

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025



CONNECT + TRANSFORM

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"I love that the library offers **so much to do**...education, exercise, concerts. I also love the book recommendations and all the different activities. **I rave about our library!** That you can read, learn, exercise, attend online or in person activities from cooking to finance...I just **can't say enough nice things** about our library"

-Roxbury Resident

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Roxbury Public Library Strategic Plan is the result of many hours of collaboration including input from the library staff, the Board of Trustees, the Strategic Planning Committee, Friends of the Library, the Roxbury community and its leaders. Together we have developed a new Vision and Mission for the Roxbury Public Library for the future. We have also established five key goals which I would like to highlight.

Goal 1: Transformative experiences

We create a culture of transformative experiences through awesome customer service and opportunities for lifelong learning.

Goal 2: Connecting with each other

We facilitate meaningful interactions by serving as the heart of the community.

Goal 3: Evolving and relevant collections

We develop our collections to evolve to meet the community's changing needs.

Goal 4: Safe and welcoming spaces

We offer welcoming and safe spaces.

Goal 5: Sustainability

We explore every avenue for financial and environmental sustainability.

By accomplishing the goals and action steps detailed in this plan, the library will continue to meet the needs of our patrons and community and be a place for all to share ideas, be entertained, educated and informed. We invite the Roxbury community to join together in the years to come as we bring our goals to fruition. Please take the time to read this document and view it as a blueprint for the future of the Roxbury Public Library.

Warm regards,

Aldo Palma

President, Roxbury Public Library Board of Trustees

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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OUR PROCESS

The strategic planning process started with an in-depth analysis of the Roxbury Township community. Consultants gathered data from quantitative sources, such as the U.S. Census and the NJ School Performance Report, to determine highlights, trends, and unique features of the Roxbury community.

In an effort to better understand the concerns, attitudes, opinions, challenges, experiences, and needs of the residents of Roxbury Township, a community-wide survey was developed. The survey was distributed to residents and other stakeholders through the library's email newsletter and social media. It was also published in a print format and distributed at the library service desk, book sales, and during in-person programming (including summer reading). The print survey was also made available at Town Hall, Senior meetings, and Rotary Club.

The information gathering phase also featured a staff survey to solicit input from library employees, and determine additional opportunities for strategic growth.

Consultants led a series of focus groups to explore themes identified in the surveys, and obtain more detailed feedback from key stakeholders in Roxbury Township. These focus groups included conversations with key demographics, including: 8th graders, working adults, parents, seniors, and community organizations.

Following the conclusion of the information gathering phase, consultants met with the strategic planning committee to develop the overarching mission and vision for the strategic plan. Based on the information gathered from the community analysis, surveys, and focus groups, consultants conducted additional meetings to establish the goals and objectives of the strategic plan.

The final strategic plan is a result of a joint effort between the Roxbury library community, and Library Crossroads Consultants. The plan has been informed by input from the residents and various stakeholders of Roxbury Township, and analysis performed by consultants in collaboration with the library's strategic planning committee.

COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

It is often said that if you want to learn about a community and its residents, just spend some time in the public library. So, when the Roxbury Public Library decided to refresh its strategic plan, they made sure to invite a large and diverse group from the community to get their ideas for the future of the library and its role in the Township of Roxbury.

The Community Analysis section of this report was commissioned by the Library's Board of Trustees and includes qualitative data from sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau and the NJ School Performance Report, as well as insight gained from surveys and focus groups. These measurable statistics help us better understand the Roxbury community and the changes it is experiencing. It also helps us more clearly identify emerging trends that were reflected in feedback from library staff and town residents.

In fact, some of our most important insights came from our discussions with members of the community, which included library staff, trustees, municipal and community leaders, as well as ordinary people who use our library every day. In almost every case, the importance of the library as a safe and secure focal point in our community for the free and open exchange of ideas came through loud and clear. In addition, residents told us that the library serves as a meeting place, a center for cultural and educational activities, and a gateway to the internet and the world beyond Roxbury. Residents also noted the library's role in bringing the community together and in helping Roxbury be a place that welcomes and values diversity and inclusion and understands that our differences make us strong.

Taken together, these comments along with the entire strategic analysis help the library's Board of Trustees and administration map the future direction of the library and keep it relevant to the needs of our community. The Trustees wish to thank everyone who took part in the surveys and focus groups. According to Roxbury Deputy Mayor Jaki Albrecht, who participated in the strategic planning committee, the data and feedback not only give us a roadmap for the future of the library, it also told us the library is valued and going in the right direction.

Bob DeFillippo, Councilman
President of the Roxbury Library Foundation
Mayor's Liaison to the Library Board of Trustees

AT A GLANCE

Population and Demographics – While the size of Roxbury’s population remained steady, the township experienced considerable change. The 2020 Census shows an increase in residents who identify as Black or African American Alone, and Two or More Races. The NJ School Performance Report shows even more diversity in the schools, and more students who primarily speak languages other than English at home.

Computer and Internet Use – 90.6% of households in Roxbury have access to broadband internet. Despite this number being above the average for New Jersey, 9.4% of households in Roxbury do not have broadband internet, which represents a continuing information access issue that many New Jersey communities face. Not represented in the Census numbers is information literacy, a person’s ability to fully and safely use the internet.

