

Spring Lake Public Library Strategic Plan 2025-2030



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from our Co-Presidents	3
Board Members and Staff	4
Mission / Vision	5
Spring Lake Library <i>current status</i>	6
Town Statistics	7
Library <i>at a glance</i>	8
Core Values	10
Strategic Goals and Objectives	10
Survey Results	14
Survey <i>takeaways</i>	16
Plans for Implementing Goals	17

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, we are proud to introduce the **Spring Lake Library's new strategic plan**. This plan represents a thoughtful vision for our little library's future—one rooted in our community's needs, values, and aspirations. A small library like ours can have a profound and lasting impact, and this plan aims to achieve exactly that.

Spring Lake is a tiny beach town on the east coast of New Jersey. Our community is well-educated and affluent, comprised of both seasonal and year-round residents. Despite our small-town, seaside vibe, we are just over an hour away from both New York City and Philadelphia. We are home to two award-winning elementary schools—one public and one parochial. Just a block from our library is a thriving downtown with a bookstore, boutiques, home décor shops, art galleries and eateries.

Our residential taxes are quite reasonable, and a sizable municipal appropriation supports our library, allowing us to proudly return significant funds to the borough at the end of each fiscal year. We are housed in the Spring Lake Community House, a beautiful Tudor-style building. As a paying tenant, we are not burdened with the maintenance of this 100+ year-old structure.

Our library is a friendly, warm, and welcoming place. We have served as a trusted resource and a gathering space for generations. Our exceptional staff is knowledgeable, competent, kind, and, above all, book lovers. They engage in conversations with residents, patrons, and local partners to better understand how the library can evolve to serve an ever-changing world.

The result is this strategic roadmap—focused on enhancing access to resources, expanding programming, and deepening community engagement.

The Staff and Board of the Spring Lake Library are excited about what lies ahead. This new strategic plan reflects the collective vision, dedication, and potential of a library deeply committed to its community.

“Even the coziest corners can spark the biggest ideas ~ and that's exactly what this plan aims to nurture.”

We look forward to our next chapter!



Christine Mawn & Megan Rigney
Co-Presidents of Spring Lake Library Board of Trustees

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LIBRARY BOARD MEMBERS

Christine Mawn- Co-President

Megan Rigney- Co-President

Jim Stokes- Treasurer

Jennifer Winn- Secretary

Joe Erbe- Mayor's Representative

Cyndee Baumgartner

Susan Burrus

Patrick Reilly

LIBRARY STAFF

Janet Boldt- Library Director

Andrea Craig- Assistant Director

Leslie Skarbek

Susan Mansfield





MISSION

Spring Lake Public Library provides people of all ages in the community with a caring, welcoming and lively cultural connection to reading, lifelong learning and personal enrichment. The Library maintains an open, unbiased environment and upholds the public's right to access information. It provides individualized assistance, community outreach, professional expertise and current technologies for equal access to facilities, quality services and materials in all formats.

VISION

The Spring Lake Public Library aims to provide the community a hub for information and discovery through robust collections and resources, innovative programming and responsive services while continually anticipating and meeting the changing needs of our patrons.

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Spring Lake Library: *current status*

Spring Lake Public Library is located in the small seashore town of Spring Lake and serves a population of 2,789. The library itself is located in the historic Spring Lake Community House which was built in 1921 with a designated use for social and educational endeavors. It was always specified that this structure would house the library, so we co-exists in a building where the arts abound. Our programs are held in the library and in the Spring Lake Community House (rooms shown below). Additional space for library sponsored programs and events is supported in collaboration with the Borough of Spring Lake at Duggan Hall, (as and when needed).

This unique and charming library provides their patrons with personalized access to knowledge, information, and lifelong learning through up-to-date resources and services.

Our on-going children's activities includes weekly Story Hours with crafts, After-School Legos and a monthly Dance and Sing Music Program. For summer we offer camps such as Art and Chess, and summer programming includes programs such as Ocean Life, Dinosaurs, Wolf Dogs, Puppet Shows, Mad Science, Magic Shows and Educational Entertainment. For teens we conduct an SAT Prep class 2 times yearly. Professional Art Classes are available throughout the year for our young aspiring artists.

