



Rutherford Public Library

Five Year

Strategic

Plan *2023-*
2028

A Message from the Library Board

With great excitement and enthusiasm, the Rutherford Public Library Board of Trustees presents a strategic plan outlining the library's goals and objectives for the next five years.

The essence of this strategic plan is to move the library forward to meet the needs of our diverse and vibrant community while maintaining the library as a cornerstone of the Borough of Rutherford.

The Board of Trustees would like to thank all of the library patrons, Rutherford residents, and community members who participated in the process by filling out a survey, attending a focus group, or providing direct feedback.

We would also like to express our deepest appreciation to the Strategic Planning Committee, under the expert leadership of our library director, Gretchen Corsillo, for the time, effort, care, and expertise they put into this process.

Let's get to work!

About the Committee

The Strategic Plan Committee was formed in August 2021 and met monthly throughout 2021 and 2022 to craft this plan. The committee, comprised of library administration, staff, trustees, volunteers, and patrons, worked collaboratively on the development and execution of a community survey, facilitated focus groups, and analyzed public opinion to shape Rutherford Public Library's (RPL) goals and objectives. Each member used their individual strengths to contribute to the finished product.

Members:

Gretchen Corsillo, *Library Director*

Wendy Armacost, *Library Board President*

Monica Rodriguez, *Library Board Vice President*

Brenda Fargo, *Superintendent's Alternate to the Library Board*

Kim Bogosian, *Rutherford Library Foundation President*

Linda Rynd, *Friends of the Library of Rutherford President*

Jen Capoano, *Library Staff*

Nancy Martin, *Library Staff*

Bridget Merli, *Library Staff*

Liz Moran, *Community Member*

Executive Summary

Although the Rutherford Public Library has always been a forward-thinking institution, it has historically lacked a formal strategic plan. As the library's leadership changed in 2020, the need for long-range planning became apparent. This undertaking was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the Strategic Plan Committee was formally established in 2021. The pandemic provided an opportunity to reassess all aspects of RPL's services and gauge the future needs of Rutherford residents.

The committee agreed early on that measuring public opinion was vital to creating a relevant and timely strategic plan. A data-gathering campaign was launched in late 2021 with a public survey, and focus groups were held in the first quarter of 2022. Committee members analyzed all feedback and worked to distill it into a set of goals and objectives. The information gathered helped the committee reflect on the RPL's strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. Results of the 2020 U.S. Census were reviewed to contextualize the committee's work with the overall demographics of the community. The results of this 18-month process are included in the final draft of this plan.

Methodology & Findings

The Strategic Plan Committee followed a two-step process to measure public opinion regarding the library and its services. First, a community survey was developed to focus on the library's current offerings and potential future additions (EXHIBIT A). Survey responses were accepted for two months, from December 1, 2021, to January 31, 2022. The responses were mainly gathered online through Google Forms, although print copies were available at the library, Borough Hall, and 55 Kip Center. The survey was widely promoted in order to receive responses from both current library patrons as well as non-users, including paid social media ads, placement in the Borough of Rutherford's Mayor & Council Newsletter and other mailings, flyers sent home in the backpacks of public school students in grades K through 6, and advertisements in Rutherford's various community Facebook groups. EXHIBIT B summarizes the data from 385 surveys completed in both formats.

The second data-gathering stage consisted of public focus groups, which allowed the committee to seek clarification and context on trends observed in the survey results. In March 2022, eight groups met: five in person and three virtually. One in-person group was specifically for parents of children under 18, while the rest were open to all. The same questions were asked in each group to ensure consistency, which can be found in EXHIBIT C. Attendees also had the option to ask questions as time permitted. The Library Director facilitated each group, and one or two committee members assisted with note-taking and providing information. During each group, it was stressed that ideas and suggestions should refer to the big picture, a post-pandemic library.

Following the conclusion of the focus groups, the committee considered the results of both steps equally in developing this plan's goals and objectives. The most common themes were a desire for more services geared toward middle and high school students, increased awareness of library offerings, and concern that the physical library space appears cold and uninviting. Many respondents also indicated dissatisfaction with the library's lack of dedicated parking, which is regrettably unable to be rectified at this time. Respondents were very pleased with the library staff and customer service they typically receive. Children's programming and the library's membership in BCCLS received high marks. Patrons were grateful that RPL remained a constant resource in person and virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Community Profile

Rutherford, called “The Borough of Trees,” was officially founded in 1881 and named after Senator John Rutherford. The town is located in southern Bergen County, New Jersey. At eight miles west of midtown Manhattan, it is considered an inner-ring suburb of New York City and is accessible both by public transportation and several major highways. Its 2020 Census population was 18,834 across 6,835 households, an increase from 2010’s total of 18,061.

