Strategic Plan
2012-2014

Connecting you... to your future!

NEPTUNE PUBLIC LIBRARY
Connecting People with Opportunities
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The Mission of the Neptune Public Library is Connecting People with Opportunities

Neptune Public Library Staff and Board members, and Committeemen: Left to right, Joe Krimko, Randy Bishop, John Bonney, Teretha Jones, Marian Bauman, Michael Palermo, Luke Tirrell, Deborah Mayhue, Kevin McMillan, Kathy Nicholas, Sandy Michlich, Hoa Tran, Karen Mindingall, Amani Neptune, Cheryl Otten, Carolyn Damiano. Not in picture: Krista Horan, Yolanda Taylor and Laura Myers
In this digital world, public libraries have to figure out how to meet the needs of their communities, especially in this difficult economic environment. Libraries are the bridge across the Digital Divide, helping people figure out how to receive the information that they need in the format that they want.

A wide range of customers come in the door every day, from unemployed workers to retired Seniors to school children needing help with their homework. Public libraries are one of the few providers of free access to the wealth of information available in all formats, from paper to digital and auditory.

Public tax support allows everyone equal access to that knowledge. Just as people are requesting their materials in multiple formats, budgets are undergoing the same cuts that all municipal departments are encountering. People are using libraries more than ever before, recognizing the role their library can play in helping with job searches, teaching computer skills, and stretching their recreational dollars with fun programs, family movies, and books to read together.

Libraries only succeed when they are supported by their residents. Let us know what you need or want and we will do our best to make sure you get it! We plan to keep providing you with the friendly service that you have come to expect.

Thank you for your support!
Acknowledgements

The Strategic Planning Committee included members of the community, representatives from the Neptune School District, Library staff, a Library trustee, several municipal employees, and a representative of MURC. They met several times and were instrumental in providing input for the direction that the Library needs to go.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Marian Bauman      Library Director
John Bonney        Reference / Outreach Librarian
Monique Burger     Community Programs, Neptune Twp
Roberta Grace      Special Projects, Neptune Twp
Dianna Harris      MURC President
Krista Horan       Systems Administrator, Neptune Library
Joe Krimko         Library Board Vice-President
Deborah Mayhue     Administration, Neptune Library
Sandy Michlich     Senior Librarian
Kathleen Thompson  Early Childhood Supervisor, Twp Schools
Planning

The New Jersey State Library offered a two-day “Strategic Planning Boot Camp” that was attended by the Library Director and a member of the Board of Trustees. As a result of this training, a public survey was compiled and distributed through several different methods: Township Email Alerts, paper surveys filled out in the Library, and a link through the Library’s Facebook page. The surveys were up for a month; then they were compiled, including comments by the participants.

The Word Cloud on the following page summarizes the comments used to describe the Library.
What words best describe Neptune Public Library?
The 2010 Census, Monmouth County Planning Board, and the Township Of Neptune Comprehensive Master Plan have provided current information for analysis.

The population of 27,935 in Neptune is relatively stable. Less than 1% growth has occurred on the western side of town. Estimates of population by 2025 show a growth of 19% to 33,215.

Preschoolers comprise 6% of the population, and children ages 5-19 make up 19.2%, for a total of over 25% of the population below the age of 19. The median age is 40.2, while nationally it is 36.7. Continued growth in the 45-64 age bracket is expected to total 29.4% of total population.

10.9 % of Neptune residents are foreign born, and 53.7 % of that number are from Latin America. At home, 5.5% speak Spanish, and 5.6% speak another Indo-European language. 89% of residents were born in the United States, and 62% were born in New Jersey. By race, Neptune is 55% white, 40% black, and 9.3% Hispanic / Latino. This is up from 5.6% Hispanic in 2000, an increase of 66%.

17% of households have their own child under the age of 18 living with them. 6% live in a household with non-relatives. 16.6 % are female heads of household with no husband. A full 31.8 % are heads of households living alone, and 11.7 percent of them are over 65 years of age.
Neptune has a higher percentage of low and moderate income households than Monmouth County or the state. 32% of people receive Social Security. 8% of all households are below the poverty level, but this number rises to 17% of female heads of household with no husband. 3% have no phone, and 11% have no access to a car or truck.

People spending more than 30% of their income on housing include: 46% of people with mortgages, 23% of those with no mortgage, and 64% of renters.

88% of residents have a high school diploma, leaving 9.7% without a diploma. 4.3% have less than a 9th grade education, which impacts their ability to find work.

Employment in Neptune is comprised of 12% retail, 26% education, health care, and social assistance, and 9% public administration. Blue collar workers are in retail, manufacturing and construction. The largest employers are Jersey Shore University Medical Center, the Asbury Park Press, Home Depot, WalMart, the Neptune Township Schools district, and the Township of Neptune.

50.61% of all tax monies in Neptune Township go to the school district.

