



*“The mission of the Mahwah Public Library is to be an essential resource, connecting everyone in the community with ideas, information, technology and each other to further life-long learning opportunities and the cultural and business interests of its residents.”*

Mahwah Public Library  
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Mahwahlibrary.org

# Mahwah Public Library

## A Vision for the Future: 2012 - 2015

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## Message from President

Typical of other municipal libraries in Bergen County, the Mahwah Public Library has developed, over 100 years, from a private collection made available to neighbors, to a storefront sponsored by The Women's Club, to an important asset of the Township of Mahwah. Presently the Library is situated in a modern building designed to accommodate a wide breadth of printed resource material, a place to study, Internet access and programs developed for children, youth and adults. Given its size and importance to our community, it is appropriate for the Library to develop and share a Strategic Plan, approved by the Library Board, which reflects our mission, our vision for the future and a general plan going out about five years.

Let me suggest that the reader make special note of the budget discussion to be found on page 11 of this document. Since 2009, the Library budget has dropped 8.7% while borrowing has increased 19% and program attendance by 69%. Obviously, these trends cannot continue indefinitely. In fact, it is the sense of The Strategic Planning Committee, that 2015 could become a very critical year in the direction of our Library.

The Library has been well served by a Strategic Planning Committee composed of community leaders, professionals in communications, library staff and board members.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees and our community as a whole, I would like to thank each member of the committee for the time and effort that they have invested in this important project.

Curtis P. Koster

# Mahwah Public Library

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## Executive Summary

Ever since 1912, when Ms. Eleanor Bugg opened her personal collection of books to friends and neighbors, there has been a lending library in Mahwah. Over the past 100 years the Library has grown from its humble beginnings into a dynamic community organization, serving diverse needs.

Just as Ms. Bugg's original lending library provided access to information and ideas, today's Library continues to provide free access to a wide range of recorded thought. Now, instead of just books, the Library loans eBooks, audiobooks, music, DVDs, online resources and much more to its patrons. It provides Mahwah residents with access to computers, productivity software and the internet, research assistance for students, help with position-searching and navigating online applications for job seekers, basic computer skill support to novice users, and, more than ever, a space for the community to meet and discuss the ideas that matter most to them.

As a result of evolving to meet the community's changing needs, the Library is busier than ever. In the past decade, it experienced tremendous growth: Circulation increased by 62%, use of public PCs has nearly doubled, and attendance at Library programs has nearly tripled since 2001.

On its centennial, the Board of Trustees established a Strategic Planning Committee, tasked with mapping out a plan for continued success and growth for the coming years. This dynamic planning process was designed to be both community-focused and forward-looking. Patrons contributed both feedback about existing services and suggestions for future enhancements. Shifting demographics, usage statistics, prevailing industry trends, emerging technology, SWAT analysis, surveys, best practices, and benchmark data were all taken into consideration throughout the process. The Committee worked together to evaluate this wealth of information and develop strategic initiatives that were closely aligned with the mission, vision and guiding principles. The selected goals embody a plan that is both responsive to the community's current expectations and actively plans for future growth.

This is no "pie in the sky" dream. Rather, the goals and objectives are based on a realistic view of the resources available, and how they can be used to enhance services wherever and however possible without additional impact to the taxpayers.

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## Mission

*The mission of the Mahwah Public Library is to be an essential resource, connecting everyone in the community with ideas, information, technology and each other to further life-long learning opportunities and the cultural and business interests of its residents.*

## Vision

The Mahwah Public Library Board of Trustees and staff will work together to:

- Provide current materials of high interest to the community in a variety of formats – e.g., books, magazines, electronic data, videos and recordings – for people of all ages.
- Employ relevant technologies to improve operational efficiency and enhance access to information.
- Partner with other organizations to improve access to local historical and civic information (museum info, town records, key religious and other community organizations).
- Provide timely, accurate information and reference services, employing a highly qualified staff to form a link between library materials and users in a congenial and professional manner.
- Be a central meeting and gathering place for people and businesses of Mahwah.
- Promote and encourage a lifelong love of reading and learning, particularly in our young people.

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- Celebrate the diversity of our community by providing multi-cultural programs.

### Guiding Principles

- Service Excellence: We are customer focused and deliver positive experiences. Our employees are knowledgeable and seek to understand our users' needs and points of view. We provide convenient and timely service, demonstrate friendliness and reliability, and are proactive in offering options and solutions to the public and each other. We are committed to accessibility.
- Welcoming Environment: We maintain an attractive, clean, environmentally sustainable and comfortable facility, recognizing its unique value to the community.
- Innovation: We pursue innovation as a means to keep our services and technology contemporary and vibrant. We implement appropriate advancements in technology for operational efficiency and enhanced customer service.
- Life-long Learning: We play a unique role in our community so that learning can thrive. We offer comprehensive services and programs that encourage intellectual and professional development of individuals throughout their lives. The Library supports reading and life-long learning within its walls and by taking services out into the community. We provide services for learners of all ages and especially for children.
- Freedom to Know: We provide free and equal access to library resources and facilities. We support the open exchange of information and ideas that represent multiple points of view. We value the benefits of diversity. Our employees handle requests for information in a manner that protects and respects every user's right to know and right to read.
- Integrity & Trust: We serve the residents of Mahwah with financial integrity. We act with honesty and fairness as we conduct our business with patrons and each other. We assume personal responsibility for accomplishing the goals of the organization.
- Staff Appreciation: We recognize that the Library's employees are our most valuable

resource. Therefore, we treat each other with respect and value team work. We encourage staff to pursue their professional goals. We attract, celebrate and retain outstanding staff members.

