













2020 Community Report









Dear Citizens of Concord,

As we look towards warmer days, I am reflecting on the challenges and opportunities we all experienced this past year.

Like many of you, I am extremely grateful for family, friends, and essential workers. As we were reminded about how important the Library is to us, we realized that Library staff members are essential workers. And we are so appreciative of how they continued to support our patrons through services, programs, and activities without missing a beat.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we were able to highlight the wealth of on-line services that the Library has to offer, including books, newspapers, magazines, films, music, and access to Special Collections. As the pandemic continued, we created a variety of virtual programs and activities to enrich all ages in the community. When curbside pick-up began, it felt like a special gift to physically connect us to literature, film, art, and music from our collections. The Library staff worked like busy elves to safely fulfill thousands of requests. And when the building opened again and people could actually be in the beloved spaces, it felt like a transcendental experience.

To add to our blessings, we were able to break ground on our exciting Library expansion after almost a decade of planning. By the end of this year, we expect to be enjoying the new spaces in person.

While we don't know what the future holds, we do know that the Library will endure and continue to find ways to be relevant and serve its patrons – in good times and bad.

Wishing you a safe and healthy spring!

Thery J. Fi twock

Sherry F. Litwack

President, CFPL Corporation

Connecting Our Community @CFPLConnects @CFPLConnects CFPLConnects

Concord Free Public Library Corporation

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The Library Corporation Trustees at the October 2020 groundbreaking ceremony for the Library expansion project.

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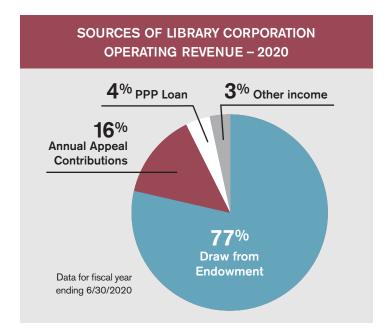
Marcy Bouley Eckel

TREASURER'S REPORT

The Library Corporation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation that has functioned successfully since 1873 as a public-private partnership with the Town of Concord. While the Town has responsibility to employ the library staff, purchase books and other media, and cover the cost of utilities such as heat, light, power and telecommunications needs and daily custodial maintenance, the Corporation manages and provides funding for the following important library functions:

- Caring for the buildings and grounds, maintenance of building systems, as well as acquisition of furniture and fixtures.
- Maintaining and growing the Library's Special Collections, which consists of thousands of historical documents, letters, manuscripts and other written material dating to the town's founding in 1635, as well as artworks of various kinds given to the library over the years.
- Augmenting the Town's purchase of books and media, currently \$125,000 each year.
- Administering the Charles Williams scholarship program that currently awards \$25,000 annually in college scholarships.
- Maintaining insurance coverage against a comprehensive array of property, casualty and other risks.

The Corporation expended \$809,000 on operating expenses during our 2020 fiscal year. To support our operations, the Corporation relies on an annual draw on our endowment funds, with additional funding from annual appeal donations and fees and other income. For many years, the Corporation has used a conservative draw rate equaling 3.5% of the average endowment balance as measured over the previous three fiscal year-ends. The 2020 annual appeal was impacted by the closure of the Library at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, we were able to secure a Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration that helped partially offset lower annual appeal income and maintain our staffing levels. The PPP loan was fully forgiven in early 2021.



Following several years of extensive planning, the Corporation began construction in Fall 2020 of the largest expansion project we have ever undertaken. The project will incorporate the historic home at 151 Main Street, and provide approximately 15,600 feet of additional space that will include a new children's library and a wonderful new space for gathering, reading and relaxing to be called the Commons. The project will also repurpose the current children's room as a new public meeting space, expanding our capacity to host larger audiences for our popular music, lectures and other programming.

We estimate the building project will cost \$10.8 million. We are raising the funds from a combination of generous donations by Concord families, gifts from institutions and local corporations, and grants totaling \$1,200,000 from the Town approved at the 2018 and 2019 Town Meetings. At present the Corporation has secured gifts or commitments for \$10.1 million, and is in the process of fundraising for the final \$750,000 needed to complete the project on schedule later this year.



The Charles Williams Fund provides an annual stipend for scholarships awarded to college-bound Concord students who demonstrate an interest and aptitude in the Studio Arts or in Music.

