

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP LIBRARY

Strategic Plan 2012-2015



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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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A Word of Thanks

The Bernards Township Library wishes to thank the Bernards Township Committee for its ongoing support for public library programs and services in our community.

We would also like to express our appreciation to the Township residents who attended our community forum or responded to our telephone survey, community leaders who participated in our leadership interviews, and staff of the Library who shared their ideas and insights with our planning team.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Bernards Township Library Strategic Plan is the result of many hours of work on the part of a large number of individuals – library staff, board members, and community volunteers. I offer my personal thanks to them all for their dedication and hard work. The Plan is our vision of the future for our Library and where we see it evolving over the next three years.

Bernards Township has one of the finest public libraries in the state of New Jersey. We have a library that provides excellent facilities, resources and programs for all residents. The Strategic Plan is not a plan for the Library to start over, but rather a directional tool which will enable us to improve what we already deliver. The Plan provides a blueprint for building upon and enhancing our services so that we can maximize the value of the Library to all members of our community.

Our Library will move ahead, implementing elements of the Plan while continuing to provide an open, welcoming environment where residents of all ages may meet, share ideas, and be entertained, educated and informed.

Tim Opremcak
President, Board of Trustees

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Today, the public library meets community needs in both traditional ways and with significant new programs and services. While many institutions would wish to be “information providers” in our lives and businesses, only the public library offers information and services according to the Library Bill of Rights - protecting privacy, providing equitable customer service to all users, and promoting intellectual freedom.

The Bernards Township Library’s Strategic Plan 2012-2015 aims to strengthen the excellent library services the community has come to expect and enjoy, while enhancing the Library’s role as a core community institution—both real and virtual. By increasing the visibility of what we do, we can be more accessible to our users. Plans to reassess space in the library building, an energetic technology plan, and a sustainable funding strategy will allow us to continue to be good stewards of public resources in a time of economic challenge.

I thank each member of the Library staff, the Library Trustees, Friends of the Library, and the community who assisted in crafting this Plan. You challenge us to be a vital and innovative resource in Bernards Township, and you have helped us chart the course for the next few years.

If you have questions about the Plan or wish to share your comments, please contact me at RLufkin@Bernards.org or 908.204.3031, extension 7.

Ruth Lufkin
Library Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Bernards Township Library (BTL) is a successful, respected, and heavily-used public institution. In undertaking its recent strategic planning initiative, BTL evaluated its strengths and weaknesses, analyzed local and national trends in public library service delivery, and solicited both qualitative and quantitative input from its wide spectrum of stakeholders—all with the goal of aligning its services with community goals and needs. The resulting long-range strategic plan will enable the Library to sustain its track record for providing quality public library services and address the inevitable challenges it will face in the future.

The future of public support for libraries is uncertain at the local, state and federal levels. Many librarians wonder if library funding will ever return to levels seen in the past. In response, BTL's new strategic plan has been crafted as a flexible document which can be amended and adjusted in response to unexpected changes in the library environment over the next three years and beyond.

In preparation for developing the BTL plan, the lead consultant reviewed the results of primary research, analyzed demographic data, and considered national trends shaping library services. The analysis of the research was shared with the Board of Trustees, designated staff and the Strategic Planning Committee at a strategic planning review meeting.

As the planning process moved forward, almost three hundred residents of the Township took advantage of the opportunity to express their opinions about how the Library might expand and enhance services in the future. Their ideas provided guidance for establishing new strategic initiatives and service priorities.

The project culminated in the identification of five key areas of opportunity and their supporting strategic initiatives for sustaining quality services and addressing community needs.

Space Assessment

- Maximize available space to meet community needs and create a welcoming environment.

Marketing and Partnerships

- Increase public awareness of services available at the Library.
- Expand outreach to underserved populations.
- Expand opportunities for strategic partnerships and collaborations.
- Align Library services with community goals for economic development.

Technology Services

- Keep pace with changes in information technology.

Funding Strategies

- Diversify Library funding.
- Increase grassroots support by energizing the Friends of the Library group.

Staffing and Leadership

- Create a succession plan for management and offer staff development opportunities.
- Increase the capacity of the Board of Trustees to advocate for public library services.

BACKGROUND AND SITUATION ANALYSIS

A long tradition of library service in Bernards Township gained official strength one hundred and fourteen years ago when the Basking Ridge Library was issued an article of incorporation. Early on, the Library was located on the present site of the Ridge Restaurant and featured two bowling alleys—the fees from which augmented the Library’s operating funds. BTL has since operated from two other locations, including its current address on South Maple Avenue.

As a municipal library, BTL receives 0.33 mill in appropriations funding from the local government toward its operating budget. Governance is provided by a 7-member Board of Trustees. The Library also has the support of a small Friends of the Library group. The Library is a member of the Morris Automated Information Network which operates a shared automation system and promotes the sharing of resources among 38 public libraries in the region. BTL is also a member of two other resource sharing consortia, the Morris Union Federation and the Raritan Valley Federation of Libraries and collaborates on special projects with the Somerset Hills Libraries—Bernardsville Public Library and Clarence Dillon Public Library.

As it undertook strategic planning, the Library’s Board of Trustees sought assurance that any proposed changes to programs and services would respond to the evolving needs of the community without having an impact on those offerings which are popular with current customers. To this end, the planning process solicited input from key stakeholder groups, including both current and prospective users in the Library’s service area.

The overall goal of the Library’s new strategic plan is to sustain the delivery of quality services which satisfy community needs and preferences. The Strategic Planning Team and the Board and staff are confident that BTL can offer the level of services that residents of all ages have come to expect and that the Library can remain a valuable asset to the Township.

Bernards Township Library: The Numbers are Impressive

Analysis of BTL's 2011 statistics reveals a steady increase in Library use.

- Registered card holders: 13,890
Approximately 50+% of the population
- Collection: 150,497
- Circulation: 442,361
- Public computers: 28
- Public use of computers: 76,152 sessions
- Budget: \$2,352,070
- Per capita expenditures: \$89.87 (2010)
- Staff: 28 FTE
- Volunteers: 38
- Total adult, young adult and children's programs: 1,042
- Program Attendance: 28,610
- Children in Summer Reading: 1,200+
- Annual number of library visits: 228,480
- Hours of operation: 64 hours per week

Political, Social, Economic, and Technological Changes

Significant changes are taking place in Bernards Township. Most notably, the Township's demographic composition is no longer as homogenous as in the past. New and growing ethnic populations include clusters of residents from other parts of the world—particularly Asia.

