

LIBRARY OF THE CHATHAMS

Chatham, New Jersey



Our Next Chapter

STRATEGIC PLAN
Fall 2019 - Fall 2022



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A Message from the Board of Trustees

Changes in how people access and use information, and in the resources, tools, and capabilities needed to manage their lives effectively in today's society, requires new approaches to the services and resources that the library provides. Current trends indicate that library use will grow as people continue to rely on libraries for current technology, content distribution, and content creation, as well as to serve as a social gathering space, learning and literacy center, and a place for civic engagement.

Our updated Strategic Plan is intended to provide renewed vision and direction as we thoughtfully adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities for the benefit of the residents of our communities. Over the next 3 years our plan will be used as a dynamic tool for library staff to utilize in making strategic decisions that will drive the programs and collections we offer. Our long-term vision is to be the intellectual center of our communities by providing a wide array of opportunities for literacy and lifelong learning and we are committed to our mission to enrich the lives of the residents of Chatham Borough and Chatham Township.

We would like to express our appreciation to everyone who dedicated so much of their time and talent to the creation of this plan. We have great expectations and welcome your feedback as we embark upon “our next chapter.”

2019 Library Board of Trustees

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Danielle Dagounis, Superintendent’s Alternate

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Throughout this planning process, the Strategic Plan Update Committee met regularly with our consultant to review library and community data and consider the specifics of current and future library services with respect to the library facility, digital media, community outreach, partnerships and technology. The Committee served as a sounding board, refining the library's key service responses and creatively designing a plan of service that is right for the residents of Chatham Borough and Chatham Township. Library staff members also were involved throughout the process, providing valuable insight into the preferences and needs of library patrons, as well as ideas and suggestions for new or better ways to serve our residents.

The Strategic Plan Update Committee would like to acknowledge the support and contribution of the Library Board of Trustees, the library's governing body that determined the need to update the library's strategic plan and provided input at key junctures during the planning process.

Our new strategic plan will guide our efforts and is intended to set an ambitious course for the future of the library. We also wish to thank all the members of the community that contributed to the process by completing surveys, participating in focus groups and speaking with the library director. Their input into the final plan was invaluable.

Strategic Plan Update Committee

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Susan Allen, Secretary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In our efforts to improve service for all residents of Chatham Borough and Chatham Township and to establish the library as the center of the community, the Board of Trustees began to plan a new future for the library. A Strategic Plan Update Committee was formed that was composed of trustees, Friends of the Library, members of the library staff and representatives from the community. With the assistance of a planning consultant, the group began the process of developing an updated plan for the library.

In order to fulfill our mission and vision, the library remains committed to a comprehensive strategic planning discipline. Our intent is to ensure that the library continues to improve, increase technical proficiency, and effectively meet our community's educational needs. Today, public libraries face challenging times as funding pressures complicate rapid changes in programs and services. By periodically renewing the planning process, the library is responding to the current and evolving needs of our patrons, while strengthening community ties and exhibiting resiliency in the face of rapid change and economic constraints.

The strategic planning process began with an updated assessment of the environment facing libraries today and what the future holds for Library of the Chathams. Using a planning technique called SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results), we were able to engage in uplifting conversations that enabled the planning team to identify opportunities for new and continued services and necessary enhancements to the facility that will meet the changing needs of our communities.

Several key issues formed the context of the planning process. Public libraries in the digital age are operating in an environment where knowledge and creativity drive productivity and economic growth, particularly in highly educated communities like ours. Access to quality sources of information, up-to-date technology, and learning opportunities are central to a community's prosperity, and in this regard, Chatham Borough and Chatham Township are no different. Libraries have traditionally been the community center for expanding access to information, educational opportunities, and social connections. The challenge now for Library of the Chathams is to reshape library services with new thinking and bold actions to meet the information and learning needs of our communities.

Using the results of all the data gathered, including but not limited to an overview of library trends, development of an updated Mission, Vision and Value statements, and community input through surveys, focus groups and community leader interviews, the Committee identified specific service priorities to emphasize in the plan. They are:

- Access to Resources and Information Literacy
- Know Your Community and Be Informed About Local, National and World Affairs
- Inspire Young Readers: Literacy from Infancy through Young Adult
- Make Informed Decisions
- Satisfy Curiosity and Stimulate Imagination: Entertainment and Lifelong Learning

Using these priorities as a guide, the committee developed Strategic Initiatives that we will focus on in the coming years:

Literacy, Discovery and Lifelong Learning
Technology and Digital Resources
Community Connections and Engagement
Marketing Library Services
Preparing the Staff for the Future
A Welcoming Environment
Service Excellence
Growth and Sustainability

With consideration for the size and scope of the library's resources, objectives and an action plan for each were determined. For the most part, library staff, who will be charged with implementing most of the strategic initiatives, developed specific action steps for each objective. For each successive year of the plan, the staff will develop action plans that will address the current needs of the community.

Our library is unique in our communities when it comes to learning, culture and engagement—consistently responsive to individual and community needs and offering a level of customer service that inspires passionate and lifelong loyalty in our patrons. Still, we want even more community members to experience what the library has to offer, and we will achieve that by robustly marketing our programs and services. Our updated plan, along with an ambitious renovation project (RMR), sets forth a new vision to guide the development of library services in our two communities and to create a 21st century destination library that reflects the cultural and educational aspirations of our residents. We believe we will enhance the community by providing a local gathering place that will promote a continuum of education and entertainment starting with early literacy and enhanced services to teens and continuing to expand horizons by offering lifelong learning for everyone who uses our library.

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OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

Our mission and vision statements reflect the library's purpose and our aspirations for the next three years.

OUR MISSION

More than a place for books, Library of the Chathams provides resources and valuable opportunities to build knowledge, culture and social experiences that enrich lives.

OUR VISION

Library of the Chathams serves as the intellectual and social center of the community and continually adapts its collections, services and facility to respond to the changes in the cultural, educational and entertainment needs of our patrons. The library will reach a level of professionalism and performance in all our activities that accurately reflects the quality of our services.

