

BRADLEY BEACH FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY
Strategic Plan 2017-2020

Open the Doors... Continue the Dream!

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Philosophy, Vision and Mission

Our Philosophy

We have a simple philosophy: Make it easy for people to find what they want. This philosophy has guided all our work – from cataloguing to space management and card applications to programs – and resulted in more, better satisfied members of our Library.

Our Vision

The Bradley Beach Library is a vibrant community center that promotes reading at all ages, levels and media; is accessible and welcoming to everyone; provides a wide variety of materials – including books, movies, music, audiotapes, magazines, newspapers, eBooks – for education and entertainment; and creates programs that bring people together to learn, play and share.

Our Mission

The mission of the Bradley Beach Library is to provide outstanding, friendly, personal customer service and equal resources to all members, from preschool children through senior adults. We are committed to enhancing the quality of life in our community by meeting the evolving information, educational, recreational and cultural needs of Bradley Beach's citizens.

Acknowledgements

We are very proud and grateful for the support of the Bradley Beach Library Board of Trustees in all our endeavors.

We salute the Friends of the Bradley Beach Library, who support us with fundraising, ideas and their indomitable spirit.

We also want to recognize our Library members, who inspire us every day, and our staff, who work so hard and so well to make the Library welcoming to everyone.

Profile of the Borough of Bradley Beach

Bradley Beach was founded in 1893 when it separated from adjacent Neptune Township. With an area of less than one square mile, it has a year-round population of about 5,000 people and over 25,000 summer visitors and residents. It is located south of Ocean Grove and north of Avon, and is separated from both towns by lakes.

The 2010 Census determined that 4,298 people, 2,098 households, and 979.8 families lived in Bradley Beach. The racial makeup of the borough was 85% White, and 20% Hispanic or Latino. In the borough, 14.8% of the population were under the age of 18, 7.2% from 18 to 24, 32.8% from 25 to 44, 31.3% from 45 to 64, and 14.0% who were 65 years of age or older.

The Census Bureau's 2006-2010 American Community Survey found median household income was \$59,792 and the median family income was \$75,575. Nearly 3% of families were below the poverty line.

The Bradley Beach School District serves about 300 students from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Public school students in ninth through twelfth grades, go to Asbury Park High School. They can also apply to Neptune High School, Red Bank Regional High School or other schools in the Monmouth County Vocational School District.

The Bradley Beach Free Public Library

The Bradley Beach Free Public Library was established in 1913 by the Woman's Improvement League of Bradley Beach. They worked tirelessly to promote and build a municipal library until 1927, when the Library was opened at the location where it still operates, on the corner of Hammond and Fourth: two blocks from the Elementary School and walking distance from anywhere in town.

Throughout its history this "great little library" has been an important center of the community. The Library was recently added to the New Jersey Register of Historic Places as an example of a well-preserved early twentieth century library instigated by a women's club.

The Library is dedicated to providing outstanding, friendly, personal customer service and equal access to resources for all patrons. The collection contains nearly 30,000 volumes along with movies, magazines and newspapers. The Library has 6,600 members who make more than 45,000 visits and request over 29,000 transactions each year.

The Library runs many programs for all patrons including children, teens, adults and seniors. Programs range from ancestor research to mahjong, story time to writer's workshops.

Priorities for the Next Three Years

Since it was founded in 1913, the Bradley Beach Public Library has been an important part of life in this coastal community. In the last five years, the Library has seen tremendous growth in visits, program participation and website use. The Library is acknowledged to be “the heart of our town.”

Over the next three years, the Library plans to consolidate that growth and address critical issues. Our priorities for 2017 through 2020 are to:

- Become more accessible and welcoming
- Celebrate the history of Bradley Beach, our library and the families of our members
- Become an even stronger cultural center
- Support borough, school and community groups
- Continue excellent progress as quality library and center of the community
- Promote equal access to resources, particularly technology and literacy
- Support education and lifelong learning
- Clarify policies, procedures and bylaws

In 2017, we will pursue these priorities while refining specific objectives and activities along with measurements to track our progress. The next two years will be focused on further implementation of the priorities. During 2020, we will also begin to work on our 2021-2024 Strategic Plan.

Goals

In order to make our Great Little Library even better, we are focusing on four critical goals during the strategic planning period:

- Become more accessible and welcoming
- Broaden role as cultural hub
- Celebrate history of Bradley Beach, our library and the families of our members
- Promote equal access to resources while supporting education and lifelong learning

Our goals are described in greater detail below. During the first year of our Strategic Plan period, we will carefully track goals, objectives and activities and develop measurements to assess our progress.