Rutherford’s population is more diverse than many other communities in Bergen County. In the most recent Census, 71.3% of residents racially identified as White, 16.2% as Asian, 2.3% as Black, 0.2% as American Indian or Alaska Native, and 7.7% as two or more races. 22.7% of Rutherford residents identify as Hispanic or Latino. Nearly a quarter of residents, or 24.5%, stated they were born outside the United States. One-third of residents over the age of five speak a language other than English at home.

The median household income in Rutherford is virtually even with that of Bergen County: \$106,817 versus \$104,623, respectively. Rutherford significantly exceeds New Jersey’s median household income of \$89,296. 95.0% of residents age 25 and older are high school graduates, while 51.9% hold a bachelor’s degree or higher. 94.1% of households own a computer, and 89.8% have home access to broadband internet.

Children under 18 make up 21% of Rutherford’s population. As of the most recent Census, the largest share was elementary and middle school-aged children ages 5-14, followed by children under five and teenagers, respectively. The town is served by its own school district, Rutherford Public Schools, which serves preschoolers through high school seniors. Rutherford is also home to the private St. Mary’s High School, several private nursery schools, and Felician University.

Rutherford boasts a vibrant downtown, including a wide variety of shops, restaurants, small businesses, a park, and even a historic theater. The library, Borough Hall, post office, and police station are all located centrally along Park Avenue and contribute to the downtown’s walkable feel. During the pandemic, a greater emphasis was placed on beautifying this area and utilizing outdoor dining and seating space. Over the last several years, redevelopment has also brought plans for high-end apartments to this area.

Library History

The Rutherford Free Library Association was established in 1893 and found its first home on the second floor of the Shafer Building at the corner of Ames and Park Avenues in 1894. The Library Association was a natural extension of the Woman's Reading Club, organized by local historian Margaret Riggs in 1889. After two years in the Shafer Building, the library relocated to Ivison Hall, formerly the First Presbyterian Church, after its owner donated the property. Although this building no longer stands, the library remains in this location.

In 1908, Rutherford residents voted to bring the library under municipal control. The first dedicated children's room opened in 1929. The library grew and saw increased use during the Great Depression and World War II. It became clear that the existing structure was no longer suitable and could not be further retrofitted to meet the library's expanding needs. A new building was constructed by local architect Edgar I. Williams, opening to the public on December 22, 1958. The structure's design was intended to complement the post office, located across the street and also designed by Williams.

As library use continued to increase, additional space for collections and public seating became necessary. Less than twenty years later, in 1976, the Grace Dickinson Wing was added, and the library as we know it today opened. This addition more than doubled the library's square footage, from 14,000 to 35,000. The Dickinson family funded nearly \$1 million of the \$1.3 million cost. The expansion added an auditorium, tripled the size of the Children's Room, and added space on the main floor and mezzanine for seating and book shelving.

In 2011, the library administration received notice of impending budget cuts from the Borough of Rutherford due to the Great Recession. As a result, services and staffing were downsized, and the Children's Room, originally housed in the library's basement, was relocated to its current location on the main floor. This area on the lower level is no longer controlled by the library and is presently occupied by the Rutherford Board of Education as the site of the Bulldog Academy, a life skills program for differently abled young adults.

The library's main floor and mezzanine spaces underwent a full renovation in 2016 to modernize the space. A computer lab was added to meet the local need for technology-focused programming. The majority of this project was generously funded by the Rutherford Public Library Foundation. The final public space awaiting renovation is the "classroom" space on the mezzanine level, which has been identified as the location for a new Young Adult area.