To support our vision, the library will continue to:

- Be a portal to the world of quality information to patrons of all ages and cultural backgrounds by offering library collections in a variety of formats and educational levels;
- Strike a balance between print and electronic resources in order to meet the needs of all library patrons;
- Provide library patrons with a safe, welcoming and comfortable facility;
- Provide a vibrant and dynamic website for use of library information and resources;
- Provide the physical and virtual space that will enable the library to serve as a community learning center for the exchange of ideas by offering a diverse selection of programs and services for children, teens, and adults;
- Respond promptly to the changing nature of library services through its knowledgeable staff, dedicated volunteers, and active community partnerships.

OUR CORE VALUES

Our core values are the foundation upon which we perform our work and interact with each other and the residents of our communities. The Library of the Chathams supports:

Open Access and Services

All residents of Chatham Borough and Chatham Township have a right to free, equitable and convenient access to all basic library resources and services. The library is a place of intellectual discovery, and is inviting, comfortable, and safe.

Intellectual Freedom

We support freedom of speech and the right of residents to receive uncensored information. The library is a forum for the exchange of ideas in our communities.

Respect and Trust

Mutual respect and trust are honored at the library. Patrons and staff are valued, supported, and respected. The library reflects, supports, and celebrates the diversity of the community in its services, collections and staff.

Excellent Customer Service

We strive to create and make available information, materials and programs that anticipate the needs of the community, are convenient and responsive, and are provided by a courteous and professional staff.

Community Partnerships

The library's resources, involvement, and leadership in our communities are extended through partnerships with community members, other Borough and Township departments, businesses, institutions, organizations and agencies.

OUR SELECTED SERVICE PRIORITIES

In order to provide the best possible public library for the community and to strive for continued excellence in our overall program of service, we will focus a significant part of our financial, personnel and physical resources in support of the following five service priorities:

Access to Resources and Information Literacy

Residents of Chatham Borough and Chatham Township will be empowered to locate, evaluate and use information aided by knowledgeable library staff and an up-to-date collection of professionally selected research materials in many formats. Trained staff will help users develop information and technology skills to meet their needs, including instructional programs, one-on-one reference services, and user-friendly technology.

Know Your Community and Be Informed About Local, National and World Affairs

Residents will have the information they need to support and promote democracy, to fulfill their civic responsibility at the local, state and national levels, and participate fully in community decision-making. The library will be a central source for information for the wide variety of programs, services and activities provided by community agencies and organizations and help people understand the history and cultural traditions of the Borough and the Township.

Inspire Young Readers: Literacy from Infancy through Young Adult

Children and Young Adults will have materials, services, and programs designed for their age group that stimulate their imagination, encourage learning, and engage them in the world of reading, starting as infants and continuing through high school to help them succeed in school and become lifelong readers.

Make Informed Decisions

Residents will have the accurate resources they need to identify and analyze risks, benefits, and alternatives when making decisions that affect their lives such as health, wealth and other life choices.

Satisfy Curiosity and Stimulate Imagination: Entertainment and Lifelong Learning

Residents who want to explore topics of personal interest and continue learning throughout their lives will find the resources and programs they want in a variety of traditional and emerging formats.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES, OBJECTIVES AND YEAR 1 ACTION STEPS

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: LITERACY, DISCOVERY AND LIFELONG LEARNING

Chatham Borough and Chatham Township are communities that are committed to education and learning. Our library plays a key role in helping to develop strong reading skills in our children and teens by offering rich literary experiences year-round. Core functions of our library are to create readers for life and promote lifelong learning through a wide variety of stimulating and informative programs and access to evolving collections.

OBJECTIVES

1. Provide quick access to accurate and up-to-date information resources.

Action Plan

- The head of reference services, along with other reference staff, will continue to consult the *Library Journal*, *Booklist*, *American Reference Books Annual*, the Morris County Reference Acquisitions list, along with other major reviewing sources, to purchase current, high quality reference sources.
- Older materials in the subject areas will be removed, unless the titles are deemed to still be relevant.
- By the end of year 1 of the plan, weed items not circulated in 4 years in all collections.
- Develop bibliographies in popular areas.
- Develop homework help guides.

2. Offer a diversified collection in a variety of formats.

Action Plan

- Invite faculty and career counselors from local universities to share what the most in-demand skills are for people entering the workforce and develop programs/collections around those skills.
- Buy more eBooks and eAudiobooks as they become increasingly popular.
- Talk to English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers to get recommendations for books to buy in different languages in order to build foreign language collections.
- Review community demographics annually.

3. Provide sufficient quantities of popular items and make them quickly available to the public.

Action Plan

- Continue to review trade publications for popular new titles.
 - Consider how to add extra non-reservable copies of certain items so they will be more available to patrons who come in the library.
 - Work with vendors on possible bulk discounts that can be applied to bulk orders of popular new titles.
 - Explore leasing best sellers from vendor rather than purchasing.
4. Provide adults with access to and awareness of a wide variety of programs for entertainment and for information to help them meet personal goals and fulfill responsibilities as citizens, workers and parents.

Action Plan

- Contact other libraries, organizations and referenced individuals who will offer quality programs that meet the needs of patrons of all ages and social backgrounds in the community.
 - Expand Chatham Adult Lifeworks Learning (C.A.L.L.).
5. Continually review and evaluate the existing collections and remove items that are no longer relevant or are in poor condition, in accordance with the library's Collection Management Plan.

Action Plan

- Create circulation reports on an annual basis to verify the usage of all print and media sources. Remove those which have minimal value from the collection that have not circulated in the past 4 years. If a source has not circulated, but still has value in the collection; consider retaining. Damaged materials of value should be replaced.
6. Keep the library's website current and user-friendly.

Action Plan

- Enlist the services of a web design agency to reassess our current website and develop a more streamlined online presence that is both easy to update for the staff and interact with for the public.

- Designate a webmaster to provide dedicated and regular maintenance to the website that includes a weekly check system to ensure that all links are active.
- Remove dated materials immediately.

7. Increase awareness of the library's online databases.

Action Plan

- Our database search engine will be presented to students who are writing papers and other researchers by placing it at the top of our database lists, having librarians present it to students and other patrons as a reference policy, and by promoting it through library advertising.
- Highlight the database search link in the homepage square and make more visible.
- Include information about databases in the newsletter and regularly post on social media sites.

