

# Kennett Library

## Strategic Plan 2019-2024

### INTRODUCTION

The Kennett Library is at a crossroads. With a collection of 55,000 items, circulation of 180,000 items and 120,000 visits per year, the Library continues to fulfill the traditional functions of a library. It offers free access to books, magazines, films, and videos as well as a quiet place to read, learn and study.

However, like all libraries in America, the Kennett Library has been evolving. The advent of ready access to information through digital networks and devices along with the availability of meeting, reading or working spaces in coffee shops and book stores, has meant that the Library has increasingly focused on its role as a community center. The Kennett Library has been very active in creating programs and classes in response to community needs. In 2018, the Kennett Library will have offered over 1,000 programs for children, teens and adults.

Participation in these programs attracts people to Kennett Square, builds community and makes connections between various populations within southern Chester county. In particular, Kennett's Adult Literacy Program has become a unique resource helping many residents improve their language and literacy skills as well as prepare for citizenship or pursue a GED. Importantly, many of Kennett's programs benefit from close collaboration with other community groups. More and more, our schools, civic groups and governmental entities look to work with the library to respond to local needs for information, learning and collaboration. In this sense, the concept of the library transitioning into a community center has become more and more a reality.

Unfortunately, the Kennett Library's ability to develop its potential as a truly vibrant center for lifelong learning and community engagement is seriously compromised by its building. Built in 1961, the Library's building on State Street lacks many of the features it needs: large and small meeting spaces, classrooms, maker spaces and dedicated technology capacity as well as much more parking. Additionally, the costs of repair and maintenance of an old facility are increasingly putting a strain on the budget. The need for a new library has been generally recognized by our patrons and the public, and certainly by the current Board of Trustees.

A special section devoted to a summary of the current "New Building" project is detailed in the New Building Initiative section of this plan. The reader is encouraged to review that section as this is a multiyear and multifaceted project requiring the resources of library personnel, a specific committee devoted to the building project, the Board of Trustees and many consultants, not to mention the critical support of the service area municipalities.

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The Kennett Library is a regional library supported by the townships of East Marlborough, Kennett, New Garden, Newlin, Pennsbury, Pocopson, West Marlborough, and Kennett Square Borough.

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## STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS AND APPROACH

The strategic plan has benefited from two major research initiatives associated with the new Building. Our architects completed a Visioning Project, partly sponsored with a grant from Chester County, involving a series of presentations and discussions with service area residents. More recently, Fairmount Ventures has finished its Feasibility Study which entailed very in-depth interviews with community leaders in the area. The strategic planning committee supplemented these with an informal survey of residents at a local community event, as well as with visits to other libraries and research on library trends and innovation.

Since the Kennett Library is still in the early stages of its new building initiative and that project will require significant commitment of resources, the strategic plan has been broken into two sections: 1) On-going operations and 2) New Building Initiatives.

### Operations

We have identified goals for the on-going operations, recognizing that resources may be limited and priorities rearranged by the project. We know, for example, that much more attention will need to be paid to listening and communication with all members of the community as we go through this process. Our goals reflect a serious commitment to put in place the processes needed to drive the Library's evolution going forward, which will benefit not only the current library but the new library as well. Near term, we've also focused on goals which will further the Library's evolution to a community center. Because of the building's limitations, some may prove to be more "proof of concept" or pilot programs rather than major new offerings for the future.

### New Building Initiatives

The second section identifies goals associated with the design, funding and construction of a new building to be located at the intersection of State and Willow Streets.

## IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW UP

The Board of Trustees has committed to a quarterly strategic plan review process. The Library Director, along with the chairs of relevant Board Committees, will be responsible for assigning accountability for specific goals relative to ongoing operations as well as for setting clear timelines and more detailed project plans as needed. The objectives relative to the new building will remain the responsibility of the Board's New Building and Capital Campaign Committees.

Both the Board and Library staff expect significant revisions and further development of this plan by the end of 2019, when the full scope of the building program and its consequences are clearer.

## Kennett Library

**Vision:** To be the catalyst for a community of lifelong learning and discovery.

**Mission:** Igniting imagination, enriching lives, creating community.

### Values:

<b>Innovation</b>	We embrace the Library's role as community leader and empower staff to learn, innovate and lead the search for new and better ways to provide services, programs and materials.
<b>Learning</b>	We connect people with reading, information and technology to expand curiosity, explore interests, and discover passions.
<b>Collaboration</b>	We reach out to community groups and local public service institutions to support each other's goals and programs and to leverage our collective resources.
<b>Openness</b>	We provide a friendly, helpful, stimulating environment that is built on free access to library resources and the exchange of information.
<b>Inclusion</b>	We celebrate diversity, invite multiple points of view, and recognize the potential of every individual.
<b>Respect</b>	We act with integrity, deliver exceptional service, and earn the public's trust as responsible stewards of its resources.