Adult Programming includes three vibrant monthly Book Clubs, on-going Tech Training for Seniors, Knitting and Crochet Club, Writer's Workshop and numerous monthly evening enrichment programs and author events in the theater. Specific annual events we host are our annual Artists' Showcase and our Pet Festival which offers Rabies shots. Adults also enjoy Professional Art Instruction through the year.



The Brown Room



Spring Lake Theatre



The Upper Gallery

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TOWN STATISTICS

The town of Spring Lake was formed as a borough on March 14, 1982. It is a town of 1.3 sq. miles, with a boardwalk length of approx. 2 miles. The distance to NYC is only 63 miles, so it is a desirable location for professionals working in the city.

Income

\$119,203

Per capita income

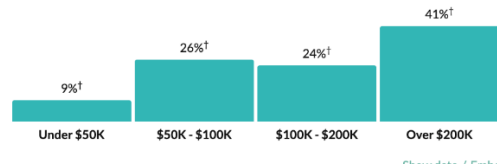
nearly double the amount in Monmouth County: \$65,545
more than double the amount in New Jersey: \$53,118

\$146,976

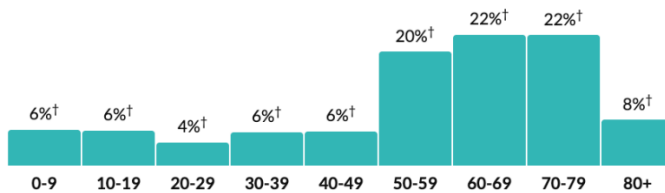
Median household income

about 20 percent higher than the amount in Monmouth County: \$122,727
about 1.5 times the amount in New Jersey: \$101,050

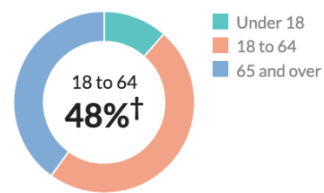
Household income



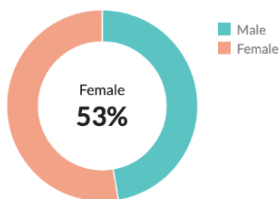
Population by age range



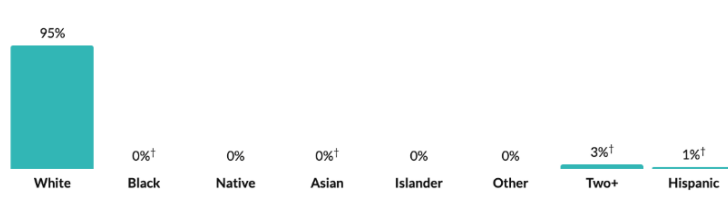
Population by age category



Sex



Race & Ethnicity



Households

1,301

Number of households

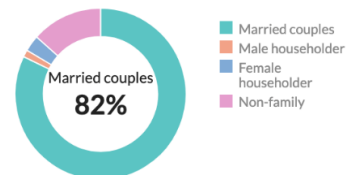
Monmouth County: 250,195
New Jersey: 3,478,355

2.1

Persons per household

about 80 percent of the figure in Monmouth County: 2.6
about 80 percent of the figure in New Jersey: 2.6

