



James and Pauline

HACKBARTH

FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY OF MAYWOOD

**STRATEGIC
PLAN**

2026-2031

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Methodology Statement

This strategic plan was developed through a comprehensive community-driven planning process designed to reflect the needs, priorities, and aspirations of Maywood residents and library stakeholders. The planning process incorporated both quantitative and qualitative input gathered through multiple engagement methods to ensure broad and inclusive participation across age groups and community sectors.

Community feedback was collected through an open community survey, promoted within the library, throughout the borough, and available online to maximize accessibility and participation. Additional targeted input was gathered through a survey of high school students to better understand the needs and perspectives of teen users.

To deepen qualitative understanding, a series of focus groups was conducted with diverse segments of the community, including open public focus groups, senior citizens, community leaders, an adult book club, and students in grades 4–5 and grades 6–8. Community leadership input was also gathered from local officials and civic organizations, including the Mayor, Scouts, and the Knights of Columbus, ensuring representation from key stakeholders in borough life.

The Strategic Plan was drafted by a committee composed of members of the Library Board of Trustees and the Library Director, who reviewed and synthesized all data and feedback. The final plan was formally reviewed and approved by the full Library Board of Trustees, affirming its alignment with community needs and the library's mission to serve as an inclusive, responsive, and forward-looking public institution.

Note: The Maywood Public Library was renamed the **James and Pauline Hackbarth Free Public Library of Maywood** in 2023, in honor of the library's benefactors. However, the library is still often colloquially referred to as Maywood Library, and that nomenclature will be used throughout this strategic plan.

Library Board of Trustees

Matthew Stathis, President
Eileen Engel, Vice President
Roseann Stuetz, Treasurer
Bina Dugan, Secretary
Nancy Jengo, Member
Allison Sabatini, Member
Kyla Smith, Member
Richard Bolan, Mayor
Jacqueline DeMuro, Council Liaison/Alternate
Michael Jordan, Superintendent of Schools
Lynn Soriano, Superintendent Liaison

Caitlin Hull, Library Director

Strategic Planning Committee

Matthew Stathis
Roseann Stuetz
Nancy Jengo
Allison Sabatini
Caitlin Hull



Foreword

All libraries are required to compile a strategic plan at regular intervals for several reasons:

- The plan allows the Board of Trustees and the Director to codify the direction the library needs to travel to best provide services to patrons.
- It allows all stakeholders a chance to reflect on and discuss how the library is used and the needs of the various constituencies it serves.
- It allows the Trustees and Director lead time to muster the resources to deliver those services.

While the library has completed several capital projects since the last Strategic Plan was issued, and we are in the final preparations for a new phase of renovation, we realize that a library, to be a true center of community life, must be more than the building that houses it.

We, Trustees, know that there are many patrons and stakeholders who understand what is needed to have a truly outstanding library in a consortium of many other excellent libraries. We have compiled this strategic plan with the input of many stakeholders who generously gave their time to help us steer the library in a direction that benefits us all.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the Strategic Planning Committee for their work in holding focus groups across the many interested groups in Maywood.

Trustees Nancy Jengo, Allison Sabatini, and Roseann Steutz met with such diverse groups from seniors to students to civic and political leaders of Maywood to determine what services and programs are most important for all patrons.

Library Director Caitlin Hull was an instrumental committee member, compiling most of the information in this report as well as coordinating between the Committee and the focus groups. I'd like to thank all the participants of the focus groups and the community leaders who helped facilitate these groups, including School Superintendent Michael Jordan, Maywood Senior Club president Bill Jerlinsky, and Mayor Richard Bolan.

Finally, I would like to thank members of the Hackbarth Foundation for their ongoing generous contributions to the capital projects, financial assistance, and guidance that allowed us to realize the dreams for an updated, beautiful library.