- Communication: We engage in the open and honest exchange of information as a critical process for creating synergy of ideas within our library and with our community.

### Committee Members

Developing a strategic plan is a major undertaking, requiring the contributions of many individuals. The Library is grateful to all residents who participated in the process, but is especially thankful for the hard work of the Strategic Planning Committee.

- Mr. Richard Wolf  
Committee Chair and Trustee, Mahwah Public Library
- Mr. Curtis P. Koster  
President, Mahwah Public Library
- Mr. John Spiech  
Vice-President, Mahwah Public Library and  
President, Mahwah Town Council
- Mr. William Grob  
Pastor, Ramapo Reformed Church
- Dr. Annette Freund  
Owner and Managing Director of Freund  
Associates Technical Communication
- Mr. Kurt Hadelor  
Director, Mahwah Public Library
- Ms. Allison Moonitz  
Supervising Librarian, Mahwah Public Library

### Methodology

The Library had previously developed a strategic plan as a vehicle to both map out future services and justify returning surplus funds to the Township. Under the previous plan, a major capital project was completed, renovating an underutilized basement into collection, program and meeting spaces. At the same time, the economic landscape shifted as local equalized values declined and the Library's operating budget declined. By 2011, with the renovation complete, the Board focused on planning for future services and capital projects. In

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## A Vision for the Future: 2012 - 2015

December 2011 the Board established a Strategic Planning Committee, tasked with developing a new long-range plan.

Trustee Richard Wolf, chair of the Committee, was instrumental in guiding the process. Starting in December 2011 and working through March 2012, the Committee reviewed past practices, surveyed the community, investigated demographic trends, analyzed usage statistics and benchmarking data; sought to understand current strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities, revised the Library's capital projects plan, established probable funding and budget scenarios, and formulated a new strategic plan for 2012-2015.

### Data Analysis

The past ten years' circulation statistics, in-house program attendance, room rentals and computer usage statistics were analyzed to better understand past trends that are likely to continue in the future. Recent circulation activity was also compared against similar regional libraries to benchmark services. Finally the 1990, 2000 and 2010 censuses were consulted to gain insight into the changing demographics of the community in order to better anticipate their evolving needs in the years ahead.

### Community Survey

Throughout January 2012, the Library conducted a survey of area residents. This survey was promoted among current Library users during Library programs and checkout transactions, as well as on our website and through email. In an effort to attract input non-users, it was promoted in local newspapers and news websites.

This 20-question web-based survey sought to identify barriers to use, customer satisfaction with services, staff and facilities, key future objectives, adoption of eBooks, and effectiveness of communications to patrons. 280 individuals responded, lending valuable insight into how the Library is perceived, what it does well and how it can improve.

### SWAT Analysis

Library staff explored the current environmental factors facing both Mahwah and libraries in general to develop a "strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats" (SWAT) analysis. This analysis sheds light on numerous conditions, both

internal and external, that impact the Library. Items identified through the SWAT analysis fed directly into the environmental analysis and were used to develop the future goals.

### Goals and Objectives

Culminating the planning process, seven strategic goals were developed. Using demographic data and use trends, environmental factors, survey responses and Committee input as their foundation, these initiatives are designed to enhance services offered to the community by both building on traditional roles and expanding into new areas that align with the mission, vision and values of the Library.

### Implementation and Evaluation

Each year, the Board of Trustees, Library Director, and the library staff will outline the action steps necessary to accomplish specific objectives and goals during the following year. At the end of each year, the plan will be reviewed and progress measured against established metrics to evaluate the success of each objective. Progress on each goal will be reported during the annual meeting held in March.

## The Changing Face of Mahwah

While Mahwah was incorporated in 1944, the area that is now Mahwah was originally incorporated as Hohokus Township in 1849. The area has roots that go back well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, including the establishment of the Ramapo Reformed Church in 1785. Geographically, Mahwah lives up to its Lenape moniker of being a meeting place. Contiguous with the New York border, Route 17 and the Interstate 87/287 corridor intersect in Mahwah. Encompassing 26 square miles, Mahwah is the largest township in Bergen County.

Perhaps because of its size, location, access to transportation and proximity to New York City, Mahwah has successfully developed a strong economic infrastructure based on manufacturing and light industry. Ford operated a factory in town 1955 through 1982, and today Mahwah is home to Inserra Supermarkets, Stryker Corp, DialAmerica, UPS, Sharp Electronics, FedEx and

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Jaguar, among others. In 2010, NYSE Euronext opened a state-of-the-art data processing center for the New York Stock Exchange.

Despite its large geographic area, Mahwah is a stable town and has experienced slow but steady growth in population over the past decade. As of the 2010 census, Mahwah was home to 25,890 residents. This represents a modest population increase of 8% since 2000 (population 24,062); by comparison the population grew a dramatic 45% between 1990 and 2000.

Despite the slower growth in the general population, the number of housing units increased 3% between 2000 and 2010. Additionally, the number of renter occupied units has increased by 12%, though it is unclear if this is due to the general state of the economy or recent trends in the housing market.

