community members who responded to the survey.

The Library Staff took the time to participate in a focus group and share their honest and helpful feedback about the Randall Library.

Board of Library Trustees:

Maureen Busch, Chair
Maura Sieller
Morgan Hillman
Rachael Flaherty
Marcy Eckel
Hannah "Sunny" Richardson
Barbara K. Wolfenden

Library Administration: Tina McAndrew, Library Director

All the Focus Group and Interview Participants were thoughtful in their responses and generous with their time. It was a pleasure to speak with them.

Facilitator: Kelly Linehan

Approved by the Randall Library Board of Trustees on September 5, 2023.

Demographic Information - Stow, MA

United States Census Bureau, Quickfacts - Stow
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/stowtownmiddlesexcountymassachusetts,US/PST045221

United States Census Bureau, Quickfacts - Massachusetts
https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/MA

City Data
http://www.city-data.com/city/Stow-Massachusetts.html

Department of Education, School and District Profiles (high school)
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=07250000&orgtypecode=5&

Department of Education, School and District Profiles (elementary and middle schools)
https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/profiles/student.aspx?orgcode=07250000&orgtypecode=5&

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of Stow is currently estimated at **7,059** (as of July 1, 2021). Massachusetts population is currently at 6,989,690.

Below is a snapshot of the historical population changes in Stow:
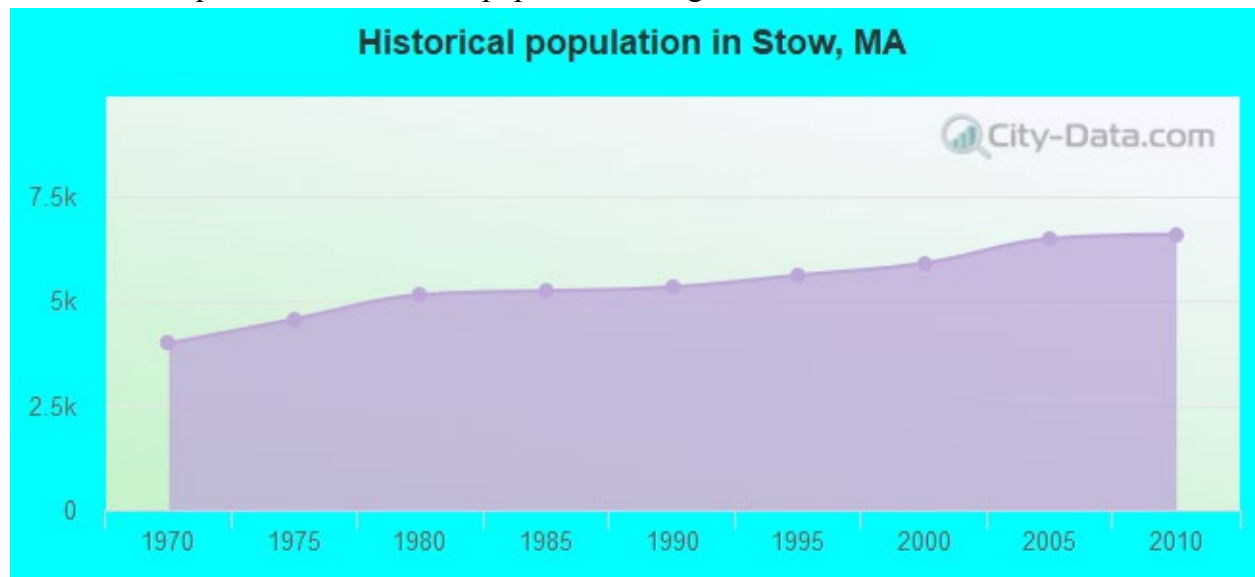
Age and Sex Demographics

According to the U.S. census, **26.5%** of people living in Stow are under 18 years old…indicating a high percentage of families with kids living in Stow (compared to 19.5% in Massachusetts). **16.3%** of seniors (over 65) reside in Stow (compared to 17.4% state wide).

Age and Sex	
Persons under 5 years, percent	5.6%
Persons under 18 years, percent	26.5%
Persons 65 years and over, percent	16.3%
Female persons, percent	48.5%

Racial Demographics

The Stow population is predominantly white at **84.8%** (compared to 79.8% in Massachusetts). Among the minority groups, the Asian population is the highest at **5.5%** 7.5% state). African American population at **2.6%** (9.3% state), Hispanic or Latino **.9%** at (12.8% state). **3.8%** identify as having two or more races (compared to 2.7% in Massachusetts).

