

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
BCPL Mission, Vision, and Philosophy	
Planning Approach	
Definitions	
Impact of COVID-19 and 2021 Action Plan	2
2021 Action Plan: Building Sustainable post-COVID operations	3
2021-2023 Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan	
Goal 1. Strengthen the Library and Build Organizational Resilience	5
Goal 2. Create Young Readers: Early Literacy	9
Goal 3. Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services	11
Goal 4. Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning	13
Goal 5. Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure	15
Goal 6. Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces	17
Appendix 1: Analysis of the Broome County Public Library 2020 Community Needs Survey	
Methodology	19
Statistical Data	19
Narrative Responses	20
Appendix 2: Strategic Planning Committee: Notes and Suggested Activities	24

A. Introduction

Mission: To educate, entertain, and energize the Broome County community.

Vision: The Broome County Public Library is dedicated to ensuring that every resident has access to the information and knowledge needed to prosper in their professions, businesses, schools and homes.

Philosophy: The Broome County Public Library is committed to freedom of information and the development of facilities, programs, services and collections responsive to community needs. We believe the community is best served by a library that is visible and involved. We will promote continued professional development for our staff so that public confidence and trust can be maintained. We believe that high quality and cost effectiveness require teamwork among our creative and competent staff, volunteers, and Board of Trustees. Our team will strive to create a comfortable atmosphere conducive to educational, informational, cultural, and recreational pursuits.

Planning Approach

- BCPL's Mission, Vision, and Philosophy as stated above were not written for this plan and are due to be updated, a process that is included in the plan as a future action step. Nevertheless, they have guided the creation of this plan as we have worked to ensure that every step is mission driven.
- We have worked to ensure that this plan is responsive to community needs. To this end, we conducted a community needs assessment. A full analysis of the results can be found in Appendix 1. Our data was collected through a widely-distributed survey that received 534 responses. While this is a solid foundation for the purposes of writing this plan, we are mindful of the need to collect a wider sample in the future.
- In addition to the Board of Trustees, our Planning Committee included representation from the Friends of the Broome County Public Library and the Library staff. Additional feedback was solicited from a wide array of stakeholders.
- We followed the approach outlined by Sandra Nelson in her book *Strategic Planning for Results* which was published by ALA Editions in 2008. The committee reviewed Nelson's "Public Library Service Responses" (p. 143-214) and chose five to use as goals for this plan. See the in-text citations for more information on the specific service responses that we used and Appendix 2 for more information on this process.

Definitions

- Goal:** The benefit that BCPL will provide to the Broome County community through specific services, programs, and resources
- Objective:** A specific service, program, or resource that is defined by its intended outcome
- Action:** A measurable step towards an objective
- Responsible Parties:** Members of the BCPL organization who are responsible for an action

B. Impact of COVID-19 and 2021 Action Plan

One of the impacts of the ongoing COVID crisis has been the disruption of existing plans and the introduction of a high-degree of uncertainty into the planning process. These external changes have coincided with significant internal changes at the Broome County Public Library (BCPL), including a leadership transition. Rather than delaying the strategic planning process, we have chosen to treat these challenging circumstances as an opportunity to develop a change-oriented plan that takes into account the need for transition management. Accordingly, the balance of 2021 is regarded as a period of dealing with crisis and/or transition from the highly restrictive environment of COVID-induced protocol to a more sustainable operation. Restoration of more normal library operations requires a number of short-term steps that lie somewhat outside the realm of the overall strategic plan. Issues of re-opening, space utilization, budgetary concerns, reassuring patrons of safety measures, and the like may or may not become significant elements within the long-term aspects of the new Strategic Plan, but they need to be dealt with over the coming months.

C. 2021 Action Plan: Building Sustainable post-COVID operations

Objectives	Actions	Target Date	Responsible Parties
1. Build sustainable post-COVID library operations	1a. Allow limited use of meeting rooms for partner organizations and county departments	2/1/2021 - 5/31/2021	Sherry Kowalski (Head of Information Services)
	1b. Facilitate the vaccination of library staff	3/16/2021 - 5/1/2021	Josias Bartram (Library Director), BCPL Department Heads
	1c. End the quarantine of returned materials	3/29/2021	Kathleen Shores (Head of Circulation)
	1d. Extend daily computer limit to 1 hour	3/29/2021	Sherry Kowalski
	1e. Reopen on Saturdays for 5 hours	4/17/2021	Josias Bartram, Department Heads
	1f. Begin hosting Friends' book sales with limited occupancy	4/17/2021	Josias Bartram, Jennifer Keysor (Librarian for Systems and Facilities)
	1g. End periodic cleaning closures	6/1/2021	Jennifer Keysor, Kathleen Shores
	1h. Reopen the 2nd floor	6/1/2021	Jennifer Keysor, Monica Buckley (Local History)
	1i. Reopen Local History department	6/1/2021	Monica Buckley, Roger Luther (Broome County Historian)