Population growth in Bernards Township has slowed substantially when compared with rates through the 1990's. Today, the Township is a stable, mature, built-out community. According to demographers, growth will pick up again only when empty nesters and retirees downsize and sell their homes to families with children—a phenomenon which has just recently begun to change the Township's make-up.

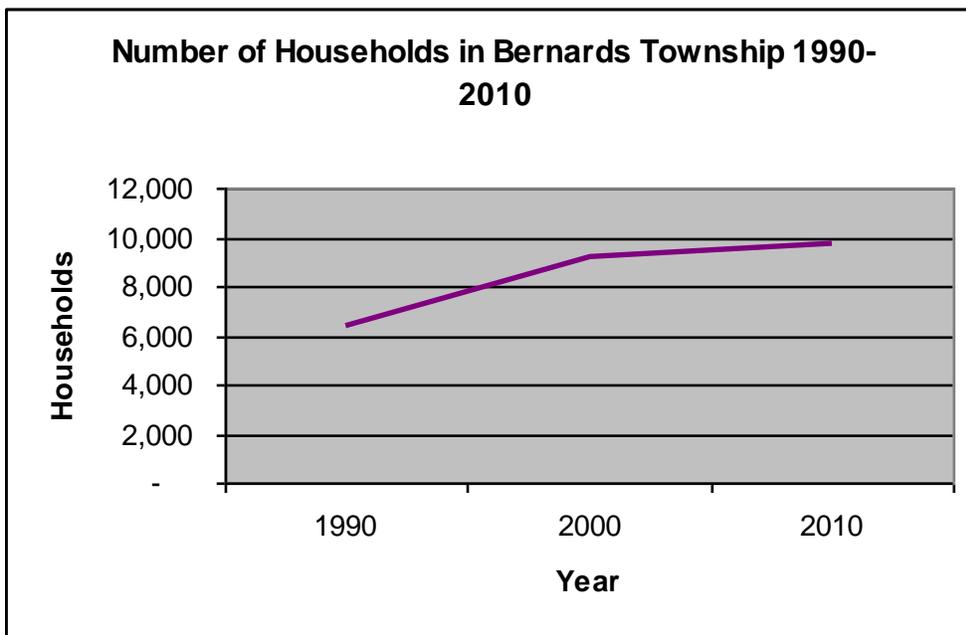
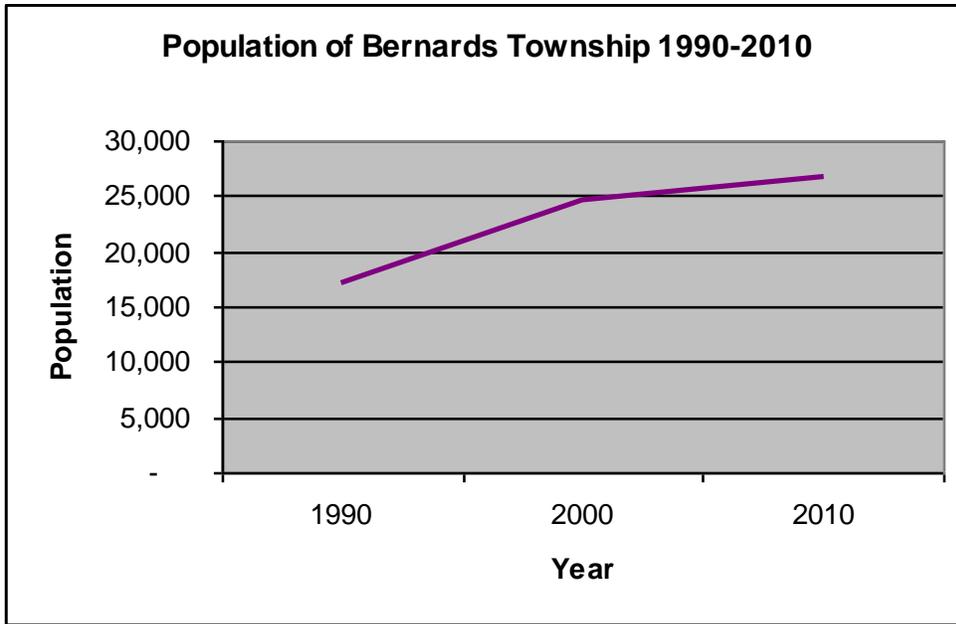
Another demographic trend is the steady increase in the number of residents ages 65 and up. As this population segment grows every year, it places new demands on all service providers—not just the Library.

Other changes taking place in Bernards Township include:

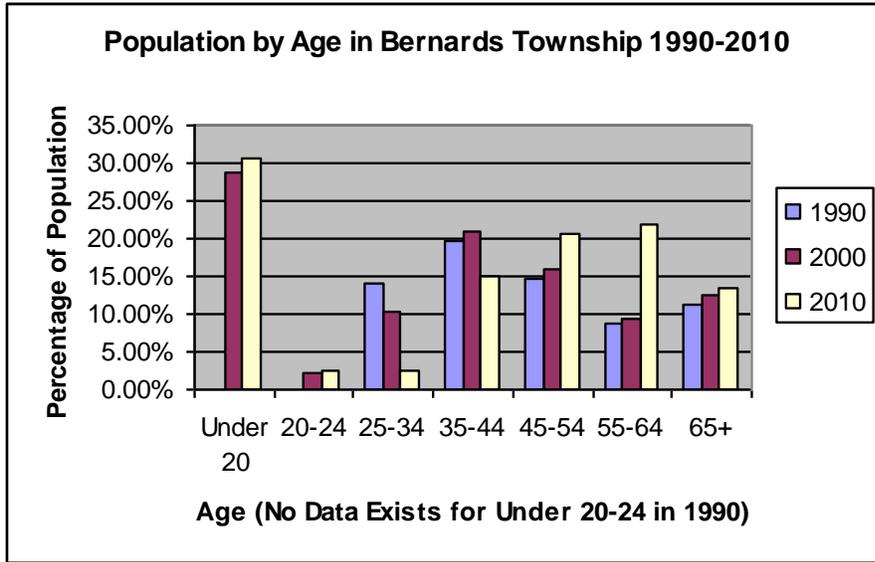
- Mounting concerns about funding for public services;
- Statewide public sentiment about property taxes may ultimately lead to reduced public funding for libraries;
- Employment remains a problem for some residents;
- School budget constraints from the State;
- Increased interest in the consolidation of public services;
- Pervasive use of technology by residents of all ages;
- Increased use downloadable materials may diminish role of the library;
- Heightened customer expectations regarding public services/anytime-and-anywhere access; and
- Growing interest in digitization.

