

The Nanuet Public Library Long Range Plan – The Nanuet Public Library for Tomorrow 2005-2010



Developed by: The Nanuet Public Library Planning Committee
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Introduction

In 2004, The Nanuet Public Library's Board decided to seek assistance in developing a long range plan for the library. Changes in library use, the impact of technology on library use, increased demands for the library to function as a center of the community and changing demands for resources pointed to the need for deliberative thinking about the type of services, programs and especially facility needed to meet the needs of Nanuet's evolving community. A planning committee consisting of Library Trustees, friends and staff worked with planning consultants from Library Development Solutions, a Princeton Junction, NJ based library-consulting firm to develop the recommendations contained in this plan.

Accomplishments

In the last 5 years, The Nanuet Public Library has achieved several significant accomplishments that have helped to make it one of Rockland County's premier libraries. There is much here to be recognized and lauded and reflects the leadership of Library Director, Gretchen Bell, her staff and the Board of Trustees. Among the accomplishments are:

- The introduction of T1 connected, Internet ready computers in the library.
- An increase in the number of computers available for public use.
- Enhanced reference service.
- Videoconferencing capability through the Rockland Distance Learning Initiative.
- Full color videomagnifier for readers with limited vision.
- Expanded cultural programming for the entire community.
- Family Film Night and Family Game Night.
- Formation of the very successful adult book discussion group.
- More teen programs and the beginning of the Teen Advisory Board.
- Creating Comics, a Community Arts grant from the NY State Council on the Arts, for the summers of 2003-05 for teens.
- The introduction of new media formats such as Books on Tape, CDs and DVDs.
- Added structured programs for the very young, age 6 months and up/

- The development of an interactive library web-site.
- Remote access to the library's catalog.
- Expanded use of the successful Meeting room for improved art exhibits and other events
- Loaning family or dual passes to numerous museums through the help of the Friends of the Library.
- Additional concerts, including the debut of the Dead Pianists society, with a series of classical concert/lecture series.
- Recognition and celebration of the library's 110th anniversary

The Planning Process

The new plan seeks to build on the accomplishments of the past while addressing the future needs of the community. Key steps in the planning process included:

Focus Groups

Library staff, trustees and community residents met in a series of focus group sessions facilitated by the planning consultants. During these sessions participants discussed their ideas for improving library service, shared what they liked best about the library, and identified areas needing improvement. Participants also discussed issues related to building a new library and library expansion and the related costs for each.

Staff Interviews

The consultants met in two sessions with library staff to learn more about the current service program and how each of the library's departments work together to deliver service. The entire staff met with the planning consultant to evaluate the effectiveness of the library's current programs, services and facility to the community.

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees met to consider strategic issues affecting the development of the plan. They considered ideas for positioning the library for the future and determined specific approaches that make sense for the service area.

Meetings with the Long Range Planning Committee

A planning committee composed of trustees, community members and staff met for several sessions to deliberate about the library's future. During the sessions the Planning Committee:

- Identified specific societal, technological, educational and community trends likely to impact on the delivery of library service and assessed the library's ability to accommodate those trends
- Assessed the library's weaknesses, strengths and capacity to deliver quality service including the adequacy of its current building
- Developed a vision to guide the library's future and created a mission statement that incorporates the library's primary purposes and the values associated with delivering library service
- Considered strategic issues that are shaping the way that library service will be delivered to the community
- Determined priorities, goals, and objectives for the Nanuet Public Library of the future
- Agreed upon a long-range plan based on the results of the focus group sessions, meetings with staff and community feedback through the all-household survey.

The Community Environment

Emerging Trends

The Planning Committee identified various trends in the community that will affect the delivery of library service to residents of the service area. Some of the most important are:

- The Nanuet School District is experiencing, and will continue to experience in the near future, an increase in the number of dual income families resulting in more unsupervised children after school hours. There is also a continuing trend for residents to expect services and amenities in the service area rather than relying on area towns and cities for those services.
- Residential and commercial development has changed many of the patterns of life in the service area, including traffic congestion, school expansion, retail development and other changes that may alter Nanuet's identity and character. A challenge for the library is its response to these changes to assist in the continuity and future of the service area's character and identity.
- The service area population is changing with the addition of younger families and an increase in the number of languages spoken other than English, especially Spanish. Additionally, there is an increase in the number of seniors and homebound residents in the service area. These changes in population significantly impact the type of services and space requirement needs of the library.
- Residents expect service quickly and conveniently, considering their busy and hurried lifestyles. Expectations for children, teen and student services and programs are high, as well as an increased demand for more accessibility to services. Implications for the library involve additional hours, improved facilities, programs, policies and quicker check out and drop off of materials, in addition to 24/7 access to library resources.
- Technology, PCs and Internet access have become a fundamental service provided by the Library. The library will need to respond, by adding capacity and taking on an educational and instructional role in assisting residents with

instruction and finding all types of information online. Remaining current with technology is a community expectation and will be a continuing financial and resource challenge for the library.