Matthew Stathis
President, Board of Trustees

COMMUNITY PROFILE



Maywood, New Jersey Community Profile

Who we serve—and what it means for the library

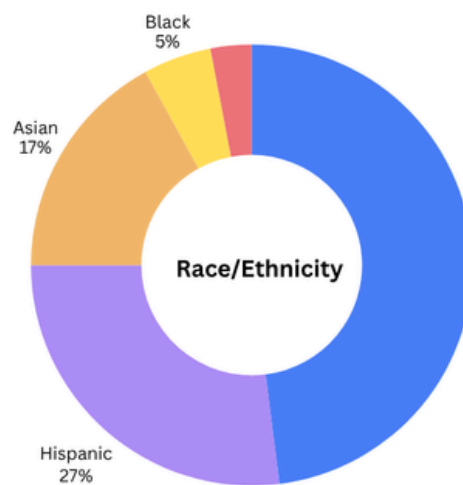
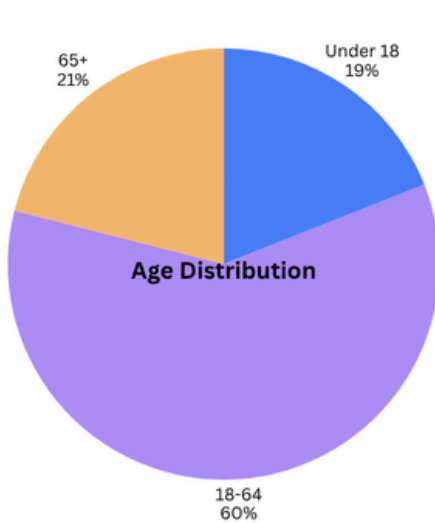
- 10.1K–10.3K Population
- Bergen County, NJ
- 0.4% Growth
- 8,000/sq. mile
- 1.2 square miles

Key Takeaways

Aging Community
Older than average with a growing senior population

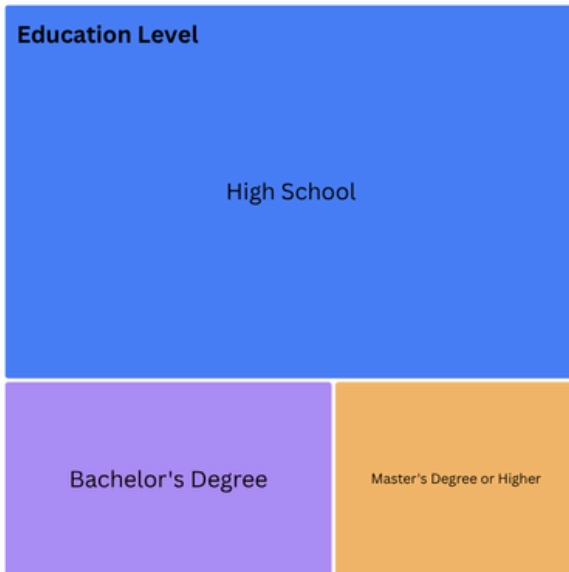
Increasing Diversity
Rapid growth in Hispanic and Asian residents

Family-Oriented
Stable, home-owning, family-based community



51%
Male

49%
Female



Housing and Households

- Median Property Value: \$533,500
- Median Rent: \$1,854
- Household Size: 2.6 people per household.
- Homeownership: 69% married couples

Income and Employment

- Median Household Income: \$117,912
- Poverty Rate: 3.9%
- Employment: 5.09k employed residents
- Workforce: Largely white-collar workers, many commute to NY City

Community Snapshot

- Affluent
- Educated
- Stable housing
- Time-constrained households

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR THE LIBRARY

- Support aging residents
 - tech help, wellness, daytime programs
- Reflect community diversity
 - multilingual & inclusive services
- Meet families where they are
 - evenings, weekends, efficiency
- Fuel lifelong learning
 - lectures, workshops, book discussions