## **Section 1: KENNETT LIBRARY OPERATIONS**

### **GOAL: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & COLLABORATION**

**Objective 1:** Develop a program for systematic listening to all stakeholders and communities to inform library services and programs

*Initiatives:*

1. Identify all stakeholders. Create and implement a plan for meeting and/or listening to each on an annual or more frequent basis. Start with a standardized list of questions to understand perceptions of the library and to identify needs and opportunities for shared initiatives.
2. Create and execute a quarterly customer satisfaction/feedback process.
3. Introduce a suggestions box. Publicize resolved issues.
4. Identify and execute a manageable approach to gathering non-user input.
5. Develop and implement a means of polling the community for new program/service ideas. Consider creating programming advisory groups.

*Measures:*

1. Stakeholder listing with meeting dates, notes etc.
2. Library user feedback survey responses
3. Periodic summaries of non-user feedback
4. Reports from polls or advisory group meetings.

**Objective 2:** Devise and execute a communications plan to increase understanding and awareness of Kennett Library's capabilities and contributions to our service areas

*Initiatives:*

1. Develop a consistent message (elevator speech) about the Library's mission & value to the community and incorporate it into all regular library mailings. Define the new community-building programs and services which the new facility will enable to include in discussions.
2. Enhance existing reporting to the Board to provide more detail on programs, work with partners, key messages to share with community boards and groups. Encourage appointed trustees to meet quarterly with their constituencies.
3. Improve website to promote community calendar, access to digital resources and information on community-building programs.
4. Develop and implement a marketing plan for social media presence.
5. Increase presence of library personnel and trustees at key community events and promote Library use.
6. Develop and execute a plan to bring services & programs to all communities in service area.
7. Expand visibility in community newsletters by sending the editors periodic updates or information of interest to them.
8. Create bookmark with logo and key message for general distribution

*Measures:*

1. Completion and communication of consistent message to Board and staff
2. Expanded monthly Board reports on items detailed in item 2 above
3. Completion of website upgrade and use of Google analytics for insights into the most useful sections of the site.
4. Completion of social media plan and execution strategy with assigned responsibility
5. Identification of key events, plans for participation as well as feedback from event. Identify responsible coordinator for each
6. Creation of contact list for key newsletters
7. Bookmarks created and distributed

**Objective 3:** Expand, document and formalize collaboration efforts to fulfill community-building goals and increase visibility within the community

*Initiatives:*

1. Document existing partners and shared programs. Identify the highest value-added partners to create clear standards for collaboration.
2. Identify any potentially important partnerships to develop. Set up initial meetings to explore possible shared initiatives.
3. Assign staff &/or Board members to specific key relationships.

*Measures:*

1. List of existing partners, programs and outcomes
2. List of new partnerships to explore and meeting dates
3. Assignment listings
4. Add targeted increase in numbers of partners and shared programs

**Objective 4:** Promote, support and expand, as appropriate, the Adult Literacy Program (ALP)

*Initiatives:*

1. Continue to offer English as a Second Language, GED and American citizenship test preparation classes and tutoring programs within Kennett Square, West Grove and Oxford area.
2. Work with other CCLS libraries to develop or promote these programs.
3. Maintain and expand existing collaboration efforts as appropriate.
4. Expand funding sources to support these programs.

*Measures:*

1. Student databases and testing results
2. Participation in Library collaboration tracking and documentation programs
3. Receipt of grants and other funding

## **GOAL: KNOWLEDGE & INSPIRATION FOR LIFE LONG LEARNING**

**Objective 1:** Sustain existing momentum in programs for children and young adults. Explore expanded programs for adults, especially those which would be facilitated by new building spaces.

*Initiatives:*

1. Create method to improve tracking of participation in existing programs to share with the Board and others as appropriate. Include categorization of programs for planning purposes, e.g. arts/crafts, story time, games, nature, science.
2. Consider strategic expansion of children's & young adult ("YA") programs, e.g. Spanish story time, increased variety of offerings. Implement as resources and time permit.
3. Survey other libraries and adult-oriented educational / cultural institutions (e.g. Uptown in West Chester, Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Chester County Hospital & C5 Health Education Programs, Hadley Fund) to generate ideas and information on expanded programs targeted at adults.
4. Introduce outreach programs into broader community.
5. Develop and execute plans to deliver pilot or test programs.
6. Develop and implement a means of polling the community for new program/service ideas. Consider creating programming advisory group. (same as initiative # 4 under Community Engagement Objective # 1.)