Library at a Glance

2022 Budget Breakdown:

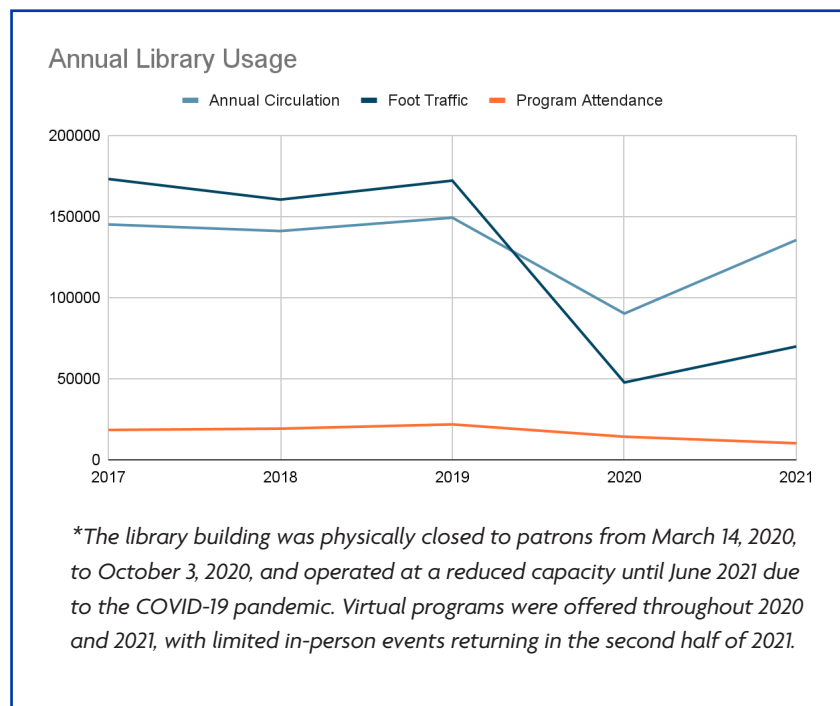
\$1,235,951.00 total operating budget

- \$1,183,551.00 municipal funds
- \$9,698.00 per capita state aid
- \$2,822.58 Bergen County Grant
- \$16,400.00 Friends of the Library donations
- \$23,479.42 misc. income

58% of all Rutherford residents are cardholders.
\$598 average annual value to patron.

2021 Numbers:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Annual circulation: 135,468 | Other Figures: |
| Physical items in collection: 70,004 | Building square footage: 35,000 |
| Digital items in collection: 897,513 | Full-time professional staff: 4 |
| Registered cardholders: 10,276 | Full-time paraprofessional staff: 6 |
| Program attendance: 10,185 | Part-time staff: 9 |
| Programs offered: 419 | |
| Foot traffic: 69,846 | |



The Strategic Planning Committee conducted a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (“SWOT”) analysis based on the feedback received during the data-gathering stage. We have identified the following:

SWOT Analysis - *Strengths*

Rutherford Public Library is fortunate to have many strengths that participants in our survey and focus groups identified. At 35,000 square feet, the building is large enough to accommodate the library’s varied collections and programs. It occupies a prime location on Park Avenue and is walkable as part of Rutherford’s robust downtown, in addition to being in close proximity to numerous schools. The overall management culture of RPL has always been future-focused, and the library is consistently an early adopter of new technology. Thanks to the most recent renovation in 2016, the building is modern. Currently, the library offers more public computers than any of its neighbors.

RPL is fortunate to receive generous funding from the Borough of Rutherford, consistently receiving over the 1/2 mill minimum required by the State of New Jersey. The Friends of the Library of Rutherford and the Rutherford Public Library Foundation are two nonprofits that exist independently of the library with the sole mission of providing additional monetary support. The Friends historically provide vital support to RPL’s children’s events and museum pass lending program, whereas the Foundation focuses on capital improvements that would not otherwise be possible. Both groups work cooperatively with library administration to identify and provide supplemental funding.

Library patrons benefit from skilled and engaged staff. RPL is fortunate to have full-time employees in all departments, compared to other libraries. An institutional focus on customer service and ongoing training helps provide the best experience possible for the public.

Finally, RPL, as an institution, works closely with other key organizations. As a member of BCCLS, the Bergen County Cooperative Library System, RPL receives benefits such as cost savings and infrastructure support while providing patrons access to 76 other libraries. The library also maintains close connections with the Rutherford school district, which allows us to host field trips for students, have staff members perform class visits, and cross-promote library initiatives throughout the year. The Bulldog Academy, a special education program the district offers, utilizes the former Children’s Room in the library’s lower level.