Education and Income – Roxbury Township is a well-educated, and prosperous community. The Median Household Income in Roxbury is 38% higher than the New Jersey average. The percent of the population in Roxbury with a bachelor’s degree or higher is higher than that of New Jersey, but lower than Morris County overall.

Location and Transportation – Roxbury Township is located near the western border of Morris County, adjacent to Sussex County. The township is bisected by major highways, and commuter time for residents is close to the state average. Easy access through major roads makes Roxbury inviting to large businesses.

Economy and Business – Most of the largest businesses in Roxbury Township are retail stores, auto dealerships, and service companies. While Roxbury is home to a thriving retail market, there are also a significant number of home-based and small businesses in the township.

COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

Population and Demographics

In contrast to the nearly 6% population growth in the state of New Jersey in the last ten years, Roxbury Township has experienced a slight decline in its overall number of residents. But new residents are still moving in. According to the Census, in the last 12 years 6.5% of the total estimated housing units in Roxbury Township are new builds, and 38% of the estimated number of housing units have new owners.

While the overall population has decreased, residents of Roxbury Township have grown more diverse. According to the 2020 Census, the residents that identified themselves as Black or African American Alone increased by almost 5%, and those who identify as Two or More Races increased by almost 4%.

In addition to the changing demographics of the township, the Roxbury school district may have an even greater diversity of students. For example, the US Census reports that 9.6% of residents in Roxbury are Hispanic or Latino, while the School Performance Reports state that 21.5% of the school population are Hispanic. Black or African American students account for 3.8% of the school population, while Asian and Two or More Races account for 4.4% and 3.3% respectively. The School Performance Report also notes that 9.7% of students have a primary home language of Spanish, and 6% of students report primarily speaking a language other than English at home.

Most residents of Roxbury own their homes (87.2%), while Census housing data reveals 12.8% of the population are renters. The average rent in Roxbury Township is about 21% higher than the average for the rest of the state, making cost of living a concern for residents.

The turnover in population that Roxbury has experienced in the last decade makes the library's focus on outreach a significant asset to library patrons and the community as a whole.

***Voices from the Community:** Participants in the public survey and focus groups said they valued a community that was safe, family friendly, and welcoming and inclusive to all. Focus group members also discussed their desire to meet more residents of Roxbury Township as a whole, as they often felt separated based on the community in which they lived (for example: Succasunna, Landing, or Ledgewood).*

Computer and Internet Use

Roxbury Township residents have a high level of computer and internet use and access, which is comparable to that of residents in the rest of Morris County, and above the average levels for the state of New Jersey. 94.4% of households have a computer, and 90.6% have broadband access. With this level of internet connectivity, it is important to engage the community in the development of information literacy skills.

While many residents have a computer with broadband access in their home, 9.4% of Roxbury households do not have broadband internet, and about 5% of homes don't have a computer. The library serves as a valuable source of access for those who do not have a computer or internet at home.

***Voices from the Community:** Focus group participants cited a community need for digital literacy skills. Survey respondents appreciated computer and technology training classes at the library as an affordable way for residents to stay connected and improve their marketable skills. Respondents also frequently commented on the convenience of public computers, wifi, and printing.*

Education and Income

Statistics for educational measures in Roxbury are interesting. Overall, Roxbury residents are well-educated. Census data shows that 95.8% of residents have a high school education or higher, which exceeds that of the county and the state. Roxbury residents also have a higher percentage of people with a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to the rest of the state. However, when compared to the surrounding Morris County, the percentage of people with a bachelor's degree or higher is about 10% less in Roxbury.

While standardized test scores and AP class participation are slightly lower in Roxbury Township than in the rest of the state, over half of test participants meet benchmarks for college readiness. PSAT, SAT, & ACT scores in Roxbury are close but just under the state average in most measures. Student participation in AP classes in Roxbury is 27.3% compared to a state average of 35.7%. However, about 5% more students enroll in college following high school when compared to the state average.

The NJ Department of Education Performance Reports** show that enrollment in Roxbury Township schools is declining slightly (from 3,502 in 2018/19 to 3,413 in 2020/21). The school population includes: 11% Economically Disadvantaged Students, 17% Students with Disabilities, and 2.4% English Learners. The district has seven school library media specialists for the seven schools.

Roxbury is an upper middle-class township, with a small percentage of people who live in poverty. The median household income in Roxbury Township is just over \$106,451 compared to a state average of \$85,245. In contrast, 5.8% of the population lives in poverty. This poverty rate is above the average for Morris County and below the average for the state. It reflects a responsibility to assess the needs of those living in poverty and determine the best services and locations to reach them.

Building strong relationships with the schools - through outreach and programs that support the educational values of the community - is a key way for the library to connect with families across Roxbury Township. Successful schools attract families and provide a positive effect on property values and, in turn, funding for the library.