8. Encourage staff to actively interact with people throughout the library in order to assist people who need help using the library's resources.

Action Plan

- Staff will walk around for at least 5 minutes during each day to be visible and available, wearing library nametags.
- Consider a staff presence on the lower level.
- Consider a mobile workstation.

9. Enhance reading experiences for adults at all levels.

Action Plan

- Expand the Book Advisory Team (BAT) in order to broaden collection and community input.
- Enhance current book groups by providing follow-up.
- Improve signage.
- Improve book lists with read-alikes.

CHILDREN AND TEENS

1. Provide programs and collections that focus on early literacy skills.

Action Plan

- Contact the local kindergarten and preschool professionals in the Borough and Township and invite them to participate in a committee with the library to advise what resources (books, programs, etc.) are best suited to support their curriculum.
 - Create a link on the website for patrons to suggest books or programming they would like to see the library offer.
 - Create a read together program that pairs teens with children learning to read.
2. Support the formal education of our children and teens with relevant collections and year-round stimulating programs.

Action Plan

- Review journals to purchase the best non-fiction titles for these age groups.
 - In order to get ideas for educational programs for children and teens we will talk to Morris Area Youth Services (MAYS) librarians, contact the various private and public schools, and reach out to non-librarian and non-local entities.
3. Offer outreach programs to schools, preschools, and local organizations that provide services to preschool and school-aged children.

Action Plan

- Create book kits for local preschool teachers to borrow for their lesson units.
 - Offer monthly "Library Hour" to local preschools to highlight new books.
 - Establish a scout resource center and promote it to local troops.
 - Continue helping with Eagle Scout and Gold Scout projects.
 - Encourage evening events at the library, scavenger hunts, etc. that bring large numbers of children AND parents to the library.
4. Broaden the outreach to teens by developing a volunteer program that utilizes their skills and provides an opportunity for positive community service.

Action Plan

- Publicize that the library offers community service credit.

- Offer activities teens can do with little training any time they come to the library.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: TECHNOLOGY AND DIGITAL RESOURCES

We recognize the changing needs of our users with respect to technology and their demand for non-print resources. As future demands emerge, we will respond accordingly.

OBJECTIVES

1. Meet the technology needs of residents by providing robust and readily available Wi-Fi service throughout the building.

Action Plan

- Have the Morris Automated Information Network (MAIN)¹ reconfigure our wireless network to a PoE (Power over Ethernet) system that will be managed by our new firewall/router. Also enabling fail-over and/or load balancing for additional optimization.
 - Use an outside vendor to update our wireless network and hardware to an Enterprise System that will provide a more powerful reach throughout the building.
 - Set up a “staff only” wireless network (possible with an Enterprise system) that will allow staff to connect through a secure wireless network when accessing staff only documents and services.
2. Expand the library’s digital collection of popular materials and information resources.

Action Plan

- Create information/large bookmarks with instructions for using technology.
 - Consider cloudLibrary discoveryTerminal.
3. Explore methods to increase information literacy.

Action Plan

- Conduct library video tour/information sessions that include highlighting databases, collections and services.
- Educate the public on how to evaluate information.

¹ Morris Automated Information Network (MAIN, Inc. or MAIN) is a consortium of libraries in Morris County that share borrowing privileges, make group purchases and share an integrated library system.

4. Keep current the library's plan for maintaining and upgrading staff and public computers, printers and the technological infrastructure.

Action Plan

- Revisit the library technology plan and keep it current.
 - Follow web-based opportunities available through MAIN (such as the Polaris Leap) that will increase functionality and public service workflow for staff.
 - Keep what we have looking fresh.
5. Anticipate the demand for new technology and the latest trends in the delivery of library services.

Action Plan

- Read technology and library blogs and articles.
- Search current technology news.
- Attend library technology section meetings.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

As an important and trusted institution in our community, we are in a unique position to partner with other organizations that will enable us to achieve our vision to be the intellectual and social center of the Borough and the Township.

OBJECTIVES

1. Maintain connections with leading not-for-profit community organizations to assure that the combination of our knowledge and resources will be easily available to the members of our communities.

Action Plan

- Maintain connections with area group leaders and leading non-profit organizations to explore ideas to support them.
- Plan presentations to our senior centers, ECLC and other local organizations to discuss library news and services.
- Provide support for book groups.
- Consider creating community guides to restaurants and other businesses.

2. Seek new partnership opportunities with local businesses.

Action Plan

- Reconsider policies concerning local businesses.
 - Create a "Local Business Showcase" – an ongoing series of programs highlighting local businesses and their owners.
 - Promote the new business resource center once it is established.
 - Promote the policy that gives free borrowers' cards to people who work at local businesses.
 - Sponsor an open house.
3. Be an active partner with the Borough and the Township in assuring that the community receives the services it deserves.

Action Plan

- Consider participating in town activities such as the Fishawack Festival, farmers market and the July 4th parade in order to let people know that we are part of the community.
 - Offer programs and services such as storytimes, paperback books and library card registrations at the pools.
 - Keep staff apprised of elected officials participating in library activities.
4. Assist the community in preserving the history and culture of Chatham Borough and Chatham Township.

Action Plan

- Reach out to the historical societies in the community, and other qualified speakers, who have knowledge of local history and can present information to the public in an interesting format.
- Solidify relationships with the towns' historical societies via a written agreement on shared policies.
- Have more library programs involving the historical societies.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: MARKETING LIBRARY SERVICES

The library will seek to improve awareness of our resources and services to better serve our residents, attract new users and build advocacy in our community.

OBJECTIVES

1. Create a marketing plan for the library as a community gathering place that complements the enhancements being made to the facility.

Action Plan

- Reach out to local civic organizations to let them know that we have space for their functions.
 - Launch the initiative with an event – “What Your Library Can Do for You.”
 - Use children’s program opportunities to educate parents and caregivers about programs for adults.
 - Publicize non-event library information.
2. Ensure that all of the library’s programs and services are communicated to the public using a wide variety of techniques.

Action Plan

- Develop a checklist of marketing venues or techniques - includes social media and print sources. (E.g. cable stations, mobile website, etc.)
3. Develop new ways to showcase the library’s resources enticing visitors to explore the collection and expand their library experience.