SWOT Analysis - *Weaknesses*

Overwhelmingly the most common criticism received while gathering public feedback was the lack of dedicated parking. While this concern is not unique to the library and impacts virtually all businesses and organizations in Rutherford's downtown area, it creates challenges for patrons. This is especially true for those with mobility concerns or parents with young children.

Despite the building's size, its open-concept floor plan can, at times, prove to be a challenge. While helpful in many ways, it can make quiet space difficult to come by at peak times of the day, such as afternoons during the school year or while a large program is taking place. The library administration has explored the possibility of constructing smaller areas for quiet study, but the building's HVAC infrastructure has rendered this currently unfeasible.

The historical emphasis on programs for children and the difficulty in getting the word out about library initiatives are two weaknesses addressed directly in this strategic plan. RPL has a robust children's department that offers wildly popular programs throughout the year; however, the same attention has not previously been given to programming for teens in grades 7-12 or adults. Additionally, the library's marketing reach has changed in recent years with the demise of local newspapers and other traditional promotional venues. Although RPL is active on social media, many surveyed patrons indicated that they were not sure how to receive news from the library. Fortunately, both of these weaknesses can be addressed and adjusted going forward.

SWOT Analysis - *Opportunities*

To address the library's challenges around teen services and marketing, RPL leadership has shifted staffing priorities to focus on these areas. With the creation of a new Marketing Associate position, the library is better equipped to leverage available resources and ensure that Rutherford residents are aware of all we offer. This role has allowed for a shift in other team members' responsibilities, including refocusing the Technology Librarian position to take on Teen Services.

Between these two roles, RPL can take better advantage of the growing number of town-wide events and make stronger connections with Rutherford students in grades 7-12. There is also an opportunity to better serve "middle-grade" students in 4-6. Having an employee dedicated to marketing will also help RPL with its outreach efforts and make it possible to collaborate with local businesses more effectively.

Because of the size of the library, there is an opportunity for thoughtful space analysis to provide a cozier atmosphere, as requested by the public. Although a full renovation is not needed at this time, the general atmosphere of the building can be revisited through smaller projects like new furnishings and paint.

Finally, despite its hardships, the pandemic has provided an opportunity to revisit how patrons engage with the library. Now that remote work is common; more people rely on the library as a space to work quietly with their own devices. Program formats have also changed, and virtual or hybrid offerings remain a popular option due to their convenience. Overall, there is a greater need and opportunity for flexibility than in the pre-pandemic world.

SWOT Analysis - *Threats*

Because municipal funding is dependent on property values, there is always a risk of annual fluctuations. In the event of a recession or other economic downturn, the library could theoretically experience budget cuts similar to those experienced a decade ago. This is largely uncontrollable and a threat to all New Jersey libraries, regardless of municipal support.

The changing landscape of reading habits and purchasing constraints can also prove challenging for RPL and other public libraries to maneuver. During the pandemic, the popularity of e-content, such as e-books and audiobooks, soared. These materials are costly for libraries to purchase, usually selling for three or four times the price of physical items with limits on how many times they can circulate before being repurchased. Additionally, not all publishers will sell e-content to libraries, preventing us from offering some popular titles. If these publishing and pricing trends continue, they will put RPL at a disadvantage regarding collection development.

Inconsistent perceptions of what a modern public library should be can also make long-range planning difficult. During the data-gathering phase of this plan, there was a stark contrast between patrons looking for a more traditional library experience with large, broad collections versus those looking for more of a community center with bestsellers and a greater emphasis on programs and meeting space. RPL is committed to serving both interests, but the lack of consensus can be seen as a threat.

Finally, the changing media and information landscape can make spreading library news difficult. With the decline of local newspapers, it is becoming increasingly difficult to reach residents who are not social media savvy. As the number of platforms grows, determining the best avenues to target can become difficult.

Despite these threats, however, RPL remains committed to carrying out this plan's goals and objectives to the fullest extent possible. Overall, the strengths and opportunities for the library greatly outweigh any weaknesses and potential challenges.

Mission: *Why We're Here*

To provide equal access to information, resources, entertainment, support, and space to members of the Rutherford community.

Vision: *Where We're Going - Together*

To be the hub of the Rutherford community and to inspire intellectual, social, and professional growth for all residents.

