

# STRATEGIC INITIATIVES FOR LIBRARY OF THE CHATHAMS STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Strategic Plan 2023-2026



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# INTRODUCTION



## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Our updated Strategic Plan is intended to provide renewed direction as we thoughtfully adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities for the benefit of the residents of our communities. Over the next three 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 life-long learning, and we are committed to our mission to enrich the lives of the residents of Chatham Borough and Chatham Township.

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## FACILITY IMPROVEMENT URGENTLY NEEDED

It is a priority to bring the *Bridging Space to Place* initiative to bring to completion. A phased approach can be used if it cannot be funded as one project, but annual cost increases are now prohibitively high. The construction costs will increase by an estimated 10% annually plus additional soft costs estimated at 5% of the construction cost per phase of construction, because the bidding process and other repeat expenses will be incurred with each phase.



## FACILITY IMPROVEMENT & MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT

- Make every effort to complete *Bridging Space to Place* project in one or two phases.
- Teen Focus: The teen population in Chatham has grown with an observable increase in library patronage by teenagers in 2022. Initiatives giving more resources to outreach, encouraging library use among young adults, will continue supported by a generous donation received from the Woman's Club.
- Local History/Genealogy Center support continues to be strong in community surveys, and reference statistics support expansion of resources in these areas.
- Census data shows a 24% increase since 2016 in those who work from home. Expansion of Business Center services would serve this new population of remote and hybrid working patrons.
- Repairs and improvements have been postponed too long. Humidity and electrical issues must be corrected and are integral to the *Bridging* project.
- Continue Phase I planning and execute in 2023.
- Plan for Phase 2 by developing and implementing supplemental funding measures.
- Maintenance management is a priority. Goals are to implement a Capital/Equipment Lifespan Plan by 2025 while also refining the Building Manager position.





# DEVELOP SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING MECHANISMS

Library income from the mandated minimum funding from our towns is unknown from year to year. In order to anticipate income or supplement in years when funding from towns is reduced, ongoing fund development becomes essential. Staff position and compensation changes cannot be sustained without this assurance. The 2022 attempt to request more than the mandated minimum indicated that such requests will likely never be assured even with hard data justification due to factors outside library control.

## Action Steps 2023

- Create and fill a part-time Donor Stewardship position.
- Approach and solicit feedback from the leadership of the Friends of the Library about the library forming a separate foundation.
  - Determine whether forming a foundation is feasible. If the decision is made to proceed, retain a consultant or seek volunteer assistance to recruit a Board of Directors.
  - Proceed with formation of a foundation or determine some other long-range fund development mechanism such as an annual appeal letter.

## Action Steps 2024-2025

- Host focus groups and inaugural meetings to form a foundation, or develop an alternate plan if needed.
- Work with an event planner, if a foundation is to be created, to plan an event celebrating and publicizing the formation. Expected implementation in 2024.
- Look at crowdfunding for targeted needs using Kickstarter and/or GoFundMe campaigns in 2024 and 2025. Begin growing an endowment fund in 2025. [Building an endowment fund may not be possible without a foundation in place.]

