

**Cranford Public Library Strategic Plan
Board of Trustees
January 2019 to December 2021**

- I) Introduction
- II) Committee Membership
- III) The Cranford Community
- IV) The Cranford Public Library
 - i) Mission Statement
 - ii) Vision Statement
 - iii) Projected Children's Room Expansion
 - iv) Basic Information
 - v) A Brief History of the Cranford Free Public Library
- V) The Strategic Plan
 - i) Strategic Planning Goals
 - ii) Strategic Planning Objectives
 - iii) Monitoring Progress
- VI) Acknowledgments

I. Introduction

The Board of Trustees of the Cranford Public Library established a committee to create a strategic plan for the Library's service to the community. The plan will guide everyday decision making and project planning so that a few well-chosen objectives can direct the organization for the next three years.

A committee comprised of representatives from the Board of Trustees, Library staff, school district, and Friends group met over the course of seven months to draft a strategic plan focused on a series of service responses. The committee held four public meetings to gather input from the community. The committee also reviewed circulation statistics, annual reports, and census data for the community of Cranford. In addition, the committee sought feedback from the community regarding the proposed expansion of the Library children's room.

Over the next three years, the Library will continue to meet the challenges of balancing patron needs, emerging technology changes, infrastructure maintenance and improvements, and budgetary constraints. The plan is not intended to be an exhaustive treatise, but rather a strategic look at key aspects of the direction the library plans to take over the next three years. Progress is made daily on many fronts by many different people and groups, all of which help the library realize these and many other goals. New ideas and opinions are always welcome, and the Director and the Board of Trustees will continue to evaluate new suggestions that will enhance the services and mission of the Library.