	1j. Staff all service desks at pre-COVID levels	6/1/2021	Department Heads
	1k. Begin allowing limited community use of meeting rooms	6/1/2021	Sherry Kowalski, Jennifer Keysor
	1l. Reopen for full Saturdays	6/5/2021	Josias Bartram, Department Heads
	1m. Reopen on weeknights	6/28/2021	Josias Bartram, Department Heads
	1n. Begin offering outdoor programs	6/28/2021	Sherry Kowalski, Kelsey Matoushek (Head of Youth Services)
	1o. Reopen Public Lounge	August 2021	Jennifer Keysor
	1p. Return to pre-COVID computer limit	Fall 2021	Sherry Kowalski
	1q. Remove plexiglass barriers and COVID signage	2022	Kathleen Shores, Jennifer Keysor

D. 2021-2023 Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan

Goal 1. Strengthen the Library and Build Organizational Resilience

Objectives	Actions	Target Date	Responsible Parties
1. Expand and diversify funding	1a. Create a funding plan that is feasible and sustainable with stakeholders	October 31, 2021	Josias Bartram, Dale Ketcham (Consultant), Finance Committee
	1b. Update funding plan in response to budget meetings and community needs	Annually, October 31st	Josias Bartram, Dale Ketcham, Finance Committee
	1c. Identify opportunities for grant funding	June 2021 and ongoing	Josias Bartram, Dale Ketcham
	1d. Work with Friends of the Library to create donor appeals and other direct fundraising	Summer 2021 and ongoing	Josias Bartram, Friends of the Broome County Public Library
	1e. Develop a strategy for fully utilizing the BCPL trust fund	August 31, 2021	BCPL Board of Trustees, Josias Bartram, Finance Committee
	1f. Spend the Community Foundation's Broome County Public Library Development Fund on 2021 priorities outlined in this plan	November 30, 2021	Josias Bartram, Board of Trustees, Jennifer Keysor
	1g. Produce a professional Annual Report that represents the Library to stakeholders and potential funders	April 8, 2021 and annually by March 1st	Jennifer Keysor, Josias Bartram
2. Rebuild BCPL staff by prioritizing the creation of positions to support the growth and development of the library	2a. Restore one Information Services FTE as a Library Assistant position specializing in emerging technology and digital literacy	2022	Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski
	2b. Fill empty positions with	June 1, 2021	Josias Bartram, Kathleen Shores,

	qualified candidates		Kelsey Matoushek
	2c. Ensure all PT staff are working full allotment of hours	June 1, 2021	Josias Bartram, Kathleen Shores, Kelsey Matoushek
	2d. Make the Principal Account Clerk position full time	2023	Josias Bartram, Board of Trustees
	2e. Complete a thorough analysis of long-term staffing needs	December 31, 2021	Board of Trustees, Josias Bartram, Department Heads
	2f. Develop professional development and/or training plans for all staff members based on self-assessment and the scope of new services	June 1, 2022	Josias Bartram, Department Heads
3. Expand access to the library by eliminating or reducing burdensome fines and fees	3a. Eliminate overdue fees on JUV materials	January 2021	Board of Trustees, Josias Bartram, Kathleen Shores
	3b. Reduce fee for non-resident library cards	January 2021	Board of Trustees, Josias Bartram, Kathleen Shores
	3c. Budget for the elimination of all overdue fees	June 2021	Josias Bartram, Finance Committee
	3d. Obtain funding to support the elimination of all overdue fees	July - December 2021	Josias Bartram, Finance Committee, Dale Ketcham
	3e. Eliminate all overdue fees	January 2022	Josias Bartram, Kathleen Shores
	3f. Work with funding partners to publicize the elimination of overdue fees	2022-2023	Josias Bartram, JoAnne Hanrahan (Board President)
4. Clarify and rebuild BCPL's role as central library in the Four County Library System	4a. Conduct an informal survey on the role of the central library in both peer and aspirational library systems	April 2021	Josias Bartram, Steve Bachman