GOAL 1: BECOME MORE ACCESSIBLE AND WELCOMING

The accessibility renovation that will make our building accessible to everyone will open during the spring of 2017. We are dedicated to ensuring that the renovation is completed on time and within our budget. In addition, we want to improve accessibility throughout our building and resources. For example, installing SiteCues on our website will enable users with limited vision to adapt the type size. We will be undertaking a wide variety of initiatives – large and small – to expand access.

Ensuring that the best use is made of the renovated space – both inside and out will be very important. We will be working with Library Interiors to furnish the new space and make the current

library as accessible as possible. At the same time, we will be working with the Monmouth County Master Gardeners to make our outdoor space beautiful, accessible and welcoming.

Now that people can easily get into and around our building, we will be reaching out to groups who have not been fully served due to the limitations of our building. Reaching out to seniors, disabled people and families with young children will be an important element of our activities.

GOAL 2: BROADEN ROLE AS CULTURAL HUB

We are very proud of the progress we have made as an acknowledged center of the community. We will continue to reach out to groups and individuals to introduce them to the Library. We will also reinforce our strong partnerships with the Borough, School, Chamber of Commerce and other institutions. Our programs will continue to both serve and challenge our members.

Our annual Art Show and Student Essays on Art will be able to expand within our additional space. We also plan to host regular displays of art by members of the community. We would also like to explore musical programming. Once the renovation is complete, we would like to revive, and possibly expand, our Museum Pass program.

We will also continue to work with community groups on community-wide projects such as Bradley Beach Love Stories, the Memorial Day Parade, Pirate Day and other celebrations and activities.

GOAL 3: CELEBRATE THE HISTORY OF BRADLEY BEACH, OUR LIBRARY AND THE FAMILIES OF OUR MEMBERS

The Library has played an important role in preserving and celebrating the history of Bradley Beach through programs like the Historic Walk, collaborating with the local museum and gaining national and state recognition of the women who founded our library. Over the next three years, we will expand our collaborative programming around the history of Bradley Beach and our library through programs and educational initiatives. We will also collaborate with the Borough Historian and the NJ State Library resources to help citizens who are interested in tracing their family history. We will investigate ways to preserve those histories as part of the Library's collection.

GOAL 4: PROMOTE EQUAL ACCESS TO RESOURCES WHILE SUPPORTING EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING

The Library is well-established as a reliable partner to borough departments, the Bradley Beach Elementary School and local community groups. We will solidify those relations and reach out to businesses and other groups to establish partnerships.

In some case, the public computers, wifi and even fax machine are the only access users have to technology and the Internet. We will ensure that the equipment is adequate, up-to-date and in good shape. We will also promote reading and learning at every opportunity and do all we can to assure that people have access to the materials they want to read.

In addition to our close partnership with the Bradley Beach Elementary School, we will continue to support education and learning through book clubs, programs, entertainment and all kinds of learning. We will also continue to reach out to seniors, native Spanish speakers, teens and other groups.

Relevant Local, Regional and Statewide Initiatives

The Bradley Beach Public Library stays informed about relevant planning and initiatives. We are especially aware of:

- The American Library Association's policy on Library Services for People with Disabilities <http://www.ala.org/ascla/resources/libraryservices>
- The Institute of Museum and Library Services policies on Accessibility in Museums and Libraries <https://www.ims.gov/issues/national-issues/accessibility-museums-and-libraries>
- *Universal Access: Making Library Resources Accessible to People with Disabilities* <http://www.washington.edu/doi/universal-access-making-library-resources-accessible-people-disabilities> describes equipment and procedures libraries can use to provide access to all
- The Aspen Institute's report, *Libraries in the Exponential Age* <http://csreports.aspeninstitute.org/Dialogue-on-Public-Libraries/2015/library/details/98/Libraries-2015>, which details how libraries will move from respected cultural institutions to platforms for progress.
- Another Aspen Institute report, *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, <http://csreports.aspeninstitute.org/dialogue-on-public-libraries/2014/report>, about how libraries will evolve to meet contemporary information challenges and resources.
- The Pew Research Center's 2016 report on libraries <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/09/09/libraries-2016/>
- *Revitalizing Bradley Beach's Main Street* <http://njplanning.org/news/revitalizing-main-street-in-bradley-beach-new-jersey/> and its emphasis on the walkability of our town
- *Coastal Monmouth Regional Plan* <http://co.monmouth.nj.us/page.aspx?ID=2970> which encourages collaboration among nearby communities
- *Monmouth County Strategic Plan* http://visitmonmouth.com/documents/145/Monmouth%20County_Strategic%20Plan%202009.pdf which outlines overall objectives for the County (although does not account for the impact of Hurricane Sandy).
- We also keep track of historic preservation initiatives, particularly the NJ Women's Heritage Trail <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/identify/whtrail2.htm>

We will continue to assess and incorporate these -- and other relevant initiatives -- into our activities and planning.