

Summit Free Public Library Long Range Plan



2018 - 2020

Summit Free Public Library

Background

Located in Union County 25 miles west of NYC, the City of Summit sits atop the second of the Watchung Mountains. Summit is home to more than 21,000 residents who speak over 35 languages, representing an economically and culturally diverse community. Summit is a major transportation hub with 30-minute direct access to Manhattan, major highways and the Newark Airport. The City is made up of six square miles of tree-lined streets, open spaces and an active community-oriented business district. Summit's public school system has been ranked consistently outstanding in New Jersey with more than 90% of its students college-bound, and Summit is also in close proximity to top-rated NJ private schools.

Library History

On January 10, 1874 the Ladies Book Club of Summit held a meeting to form the Summit Library Association with 2,000 shares of capital stock issued at the cost of \$5.00/share to each stockholder. The books were kept in the home of Dr. Risk and the library was open for two hours each Saturday afternoon. By 1878, the library moved into the new school building and the library was now open on Wednesday and Saturday afternoons. Non-stock holders were permitted to borrow books at the rate of \$.15/week. In 1882 the library moved again to the rear room of Mrs. Rapelyea's notion store.

A dedicated library building was finally built in 1891. The small round building on Tulip Street served as a library until 1911 and is now the Summit Playhouse. In 1901, Summit residents voted to establish the library as a Free Public Library, thereby a municipal library receiving taxpayer support. Andrew Carnegie donated \$21,000 for a new library to be built on Maple Street in 1911. The architect for the new building was Earl Harvey Lyall. Thirty local high school boys moved 1,000 books to the new building in boxes strung on rope, making the trip by foot! An additional sixty boxes were moved on three horse-drawn carts.

The Carnegie building served the community well until January 1964 when a mid-century modern building was opened right next door. A chute was built between the two buildings and the cartons of books were slid from one building to the other. The current building was updated and expanded to more than 35,000 square feet in the late '90s and continues to serve the community well.

In 2017, over 300,000 items were circulated from the library. The library collection contained over 180,000 items including eBooks and eAudio books and over 200 periodical subscriptions. There were almost 20,000 library card holders and 205,515 people visited the library during the year. The library offered 991 programs for adults, teens and children that were attended by almost 19,000 people. The library's public access computers logged over 17,000 sessions and patrons connected to the library's Wi-Fi more than 90,000 times.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Summit Free Public Library informs, enriches and inspires the community.

VISION STATEMENT

The Summit Free Public Library will be a destination vital to the fabric of the community. The library will be the focal point for knowledge, entertainment, social gathering and the exchange of ideas.

I. GOAL: To provide comprehensive library materials, programs and services to meet the needs of all patrons.

- 1) Provide library materials to meet patron needs.

Action Steps:

- a. Continue to provide an excellent print book collection
- b. Continue to investigate new e-book lending models.
- c. Continue to investigate streaming services, collections and programming.
- d. Continue to investigate newer and emerging formats and technologies.
- e. Follow trends in education in collection development.
- f. Evaluate and enhance the foreign language collection.
- g. Continue to provide materials to supplement school reading programs such as reading kits, core reading materials and materials for special needs children.
- h. Investigate establishing a lending library of “things”.
- i. Gather and disseminate information on volunteer opportunities at community agencies.

- 2) Provide services and materials that establish the library as a resource for the business community.

Action Steps:

- a. Create a designated business center including collections on starting a business, writing a business plan, etc. to this area.
- b. Investigate co-working/conference spaces.
- c. Provide equipment for business people (fax machine, scanner, etc.)
- d. Continue to provide programs on starting a business, networking, etc.

- 3) Provide improved access to library services.

Action Steps:

- a. Investigate updating library cards.
- b. Improve organization of library materials and services.
- c. Investigate cardless borrowing.
- d. Investigate cardless borrowing with our partner libraries.
- e. Check to see if TLC system can accommodate sending reminders to borrowers when their cards are expiring.
- f. Investigate allowing borrowers to place hold on items on the shelf.
- g. Implement text messages for holds notification.
- h. Investigate sending text messages for overdue items.

- 4) Provide stimulating programming for all ages.

Action Steps:

- a. Utilize new trends in programming for all ages.
- b. Increase collaboration with community organizations to enhance programming.
- c. Invite authors, experts and performers to share their expertise.
- d. Host a volunteer fair for local community agencies to be matched with volunteers.

- 5) Provide education and career information services.

Action Steps:

- a. Continue to offer career assistance services including resume assistance and job search skills.
- b. Continue to offer access to information on colleges, technical schools, financial aid and exam preparation.
- c. Reach out to local businesses to inform and identify their needs.

- 6) Provide opportunities for learning.

Action Steps:

- a. Offer training for technology, software, databases, and social media.
- b. Offer training for use of devices.
- c. Provide links to online tutorials.
- d. Provide training for parents/caregivers on trends in early literacy/literacy strategies.
- e. Offer training/programs to promote civic engagement.
- f. Screen TED talks.

- 7) Increase outreach services.