Core Values

- **Access.** RPL values free and open access to information, physical access to our building, and providing patrons with the technology they need to access the world.
- **Diversity, equity, and inclusion.** The library is committed to serving all patrons and offering collections and programs that meet the varied needs of our community.
- **Lifelong learning.** Education does not cease when one stops attending school. We promote ongoing learning through educational programs for all ages and high-quality information resources for individual and group enrichment.
- **Community.** We value our place as the center of the Rutherford community. By forging connections with our patrons and local organizations, we promote the sense of belonging for which Rutherford is known.
- **Service.** The library staff is committed to excellence and assisting each community member to the best of our abilities. We value volunteerism and the notion that we all can make our community a better place.
- **Intellectual freedom.** RPL upholds the tenets of the ALA Bill of Rights and supports all community members' rights to read. We recognize that freedom of speech and thought is central to a healthy democracy.

Goals & Objectives

GOAL I: Increase engagement with teens in grades 7–12.

OBJECTIVE A: Furnish a dedicated, appealing, and safe physical area for teens to congregate in the library, providing space for socialization and reading alongside additional book displays.

OBJECTIVE B: Develop a formal teen volunteer program, including a Teen Advisory Board that would meet at least three times per year to help shape young adult services.

OBJECTIVE C: Offer programs specifically targeted at students in grades 7–12, with an initial goal of at least twelve events in the first year.

OBJECTIVE D: Connect more closely with local schools to cross-promote teen services and collections.

GOAL II: Enhance marketing and communications efforts with the goal of raising awareness of RPL in the Rutherford community.

OBJECTIVE A: Expand reader's advisory services with monthly curated reading lists on topics of interest, sharing them both in the library and online. Create a permanent collection of past lists on the library's website.

OBJECTIVE B: Increase library outreach with local organizations and businesses with the goal of building and maintaining partnerships.

OBJECTIVE C: Create a streamlined strategy for managing the library's e-newsletter through more frequent scheduling, list segmentation, and a focus on efficiency and consistency of messaging.

OBJECTIVE D: Investigate additional venues to advertise library events and services.

OBJECTIVE E: Increase the library's visibility in the Rutherford community by participating in at least two town-wide events each year.

Goals & Objectives

GOAL III: Diversify library programming.

OBJECTIVE A: Maintain year-round programming for all age groups.

OBJECTIVE B: Annually examine program offerings to ensure a wide range of interests are being met. Target diverse interests and diverse identities through various types of programs (e.g., lectures, discussion groups, performances, etc.).

OBJECTIVE C: Create inclusive programs that support individuals with diverse abilities

GOAL IV: Create a cozier atmosphere within the library building.

OBJECTIVE A: Offer more seating options for gathering, relaxation, and leisure.

OBJECTIVE B: Consult with a professional interior designer for guidance on how to make the most effective use of the library's space.

OBJECTIVE C: Display more art in the library through a mix of permanent pieces and rotating exhibits, collaborating with local artists to the extent possible.

OBJECTIVE D: House additional displays throughout the building, highlighting traditional and unique library materials and outside collections.

Measuring Success

The Strategic Planning Committee will reconvene twice annually, in the middle and at the end of each year, to review the library's progress towards these goals and objectives. Goals and objectives will be adjusted as necessary based on the committee's findings. The committee shall include at least one community member at all times to offer input on the library's public-facing progress.



EXHIBIT A



Rutherford Public Library is embarking on the creation of a 5-year strategic plan. The following survey seeks to help our committee tap into your thoughts about the library - whether you use it or not! Your answers will help shape our future.

Your zip code: _____

Do you have a valid library card?

- Yes
- No
- I used to have a library card, but it expired.

How You Use the Library

On average, how often do you visit Rutherford Public Library?

- Daily
- A few times a week
- Once a week
- A few times a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month
- Never

On average, how often do you use Rutherford Public Library's virtual services (e.g. downloadable content from Libby or Hoopla, virtual programs, digital newspapers, etc.)?

- Daily
- A few times a week
- Once a week
- A few times a month
- Once a month
- Less than once a month
- Never

For what reason(s) do you visit the library? Please check all that apply.

- I borrow materials by coming inside the library building.
- I borrow materials through the Grab & Go outside pickup service.
- I attend library programs for adults such as book discussions, yoga, lectures, etc.
- My children attend library programs such as story time, concerts, yoga, etc.
- I use the library's computers, printers, and/or copier.