Aging trends for Mahwah are particularly noteworthy, with implications for Library services. According to the US Census data, there has been a notable shift towards an older population: While the population under 20 has increased by 3% to 26% of the total, the combined population of 'working' age adults 20 to 60 have shrunk by 11% from 1990, down to 54% of the population. (In particular, the 20 to 44 population declined by 16% between 1990 and 2010.) While working age adults are losing ground, those in or nearing retirement have steadily increased to 20% of the population, an 8% gain compared to 1990. As a result of these shifts in age over the past decade, the residents' median age has increased to 40.4. Viewed as a trend, we can suppose that Mahwah residents are aging in place or the town is attracting older couples/families, while losing 20 to 44 year olds. It appears that Mahwah is a "graying" community.

Aside from aging, it is the remarkable increase of cultural diversity that is the most important demographic shift impacting life in Mahwah. Most Mahwah residents are white, but this ethnic group has dropped to 85% of the population since 1990, a decrease of 5%. Although still relatively small compared to the white population, the Asian and Hispanic populations have more than doubled in the past twenty years. Asians now constitute 7.8% of Mahwah residents, and Hispanics account for 6.3%. This shift in demographics can also clearly

be seen in the variety of foreign languages spoken in Mahwah, where 20% speak a language other than English in their homes and the number of English-only speakers decreased by 13%. The impact of this profound cultural change within the past 20 years challenges the library and every other public service agency to embrace cultural diversity on every level.

Mahwah is a relatively well-educated, affluent community. In 2010, the median income was \$91,260, up 15% since 2000. Mahwah residents are also well educated; current American Community Survey estimates that 65% are high school graduates and 35% have a bachelor's degree or higher.

As a result its strong infrastructure, increase in population and housing prices, Mahwah enjoyed steady increases in equalized property value over the years. By 2008, equalized property value had increased to a peak in excess of \$7B. Due to the economic downturn, however, property values have declined in recent years. In 2011 equalized values were down 9% compared to the peak of three years prior. While a 9% drop in value is considerable, Mahwah had the second highest equalized value in Bergen County.

### 1912-2012: A Century of Success

1912 — Eleanor Bugg makes her private library collection available to individuals in the community as a lending library.

1920 — The Mahwah Women's Club assumes responsibility for the Bugg collection.

1921 — The Bugg collection moves to a storefront on Miller Rd., a more accessible space with room to grow.

1929 — The Mahwah Woman's Club relinquishes control of the collection to the newly formed Mahwah Public Library Association.

1944 — Mr. & Mrs. Winters bequeath \$65,000 for the construction of a new building to house the growing library.

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1949 — Construction of library on Franklin Turnpike is complete. This library, designed to serve a population of 4,800, holds 1,500 items in 3,000 sq. ft.

1993 — The Mahwah Board of Education donates land on Ridge Road for the purpose of building a new library. The Library serves 11,000 registered borrowers with 80,000 items in the collection, far exceeding the capacity of the 44-year-old building.

1998 — Construction of the current library on Ridge Road is complete. The library, designed to serve a population of 24,000, holds approximately 115,000 items on the main floor (22,000 sq. ft.) and the lower level is left unfinished. The library loans 163,000 items, and 7,600 patrons attend programs.

2008 — Lower Level renovation plans are approved. Circulation tops 321,000 items loaned or renewed, and 17,000 attend programs in the library.

2011— Renovation of the lower level is complete. Circulation exceeds 350,000 and public program attendance tops 22,000, a three-fold increase over 1998 when the building was constructed.

2012 — The Library celebrates its 100th Anniversary.

### The Library Today

As the Township has grown in the past decade, the Library has risen to the challenge of meeting the evolving needs of its residents. This is manifest through several common metrics, including circulation and program attendance.

#### At a Glance, 2011

Population	25,890
Cardholders	
Adults	8,957
Children	2,689
Non-Resident	524
Total	12,170
Collection	
Adult Books	52,163

Young Adult Books	7,141
Children's Books	49,011
Media (DVDs, CDs, etc)	19,788
Other Materials	7,004
Total	135,107
Circulation	
Adult Books	90,459
Teen Books	16,724
Children's Books	107,913
Media (DVDs, CDs, etc)	129,219
Other Materials	10,179
Total	354,494
Service Hours	
Fall/Winter/Spring	62 hours/week
Summer	54 hours/week
Total	3144 hours
Programs	
Adult	212 programs/ 7,229 attendance
Teen	222 programs/ 4,699 attendance
Children's	363 programs/ 10,719 attendance
Total	797 programs/ 22,647 attendance
Community Rentals	25 events/ 795 attendance
Staff	
Full Time	16 FT
Part Time	6.8 FTE
Professional MLS	5.6 FTE
Non-Professional	17.2 FTE
Total	22.8 FTE

#### Facilities

The Mahwah Public Library has operated out of four buildings over the past century: Ms. Bugg's home (1912-1921), a storefront on Miller Rd. (1921-1949), a purpose built library on Franklin Turnpike (1949-1997) and the current building on Ridge Rd (opened in 1998).