Action Steps:

- a. Provide access to library services to patrons with special needs.
- b. Increase visits with public schools, private schools and community organizations.
- c. Look into working with SAGE to provide homebound delivery.

- 8) Preserve and/or digitize local historical documents.

Action Steps:

- a. Work with local organizations and other libraries to share, preserve and digitize historical materials.
- b. Evaluate the relevance of the local newspaper archives.
- c. Seek out funds for digitization of historical materials.

- 9) Identify and review library policies as needed.

Action Steps:

- a. Revise library policies to improve customer service as needed.
- b. Develop plans to deal with emergencies in the first year of the plan.

II. GOAL: To provide functional current technology.

- 1) To provide access to information regarding the holdings of neighboring libraries.

Action Steps:

- a. Investigate the benefits of joining or forming a consortium.

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- b. Make people aware of Jersey Cat and other resources available.
- 2) Continue to modernize and enhance the library website.

Action Steps:

- a. Add local digitized documents.
- b. Investigate alternate options to book study rooms online.
- c. Improve mobile interface for website and catalog.

- 3) Continually upgrade and replace staff and public computer hardware and software.

Action Steps:

- a. Replace laptops for computer lab; consider Chrome Books.
- b. Investigate vendors offering device lending; consider Chrome Books.
- c. Keep software up-to-date.
- d. Continue to boost wireless connectivity throughout the building.
- e. Investigate self-check systems.
- f. Investigate new meeting room and study room reservation software.
- g. Obtain tablets for staff to use when assisting patrons in the stacks.
- h. Investigate lending hot spots.
- i. Investigate using Chrome base for public PCs.

III. GOAL: To provide a welcoming, comfortable, accessible and functional environment.

- 1) Redesign public and staff spaces to improve functionality and appearance.

Action Steps:

- a. Work with a consultant to create an ongoing master plan.
- b. Renovate or replace the circulation desk.
- c. Increase the size of the reference desk.
- d. Rearrange and replace furniture as needed
- e. Ensure that all space is in compliance with building and fire codes.
- f. Provide smaller 2 person tables for tutoring and other smaller activities.

- 2) Continue to improve lighting and electrical capacity throughout the building.

Action Steps:

- a. Continue to review the number of outlets and electrical capacity and provide adequate outlets for staff and public as needed.
- b. Continue to increase lighting levels throughout building to meet the needs of patrons.

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- 3) Improve signage throughout.

Action Steps:

- a. Provide a map for easy location of collections.
- b. Utilize large, clear and uniform signage throughout.

- 4) Identify the library as a community emergency center as needed.

Action Steps:

- a. Size and purchase and install a generator.
- b. Meet with City representatives to determine how the library can fit into the City's emergency plan.
- c. Keep wireless capacity current.
- d. Purchase an adequate supply of power strips for public use during emergencies.
- e. Identify neighbors such as the Middle School, the YMCA, The Connection, etc. that may use the library as an emergency evacuation center and be prepared to accommodate such groups.
- f. Develop a communication plan with City.

- 5) Develop policies and plans for emergency situations.

Action Steps:

- a. Develop emergency plans for water damage, natural disasters, active shooter situations, evacuation, etc.
- b. Develop a communication plan.
- c. Hold regular drills.

IV. GOAL: To provide the community with a well-trained and highly motivated staff.

- 1) To provide a well-trained and competent staff.

Action Steps:

- a. Provide ongoing training for staff members.
- b. Staff members shall participate in at least one Continuing Education opportunity per year.
- c. Continue to provide computer training as needed.
- d. Continue to provide staff training on using new devices and technology.
- e. Offer team-building exercises for staff.
- f. Plan for a regular staff-development day.

- 2) To ensure excellent customer service to all patrons.

Action steps:

- a. Provide a name tag.
- b. Provide an online suggestion box on the website.

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- 3) Review and update policies.

Action Steps:

- a. Continue to update the personnel policy.
- b. Organize and update the policy manual.
- c. Update job descriptions, as needed.
- d. Identify need for additional policies.

V. GOAL: Increase public awareness of the changing role of the library in today's world.

- 1) Improve public relations and marketing of library services.

Action Steps:

- a. Develop public relations procedures and update as needed.
- b. Centralize publicity for all departments.
- c. Consider hiring a marketing professional to disseminate program and service information.
- d. Create an annual marketing plan.
- e. Develop a "brand" in public relations that standardizes all library publicity materials.
- f. Consider utilizing paid advertising for promotion.
- g. Increase networking by working with local organizations and associations.
- h. Develop and distribute a "new member packet" to patrons when they get a library card.
- i. Explore alternative media and venues for the dissemination of information.
- j. Work with the Newcomers Club to distribute information about the library to new residents.

VI. GOAL: Supplement the budget by establishing new funding sources.

- 1) Identify and seek out alternate funding sources.

Action Steps:

- a. Work cooperatively with the Friends of the Library and Library Foundation.
- b. Seek out local corporate sponsors for larger-scale programs.
- c. Create a brochure outlining the donation process.
- d. Seek out new grant sources.

SUMMIT FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY - 2018
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