The Fund is named for Library benefactor Charles Williams, a contemporary of the Library's Founder, William Munroe. Scholarship awards received by Williams Scholars range from \$3000–\$5000 and may be renewable annually for the remainder of the student's undergraduate career. Smaller one-time grants are given to Honorable Mention recipients.

The 2020 recipients for The Charles Williams Scholarship for Excellence in Music, and The Charles Williams Scholarship for Excellence in Visual Arts were:

- Eleanor Kuchar, Concord-Carlisle High School, Class of 2020, Tufts University, Class of 2024 (Honorable Mention in Music)
- Madeline Mueller, Concord-Carlisle High School, Class of 2020, Tufts University, Class of 2024 (Honorable Mention in Music)

For more information on the scholarships, please visit **concordlibrary.org/about/williams-scholarship**.

LIBRARY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

As of April 2nd Library Director Kerry Cronin has resigned. The Trustees thank Kerry for her 12 years of service and wish her well in her future endeavors.

The Concord Free Public Library's mission is to inspire lifelong learning and to actively promote personal enrichment by connecting community members to information, ideas, culture, unique historical resources and each other in a tradition of innovation and excellence.

Despite the challenges of 2020, the Concord Free Public Library remained true to its mission by quickly adapting to the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and delivering services in innovative ways. When library buildings closed in March, staff members seamlessly moved popular programs such as story times, book discussion groups, children's concerts and cookbook club to a virtual platform. These programs not only offered opportunities for education and enrichment, but also a much-needed sense of community during a time of collective isolation. The Library hosted 442 virtual programs with 4,769 attendees beginning in March. The Library's presence virtually also enabled staff to reach a broader audience, with program attendees from all over the United States and abroad. Also noteworthy is the collaboration between the Library and the Concord Public Schools during the pandemic. Through the support of School Superintendent Dr. Laurie Hunter's frequent promotion of CFPL's Summer Learning Program, the Library had record participation. Overall, 552 readers read 2,430 books and completed 2,047 activities, all virtually! Thanks to our dedicated Girls Who Code volunteer facilitator, Theresa Hubshner-Younger, the club continued virtually when the schools transitioned to remote learning. The participants in Girls Who Code created many wonderful projects, some of which the library staff featured on our website.

Beginning in June the Library started offering curbside pickup service at the Main Library's Sudbury Road entrance Monday–Friday between the hours of 10:00–6:00 p.m. and for a shorter duration at the Fowler Branch. Staff members fulfilled

Staff enjoyed library themed treats.



12,256 reservations. Library colleagues found creative ways to enhance this service by completing close to 100 personalized reading recommendations for all ages, launching a thematic book bundle option for young readers, providing complementary printouts, offering an outdoor puzzle swap, and providing Take and Make craft kits for families to enjoy. Take and Make kits have also been adapted as a monthly hands-on activity for seniors, which the Council on Aging distributes courtesy of the Friends of CFPL. While Library buildings were required to close for more than half the year, services have remained open and responsive throughout the pandemic. Staff have worked incredibly hard to keep up with service and program requests, and some departments reported being busier than ever.

We are grateful for the contributions of the Friends of CFPL and Library Corporation Trustees toward the Library's success. Through the generosity of the Friends of CFPL and with the support of Board member Lara Wilson, the Library was able to offer mindfulness programs, writing workshops, and author talks, including an all virtual and very robust Concord Festival of Authors series in October. Among the program highlights included a keynote event with author Jennifer Haigh and an online lecture with Jill Lepore, recipient of the 2020 Ruth Ratner Miller Award for Excellence in American History. The Friends also hosted successful poetry readings and oversaw the installation of a book receptacle in the Stow Street parking lot to facilitate the donation of materials in support of library services.

The Library Corporation Trustees generously donated funds toward the purchase of multiple sets of tables and chairs at both locations to support the utilization of the Library's grounds. This addition has been a boon for services, as visitors have been able to gather for socially distanced meetings, enjoy a quick snack or beverage and benefit from the Library's Wi/Fi service. The availability of this furniture also enabled library staff to maximize the outdoor space for safe activities such as Story-Walks and the annual fall scarecrow festival.

The Trustees broke ground on the building expansion project in September and have worked collaboratively with the Library staff on the planning for the expanded facility slated to reopen in the fall of 2021. The Trustees commissioned the organization GreenerU to work with stakeholders to create a Sustainability Plan, which positions CFPL as a community leader both in sustainable practice and in the development of programs to promote these values to others. It has been rewarding to participate in developing services for a post-pandemic time.