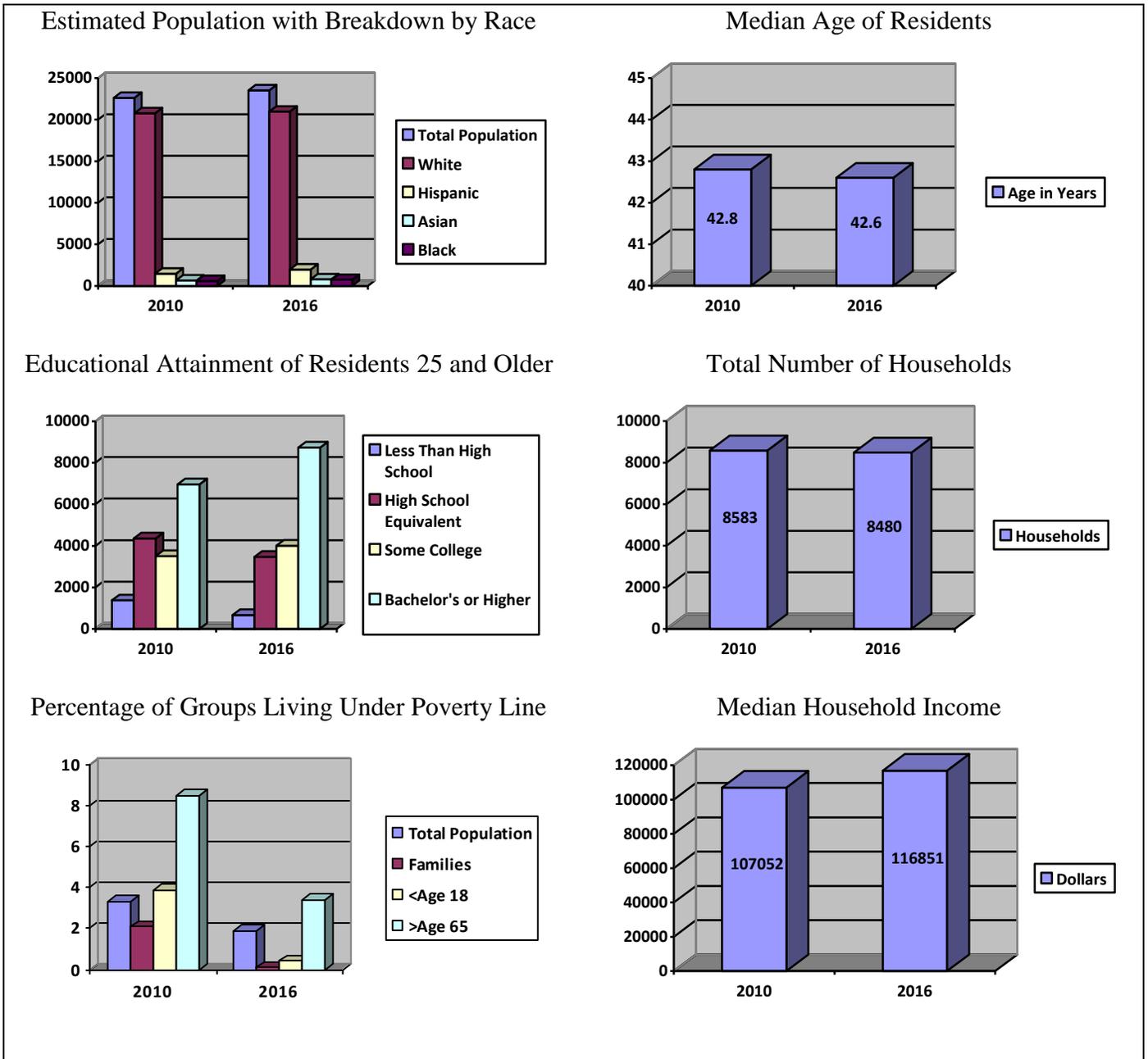
II. Committee Membership

- Patricia Pavlak, Chair
President, Cranford Public Library Board of Trustees
- Susan Burke
Trustee, Cranford Public Library Board of Trustees
- Wayne Hayes
Trustee, Cranford Public Library Board of Trustees
- Commissioner Patrick Giblin
Mayor's Alternate, Cranford Public Library Board of Trustees
- Kathleen Cirillo
Liaison to the Friends of the Cranford Public Library
- Kristen Mallon
Liaison to the Cranford Public School District Board of Education
- Judy Klimowicz
Assistant Director/Children's Librarian, Cranford Public Library
- Michael Maziekien
Director, Cranford Public Library

III. The Cranford Community

Source of data: Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: US Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Cranford has a total estimated population of 23,531. The breakdown by gender is 48.2 % male and 51.8% female. The racial composition is as follows: 89.1% White, 8.3% Hispanic, 3.1% Black, and 3.4% Asian. The median age of residents is 42.6 years. With regard to education, 51.7% of residents 25 years or older hold a Bachelor's degree or higher. There are 8,480 occupied households. The median household income in dollars is \$116,851. Approximately 0.1% of families and 1.9% of the population are below the poverty line, including 0.4% of those under age 18 and 3.4% of those age 65 or over.



IV. The Cranford Public Library

i. Mission Statement

The mission of the Cranford Public Library is to provide cultural, recreational, educational and informational services to all residents of the community as well as to all other eligible for its services. To accomplish this goal, the library:

1. maintains a current collection reflecting the needs and interests of the public;
2. provides prompt, efficient and courteous service;
3. makes facilities available for community interest programs;
4. provides convenient access;
5. cooperates with other community and professional agencies to expand and to strengthen its services for the benefit of the community.

ii. Vision Statement

The Cranford Public Library aspires to be:

- the center of a diverse community where people gather to learn, discuss, and engage;
- the leader in meeting Cranford's information needs;
- a place where people of all backgrounds feel welcome and accepted;
- a physical space that inspires learning and is user-centric;
- a partner to our township and schools;
- a constantly evolving entity that changes with the needs of the community and users.

iii. Projected Children's Room Expansion

In 2015, the Library commissioned an architectural study, funded by a grant provided by the Union County Freeholders, to explore the feasibility of expanding the children's room. The study was commissioned in response to the inadequacy of the current space to meet the needs of the public. Problems include inaccessibility of the collection, lack of sightlines, lack of available outlets, lack of shelf space, insufficient office and storage space, and cramped high-traffic areas. The study, performed by a firm with a long history of public library projects in New Jersey, includes a plan to expand the children's area from 2,445 square feet to 4,995 square feet.

The results of this study were presented to the Cranford Township Committee in a series of meetings in early 2018. After discussion, Committee members voted to include 50% of the projected cost of the expansion in the 2018 capital budget, dependent on availability of the other 50% from an alternate source. The Library intends to apply for a grant to cover the remaining costs, pursuing funds made available through the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act. In 2017, a statewide referendum was approved by New Jersey voters, authorizing issuance of \$125 million in municipal bonds to support library construction projects. The Cranford Public Library Board believes that, through a successful application for these funds, services to children and parents will be greatly improved.