Population by household type





2024 Library: *at a glance*

Municipal Appropriation: \$2,343,398

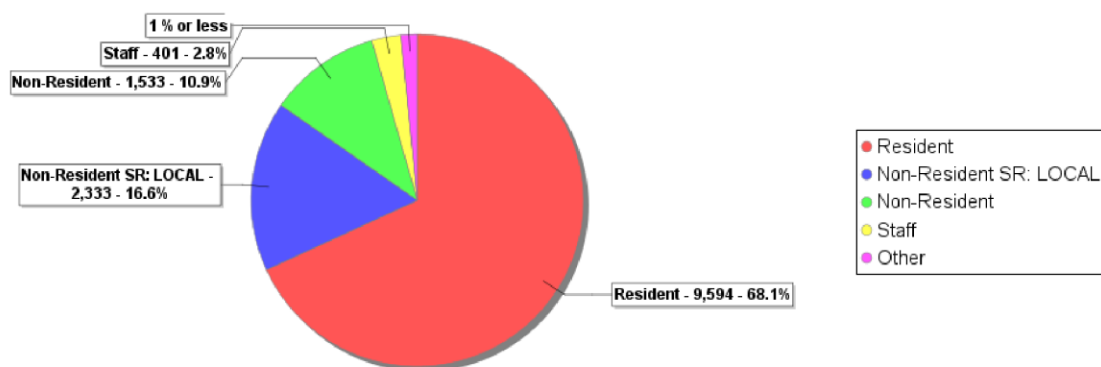
BUDGETS & EXPENDITURES	Personnel Expenses	\$236,111
	Computer Expenditures	\$6,837
	Book Purchases	\$17,203
	Magazine/Newspaper Purchases	\$5,125
	Audios / CD Purchases	\$746
	Online Offering Purchases	\$22,795
	Programming	\$14,951
	All other Expenses	\$74,259
	TOTAL	\$378,028
TITLES IN COLLECTION	Books	12,850
	E-books	12,787
	Audio	7475
	Video	1095
	Databases	6
STATISTICS	Attendance in Library	16,324
	Reference Transactions	2,221
	Attendance for Programs	4,502

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2024 Library: *at a glance*

GENERAL	Population Served	2789
	Registered Borrowers	2474
	Total Yearly Hours	5538
	Square Footage	2151

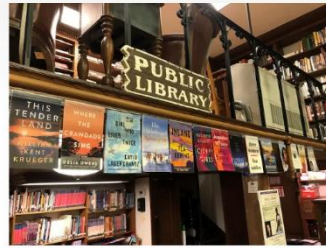
Circulation Percentage by Patron Category



Total Circulation: 14,082

#	Patron Category	Unique Users	Circulation	Checkouts	Renewals	Check-ins	In-House
1.	Resident	494	9,594	8,119	1,475	8,103	244
2.	Non-Resident SR: LOCAL	102	2,333	1,910	423	1,883	65
3.	Non-Resident	56	1,533	1,211	322	1,253	24
4.	Staff	8	401	349	52	353	40
5.	Renting in Spring Lake	6	113	98	15	103	3
6.	Summer Resident	7	63	53	10	52	2
7.	Juvenile	4	35	24	11	22	1
8.	Non-Resident SR: OVER 10	2	10	10	0	10	0
9.	Undefined	1	0	0	0	1,511	1,233
Totals		680	14,082	11,774	2,308	13,290	1,612

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CORE VALUES

Inclusivity- A library for everyone, without barriers.

Innovation- Forward thinking services that anticipate future needs.

Community Centered- Programs and resources tailored to the needs of the local population.

Sustainability- Thoughtful stewardship of resources for long term impact.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goal 1:

Maintain and Enhance Library Services

Continue to offer exceptional service to our Patrons, while looking for additional ways to serve the Community.

- Expand the library's collection to include more Large Print titles. Stay current on reading trends that would enhance library collection.
- Continue to evaluate online offerings and constantly assess the need to add more items when needed.
- Continue and expand on home delivery to shut in and elderly patrons.
- Regularly survey community members to align acquisitions with changing interests.
- Plan for systematic weeding to keep collection fresh and relevant
- Maintain collections based on the interest of users. Add additional genres of materials that may not have been popular in the past, and access circulation to address current and future trends.

Goal 2:

Technology and Innovation

Bridge the digital divide and provide access to emerging tech for all age groups.

- Continue to offer one- on-one help tech help for those who need it
- Offer workshops dealing with online security, using apps and emerging technologies.
- Upgrade wi-fi and equipment when needed to provide the fastest internet service to user.
- Stay current on trends in emerging innovation such as incorporating AI use in our Library
- Replace outdated computer equipment.