Action Plan

- Research mailing methods to residents to improve the delivery of the newsletter. Investigate first class mail.
- Do more displays and promotion of library resources like Kanopy as soon as people walk in the library. (E.g. run Kanopy on computers facing out, get more moving displays with Kanopy for showings to kids, and run a video or web tutorials on circulation computer facing out.)
- Use local TV and radio stations to advertise library resources.
- Display new items.

4. Strive to be the first place people go to get information about our communities.

Action Plan

- Update community binder and publicly display it on the slat board display.
- Develop new patron packets and update yearly.

5. Seek opportunities to promote advocacy and support for the library.

Action Plan

- Promote the formation of a young professional's group to support the library.
- Compile a list of neighborhood social media groups.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: PREPARING THE STAFF FOR THE FUTURE

Public libraries are dynamic and demands for new and innovative services require that our library staff possess a wide set of skills to effectively serve an educated and increasingly more diverse population.

OBJECTIVES

1. Evaluate staff roles and responsibilities to ensure they are aligned with the library's mission and vision.

Action Plan

- Reevaluate job descriptions to accurately reflect the library's mission and vision statements.
- Develop staff versatility by cross-training.
- Make sure staff understands that their roles are not frozen in time and WILL change as library needs change.
- Involve part-time staff in meetings and other staff development opportunities.

2. Develop, implement, and regularly review the library's policy and procedure manual in order to adjust to changing library services.

Action Plan

- Keep the policy & procedures manual current and revise as new methods and practices are developed in house and/or by MAIN.
- Review regularly by revision date. Set a schedule, and, if older than e.g. 5 years, review for relevancy, changes made since written, staff knowledge and practice of.
- Develop a library personnel manual.

3. Provide the staff with the resources to work in teams to pursue new initiatives in services, technology, collection development and programming.

Action Plan

- Create small committees of staff members to search for current awareness sources and to consider recent developments in these areas in order to make recommendations to the management and staff.
4. Establish competency standards for staff, so that library employees are capable of providing technological assistance on the various electronic devices currently in use.

Action Plan

- Consult a set of competency standards provided by a professional library association or institution (such as WebJunction Competency Index for the Library Field).
- Using competency standards as a guideline, provide instructions and reviews of skills through web-based options as well as workshops, books, and other Internet sites.
- Reference staff to construct a chart that links particular electronic devices with software or programs that work with that device.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

We are committed to providing a safe and welcoming place for residents to explore knowledge, culture and social experiences.

OBJECTIVES

1. Proceed with the library's reorganization plan for better use of space for patrons and library staff functions.

Action Plan

- Keep residents and staff informed on the progress. Staff members are encouraged to talk to public.
- Be prepared to submit a grant application to the State Library for the construction bond fund grant.

2. Offer an inviting teen area.

Action Plan

- Review literature on teen spaces and study best examples at other libraries.
- Visit and talk to teen librarians about what works and what doesn't, before planning furniture and equipment purchases.

3. Ensure that the library's physical plant and exterior are well maintained.

Action Plan

- The Facilities Team does a daily walk through of the building to report on issues. The staff, especially custodial, should always have an awareness of the outside of the building and grounds, looking for changes or problems each season brings.
- Create a public suggestion box that could help with awareness of facilities problems.
- Do a staff spring/fall cleanup of work areas and kitchen.
- Simplify and beautify staff entry ways.
- Create a visual barrier at back door to hide the recycling/book collection areas.

4. Help people find available parking.

Action Plan

- Tell people about alternate parking by providing more maps in the library, mailing the parking map, and placing a sandwich board sign in the parking lot.
- Insert parking information in new patron packet.

5. Consider indoor environmental issues when selecting new or replacement furniture and fixtures.

Action Plan

- The Assistant Director and other staff members will attempt to purchase, in alignment with the goals stated in the RMR project, as much as is practical, eco-friendly furniture (furniture that is made in such a way as to have little negative impact on the environment).
- The library will have a policy of purchasing energy-efficient light bulbs and fixtures.

6. Make improvements to the library's meeting rooms.

Action Plan

- Make sure artwork is on display as frequently as possible.
- Check semi-monthly to see if the carpet needs cleaning, the walls are in need of repainting, and spotlights are all working.
- Consider offering equipment to the public for programs.

7. Ensure that the library is a safe place.

Action Plan

- Install camera software on all staff computers.
- Review department and individual work areas with an eye to safety concerns for staff and visitors.
- Promote an understanding of cultural differences.
- Make certain the library is in compliance with all of the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: SERVICE EXCELLENCE

We are focused on making certain that everyone using our library is consistently provided an excellent customer service experience. Staff members recognize that communication is essential so that the needs of our residents are anticipated and met and that they can take full advantage of our programs and services.

OBJECTIVES

1. Offer customer-focused service in all library departments.

Action Plan

- Improve communication/interaction between departments by sharing suggestions and/or concerns at staff meetings.
- Consider procedure change to allow patrons to pick up their own holds.
- Research the implementation of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) technology.

2. Provide ongoing customer service training.

Action Plan

- Encourage training for all staff offered by the automation consortium (MAIN).
- Share updates and new procedures with part-time staff.

3. Reward exceptional individual or departmental customer service performance.

Action Plan

- Document a co-worker or department going the extra mile to make someone's visit to the library a special experience. Make a note describing the "good deed," put it in a jar, and a name will be pulled periodically to be given a "Caught you being great!" recognition prize. (staff meeting recognition, treat, etc.).
- Consider other staff reward programs.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVE: GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Library Board of Trustees will maintain the highest levels of financial efficiency and integrity and govern the library in a transparent manner that aligns with the library's institutional priorities.

OBJECTIVES

1. Secure the library's future financial stability.

Action Plan

- Research the implementation of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification).
- Maintain image of library as reliable, authoritative.
- Conserve library supplies and utilize money properly.

2. Continually assess the progress of the library's Strategic Plan.
3. Develop year 2 action plans.

Action Plan

- See Tracking Our Progress on the following page.