	4b. Drawing on the data collected from other systems, conduct a survey of the libraries in the Four County System to assess the desired role(s) of BCPL as an active central library	June 2021	Josias Bartram, Steve Bachman
	4c. Work with the Four County Library System Steering Committee to address the role of the central library in the 2022-2026 Plan of Service	April - July 2021	Josias Bartram, Steve Bachman
	4d. Budget for an expanded role as the central library	June 2022	Josias Bartram, Finance Committee
	4e. Work with the Four County Library System to publicize BCPL's role as the central library	2022 and ongoing	Josias Bartram, Steve Bachman
5. Coordinate strategic planning with Broome County, the City of Binghamton, the Four County Library System, and the Friends of the Broome County Public Library	5a. Meet with City and County Planning Departments	Summer 2021	Dale Ketcham, Josias Bartram
	5b. Actively participate in developing the Four County Library System's 2022-2026 Plan of Service	April - July 2021	Josias Bartram, Dale Ketcham, Steve Bachman
	5c. Include representatives of BCPL Friends in all planning activities	2021 and ongoing	Planning Committee, Josias Bartram, JoAnne Hanrahan
6. Develop and implement a comprehensive plan addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion	6a. Create a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Plan based on survey data and researched best-practices in addressing the diverse needs of the library community	Summer 2021	Board of Trustees, Josias Bartram
	6b. Recruit a committee to review and revise the DEI Plan	September 2021	Board of Trustees, Josias Bartram

	6c. Identify staff and board members to implement action steps of the DEI Plan	September 2021	Board of Trustees, Josias Bartram, Department Heads
	6d. Allocate appropriate funds from budget to advance DEI goals including materials acquisitions and facilities upgrades & begin implementation	January 2022 and ongoing	Board of Trustees, Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski, Jennifer Keysor
	6e. Routinely review progress towards meeting DEI goals and make adjustments to timelines, budgets, and responsible parties	January 2022 and ongoing	Board of Trustees, Josias Bartram
7. Continue to hone community needs assessment	7a. Refine survey questions using the data collected from the 2020 survey	January 2022 and ongoing	Planning Committee, Josias Bartram, Jennifer Keysor
	7b. Develop targeted questions for different stakeholders	January 2022 and ongoing	Planning Committee, Josias Bartram
	7c. Improve demographic dataset and account for complex family structures	January 2022 and ongoing	Planning Committee, Josias Bartram
	7d. Administer survey annually	Annually in February	Josias Bartram
	7e. Assess Library hours	February 2022	Josias Bartram
	7f. Work with the community and staff to update BCPL's mission, vision, and philosophy	June 1, 2022	Planning Committee, Josias Bartram, Board of Trustees, Department Heads
8. Revisit and update strategic plan biannually	8a. Planning committee meets to assess progress	October and April 2021-2023	Planning Committee, Josias Bartram
	8b. Planning committee reports progress to Board of Trustees	November and May 2021-2023	Planning Committee, Josias Bartram
	8c. Progress is reported to the public annually	December 2021-2023	Planning Committee, Josias Bartram

Goal 2. Create Young Readers: Early Literacy

Children from birth to five will have programs and services designed to ensure that they will enter school ready to learn to read, write, and listen (Nelson, p. 165).

Objectives	Actions	Target Date	Responsible Parties
1. Ensure the Broome County Public Library is providing meaningful programming to support early literacy opportunities	1a. Develop measurable goals and standards for each program	Annually in January	Kelsey Matoushek
	1b. Conduct annual assessments of each program and evaluate against program goals and standards	Annually in December	Kelsey Matoushek, Michelle Ford (Youth Services Librarian)
	1c. Identify opportunities and strategies for improvements, including trainings for staff & opportunities for partners to achieve community impacts	Annually in January	Kelsey Matoushek, Josias Bartram
	1d. Develop a pilot for bilingual storytimes	2023	Kelsey Matoushek, Michelle Ford
	1e. Form a parental advisory group	2023	Kelsey Matoushek
	1f. Develop programs that support parental/care-giver involvement in early literacy	2023	Kelsey Matoushek, Michelle Ford, Sherry Kowalski
2. Increase available technology for early literacy with a focus on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, math)	2a. Investigate available technology; find experts within the community to guide research	2021-2022	Kelsey Matoushek
	2b. Develop a plan for implementing new technology including funding stream and assessment	2022	Josias Bartram, Kelsey Matoushek
	2c. Implement plan and evaluate success	2023	Josias Bartram, Kelsey Matoushek

3. Establish a vehicle for ongoing communication between the Broome County Public Library and the local community of educators and caregivers	3a. Build relationships with educators and school administrators to support early literacy	December 31, 2021	Kelsey Matoushek, Dale Ketcham
	3b. Develop an Educator Advisory Group that includes caregivers, classroom teachers and administrators that will work with staff to evaluate and design programs	December 31, 2022	Kelsey Matoushek, Dale Ketcham
	3c. Build relationships with the homeschoolers community	December 31, 2021	Kelsey Matoushek, Michelle Ford
	3d. Pilot program to automatically issue library cards with pre-K and Kindergarten registration	2023	Kelsey Matoushek, Dale Ketcham

Goal 3. Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services

Residents will have a central source for information about the wide variety of programs, services, and activities provided by the BCPL, community agencies and organizations (Nelson, p. 180).