Cranford Public Library Long Range Plan: 2019-2021

iv. Basic Information

Membership	
Adults	4,057
Young Adults	252
Children	1,005
Total Resident Members	5,314
Purchased Card	1
MURAL Borrowers	569
Total Non-Resident Users	570
Grand Total Resident & Non-Resident	5,884

Collection	
Books	128,561
Audiocassettes and Recorded Books	4,421
Videocassettes	639
DVDs	6,152
Compact Discs	5,913
Puppets	219
CD-ROMs & CD-ROM Kits	72
Museum Passes	29
Misc	230
Total	146,236

Circulation	
Adult Collection	95,283
Young Adult Collection	5,776
Children's Collection	126,774
Total	227,833

Digital Circulation	
eAudio	4,788
eBooks	12,166
Total	16,954

Computer & Typewriter Use	
Internet Sessions	10,953
Word Processor Sessions	899
Typewriter Sessions	558
Wireless Sessions	24,066
Total	36,476

Programs	
Adult Programs & Meetings	140
Young Adult Programs & Meetings	48
Literacy Volunteer Sessions	73
Children's Programs	194

Children's Summer Reading Program	
Participants	391
Total Hours Read	16,327
Carnival Attendance (Children & Adults)	494

Young Adult Summer Reading Program	
Participants	52
Total Number of Books Read	686
Carnival Volunteers	25

Database Usage	
Database Sessions	60,762
Database Searches	21,743
Database Views/Retrievals	49,782

Figures are from the Cranford Public Library 2017 Annual Report and New Jersey Public Library Data and Analyses.

v. A Brief History of the Cranford Free Public Library

The origin of the Cranford Free Public Library goes back to the Cranford Library Organization, a subscription library founded in 1880. In 1895 the Library Organization, short of funds, gave its 1,061 volume collection to the Wednesday Morning Club, which then formed the Cranford Circulating and Subscription Library. In 1907 the Cranford Free Public Library Association was founded by three women's clubs, the Wednesday Morning Club, the Village Improvement Association, and the Progress Club. The Association's sole mission was the establishment of a free, non-subscription library. Thanks to the efforts of the Association, a referendum to establish a tax-supported public library was passed by Cranford voters. On December 2, 1908, the Township Committee appointed the Trustees under whose direction the library would be operated. In 1910, a library building, financed in part by the Carnegie Fund, was erected on Miln Street. A white-columned structure, it resembled a Southern mansion more than a typical Carnegie library. Cranford's population at the time was 3,641.

In 1924, a 20 by 40 foot addition was constructed in order to accommodate the town's growing population and the library's growing collection. In 1930, the library's first telephone was installed. During World War II the library served as a Defense Council Information Center. In the spring of 1942, a victory book drive yielded 2,199 books for soldiers. The 1940s and 1950s represented a period of frustration for the library, as it struggled to cope with an expanding population, heavier reference demands, and an undersized, antiquated building. A survey conducted in 1955 by the State Bureau of Public and School Library Services pointed to the inadequacy of the library with respect to its staff size, its facilities, and its book stock. This survey formed the basis for the library board's recommendations to the Township Committee in ensuing years.

In 1962, thanks to support from the township committee and the library board, a new library building was erected on Walnut Avenue, the library's present site. At the time the library's collection numbered 33,933 volumes. By the end of 1975 the collection had reached 81,509 volumes in a building designed for 75,000. At the end of 2017, the collection numbered 146,236 items.

Another significant date in the library's history is 1979, the year the Friends of the Cranford Public Library was formed. The Friends, who support the library through funding and volunteer efforts, have had a major positive influence on the library ever since.

With the support of the township committee and the library board, the library underwent a major renovation in 2000. A two-phase project, phase one was the building of a new community center adjoining the library building's north side, and phase two was the renovation and expansion of the library. The community center, which opened in the summer of 2000, was erected on the library parking lot. (A new parking lot for both the community center and the library was built on the south side of the library.) Once the community center was completed, the library moved its operations to rooms on the first floor of the community center so that work could proceed on the library building. Beginning in July 2000, the library was completely renovated and partially reconfigured, and an elevator and new 5,400 square foot second floor were added.