During the closure, the circulation of digital collections increased significantly. Staff members assisted patrons in accessing these materials by renewing and issuing new library cards. The Fowler staff provided bi-weekly recommendations of titles in the Hoopla collection and contributed to the staff picks page



The new tables and chairs on the lawn draw the community together, safely.

on the Library's website. Staff members also created online tutorials to assist patrons further. The Reference staff helped patrons download digital media to their devices through OverDrive, Libby, Hoopla, RBDigital, New York Times Digital, the digital Wall Street Journal, and Kanopy. In total, the Reference Department answered 1,566 questions over the course of the year.

Recognizing the pandemic as historically significant and in need of documentation, Special Collections launched a program called Chronicling COVID-19 where community members and organizations were invited to contribute a piece of writing or other creative expression about their experience during this most unusual time for the benefit of future generations. In order to create greater engagement around the library's historic collections Curator Anke Voss launched the virtual series Concord Stories from Special Collections, which highlights the collections through stories about Concord's people and places.

Anke Voss and her Assistant Curator also conducted an inventory of the Library Corporation's art collection and worked with a professional photographer to document the 200+ piece collection. The digital images will serve as a record of the collections and support future programming and outreach, both on-site and remotely. Among the opportunities for showcasing these materials are two new resources, Omeka, an open-source web publishing platform for creating and hosting online exhibitions and Libguides, a content management system for developing guides for collections and other resources.

Among the other accomplishments in Special Collections is a lecture related to *Little Women* by Professor Anne Boyd Rioux and a subsequent <u>Boston Globe</u> article on the adaptation of Louisa May Alcott's novel and its effect on Concord. The Concord Free Public Library was also pleased to have the Stillman painting, *The Philosopher's Camp in the Adirondacks*, featured in the Smithsonian American Art Museum's exhibition, "Alexander von Humboldt and the United States Art, Nature, and Culture."

Before the library opened for curbside services staff members used the time to attend many webinars and professional development opportunities, such as virtual recordings from the Public Library Association's conference. Two staff members, Darshana Merchant and Irene Cunningham, received Paralibrarian Recognition of Achievement levels 2 and 3, respectively, from the Massachusetts Library Association's Paralibrarian section. We also congratulate our colleague Irene Cunningham for completing her Master's Degree in Library Science in December. During this time, we met as full-staff weekly via Zoom to share innovative ideas and answer questions related to the Library's reopening process. The team building we experienced as a staff was a positive aspect during a difficult time.

Following the Commonwealth's guidelines for reopening, we altered the facility and developed a modified service plan to ensure a safe reopening. This included scheduled time for seniors and other at-risk individuals, recording all visitors for contact tracing purposes and limiting in-person browsing to designated areas on the first floor of both buildings. We offered this service successfully from September 23-December 11, when we needed to suspend the service due to increased case counts for COVID-19. During that time, 5,344 visitors took advantage of the opportunity for in-person browsing between the two locations. Throughout the closure, all returned items are quarantined for up to 72 hours based on public health guidance. The Town Manager has generously offered fine amnesty on all materials until services are fully restored. Through the support of CARES Act Funds we were able modify HVAC equipment to iWave M technology in the fan coil units and Halo LED lights in the air handlers to improve the air quality for approximately 50% of the building. This coupled with new freestanding HEPA filters and the addition of MERV 13 filters will make both facilities safer when patrons return. Library staff are optimistic that we will be able to welcome residents back and resume full services sometime during 2021.

We congratulate long-serving staff members Karen Ahearn and Fayth Chamberland who both retired in 2020 after serving a collective 78 years in children's services. CFPL also saw the departure of Branch Librarian Stephanie Rivera, who relocated to the Midwest with her family. We were saddened by the death of weekend custodian Warner Wood, who attended to both buildings with such dedication for decades. During 2020, we were pleased to welcome two new supervisors, Dorothy "Dorrie" Karlin, Fowler Branch Librarian, and Royce McGrath, Supervisor of Children's Services.

Our sincere thanks to our very talented and dedicated colleagues who have performed extraordinary work in difficult times. Thanks also to the Library Committee, Library Corporation, and Friends of CFPL whose generous contributions make the success of the Concord Free Public Library possible.