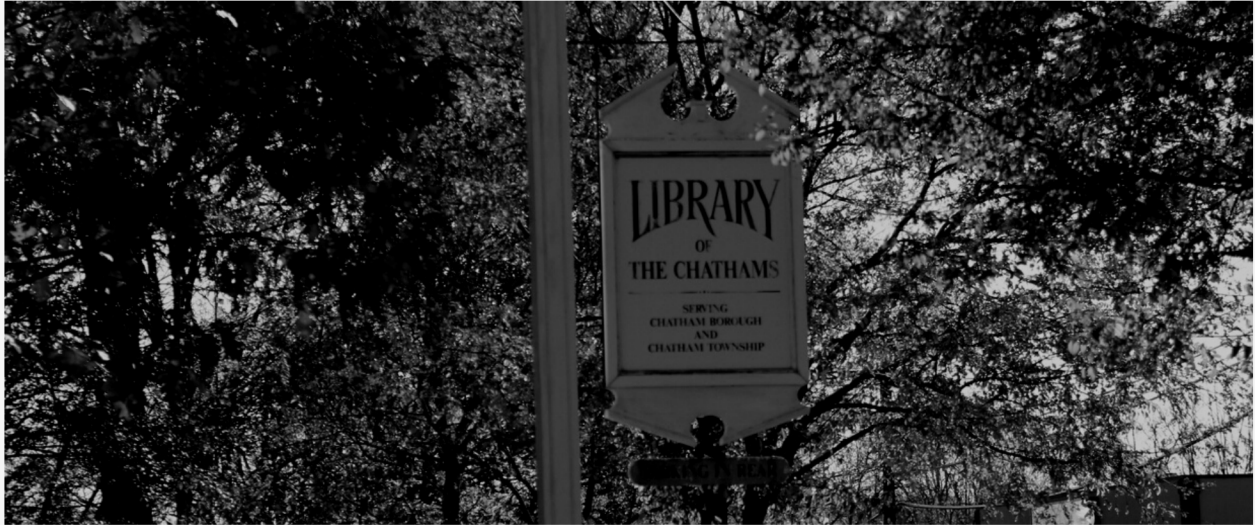




# ADVOCACY/MARKETING PLAN

## ESSENTIAL FOR FUND DEVELOPMENT SUCCESS AS WELL AS PROMOTION OF LIBRARY SERVICES AND VALUE

- Create and execute a marketing plan in 2023 to include social media and image facets. Marketing plan will be neutral in tone and mood.
- Develop a budget for advocacy/marketing for 2024 implementation.
- Advertise on social media.
- Incorporate regular use of a videographer at library events.
- Establish a plan to enlist at least two sponsorships by local businesses each year.
- Form partnerships with local and nonprofit organizations.
- Further develop library volunteer programs in 2022, 2023 and 2024, and encourage engaged participation.
- Expand opportunities for community input via programs, communications, and solicitations.



# REORGANIZE ADMINISTRATION

REALIZING THAT THE LIBRARY HAS MOST OF THE SAME RESPONSIBILITIES AS OUR MUNICIPALITIES BUT NOT THE STAFF/EXPERTISE, CONTINUE EFFORTS TO GAIN BETTER INFORMATION SOURCES AND REDIRECT FUNCTIONS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION.

- Redefine and enable the Director's job to include regular fund development while moving all daily operations to the Assistant Director position. Make other adjustments as needed, taking advantage of staff turnover.
- Automate the purchasing request and purchase order process.
- Conduct a director evaluation at least every two years.
- Continue to define and refine duties, outsourcing when cost-effective and efficient.
- Incorporate succession planning into the compensation plan.

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# USE TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT LIBRARY SERVICES



- Establish an exclusive wireless network for staff members providing them with improved mobility to work productively around the library.
- Continue the initiative to replace staff desktop computers as they age with laptops and tablets. Implementation to date has been successful, but is a five-year implementation plan.
- Evaluate and purchase fund development software such as Razor's Edge, Blackbaud, Aplos, etc.
- Incorporate new, cost-effective technologies regularly.

**THE TECHNOLOGY PLAN IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN. THE COMPLETE PLAN IS A SEPARATE DOCUMENT.**



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# STAY ON CUTTING EDGE OF RESIDENTS' NEEDS

OUR PATRONS ARE THE REASON THE LIBRARY EXISTS. PROVIDING SERVICES AND RESOURCES ARE NOT STRETCH GOALS BUT THE LIFEBLOOD OF THE LIBRARY. CONSTANT EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT IS STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE BUT SOME ACTION STEPS SHOULD BE GUIDED BY BOARD POLICY.

- Continue all core services and initiatives at existing levels as long as demand requires; discontinue those that are no longer utilized. Accelerate new services as they develop.
- Evaluate services and resources improvements.
  - Improve metrics for measuring the success of library programs and services and, based on results, adjust what is offered and what is replaced.
  - Standardize collection maintenance requirements and evaluate their impact.
- Structure a Staff Development Plan in conjunction with a Compensation Plan
  - Require minimum standards for all staff continuing education in stretch areas targeted by the supervisor/director.
  - Hold regular staff training days including mandatory workshops and problem solving.
  - Continue to train staff on and utilize new technologies with excellent return on investment.
- Develop foreign language collections.
  - Develop our foreign language collections based on current usage and patron requests.
  - Evaluate and utilize MAIN World Language Collections.
  - Test new acquisitions with tailored outreach to population segments and continue to evaluate needs as the demographics of Chatham change.
- Develop Career Center
  - There was an 11% increase in the age group 20-24 years. This demographic of residents would likely benefit from career development programs and resources.
  - Evaluate career development needs and develop resources based on the current use of library career services.
  - Target population demographic segments, including women in business, and test interest.