***Voices from the Community:** The focus group and survey respondents believed investment in the school system was important, but they also expressed that affordability was an issue for many, particularly those on fixed incomes. The library was often cited as a place that provides resources and opportunities to complement the school system and support homeschoolers. However, respondents cited a need for additional space - for studying, for the children's room, and for small groups to meet.*

Location and Transportation

Roxbury Township is located near the western border of Morris County, adjacent to Sussex County. At nearly 22 square miles, the township is bisected by Routes 80 and 46, and is home to Hopatcong State Park and Berkshire Valley State Wildlife Management Area. It borders the towns of Mount Olive, Randolph, and Chester, also along Route 80 in Morris County.

Roxbury has a 65.8% participation rate in the labor force, and working residents travel an average of 34.2 minutes to work, both of which are about average for the state of New Jersey. The major highways that connect the township support retail business in the community.

***Voices from the Community:** The focus group with working adults greatly appreciated weekend and evening programs, as well as online programs and recordings of online programs. The participants also cited the lack of a town center for community connections, but felt the library functioned as a center of the community for their families. Traffic was a regular complaint for respondents as well.*

Economy and Business

Retail in Roxbury is particularly important as the total sales per capita is well above the state average (\$25,898 in Roxbury, compared to a state average of \$15,079). There are major chains such as Marshalls, Home Depot, Kohls and Walmart, and car dealerships such as BMW and Toyota. Eleven companies in Roxbury have an estimated income over \$20 million per year. Based on sales, three out of sixteen of the largest companies in Roxbury are home oil/fuel companies. Roxbury's access to major roads has made it an appealing location for these companies. Other companies with over \$10 million in sales provide service in the areas of: HVAC, paving, metal rails, sand and gravel, and water purification. Data Axle Reference Solutions**** also reports 93 home-based businesses and 375 businesses with less than \$500,000 in sales volume in Roxbury Township.

***Voices from the Community:** Focus group participants appreciated the library's support of small businesses. They felt the large chains did not have the small town feel of a local coffee shop, or a downtown area that other communities have.*

DATA FROM THE UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU

Population*

Population Census (April 1, 2020)	22,950
Population Estimate (April 1, 2010)	23,308
Population % Change (2010-2020)	-1.5%

Roxbury

Area***

Land	20.85 sq mi
Water	1.13 sq mi
Total	21.98 sq mi

Roxbury

Age*

	Roxbury	County	State
Persons under 5	4.7%	5.0%	5.8%
Persons under 18	21.2%	20.8%	21.8%
Persons 18-64	61.5%	61.6%	61.6%
Persons 65 years and over	18.0%	17.6%	16.6%

Race and Ethnicity*

	Roxbury	County	State
White alone	80.2%	83.1%	71.9%
Black or African American alone	7.0%	3.8%	15.1%
Native American & Alaska Native alone	0.3%	0.3%	0.6%
Asian alone	6.1%	10.8%	10.0%
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander alone	0.1%	n/a	0.1%
Two or More Races	5.8%	1.9%	2.3%
Hispanic or Latino	9.6%	13.9%	20.9%

Historical Comparison

	2010	2020
White alone	88.2%	80.2%
Black or African American alone	2.34%	7.0%
Native American & Alaska Native alone	0.09%	0.3%
Asian alone	5.70%	6.1%
Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander alone	0.05%	0.1%
Two or More Races	1.99%	5.8%
Hispanic or Latino	8.93%	9.6%

General Characteristics

	Roxbury	County	State
Veterans (2015-2019)	1,184	17,739	321,991
Veterans, as percent (2015-2019)	5.0%	4.0%	3.6%

Foreign Born Persons (2015-2019)	12.5%	19.3%	22.4%
Owner-Occupied Housing Units	88.2%	73.9%	63.9%
Languages Other Than English Spoken at Home	16.4%	24.4%	31.3%

Computer and Internet Use

Roxbury	County	State
Households with a Computer (2015-2019)	94.4%	91.4%
Households with a Broadband Internet Subscription (2015-2019)	90.6%	85.8%

Economy

Roxbury	County	State
In Civilian Labor Force (2015-2019)	65.9%	65.5%

Transportation

Roxbury	County	State
Mean Travel Time to Work (Minutes)	34.4	32.2

Income and Poverty

Roxbury	County	State
Median Household Income (2015-2019)	\$113,957	\$82,545
Persons in Poverty, Percent	5.3%	9.2%

Education

Roxbury	County	State
High School Graduate or Higher	95.8%	90.3%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	44.4%	40.7%

DATA FROM NJ SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REPORT CARD

Race and Ethnicity	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
White	69.8%	67.7%	66.7%
Hispanic	19.0%	20.7%	21.5%
Black or African American	3.1%	3.7%	3.8%
Asian	4.7%	4.4%	4.4%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Native American or Alaska Native	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races	3.1%	3.3%	3.3%

PK-12 Public Schools

2018-19	Targets Met 18/19?
English/Language Arts Proficiency	Yes
Math Proficiency	Yes

Graduating Class	2018	2019	2020
Postsecondary Enrollment (4-Year)	53.7%	51.3%	49.8%
Postsecondary Enrollment (2-Year)	32.2%	32.8%	28.6%
Any Institution	85.9%	84.2%	78.5%