Demographic Profile of Bernards Township

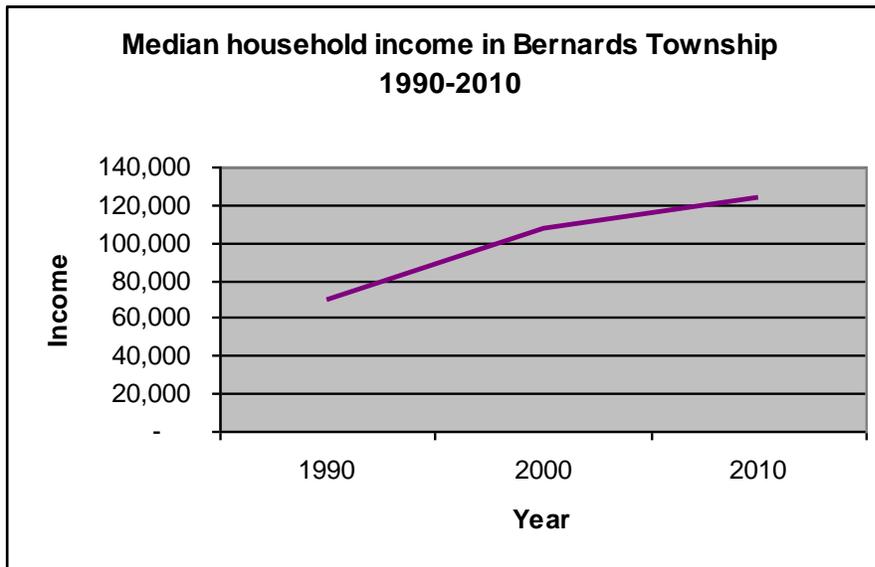
Population Indicators

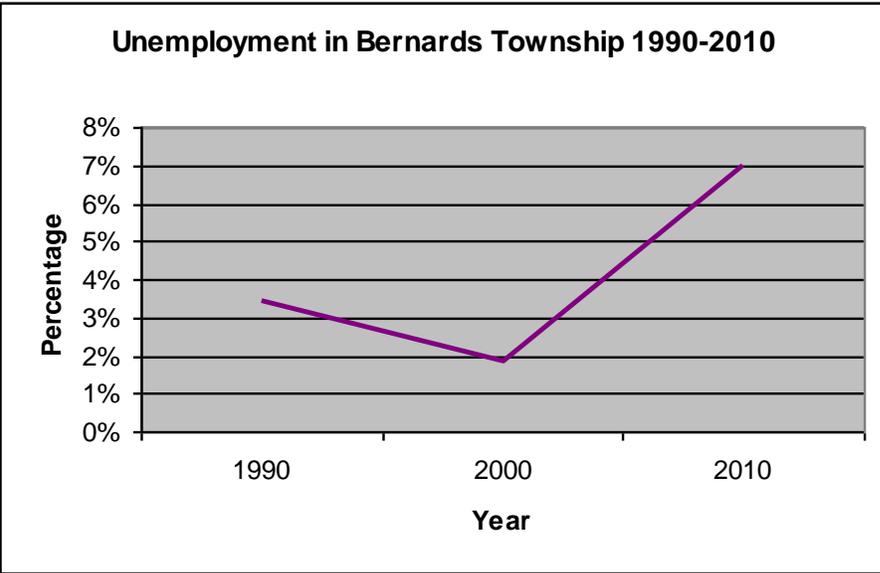
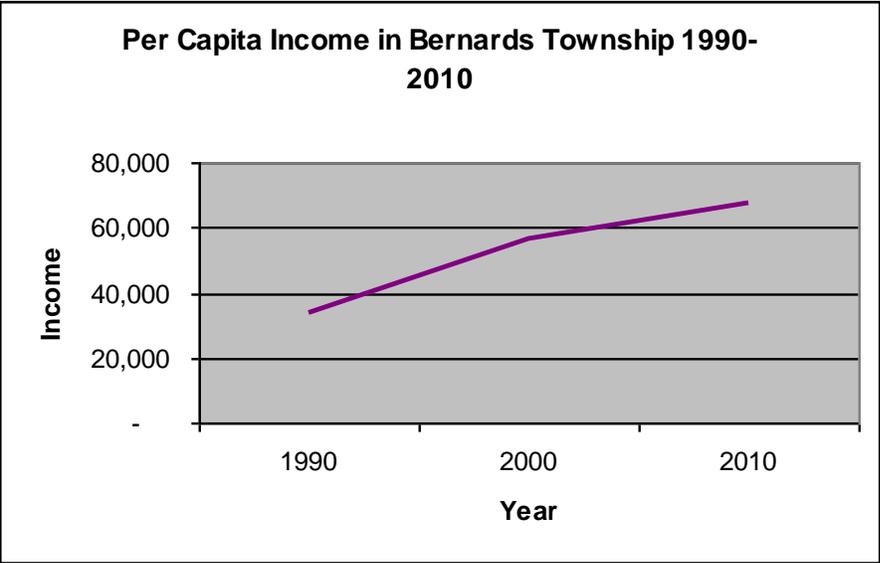


