



REBIRTH & RENEWAL

A Long Range Plan
For The Bridgeport Public Library
2001-2005

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Developed by
The Bridgeport Public Library
Long Range Planning Committee
With Assistance From
Library Development Solutions
Princeton Junction, NJ



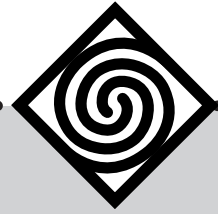
Planning Team

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Nancy Johmann, (former City Library, resigned July 2000)

Board of Directors

John Arcudi, President
James O'Donnell, Vice President
Sauda Baraka, Secretary/Treasurer
Adele Jacobson
Frank Borres
William Holden
Judge Saden
Robert Swift





Executive Summary





The Planning Context

In 1999, the Bridgeport Public Library embarked on a year of self-study intended to set directions for improving the library and the services it provides to the community. What should library service in Bridgeport look like in the future? What roles will the library play in the constantly changing environment of information delivery and technological change? What can and must be done to provide access to knowledge, information and entertainment for the residents of an older industrial city? Is there a “Digital Divide,” that when added to other urban realities, creates new opportunities for library service?

During the last year the Bridgeport Public Library Board of Directors and staff confronted these questions. All agreed that to meet the changing needs of Bridgeport residents that the library’s roles for the future would be different from its traditional roles. All agreed that the Bridgeport Public Library needed to focus its attention on creating a long term dream which clearly establishes the library as an anchor of community life—a place for improving educational opportunities, a downtown cultural attraction, a safe haven for the city’s children, and a community living room where people of all ages and from all walks of life can come together to learn from each other and explore issues vital to the city’s future. These factors led the Board of Directors and former Director Nancy Johmann to conclude that a long-range plan of service was needed to guide the library’s future development.

Library Development Solutions (LDS), a Princeton, NJ consulting firm was selected in November 1999 to help the Bridgeport Public Library determine a new model for library service that would enable city residents to obtain library service through the existing structure of a main library and neighborhood branches that reinforce the best that each offers.

A planning process to assess library facilities, analyze current programs and services, gather community feedback and understand community needs, and design a plan of action to respond changing community needs was developed by the planning consultant in conjunction with library administrators.

The process of renewal and the plan to improve library programs and services began with recognition that city residents and taxpayers deserve the best possible library service to help them become productive 21st century citizens. The Library staff want no constituency to be left behind in the race for access to information, entertainment, education and cultural resources. All Bridgeport residents understand that the most valuable assets for the future will be the community’s human and intellectual capital. During the last year, LDS:

- ◆ Visited each branch of the Bridgeport Public Library
- ◆ Conducted focus groups with community residents to learn how libraries currently meet or don’t meet their needs
- ◆ Met with more than 50 staff members to determine areas where library service could improve
- ◆ Worked with a Long Range Planning Committee to develop the plan





The Community Speaks

Community residents expressed their ideas for improved library service in focus group sessions held December 1999.

Among their suggestions were the following:

- ◆ Increase the use of information technology and provide additional user opportunities for training in information access and retrieval.
- ◆ Expand hours of service, including Sunday hours.
- ◆ Improve community awareness of library services and programs.
- ◆ Expand services offered to children, young adults and their parents as well as the growing senior population.

From a computer Touchscreen Survey, we learned that Bridgeport residents support and value their libraries.

- ◆ 56% of the total respondents requested more library hours. 58% requested more library materials and 44% saw a need for additional computers
- ◆ 54% of the respondents didn't own a computer in their homes. 36% used the BPL for computer access and 36% asked for training on computers and Internet use
- ◆ 55% of the respondents suggested more parking at the Burroughs Library
- ◆ Respondents felt that the Bridgeport Public Library helped them most by providing research facilities (63%), providing books and other library materials (65%), providing a place to do homework (38%), and offering computer access (37%)

Planning Outcomes

The Long Range Planning Committee met in a series of meetings with Library Development Solutions. During the course of their meetings they:

- ◆ Identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to improved library service in Bridgeport
- ◆ Considered informational, cultural, social and technological trends in Bridgeport and society at large
- ◆ Developed a shared service vision, mission, and goals to guide the library for the near future





Our Vision

The Bridgeport Public Library . . . Ask Us First!

The Library as the Heart of the Community

We want the people of Bridgeport to encounter a library system that exceeds their expectations in every way. People in our community will consider the library essential to achieving their personal goals. When they have an information need they will think immediately of the library and the library will be readily available to them, physically or electronically, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. The library staff will deliver products based on community needs and desires and impart knowledge and wisdom that helps people make informed decisions that can improve their day-to-day lives.

A Library Staff that Celebrates and Values its Users

Reliable and sustainable funding will support frequent and consistent programming to attract people of all ages and from all cultures. The library atmosphere will demonstrate that we trust our users and do everything we can to make sure they have the resources they need. Library staff, which has up to date skills and training, will be proud of being part of the Bridgeport Public Library System. Every person walking through our doors will receive personalized service to ensure that they have a positive library experience.

Libraries with Safe and Comfortable Facilities

Serving as a center for community information and culture, the Library will provide service in convenient community locations and in facilities that are clean, safe, and comfortable and user friendly.

