

Background and Introduction:

Berkeley Heights Public Library (BHPL) had been located at 290 Plainfield Avenue from 1953 until late 2017. The building was constructed in the late 1920's as a meeting hall for the Mt. Carmel Society. It was sold to the Township in the early 1950's and became a Library. A large addition was added in the mid-1960's which doubled the size of the 2 story structure to 13,500 square feet. Barrier free access and A.D.A. compliance were not yet part of building regulations.

After 2012, faced with aging buildings and a predicted increase in population, the Township Council made the decision to explore consolidating municipal functions on one site. After examining several options, the Council entered into a transaction with Little Flower Church that resulted in the Library property being owned by the adjacent church and the Township owning church property containing a school and separate rectory at 110 Roosevelt Avenue.

BHPL closed at 290 Plainfield Avenue in December 2017 and moved operations to the former rectory. Because of space limitations, two-thirds of the Library's collection was moved into storage. In August 2018, construction began on the new Municipal Complex at 29 Park Avenue and is expected to be completed for mid-2020 occupancy. Although the property at 110 Roosevelt has been sold to a developer, the Library plans to remain there until moving to the new Municipal Complex.

With construction of the new Municipal Complex underway, the 10,500 square foot footprint of the new Library is set, but the actual spaces within the Library are being defined, and finishes and furnishing are now being determined. It is the focus of the Library Board of Trustees along with the Library Director to collaborate with the architect and other professionals to define these spaces and determine their design.

To help guide this work, the Library sought the input of the public and commissioned a survey by Jim Hecht of Library Management Consultant which was completed in November 2018. Over 500 participants, representing 1115 people, responded. The Library Director, Assistant Director and a Board member have taken different American Library Association online courses in patron centered Library design, teen services and marketing. Two Trustees, the Director and the Assistant Director participated in the Library Journal Design Institute on Library design.

In December 2018, the Library Board of Trustees formed a Planning Committee to define the objectives for the new Library space and plan the goals for the next few years. The committee used the survey results, prior and ongoing input from the community and staff, and community and circulation statistics, along with knowledge from ALA courses, LJ design event, informative visits to other Libraries and expert recommendations for modern Library design to create this Strategic Plan 2019-2022 and a companion Library Space Plan for New Municipal Complex. While we are excitedly planning a wonderful new space, we remain committed to providing our community with the full range of services and programming they have come to expect from BHPL.

Library Board of Trustees:

Ann Bunyaner, President
Diane O’Halloran, Vice-President
Linda Nessenson, Secretary
Donna Boyd, Treasurer
Sheila Buthe
Angie Devanney, Mayor
Dr. Melissa Varley, Superintendent of Schools

Planning Committee:

Linda Nessenson, Board of Trustees
Diane O’Halloran, Board of Trustees
Stephanie Bakos, Library Director
Laura Fuhro, Children’s Librarian/ Assistant Director

Statistical Overview of Berkeley Heights:

(based on NeighborhoodScout.com)

Population: 13,763 2010 US Census: 13,183

Age of Population:

under 5 years	3.9%
5 to 17	21.2%
18 to 24	7.0%
25 to 34	5.9%
35 to 54	29.9%
55 to 64	13.8%
65 years and older	18.4%

Ethnicity of Population:

African American	1.7%
Asian	12.2%
Hispanic	5.5%
Other	0.9%
White	79.7%

Educational Attainment, age 18 and older:

attending college	3.7%
high school graduate	95.7%
college graduate	66.9%

Income:

per capita income	\$64,533
median household income	\$151,272
individuals below poverty level	3.8%

VISION

The Berkeley Heights Public Library is your place to engage, connect and discover.

MISSION

The Berkeley Heights Public Library builds community and enriches the quality of life throughout Berkeley Heights by bringing together people, information and ideas.

ENGAGE

We seek to engage your mind in life-long learning. We embrace the entire community—from infants and toddlers to teens to seniors—and are dedicated to enriching your life through our collections, programs and services.

CONNECT

We help people connect. We offer programs, resources, and services that help people understand and change the world.

DISCOVER

We empower you to discover by offering access to resources and guidance in navigating the world of information and communication.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

SERVICE: Enhance the customer experience.

1. Deliver exemplary customer service.
 - a. Continue to provide warm and helpful service.
 - b. Encourage and respond to patron feedback.
 - c. Explore options for service point kiosks.
2. Provide Library patrons with access to Library materials and services.
 - a. Provide a balanced collection in physical and digital formats.
 - b. Promote circulation of new technology like Wi-Fi hotspots, launch pads and tablets.
 - c. Promote digital literacy.
 - d. Explore circulating new types of materials, such as museum passes, video games, and Library of “things” (for example craft tools or Go Pro camera).
3. Connect with patrons via the latest technology.
 - a. Revamp Library website to modernize its look and increase customer usability.
 - b. Promote Library’s presence on social media platforms.
 - c. Establish and implement process for regular communications about Library events and services through in-house digital displays, BHPL website, social media, emails, cell phone communications and other town-wide communications available to BHPL.
 - d. Explore self-service checkout.

MARKETING: Strengthen the role of the Library in the community.

1. Encourage widespread community participation, increase patron membership, and promote services to all age groups in the community.
2. Enhance the Library’s role as a community information hub and civic engagement center.
3. Partner and collaborate with:
 - a. the Township of Berkeley Heights, its departments and boards,
 - b. the Berkeley Heights Public School District and other local schools,
 - c. local businesses,
 - d. cultural institutions, and
 - e. civic and community groups.
4. Develop a plan to create a BHPL brand and implement a marketing plan throughout Library communications, e.g. website, social media, newsletters, newspapers, emails, in-house digital displays, and other town-wide communications available to BHPL.

TECHNOLOGY: Integrate the latest technologies as the foundation of Library services and collections.

1. Deliver a technology forward environment
 - a. Meet the needs of BYODs with robust Wi-Fi, Wi-Fi printing, charging stations with USB ports, and seating.
 - b. Provide workstations with up-to-date software and security.
 - c. Evaluate ways to bring printers closer to work areas and explore payment options.
 - d. Introduce more options to the public by providing laptops and tablets for in-house use.
2. Provide innovative technology for adults, teens, children and staff
 - a. Use circulating tablets as a means to give the public the opportunity to experiment with downloaded titles.
 - b. Evaluate the databases and downloadable services currently available for public use. Evaluate products new to the Library market.
 - c. Promote technology in the Children’s Department by providing early literacy computers, relevant book and pre-loaded tablet collections, and programming focusing on STEM and STEAM activities.
 - d. Provide teens with a more flexible space and current technology to promote collaboration. Include large screen for gaming.
 - e. Provide staff with the technology, both hardware and software, necessary to perform tasks. Stay current with vendor updates and improvements.
 - f. Explore purchasing expensive specialty software licenses and equipment for public use in-house.
 - g. Create opportunities for patrons and staff to explore and master new technologies.