Population Distribution

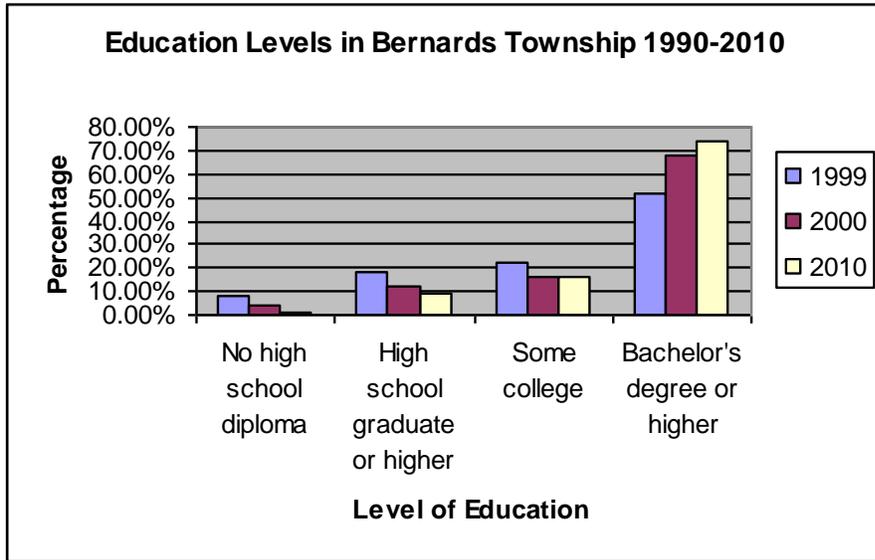


Economic Indicators

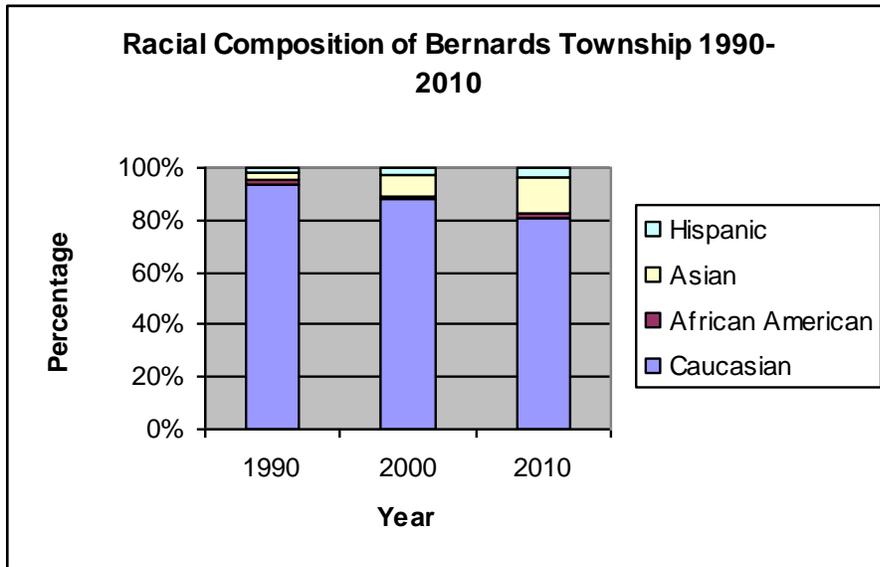




Educational Indicators (for population 25+)



Cultural Indicators



Sources:

www.bernards.org/Demographics/Documents/Bernards%20Township%20Demographic%20Data%202004-15-2010.pdf
<http://2010.census.gov/2010census/popmap/ipmtext.php?fl=51:3403505560>

A Track Record of Success and Forward Progress

BTL has long demonstrated a commitment to continuously improving services. Recent Library successes include:

- Highly successful Leisure Learning and novel Adult Summer Reading programs
- Innovative programs for children
- One-on-one computer training for 250+ Library customers
- Continuous introduction of new technologies
- Renovations to public restrooms
- 2200+ items/month borrowed from other libraries for BTL patrons
- Online language instruction
- Expansion of menu of downloadable materials
- Introduction of early literacy stations
- E-book readers available for borrowing within the Library

PLANNING METHODOLOGY

In 2011, the BTL Board of Trustees contracted with The Ivy Group to facilitate the Library's next strategic planning initiative. The consulting team recommended a phased series of planning activities that included the following:

- Initial planning, on-site visit, consultation, and review of key background information that would inform the planning process
- SWOT Analysis conducted with the Strategic Planning Committee
- Survey of Library Trustees
- Community Leadership Interviews
- Telephone Survey of randomly selected households in Bernards Township
- Strategic planning meeting with Trustees, designated staff, and members of the Strategic Planning Committee
- Community Forum
- Development of a strategic plan that reflects all information gathered during the strategic planning process and responds to community issues raised by the assessment process

SPACE ASSESSMENT

Strategic Initiative One: Maximize Available Space to Meet Changing Community Needs and Create a Welcoming Environment

Research reveals the need to make better use of available space and to consider expanding the facility's useful footprint by using outdoor space in new and creative ways. Input from internal and external stakeholders also suggests that the Library environment should be enhanced to appeal to more population segments.

Opportunity

BTL is well-positioned to re-evaluate its current use of space, explore the potential for enlarging the facility, and create, in the words of study participants, a “more hip” look and feel. These changes will enable the Library to become a true community gathering place—something which stakeholders report that the Township lacks.

Strategies

- Contract with a library building consultant to assess current space utilization and projected space requirements. Specific areas of exploration would include the use of space in the lobby and the front of the building, the local history room, an improved teen space, additional quiet study or small group meeting areas, and a technology center. Enhanced support for webinars, full tech enabled program and conference room space is also desirable.
- Conduct focus groups to solicit the input of target populations including teens, young professionals, and seniors regarding the preferences regarding space in the Library.
- While considering redesign of the building, follow the lead of the Township which has recently been certified by Sustainable New Jersey at the Silver Level.
- Explore amenities such as comfortable seating, conversational areas, and a coffee service as ways of improving the “feel” of the Library.
- Based on the results of the facility assessment, contract with an architect for design explorations and project costs.
- Contract with an interior designer to develop plans for creating a more “hip”/inviting environment which will make the Library a community destination.
- Agree on a process that leads to a yes/no decision on proceeding with renovation and/or expansion.

MARKETING AND PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic Initiative Two: Increase Public Awareness of Services Available at the Library

BTL has not focused on brand development and marketing. It is not surprising, therefore, that the research indicates that the public is unaware of all of the services available at the Library. The Library is planning for a new logo, ideally one which will not reinforce the popular perception that libraries are only about books.