- “Green” buildings and building construction have become important factors in renovation and construction of new public spaces. Residents expect the Nanuet Public Library to keep in mind these factors when undertaking construction of a new facility or expansion.

Community Focus Group Discussions and Survey

Over 78 members of the Nanuet Public Library service area, including library staff, met in focus group sessions to discuss their perceptions about the library and their expectations for future library service. Many staff members also met with the planning consultant to discuss similar issues as well as library programs and facilities. A survey was sent to every household in the Nanuet School District in spring/summer 2004 with 680 responses to 15 major questions and many sub questions. Some of the key findings from these sessions and the survey are:

- Residents **view the library as a common central destination in the community**. In light of the many changes occurring in the service area communities, residents expressed a growing sense of disconnection from each other (except concerning the schools) as the community matures and grows. Nanuet School District residents are seeking a center of community life and they believe that the library has played that role and should continue to do so.
- Access to all that the library has to offer is a source of concern for residents. They **expect the library to respond to their busy lifestyles** with additional hours, convenient check out and drive through book drop off, additional PC access in the library and easy access to library resources from home, day or night. They asked for additional instruction in PC, Internet and online catalog use and more programming for children and adults.
- Though the library provides programs and services to preteens, teens and older residents, even **these heavy library users perceive themselves as underserved**. Many students expressed a sense of discomfort in using the library. They feel that their actions are scrutinized too heavily and that there are not enough resources to use.

Many use New City Library or the Finkelstein Library before they come to Nanuet. Seniors feel that more PC, Internet and catalog instruction needs to take place to help them be self-sufficient modern library users.

- Both in the focus group conversations and the survey, respondents said that the library needs to **increase its collection of current videos for adults and children and provide greater access to popular materials such as best sellers**. The library needs to continue extensive weeding of the collection in order to have room for newer and asked-for materials.
- Residents are very concerned with **tax increases and changes in public services** that may precede a tax increase. The library needs to be very sensitive to these concerns and anticipate the need for supplemental funding through the use of private fundraising through a Nanuet Library Foundation and revived Friends of the Library.
- The library is undersized to meet all the needs of the service area community of almost 13,000 people and there are few short term solutions. The library will need to grow beyond its existing footprint to serve all the growing needs.

Survey Results and Comments from Residents¹

Among the many significant results from the 608 survey respondents are the following:

- 87% have a library card
- Only 35% spend more than 30 minutes in the library per visit
- Between 20 – 23% of respondents said that the library needs to have more comfortable seating., more computers, and more quiet study areas
- Between 13 and 17% stated that the library needs to have an improved children’s area and more adult programming

Approximately 249 of the respondents say that they use other libraries instead of or as well as the Nanuet Public Library. Use of other libraries is heaviest in New City – 61 respondents, Pearl River – 89 respondents and Finkelstein – 54 respondents. In response to questions about using other libraries the comments include:

¹ Numerical survey results available in the library

- There is a greater variety of books and materials at New City and Finkelstein
- Better selection of Large Print books elsewhere
- Better CD and DVD selection elsewhere

Additional comments that were made a number of times in the survey include the following:

- Need more space for books
- More best sellers
- Need a 24 hour drive up book drop
- Need more CDs and DVDs
- Need at least 6 more computers
- More large print books are needed for the visually impaired and for some seniors
- Start clearing out old books and make room for new ones
- Extended hours would be helpful

In response to questions about supporting construction of the new library many people felt that additional information was needed, especially relating to cost and timing.