ABOUT THE LIBRARY



History

Early History and Founding

Late 1940s

- Thelma Applegate and Gladys Cooper began pestering Mayor Russell Pike - Maywood needed a library!
- Maywood Council authorized a committee of volunteers from various organizations: Rotary - Ed Trinkka, Boy Scouts - Arch Denee, Chamber of Commerce - Reginald Kretzer, Girl Scouts - Eileen Fortunato

1951

- Recreation Commission allocated \$1,000 for Library and willed upstairs of Borough Hall Annex
- **June 14, 1951**
"L Day" - 11,707 books collected in door-to-door drive
- **December 15, 1951**
Doors open for 11 hours per week.
Volunteer librarian: Eileen Fortunato
First Library card issued: Len Rubin

1953

- November referendum to municipalize the library and establish a 7-member Board of Trustees passes

1955

- Library moved downstairs

1959

- First full-time librarian is hired: Cora Lamb

1964

- Federal Library Services and Construction Act passed
- Maywood is awarded the maximum amount to construct a new library: \$50,000

1966

- **February 27, 1966**
Cornerstone laid at 459 Maywood Avenue
- **May 22, 1966**
Dedication ceremony

1982

- Lorraine LaPietra Lapin organizes the first Friends of the Maywood Library group

1986

- Maywood Public Library is a member of BCCLS, with 55 other libraries, having previously been a charter member of the mid-Bergen Federation, a group of 8 libraries with reciprocal borrowing

Growth, Expansion, & Modern Era

2002

- An expansion is proposed to create a new children's library. The library is awarded a matching grant to complete the project

2004

- Grand reopening of the new children's library, named for librarian Margaret R. Barth

2006

- The James and Pauline Hackbarth Foundation is established with the purpose of partnering with the Maywood Free Public Library by investing in capital projects and equipment as well as cultural opportunities so that the library may serve as both a community and a cultural center for the Borough of Maywood.

2012

- The adult area of the library is renovated, improving access to materials and technology with the addition of new shelving and an adult computer area

2017

- NJ voters pass the New Jersey Construction Bond Act grant referendum

2021

- The Maywood Public Library is selected as a recipient of the second round of the NJ Library Construction Bond Act Grant

2023

- Construction begins on the Hal Bloom Young Adult Center, Lorraine LaPietra Lapin Makerspace, and the children's room renovation

2024

- **January 20, 2024**
Dedication of the renovated Young Adult space
- **January 21, 2024**
The Library hosts a grand opening Open House for the community
- The Library is renamed **The James and Pauline Hackbarth Free Public Library**, in honor of the library's benefactors

2026

- Library Board of Trustees conducts focus groups and surveys to develop a 5 year Strategic Plan and Capital Plan.
- Construction begins on the lower level renovation to create 5 new meeting room/quiet study spaces for the community.

MAYWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY

— LIBRARY TODAY AT A GLANCE —

COLLECTION & DIGITAL ACCESS

49,677 physical items

- Books, DVDs, Blu-rays
- Audiobooks & music CDs
- Museum passes & hotspots
- Board games & video games
- ESL & Spanish materials
- Library of Things

18.9 MILLION+ items available with a library card including:

- Libby & Hoopla eBooks
- Kanopy streaming
- ComicsPlus manga/comics
- Mango Languages
- Freegal music
- WSJ Wall Street Journal access
- NJ NJ newspaper archives

CIRCULATION HIGHLIGHTS

67,032 total circulations

Adult	25,039
Children	22,263
Electronic	19,730
Other physical items	2,622

+2.5% annual circulation growth

+12% increase in e-content circulation (2025)

COMMUNITY IMPACT

40,000+ visitors in 2025

TECHNOLOGY ACCESS

- 25 public PCs
- 1 Mac computer
- 2 early literacy stations
- Free Wi-Fi

DIGITAL USAGE

- 11,270 public computer sessions
- 29,038 Wi-Fi sessions

PROGRAMMING GROWTH

ADULT PROGRAMS	CHILDREN & FAMILY PROGRAMS
<p>294 programs in 2025</p> <p>60% increase from 2024</p> <p>ATTENDANCE DOUBLED 680 → 1,375 participants</p>	<p>271 programs</p> <p>2,434 attendees</p> <p>GROWTH:</p> <p>+28% more programs</p> <p>+21% higher attendance</p>