If the Library wants to become a popular community gathering place, a new brand coupled with proactive marketing communication efforts might serve it well. Additionally, if the Board decides to move ahead with a renovation project, it is important to communicate effectively the full range of Library services to sustain the loyalty and interest of current Library supporters.

Opportunity

BTL has an opportunity simultaneously to increase the visibility of the Library and its underutilized resources and to connect with target market segments which have been identified as underserved.

Strategies

- Develop a marketing and public relations plan that supports the new strategic directions of the Library.
- Create a new logo, tagline, and design system for the Library that reflects its new strategic priorities and resonates with a broader spectrum of library users and potential users.
- Sub-brand and market online resources and services as a virtual branch library in Bernards Township with emphasis on specific product and service lines, including business and employment, seniors, and teen resources.
- Develop a plan to communicate and leverage the results of the research study and the new strategic plan to the media, community, and elected officials via leadership breakfasts, press conferences, presentations to community groups, etc.
- Launch a card registration drive.
- Promote the capabilities of BTL's highly respected team of professional librarians as a means of differentiating the Library from Google and other commercial search engines.

- Leverage relationships with other community organizations in order to expand the Library's reach.
- Host programs at non-library sites to connect with underserved populations.

Strategic Initiative Three: Expand Outreach to Underserved Populations

The strategic planning initiative solicited information about population segments which might be considered underserved in Bernards Township. The segments most frequently cited include teens, ethnic populations, adults in the 35-54 age range—the largest population segment in the Township, residents who do not reside in close proximity to the Library, and seniors.

Opportunity

BTL understands the importance of improving services to these population segments. The proportion of seniors has been increasing, and the large mid-range adult group deserves special consideration. Teens are not ideally served by the current space allocated for them and could, but often do not, benefit from many resources and services already available. Community leaders believe increasing cultural diversity is having a significant impact on Bernards Township. And finally, residents of areas such as The Hills have the potential of becoming valuable supporters of the Bernards Township Library. Each of these population segments represents opportunities for the Library to increase use and broaden its base of support.

Strategies

For Serving Teens

- Supplement the research conducted as part of the strategic planning initiative with an online survey of teens—possibly conducted in conjunction with local high schools—to gain a better understanding of their preferences and perceptions regarding public library services.
- Solicit the input of members of the Teen Advisory Board to develop new goals and ideas for expanded teen services.
- Expand programming on SAT preparation, career exploration, and promotion of Learning Express.
- Promote virtual services to teens who do not have transportation to the Library and explore and recommend possible transportation options.

MARKETING AND PARTNERSHIPS, CONTINUED

- Expand intergenerational opportunities with seniors and children.
- Aggressively market online services and databases to teens who are often reluctant to come into the Library.
- Consider including a non-voting student representative on the Board.

For Culturally Diverse Communities

- Augment the research conducted during the strategic planning initiative by meeting with leaders in the ethnic communities to explore their need for and interest in public library services.
- Identify other organizations in Bernards Township that offer services to the community's ethnic populations and identify the unmet needs which BTL might help them address.
- Identify best practices for providing public library services in culturally diverse communities.
- Offer additional programs such as a film series with appeal across all cultural groups.
- Offer staff opportunities to attend training programs that concentrate on the nuances of providing customer service to individuals from other cultures.
- Integrate in the strategic marketing plan goals for communicating information about library services to residents from other countries.

For Adults Between the Ages of 35-54

- Conduct focus group research with individuals in this target market to better understand their needs and preferences and to identify barriers to library use.
- Evaluate programs and collections in relation to survey results.
- Promote volunteer opportunities and FOL membership to this market segment.
- Monitor plans for the revitalization of Adult School programs at the High School and collaborate as feasible.

For Residents Who Do Not Reside in Close Proximity to the Library

- Research demographics of residents.
- Collaborate with the Township to map the locations of current card holders.
- Conduct a focus group with residents to gain insights into how the Library might better serve them.
- Consider making both adult and children's programs now offered at the Library also available at venues such as community centers in The Hills.
- Intensify efforts to promote virtual services to this target market.

For Serving Seniors

While BTL does an excellent job in serving seniors with its twice yearly Leisure Learning programs, there are other opportunities to serve seniors:

- Consider a senior advisory group for the purpose of obtaining input on new programs, services, and customer and facility amenities.
- Conduct an audit of other organizations and agencies providing services to seniors in order to identify unserved needs and to pursue potential partnerships and alternate venues for senior programming.
- When developing the strategic marketing plan, include specific marketing, packaging, and branding initiatives that target seniors and promote lifelong learning.
- Connect seniors with technology by continuing to provide training that increases their proficiency with computers and other personal electronic devices.
- Expand the content of the BTL website to include more content that is of interest to seniors.
- Integrate socialization and networking opportunities into library programs and services for seniors, including collaboration with teens.
- Research methods used by other libraries to deliver services to homebound community residents.

- Monitor the demand for an expanded collection of large print books as well as recent developments in assistive technology that the Library can use to serve residents with vision and other physical challenges.

Strategic Initiative Four: Expand Opportunities for Strategic Partnerships and Collaborations

BTL already has several successful partnerships in place. Staff report that they work productively with local schools and collaborate with business organizations such as the YMCA and the Trilogy Repertory Company. Community leaders believe that partnerships and collaboration are important because they maximize resources. BTL is encouraged to explore other viable public and private sector partnerships.

Opportunity

BTL can use partnerships to reach underserved populations, expand programming, host programs in alternate venues, share costs, and augment the expertise of Library staff. Partnerships also demonstrate to supporters the Library's commitment to prudent financial management.

Strategies

- Conduct an analysis of existing partnerships to determine their effectiveness.
- Review suggestions for partnerships made by community leaders and establish priorities based on the Library's mission and new strategic objectives.
- Research best practices for library partnerships and establish protocols for how BTL will enter into future agreements.
- Designate a staff member who will manage partnership agreements in the future.
- Respond to national and regional changes in education by:
 - Connecting learners of all ages with supplemental resources not available through schools;
 - Increasing the ability of librarians and/or community members to serve as coaches or mentors for independent learning;
 - Providing space for group learning; and
 - Offering training to enable learners of all ages to participate successfully in online instruction.

- Explore the potential for collaborative training and professional development opportunities for school and public library personnel.