Kerry Cronin, Library Director



In 2020, the Concord Festival of Authors (CFA) moved online due to COVID-19. With the support of the Friends of the Concord Free Public Library, the enthusiasm of the CFA Team and the hard work of curator Lara Wilson, the CFA organized over 25 literary events. The CFPL Corporation generously funded the promotion of the CFA, and hundreds of participants attended the online events – not only Concordians, but literary enthusiasts from across the globe!

The festival kicked off with the annual Ruth Ratner Miller Memorial Award for Excellence in American History presented to celebrated historian and prolific author, Dr. Jill Lepore, who shared her keen insights about democracy to over 200 audience members on Zoom. One patron wrote, "I loved hearing Jill Lepore's talk as she was awarded the (much deserved) Ruth Ratner Miller award... now that I live in western Massachusetts, it was a special treat to be with you tonight—the silver lining of the COVID crisis, I suppose." The Friends of the CFPL sponsored the CFA Keynote Speaker, bestselling author Jennifer Haigh, introduced by MIT creative writing professor Helen Elaine Lee before she discussed *Why Stories Still Matter*.

The virtual 2020 Breakfast with the Authors, emceed by Suzanne Koven, MD, featured Adrienne Brodeur (*Wild Game*), Caroline Leavitt (*With or Without You*), and Marjan Kamali (*The Stationery Shop*). Panels held through Zoom included: Children's Writers, Debut Novelists (hosted by A Mighty Blaze), Young Adult Authors, International Poets, 20th Annual Massachusetts Book Award Winners, LGBTQ Memoirists and the Chunky Monkey Writing Group – comprised of nine highly acclaimed authors. Dr. Robin Schoenthaler from Emerson Hospital presented *Writing about Coronavirus*. The CFA 2020 concluded with the popular Mystery Night panel on Halloween, hosted by award-winning mystery author Kate Flora.

A multitude of Concord organizations moved their CFA events online, including Be Well Be Here (3 Writing Workshops) the Concord Bookshop (Margot Livesey), the Concord Museum (multiple award-winning historians Lizabeth Cohen and Fred Logevall), Debra's Natural Gourmet (Debra Stark), Orchard House (Pulitzer-Prize winner John Matteson as well as Jan Turnquist discussing *Little Women* from book-to-film), The Robbins House (*Anti-Racism and Reconstruction* panel), Thoreau Farm / Thoreau Society (Lawrence Millman), the Transcendentalist Council of First Parish (Jared Hardesty), Turning Life On (Dr. Anthony Rao) and Walden Woods Project (David Gessner).

For more information on the Concord Festival of Authors, visit ConcordFestivalofAuthors.org.

The Friends of the Concord Free Public Library is a nonprofit, charitable 501(c)(3) organization that supports the library and promotes its vital role in our community.



As 2020 began, the Friends looked forward to celebrating our 50th anniversary. While the celebrations have been postponed, we reflect with gratitude upon the programming that became possible through the adaptability of our community.

Most recently the Concord Festival of Authors, chaired by the Friends and co-hosted with partner organizations in Concord, finished a hugely successful online festival. Over 200 people virtually attended the kickoff event, the Miller Award for Excellence in American History, presented to Dr. Jill Lepore.

Our Poetry Series, featuring black poets Tommye Blount and Nathan McClain, Jeffrey Harrison, and Matthew Lippman, brought engaging conversation through Q&A sessions. The Friends' Authors Series featured short story writer Ron Maclean; Concord wellness expert Jonathan Glass; and debut novelist Rishi Reddi. Friday Flicks at Fowler showcased films about Germany, German films and German people, such as *The Counterfeiters* and *Wings of Desire*.

As part of our continued commitment to the condemnation of racism, our partnership with Concord-Carlisle Adult & Community Education continues to bring important dialogue around Unconscious Bias to Zoom sessions. We additionally helped to fund the "What is Racism" children's program by Wee the People.

In lieu of our twice-annual book sales, we have partnered with our online bookseller to provide donation bins for patrons. Our community has been very generous with donations since the bins arrived in August. A portion of all proceeds from books collected and sold from these bins goes back into library programming.

This summer we partnered with our new Children's Librarian, Royce McGrath and the young readers who participated in the Summer Reading Program to provide a \$200 donation to Gaining Ground's Read for Seed program.