The main (ground) level of the current building consists of 22,500 square feet with an additional



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7,500 square feet on the lower level, for a total of 30,000. Prior to May 2011, all public services were delivered from the main level, which also accommodates the administrative suite, technical processing and a large meeting room. Renovation of the lower level – previously an unfinished basement – into public space including a reading lounge, vending café, public meeting rooms and small theater was completed in spring 2011 and opened to the public on April 30, 2011.

Based upon the formula provided by NJAC 15:21-5.4, determining the minimum square footage requirement, and using latest census data, special requirements was determined as follows:

- Current population of Mahwah (2010 census): 25,890
- For populations of 25,000 – 50,000: Initial allowance of 16,000 sq. ft..
- Additional allowance for population of 25,890:  $25,890 - 10,000 = 15,890 \times .45 = 7,150$
- Combined space requirement = initial allowance + additional allowance:  $16,000 \text{ sq. ft.} + 7,150 \text{ sq. ft.} = 23,150 \text{ sq. ft.}$

Based upon the State's formula, and its yield, the Library exceeds the minimum space requirements established in NJAC 15:21-5.4 by nearly 6,850 sq. ft.

More than simply meeting required minimums, the Library facilities meet demanding community expectations. Survey respondents indicate our customers were satisfied or very satisfied with:

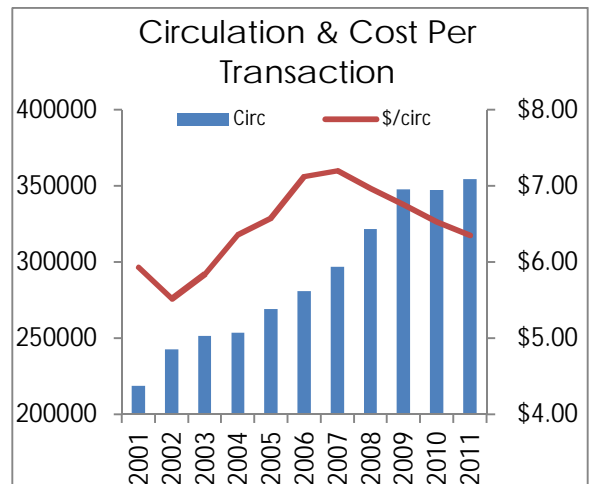
- Exterior condition: 89%;
- Interior condition: 92%;
- Lighting: 92%;
- Overall cleanliness: 94%;
- Building safety: 87%.

While the facilities received high marks in most areas, it received the lowest marks for acoustics/noise and dedicated quiet space. While 70% indicated acoustics were satisfactory or very satisfactory, 16% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied – the highest level of dissatisfaction among building and grounds. Similarly, 68% were satisfied or very satisfied with quiet study space

while 11% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Reconciling the divergent needs of active patrons – especially teens after school – with those who see quite refuge in the Library is clearly an issue that needs to be addressed.

### Services

A primary focus over the past decade has been meeting the informational needs of local residents. This is apparent in the collections currently available. New formats, such as eBooks, BluRay discs and electronic games have been introduced while others, such as VHS, have been discontinued. The results of continual collection improvement speak for themselves: circulation increased an average of 6.6% each year, for a 62% cumulative increase since 2001. In 2011, Mahwah loaned over 350,000 items – the fourth highest circulating library in Bergen County according to statistics provided by the Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS).



At the same time, by carefully controlling costs, the Library has become more cost effective in recent years. After peaking in 2007, the cost per checkout transaction has declined for the past four years and in 2011 was comparable to 2004.

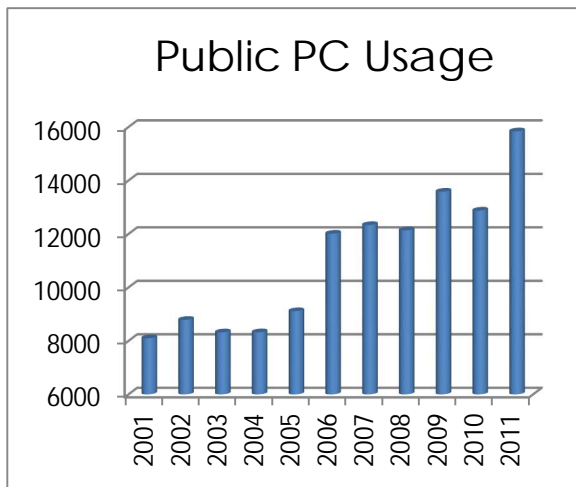
We know that the collections are heavily used and can infer some degree of patron satisfaction, but when asked directly, interesting trends emerged: 79% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the adult book collections (17% were neutral or had no opinion); most (61%) were satisfied or very satisfied with adult audio-visual collections, though slightly more were merely

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satisfied than very satisfied (35% vs 26% respectively) and 6% were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with this collection, the second highest level of dissatisfaction with collections. Most (58%) had no opinion regarding the quality of teen and children's book collections; 36% were either satisfied or very satisfied. (This may reflect more on the demographics of the survey respondents rather than the quality of the collections.)