LIBRARY SPACE

Two-level facility featuring:

- Adult collection area
- Renovated Hal Bloom Young Adult Center
- Children's room
- Hackbarth Auditorium
- Meeting room & public spaces

SERVICE HOURS

OPEN 7 DAYS/WEEK

55 hours weekly

Summer schedule: **49 hours/week**

KEY TAKEAWAY

The Maywood Library has evolved into a modern community hub combining traditional collections, digital access, technology services, and rapidly expanding public programming.

FUNDING AND SUPPORT



Municipal Funding

All New Jersey municipal libraries are funded using the same minimum formula commonly referred to as “ $\frac{1}{3}$ of a mil”. Municipalities are required to allocate a minimum of $\frac{1}{3}$ of $\frac{1}{10}$ of a cent (0.0003333), or put another way, .33 cents per \$1,000 of a municipality’s equalized (true) property value for library operations. This is a dedicated and automatic funding stream based on the value of all taxable property at true market value. This is a mandatory minimum budget requirement; however, municipalities may add more funding. If property values increase, library funding increases; if property values decrease, funding decreases. The $\frac{1}{3}$ mil allocation for the Maywood Library in 2025 was \$692,984.50; for 2026, it increased to \$764,806.00. This state-mandated minimum funding makes up the majority of the library’s operating budget each year.

State Funding

The Library also receives funding from the state of New Jersey, referred to as Per Capita State Aid. “The Per Capita State Aid (PCSA) program is the largest public library grant program administered by the NJ State Library (NJSL) and is the foundation of state support for public libraries.

The program is authorized pursuant to N.J.S.A 18A:74-3 et seq. The first State Per Capita Aid Act was passed by the New Jersey Legislature in 1959. It established the principle of a partnership between local libraries and the State of New Jersey to provide quality library service through direct state financial support for public libraries. Its passage set a precedent that the State of New Jersey had a critical partnership role in providing quality library service for the residents of New Jersey.” (New Jersey State Library: https://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/library-development/per_capita_state_aid/)

The PCSA program has not been fully funded in many years. In 2025, the Maywood Library received a Per Capita State Aid payment of \$5,458. If the program had been fully funded by the legislature, the Maywood Library would have received \$12,600. The Maywood Library received only 43.32 percent of full funding. There have been efforts made by library advocates for many years to restore full funding to this program.

Other

The Maywood Library may also receive funds through gifts, bequests, grants, and donations. The library’s largest donor and main benefactor is the James and Pauline Hackbarth Foundation.

The Foundation was established in 2006, through the Last Will and Testament of Mr. James Hackbarth. James was a retired builder who constructed homes in Maywood and the surrounding Bergen County communities, primarily in the 1950s and 1960s. He and his wife, Pauline, thoroughly enjoyed the atmosphere of Maywood and often talked of ways to give back to the community, ultimately incorporating this desire into their will.

The Foundation's directive is to partner with the Maywood Library by investing in capital projects and equipment, as well as cultural opportunities, to serve as both a community and cultural center of the town.

The Foundation's purpose is not to cover the library's operating expenses, which should be solely the responsibility of state and local funding. Instead, it has funded capital projects like the 2012 adult area remodel and the major 2024 renovation of the Young Adult and Children's areas. It has also funded grant requests for, among other things: new computers, museum passes, digital access to a variety of content, and a broad array of programming for all ages.

At certain periods throughout its history, the Maywood Library has also been supported by Friends of the Library. Friends of the Library are non-profit, charitable groups composed of volunteers, and their purpose is to support the library. This can be financial support or helping to spread the word about library programs and services. Today, the Maywood Library is fortunate to have a small group of dedicated Friends, led by Helene Trink-Faustini and Joanne Lyons.



COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SUMMARY



The following section compiles and summarizes responses from all focus groups conducted and surveys responded to by the community.

Across all surveys and focus groups, the library is highly valued and well-regarded. Residents consistently describe it as:

- Welcoming, safe, and inclusive
- A central community hub and gathering space
- A trusted resource for education, technology, and culture

Satisfaction is very high, particularly with staff, collections, and the overall atmosphere. However, a clear pattern emerges:

The library is deeply appreciated by users, but many services are underutilized due to limited awareness.

Topic: Library Use & Core Value

Library use is frequent and diverse across all age groups:

Most residents visit monthly or weekly

Use is a mix of:

- Physical materials (especially for children and students)
- Digital services (especially for adults and seniors)

The library serves multiple essential roles:

- Study and homework space (especially for students)
- Technology access point
- Community and social space
- Educational and cultural center
- Safe after-school environment for youth

Topic: Technology & Digital Services

Technology is both a major strength and a growing need.

High-Demand Areas:

- Ebooks and audiobooks (Libby, Hoopla)
- Printing and computer access
- Tech assistance, especially for seniors

What's needed:

- Expand basic tech training (especially practical skills like photo storage)
- Increase makerspace awareness and instruction
- Consider new offerings like podcasting or recording spaces
- Expanded tech help services

Major Issue noted:

- Awareness of digital resources and specialty services is low across all age groups.

Topic: Programs & Services

Programming is widely appreciated and seen as a major strength.

What Works Well:

- Children’s programs and family events
- Cultural programming (concerts, workshops, performances)
- Hands-on, social, and interactive activities
- Maker space and creative offerings

What’s needed:

- More teen and “tween” programming (grades 4–8)
- More senior-focused programming, especially wellness (yoga, tai chi) and technology help
- More structured, outcome-based programs (clear takeaways)
- Better timing of programs for working families
- Expanded educational support (tutoring, workshops, life skills)

Programs are most successful when they are:

- Social and interactive
- Clearly structured
- Hands-on with tangible outcomes
- Conveniently scheduled

Topic: Collections & Resources

Overall satisfaction with collections is strong, with continued demand for:

- More new and popular titles
- Expanded teen/young adult collections
- Additional Spanish-language materials
- More hobby, craft, and specialty topics
- Increased availability of DVDs/Blu-rays and media
- Improved ebook availability and reduced wait times

Topic: Awareness, Marketing & Communication

This is the most consistent challenge across all groups.

Key Issues:

- Many residents (including active users) are unaware of services
- Over-reliance on Social media, Email/newsletters (opt-in audiences)
- Website seen as outdated, not mobile-friendly

Recommended Improvements:

- Expand school-based communication
- Use multiple channels such as print flyers, local publications
- In-person outreach (events, parks, schools)
- Improve website usability and mobile access
- Strengthen social media engagement
- Encourage word-of-mouth promotion

Topic: Community Engagement & Partnerships

There is strong support for expanding partnerships with:

- Schools and PTOs (most effective outreach channel)
- Senior centers and recreation programs
- Community organizations (Scouts, clubs)
- Local professionals (education, legal, health)
- County services

Topic: Youth & Student Engagement

Youth engagement is a major strength—but varies by age group.

Strong Areas:

- Elementary-age engagement is high
- Students use the library heavily for homework, studying, and socializing

What's needed:

- More programming for tweens and teens, including social programs and Makerspace instruction
- Quiet, dedicated teen spaces

Critical Insight:

Students value the library—but want spaces and services tailored specifically to their age group.

Topic: Perceived Barriers to Use

Across all groups, the main barriers are:

- Lack of awareness (most significant)
- Time constraints and scheduling conflicts
- Transportation and access challenges
- Perception that the library is “only for books”
- Competition from digital alternatives
- Limited teen/adult-targeted engagement

Topic: Seniors & Adult Engagement

Seniors and adults show strong interest but face barriers.