Goal 3:

Strengthen Community Engagement

Position the library as a central hub for culture, education and social connection.

- Continue to collaborate with schools and local businesses to create a sense of community.
- Offer a Patron Appreciation event each year featuring refreshments from local establishments.
- Periodically bring in local professionals to discuss what they do, and what they can offer our Patrons.



Goal 4:

Increase Library Visibility through Marketing

Use vibrant imagery and messaging as an opportunity to keep the Library in the public eye: introducing the Library to those who may not be currently using its offerings, and reintroducing to those who may not realize the many valuable services provided.

- Create a Contemporary Aesthetic. In our past marketing we have used a very historic look to compliment the feel of a very traditional Library space, but as we look forward, we have changed the marketing palette to suit the feel of a vibrant oceanside community.
- Continue to utilize and grow social media following, Newsletter subscribers and social media to promote library and programs.
- Continue to update website with an eye towards ease of use for all ages and ensure that it contains a vibrant and interactive calendar.
- Include events in Coast Star Calendar, and write periodic articles featuring events.
- Continue to include information about programming on our town's elementary school website.

Goal 5:

Physical Library: Aesthetics / Function

To be a vibrant, welcoming hub for knowledge, creativity, and community connection- blending tradition with innovation.

- Make shelving adjustable as needed to provide space and accommodate areas for growth.
- Continuously assess how Patrons are using the Library space and work on changing areas if needed.
- Paint areas where needed.
- Improve and replace outdated and harsh lighting.
- Add handrail by stairs to give added stability.

Goal 6:

Staff Development / Succession Planning

Access staffing needs with the eye to the future.

- Map out who will be retiring and at what point and plan accordingly.
- Develop a mentorship program- Train and prepare potential successors for leadership roles.
- Clearly define the transition process. Outline how the new Director will be selected and integrated into the Library.



Goal 7

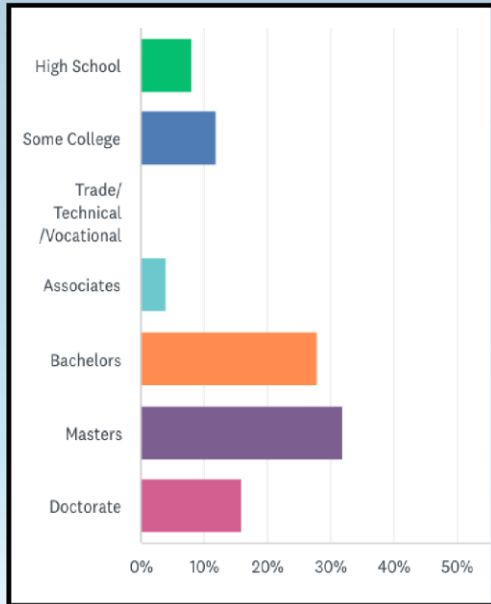
Future Library Board Development

- Identify what demographic needs to be represented on the Board and come up with plan to incorporate that group onto Board.
- Create a welcome packet for new members including Board members names, emails and phone numbers.
- The Library recognizes the need to continually evaluate and embrace new ideas, whether from new board members or other interested community voices and sources. Consider the utilization of focus groups of various demographics for brainstorming sessions.
- The Library Board wishes to continue the financial partnership with the town, since they currently provide services for the library's submitted invoices and bills. Changes to this arrangement would be disruptive to the current library operations.