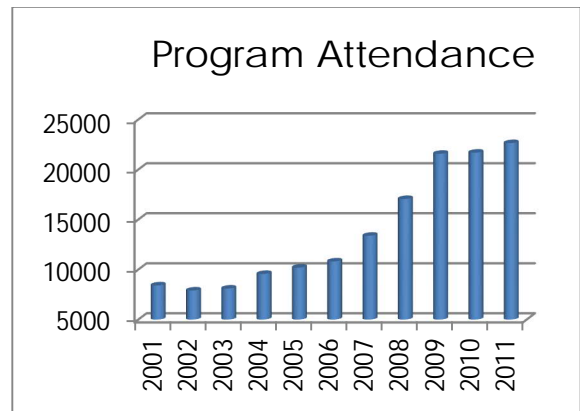
Access to eBooks and digital audiobooks was a mixed bag: 27% were satisfied or very satisfied while 8% were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Although 8% may not seem high, it is the highest level of dissatisfaction with any area of service. 67% of survey respondents were neutral or had no opinion regarding the Library's eBook services, despite 45% of the survey respondents indicating they had an eBook reader.



While connecting residents with the materials they need is a significant part of the Library's mission, it's more than just a great collection of books, it's access to *information*. In today's world, this often means technology and access to the internet. Here too, the Library has met the challenge by adding more PCs and broader-bandwidth connections. As a result, use of public PCs rose an average of 6.2% each year, nearly doubling over the past decade. And, while the Library doesn't currently track wireless use, staff have noticed a steady increase of patrons using WiFi-enabled devices.

Mahwah, partially because of its large geographic area and limited east-west thoroughfares, has no true "down town" or central meeting place. Recognizing this, and the long-term shifts in how

people use libraries, the Library has sought to fill an important need as a community gathering place, or "3<sup>rd</sup> place." This is manifest in two ways: first, through providing unmatched Library-sponsored programming and, second, positioning itself as a venue for other community organizations' events now that the Lower Level meeting rooms are available.



As a result of its commitment to high-quality programming, attendance at Library-sponsored events has soared. From 2001 through 2011, attendance grew by 167%, an average of 11.4% per year. Clearly, residents value having a venue where they can attend and discuss a variety of great programs throughout the year.

Beyond providing great collections, access to technology and space for people to connect, the Library is also dedicated to excellent customer service at all levels. Survey results show that the staff are responsive to patrons' needs: 84% were satisfied or very satisfied by the staff's ability and willingness to locate information and materials from outside the Library; 88% were satisfied or very satisfied by staff's knowledge of the Library collections and services; 90% were satisfied or very satisfied by staff's willingness to answer questions or provide general assistance; and, 93% were satisfied or very satisfied by staff's friendly attitude. Although the Library doesn't have comparable data from 2001, it's safe to say that customer satisfaction has improved greatly in over the past decade.

### Budget

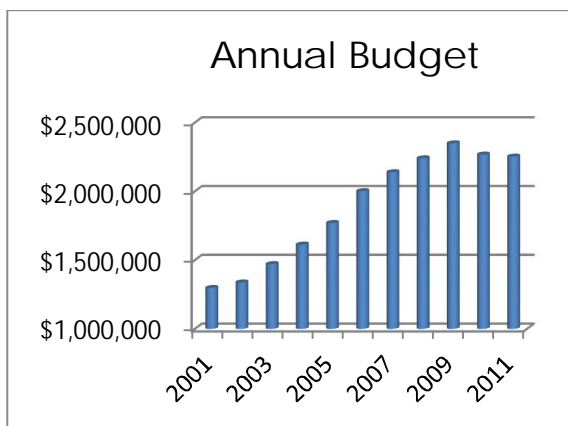
Mahwah Township grew and thrived for much of the past decade, leading to a period of economic prosperity. From 2000 through 2008, the

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equalized property value increased an average of 10% per year. By 2009, the economic downturn began effecting property value when the equalized value declined by 3.5% followed by additional drops in both 2010 and 2011.

The Library receives 98% of its funding through a State-mandated "1/3 mill" municipal appropriation. Because Library funding is inexorably linked to property value, it enjoyed strong growth through 2009. The Library was able to set aside capital funds to complete the lower level renovation while still maintaining operations and returning surplus funds to the Township.



When equalized property values started declining in 2008, the Library's budget was adversely impacted. In 2010, Library funding decreased by 3.5%, followed by decreases in 2011 and 2012. By 2012, the Library's budget dropped 8.7% from its peak in 2009. Put into perspective, the FY2012 budget is comparable to FY2007, even though borrowing has increased by 19% and program attendance is up 69% in the past five years.

Careful financial planning allowed the Library to maintain the same level of services through the economic downturn while returning over \$682,000 to the Township between 2008 and 2011. However, the days of increasing millage and surplus funds to return to the Township after budgeted operating expenses and capital improvements are past. The new economic reality has set in.

## Future Challenges

### New Expectations and Economic Resets

Libraries across New Jersey face new challenges after the economic reset in late 2007. Residents turned to their local libraries for everything from broadband internet access and assistance with job searching. They looked to libraries for materials to read for pleasure or AV materials to enjoy during 'staycations' in an age of fiscal restraint.

Bergen County libraries aggregate circulation increased 8% in 2008 and 7.7% in 2009 as they responded to rising demand for services.

Yet, just as use was climbing, equalized property values began declining and reducing the one-third mill funding that supports core operations. By 2010 and into 2011, many regional libraries were faced with the challenge shrinking budgets. Some responded by cutting hours, reducing materials budgets or downsizing staff.