Objectives	Actions	Target Date	Responsible Parties
1. Increase awareness of the Library and the resources BCPL offers the community	1a. Develop a communications plan	December 31, 2021	Josias Bartram, Marketing Committee, Kathleen Shores, Sherry Kowalski, Jennifer Keysor
	1b. Update Library branding and logo with guidance of marketing experts	December 31, 2021	Josias Bartram, Marketing Committee, Sherry Kowalski, Jennifer Keysor
2. Visibly engage with the community outside of the library walls	2a. Plan outdoor programming for Reading Garden	July 2021 and ongoing	Sherry Kowalski, Kelsey Matoushek
	2b. Increase outreach at local community events	December 31, 2022	Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski, Kelsey Matoushek
	2c. Work with local businesses & organizations to engage county residents in the immediate vicinity of the Library	December 31, 2023	Josias Bartram, BCPL Board of Trustees
3. Bring diverse community services into the Library and give patrons access where appropriate	3a. Promote community resources at the library	June 2022 and ongoing	Sherry Kowalski, Kathleen Shores
	3b. Collaborate with community programs to connect patrons to resources at the Library; specifically addressing needs of patrons from historically disadvantaged communities	June 2022 and ongoing	Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski, Social Responsibility Committee
	3c. Pursue grants and alternative funding to develop a point of service model that allows the	Fall 2021 and ongoing	Dale Ketcham, Josias Bartram

	BCPL to host/house satellite spaces for these programs		
4. Work with the Broome County Historian and the Broome County Historical Society to modernize and promote the Local History and Genealogy Center	4a. Pursue a planning grant to facilitate the development of the Local History Department	2022	Josias Bartram, Dale Ketcham, Roger Luther
	4b. Develop a plan to address the lack of adequate archival storage and shelving	2023	Josias Bartram, Roger Luther
	4c. Develop a plan to address the backlog of unprocessed archival collections	2023	Josias Bartram, Roger Luther
	4d. Prioritize the digitization of historical materials for online access	2023	Josias Bartram, Roger Luther, Monica Buckley
	4e. Clarify and formalize the relationship between the Library, the Historical Society, and the County Historian	2023	Josias Bartram, Roger Luther
	4f. Plan for the gradual obsolescence of microfilm	2021 and ongoing	Josias Bartram, Roger Luther, Monica Buckley
	4g. Grow the user base for the Local History Center through active promotion, digital collections, and outreach to diverse communities	2023	Josias Bartram, Roger Luther, Monica Buckley

Goal 4. Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning

Goal: Residents will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives (Nelson, p. 195).

Objectives	Actions	Target Date	Responsible Parties
1. Develop mission-driven programming for children, teens, and adults that is responsive to community needs and interests	1a. Develop measurable objectives for each program	Annually in January	Sherry Kowalski, Kelsey Matoushek
	1b. Conduct annual assessments of each program and evaluate against program goals	Annually in December	Sherry Kowalski, Kelsey Matoushek
	1c. Identify opportunities and strategies for improvements, including trainings for staff & opportunities for partners to achieve community impacts	Annually in January	Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski, Kelsey Matoushek
2. Address digital literacy for all ages	2a. Work with Literacy Volunteers to develop a digital literacy program with measurable objectives	February 2021 and ongoing	Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski
	2b. Assess what services are already available in Broome County so as not to duplicate services	February 2022 and ongoing	Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski
	2c. Continue to survey the community and understand technological deficits	Annually in February	Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski, Jennifer Keysor
	2d. Works towards creation of a Library Assistant position that specializes in digital literacy assistance and training	2022	Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski, Board of Trustees
	2e. Develop innovative STEAM programming for children and teens	2022 and ongoing	Kelsey Matoushek

3. Build circulating collections of tools, equipment, technology, and other non-traditional items that address clear community needs	3a. Assess unmet community needs for tools, equipment, and technology	2022	Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski, Jennifer Keysor
	3b. Conduct a survey of formal and informal collections that are already being offered within Broome County and share the results with the community as a resource list	2022	Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski, Jennifer Keysor
	3c. Develop collections policies and procedures modeled after peer and aspirational libraries with successful programs	2022	Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski, Jennifer Keysor, Kathleen Shores
	3d. Coordinate with the other libraries in the Four County Library System	2022	Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski, Jennifer Keysor
	3e. Implement a pilot program based on findings	2023	Josias Bartram, Sherry Kowalski, Jennifer Keysor, Kathleen Shores

Goal 5. Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure

Goals: Residents who want materials to enhance their leisure time will find what they want when and where they want them and will have the help they need to make choices from among the options (Nelson, p. 199).