*Measures:*

1. Enhanced Board reporting on programs
2. Summary of ideas and information from other libraries etc.
3. Increased number of card holders from outlying communities
4. Delivery of one or more pilot programs with feedback mechanisms
5. Reports from polls or advisory group meetings.

## **Objective 2: Enhance collection development and utilization**

### *Initiatives:*

1. Create collection development and weeding policy. Improve reporting on collection (adds as well as deletions) for monthly Board reports.
2. Build Spanish language collection.
3. Expand use of themed displays with book lists. Develop metric for determining response to this approach.
4. Develop a “merchandising” strategy, e.g. face out books in shelves, to engage browsers.
5. Consider best sellers’ section or rental program.
6. Consider creation of advisory groups (heavy users or book club members, YA or parent groups) for collection development.

### *Measures:*

1. Monitor monthly circulation statistics with a goal of improving or steady circulation. Report on any improvement measures undertaken.
2. Provide enhanced collection reporting, showing additions, deletions and totals, in monthly Board reports
3. Create a new metric for assessing the use of themed displays or new merchandising ideas
4. Execution of best sellers’ section or advisory group concept

## **GOAL: CUSTOMER VALUE & EXPERIENCE**

### **Objective 1: Enhance staff skills and/or build capacity to leverage their time**

#### *Initiatives:*

1. Update job descriptions annually as part of performance planning and review process. Review distribution of responsibilities to assure equitable and appropriate allocation of duties and improve communication process within staff.
2. Incorporate continuing education into performance planning and evaluation
3. Regularly evaluate emerging fads &/or technologies which the library may be able to incorporate into program offerings or adopt for its own use.
4. Identify new skill sets that may be required in the new building environment.
5. Recruit part time staff or volunteers who represent the community.
6. Seek volunteers to help with programming, especially in arts and sciences. Consider engaging retired teachers and create a simplified onboarding process for them.
7. Create recognition programs for volunteers.

#### *Measures:*

1. Achievement of continuing education goals
2. Staffing plan for new Library
3. Number of volunteers
4. Execution of recognition program.

### **Objective 2: Enhance the “friendliness” of entering the Library. Institutionalize listening programs listed under first goal as appropriate.**

#### *Initiatives:*

1. Brainstorm an appropriate “friendliness” campaign with Library staff. Find ways to acknowledge and welcome every visitor.
2. Identify and implement ways to improve the “friendliness” of the existing building, e.g. more inviting social area at the entry, clean up/reorientation of the meeting room, first floor quiet area for computer access or reading.
3. Assess usefulness and ease of execution of customer satisfaction surveys, poll etc. recommended in Community Building section above.

#### *Measures:*

1. Customer satisfaction or feedback surveys to be developed under Community Engagement Objective #1.

## **GOAL: SUSTAINABILITY & GOVERNANCE**

### **Objective 1: Maintain annual expenses within adopted budget & sound financial practice**

#### *Initiatives:*

1. Monitor and report on performance against budget on a monthly basis. Propose and execute plans to compensate for any shortfalls as needed.
2. Assure financials conform with cash accounts and that all extraordinary but necessary expenses above \$5000 have been approved by Finance Committee.
3. Always achieve the state mandated 12% of expenses funding for library materials.

#### *Measures:*

1. Monthly financial reporting to the Board
2. Bank reconciliation and Finance committee records

### **Objective 2: Pursue increased funding for ongoing operations**

#### *Initiatives:*

1. Build on growing success of major fund-raising events (House tour, Fall program, annual appeal)
2. Continue to promote the adoption of the Fair Share approach to all 8 municipalities.
3. Pursue library tax initiatives within Pennsbury, Newlin, and Kennett Square Borough.
4. Increase effort devoted to the research and pursuit of operating grants. Consider a part-time Development Manager.
5. Development information on estate planning opportunities to benefit the library to provide to interested parties.

#### *Measures:*

1. Receipt of additional revenues or funding from any of these initiatives.

### **Objective 3: Protect and grow the library investment portfolio**

#### *Initiatives:*

1. Diligently pursue transferring available free cash to rebuild portfolio value.
2. Minimize the use of portfolio funds for renovations on current library building. Finance committee approval required.
3. Improve accounting, reporting and controls of endowments, especially relative to any restrictions.