The lingering economic slowdown has taken a toll in Mahwah as equalized property value have decreased since their peak in 2008, resulting in the Library's municipal appropriation declining by more than \$200,000 between 2009 and 2012. The sluggish economy will continue to have an impact on resource allocation. With increased demand for library services and programs, appropriate funding will need to be in place to support current operating expenses and ongoing capital improvements.

Detailed budget projections are included as an appendix.

### Traditional Library or "3rd Place"

As mentioned previously, Mahwah has no downtown or center of the community. Due to its size and being divided by a major north-south thoroughfare, there are few places for the community to come together. The Library fills the void for this "3rd place" as an anchor of community life that fosters broad, creative interaction among residents.

Rather than focus on a larger building to store expanding collections, the Library has focused on balancing space for materials, technology, large

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events and small group social interaction. This is especially true of the lower level renovation which features meeting rooms that can be used for either Library programs or community events, a comfortable periodicals reading lounge, and a café-style vending area. These areas are now well occupied by residents using the Library as a place to gather and meet with friends.

Paradoxically, as the Library becomes more active, some patrons who look to a library for a quiet environment to read and study are displaced. This is particularly true weekday afternoons, when the Library is inundated by middle- and high-school students meeting with friends to study and chat after school. The question of how to balance traditional library values while embracing the growing need for a dynamic meeting place becomes more important. Careful space planning is necessary to reconcile these competing needs with limited funds for major changes to the facility.

### Technology and Content Distribution

Many demographic, economic and societal factors influence modern libraries but few, if any, are as powerful as the tectonic shift in how information is created and delivered to consumers.

Today's tech-savvy users expect information to be as accessible as Google's "one box" search, as portable as their iPhone and as user-friendly as iTunes. And they expect to be fully connected 24/7, regardless of their location or device. Publishers and retailers are working hard to meet these expectations with a variety of new distribution channels that use technology to deliver content directly to consumers instantly.

Many libraries, including Mahwah, have responded by adding access to eBooks, digital audiobooks, downloadable music and virtual reference in response to the burgeoning demand for these services. Patron adoption of these services, while strong, has not kept pace with general consumer demand. Why? Staff are not yet comfortable with digital collections and are reluctant to assist patrons with new format; library eBook services are not user-friendly; and, many publishers won't sell front list digital content to libraries while others want to reintroduce some "friction" to make it more difficult for libraries to loan digital content. If libraries are unable to meet consumer expectations

by providing digital content, they run the great risk of becoming information ghettos and marginalized.

The Library must be responsive to public demand by adopting, and adapting to, new methods of delivering information. It must work collaboratively with publishers and distributors to ensure that quality digital content is readily available. By investing in ongoing staff training, the Library can better ensure that exemplary service and productivity will transition seamlessly to meet future demands.

### Public Awareness

*"Despite all our real-time reference, web sites that rock, and exemplary programs, libraries are still missing the hook that will change our public's perception of what we have to offer. It isn't enough simply to tell potential patrons what is available at their library." (Rivkah K. Sass, "Marketing the Worth of Your Library," Library Journal 6/15/2002)*

Commercials, direct mail and email marketing, online and print advertising, billboards – consumers are saturated with more marketing messages than ever before. Libraries, with their limited budgets and "build it and they will come" mindsets have a difficult time competing for public awareness. But without promoting services, the many benefits of public libraries go unnoticed by the communities they serve.

Traditional print advertising in local papers may attract older patrons and those that are not familiar with the Library. Emailed newsletters, social media and targeted online marketing present opportunities for the Library to engage a younger, tech savvy audience. Regardless of the method, better marketing will help the Library communicate the value it offers to the community, thereby increasing use.

### Staffing the Next-Generation Library

Today's libraries need to be community-centric, customer-focused, tech-savvy, web-enabled, dynamic organizations that are responsive to quickly evolving needs and expectations. In order to succeed, libraries need staff that both embrace traditional library values while being innovative in how they approach their jobs.

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Support for continuing education will be critical. Staff must have opportunities for professional growth; after all, the tools and skills required – if not the very nature of the work – are changing. Staff should be comfortable adapting to new roles. They should also be comfortable adopting new technology that improves efficiency or enhances customer service.

The Library's staffing level has been stable over the past years. In 2011, it employed 22.8 FTE, including 5.6 FTE professional and 17.2 FTE non-professional. The mix of professional and clerical works well for the size and activity of the Library. However, future attrition through retirement should be viewed as an opportunity to refocus the staff. Careful consideration should be given to balancing future priorities against existing tasks that may no longer be relevant.

### Goals and Objectives 2012 – 2015

#### Goal 1 – Ensure sustainable funding

- Objective 1.1 – Operating expenses will be managed within traditional “1/3 mill” appropriation. The Library will be aware of any proposed changes to existing law and advocate in support of appropriate, sustainable funding.
- Objective 1.2 – The Board of Trustees, individually and collectively, will be strong advocates in support of the Library. Trustees will understand the issues facing the Library and be prepared to speak on these issues.
- Objective 1.3 – Re-establish the Friends of the Library to augment municipal funding. Friends will advocate for Library issues and fundraise for long-term capital projects.
- Objective 1.4 – Seek grant funding for special projects. Certain projects, although beneficial to the community, fall outside the scope of the operating budget and may be suitable for funding through grants. Staff will be trained and encouraged to write grants and approach potential funders for special projects.