4. Continue to recognize and support the Friends of the Library.

Action Plan

- Support the Friends' needs for various activities throughout the year.
- Help to promote the Friends organization.
- Continually express appreciation to the Friends.

TRACKING OUR PROGRESS AND SUCCESS

Much time and effort went into developing our updated strategic plan. In order to determine if we are successful in achieving our stated objectives, we need to set forth a plan of assessing our progress on an ongoing basis.

The library Director will hold quarterly staff meetings to discuss the strategic plan and track the implementation and progress of action plans for the current year. This process not only will keep the strategic plan uppermost in the minds of staff as they carry out library activities, but also will allow for any needed modifications throughout the following two years.

At the library Board of Trustees meeting immediately following the quarterly staff meeting, the library Director will provide the trustees with a progress report of the strategic planning initiatives, any feedback received from staff and any modifications that need to be made to the action plans depending on changing needs and circumstances.

Finally, an annual assessment by the library Director will be given to the Board and shared with the staff, Borough and Township officials and library patrons. The trustees will also be informed about what to expect in the next quarter.

The library may also want to survey members of the community for their opinions and comments on current and newly implemented services and improvements to the library facility.

Measures for Success

In determining our success rate each year, we will begin or continue to:

1. Measure and analyze customer use and compare with previous years.
 - Record traditional use statistics for adult and children's departments, including circulation, numbers of visitors, numbers of reference questions, number of programs and program attendance, use of library computers, visits to the library and to the library's website, usage of online databases, and the percentage of the population that have library cards.
 - Report on increases or decreases in usage.
 - Strive to achieve an upward trend over the life of the plan in the following output measures:
 - Circulation of popular materials
 - Circulation of e-content items
 - Online database usage
 - Program attendance
 - Number of cardholders

2. Chart the progress on the following program initiatives:
 - Number of programs and attendance figures.
 - Monthly visits to the schools.
 - Number of teen volunteers.
 - Number of partner events with local organizations and groups.
 - Number of community residents presenting programs at the library.

3. Chart the progress of the following collection initiatives:
 - Downloadable eBooks and eAudiobooks.
 - Availability of new, popular titles.
 - Business Center resources.
 - Number of items removed from the collection.

4. Chart the progress on the following services/facility initiatives:
 - Bridging Space to Place project – Renovate, Modernize and Reorganize (RMR).
 - Database of local organizations, clubs and community groups.
 - Outreach programs to schools, preschools, and local organizations.

5. Chart the progress on the following marketing initiatives:
 - Creation of a marketing plan.
 - Progress of posting library events on various venues.
 - Successful efforts to enhance public knowledge of the benefits of reading to young children.

6. Chart the progress on the following staff initiatives:
 - The numbers of staff attending MAIN training programs.
 - Success of “Caught you being great” initiative.

7. Measure levels of user satisfaction:
 - Annually develop and distribute a web-based survey to determine levels of satisfaction with library services.
 - Monitor and report on program evaluations that attendees will be asked to complete.

RESOURCES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT OUR PLAN

It is essential that the library identifies as service priorities not just what can be accomplished efficiently, but to align the allocation of its financial, physical, personnel and technology resources with what is truly desired by the community and deemed the highest priorities in community feedback and analysis. In order to effectively implement the library's plan, the following resources are needed.

Funding

The library's annual budget covers personnel, building operation and maintenance, computer hardware and maintenance, membership in MAIN (Morris Automated Information Network), library materials in all formats, public programming, supplies and staff training. Over 79% of the library's annual expenses involve personnel costs and building operation and maintenance – the two most expensive line items in the budget.

Membership in a multi-library consortium like MAIN with 37 member libraries benefits the library by providing shared resources, technical support, online resources for patrons to borrow, and automation costs based on the buying power of a large consortium of public libraries. For a joint library like Library of the Chathams to deliver the best possible 21st century library service, it is crucial to have access to shared resources to meet the varied needs of our residents in the most cost-effective manner and to help ensure that the integrated library system and other library technology remains advanced and progressive.

The desire to carry on a tradition of superior service in an attractive and well-maintained facility will certainly stress the limitations of the library's annual budget. Additional financial resources for action steps outlined in this plan include:

- Funding for up-to-date and expanding collections
- Increased services for teens
- Technology enhancements such as the introduction of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) and updated computers
- Increased programming for the public
- Improved marketing and public relations
- Continued training and improvement of staff skills

Moreover, the success of the library's capital campaign *Bridging Space to Place* will enable the library to update the facility to meet the changing needs of the communities.

The ongoing planning process includes measurement tools to properly determine the success of various objectives in the plan, ensuring that funding is targeted to those initiatives that are best used and most valued.

Personnel

The library's updated plan is ambitious and may require additional staff to implement new initiatives as well as maintain the current services. These might include:

- Project to weed all collections by end of year 1 of the plan
- Monthly visits to the schools
- Development and maintenance of the business resource center
- Marketing initiatives
- RFID implementation
- Website management

Facility

The library facility is an extremely active and attractive community library and the public seems very pleased with the facility. The library has been diligent about the continued need to enlarge and upgrade the facility as the community has grown and usage continues to increase. The *Bridging Space to Place* initiative is key to the success of several of the objectives in this plan. The renovation project includes:

- Teen Center for young people and for adults who require quiet spaces
- New Children's Activity Room
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)/Conference Room that doubles as a meeting room
- Four new quiet study rooms
- A modern, cataloged local history room
- Modern, efficient lighting
- Unobstructed interior and exterior walkways
- Space for expanded programming

In addition, the parking issue is ongoing and carrying through with some of the action plans to assist patrons in finding available parking is critical.

The circulation of print books still remains strong and when queried, focus group participants, including the teens, still prefer a printed book to an eBook for most items borrowed. While the print reference section is gradually being reduced and the library plans a major weeding of the print fiction and non-fiction collections, it is likely that the print collection will not grow substantially over the next three years. The stacks areas that may require reassessment are DVDs, music on CD, books on CD, and magazines as these formats continue to transition to downloadable and streaming formats.

Collections

During our survey period, we discovered that the library's collection of books and non-print materials is still the most used service and ranks high in importance to library patrons along with the ability to reserve items and request items from other libraries. Even today, with all the available technologies, interest in reading the printed book is still high among all age groups. Areas of the collection on which the library will focus include more downloadable and streaming content, additional copies of popular fiction and non-fiction titles and larger teen and foreign language collections.