Objectives	Actions	Target Date	Responsible Parties
1. Build a more robust collection of e-books and e-audiobooks	1a. Conduct an assessment of what e-books and e-audiobooks patrons are interested in	2022	Jennifer Keysor, Sherry Kowalski
	1b. Assess the e-book and e-audiobook needs of ESL students, the disabled community, and other specialized populations	2022	Jennifer Keysor, Sherry Kowalski
	1c. Assess available options for e-book and e-audiobook services	2022	Jennifer Keysor, Sherry Kowalski
	1d. Advocate for increased e-book and e-audiobook spending in the Four County Library System as the central library	2021-2022	Josias Bartram
	1e. Provide increased support and training for patron e-book and e-audiobook use	2022 and ongoing	Sherry Kowalski
2. Engage subcultures such as fandoms and gamers that are already active in the community	2a. Develop outreach program to engage interest groups	2022	Kelsey Matoushek, Sherry Kowalski
	2b. Coordinate with other libraries in the Four County Library System	2022	Josias Bartram, Kelsey Matoushek, Sherry Kowalski
	2c. Partner with existing businesses and organizations such as comic book stores to cross promote programs	2022	Josias Bartram, Kelsey Matoushek, Sherry Kowalski
3. Strengthen the sense of community between staff, patrons, and stakeholders around a shared love of reading, viewing, and listening for pleasure	3a. Create a dialogue between staff and patrons on social media and in person through recommendations and reviews of books, movies, and other materials from the library's collection	2021 and ongoing	Sherry Kowalski

	3b. Develop a framework to support patron led book clubs	2022	Sherry Kowalski
	3c. Promote existing clubs and interest groups	2022 and ongoing	Sherry Kowalski, Kathleen Shores
4. Expand the library's offerings in the arts	4a. Develop art exhibit program	2022	Sherry Kowalski, Josias Bartram, Jennifer Keysor
	4b. Partner with the local arts community to provide dynamic programming and opportunities for patrons	2022	Sherry Kowalski, Josias Bartram

Goal 6. Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces

Goals: Residents will have safe and welcoming physical places to meet and interact with others or to sit quietly and read and will have open and accessible virtual spaces that support networking (Nelson, p. 210).

Objectives	Actions	Target Date	Responsible Parties
1. Revitalize the library space, both physical and virtual, to create a more welcoming environment	1a. Refresh the Library by repainting, reflooring, and rearranging the space to accommodate current and future needs	Spring 2021, and ongoing	Jeffrey Boisvert (Trustee), Josias Bartram, Jennifer Keysor, Sherry Kowalski
	1b. Create a visually and spatially distinct teen space through the use of distinctive paint, carpet, and furnishings	Spring 2021, and ongoing	Jeffrey Boisvert, Josias Bartram, Jennifer Keysor, Kelsey Matoushek
	1c. Renovate and refresh the Youth Services department	2022	Jeffrey Boisvert, Josias Bartram, Jennifer Keysor, Kelsey Matoushek
	1d. Gather and synthesize staff feedback on long-term design plan	Summer 2021, and ongoing	Jeffrey Boisvert, Josias Bartram, Jennifer Keysor, Sherry Kowalski
	1e. Improve signage and patron wayfinding experience	Summer 2021, and ongoing	Jeffrey Boisvert, Josias Bartram, Jennifer Keysor, Sherry Kowalski
	1f. Overhaul the current Library website to be more user friendly and intuitive	January 2022	Josias Bartram, Jennifer Keysor, Sherry Kowalski
	1g. Complete an existing conditions analysis for the Reading Garden from which to create a garden improvement plan, including budget and possible funding sources	Summer 2021	JoAnne Hanrahan, Kate Miller-Corcoran (Treasurer of the Board), Josias Bartram, Jennifer Keysor
	1h. Implement wireless/mobile printing	June 2021	Josias Bartram, Jennifer Keysor
	1i. Conduct a thorough review of meeting room policies and procedures and revise where needed	Summer 2021	Jeffrey Boisvert, Josias Bartram, Jennifer Keysor, Sherry Kowalski

2. Work with the community to enhance, destigmatize, and promote the immediate neighborhood	2a. Collaborate with the City of Binghamton and Broome County on cosmetic improvements to the blocks surrounding the library	2022 and ongoing	JoAnne Hanrahan, Josias Bartram, Dale Ketcham
	2b. Engage businesses and community organizations in the immediate vicinity of the library to showcase the neighborhood	2021 and ongoing	Dale Ketcham, Josias Bartram, JoAnne Hanrahan
	2c. Review of BCPL responsibility for addressing issues of homelessness, poverty, etc, mentioned in survey	2022	Dale Ketcham, Josias Bartram, Social Responsibility Committee
3. Create a space that is welcoming to and inclusive of everyone in the Broome County community	3a. Address the inclusiveness of the Library space as part of the DEI plan	2021	Josias Bartram, Board of Trustees, Jennifer Keysor
	3b. Institute annual customer service training	November 2021 and annually	Josias Bartram, Department Heads
	3c. Assess the efficacy of current hours through inclusion in future surveys and the installation of networked people counters	February 2022	Josias Bartram, Planning Committee, Jennifer Keysor

Appendix 1: Analysis of the Broome County Public Library 2020 Community Needs Survey

Methodology

During the second half of 2020, the BCPL Board and staff undertook to obtain community input on a number of Library issues in preparation for the design of a new Strategic Plan. Serious effort was made to obtain the perspectives of the community because, first, that is what a public library should do, but, secondly, because such input is mandated by the New York State Education Department in its 2021 guidelines for the development of new strategic plans for libraries.