Standardized Tests, 2020-2021**

	Roxbury	State
PSAT Participation Rate	56.7%	33.8%
SAT Participation Rate	60.7%	45.4%
ACT Participation Rate	6.5%	8.8%
PSAT Reading and Writing	514	517
PSAT Math	496	503
SAT Reading and Writing	545	557
SAT Math	542	560
ACT Reading	26	26
ACT English	23	25
ACT Math	25	25
ACT Science	25	25

COMPANIES IN ROXBURY WITH SALES IN EXCESS OF \$20 MILL****

BMW Of Roxbury	Spectrum Communications LLC
Cintas First Aid & Safety	Starz Oil
Holland Manufacturing Co Inc	Towne Toyota
Home Depot	Vertellus Specialties Inc
Kohl's	Walmart Supercenter
Orcas Naturals	World Internet Marketing Inc
Portasoft Of Morris County	

SOURCES

*U.S. Census Bureau Quick Facts (2021)

<https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/NJ,roxburytownshipmorriscountynewjersey/PST045221>

**NJ School Performance Report (2019-2020) <https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/selectreport/2020-2021/27/4560>

***Census Gazetteer Files: New Jersey Places, United States Census Bureau (2019)

<https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-files/time-series/geo/gazetteer-files.html>

****Data Axle Reference Solutions <https://www.referenceusa.com>



SURVEY RESPONSES

The picture that emerges from the community survey is one that shows participants – library users and non-users alike – seeking an inclusive and engaging central hub, where neighbors from the distinct communities that make up Roxbury Township can meet and connect with each other. They want a safe place to interact with welcoming and knowledgeable staff. They want to expand the education of themselves and their children, freely use accessible technology, and have spaces where they can quietly read and reflect. The vast majority of survey participants are highly satisfied with their library.

- About half the respondents use the library in-person. About one-fifth use online services, and one-fourth of them use both in-person and online services.
- People value browsing books and having quiet spaces to read, study and hold meetings. They also appreciate public computers and wifi.
- Many respondents think the addition of a cafe would improve the library. They also like the idea of adding seating with electrical access, and adding to or expanding spaces for adults, children, and teens.
- Respondents view the well-trained and engaged staff, and convenient operating hours as a major strength of the library. They enjoy the services, programs, and collections, and appreciate the safe, attractive, accessible interior space of the library.
- Respondents overwhelmingly value hiring friendly, welcoming, and knowledgeable staff. They also appreciate investment in new technology and in the library facility to make it welcoming, engaging, and a place where all residents of Roxbury Township can connect. Respondents also value the library's promotion of literacy, learning, and civic engagement.
- Most respondents want to live in a community that is safe, affordable, inclusive, and family-friendly, with abundant educational opportunities and free access to technology. They want to bring a small-town feel to their township, and are concerned about overdevelopment and traffic.

"[The library] gives **our family** a place to stay away from social media and **actually learn.**" –Roxbury Resident

THE PARTICIPANTS

Respondents

1,152 Total Survey Respondents

83% Residents

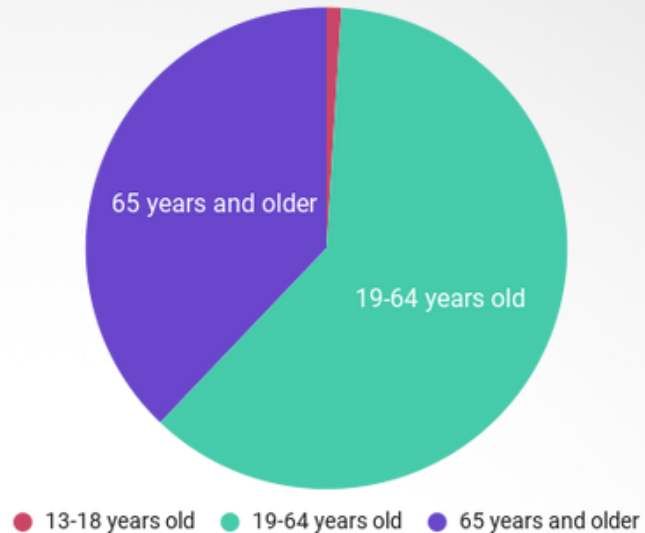
17% Non-residents

Age Groups

1% 13-18 years old

61% 19-64 years old

38% 65 and older



TOP RANKED RESPONSES

Please describe your normal use of your library:

47% Use in-person services (check-out materials, attend programs, use the facility)

18% Use online services (download books, use online resources, attend online programs)

25% Regularly visit the library and use the library virtually

10% Don't use the library

During your visits to the library which of the following are the most important to you and your family? (Higher score is most valued)

Book Browsing (7.1)

Studying/Quiet Space (6.1)

Public WiFi (5.6)

Public Computers (5.3)

Meeting Rooms For Local Organizations (4.9)

Children's Room (4.9)

Newspaper and Magazine Reading Area (4.7)

Book Sales (4.3)

Teen Space (3.3)

Why some residents do not use the library:

48% Use own computer at home or other location

39% Too busy/No time

37% Buy my own books and other materials



What could the Library do to improve its space?