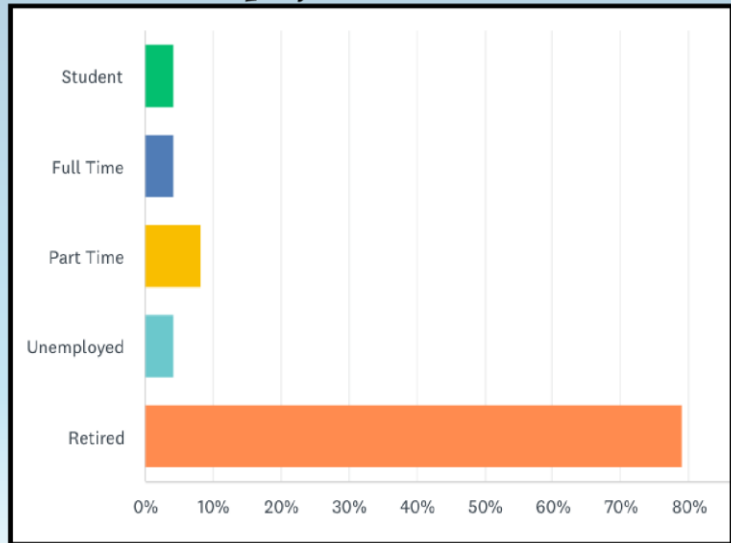
2025 Survey of our Patrons / Town Residents

In an effort to better serve our patrons and our community we conducted a survey to help develop our new comprehensive 5-Year Strategic Plan. Even though the Library is not large in stature, the breadth and depth of the experiences that the library provides for our patrons continues to be impressive for such a small community.