We continue to brainstorm ideas for offering traditional programs safely while bringing additional future programming. Please contact us with ideas. We thank you for your support.

Our gifts and programs are funded through the generosity of our members, sales of donated books, and sales of the book *Historic Concord and the Lexington Fight*.

To learn more, or to join the Friends, visit us online at concordlibrary.org under "How We Work".

Follow us on Facebook: @concordlibraryfriend
E-mail us at friends@concordlibrary.org

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS REPORT

After serving as curator of CFPL's William Munroe Special Collections for 23 years, Leslie Perrin Wilson retired at the end of July 2019. An exhibition: *Curator's Choice: A Personal Perspective on Two Decades of Collection Building* was on display in the Art Gallery from May 3 – July 25, 2019. The show featured one hundred items from the many gifts and purchases acquired by Leslie for Special Collections over the course of her tenure.

Anke Voss joined the Concord Free Public Library staff as the new Curator for the William Munroe Special Collections in October 2019. After a comprehensive orientation by Assistant Curator Jessica Steytler, to the operation of the department, Anke was prepared to delve into the department's rich holdings, and serve patrons near and far. In addition to providing public service to researchers and other members of the public, Anke had numerous opportunities to meet with stakeholders, including representatives from the Concord Historical Commission, Concord Historical Collaborative, Concord Museum, Concord Tourism, and Visitor Center, the Town Clerk, and the newly hired Municipal Archivist for the Town of Concord. With the assistance of Assistant Curator, Jessie Hopper, Special Collections completed an inventory of all art objects displayed at the Library or stored in the Special Collections vault.

Anke also meets regularly with the Corporation's Special Collections Committee, to review policies and procedures, review plans to update the Special Collections staff and storage areas as part of the Library expansion underway, and share ideas about strategic planning for Special Collections.

Doris Kearns Goodwin donated a large number of books from the private collection that belonged to her and her late husband, Richard Goodwin, to the Library, after selling their home on Monument Street. In just her first week, Anke assisted the Library Corporation and Friends in consulting on which books to retain in the Library's collection and which items to sell at the Friends book sale.

Robert Fàbregas, a publisher from Barcelona, who has been translating Thoreau's essays into Catalan, visited Special Collections in October 2019 and donated copies of his first translations.

Another noteworthy addition to Special Collections in December 2019 was the donation of the Amedio (Al) Armenti (1924-2019) Papers. Armenti played a significant role in Concord's many equal rights organizations. He was a lifelong pacifist and anti-war protestor. Renee Garrelick interviewed Armenti in 2001 for the Concord Oral History Program.

Little Women Week took place December 15-22, 2019, with special events taking place in Concord, including a Little Women Walking tour. Tours concluded with a visit to Special Collections, where Alcott devotees viewed manuscript pages

from *Little Women*, early editions of the novel, and Alcott photographs from the collection. The same week, students participating in a Library-sponsored workshop on Alcott-area bookbinding also got an opportunity to view Alcott's original working manuscripts.

Leading up to the opening of Greta Gerwig's 2019 film adaption of *Little Women* on Christmas Day, CBS Morning News anchor Rita Braver interviewed Professor Anne Boyd Rioux at the Library. Staged in the Special Collections Reading Room, the recording session included a discussion of Rioux's recent publication, *Meg, Jo, Beth, Amy: The Story of Little Women and Why It Still Matters*, and Rioux's analysis of Alcott's Little Women manuscripts held by Special Collections. The segment aired on Sunday, December 15, 2019. The Library and Corporation hosted a well-attended lecture by Anne Boyd Rioux in January 2020. Anne discussed the challenges of adapting the novel *Little Women*, and how each era produces its *Little Women*, from the first adaption for the Broadway stage to Greta Gerwig's film. You can view Rioux's lecture on our YouTube channel.

The Library's Walter James Stillman, *The Philosophers' Camp in the Adirondacks*, was to be on view at the Smithsonian starting March 2020, for their major Alexander von Humboldt exhibit. The pandemic temporarily closed the exhibition, although it is on view virtually: **americanart.si.edu/exhibitions**. In preparation for the display, the Smithsonian paid for restoration and cleaning of the painting, completed by Carmichael Art Conservation LLC, in Bedford, Massachusetts.