Strategic Initiative Five: Align Library Services with Community Goals for Economic Development

BTL already provides resources and support services for career explorers, job seekers, entrepreneurs, and business owners and operators. Additionally, BTL staff has strong ties with the Chamber of Commerce, S.C.O.R.E., and two groups which support individuals looking for employment.

Opportunity

BTL can enhance its value in the Township by packaging and further promoting services and resources already available. Advocacy efforts for sustained funding can incorporate information about the ways in which a high performing library contributes to the quality of community life and higher property values.

Strategies

- Form a business and economic development advisory group to assist the Library in understanding the needs of business owners and individuals who are looking for career and job opportunities.
- Research and share in the community information from recent studies on the economic impact of public libraries.
- As part of the evaluation of the Library's current use of space, explore the potential for a designated employment and business information center.
- Formalize existing business partnerships and continue to identify additional partners for training, resource development, community outreach, and programming.
- Include in the strategic marketing plan specific initiatives to promote employment and business services and resources.
- Train staff on techniques for serving as coaches/mentors for customers using business and employment resources.
- Educate job seekers of all ages on skills for career exploration and development: online readiness, job searches, applications, resumes, document management, and email.

TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

Strategic Initiative Six: Keep Pace with Changes in Information Technology

One of the most important roles BTL can play in the community is that of technology provider and supporter. Despite the fact that the Township is more affluent than many other areas in New Jersey, there are individuals who cannot afford to purchase computers or pay for Internet access at home and/or lack sustained support for technological advances. The research indicates there is also a need for training classes for individuals who are not proficient with computers or other personal electronic devices.

The importance of keeping pace with new developments in information technology is heightened by the fact that, as sophisticated technocrats, many residents have higher expectations regarding the services available at the public library—especially teens and young professionals who have always had access to the Internet. This phenomenon compounds the stresses on BTL to make available up-to-date technology that satisfies the expectations of the Township’s diverse, tech savvy, constantly connected, and highly mobile market segments.

Opportunity

BTL has the opportunity to promote itself as a reliable resource for information technology and training. The Library can maximize its technical capabilities to better serve hard-to-reach populations, such as young adults, men, and young professionals. A focus on remote access to library resources will address the fact that many Township residents report that they don’t use the Library because they are time-starved or the Library location is not convenient for them.

Strategies

- Complete the technology plan to reflect new strategic directions.
- Project future staffing requirements for technology.
- Develop a plan for staff to obtain technology training.
- Identify organizations in the public and private sectors with which BTL might establish technology partnerships.
- Develop a plan for tracking new developments in information technology and assessing whether or not BTL should commit to using them.

FUNDING STRATEGIES

Strategic Initiative Seven: Diversify Library Funding

BTL has been fortunate in avoiding the financial pressures afflicting other libraries in New Jersey, thanks to an expanding tax base in the late 20th century and prudent, conservative financial management at the municipality and the Library. The Library has also been the beneficiary of several substantial gifts from Township residents as well as support from the local municipality.

Looking forward, with the town fully built out and increasing pressure on municipal funding, it is clear that additional approaches to funding will be required for future development.

It has been almost twenty-two years since the Library's last capital campaign, and any future capital campaign will be launched in a very different financial climate. It is important that the Library diversify and strengthen its funding base and foster a culture of giving among prospective donors. It is equally important that the Board of Trustees is prepared to lead the fundraising venture.

Opportunity

New funding initiatives could provide the Library with the opportunity to engage first-time donors, to redefine and articulate its value to the community, to engage local residents in providing for the costs of an expanded/enhanced facility, and to ensure ongoing special programs and services.

Strategies

- Research and establish goals for securing grants for special programs and services and identify resources for grant writing.
- Investigate the potential advantages of establishing a Foundation.
- Explore the establishment of an endowment, and create a development program that includes major gifts, corporate support, and estate planning opportunities.
- Work with the Friends of the Library to define fundraising roles for the Board of Trustees and the Friends Group.
- Make it possible for individuals to make online contributions.
- Explore recruiting a Trustee with experience managing fundraising for a non-profit board.

Strategic Initiative Eight: Increase Grassroots Support by Energizing the Friends of the Library Group

The Friends of the Library (FOL) is more than fifty-five years old, originally established to help organize community support, raise funds and stimulate interest in reading and the use of the Library facilities. Today the Friends support the Library by generating contributions with an annual membership drive, representing the Library at some community events, and providing other types of volunteer support.

Maintaining the enthusiasm of a Friends of the Library organization is a challenge for any library, and BTL is no exception. While the organization has over 500 donors, it has less than a dozen truly active members. To sustain the organization long term and increase its ability to support the Library, FOL must grow its membership and differentiate donors from active members. The research suggests that the Friends might be reinvigorated by expanding the vision members have for the future of the organization and by learning more about the best practices of other successful, proactive Friends groups.

Opportunity

If BTL commits to a program of library renovations, grassroots support will be an essential component of a capital campaign. With a reinvigorated FOL, the Library has an opportunity to garner even greater grassroots support for quality public library services. In addition to raising money for special projects and donating their time as volunteers, The Friends of the Library have the potential to become effective ambassadors for the Library in their neighborhoods and in their professional and personal lives.

Strategies

- Review BTL's new 2012-2015 Strategic Plan with the FOL members.
- Collaborate with the FOL organization to establish goals to align with the direction of the Library.
- To encourage a higher level of communication between the Board of Trustees and the FOL, explore the possibility of offering a non-voting seat on the Board of Trustees to a representative of the Friends group.
- Encourage the FOL group to take greater advantage of ALTAFF training programs and materials.
- Explore the possibility of providing the FOL with training—possibly with the Friends groups of nearby libraries.

FUNDING STRATEGIES, CONTINUED

- Conduct a series of FOL discussions around the topics of fundraising and advocacy.
- Evaluate the upside potential of creating a Young Friends of the Library group.
- Suggest that FOL consider instituting a tiered classification for members.
- Evaluate Library fundraising initiatives currently managed by Library staff (such as the book sale) and delegate to the FOL.

STAFFING AND LEADERSHIP

Strategic Initiative Nine: Sustain Recent Improvements in Library Operations by Creating a Succession Plan for Management and Offering Staff Development Opportunities

The increasing demand for library services supports the need for continuous staff training and professional development. The staff is this Library's most valuable asset. Every effort should be made to sustain morale and to reward staff with opportunities for professional growth.