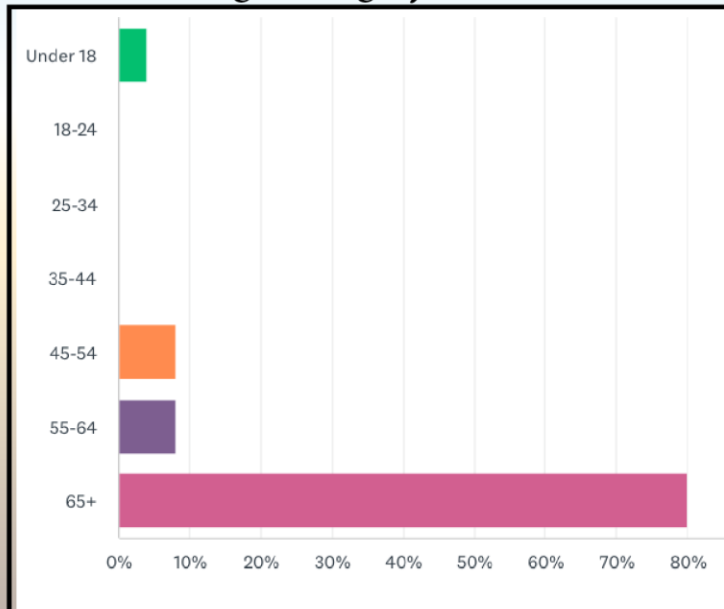
Level of Education



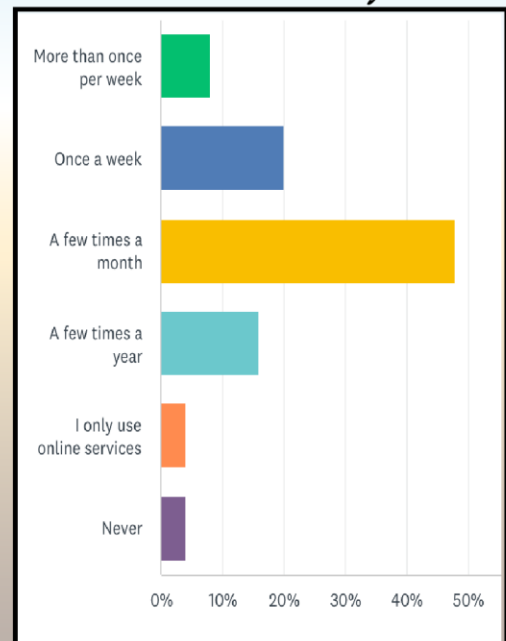
Employment Status



Age Category



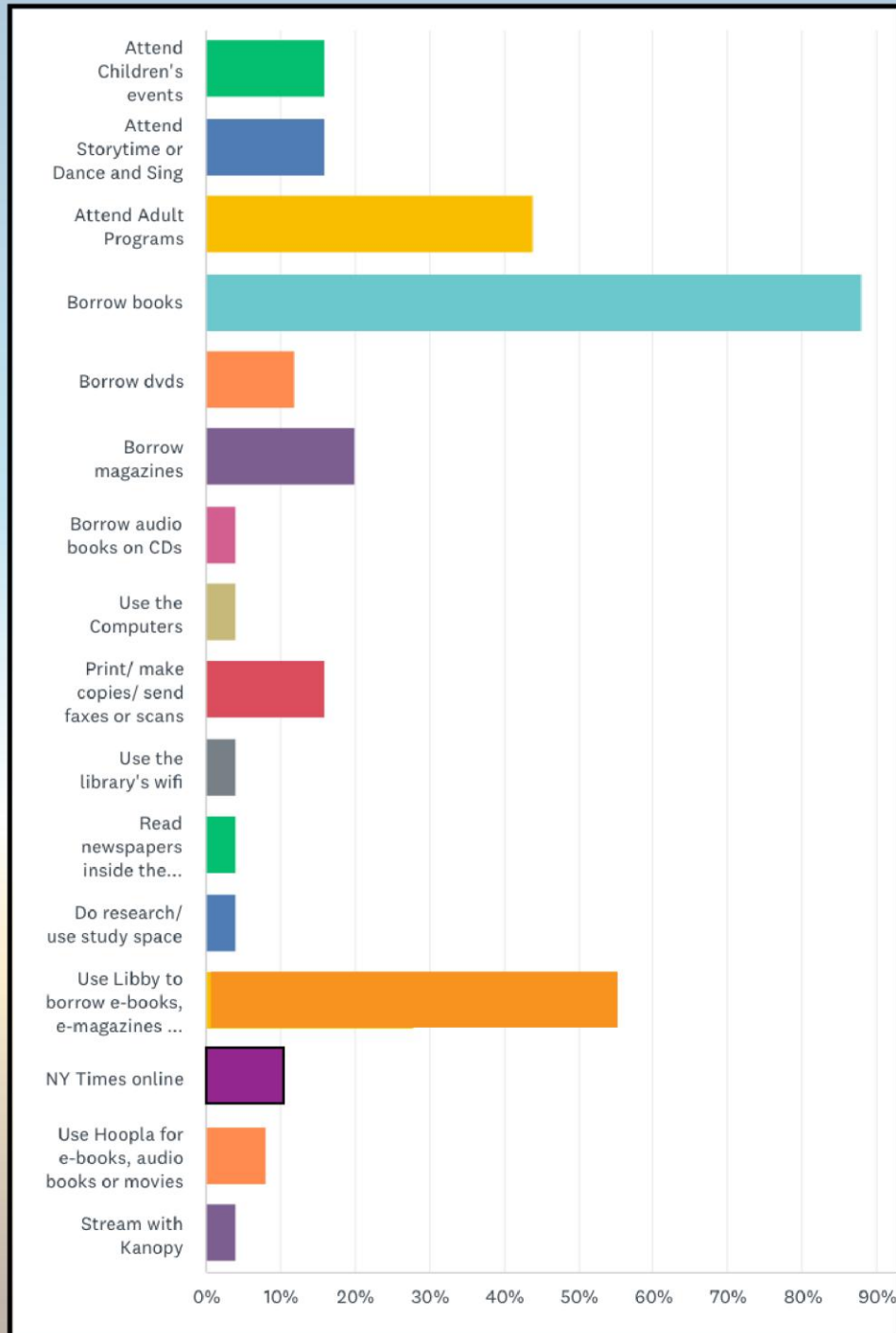
I Use the Library . . .



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2025 Survey of our Patrons / Town Residents

How the Library is Used



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SURVEY takeaways

What we learned from the surveys; most respondents are currently happy with the services offered, and appreciate the enhancements that have been made with regard to the circulation system; being able to control accounts, receiving texts and emails.