- 41% Add a cafe
- 33% Add seating options with electrical access
- 24% Renovate/Expand the Adult Reading Area
- 17% Renovate/Expand Children's Room
- 16% Add small private group study spaces
- 15% Add meeting room space
- 13% Add additional updated public computers
- 7% Renovate/Expand Teen Space
- 14% Other (includes improve outdoor space, renovate bathrooms, increase quiet space, increase comfortable seating)

Please pick up to three of the most important library strengths

- 62% Well-trained and engaged staff, providing excellent customer service
- 50% Convenient operating hours
- 43% Safe, clean, and ADA Accessible building
- 38% Unique services (Passport Service, Launchpads, Library of Things, Maker Programming)
- 33% Diverse assortment of well-attended programs
- 32% Expansive physical and electronic collections (including Hoopla, Kanopy, and Cloud Library)
- 17% Ample, attractive interior physical space (meeting/study rooms, display spaces)
- 14% Library working within community partnerships

Please pick three of the most important library shared values. The Library will...

- 75% offer a great library experience by hiring friendly, knowledgeable, and helpful staff.
- 50% invest in the facility to provide a modern, comfortable, and welcoming environment.
- 49% build community by engaging with and connecting Roxbury's population.
- 43% promote the literacy, learning, and civic engagement necessary for a healthy democracy.
- 40% invest in the technology required to create and assist digitally literate citizens.
- 26% be careful stewards of public resources and value integrity as a cornerstone of all that we do.
- 16% believe we can be more effective by collaborating with other community organizations.

"The library is a place where I can go
that's **peaceful** and **welcoming**." -Roxbury Resident

Overall, how would you rate your satisfaction with the Roxbury Public Library?

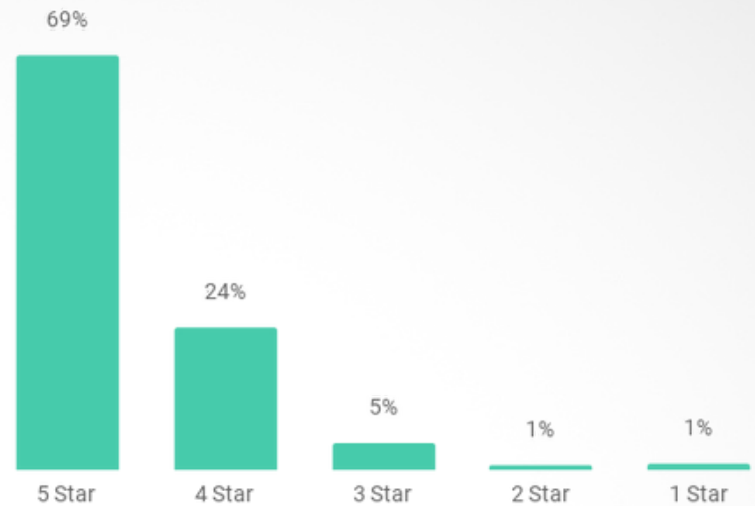
69% 5 Star

24% 4 Star

5% 3 Star

1% 2 Star

1% 1 Star



What type of community do you want Roxbury to be?

- Diverse, inclusive, and welcoming
- Safe
- Affordable
- Family friendly
- Tight knit, caring, with a small town feel
- Focused on education, in schools and the library
- Excellent outdoor areas, such as Horseshoe Lake

Most important issues in the community:

- Safety
- Open space
- Overdevelopment and traffic
- Schools and educational opportunity
- Communication, lack of local news coverage
- Efficient use of taxpayer dollars
- Lack of a "main street" gathering place for the community
- Lack of cohesiveness among individual communities
- Support for small businesses

Community challenges faced in the last few years:

- 51% Continuing lifetime learning and personal growth
- 37% Learning new technologies
- 25% Financial planning
- 19% Online security/identity theft
- 19% Ensuring opportunity for children
- 19% Employment or underemployment
- 18% Obtaining reliable health information
- 17% Obtaining affordable healthcare



14% Childcare and a safe space for my children

13% Learning about diversity and equity

10% Running a small business

16% Other - including:

- Mental health issues
- Rising costs/inflation/taxes
- Pandemic related isolation
- Support for autistic children
- Eldercare and dementia

What do you value most about the library?

- Access to books, films, and Library of Things
- The library staff
- Access to WiFi and public computers
- Space to work and study
- Educational opportunities for free
- Community engagement
- Critical service during pandemic

How does the library help you reach your goals?

- Engages children in literacy and learning, and supports homeschoolers
- Saves money of residents by providing free resources and programs
- Online programming and ebooks help residents with mobility issues stay connected
- Helps adults continue lifelong learning and keep mentally active
- Supports local businesses and the self-employed by providing free resources such as LinkedIn Learning
- Provides a safe space for children and teens in the community
- Helps residents stay connected to local organizations, events and people



FOCUS GROUPS

About 70 people participated in four different focus groups. The four groups engaged specific demographics – parents and employed adults, representatives from community organizations, senior citizens, and 8th grade students. A consultant visited an 8th grade classroom during the school day to conduct the focus group for students. The other three groups met virtually.

To encourage participants to feel comfortable speaking freely, employees of the library and Board members were not present. The questions started broadly and narrowed to focus on specific library services.

WHAT TYPE OF COMMUNITY DO YOU WANT TO LIVE IN?