The average per capita spending for New Jersey libraries is $56.93. Neptune spends $54.76 per capita.
Analysis of Current Situation

The Neptune Public Library suffered a setback in early 2010 when the budget was cut and 7 staff were laid off. This forced a reduction in hours open, as well as a reduction in most statistics, as we were open 25% fewer hours to serve our public.

In a climate where many local residents are looking for work, computer uses were down, mainly due to being closed on Tuesday and Thursday mornings and Saturday afternoons. Since computer class instructors and other reference professionals were working the circulation desk, fewer classes were offered to fewer students.

The number of visitors was down each year, also due to reduced hours. Interestingly, the number of students attending a computer class was up almost 19%, indicating a need for these classes. Another statistic that did not change much was the number of programs offered and the attendance at them. Our two meeting rooms are fully booked the two evenings that we are open and on Saturdays by scout troops, municipal organizations, and other community groups. When both meeting spaces are being used, there are times when the Quiet Study area downstairs is turned into a meeting room.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours open per week</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circulation</td>
<td>110,010</td>
<td>87,508</td>
<td>83,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer uses</td>
<td>16,567</td>
<td>16,656</td>
<td>13,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer classes/students</td>
<td>230/689</td>
<td>114/316</td>
<td>101/375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SR Club books read</td>
<td>2,508</td>
<td>1,702</td>
<td>1,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web page Hits</td>
<td>30,336</td>
<td>32,302</td>
<td>26,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visitors</td>
<td>102,952</td>
<td>86,900</td>
<td>81,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programs/attendance</td>
<td>234/4,379</td>
<td>267/4,343</td>
<td>262/4,175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mayor Kevin McMillan, Library Director Marian Bauman and some of the partiers who attended the 2011 Read Across America Dr. Seuss Birthday Party.
Strengths

- Friendly and highly educated staff
- Large collection of books, movies, music, and magazines
- Computers & computer classes, current software
- Community support and usage
- Deep corporate and municipal knowledge
- Stable, enthusiastic, knowledgeable Board of Trustees
- Friends of the Library who are advocates
- Accommodating hours of operation
- Meeting rooms for programs and community groups
- Partnerships with local organizations through outreach
Challenges

- Budgets based on yearly changes in property valuations
- Cultural competency of staff to deal with changing population demographics
- Communication among staff and with the public
- Perception that the Internet has everything
- Competition with bookstores and other media outlets
- Digitalization of everything will make libraries obsolete
In 2009, the Library was open 60 hours per week. With our lay-offs, that number went down to 44 hours, and the Library was no longer meeting the minimum of hours open as required by the NJ State Library.

Attendance at Library programs has gone down, due to our reduced hours for 8 months in 2010 and all of 2011.

The number of people using a computer actually held steady in 2010 when so many people lost their jobs. It went down in 2011, due to a lack of open hours.

The number of items that were checked out has dropped for the past two years, probably due to not being open when people wanted to come to the Library. Our new hours should help reverse this.
In the summer, many people come to the Library in the morning and go to the beach in the afternoon. When we were closed on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, we lost 40% of our open hours, with corresponding Summer Reading Club participation.

Layoffs meant less time to teach computer classes, and fewer classes being offered. The rise in the number of students in 2011 indicates an interest in taking classes.

Computers in the Library are set by default to our home page. The rise in Web Page Hits 2010 corresponds to the number of computer uses. The loss in 2011 is due to hours not open.

Students need instruction on how to use the databases, and reference librarians have been working the circulation desks, due to staff cuts.
Survey Results

What words describe the Neptune Public Library?

- Friendly, Helpful Staff
- Selection of Materials
- Cozy, Comfortable
- Convenient, Accessible

What Can We Change or Improve?

- Hours, Longer or Better
- Materials Selection
- More Ebooks
- DVD Movies
- Join Monmouth Co Library
- Card Renewal / ID Process
- Computers / Classes
How Do You Want to Get Info About the Library?

- Library Website
- Township Email Alerts
- Library Online Blog
- Flyer
- Twitter
- Word of Mouth
- Coaster
- Facebook

Age of Respondents

Female – 149 Respondents
Male – 44 Respondents
Service Priorities:

• CREATE YOUNG READERS

• CONNECT with TECHNOLOGY

• SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT & BUSINESS

• COLLABORATE & COMMUNICATE

• SERVE LIFELONG LEARNERS

• JUST FOR THE FUN OF IT!
OUR STORY:

Several mothers who brought their sons to our Read to a Dog Program told our Youth Services librarian that their sons were reading much better since we started this program. The boys actually wanted to practice their reading, as they were going to read to a dog that week. The mothers credit this program with the boys’ increased reading skills and enthusiasm for reading.

The years from birth through age eight are critical in the development of the ability to learn through the rest of a child’s life. Parents, educators and librarians help shape these experiences. The Neptune Public Library has a role to play in developing young readers.
GOAL:
Children from birth to age eight will have programs and services designed to foster reading readiness and a love of reading.