The process of obtaining input relied on seeking responses to a survey instrument that was accessible both on-line and in hard-copy format. The survey process ended in December 2020 and drew 534 responses. Certainly we owe these residents many thanks for taking the time and sharing their thoughts with us. Although this is a reasonably good response and can provide a certain level of guidance as a strategic plan is designed, it represents but three-tenths of 1% of Broome County's total population (which might be considered the Library's constituency). So, although survey responses suggest certain directions for the future, they certainly could not be called mandates.

One unfortunate, but unavoidable, "intrusion" on the content of survey questions was the overwhelming impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the crisis cast its shadow across all responses, we need to put this issue in the perspective of a crisis that will pass allowing more standard library operations to resume during 2021.

There were 9 questions posed of respondents, seeking both information about the respondents and their views of BCPL services. The full dataset is available upon request.

Statistical Data

The survey included three questions which lend themselves to statistical review.

Which media sources are the best way to inform you about events and programs at the Broome County Public Library?

As respondents were free to choose more than one response, the percentages per response add up to well over 100%.

- Social media - 74%
- Library website - 44%
- Local news (TV/radio/websites) - 41%
- Library newsletter - 23%
- Posters inside the library - 22%
- Local newspaper - 18%
- Word of mouth - 15%
- Other - 7%

When you visit the library, what is your primary mode of transportation?

- Personal vehicle - 88%
- Walk - 8%

- Bus - 2%
- Bicycle - 1%
- Taxi/Uber/Lyft - 0%

To help us better understand the demographics of our respondents, please select any of the below options that you feel apply to you.

- a. **Income** - Since income levels weren't defined monetarily, it is somewhat uncertain how respondents categorized themselves.
 - Lower income - 24%
 - Middle income - 59%
 - Upper income - 9%
 - Not answered - 8%

- b. **Age** - The brackets for age level were a bit variable, so internal comparisons here are slightly vague (e.g. Ages 18-24 encompasses only a 7-year age span, while 50-64 covers 15 years). As it stands, the older the age grouping, the larger the percentage of respondents. In short, the survey tends to reflect the views of older citizens.
 - 18-24 - 3%
 - 25-34 - 13%
 - 35-49 - 23%
 - 50-64 - 29%
 - 65 or older - 30%

- c. **Broome County resident/non-resident**
 - Resident - 87%
 - Non-resident - 4%
 - Not answered - 9%

- d. **Children in the household** - The unusually high percentage of participants who didn't answer this question may indicate that the binary choice was too narrow.
 - Yes - 52%
 - No - 24%
 - Not answered - 24%

Narrative Responses

This is where the “meat and potatoes” of the survey can be found. Survey responses span the time period from August 24, 2020 through January 6, 2021. There are some response areas that appear to be “time-sensitive” in that they seem to vary from other responses due to when the surveys were completed; these variations will be noted. Almost every completed response was sincere, although a very small number (only 3) chose to use the survey as an opportunity for sarcasm.

What is your favorite reason to come to the Broome County Public Library?

- Here, we cannot overemphasize the dominating factor of “books.” The word “books” appears in fully 74% of all responses as a chief reason for heading to the Library. Nothing else comes even remotely close to this as a reason.
- Other significant reasons mentioned with frequency are: peace and quiet, children’s resources and space, and the periodic book sales.
- Often there is reference to “friendly staff” as a reason for stopping by.
- Mentioned often, but seemingly on a “downtrend”, is access to computers; this may be due to the ever-increasing access to smartphones and personal computers.
- Few respondents cited their reasons for stopping by as being for research, studying, genealogy or socialization.
- There is a noticeable “bump” during December in responses from persons who do not currently make use of the BCPL; often these responses cited their use of other libraries closer to home.

What services do you wish the library offered?