Three out of four groups mentioned they want to live in a community that is welcoming and engaged. Additional descriptors included:

- Active
- Safe
- Respectful
- Inclusive
- Caring

WHY DO YOU THINK IT IS IMPORTANT FOR COMMUNITIES TO HAVE LIBRARIES?

In addition to acknowledging the importance of library resources, all the groups mentioned the important community role of the library, as described here:

- Community focal point
- Heart and soul of the community
- Supportive and proactive throughout the pandemic
- A library is more of a hub, particularly if there is no downtown
- Community center; meeting space
- Helps connect people in the community
- Extension of education
- Central place where you can see what's happening all over the community
- Safe place to go

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ROLES OF THE LIBRARY?

A significant number of participants lauded the importance of library resources and programs, such as:

- Lifelong learning and intellectual stimulation
- Programs such as book discussion groups, knowledge sharing
- Gathering place, bringing families together
- Early literacy support
- Helps connect the people in a community

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE AT OR FROM THE LIBRARY?

This was an opportunity for participants to share their personal experiences and desires:

- More programs on the weekend and evenings
- Variable times for children's programs; passive programming for children
- Language learning programs; ESL programs
- Continue virtual programming
- Increased marketing of library programs; reciprocal sharing of information about programs of other community organizations
- Continue to strengthen programming to support business
- Tutoring for help with school assignments

Finally, the groups were asked to specifically address library buildings and grounds, customer service, and library website or catalog.

Library buildings and grounds:

- Building is outdated and inefficient
- Building is too limited and small
- Insufficient meeting space
- Lacks space for conversation and networking
- Need a place to study in groups and to hang out
- Need a private area for teens
- Children's area is too small

Customer service:

- Excellent job
- Staff is friendly and helpful
- Staff is fantastic (even patient with kids having meltdowns)

Other comments that were offered by participants included:

- Praise for the passport service
- Love the library's participation in community events
- The library should be a beacon of what Roxbury stands for

It is obvious that the community of Roxbury appreciates their public library and, by virtue of their questions and suggestions, hope it will continue to improve.



"The library helps by keeping my adult son **engaged**, and offers us both continued **learning** opportunities through **diverse** programming and resources."

-Roxbury Resident

VISION

The Roxbury Library is an innovative center of **learning and discovery** that reflects the spirit of our community.

MISSION

We enhance the quality of life in the Roxbury community by **connecting people** to each other, to diverse collections, and to **transformative experiences**.

GOALS

Connecting with Each Other

We facilitate meaningful interactions by serving as the heart of the community.

Evolving & Relevant Collections

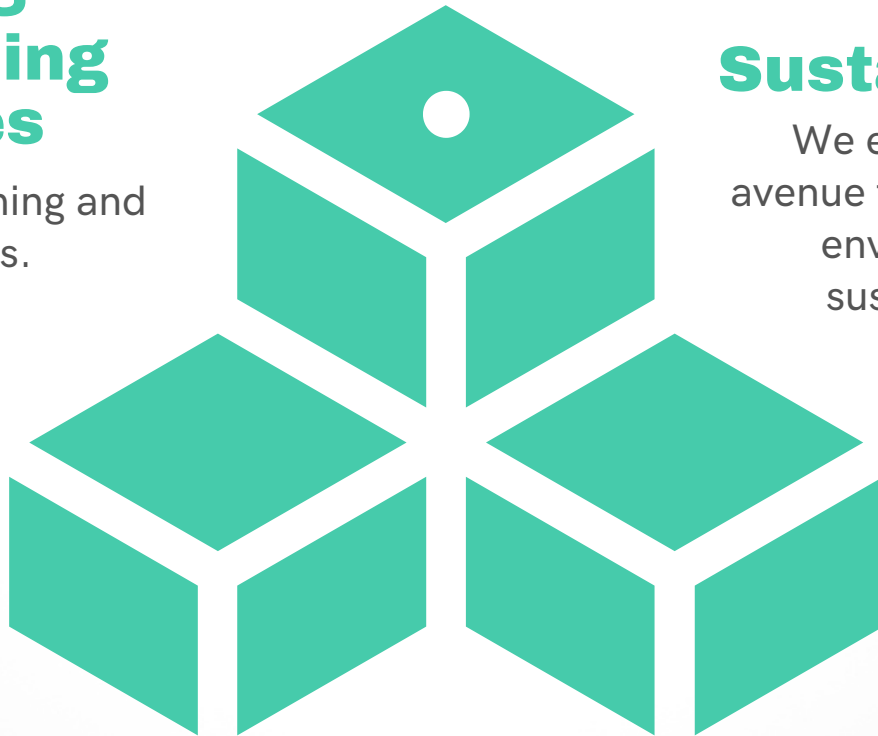
We develop our collections to evolve to meet the community's changing needs.

Safe & Welcoming Spaces

We offer welcoming and safe spaces.

Sustainability

We explore every avenue for financial and environmental sustainability.



Transformative Experiences

We create a culture of positive experiences that change people's lives through awesome customer service and opportunities for lifelong learning.

OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES

We create a culture of positive experiences that changes people's lives through awesome customer service and opportunities for lifelong learning.

Objective 1: Create and offer high quality onsite and virtual programming for all.