Activities:
- Continue outreach with Vital Statistics to reach parents of Neptune newborns and invite them to visit the Library
- Promote Mayor’s Book Club as an easy way to engage parents in reading to their children and get books into homes with young children
- Provide storytimes, crafts and special programming for children ages 6 months through school age.
- Continue collaboration with the Early Childhood Advocacy Council by presenting family workshops on the importance of literacy and reading
- Promote Summer Reading Club as a way to keep children reading
- Utilize the power of municipal Email Alerts to promote programs and services
OUR STORY:
A couple came in and said they would need some help. They had a new granddaughter, and their son had sent her picture to their Email account. They wanted to print a copy in color, so they could show off the new baby to their friends.

Technology in our world is increasing at an exponential rate and people need help learning how to use it and why they need it. The Neptune Public Library has a role to play in making new technology available and helping people use it.

GOAL:
Residents will have current hardware, software, and computer instruction to meet their technology needs.
Activities:

- Provide updated computers and software for use by the public
- Offer basic computer and internet classes so users can learn enough to use a computer without help.
- Keep abreast of the latest technology for implementation in the library
- Use social media to post library events and programs
- Continually train staff as new versions of software are adopted
OUR STORY:
A recent student of our basic computer and Microsoft Office classes used her new knowledge to gain a job at a local business. She credits the instruction she gained with helping her land her new job, and admits that she knew very little about computers before taking our classes.

Twenty-first century job skills are a necessity in the employment arena these days. Most job applications have to be completed online, and resumes must be submitted electronically. Local businesses need skilled laborers and other reference resources to grow their businesses.
The Library has a role in helping the unemployed, under-employed and local businesses navigate this electronic world.

GOAL:
Jobseekers and businesses will find resources and assistance with their employment and economic growth.

Activities:
- Reach out to the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary and other civic organizations
- Provide information to homeowners’ groups about business and employment resources
- Utilize municipal mercantile license list for Email and snail mail contacts
- Continue meeting with Economic Development Corporation to publicize library resources and services
- Locate job hunting, resume, and business resources in a prominent place in the library
- Adopt new versions of software as they are released
• Continue to offer computer classes to update job skill sets for residents
• Continue relationship with One Stop Career Center for referrals
• Train staff in database use and employment and business resources
COLLABORATE & COMMUNICATE

OUR STORY:
Recent comments on our User Survey, like a request for Ebooks that can be read on a Kindle (already got them!) have made us realize that there is a disconnect between the services we offer and people’s knowing about them.

Services need to be marketed so that everyone has an opportunity to use them. The Library also has a role in providing meeting space for collaborative work, and being a clearinghouse for local information.
GOAL:
Library programs and services will be communicated in formats that residents need. The Library will collaborate with local groups to support them with resources that they need.

Activities:
- Utilize local media to publicize services and programs
- Work with Neptune Schools System to support curriculum and reading needs
- Design publicity locally
- Reach out to community organizations when programs or services are relevant
- Continue to utilize statewide library resources, such as Interlibrary Loan
- Use the power of social media to spread the word about library services
- Take advantage of training and offered by LibraryLinkNJ, the NJ Library Cooperative
- Improve staff communication and knowledge of library programs and services
SERVE LIFELONG LEARNERS

OUR STORY:
An eighty-year old grandmother came in to learn basic computer skills now that she’s retired. After taking a few classes, she now shops online and is fluent in YouTube!

Library users expect to find relevant and current information on a variety of topics. Library databases, books, and reference materials, as well as trained professional librarians are necessary to help users with their information needs.
GOAL:
Library users will find relevant and current resources and help to meet their information needs.

Activities:
- Use national selection resources to keep the library collection current
- Serve diverse groups with programs and materials to meet their needs
- Utilize current events to steer collection purchases
- Review merchandizing and signage in library to improve success in finding information
- Publicize remote collections, such as Ebooks, online databases, and WebCat online catalog
OUR STORY:
People were having a hard time remembering to put their name on the reserve list for new books by popular authors. Staff came up with the idea of having a “Best-Seller Club” that required a one-time signup in order to get books all year long.

Many people visit a library to find books or movies to enjoy. Libraries have always provided materials for recreation and leisure.

GOAL:
Programs, movies, books, and other leisure materials will be readily available to help stretch recreational dollars.
Activities:

- Continue to provide current movies and TV series for checkout
- Purchase music CDs in different genres for borrowing
- Continue to purchase best-sellers in several different formats, including large print, audiobooks, and Ebooks.
- Encourage young readers by purchasing books in formats that they enjoy: anime, etc.
- Showcase recent movie releases with Cinema Saturday family movies.
- Get books into the hand of teens and tweens through the Tween and Teen book clubs.
- Engage children with library crafts, games and special programs