Race and Hispanic Origin	
White alone, percent	84.8%
Black or African American alone, percent	2.6%
American Indian and Alaska Native alone, percent	0.00%
Asian alone, percent	5.5%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone, percent	0.00%
Two or more races, percent	3.8%
Hispanic or Latino, percent	.9%
White alone, not Hispanic or Latin, percent	83.9%

Veterans and Foreign-Born Residents

According to the U.S. census, **10.2%** of Stow's population is foreign born (compared to 17.3% in Massachusetts). Between 2011-2021, **246** veterans resided in Stow (277,442 in the state).

Population Characteristics	

Veterans, 2017-2021	246
Foreign born persons, percent 2017-2021	10.2%

Housing Statistics

The majority of residents in Stow are homeowners at **85.5%** (compared to 62.4% in the state). The housing market has a median home value of **$555,200** (compared to $424, 700 in the state).

Housing	
Housing units, July 1, 2021, (V2021)	X
Wonder-occupied housing unit rate, 2017-2021	85.5%
Median value of owner-occupied housing units 2017-2021	$555,200

Families and Living Arrangements

Between 2017-2021 there were **2,646** households in Stow (2,714,448 in Massachusetts). **11%** of households in Stow speak a language other than English (compared to 24.4% in the state). The average persons per household is **2.69** (compared to 2.48 in the state).

Families and Living Arrangements	
Households, 2017-2021	2,646
Language other than English spoken at home, percent of persons age 5 years +, 2017-2021	11%
Persons per household	2.69

Education

The majority of Stow residents are highly educated. **98.9%** of people have high school degrees (compared to 91.2% in Massachusetts), **75.3% have** a Bachelor's degree or higher (compared to 45.2% in the state).

Education	
High school graduate or higher, percent of persons age 25 years+, 2017-2021	98.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons age 25 years +, 2017-2021	75.3%

Health

4.5% of Stow residents (under 65) have a disability (compared to 7.9% in the state), only **0.6%** (under 65) of residents have no health insurance (compared to 2.9% in the state).

Health	
With disability, under age 65 years, percent, 2017-2021	4.5%
Persons without health insurance, under age 65 years, percent	0.6%

Economy

According to the latest U.S. census, **69.6%** of Stow population (over 16) are in the workforce (67.1% in Massachusetts), and **66.2%** of female residents (over 16) work (compared to 63.5% in Massachusetts).

Economy

In civilian labor force, female, percent of population age 16 years+, 2017-2021	66.2%
Total accommodation and food services sales, 2017 ($1,000)(c)	5,434
Total health care and social assistance receipts/revenue, 2017 ($1,000)(c)	D
Total transportation and warehousing receipts/revenue, 2017 ($1,000)(c)	NA
Total retail sales, 2017 ($1,000)(c)	34,268

According to City Data, below is a snapshot of the most common industries in Stow. Please keep in mind the statistics were compiled in 2000 so numbers have fluctuated.
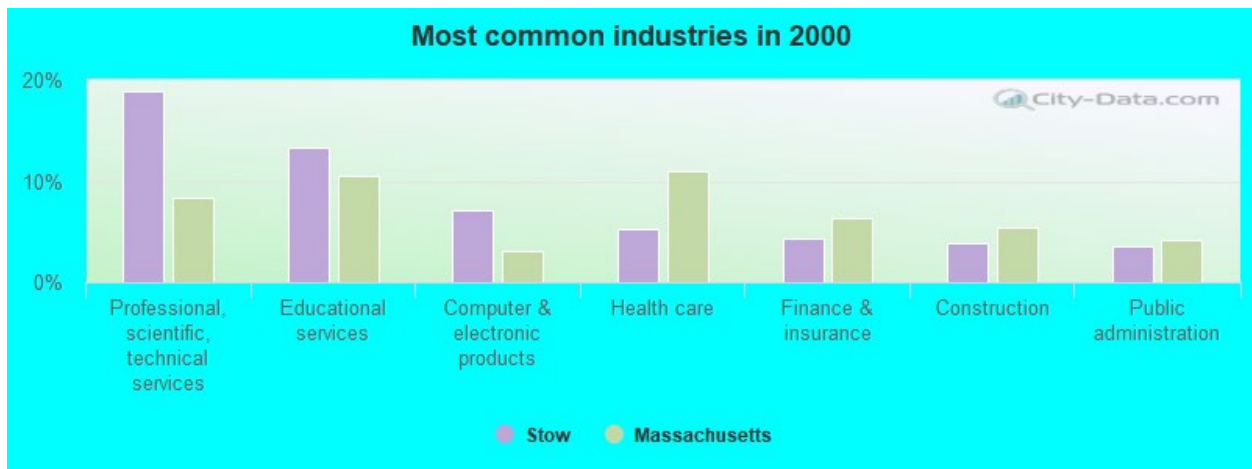
- Professional, scientific, technical services (18.8%)