- Expand hybrid programming (combination of virtual and onsite).
- Identify types of virtual programs that are most successful and popular, e.g., book discussions, storytimes.
- Survey the community to determine what types of programs are most appealing and/or desired.
- Schedule programming to meet the needs of the entire community, from working parents to seniors.

Objective 2: Ensure all staff are well-equipped and supported to exceed customer service expectations.

- Clarify and communicate expectations to staff.
- Develop a comprehensive onboarding program for new staff.
- Identify skills and talents among current staff and utilize these to strengthen customer service objectives.
- Actively support professional development and growth for all staff.

Objective 3: Embrace technology innovations that support and enhance customer service.

- Monitor emerging trends to identify tools to enhance the customer experience.
- Bring library services to the people of the community where they gather, such as Horseshoe Lake, schools, a bookmobile, kiosks at popular stores, or even another branch.
- Ensure all staff are comfortable with any innovations and can successfully utilize and promote them.
- Upgrade the library to the RFID standard to allow for innovative transactional experiences.
- Ensure that online and mobile library experiences are intuitive and helpful to library users.

Objective 4: Develop a comprehensive schedule of literacy instruction, both technological and otherwise.

- Survey library users as to their perceived need for instruction, e.g., devices, programs, digital literacy, etc.

- Develop both regular schedules of classes and just-in-time training.
- Develop instruction and learning resources to assist everyone, from children to seniors, with financial literacy, digital literacy, and any/all topics necessary to function in the 21st century.
- Experiment with ways of better serving the ESL community and new Americans.

Objective 5: Infuse delight into the library experience.

- Plan unique displays and events to captivate the interests of library users.
- Surprise library visitors with unexpected gestures of thanks.
- Enhance the value of library membership by offering Roxbury library and literary themed gifts along with a new card.
- Celebrate early literacy by initiating/continuing a 1000 Books Before Kindergarten campaign infused with fun and rewards/incentives.
- Explore the feasibility of personalized library cards, children's and themed cards.



"The activities that are planned for children allows me to **engage** my child with **others** and exposes her to books. **Reading is valued** in our household."

-Roxbury Resident

GOAL 2: CONNECTING WITH EACH OTHER

We facilitate meaningful interactions by serving as the heart of the community.

Objective 1: Seek opportunities for partnerships.

- Identify the range of organizations, associations and businesses in the community and develop methods of contacting these for productive connections.
- Invite organizations to the library for unique partnership networks.
- Regularly collaborate with Roxbury's schools, PTAs/PTOs and other student/family focused organizations.
- Explore a community wide calendar.
- Position the Roxbury Library as a community hub for discussions and debate while preserving civic discourse.

Objective 2: Engage with the community beyond the library walls.

- Participate in community events in an effort to promote the library.
- Connect with small businesses in the community, offering resources to support their needs, both personal and professional.

Objective 3: Foster relationships between the library and community organizations, and facilitate relationships among these organizations.

- Interview members of community organizations to identify any skills or information they may need, and offer the library's expertise.
- Actively seek out and support local projects of community organizations, e.g. have a presence at their events, be a collection location, help with planning.

Objective 4: Attract and encourage individuals to share their skills and experience to create unique volunteer initiatives.

- Research exemplary models of volunteer programs, especially those focusing on skill development.
- Develop a program highlighting useful skills and talents, and market to specific population segments.

Objective 5: Create a plan to effectively communicate to the entire community the value of the library.

- Develop compelling messaging, highlighting the assets and value of the library - The vibrant Heart of a vibrant Community.
- Continue to invest in marketing initiatives and new platforms so people are informed and excited about library services and opportunities.
- Invest in marketing automation solutions that deliver the right solutions to the right users.
- Create a consistent and comprehensive marketing and branding effort.

GOAL 3: EVOLVING AND RELEVANT COLLECTIONS

We develop our collections to evolve to meet the community's changing needs.

Objective 1: Continue to invest in digital and nontraditional collections as demand dictates.

- Carefully monitor use of current collections and maintain awareness of evolving trends.
- Survey library users, as appropriate, to determine their articulated and implicit needs.
- Advocate for increased digital collections investment by consortium.
- Invest in nontraditional collections such as the Library of Things, Museum Passes, in-house technology lending, and other lending programs that maximize library value to users.

Objective 2: Evaluate all collections on an ongoing basis for use, relevancy, and to ascertain the physical limitations of the building.

- Apply qualitative standards to evaluation of the collection, including consideration of accuracy and relevance of information.
- Develop a plan to address issues of shelf space to ensure that new materials are appropriately housed, as well as easily discoverable.
- Track usage of materials to determine evolving trends regarding use.

Objective 3: Celebrate differences and diversity by curating robust collections that reflect the global community and broaden the horizons of the local community.

- Apply a diversity, equity and inclusion audit of materials to determine if the collection is balanced.
- Expand the scope of the collection and highlight the value of these newly added materials using analytical tools such as Collection HQ.
- Build new connections with community groups to connect them with relevant collections.
- Digitize the library's local history holdings and make the collection easily accessible online so all Roxbury residents may enjoy it.

Objective 4: Uphold the integrity and nurture the spirit of intellectual freedom.