#### Goal 2 – Improve access to information and current materials

- Objective 2.1 – Utilize statistical methods to understand and improve how the collection is being used. Review collection management policy to ensure the Library is focused on current community interests and needs. Align collection development budget with revised policy to increase use.
- Objective 2.2 – Enhance access to materials in non-traditional formats. Invest in new formats, such as eBooks, digital audiobooks and downloadable music that meet or exceed constituents' expectations for access to information on a variety of devices. Purchase eBook readers to loan to book discussion groups and/or directly to patrons.
- Objective 2.3 – Enhance staff's ability to assist patrons with non-traditional formats. Facilitate ongoing staff training with new and emerging formats. Purchase eBookreaders and tablets for staff to become familiar with digital content.

#### Goal 3 – Strengthen the role that the library plays as a central meeting place in the community

- Objective 3.1 – Be known as a destination for high-quality cultural, information and educational events in Mahwah. Understand community demographics and interests as the basis for selecting and presenting timely, relevant programs.
- Objective 3.2 – Be known as a destination for community-focused meetings. Promote the Library as a gathering place for local organizations, non-profits and businesses to host meetings and events.

#### Goal 4 – Create a safe, welcoming environment that serves the needs of diverse user groups.

- Objective 4.1 – Maintain a high level of customer satisfaction with the existing building and grounds. Undertake both routine maintenance and targeted capital improvements to create a physical space that is clean, safe, welcoming and accessible.

# Mahwah Public Library

## A Vision for the Future: 2012 - 2015

- Objective 4.2 – Employ a planning expert to review the existing facilities and determine how multiple, competing needs can be accommodated in the Library, including developing both a short-term (<3 years) and long-term (>5 year) space plan.
- Objective 4.3 – Offer a “high-noise/activity” space for teens to use the Library after-school without disrupting Library operations; alternately, offer a “low-noise/activity” space for patrons seeking a place for quiet reading and study.

### Goal 5 – Expand awareness of the Library

- Objective 5.1 – Engage a marketing expert to develop an effective, broad-spectrum communications and marketing strategy that clearly defining the Library brand and value. Establish consistent guidelines for marketing materials and publicity.
- Objective 5.2 – Hire or outsource staff to manage ongoing marketing. Develop attractive fliers and posters for high-interest programs and services. Use targeted print and online advertising to introduce the Library to new users. Use emailed newsletters and social media to keep patrons connected to the Library and informed about upcoming programs, news and advocacy issues.
- Objective 5.3 – Establish the website as the first place residents will look for information about the Library, its collections, services and programs. The website will be both robust and user friendly. Develop a mobile interface to allow for access by handheld devices.
- Objective 5.4 – Enhance public perception of the Library. Press coverage of Library events and issues will be favorable. Personal reviews on social networking sites will be positive.

### Goal 6 – Promote Lifelong Reading and Learning

- Objective 6.1 – Be a recognized leader in early literacy. Conduct programs for children focusing on early literacy. Staff will develop

expertise in early literacy; they will visit other organizations to explain the benefits of, and advocate for, early literacy programs.

- Objective 6.2 – Be a place where the public can discuss shared reading experiences. Offer Library-sponsored book discussion groups, and act as a meeting place for non-Library book groups.
- Objective 6.3 – Help new immigrants and non-English speakers become informed citizens. Partner with local organizations to develop and present English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. Offer current, popular reading materials in languages other than English.

### Goal 7 – Build Strong Partnerships with Local Organizations

- Objective 7.1 – Be a resource for local government and non-profits as they make more information available to the public. Offer expertise and technical assistance to local organizations that are creating and distributing digital content. Host digital archive services for local organizations that wish to make their information available online.
- Objective 7.2 – Partner with local organizations to make historical records available to Library patrons. Seek out organizations that have important local history collections, work with them to preserve content in digital formats, and make the information available to Library patrons both on-site and remotely.

## Building for Tomorrow, Planning for the Future

The Library is dedicated to serving the community as its expectations evolve. By establishing clear goals and objectives for the next three years, the Library is also laying the foundation for continued growth in the future.

# Mahwah Public Library

A Vision for the Future: 2012 - 2015

## Appendix: Summary Capital Projects Plan

Capital projects are those major initiatives, including large-scale regular maintenance and repair items, improving operational efficiency, reducing energy consumption, or improving customer service that are necessary to promote and support sustained long-term growth.

In the fall of 2010, the Board of Trustees worked with Library staff and building consultant Carl Waldenmaier, who was familiar with the facilities, to identify major capital projects to undertake in 2011-2014. The Board adopted the Capital Projects Plan in December 2010 and used it as a roadmap for prioritizing both projects and budgets. The Capital Projects Plan was reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee to determine if the projects were aligned with the goals and objectives identified in the long-range plan.

### Recently Completed Projects

**Lower Level Renovation:** Renovation of the lower level – previously an unfinished basement – into public space was completed in spring 2011. The lower level includes a reading lounge, vending café, public meeting rooms and small theater as well as utility and storage rooms.

**Ridge Road Landscaping:** Landscaping in front of the Library had become overgrown with undesirable vegetation, making it difficult to see from the street. A landscape architect was hired to develop a plan, and new plantings were installed that highlight the Library as attractive, welcoming destination.

**Exterior LED Message Center:** A new LED message center was constructed late in 2011, replacing an existing letter board sign. The new LED message center allows the Library to better advertise and promote key programs, events, online resources and other services.