- Educational services (13.3%)
- Computer & electronic products (7.1%)
- Health care (5.3%)
- Finance & insurance (4.4%)
- Construction (3.8%)
- Public administration (3.6%)

The rest of the report is on school statistics in Stow, according to the Department of Education's School and District Profiles.

Public High School, Nashoba Regional, 2022-2023

In the current school year, 2022-2023, there is some racial diversity in the Nashoba Regional High School. **83.2%** of students are white (compared to 54.4% on a state level). Of the minority groups, the Hispanic student population is at **7%** (compared to 24.2% in state), African American at **1.8%** (9.4 % in state), Asian at **4.7%**(7.3% in state), Native American at **0%** (0.2% in state), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander at **0.1%** (same as state). **3.2%** of the student body identify as multi-race/non-Hispanic (compared to the state level of 4.4%).
When looking at enrollment at the high school by gender, **406** are female (442,564 compared to state level) and are male **421** (469,563 compared to state) and **2** are non-binary (1,608 compared to state).

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (2022-23)			
Race	% of School	% of District	% of State
African American	1.8	1.4	9.4
Asian	4.7	4.1	7.3
Hispanic	7.0	8.2	24.2
Native American	0.0	0.0	0.2
White	83.2	81.8	54.4
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.1	0.1	0.1
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	3.2	4.4	4.4

Enrollment by Gender (2022-23)			
	School	District	State
Female	408	1,487	442,564
Male	421	1,562	469,563
Non-Binary	2	2	1,608
Total	831	3,051	913,735

The section below is on statistics for Stow public elementary and middle schools. Statistics are pulled from the Department of Education's School and District Profiles.

Public Elementary School, 2022-2023
- Center School

In the current school year of 2022-2023, **78.5%** of students are white (compared to 54.4% on a state level). Of the minority groups, the Hispanic student population is **8%** (compare to 24.2% state), African American is **0.6%** (compared to 9.4% state), Asian is **6%** (7.3% state), Native American is **0%** (0.2% state), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander is **0%** (0.1% state). **6.8%** of the student body identify as multi-race/non-Hispanic, which is high compared to the state level of 4.4%.

When looking at the elementary school by gender, **231** are female (compared to 442,564 state) and **267** are male (compared to 469,563 state) and **0** are non-binary (compared to 1,608 state).

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (2022-23)			
Race	% of School	% of District	% of State
African American	0.6	1.4	9.4
Asian	6.0	4.1	7.3
Hispanic	8.0	8.2	24.2
Native American	0.0	0.0	0.2

White	78.5	81.8	54.4
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.0	0.1	0.1
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	6.8	4.4	4.4

Enrollment by Gender (2022-23)			
	School	District	State
Female	231	1,487	442,564
Male	267	1,562	469,563
Non-Binary	0	2	1,608
Total	498	3,051	913,735

Public Middle School, 2022-2023

- Hale

In the current school year of 2022-2023, **83.3%** of students are white (compared to 54.4% on a state level). Of the minority groups, Hispanic student population is **4.8%** (compare to 24.2% state), African American is **2.6%** (compared to 9.4% state), Asian is **4.1%** (7.3% state), Native American is **0%** (0.2% state), and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander is **0%** (0.1% state). **5.2%** of the student body identify as multi-race/non-Hispanic, which is high compared to the state level of 4.4%.

When looking at the elementary school by gender, **144** are female (compared to 442,564 state) and **126** are male (compared to 469,563 state) and **0** are non-binary (compared to 1,608 state).

Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity (2022-23)			
Race	% of School	% of District	% of State
African American	2.6	1.4	9.4

Asian	4.1	4.1	7.3
Hispanic	4.8	8.2	24.2
Native American	0.0	0.0	0.2
White	83.3	81.8	54.4
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0.0	0.1	0.1
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	5.2	4.4	4.4

Enrollment by Gender (2022-23)			
	School	District	State
Female	144	1,487	442,564
Male	126	1,562	469,563
Non-Binary	0	2	1,608
Total	270	3,051	913,735