They also are really happy with the informative, interactive website that the Library now has. Most respondents commented on how the staff was very willing to help in any way needed, and great about giving suggestions.

Words used to describe the Library:

**“Beautiful” “Peaceful” “Cozy” “Welcoming”
“Comfortable” “Inviting” “Convenient”
“Organized” “Quaint” “Historical”**

Words used to describe the Staff:

**“Knowledgeable” “Helpful” “Welcoming”
“Friendly” “Kind” “Responsive” “Personable”**

When asked how we might improve the Library and its services there were not many new suggestions, but rather suggestions for things already in place. This lets us know that we must double our efforts to market our services better to the community.

Interestingly, many used that question to compliment what is already being offered.



PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTING GOALS

Based on the Strategic Goals we have presented along with information we have gathered from our 2025 Survey we now can establish a plan of change for these upcoming 5 years.

Goal 1: Maintain and Enhance Library Services

Over the next five years, the library will remain committed to maintaining and expanding its high-quality services. To ensure the collection remains vibrant and reflective of community interests, a combination of regular user surveys and data-driven circulation analysis will guide acquisitions. The inclusion of more large print materials and niche genres will address diverse patron needs. A systematic weeding plan will keep the collection current, while digital offerings will be regularly assessed and expanded. By continuing and growing home delivery services to elderly and homebound patrons, the library will ensure inclusive access. These initiatives will be implemented incrementally each year, ensuring resources and patron feedback guide the pace of growth.

Goal 2: Technology and Innovation

In pursuit of technological excellence, the library will invest in both infrastructure and education. Scheduled equipment upgrades and Wi-Fi enhancements will ensure access to fast, reliable internet, while ongoing staff training will help the team stay on top of emerging trends, including AI integration in library services. Ongoing tech-help sessions and workshops on cybersecurity and digital literacy will be promoted to all age groups, reinforcing the library's role in closing the digital divide. Annual assessments of community tech needs will inform future programming and equipment purchases.

Goal 3: Strengthen Community Engagement

The library will continue to deepen its ties with local organizations and residents, reinforcing its role as a cultural and social cornerstone. Annual patron appreciation events and talks by local professionals will be scheduled to foster a sense of belonging and connection. Collaborative programs with schools and businesses will be planned seasonally, with feedback in place to refine and expand successful initiatives. These efforts will help establish the library as not just a resource center but a thriving community hub.

PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTING GOALS

Goal 4: Increase Library Visibility through Marketing

A bold and contemporary marketing strategy will guide the library's public engagement efforts. A refreshed visual identity, designed to align with the town's coastal character, will be carried through all promotional materials. The library will consistently update and promote its programs via newsletters, an intuitive website, and growing social media platforms. Strategic outreach through local publications and community calendars will broaden the library's reach. These efforts will be continuously evaluated to maximize impact.

Goal 5: Physical Library: Aesthetics / Function

To ensure the library remains a welcoming and functional environment, a phased plan for physical improvements will be executed. Adjustable shelving and reconfigured spaces will accommodate changing usage patterns. Routine maintenance, including fresh paint and improved lighting, will enhance the ambiance, while safety upgrades like handrails will improve accessibility. Patron feedback and usage analytics will guide each stage of improvement, ensuring the space evolves with community needs.

Goal 6: Staff Development / Succession Planning

Long-term sustainability will be supported by a proactive approach to staff development and succession planning. A detailed timeline of anticipated retirements will allow for orderly transitions. A mentorship program will be launched to nurture internal leadership, while clear succession protocols will ensure continuity at the administrative level. Annual reviews of staffing needs and skill gaps will inform training and hiring strategies, securing a strong, adaptable team for the future.

Goal 7: Future Library Board Development

The library board will identify underrepresented demographics and actively recruit Board members who reflect the broader community. A comprehensive welcome packet, including contact information and board responsibilities, will be created to onboard new members effectively. Ongoing evaluation of board composition and performance will help maintain a dynamic and representative leadership structure committed to the library's mission.