What's needed:

- Hands-on technology support
- Wellness and active aging programs
- Daytime and accessible programming
- Clear, centralized communication

Concerns expressed:

- Parking and mobility challenges
- Fragmented communication across organizations
- Lack of awareness of available programs

Topic: Facilities & Space

The library building is seen as a major asset, especially after renovations.

Strengths:

- Central location
- Flexible and well-used spaces
- Welcoming, multi-generational environment

What's needed:

- More quiet study areas (especially for teens and students)
- More private or small group study rooms
- Improved comfort and aesthetics (cozy seating, lighting)
- Better space separation (quiet vs. active areas)

Other Concerns Expressed:

- HVAC and climate consistency
- Accessibility
- Parking and ease of access (especially for seniors)

2026-2031 STRATEGIC PLAN



Strategic Vision Statement

The library will serve as a dynamic, inclusive community hub that connects people to knowledge, technology, and each other—while adapting to evolving needs through innovation, partnerships, and responsive service.

Goal 1: Increase Awareness & Community Engagement

Ensure all residents understand and engage with the full range of library services. Build long-term relationships with residents and encourage community involvement.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Expand marketing beyond current users
- 1.2 Improve communication across multiple channels (digital, print, in-person)
- 1.3 Strengthen outreach to non-users and underrepresented groups
- 1.4 Improve visibility of underutilized services (Makerspace, Library of Things, digital resources)
- 1.5 Engage youth early and sustain involvement over time

Key Strategies:

- Redesign website to be mobile-friendly and user-centered
- Increase school-based communication (Class Dojo, flyers, announcements)
- Partner with schools and colleges for service opportunities
- Create youth engagement pipelines: Volunteer → teen leader → adult supporter
- Expand presence at community events, parks, and local venues
- Launch targeted campaigns highlighting “hidden” services
- Strengthen social media engagement with more dynamic content

Evaluation:

25% increase in program attendance over 5 years
30% increase in website traffic and mobile usage
20% increase in Library of Things and Makerspace usage
Growth in social media engagement (shares, reach, interactions)

Goal 2: Improve Access, Spaces & User Experience

Create a welcoming, functional, and accessible environment for all users.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Expand quiet and private study spaces
- 2.2 Improve comfort, flexibility, and usability of library spaces
- 2.3 Address facility and accessibility needs and other updates outlined in the Capital Plan
- 2.4 Enhance access through hours and policies where feasible
- 2.5 Enhance the library’s role as a “third space” for all residents

2026-2031 STRATEGIC PLAN



Key Strategies:

- Add private study rooms and dedicated quiet zones
- Address HVAC and climate consistency
- Review ADA compliance and accessibility upgrades
- Improve lighting, atmosphere, and exterior
- Evaluate extending evening/weekend hours

Evaluation:

Increased occupancy/use of study rooms and quiet spaces

Reduction in facility-related complaints

Improved accessibility compliance benchmarks met

Goal 3: Enhance Programs & Services for All Life Stages and Become Community Hub

Deliver relevant, high-quality programming that meets the needs of children, teens, adults, and seniors.

Position the library as a central space for connection, learning, and shared experiences.

Objectives:

3.1 Expand teen and tween programming

3.2 Strengthen senior-focused programming (wellness, tech, social)

3.3 Increase hands-on, structured, outcome-based programs

3.4 Expand partnerships with schools, community groups, and local organizations

3.5 Increase community-led and collaborative programming

Key Strategies:

- Expand current successful programs, including early literacy, financial literacy and life skills, and wellness programs
- Introduce new programming series that showcase local talent and stories
- Pilot flexible program times (evenings, weekends, daytime for seniors)
- Formalize partnerships with community organizations and host collaborative events on topics like health, education, and culture
- Increase library space available for group activities and for use by community organizations

Evaluation:

20% increase in teen and tween program participation

15% increase in senior program attendance

Increased repeat attendance

Establish at least 5 new active community partnerships and deliver programs in partnership with them

Increase in meeting room usage by community groups

2026-2031 STRATEGIC PLAN



Goal 4: Increase Availability, Usability, and Discoverability of All Resources

Maintain a relevant, diverse, and accessible collection aligned with community needs.