- What is the cost and what will be the impact on taxes
- Time closed and cost
- Is a new library less costly than an expansion, how is this possible

Those who say they have enough information to support the new library, comment that:

- The library is a reflection of the values in a community-ours is too small and outdated
- It's important to maintain a standard of excellence in our community, including in the library
- A growing population, increases in circulation of materials, increased use of computers, all point to the need for much more space
- This library is too old and too small to serve this community's needs
- Shouldn't we really have a space that has a sprinkler system and is ADA compliant for handicapped and older residents

It would be prudent for the Library Board and other library advocates to address concerns that residents have about the potential costs of a new library and explain in greater detail the cost comparison between renovating the space and constructing a new library.

Summary of Community Input

As the Nanuet School District population continues to grow and change, the library is faced with more demand for materials and services than can be met with current resources and space. The service areas in greatest demand by the community are:

- ✓ Children's programming
- ✓ Children's materials
- ✓ Seating that can accommodate adults, children and teens after school
- ✓ Technology training
- ✓ Access to computers for Internet and word processing applications
- ✓ More best sellers, videos, books on tape and CD, DVDs, and music CDs
- ✓ Meeting room space for large and small group meetings
- ✓ Space for group study
- ✓ The ability to accommodate laptops
- ✓ Café and food service
- ✓ A drive up book drop
- ✓ Additional parking when needed



The Nanuet Public Library

The Long Range Planning Committee reviewed many library use statistics and trends for the past few years. Although the traditional measuring factors indicate a steady increase in most categories, they do not sufficiently reflect the dramatic changes in how the public uses the library, for example technology use and an increasing reliance on the use of the

Internet for acquiring information. Nor do they adequately reflect demand since community needs have not always been fully met due to limitations with the library facility or collections.

General Use Statistics²

	2001	2004	% Change
Total Circulation	239,143	351,427	32%
Visits to the Library	178,000	191,461	7.1%
Number of programs offered	596	548	-8.1%
Program attendance	10,635	13,122	19.0%
Collection Size	132,032	156,545	15.7%

Significant Findings

- The number of items loaned to residents has increased by 32% in the last four years. The Nanuet Public Library ranks 5th out of 48 libraries in the Ramapo Catskill Library System in number of items circulated.
- School age population has increased by 25% in the past 10 years. Since the 1990 census, the overall service area population has increased by 13%.
- Present parking is not adequate to accommodate library users during popular programs and other busy times.
- Significant increases in the use of the Internet, electronic databases and computer software have placed greater demands on library resources and staff and are not reflected in circulation statistics.

² RCLS Annual Report 2004

The Plan

The Planning Committee created this plan to provide a blueprint for the library's growth and development over the next five years. The plan responds to the feedback received from the community during the focus group sessions, the survey and numerous community forums anticipating and responding to trends in the community. The vision and mission provide a context for developing specific strategies that address community concerns and meet emerging library and information needs. The vision is the dream, the overarching direction in which the library is headed, the statement against which its development is measured.

The mission describes the library's purpose and the value associated with the delivery of service to each and every Nanuet School District resident. Together the vision and mission set the stage for a library committed to excellence and achievement.

Our Vision

To be the intellectual and cultural center of our community. The place to go for information and cultural resources, in a comfortable and convenient environment, providing services for all generations.

Our Mission

The Nanuet Public Library is dedicated to be a civic resource promoting open access to information, materials and services to all residents of the Nanuet School District to advance knowledge, foster creativity, encourage the exchange of ideas, build community and enhance the quality of life.

To fulfill this promise, the library will provide:

- Knowledgeable and responsive staff;

- Technology that connects our community to global information,
- A variety of library services, public meeting space and programs for all ages.

Guiding Principles

The Planning Committee recommended five key principles for the Board and Library staff to guide the development of this plan and its recommendations.

- Provide a welcoming, friendly library environment that encourages people to spend time exploring all the library has to offer including cultural events book clubs and adult programming. Make the library a destination.
- Improve service to teens and students.
- Play an active role in introducing new services and programs to the community.
- Continuously promote the library and its capabilities to the community.
- Secure additional public and private funding to support library initiatives.

Library Roles and Service Responses

Planning Committee members analyzed current use information and the results of the community needs assessment. They determined that the library needed to continue making adjustments in response to needs expressed by the community. The following are not the only service responses that the library will employ in the next few years but are the key areas it will focus on to fulfill its stated mission.

A Destination for Current Titles and Topics

The library will continue to focus on developing collections and offering programs that are topical and respond to current needs and interests of its users. There is increasing demand for best sellers and current titles by people who use the library for popular reading materials.