- Here the chief caveat to keep in our thoughts is the realization that all the wonderful services and resources that respondents suggest are being generated by a fraction of 1% of the County’s residents. To undertake effort and expense in either acquiring new resources or offering fresh programming requires recognition that the public response may be negligible. Even so, there are many, many interesting recommendations.
- The single leading comments here are kudos and compliments to the BCPL staff and the resources already available.
- The second most frequent wish is to get things back to “normal” in the post-COVID world. In terms of a services “wish list,” no single item surfaced as in high demand. The items most commonly mentioned are:
 - More book sales
 - A coffee shop / bar / cart
 - E-books and audio books
 - Computer classes, tech help, social media classes
 - Makerspace
 - Free borrowing of tools, sewing machines, unusual cake pans, hobby equipment
 - Services and resources for homeschoolers
- Less frequently mentioned are:
 - Reading programs year-round
 - More evening hours and programs
 - Genealogy courses, possibly with Ancestry.com
 - Out-of-town newspapers
 - Home and garden classes
 - Availability of a notary public and a social worker
 - Music listening room
 - A welcome to the BCPL orientation class
 - Mobile book van to senior centers

What deters you from coming to the library more often?

- At this time, THE deterrent working against usage of the BCPL is the pandemic, cited by more than half the respondents. In a way, this clouds the issue of “deterrents” because it is a factor of the moment rather than anything Library-systemic.
- Many respondents said, in one way or another, that “nothing” deters them from using the BCPL.
- The number and variety of deterrents is actually quite limited. The most common factors were:
 - Lack of time
 - Inertia
 - Fines
- Not as frequently cited as those just above were:
 - Sense of personal risk in using BCPL, citing homeless, panhandlers, loud people who sit in the Library “all day”, et al.
 - Downtown Binghamton referred to as dangerous.
 - Staff behavior: cold, impersonal, rude, etc.
 - Distance from home; this factor was cited much more frequently from early December on, suggesting the surveys were being completed by out-of-towners much more often than in the fall
 -

Is there anything that you particularly dislike about the library?

- The majority of respondents stated that they had no real “dislikes”, and the range of dislikes cited was really quite narrow. Principal concerns were:
 - Discomfort in parking lot and throughout the building (especially in Lobby area) with the homeless, panhandlers, loud and arguing people, and sleepers on the 2nd floor.
 - Rest room conditions are experienced as dirty, needles on the floor, scary, and in need of no-touch, hands-free faucets, flush handles, towel dispensers, etc.
 - Rude and unfriendly staff
 - Fines
 - Expiring library cards
 - Perhaps 6-7 respondents cited the Drag QueenStorytime. Although this was a big issue a few years back, it has faded.

If you had a magic wand and could change anything about the Broome County Public Library, what would it be? Please specify, describing as many changes as you would like.

This proved to be a very useful question, and it generated a large, varied, and creative set of responses. Here are the most commonly suggested ideas:

- Establish a coffee shop
- Hold ongoing book sales in a dedicated space/room
- Redevelop the outdoor garden area to include play area, reading spaces
- Cozy reading nooks indoors, with comfy chairs
- Add color and artwork throughout
- More adult classes in evenings
- Be open evenings and Sundays
- Conversation spaces

- More digital resources
- Bring back magazines
- Provide customer service classes for staff
- Dedicated quiet area (glassed-in)
- Safer environment both indoors and out
- More comprehensive signage and help in finding things
- Literary events with local authors
- Access books from home
- Staffed social service or community support options
- Internships for high school students
- Beginning computer classes (navigating the Web and handling e-mails)
- Re-open neighborhood libraries

To the best of your knowledge, how is the Broome County Public Library funded?

- Many sources were listed, with respondents often adding a (?) at the end of their response, making it quite clear that they were unsure of the facts.

Appendix 2: Strategic Planning Committee of the Board of Trustees for the Broome County Public Library: Notes and Suggested Activities

The notes below consider the results of the Community Needs Assessment and the needs of the Library as understood by the Board, the Director and Staff, and integrates them into the Library Service Responses chosen for the Strategic Plan.

Committee members: Josias Bartram, Library Director; Kate Miller-Corcoran, Chairperson & Board Treasurer; JoAnne Hanrahan, Board President & President, Friends of the Broome County Public Library; Peter DeWind, Board Vice President; Jeffery D. Boisvert, Board Secretary; Emily Backus, Jennifer Embree, Jill Kissick-Castro, Margaret Shiel, Board Members; Dale Ketcham, Strategic Planning and Grants Consultant; Kathy Groover, Treasurer, Friends of the Broome County Public Library; Sherry Kowalski, Head of Information Services, Broome County Public Library.