#### *Measures:*

1. Portfolio balances
2. Records of endowed funds

### **Objective 4: Continue to improve on Board disciplines**

#### *Initiatives:*

1. Work with municipalities to appoint Board members with a genuine interest and sufficient time to invest in Library affairs.
2. Identify desirable backgrounds/skill sets for Board members to share with municipalities or to help select new at-large members.
3. Require Board committees to adopt annual goals in connection with the strategic plan or emerging needs.
4. Adopt more effective and less costly donor database and acknowledgement process

#### *Measures:*

1. Volunteer hours of Board memberships
2. Committee goals and reports to Board
3. Improved donor management systems

## Section 2: New Building Initiative

Starting in June 2016, the Library’s Executive Committee initiated the exploration of a new library building. Built in 1961, the current library is lacking space, has failing infrastructure and features an interior that is neither is conducive to 21th century operations nor pleasing to library patrons.

RRMM Lukmire, Arlington VA, a firm specializing in the design of libraries and community centers, was selected as the library architect and EDiS, Wilmington DE, as the Construction Manager at Risk. The new building project gained significant momentum mid-2017 with a Visioning Project, partly sponsored with a grant from Chester County, involving a series of presentations and discussions with service area residents.

Several designs were produced by the architect, but the estimated construction costs were above target. Finally, as of December 2018, a design has been submitted and accepted by the New Building Committee (“NBC”). The construction cost target for this building is \$15 million. This design calls for a building with 2 floors, 25,000 ft.<sup>2</sup>, and shelving space for approximately 55,000 volumes. The facility envisions a significantly improved community center, including a 111-seat raked auditorium with a stage, multiple meeting rooms for classes and tutoring, as well as multipurpose rooms for maker space, children and YA programming, and quiet study. The building will also bring the Library into full ADA compliance.



Fairmount Ventures, Philadelphia PA, was hired to conduct a feasibility study of funding potential during the 2nd half of 2018. The results of that indicated that a capital campaign of approximately \$12 million does have a good chance of success. As such, the Board of Trustees approved commencement of a capital campaign. During the strategic plan period, the Executive Committee and various committees of the Board will be actively engaged in initiating the capital campaign leading to construction estimated spring of 2021.

### GOAL: New Library Building

**Objective 1:** Finalize design with final interior and exterior renderings to be shared with the Kennett Library community

*Initiatives: Building Design, Cost and Communications*

1. New Building Committee approval of final schematics design (December 2018).
2. Cost estimate approval (December 2018).
3. Obtain preliminary consent from the various Kennett Borough departments on various design and construction components of the current schematic design including surface parking, storm management, water and sewer utilities placement, approved property lines, etc. (January 2019)
2. Develop a portfolio of various floor plans including the exterior and interior renderings for eventual use during the capital campaign. (December 2018)
3. Identify new programming potential of new design.
4. Develop estimated operating costs for library operations in the new facility.
5. Develop & execute a plan and timeline for sharing the design with the community.

**Objective 2:** Initiate and manage a successful \$12 million capital campaign

*Initiatives: The Capital Campaign*

1. Initiate foundational efforts to support a capital campaign.
2. Engage Fairmount Ventures as the capital campaign manager. (January 2019).
3. Initiate Capital Campaign (January 2019).
4. Pursue a “Change the Narrative” communications and public relations effort for the first 6 months of 2019.
5. Develop presentations, scripts, and FAQs for eventual meetings with significant donors.

*Initiatives: Capital Campaign Committee*

1. Create a Capital Campaign Committee to organize and manage the campaign. Start with the appointment of 2 cochairs by June 2019
2. Assure that the Capital Campaign Committee will have appropriate internal support for administrative, financial, and planning tasks.
3. Create a timeline and tracking mechanisms to organize and assess progress against goals.

*Initiatives: Foundational Research*

1. Compile a listing of “Community Influencers” in order to recruit people with significant standing in the library service area communities who will promote the library building project within their various networks.
2. Develop research on individuals, foundations, and corporations which have potential to commit major funds to the library project. (Fairmount Ventures-January-December 2019).
3. Estimate and quantify the economic value/benefit to Kennett Square and surrounding communities of building a new library and community center.

*Initiatives: Final Approval Process*

1. Follow the CCLS approval process which requires approval from the CCLS System Board for all new library construction projects.
2. Develop a formal business plan for the library building project.
  - a. This plan will require final design and cost estimates, floor layouts, permit, environmental and zoning requirements, and a detailed financial pro forma which includes funding opportunities, projected personnel costs, and cash flow projections.
  - b. The construction effort will in all likelihood require construction financing. Interview local banking institutions in order to select a financing partner for the project.