The Community's Information Resource

The library will increasingly become the community's navigator to information and resources, both online and in print. Staff will play a larger instructional and mentoring role in assisting the community to use the information tools available at the library. The library will:

- Provide tools and resources by which people can get information
- Instruct people on how to effectively use these resources
- Assist in their use when needed
- Nurture a desire by residents to obtain valid information and become experienced information seekers

A Community Commons and Gathering Place

The library will continue its role of being the center of the community; the touchstone for all residents. It is becoming the center of information for students, small and home based businesses, parents, retirees, children and all residents and the place where residents can gather to explore new ideas and to enjoy similar ones. The library will foster a magnetic draw through its welcoming and comfortable environment.

A Center for Cultural Enrichment and Entertaining Programs and Resources

The library is uniquely positioned in Nanuet and the whole service area as the public institution capable of offering both enrichment and entertainment for community residents. The Nanuet Public Library is no longer just a "warehouse of books" but has become multifaceted in various resources that benefit the entire community. From artwork and programs for all ages, to popular videos, best sellers, CDs and DVDs, free passes to popular museums, to a core collection of classical literature and many exciting cultural programs, the Nanuet Public library should have the resources, staff and facility to excite and inspire all residents.

An Educational Support Center

The library will continue to play an important role in helping the community achieve its educational goals. It will remain a place where preschool children can obtain early literacy skills that prepare them for a successful school career through their participation in library sponsored story hours. Older children will know that they can find a wide assortment of material to support their need for homework related materials. And adult learners can find information on a wide assortment of topics to support their lifelong learning.



Strategies for Success

The Nanuet Public Library faces a number of challenges over the next few years in fulfilling its mission and newly defined roles. Intrinsic to all of this would be providing a level of staffing and a library facility that would enable the library to provide the best service possible to the community. The strategies and activities that follow offer a roadmap for the library to meet these challenges.

Goal One: The Nanuet Public Library will develop a library environment that offers a convenient, cozy, hi-tech and quiet, comfortable and functional space. Residents will be drawn to the library as a destination for a variety of uses.

Strategies:

1.1 Improve the layout of public spaces and easier to use stacks

Action Steps

- Continue extensive weeding program to remove unwanted books from shelves and to create open shelf space and possible open floor space
- Consider emptying all bottom and top shelves – angle remaining bottom shelves
- Analyze change in shelving footprint to create more open space
- Add new face-out display units to highlight new collections in a retail-like merchandising plan

1.2 Improve lighting throughout the library

Action Steps

- Review aisle lighting in the stacks and consider repositioning to spread light more evenly
- Consider hiring a lighting specialist to review existing lighting/lamping and any low cost solutions to brighten user space

1.3 Explore improvements for convenience and ease of use

Action Steps

- Install a drive through drop box, in a separate lane, in the parking lot to facilitate easier return of materials, especially at night
- Investigate use of self checkout terminal

1.4 Provide value added services to address user and community needs

Action Steps

- Design regular sessions of computer instruction for the catalog, Internet and software programs

Goal Two: Enhance library collections and services to continue creating modern popular library collections

Strategies:

2.1 Improve the adult collections

Action Steps

- Continue the extensive weeding program
- Create displays of new books and other new media
- Use the book budget to fill in gaps in the collection with clean new copies of old and new titles
- Create a 7 day or Express Books program to allow local readers greater access to new titles and best sellers

2.2 Improve the non print collection

Action Steps

- Purchase multiple copies of popular new DVDs
- Enhance the CD collection with newer popular titles, especially music geared toward teens
- Examine organization of the CD collection and determine better method to display for browsing and storing CDs
- Determine a way to relocate the children's video collection to the children's room

2.3 Improve access to special collections

Action steps

- Stimulate the use of collections such as Large Print through brochures, lists and takeaways

Goal Three: Review all policies to improve and increase library usage

Strategies:

3.1 Review and revise all internal policies

Action Steps

- Develop and communicate new collection development policy
- Develop and communicate new community meeting room policy

3.2 Review and revise all user policies

Action Steps

- Develop and publicize new unsupervised children policy
- Develop and communicate new standards of patron behavior policy
- Develop and publicize new Internet use policy
- Carefully review and revise computer use policies

Goal Four: Develop a marketing, public relations and identity campaign to promote the library and develop additional support and advocacy

Strategies:

4.1 Create an identity campaign to promote recognition of the library

Action Steps

- Decide on a library logo to use on all library materials including the newsletter, web site, card, handouts, etc...
- Consider initiating a “design the Nanuet Library logo” contest throughout the service area to encourage participation and excitement about the library (if it is an owl – use this as a starting point for the contest)
- Decide on fonts and colors to use in all library materials
- Redesign the Nanuet Public Library card to reflect the new design

- Consider adding a marketing/PR person to the staff to assist with these efforts

4.2 Develop consistent outreach efforts to different parts of the service area

Action Steps

- Develop a consistent outreach to the local and county business community to meet their needs and gain additional support for the library
- Continue to develop programs for children in the library and in service area child care facilities – both private and public

4.3 Develop an internal communication process to include staff, Friends of the Library, and other supporters

Action steps

- Create specific methods for internal communication through staff meetings such as monthly meetings, bulletin boards and suggestion boxes
- Develop an in-house Intranet for staff communication and discussion of important issues

Goal Five: Review all programs to meet current needs of the service community

Strategies:

- 5.1** Review adult programming to meet needs of the community
- 5.2** Add specific programs around cultural, music, wellness and fun themes to attract new participants
- 5.3** Create additional fun programming for seniors and retirees not centered around senior type themes

Goal Six: Develop library technology and programs to be easy to use and available for all users

Strategies:

- 6.1 Analyze current technology use in the library and develop programs and actions to address the increased usage**

Action Steps

- Continue instruction on computers for catalog, Internet and software programs

- Add 6-10 new computers in the library and attempt to provide Internet, catalog and word processing on all of them
- Examine installing a wireless network to accomplish the above and to allow users access to a wireless network with their own or loaned notebooks for use throughout the library
- Purchase and install an automated PC management program for users to login and off using their library card
- Create at least one email express computer for 15 minute stand up use

6.2 Start to develop a technology plan for a new library facility

Action Steps

- Improve the library's web site to become more informative and interactive for users
- Review new technologies for early adopters, such as MP3s, e-books, etc...

Goal Seven: Respond to un-served and underserved populations as well as special populations with services, collections and programs to meet their needs

Strategies:

7.1 Respond to current needs with new approaches to targeted populations

Action Steps

- Develop program for delivery of materials to homebound residents and possibly other residents
- Improve the Large Print collection and promote it through brochures or takeaways
- Develop programs for seniors that are fun and attractive for broad groups of interest
- Create an ex officio position for a teen member of the Board
- Continue to create a teen advisory group – middle school through high school age
- Analyze possible use of space for student/teen study and work group area
- Create midterm and finals program for study nights in the library

Goal Eight: Continue staff development plan to help train and retain staff to provide excellent service

Strategies

8.1 Develop a consistent staff development plan

Action Steps

- Create at least quarterly in-house staff development days to provide training on topics when the library is closed
- Review skills that need upgrading for all staff
- Create continuing education checklist for all staff to chart progress and attendance in staff development activities
- Stay on top of technology training to ensure that all staff are up to date with needed skills
- Develop or contract for a customer service training program

Goal Nine: Develop revised and new formats to create additional support for the library

Strategies

9.1 Dedicate Board and staff resources to revitalize and broaden the Friends organization

Action Steps

- Reorganize the Board of the Friends to create new opportunities for additional involvement
- Find additional or new leaders to renew Friends activities
- Initiate a Friends reenergizing campaign to launch the effort

9.2 Review the volunteer program and develop an adult volunteer group to assist the library with certain tasks

- Develop an adult docent program to assist the library with routine tasks and for an additional outlet for volunteering

Goal Ten: Review all funding sources and develop additional public and private sources for library support

Strategies

10.1 Develop sustainable funding sources through public and private means to supplement public funding

Action Steps

- Consider creating a separate Nanuet Public Library Foundation to assist in private fund raising for the library
- Create a new capital campaign to launch funding opportunities for a new library facility and an endowment

Goal Eleven: Proceed with all plans to fulfill the promise of a new library for the service area community

Strategies

11.1 Continue working with the architect

Action Steps

- Address concerns by community and planners about building a “Green Building”
- Continue developing an architectural site plan
- Continue the process of acquiring DOT adjacent land between the library driveway and the ramp to Rte. 304
- Address parking issues raised by community
- Look to creating a landmark facility in Nanuet in a modern functioning library

11.2 Continue working toward a successful library building referendum

Action Steps

- Increase community involvement in the referendum process
- Continue developing the library as the center of community
- Collaborate with the Nanuet Board of Education concerning the future use of land acquired by the school district