- I connect my own device(s) to the library's Wi-Fi.
- I read, work, or study.
- I am tutored at the library, or my children receive tutoring.
- I provide tutoring or other services at the library.
- I meet and/or socialize with friends or colleagues.
- I seek tech support from library staff.
- I seek information or research assistance from library staff.
- I do not visit the library in person.

If you do not visit the library in person, please indicate why. Select all that apply.

- I use the library's apps (Libby, Hoopla) or online resources exclusively.
- I attend virtual programs only.
- I am still social distancing and do not feel comfortable visiting the library in person.
- Library hours are not convenient to my schedule. *(The library will return to its full operating hours of Monday-Wednesday 10am-8pm; Thursday-Friday 10am-6pm; and Saturday 10am-4pm in January 2022.)*
- The library location and/or parking is not convenient.
- I visit another library exclusively.
- I prefer to purchase my own books, media, etc.
- I have outstanding fines.
- I don't have time.
- I am not satisfied with the library building (e.g. uncomfortable seating, lighting, etc.).
- I have had a poor experience with the library staff/received poor customer service.
- The library's programs and events do not interest me.
- I have had a poor experience with the library's computers and/or wifi.
- Other (please explain):

Please check off which program formats you are most interested in attending in the future. Check all that apply.

- In-person events at the library
- Virtual events
- Hybrid events (in-person events with a streaming option)
- I am not interested in attending library events.
- Other (please specify):



If you attend library programs, in person or virtually, please check off the types of events you are most interested in attending, assuming it is safe to do so.

- Lectures
- Movie Screenings
- Book Clubs
- Arts & Crafts
- Technology Classes
- Concerts or Performances
- Fitness Classes (e.g. yoga, Zumba)
- Other (please specify):

Please check off the types of events your children would be interested in attending, in person or virtually, assuming it is safe to do so.

- Story Time
- Music & Movement or Live Music
- Fitness Classes (e.g. yoga, Zumba)
- Book Clubs
- Arts & Crafts
- Non-musical Performances (e.g., magic shows, holiday shows, etc.)
- Library Tales class trips
- Summer Reading Club events
- Other (please specify):

What time of day would you like to visit the library? Check all that apply.

- Weekday mornings (10am-12pm)
- Weekday afternoons (12pm-5pm)
- Weekday evenings (5-8pm)
- Weekday evenings after 8pm
- Saturday mornings (10am-12pm)
- Saturday afternoons (12pm-4pm)
- Sunday mornings (10am-12pm)
- Sunday afternoons (12pm-5pm)
- None



Have you ever utilized the following library services?

	Yes	No	Was not aware of this service
Book or movie recommendations from staff			
Brainfuse virtual tutoring			
Business databases (e.g. Value Line, Hoover's, etc.)			
Digital newspapers (e.g. Wall Street Journal Online)			
Downloadable e-books, audiobooks, or magazines (e.g. Libby/Overdrive, Hoopla)			
English as a Second Language (ESL) classes or databases			
Genealogy resources (Ancestry, Heritage Quest, or one-on-one help)			
Grab & Go outside pickup service			
Library desktop PCs			
Library printers and/or copiers			
Library Wi-Fi			
Loanable hotspots			
Meeting room rental			
Museum passes			
Online account management (e.g. renewing items, paying fines, etc.)			
Online career resources (Job & Career Accelerator, Teacher Reference Center)			
Online catalog			
Online program registration			
Rosetta Stone foreign language database			
Streaming movies, TV shows, or music (e.g. Hoopla)			
Technology help (one-on-one or group format)			

How do you find out about library news and events? Check all that apply.

- In-library signage or by speaking to a staff member
- Digital sign on front plaza
- Library e-newsletters
- Library website
- Library social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Word of mouth
- Local newspaper
- Borough of Rutherford Mayor & Council Newsletter
- Other (please explain):



How would you like to see the library spend its budget? Please rank the following categories from highest (10) importance to lowest (1).

1. Print books, magazines, and newspapers: _____
2. Physical DVDs and CDs: _____
3. Downloadable e-books and audiobooks: _____
4. Streaming video and music content: _____
5. Programs for adults: _____
6. Programs for children (birth-grade 6): _____
7. Programs for teens (grades 7-12): _____
8. In-house technology (computers, printers, wifi, etc.): _____
9. Library interior upgrades (furnishings, aesthetics, etc.): _____
10. Reference databases: _____

How You Feel About the Library

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), please rate the LIBRARY STAFF.