The Library's bust of Louis May Alcott by Walton Ricketson spent February 2020 under the care of Robert Shure & Skylight Studios, Inc. Her repair and cleaning was the result of a request by the Providence Athenaeum, to create a replica of the bust for permanent exhibit at their institution, which is on view now: providenceathenaeum.org.

Primarily while working from home during the Library closure (March-June 2020), Special Collections started developing two new digital platforms to highlight the Library's collections:

- Omeka is a free, flexible, and open source web-publishing platform for the display of library, museum, archives, and scholarly collections and exhibitions. Special Collections is using Omeka to create new digital content, transform older online exhibits, and provide access to archived collections. https://sc.concordlibrary.org/
- Libguides is a content management system used to curate knowledge and subjects, and we are using them to create specific guides to some of our most important subjects. There is a guide to Ralph Waldo Emerson, with links to CFPL's Emerson materials as well as outside links to other Emerson materials and places. https://concordfree.libguides.com/

I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship.

- Louisa May Alcott

Each year we put together an annual report to show you what we've accomplished and the things we're proud of. It's an opportunity to share success stories and celebrate our Library.

When our previous fiscal year started in July of 2019, our day-to-day operations were normal. The Library was offering summer reading, in-person programming, book browsing and our doors were wide open. Then our world shifted with the COVID-19 pandemic. and we had to physically close our doors to the public for much longer than any of us could have imagined.

Nothing feels the same... but even with the world at a standstill, we have so much to celebrate. Myriad virtual programming, curbside book access, innovative take-and-make craft kits, e-reading services, movie streaming, and a green lawn, scattered with tables and chairs, to safely meet outside.

Our Library Building Project started in October and our vision for the future feels within reach. Throughout this pandemic, CFPL has continued to serve our community every single day in every way we can imagine. We've remained steadfast in our goal to connect people to information, experiences, and services so our community can read, learn, explore, and thrive. And throughout, we have been amazed and humbled by your generosity to our annual fund and our capital campaign. Thank you.

While our fiscal year ended on June 30, the pandemic did not. New challenges continue to arise, but please know, that we continue to rise too. We will adapt our services in response to your evolving needs. We are here for you, even though the ways we serve you remain in flux.

We are YOUR Library. And we cannot wait to welcome vou back in person.

This list recognizes gifts and pledges to the capital campaign and the annual fund from July 1, 2019-June 30, 2020. We are so very grateful for your support.

John W. Boynton IV. Campaign Chair and Library Corporation Trustee

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We strive to make this list as accurate as possible. Please accept our apologies for any mistakes. You can email updates to meckel@CFPLCorp.org.

We are so grateful for the support of the Friends of the Concord Free Public Library. Their significant contributions not only helped to fund our capital campaign, but also their annual contributions help to buy books and materials.





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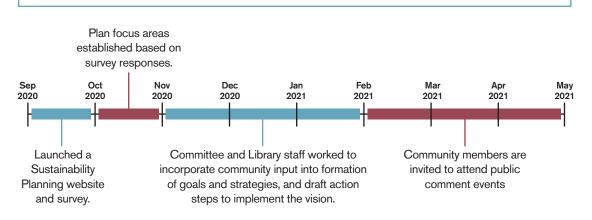
CFPL'S COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

The Library Corporation is supporting the Town of Concord's climate action commitment by creating the Library's first sustainability plan. The plan will have two primary focus areas: 1) Outreach and Education and 2) Built Environment and Operations. As the stewards of the Concord Free Public Library, the Library Corporation has taken on a community-centered process with input from across the library community, and the outcome will be an aspirational, clear, and actionable plan that will inform and engage the community in their response to climate change. This sustainability plan aligns with the Town's climate commitments and Concord's sustainability and resilience goals of the Town of Concord's Sustainable Concord Plan.

For more information on the plan, visit CFPLCorp.org/planning-website/

SUSTAINABILITY PLANNING GOALS

- Create a clear, implementable 5-year sustainability plan
- Align the plan with Town's Sustainable Concord plan and long-term planning at CFPL
- Engage the community and increase community awareness



LIBRARY SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

With support from the Waltham-based firm GreenerU, the Sustainability Committee has been leading the plan development process.

Members of the Committee include:

Elise Woodward, Chair
Jeff Adams
Lindsay Howard
Kate Hanley
Michael Bellefeuille
Maggie Bowers

Reni Cunningham

Rick Johnson

Alice Kaufman

Marcy Bouley Eckel

Kerry Cronin

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