**Roof Replacement:** The Library engaged a roofing consultant to survey the roof and develop a replacement plan. Based on the consultant's recommendations, the building was re-roofed using an Elvaloy-based system for longevity.

### Scheduled Projects

**Book Return Bins:** Exterior book and media return bins to replace the existing bin which is rusting, dented and in generally poor condition. Scheduled for 2012.

**Expanded CCTV System:** Six old, low resolution cameras on the main floor will be replaced with new high-resolution units; up to 12 additional cameras will be installed on the main floor and exterior of the building. Scheduled for 2012.

**Winter Room AV Upgrades:** The Winter Room has an aging sound system but lacks a comprehensive audio-visual system. A new AV system will be installed and integrated with the AV distribution system in the Lower Level. Scheduled for 2012.

**Main Floor Carpet Replacement:** Carpeting throughout the main floor is worn and soiled from nearly 14 years of heavy use and is need of replacement. This project includes moving shelving and collections on the main floor while new carpet is installed, opening up the possibility of rearranging shelving to improve flow in some areas of the Library. Scheduled to 2012.

**Improved Media Shelving:** Existing adult media shelving hold approximately 10,000 items, including DVDs and BluRay, CDs and audiobooks. The shelving is cramped in places, limiting collection growth and ease of access. New shelving allows this collection to grow and improve browsing through face-out display, increasing circulation. Adult media would be relocated from its current location to a more visible position. Scheduled for 2012.

**Energy Audit & Upgrades:** The current building, opened in 1998, largely predates current energy efficiency standards. Undertaking a comprehensive energy audit and implementing selected upgrades is projected to reduce utility costs by up to 20% in future years. Scheduled for 2012.

**Dedicated Young Adult Area:** Use of the Library by teens after-school is an ongoing challenge and opportunity; while the Library encourages use of the Library and its resources by all, teen activity often disturb adult patrons. Creating a dedicated teen space better isolates some of the noise and disturbance. This area can be used as a quiet zone

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if teens are better served in another area of the Library at some time in the future. Scheduled for 2013.

**Driveway Widening & Parking Lot Resurfacing:** The Library's driveway is narrow and curves where it intersects with Ridge Road, creating a hazardous condition for drivers entering and leaving the Library. The Library will engage a traffic consultant to determine the feasibility of both redesigning and widening the entrance and creating a separate exit to improved traffic flow. The parking lot will be resurfaced to repair the numerous cracks and patches that have grown over the years. Scheduled for 2013.

**Upgrading Children's PCs:** Juvenile patrons currently have access to four PCs with basic games. These PCs are well-used, but do not cohesively support early literacy and computer skills. Five or six dedicated children's PCs with robust educational software will be installed on new task-specific furniture. Scheduled for 2013.

**RFID Security System:** The Library's current material security system relies on older radio frequency ("RF") technology to deter loss. However, this system is costly and requires considerable staff involvement with each transaction. A new radio frequency identification ("RFID") system will allow for much more efficient circulation transactions, including self-service transactions, potentially reducing personnel costs. Scheduled for 2014.

**Solar Photovoltaic Array:** The Township is reconsidering installing solar PV systems to reduce electricity costs in municipal buildings. If funding is available, either public or private, the Library will benefit from a low- or no-cost PV system by reducing electricity costs by as much as 30% in future years. Scheduled for 2014.

**Technology Upgrade:** The Library recognizes the need for ongoing upgrades in technology. These projects encompass routine PC replacement, adding IT infrastructure, improving efficiency by implementing targeted technology, and developing new technology-based services. The Plan includes funding for technology each year.

**Additional Space:** Throughout the planning process two priorities have emerged: better balancing the

needs of an active library against patrons' expectations for space for quiet reading and introspection; and, additional parking necessary for the Library to truly become the town's center. Capital funds are earmarked to either purchase land for parking or begin developing plans for additional space. Scheduled for 2015.

### Cancelled/Suspended Projects

**Integrated HVAC Control System:** A building-wide HVAC management system featuring centralized management of multiple sensors for each HVAC unit was considered. This project was abandoned in favor of a more cost-effective plan of upgrading thermostats to more configurable devices.

**Main Floor Entry Lobby & Bathroom Renovation:** The main entrance vestibule and adjoining bathrooms are beginning to be run down due to the volume of use. The Library considered renovating the entrance lobby and bathrooms, but chose to make cost-effective improvement such as painting and adding new display areas. The Library will need to undertake an extensive renovation of this area in the future.

**Lighted Path to Off-Site Parking.** The Library has approximately 100 parking spaces in two lots which is insufficient during busy times, or when the outside organizations are using the meeting rooms. This project added a lighted path to neighboring organizations' lots to handle the overflow. The Library may be better served by purchasing an adjacent open lot to add parking capacity in the future.

### Budget & Timeline Projections

Attached are revised budget and timeline projections showing capital projects through 2014. The Library has endeavored to develop realistic budget numbers for projects, however it is important to remember that project costs may vary based on both scope and timing of each project. Project funding is viable through 2012 and into 2015 if the Library is able to transfer surplus from the operating budget to capital projects. The Library may opt to re-prioritize, scale back or eliminate some projects. Beyond 2015, the Library's budget may not allow for significant capital projects without developing a private fundraising group.