1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), please rate the LIBRARY COLLECTION (physical and digital items owned by the Rutherford Library).

1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), please rate the LIBRARY BUILDING AND PROPERTY.

1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), please rate the LIBRARY COMPUTERS AND PRINTERS.

1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), please rate the LIBRARY PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS.

1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), please rate the LIBRARY PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN.

1 2 3 4 5

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being the highest), please rate the LIBRARY HOURS.

1 2 3 4 5

How well do you think the library is meeting the needs of the Rutherford community?

1 2 3 4 5

How important is the library to the Rutherford community?

1 2 3 4 5



How interested would you be if the library were to offer the following services?

	Very Interested	Interested	No Opinion	Not Very Interested	Not At All Interested
Later evening hours (The library is normally open until 8pm Monday-Wednesday.)					
Makerspace or STEAM lab					
More technology devices available for checkout (e.g. e-readers, Go Pros, Rokus, etc.)					
A "library of things" available for checkout (e.g. tools, games, etc.)					
Dedicated space for third-party after school tutoring					
Sunday hours					
Programs for teens in grades 7-12					
Book returns in other locations around Rutherford					
Notary Public service					
Exhibitions of art, photography, or collectible items					
Additional foreign language collections (Currently, the library offers books in Spanish and Korean.)					
Outdoor lockers for after hours item pickups					
Delivery for homebound residents					

Are there any additional services or features you would like to see the library offer? For example, have you seen something offered at another library that you would like to see in Rutherford?



Short Answers

Think about the Rutherford community as a whole. Is there something missing that the library could provide?

What do you like best about Rutherford Library?

What do you like least about Rutherford Library?

Is there any other information you would like to add?



Final Questions: About You

Please select the age group that best describes you:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 | <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 75 or Above |

Are you the parent, guardian, or caregiver of one or more children under 18?

- Yes
- No

Are there any languages spoken in your home besides English? If yes, please specify which one(s).

Please provide your email address if you would like to subscribe to the library's e-newsletter.

Would you be interested in providing more information during a focus group? Focus groups will last for one hour and will take place in early 2022. The public health situation will dictate whether they will be held in person or virtually. If you would like to participate, please leave your name and contact information below. Space is limited! If you are selected, a member of the Strategic Plan Committee will reach out to you directly after January 1.

EXHIBIT B



Rutherford Public Survey Community Survey Results

SUMMARY

RPL's community survey collected responses for a period of two months, from December 1, 2021 - January 31, 2022. A total of 385 responses were received. The survey was available as both a digital and print product. Print copies were available at the library, Borough Hall, and the Kip Center. The digital form was promoted widely by the library, the Borough of Rutherford, and individual staff and committee members. The vast majority of respondents completed the survey online.

RESULTS

Statistical Profile:

366 of the 385 respondents (95.1%) indicated that they reside in Rutherford. It should be noted that cardholders from any BCCLS town may (and often do) use their borrowing privileges in Rutherford. Out-of-towners without a library card or from non-member libraries may use RPL's computers, seating areas, and attend certain programs.

89.1% of respondents have a valid library card. 8.1% reported having a library card previously that has since expired, and 2.9% do not have a card. 6.8% of respondents indicated that they "never" use the library. The most common frequency of visits was "less than once a month" (31.2%), followed closely by "a few times a month" (26.5%). Just over 20% could be considered very frequent users, visiting RPL once a week or more.

Respondents were also queried about their usage of RPL's virtual services, which includes digital collections, virtual programs, and reference databases. 36.6% "never" utilize these services. 22.3% use them "less than once a month", and 16.4% use them "a few times a month". The distribution of "daily", "once a month", "once a week", and "a few times a week" was fairly even.

For patrons who do visit the physical library, their most common reasons included borrowing materials inside at the front desk, borrowing materials through the Grab & Go outside pickup service, attending children's programs, working on library computers, or using the library's seating areas to read, work, or study. Individuals who self-identified as not visiting the library most commonly cited the following reasons: using the library's apps (e.g. Libby, Hoopla, etc.) exclusively, a dissatisfaction with the building's location and/or parking, and a preference to social distance due to COVID-19. Other common reasons included not having time, experiencing hardship with the library's hours, and preferring to purchase books and/or media.