Technology

The implementation of RFID is a major initiative that will ultimately save time and labor for library staff and provide an enhanced experience for library patrons. Items are returned to the shelf more quickly for patron availability, and collection management including weeding, inventory and finding misplaced items is more easily performed with RFID technology.

Hand-held devices such as e-readers, tablets and smart phones have resulted in a need to offer technology assistance in addition to regular computer training classes offered by library staff. Staff members who are knowledgeable in basic computer maintenance, troubleshooting, and routine functions are needed to instruct and assist the public. The rise of social media online and the abundance of "apps" on mobile devices create new opportunities for staff to educate the public and improve residents' information fluency.

Recognizing that many of our residents are not able to visit the library due to various working and personal constraints, the library will strive to maintain a website that is easy to navigate, up-to-date, and contains links to a variety of free and reliable information so that the website can function as a virtual library for those who are unable to visit in person. The website and Facebook page along with other social media tools are becoming increasingly necessary to keep residents informed and engaged about library activities and services.

To succeed as a 21st century public library, staff expertise needs to transfer from traditional reference service to increased technology support not just in maintaining the hardware and troubleshooting when problems arise, but as educators and guides in the cyberworld.

CREATING OUR PLAN: THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In 2018, the library Board of Trustees contracted with a consulting firm to help guide the library through the process of updating the library's strategic plan. The library is strongly committed to the strategic planning process and wanted to ensure the future success of the library and to continue to deliver the superior service residents have enjoyed for many years. To continue to meet these high expectations of our residents during a time of rapid change in the library environment, it is imperative that the library continues to plan for the future and effectively allocate its resources.

The library contracted with PRO LiBRA Associates, Inc. to assist the library with the strategic planning process that followed guidelines developed by the Public Library Association and the New Jersey State Library. The Strategic Plan Update Committee was comprised of members that were selected from the library Board of Trustees, staff, and members of the Chatham community. The Committee met regularly, and all meetings were facilitated by the consultant. During the first phase of the project, the consultant conducted appreciative inquiry sessions with the staff and trustees, the results of which were used to develop a new mission and vision statement for the library and to establish core values that will provide a foundation for the updated strategic plan. The community profile was reviewed by studying recently updated census information, the library's expenditures and revenues for 2017, and library usage statistics for the past year. Library output measures were benchmarked by comparing our library to other New Jersey libraries with similar budgets and population service areas.

Community engagement was central to the plan development process. In an effort to define the community's opinions on the library and service expectations, the needs assessment process involved broad community participation and input that included: a survey designed for both users and non-users; focus groups with adults and school students; and one-on-one interviews with community leaders conducted by the library Director. These activities were undertaken to ascertain the perceptions of residents about their library and to solicit positive and negative comments about the programs and services provided. High school students who attended the focus groups were highly engaged and provided relevant observations that played a key role in the development of the library's service priority which will guide the library's strategic and operational efforts over the next three years in its service to teens.

Upon the completion of all the community research, the Strategic Plan Update Committee reviewed a dozen Library Service Priorities prepared by the consultant and selected those that they felt best responded to the community's needs and expectations. From these priorities, the committee developed strategic initiatives that would become the library's focus for the next three years and weighed the results against our library's current and anticipated financial resources, building facilities, technology, existing collection and staff expertise. Objectives were established for each of these in initiatives and action plans for year 1 of the plan were developed by library staff.

Finally, an ongoing process was developed to track our progress of achieving the various objectives over the course of the year.

***PLANNING DOCUMENTS USED IN
THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR PLAN***

WHAT WE HEARD FROM OUR COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Residents were invited to participate in the planning process in a variety of ways. The needs assessment process involved community input that included a survey designed for both users and non-users, focus groups conducted by the consultant, and eight one-on-one interviews with community leaders conducted by the library Director. Residents who attended the focus groups were highly engaged and provided relevant observations that played a key role in the development of the library's core service priorities, which will guide the library's strategic and operational efforts over the next three years. The library received many compliments as well as honest comments about what they would like to see improved.

Focus Groups

The consultant conducted focus groups with adult members of the Friends of the Library and high school students. In the focus groups our consultant listened to feedback about what the library means to the community and what improvements could realistically be made in the next few years. The following topics were discussed at these activities:

- Importance of a public library in the community
- Reasons for using the library
- The library's collections
- The library's website, access to research databases, and public computers
- Communications, library publicity and marketing
- Customer service attitudes
- Programming for adults and teens
- The current facility and parking

Library Surveys

A survey of library users was conducted during the fall of 2018. In all, nearly 300 responses were submitted. Those surveyed answered questions about their satisfaction with library services, frequency of library use, what collections and services they use, and what services are most important to them. Their feedback offered ideas and understanding of what was important to them today and what they hope to see in their library five years in the future. Of the residents responding to the user survey, 52% were between the ages of 25 and 54 (some likely filling out the survey with services to their children guiding their responses) and 37% were 55 or older.

Interviews with Community Leaders

The library Director conducted one-on-one interviews with three community leaders representing various constituencies. All interviewees were familiar with the library and were complimentary. Emerging from these interviews were several comments and ideas that focused primarily on ways to improve the library facility and services. They included:

- A strong library serves as a community learning center
- A library brings people together
- Multi-purpose space is important
- Improving space for teens is important
- The library needs to find the best way to communicate the programs and services the library provides to the public
- Some people don't use the library because they buy their books and other media

A key component to the development of this plan was collecting community input and feedback about library services that enabled the planning committee to make decisions that will better meet residents' needs and interests. This section describes the results of what we heard from our residents and played a significant role in determining the specific actions that will guide the library's service program over the next 3 years.