The library re-opened in its refurbished space on June 2, 2002. The project was financed in part by a \$400,000 grant administered by the New Jersey State Library, while the Friends of the Library raised more than \$50,000 toward the purchase of new public furniture.

The library acquired its first computer for public use in 1982. In November 1991 the library's main operations--cataloging, circulation and the public access catalogue--were all automated. Today the library

has twenty-one computers available to the public, including twelve providing access to the internet, six providing access to the online public library catalog, two word processing stations, and one early literacy station. The library also provides wireless internet service to our patrons. In addition, library patrons have access to over 600,000 digital items including ebooks, audiobooks, music, and video through downloadable and streaming services. The library's website allows patrons to use a wide array of library services and proprietary databases remotely and makes the library accessible from anywhere.

Throughout its more than a century of service to the citizens of Cranford, the Cranford Public Library has grown and evolved to meet the needs of a changing society, and to provide our patrons with the services and materials they need. With planning and flexibility, the Cranford Public Library will continue to serve the community for the next century and beyond.

V. The Strategic Plan

i. Strategic Planning Goals

The Strategic Plan is structured around six key areas targeted for improvement, enhancement, and review. Planning objectives in each area follow in the next section.

1. Collection Development

A set of procedures and policies shaping the library's collection of print and non-print materials, electronic resources, and unique collections.

2. Information Technology

The library's use of computers, software, peripheral devices, and other related technologies to ensure access, transmission, communication, manipulation, and protection of data.

3. User Engagement

The creation of programs, events, and exhibits to promote lifelong learning for the public and enhance each patron's experience, along with the development of metrics to assess response to library services.

4. Outreach

The promotion and provision of services to populations who may not otherwise have access to or knowledge of those services, and the development of new initiatives to reach these populations.

5. Environment and Ambience

The improvement of the library's physical space, with special regard to expansion, comfort, utility, safety, and the expansion of the children's room.

6. Professional Development

Assurance of high quality service to the community through formal and informal learning opportunities for library staff.

ii. Strategic Planning Objectives

The following objectives have been established to support the Strategic Planning Goals.

1. Collection Development

- a. Evaluate and act on purchasing and lending policies for new and popular materials.
- b. Evaluate library databases, renewing, promoting or replacing resources as necessary.
- c. Seek opportunities to grow and enhance digital collections.

2. Information Technology

- a. Create a comprehensive technology plan.
- b. Improve and expand wireless internet access.
- c. Examine market for integrated library systems.

3. User Engagement

- a. Increase the number of registered borrowers.
- b. Expand programming responsive to emergent trends, including hands-on demonstrations of digital services.
- c. Develop surveys to gauge patron responses and needs.

4. Outreach

- a. Position the library as a welcoming organization for newcomers.
- b. Foster proactive outreach to civic, educational and government organizations.
- c. Test changes to library hours.

5. Environment and Ambience

- a. Address the limited space available for children's services and collections through expansion.
- b. Work with members of the public to improve comfort and usability of library spaces.
- c. Develop and implement policies necessary for safety, disaster preparedness, and ADA compliance.

6. Professional Development

- a. Encourage staff participation in local and national chapters of professional organizations.
- b. Encourage regular attendance of online training opportunities.
- c. Develop plan for staff recognition.

iii. Sustaining and Monitoring Progress

As the plan is formally set into motion in January 2019, the Director will report to the Library Board of Trustees and the Board will review results on a quarterly basis. The board will add additional objectives within the Strategic Planning Goals as they become necessary and establish priorities to ensure a prudent balance between these goals and objectives and the day to day operating issues that will arise.

VI. Acknowledgments

The Board of Trustees wishes to acknowledge the efforts of all who contributed to this planning effort and look forward to the continued partnership in realizing all of the goals set forth in the 2019 - 2021 Strategic Plan. The Board extends their thanks to individuals who attended our Strategic Planning Meetings or otherwise provided feedback and input into this process. The Board also appreciates the cooperation of the Township of Cranford, the Cranford School District, and the Friends of the Cranford Public Library in their continuing efforts to support the Library.

Approved by the Cranford Public Library Board of Trustees December 19, 2018.