Create Young Readers: Early Literacy

- Monthly newsletter and calendar from library with activities that are sent directly to parents and caregivers.
 - Ensure that families are directly receiving it.
 - Consider a segmented email list.
- Young Reader/Youth Section on website.
 - Include book selection, prerecorded book readings, activities.
 - Use both as an online source and also to draw people into the Library. (e.g. like this? come on in and visit us)
- Look into developing or upgrading e-readers that are specific to youth: picture books.
- Identify and train a staff member for digital youth outreach.
- Ask local community members and community authors to read books either online or in-person.
- Create young readers book club; learning about authors and other main ideas that come from books.
- Continue to focus on in-house programming and evaluate with the community.
- Identify (additional) free sources for materials. Giving books and other items away that people can keep.
- Educator Card: Checking out books to relend to the children in their classes, more books are allowed to be checked out.
- Educator Advisory Group: Classroom teachers and administrators that participate with staff to advise on the design of programs so that there is congruence.
- Reach out to the schools in the catchment area: How can we supplement at the library?
- Ask elementary school(s) to help with awareness.
- Whatever is done for the 0-5 age group would be with an understanding that the children would be heading into PreK and Kindergarten. The more we can design efforts that are preparatory for what is happening in PreK and Kindergarten the better.

Know Your Community: Community Resources and Services

- Develop a clear vision on how we can best collaborate with different community organizations.

- Focus on building relationships and making sure any services we offer are sustainable and do not cease to exist at the end of a grant.
- See the Library as a touch point for the community to access resources.
 - There are visitors who may be in need of services and unable to access them. This would be a way to overcome many barriers that may exist.
 - Prioritize the organizations patrons are in most in need of.
 - Find a way to have a social worker onsite to assist patrons and connect them with services throughout the community.
 - Collaborate with organizations providing services.
 - Work on collaborative grants to fund.
- Educate the board, staff, etc on what resources are available.
- Message to patrons where in the library they can go to find information about community resources
- Highlight community resources in library newsletter
- Library as part of the community - engaging in the community outwardly
- The Library is in a location that is recognizable and easy to get to. Remind local community organizations that there is available space in the building for meetings, conferences, etc.
- Actively participate with Chamber of Commerce
- People borrowing items other than books. What are the focuses?
- Makerspace: what is the community looking for or in need of?

Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning

- Library Scavenger Hunt
- Package items together on different topics: fiction, non fiction, AV materials, technology (like a unit of study)
- Continuing to develop the collections.
- Directional signage to assist patrons with exploring the stacks.
- Expanding to more non-traditional lending items such as cake pans, exercise equipment, toys, etc.
- In newsletter/on website: "Did You Know?" section... with fun facts and where to find more resources in the library. Also, list Library resources.
- Programs for adults
- Have materials that have to do with different events or groups in the area (e.g. TCRC : running books and items)
- Find out what patron interests are.
- Technology education - learning how to use different programs differently.
 - Invite organizations already offering classes to the community.
- Set up social media pushes on different topics. (e.g. "Did you know we have this section?") Measure the level of response and take into consideration when designing programming.
- Collaborate with businesses to bring in information
- Revisit fees for room rentals
- Embed reference.

Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, and Listening for Pleasure

- Bring more art to the library.
- Improve Ebook collection
- Collaborate with other orgs to bring in and promote interesting films
- Build upon the community that Jan has built around what people are reading at any given time.
 - Engage the community in different ways to talk about what they are reading and how they enjoy it.
- Expand book clubs.
 - Consider changing what they look like
 - Make them more accessible.
 - Segmented book clubs
 - Allow patrons to start new book clubs
 - Continue to message about book clubs in newsletter/on social media
- Engage fandoms and gamers (subcultures).
 - Have resources so that patrons interested in becoming involved in these fandoms, etc, can learn more and become engaged.
- Have more designated trainings or a time when patrons can learn to use ebooks in-house.
- Set up permanent displays in the main thoroughfare.
- Highlight local history.
- Educate patrons on the ease of self-check out and the catalog.
- Enable people to understand where everything is in the library.
- Share any guides to podcasts or host a program on podcasts.
- Staff Picks right on shelves with little notes that draw you in

Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical and Virtual Spaces

- Overhaul website.
- Host a block party; engage local businesses and neighbors
- Update the public lounge; consider coffee cart
- Work with the community to enhance, destigmatize, and promote the immediate neighborhood
- Food trucks at lunch time
- Move admin suite closer to public.
- Create Public Health Policies (e.g. bed bugs)
- Signage about digital citizenship.
- A number of goals are already in development to make layout more inviting: paint color, flooring.
- Maintenance
- Invest in making the children's area more comfortable.
- Consider moving the Security Office right inside the front door.
- More personalized touch throughout the library - feeling more welcome! little interactive pieces such as a puzzle, coloring sheets
- Consider tone of signage.
- Make rooms accessible for community members to use to have small gatherings (e.g. playing bridge, community meetings); quiet rooms/study rooms
- Continue to improve accessibility for all
 - Consider signage, color contrasts, etc.
- Use the Reading Garden more.

- Bring in local artists to display art, become part of First Friday.
- Offer wireless printing.