Despite the continuation of the pandemic, the majority of respondents (65.2%) indicated a preference for attending library programs in person. 41.8% were interested in a hybrid



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in-person/virtual format, while 32.5% were only comfortable with virtual events. 11.4% were not interested in attending library programs of any kind. For this question, respondents were asked to select all options that appealed to them, so percentages add up to more than 100. The most requested types of events for adults were arts and crafts, lectures, and concerts. For children, arts and crafts, non-musical performances, Summer Reading Club, and concerts were asked for the most.

The survey also inquired about what times patrons would most like to visit the library. Weekday evenings from 5-8pm proved to be the most popular timeslot, with weekday and Saturday afternoons following close behind. 155 respondents also indicated an interest in Sunday afternoon hours. (Note: RPL was open Sundays prior to the 2011 budget cuts, which made the hours unsustainable.)

RPL has recently put more emphasis into marketing its services. The most common ways for patrons to find out about library news and events included the library's e-newsletters, website, and social media outlets. In-library signage and word of mouth were also frequently cited.

The next question asked respondents to rank how the library should allocate its budget towards various resources. The results varied wildly, and it seems there was significant confusion on how to answer. Therefore, this question did not yield much meaningful data.

Respondents were then asked to rank various categories on a scale of 1 (the worst) to 5 (the best). Average ratings were as follows:

- Staff: 4.5/5
- Collection: 3.9/5
- Building & Property: 3.9/5
- Computers & Printers: 3.7/5
- Programs for Adults: 3.4/5
- Programs for Children: 4.0/5
- Hours: 3.5/5
- How well the library is meeting the community's needs: 3.9/5
- Importance of library to the community: 4.6/5

At the conclusion of the survey, limited demographic data was collected in order to better contextualize the results. Most respondents fell into the 35-44 and 45-54 age groups, with Under 18, 18-24, and 75 or Above being the least represented. 8 respondents declined to disclose this information. 57.9% of respondents identified as the parent or guardian of at least one child under 18. A variety of non-English languages are spoken in respondents' homes, with the most numerous being Spanish and Gujarati.



Commentary:

Respondents were given a list of potential additions to the library's service profile and asked to rank them on a scale ranging from "very interested" to "not interested". Later evening hours, Sunday hours, Notary Public service, art exhibitions, homebound delivery, and a makerspace or STEAM lab received the most "very interested" responses. Little interest was shown in loaning more devices, off-site book returns, dedicated tutoring space, or expanded foreign language collections. Patrons' usage of current services was also queried. Based on the data, there is little awareness of digital services such as Brainfuse tutoring, business databases, genealogy resources, and Hoopla.

A short answer section invited respondents to share their thoughts about what additional services they would like to see from the library, what they like best, and what they like least. Common sources of praise were the library staff, the building's central location, and children's programs. The majority of complaints centered on the lack of dedicated parking, feelings that the library's collection is too small, limited hours, and a lack of warmth in the physical building. Many respondents recommended specific programs and expressed an overall desire for a community center or cultural hub in Rutherford. A need for tween and teen programs was also communicated, with many patrons noting that current children's programs tend to end at sixth grade. Several complaints were also received about the children's department moving upstairs, a change that was outside the library's control due to budget cuts. RPL's membership in BCCLS was highly praised, and numerous patrons noted that it makes up for Rutherford's limited collection.

Respectfully submitted,
Gretchen Corsillo, Library Director
February 2, 2022

EXHIBIT C

Warm-up Activity:

List 3-5 adjectives that first come to mind when you think of Rutherford Public Library.

Questions:

- How do you think the library currently fits into the Rutherford community as a whole? How should it fit in?
- What type of services do you most expect to see from the library? What's most important?
- Are there any local organizations or businesses that you would like to see the library partner with? Examples of past partnerships include the Sketchbook Project with the Rutherford Arts Council, educational programs held by local banks, Library Tales class trips with the Rutherford Schools, etc.
- Technology is always changing. How do you feel about the library's current tech offerings? What additional offerings would you like to see? Makerspace, additional computers, etc.
- Survey results indicated a desire for expanded collections. What would you like to see more of in the library?
- Is there anything currently holding us back from being the library of your dreams? If so, what?