Summary of Key Findings

Focus group participants, community leaders and survey respondents agreed on many issues and shared common concerns for the future of our library. Among them were:

- Chatham Borough and Chatham Township are still viewed by many as a small town where neighbors know and care about each other. The highly rated local public schools and public services are in high demand. The senior population has grown and looks forward to enjoying retirement at home in their own community.
- Residents care about the community and feel that the library should play an important role in connecting people with each other. The concept of the library as a community center was mentioned several times and should be emphasized in the library's future library services.
- Focus group participants and survey respondents could not praise the library enough when discussing the features and services that are currently offered.
- Staff got high praise for customer service in all of the focus groups. And nearly 93% of the survey respondents said that staff service was excellent or very good.
- More multiple copies of best sellers are still needed to keep the library's collections current with the needs and expectations of local residents.

- There were several requests for more downloadable content, particularly in the 25-54 age group.
- Residents view the library as a place where they would like to browse for new books and DVDs, as well as an after-school destination for students to do research and homework.
- Despite the current robust program offerings for adults and children, residents would appreciate even more and view the library's role as the social and learning center of the Chatham communities.
- There were several comments about the library's meeting rooms and the lack of availability for library and community programs.
- The library needs to be more visible in the community and use all avenues of marketing to make residents aware of the wide variety of programs and services that the library offers.
- The collections and programs for children are excellent and should continue.
- More cooperation and publicity through the schools could entice teens to use the library.
- Teens in the focus group would like a larger area for study and collections. Several mentioned they would like to have a makerspace in the library.
- The library should provide a place for social interaction for millennials.
- Working adults, many with long commutes, generally don't have the time to use the library.
- A few community leaders expressed concern for the future of public libraries in general unless libraries can adapt to the changing trends in the way information is accessed.

Other Findings

- People described the library as:
 - Friendly
 - Conveniently located
 - Clean
 - Welcoming

- The top five services that people are using at the library are:
 - Borrowing items from other MAIN libraries
 - Reserving items through the online catalog
 - Adult and Children’s programs (55% in the 25-54 age group)
 - Using the library’s website (including managing and monitoring personal accounts)

- The top areas of the collection that people use are:
 - Adult fiction, non-fiction and new book titles
 - DVDs (movies)
 - Museum passes
 - Audiobooks and downloadable digital media
 - Children’s fiction, non-fiction and new book titles
 - Magazines and newspapers

- A majority of focus group participants prefer print resources over digital formats

A PROFILE OF CHATHAM BOROUGH AND CHATHAM TOWNSHIP

Chatham Borough and Chatham Township share a common heritage and are sometimes jointly referred to as The Chathams. Although the two are actually separate municipalities, they do share a library, school district, volunteer ambulance corps, zip code and post office. Residents have been known to say the Borough and the Township are really just like one town that happens to have two different governments.

Noteworthy for the fine examples of Colonial and Victorian architecture along its tree-lined streets, the borough's historic district on the east end of Main Street is filled with charming homes. Proud of its Early American roots, the township was a resting spot for George Washington during the Revolutionary War.

Cultural opportunities in Chatham include historical, art, garden and musical groups and organizations, as well as programs at neighboring Drew and Fairleigh Dickinson Universities.

Chatham Borough is governed under the borough form of New Jersey municipal government. The government consists of a mayor and a borough council comprised of six council members, with all positions elected at large. A mayor is elected directly by the voters to a four-year term of office.

Chatham Township is governed under the Township form of government with a five-member Township Committee. The Township Committee is elected directly by the voters in partisan elections to serve three-year terms of office on a staggered basis, with one or two seats coming up for election each year. At an annual reorganization meeting, the Township Committee selects two of its members to serve as Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Towns with libraries bordering or near Chatham Borough and Chatham Township that local residents also frequent are Madison, New Providence and Florham Park. Many residents also use the Morris County Library in Whippany.

For a detailed demographic analysis, see Addendum I.

OUR LIBRARY PROFILE

Our Library Yesterday

The Chatham Borough Library was founded in 1908 in downtown Chatham. A referendum was placed on the November 1974 ballot to create a joint library that would serve the residents of Chatham Township as well. The measure passed and the Library was renamed **The Joint Free Library of the Chathams**. The library is administered by six trustees, who are appointed jointly through the two governments via the mayors of Chatham Borough and Chatham Township or their representatives, as well as a representative from the joint School District of the Chathams.

Our Library Today

As the population of the community has grown and technology has broadened, so have the services that the library provides. The Library of the Chathams is one of the busiest libraries in Morris County and offers a wide array of programs and services to its residents. The Friends of the Library play an important role in the success of the library by providing supplemental funding to the library as well as its members volunteering their time and talents to promote and carry out many important services.

Organizational Profile

- One stand-alone, 35,396 square foot facility
- Population served (Borough and Township) – 19,414
- Total hours open to the public per week – 65
- Number of employees (including janitorial staff) – 32 (19.01 FTE)
- Number of full-time professional librarians – 5

2018 Statistics

Financial Data (2018)

Total Expenditures - \$1,988,098

Service Statistics

- Total Circulation – 225,616
 - Adult Circulation – 123,145
 - Children’s Circulation – 92,098
 - Electronic circulation – 10,373
- Reciprocal Borrowing – 49,174
- Loans provided to other libraries – 28,249
- Loans received from other libraries – 31,527
- Circulation of non-print collections – 27.33%
- Circulation of electronic collections – 4.94%
- Reference Transactions – 37,437
- Patron visits – 245,002
- Number of registered borrowers – 15,612 (including 836 non-resident)
- Number of Internet computer users – 33,193

Materials and Resources Owned (as of December 2018)

- 116,264 print books
- 5,254 ebooks
- 2,743 audiobooks (spoken)
- 3,594 audio CDs (music)
- 2,876 eAudiobooks (downloadable)
- 12,805 videos (DVDs)
- 207 print serial subscriptions
- 77 electronic serial subscriptions
- 26 databases purchased
- Total Volumes – 145,248

Programming

- Number of library sponsored adult programs – 336
- Attendance at adult programs – 4,554
- Number of library sponsored programs for young adults (age 12-18) – 92
- Attendance at young adult programs – 752
- Number of library sponsored programs for children (age 11 and under) – 500
- Attendance at children’s programs – 14,810
- Total number of community sponsored programs (all ages) – 408
- Attendance at community sponsored programs – 4,236

Technology

The library is a member of the 37 member Morris Automated Information Network (MAIN) consortium and offers a wide variety of technology to its library patrons. The consortium-shared Integrated Library System (ILS) is hosted by Polaris. Through the library's website (<https://chathamlibrary.org>) library patrons can:

- Access the searchable online catalog
- View their account as well as renew titles and place holds.
- Access downloadable audio and eBook titles.
- Access research databases from the library or from home, on topics as diverse as history, genealogy, literature, full-text newspaper/magazine indexes and career and job assistance.
- Access information about programs for adults, young adults and children that includes an online events calendar and reservations for programs.
- Access links to local information.