- Ensure that all staff, Board, Friends and Foundation members are familiar with the tenets of intellectual freedom.
- Construct a process to manage any challenges, and train everyone associated with the library in that process.
- Continue to review existing policies to ensure the future of intellectual freedom at Roxbury Library.

"I felt so **protected** during the pandemic, and it seemed all my requests were filled **quickly**, with very little wait time for best sellers and new titles. The staff was **friendly** and **courteous** and so willing to assist me with all my requests."

-Roxbury Resident

GOAL 4: SAFE AND WELCOMING SPACES

We offer welcoming and safe spaces.

Objective 1: Pursue the planned expansion and reimagining of the library facility.

- Continue to steadily move forward with the planned expansion, outlining the needed steps to achieve the goal of an expanded library facility.
- Develop a short list of benefits of impact of library expansion as an advocacy tool.

Objective 2: Evaluate current physical space and address shorter term needs.

- Analyze use of current spaces and identify possible improvements that would expand use.
- Develop an annual plan to apply upgrades, in a cost effective manner.

Objective 3: Create an atmosphere of inquiry and inclusion, free from judgements.

- Establish an environment that welcomes and embraces differences and diversity of the community and staff.
- Reinforce acceptable treatment of individuals by providing ongoing staff and Board training in these areas.



GOAL 5: SUSTAINABILITY

We explore every avenue for financial and environmental sustainability.

Objective 1: Pursue partnerships and shared services agreements.

- Seek shared services agreements, with other library organizations and beyond, for the purpose of controlling cost and expanding services.
- Identify partnerships with local and county organizations to leverage the library's investment.

Objective 2: Seek alternative sources of funding so that the library can effectively meet the needs of the community.

- Pursue available grants and foundation funding to augment library programs and services.
- Research potential options, such as those included in governmental legislation, to determine if pursuit of these would be productive.

Objective 3: Strengthen fundraising capabilities of organizations that support the library.

- Evaluate capabilities of the Friends of the Library and the Library Foundation to determine options for further development.
- Build relationships and solicit financial support from community and business organizations throughout the community.

Objective 4: Continue to aggressively raise funds for the capital plan.

- Research successful fundraising options in order to expand the scope and reach of fundraising efforts.
- Recruit additional individuals to join the Friends and the Foundation in support of this goal.
- Work with New Jersey Library Association and MAIN to advocate for additional construction funding for New Jersey libraries.

Objective 5: Explore avenues to reduce the carbon footprint of library services and community members.

- Execute an ecological sustainability audit of the library facility and practices.
- Apply best practices in this area to all library functions.
- Provide equipment and training to help community members reduce their own carbon footprints.

"The library offers a **space to work** on days when a home office isn't an option." –Roxbury Resident

HOW TO USE THIS PLAN

This strategic plan is the result of input from the community and library staff. It has been shaped by data about where the library has been, and feedback about how the library can best serve the community and your stakeholders. As a result, it holds information and recommendations that can be used to strengthen and guide library management in a number of ways. These include:

SHARING

This plan should be shared with anyone who would benefit from understanding where the library has been, and where you would like it to go. Communication about this plan can be shared with:

- Staff
- Township Officials
- The Public (through the website)
- Friends of the Library/Foundation
- Community Partners
- Surrounding Libraries
- Job Applicants

PLANNING

Does an existing service or program help the library meet your stated goals, or would those resources be better applied to a new service? How do you meet the seemingly unlimited needs of the community with a limited amount of resources, time, funding, and staff effort? The library's Vision and Mission statement and Goals and Objectives can help guide the library's annual planning, and inform difficult decisions around the expenditure of limited assets.

EVALUATING

This plan serves as a rubric for measuring your success. Oftentimes, the assessments made by members of library administration differ from considerations of those outside of library management. For this reason, we encourage libraries to provide opportunities for feedback – for your entire community, and all areas of library staff – to evaluate your library's success in meeting the stated goals and objectives.

BUDGETING

When developing your next budget, ensure that your library's goals and objectives are reflected in your budget. This strategic plan should also be a regular part of any budget presentation or request for funds.

REVIEWING POLICIES

Are your current policies reflective of the *Vision and Mission* statement and the *Goals and Objectives* in this plan? For example: if you want a "welcome and safe space" and to create "an atmosphere of inclusion," is the policy under consideration including everyone? Who does it include? And who is being left out?

RECRUITING

Are you recruiting the staff you need to meet your *Goals and Objectives*? We encourage you to use this strategic plan as a rubric for developing employment postings and hiring practices. Through job listings and an easy-to-find location on your website, all applicants should be able to review the strategic plan to see what your library values.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Sharing the strategic plan with potential partners, including other libraries, may create new opportunities to work together for collective impact.

HOLDING STAFF MEETINGS

We recommend actively engaging with this plan - share and discuss the strategic plan with all staff and volunteers. Simply making the plan available does not ensure the plan has been read and understood. Reviewing and discussing will help library staff and volunteers become involved with the stated goals, and see how their own feedback is reflected in the plan.

"So **grateful** for our library, it's so **warm and inviting**, both the **people** and the **space**. As much as I love it, it **improves constantly**."

-Roxbury Resident