Mission

We believe that libraries can change people's lives and are a cornerstone of our democracy. The Bridgeport Public Library provides opportunities for our residents and taxpayers to pursue lifelong learning, cultural and economic enrichment and enjoyment. To accomplish this mission, we offer free and open access to creative works, knowledge and information from diverse perspectives.





Guiding Principles

The Planning Committee identified the following principles to guide The Bridgeport Public Library.

- ◆ We treat each other and our patrons respectfully, courteously and in a non-judgmental manner.
- ◆ We do everything we can to help our patrons address their information needs.
- ◆ We value the library's vast resources and the diversity of our collection.
- ◆ We are forward thinkers who value innovation and change.
- ◆ We support free and open access to information and library resources.
- ◆ We value the diversity of our community.
- ◆ We believe that staff is integral to the delivery of the best possible service and for that reason continuously invest in staff development.
- ◆ We conduct ourselves in a business like manner at all times.
- ◆ We encourage staff participation, support open communication, and offer a collegial work environment.
- ◆ We act in an ethical and honest manner.
- ◆ We provide accessible, comfortable, safe, clean and user-friendly buildings that support a modern library service program.
- ◆ We recognize and reward staff for good performance.
- ◆ We communicate with the public in a way that makes it easy for them to use our libraries.





Goals

The Planning Committee's approach for renewing and extending library service in Bridgeport consists of the following goals and objectives.

PRIORITY:

Building Community

Goal 1: People will become more aware of Bridgeport's libraries and consider them as community information centers

Objectives:

- 1.1** Encourage staff to become more involved in community groups (Ongoing)
- 1.2** Create a single library identity and trademark, brand and motto, by developing a library marketing and promotion plan (2001)
- 1.3** Redesign the Library's Web page to make it easier for people to locate information (2002)

PRIORITY:

Improving Access

Goal 2: People will encounter libraries that are safe, accessible, user friendly, clean and responsive to neighborhood needs

Objectives:

- 2.1** Improve security and safety at each library building (Ongoing)
- 2.2** Improve the cleanliness of library facilities (Ongoing)
- 2.3** Improve parking at all library buildings (2003)
- 2.4** Extend library hours (2003)
- 2.5** Reorganize the Burroughs building to make it easier for people to locate information (2004)
- 2.6** Complete renovations or construction for all library branches (2005)

PRIORITY:

Lifelong Learning

Goal 3: People will have access to library programs, services, materials and staff to support their lifelong learning needs

Objectives:

- 3.1** Develop innovative programs to bring new audiences to the library (2002 and ongoing)
- 3.2** Develop a comprehensive program for technology training for the public (2001 and ongoing)
- 3.3** Increase teen use of the library (2001 and ongoing)
- 3.4** Reallocate library resources to support new initiatives (2001 and ongoing)
- 3.5** Revise circulation policies to make them less restrictive (2001)
- 3.6** Revise the collection development plan to align it with the plan's vision and mission (2002)
- 3.7** Increase senior citizen use of the library (2003)
- 3.8** Establish cluster information centers to meet specific community needs (2005)





PRIORITY:
**Improving
Customer
Service**

Goal 4: People will encounter staff who are knowledgeable, friendly, courteous and respectful

Objectives:

- 4.1** Improve communication among staff, administration, and the Board (2001 and ongoing)
- 4.2** Develop a cohesive plan for staff development (2002)
- 4.3** Establish an annual performance dialogue to provide feedback to all employees (2003)
- 4.4** Ensure that all staff can direct library users to resources (2003)
- 4.5** Improve staff technology skills (2004)
- 4.6** Improve managerial skills for supervisory staff (2004)
- 4.7** Hire a human resource coordinator to coordinate personnel and training issues (2004)

PRIORITY:
**Providing
Access To
Information
Resources**

Goal 5: People will get the information they need, as conveniently as possible

Objectives

- 5.1** Reorganize the reference areas in the Burroughs building (2001 and ongoing)
- 5.2** Increase the accuracy rate for reference transactions (2001 and ongoing)
- 5.3** Make it as easy as possible to request and receive a book or journal article via interlibrary loan (2001)

PRIORITY:
**Increasing
Library
Collections**

Goal 6: People will find ample supplies of current materials

Objectives:

- 6.1** Develop a method to quickly order a book on demand and get it on the shelf (2001)
- 6.2** Subscribe to a larger lease plan (2002)
- 6.3** Develop attractive displays to merchandise current material (2002)
- 6.4** Explore options for managing the video collection (2002)
- 6.5** Improve the reader's advisory function (2003)





PRIORITY:

**Access
To
Technology**

Goal 7: People will encounter a library technology infrastructure that provides them with the information they need.

Objectives:

- 7.1** Establish a technology and network support office (2001)
- 7.2** Develop consistent, user-friendly policies for technology use (2001 and ongoing)
- 7.3** Establish an infrastructure to support the library cybercenter (2005)

PRIORITY:

**Library
Support**

Goal 8: People will benefit from increased public, private and grant support for the library

Objectives:

- 8.1** Enhance the Board of Directors' ability to serve as advocates for the library (2001 and ongoing)
- 8.2** Divest the Klein Memorial (2004)
- 8.3** Establish a development office (2005)
- 8.4** Establish a friends of the library group to provide supplemental support for the library (2005)