The library currently has:

- 34 public PCs for public use
- 25 computers with Internet access
- Wi-Fi provided

Wireless sessions 41,562 (annually)

Source: Library of the Chathams 2018 Annual Report to the NJ State Library

OUR LEVEL OF USE – A 3-YEAR PERSPECTIVE

The average usage of our library over the last 3 years has remained relatively stable. The decline in circulation, while very slight, is on par with many public libraries in Morris County and across the country.

Function	2016	2017	2018
Circulation	227,147	226,008	225,616
Reciprocal Borrowing	23,159	54,541	49,174
Items Borrowed from Other Libraries	32,574	33,513	31,527
Items Lent to Other Libraries	32,077	30,024	28,249
Public Computer Sessions	48,051	31,307	33,193
Reference Transactions	34,510	35,649	37,437
Program Attendance (Adult, YA, and Children) (1)	22,112	23,173	20,116
Annual Library Visitors	238,527	251,799	245,002
Registered Cardholders (2)	14,880	14,866	15,612

- (1) Library sponsored programs
- (2) Includes resident and non-resident cardholders

ADDENDUM 1 – DETAILED COMMUNITY ANALYSIS

Chatham Borough and Township, New Jersey

Total Land Area: 11.603 Square Miles

POPULATION	2016 Est.	2010	% Inc/Dec
Total population	19,558	19,414	0.74%
Male	9,628	9,270	3.86%
Female	9,930	10,144	-2.11%
Under 5 years	1,089	1,456	-25.21%
5 to 9 years	1,944	1,865	4.24%
10 to 14 years	1,907	1,783	6.95%
15 to 19 years	1,378	1,196	15.22%
20 to 24 years	611	499	22.44%
25 to 34 years	1,234	1,303	-5.30%
35 to 44 years	2,927	3,109	-5.85%
45 to 54 years	3,209	3,527	-9.02%
55 to 59 years	1,305	1,203	8.48%
60 to 64 years	880	979	-10.11%
65 to 74 years	1,411	1,254	12.52%
75 to 84 years	827	794	4.16%
85 years and over	440	309	42.39%
Median age – Borough	38.6	38.0	1.58%
Median age – Township	43.8	43.3	1.15%
18 years and over	13,622	12,293	10.81%
21 years and over	13,062	13,049	0.10%
62 years and over	3,207	3,077	4.22%
65 years and over	2,678	2,494	7.38%
RACE			
White	17,276	17,662	-2.19%
Black/African American	237	167	41.92%
Asian	1,732	1,100	57.45%
Some other race	63	130	-51.54%
Two or more races	245	328	-25.30%
Hispanic or Latino*	1,085	806	34.62%
*Note: May be of any race.			

SELECTED COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

2016 ESTIMATES

INCOME	Borough	Township	New Jersey
Median Family Income	201,314	206,250	90,757
Mean Family Income	259,955	306,266	118,771
Median Household Income	150,625	156,607	73,702
Mean Household Income	223,219	250,861	101,634
Per capita income	71,445	89,794	37,538

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (Over 25)	Borough 5,538	Township 7,091
Less than high school	96	108
Some high school – no diploma	47	88
High school graduate (includes GED)	534	759
Some college – no degree	440	618
Associate degree	211	213
Bachelor's degree	2,220	2,883
Graduate or professional degree	1,990	2,422

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

CHATHAM BOROUGH AND CHATHAM TOWNSHIP	
Nursery school, preschool	679
Kindergarten to 12th grade	6,284
Kindergarten	301
Elementary: grade 1 to grade 4	1,539
Elementary: grade 5 to grade 8	1,572
High school: grade 9 to grade 12	1,362
College, undergraduate	472
Graduate, professional school	242

EMPLOYMENT

OCCUPATION - CHATHAM BOROUGH AND CHATHAM TOWNSHIP	
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	8,975
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	5,696
Service occupations	817
Sales and office occupations	2,015
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	196
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	161
INDUSTRY - CHATHAM BOROUGH AND CHATHAM TOWNSHIP	
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	8,975
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	0
Construction	326
Manufacturing	623
Wholesale trade	213
Retail trade	598
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	87
Information	288
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	2,125
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	1,504
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	2,057
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	588
Other services, except public administration	379
Public administration	187
CLASS OF WORKER - CHATHAM BOROUGH AND CHATHAM TOWNSHIP	
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	8,975
Private wage and salary workers	7,496
Government workers	828
Self-employed in own not incorporated business workers	643
Unpaid family workers	8
MEANS OF COMMUTING TO WORK - CHATHAM BOROUGH AND CHATHAM TOWNSHIP	
Workers 16 years and over	8,789
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	5,656
Car, truck, or van – carpooled	333
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	1,803
Walked	158
Other means	82
Worked at home	767

Mean travel time to work – Borough – 38.4 minutes Township – 36.7 minutes

HOUSING

HOUSING OCCUPANCY - CHATHAM BOROUGH AND CHATHAM TOWNSHIP			
Total housing units			6,999
Occupied housing units			6,589
Vacant housing units			400
Homeowner vacancy rate	Township – 0.7%	Borough – 0.0%	
Rental vacancy rate	Township – 17.3%	Borough – 10.8%	

YEAR HOUSEHOLDER MOVED INTO UNIT - CHATHAM BOROUGH AND CHATHAM TOWNSHIP	
Occupied housing units	6,589
Moved in 2015 or later	145
Moved in 2010 to 2014	1,699
Moved in 2000 to 2009	2,203
Moved in 1990 to 1999	1,271
Moved in 1980 to 1989	569
Moved in 1979 or earlier	702

Source: American Fact Finder, U.S. Census Bureau (2010 Census; 2016 Estimates)