Provide equitable access to all resources, including technology, and empower users with digital skills.

Objectives:

- 4.1 Expand collection of high-demand materials and formats
- 4.2 Balance physical and digital collections
- 4.3 Improve discoverability of resources
- 4.4 Increase awareness and use of digital resources and non-conventional collections
- 4.5 Expand technology training and support
- 4.6 Establish literacy and language learning support

Key Strategies:

- Increase investment in key areas including new and popular titles, YA materials, Spanish language and media
- Enhance promotion of unique resources like databases, museum passes, Library of things
- Offer regular tech help sessions and demonstrations on digital services
- Expand Makerspace programming to include introductory and project-based classes
- Promote all collections through focused and targeted marketing

Evaluation:

25% increase in digital resource usage (Libby, Hoopla, etc.)

10% increase in attendance at tech help sessions

15% increase in Makerspace participation

Reduced wait times for high-demand materials

Increased circulation across formats (physical + digital)

10% increase in use of specialty collections (e.g., Spanish, Library of Things)

Implementation Timeline

Year 1 (2026): Space & Experience

Focus: Physical Improvements

- Add study rooms / quiet zones
- Upgrade seating + layout
- Address lighting + comfort issues
- Evaluate extended hours
- Begin planning for exterior renovation

Year 2 (2027): Foundation & Visibility

Focus: Awareness + Quick Wins

- Launch new website (mobile-first)
- Start “Did You Know?” campaigns
- Pilot teen & senior programs
- Begin expanded tech help sessions
- Improve social media consistency

Year 3 (2028): Expansion & Engagement

Focus: Programs + Outreach

- Expand program tracks by age group
- Increase school partnerships
- Launch program series (not one-offs)
- Grow Makerspace offerings
- Begin community event expansion

Year 4 (2029): Partnerships & Growth

Focus: Community Integration

- Formalize 5+ partnerships and increase co-hosted events
- Expand volunteer pipeline
- Launch community showcase programs

Year 5 (2030–2031): Optimization & Sustainability

Focus: Refinement + Long-Term Impact

- Review all evaluation criteria and adjust strategy as needed
- Scale successful programs
- Strengthen Friends/Foundation role
- Plan next strategic cycle
- Plan future capital projects



The capital projects outlined below should be considered for completion during the time period of this strategic plan. The Library has been reserving funds in a capital fund when possible.

- **Trinka Room Updates** – *Construction anticipated to take place in 2026*

The Trinka room will be renovated to incorporate small quiet study rooms rather than remaining as one large room. This will help the library better use the space and meet the needs of the community to have quiet study rooms.

- **Lower-level flooring** – *Construction anticipated to take place in 2026*

The project entails installation of new flooring on the lower level so that there is flow from the new YA space throughout the remainder of the lower level and also new flooring on the rear entry stairs to match the upper level lobby flooring.

- **Lower-level bathrooms** – *Construction anticipated to take place in 2026*

The existing lower-level bathrooms are original to the building and need to be renovated. They will be brought up to ADA requirements.

- **Upper-level rear entrance lobby**

This project entails revealing exposed brick wall on the wall facing the elevator. New flooring and handrails for the rear hallway should be considered.

- **Elevator repairs or upgrade**

The existing elevator needs to be assessed for possible repairs or replacement.

- **Exterior emergency exits**

This project entails the repair of concrete on all emergency exit stairwells and the replacement or repair of all emergency exit doors.

- **Exterior awnings**

This project entails the installation of awnings over all emergency stairwells to protect against flooding issues and to improve the aesthetics of the exterior of the building.

- **Exterior rear façade**

This project entails the replacement of the façade of the rear of the building to improve appearance at what is effectively the main entrance of the building. Currently, the exterior wall has holes from birds making nests within the walls and is discolored.