Opportunity

The BTL can use the new strategic plan, the community assessment, and the possibility of a renovation project as opportunities for staff to expand and acquire new skills and experience.

Strategies

- Conduct an orientation session to introduce new strategic objectives to all staff.
- Assign specific staff members the responsibility of implementing aspects of the new strategic plan.
- Institute cross training for staff where feasible.
- Make staff aware of training programs available either online or in classroom settings, and encourage and facilitate participation.
- Consider establishing a scholarship fund for staff wishing to enter or complete an M.L.S program.
- Create a succession plan and project future staffing requirements.
- Identify training needs based on new strategic initiatives.
- As vacancies occur, recruit new employees who are flexible and "big picture" thinkers with "21st century" skills: critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, innovation, collaboration, and communication.

Strategic Initiative Ten: Increase the Capacity of the Board of Trustees to Advocate for Public Library Services

A dedicated Board of Trustees is one of BTL's most valuable assets. Trustees are mutually supportive and great cheerleaders for the high performance library staff. They are well-informed about Library operations, have participated in and demonstrated an interest in the strategic planning process, and, as a group, work in the best interests of the Library.

Looking to the future, the Board has to consider the possibility that BTL may not always be protected from the devastating financial reversals experienced by most New Jersey Libraries. The unpredictability of State funding and the pressures on municipalities to cover the cost of public services mean libraries will need to better advocate for sufficient and consistent funding in order to maintain quality services.

Advocacy is both an art and a science, and it is not necessarily intuitive. Even though it is a fundamental responsibility of Trustees, in many libraries advocacy all too often falls on the shoulders of the library director. The BTL Board may wish to become more proactive by developing an advocacy plan which delineates the roles of Trustees, Friends and staff.

Opportunity

There are intensified efforts underway in New Jersey to improve the performance of library boards through training provided by the New Jersey Library Association, the New Jersey Library Trustee Association, and the New Jersey State Library. BTL can build on its recent successes by ensuring that Trustees receive advocacy training and by using the new strategic plan as a springboard for important discussions with community leaders and elected officials.

Strategies

- Create job descriptions for Trustees (to be shared with elected officials and prospective Trustees) to ensure there is a clear understanding of fiduciary responsibilities and expectations.
- Collaborate with local elected officials to recruit and vet new Trustees strategically, focusing on those who have connections with important constituencies as well as expertise in marketing, personnel administration, finance, construction, fundraising, etc.
- Establish requirements for Trustees to participate in training workshops on topics such as fundraising, advocacy, and construction— possibly partnering with other libraries in the region.
- Institute succession planning strategies for the Board to guarantee BTL will have

trained and experienced leadership in the future.

- Hold officers of the Board, rather than the Library Director, accountable for Board functions and the management of viable committees.
- Conduct a benchmarking study to compare the performance of BTL against that of peer libraries, and integrate results into advocacy efforts.
- Explore the possibility of strengthening the Board by establishing special task forces or *ad hoc* committees comprised of individuals in the community who have expertise in areas such as technology or marketing and PR.
- Enhance the reputation of the Board and foster partnerships by creating more opportunities for the Board to be highly visible in Bernards Township.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Now that the documentation of strategic initiatives is complete, the involvement of a larger group of diverse, dedicated Board members, staff and citizens is needed to lead our Library in the fulfillment of these strategies.

Some are already underway or ongoing, while others are longer-term. Over the next few months we will prioritize each segment, identify those who will be responsible for implementation, and estimate time frames for completion.

A plan is, of course, only a set of guidelines. We fully realize that we do not have unlimited resources to enact all that is contained in the Plan. Changes in circumstances, evolutions in technology, and the requirements of government, the public, and other stakeholders may necessitate changes from the Plan as presented.

The challenge for the Board of Trustees is to find ways to extend the Library's tradition of excellence, as well as to create new and better ways of delivering services in today's rapidly changing library and information environment. At the same time, the Board of Trustees and staff don't wish to lose sight of the Library's traditional role as a place for quiet reading and research.

An electronic copy of this plan is available on the Library's website at www.BernardsLibrary.org.

Bernards Township Library
32 South Maple Avenue
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920
908-204-3031

APPENDIX

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP LIBRARY
SWOT Analysis - 2011



BERNARDS TOWNSHIP LIBRARY
SWOT Analysis

At the initial planning meeting, the Strategic Planning Team participated in a discussion to identify BTL's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. In that session, the Committee developed the following analysis for the Library's current operations.

Strengths

- Quality customer services
- Welcoming environment
- Knowledgeable and professional staff
- Up-to-date collections in multiple formats
- Strong programming for children
- Popular Leisure Learning program
- Positive relationship with local government
- Accessible location
- Reciprocity with other libraries
- Evolving use of technology
- Adequate funding
- Engaged Board of Trustees

Weaknesses

- Limited public awareness of some services
- Limited parking
- Space allocation
- Slow to capitalize on new technologies
- Location not convenient for some residents

- Building may not be large enough for increased use
- Teen services and programming
- Not a “hip” environment

Opportunities

- Reallocate space /explore expansion to reflect community needs
- Offer a more inviting environment
- Commit to continuous improvement in technology
- Showcase the Library’s support for academic achievement and lifelong learning
- Increase public awareness with consistent marketing and public relations
- Cultivate additional partnerships
- Clarify roles of Board of Trustees and Friends of the Library
- Diversify funding base
- Improve programs and services for currently underserved market segments

Threats

- Uncertain environment for library funding (possibility that municipal budgets may be cut and the millage requirement eliminated)
- Shifts in local political environment/new leaders with different agendas
- Inability to raise funds for capital improvements
- Inability to remain relevant/keep pace with rapidly changing technologies
- Political pressures to consolidate with County Library, other municipalities, etc.
- Ongoing competition from Netflix, Amazon, streaming media
- Inability to adjust programs and services to respond to recent demographic trends

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP LIBRARY
Telephone Survey

Executive Summary
December, 2011



BACKGROUND

In December, 2011 The Ivy Group planned and fielded a community-wide telephone survey on behalf of the Bernards Township Library. The goal of the survey was to gather statistically reliable information which would guide management decisions regarding which programs and services the Library will offer in the future and how customers will access them. The data from the telephone survey will provide the staff and Board with a precise understanding of the needs and preferences of current and potential customers as they relate to the delivery of public library service in Bernards Township.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Specific objectives of the telephone survey were to:

- Measure the level of support for enhanced and expanded library programs and services in Bernards Township;
- Explore the roles the public library plays or might play in the community;
- Explore residents' level of satisfaction with specific service attributes, including library collections, programs, technology, etc.;
- Evaluate current levels of awareness of library programs and services among user and non-user market segments;
- Determine current use patterns;
- Determine primary motivations that residents of Bernards Township have for using their Library;
- Identify barriers preventing some residents from taking advantage of public library services; and
- Develop demographic profiles of user and non-user populations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Approximately 6,500 residential telephone numbers were purchased from a commercial list broker. In order to qualify to participate in the study, respondents had to be at least 18 years old and a resident of Bernards Township. Each interview lasted approximately 13 minutes and was conducted by professional telephone interviewers experienced in conducting studies on behalf of public libraries. The Bernards Township Library was identified as the sponsor of the research project.

Over a one-week period, 200 interviews were completed. 200 interviews yield a margin of error of +/- 7% at the 95% confidence level across the entire population of Bernards Township 18+ years old, but not for individual population segments represented in the study. Calls were made during the day, at night, and on weekends so that an adequate representation of all market segments would be achieved.

Final Call Dispositions

Calls Conducted: 12/12/11 - 12/14/11

DISPOSITION	COUNT
No answer	324
Phone busy	55
Disconnected phone	150
Business/Government phone	18
Respondent not available	214
Initial refusal	221
Computer tone	36
Language problems	19
Schedule callback	17
Answering machine	1,083
Unable to complete call	11
Number changed	2
Blocked call	9
Duplicate number	0
Add to study do not call list	4
Break off in mid-interview	26
DNQ-NON RESIDENT	10
DNQ-AGE	1
OVER QUOTA	0
Completed Interviews	200
Avg. LOI	13:50

HIGHLIGHTS OF FINDINGS

- 30% of all respondents are male and 70% are female.
- 85% of all respondents have a card for the Bernards Township Library.
- 33% of all respondents have used public library services two times or less in the past twelve months. For purposes of this research, these respondents are classified as infrequent or non-users of library services.
- 35% of respondents classified as library users indicate that they have patronized the Library more than 12 times in the past year.
- The primary reasons respondents indicate for not using the Library are that they: use the Internet to get information (32%); do not have the time to use the Library (12%) or prefer to buy their own books (12%).
- The three reasons that current customers cite most frequently for using their public library are: to get books for leisure reading (92%); to get information for hobbies or personal interests (78%); and to ask for assistance finding information (75%).
- Library users evidence a high level of satisfaction with the Library's programs and services—particularly staff courtesy and professionalism.
- Customers are least satisfied with the Library's music and movie collections, audio books, teen programming, and downloadable audio books and e-books.
- 50%+ of the respondents who access library services have never used nine of the services, materials or programs explored in the study—particularly some of the less traditional services;
- The data suggests there is strong support for library collections, programs and services which support the needs of seniors, as well as children, teens, and coordinated programs between the Library and local schools.
- While 53% of all survey participants know the Library has a website, 47% of those participants report that they have visited the site only infrequently.
- Among the nine possible roles public libraries might play in the Township, respondents attach the highest levels of importance to the public library being a “source of reliable information”, an “educational support center for people of all ages”, and a “place that provides access to current popular materials”.

- 93% of all respondents totally or strongly agree that the public library plays an important role in Bernards Township.
- 94% of all respondents totally or strongly agree that it is important that the Library receive predictable and adequate funding.
- 2% of all respondents are between the ages of 18 and 30; 16% are between 30-45; 45% are between 45-60; and 37% are 60+ years old.
- 9% of all households represented in the study have a child under the age of 5, and 42% have a child between the ages of 6 and 17.
- 29% of households in the study have a member who is age 65+.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Gender of survey respondents (noted, but not asked)

70% of respondents overall are female and 30% are male. This finding is similar to that of other public library surveys in which females were more likely or willing to answer questions about libraries.

Question 1b: Percentage of respondents who have a card for the Bernards Township Library

85% of all respondents in this survey report they are registered cardholders. Women (86%) are slightly more likely than men (80%) to have a library card. Library users (97%) are more likely than non-users (59%) to have a library card. Respondents in households with children (89%) are more likely than those without children (81%) to be registered cardholders. Respondents age 30+ (84%) are more likely than those under 30 (67%) to have a library card.

Question 2: Use of public library services in the past 12 months

33% of survey respondents have used Library services two times or less in the past twelve months and for purposes of this study are classified as non-users. 72% of the non-users are female, and 27% are male. 77% of the households with children accessed public library services more than two times during this period vs. 59% of the households without children.

Among library users (respondent base 134), frequency of use in the past 12 months is as follows:

3-5 times	15%
6-8 times	14%
9-12 times	16%
13-25 times	19%
26+ times	35%

Question 2a: Use of other libraries

The study indicates that the use of other libraries by residents of Bernards Township is minimal. Only 21, or approximately 10%, of the participants in the study report they have used any other library.

Question 3: Reasons for not using library services at all, or not using them more frequently

Respondent base: 66 non-users

I use the internet to get information.	32%
Other (see open-end responses on page 20)	20%
I don't have time to use the library.	12%
I prefer to buy my own books.	12%
I have other places to get reading materials.	9%
I use another library.	8%
I don't read a lot.	5%
The library's hours are not convenient for me.	3%
The library doesn't have what I need.	2%
I don't have a way to get to the library.	2%
The staff is unfriendly/unpleasant.	0%
I owe a fine or fees.	0%
There is no quiet room to read or study.	0%
There is no place to park.	0%
The library is too far away.	0%
I don't have a library card.	0%
There are no electronic devices that I can borrow.	0%

Question 4: Motivations for accessing Bernards Township Library services

The 134 respondents classified as library users were asked about their reasons for accessing the Library. Among the twenty-two possible motivations for using the Library, “to get books for leisure reading” and “for reasons related to hobbies or personal interests” are the two most frequently cited.

Even though many libraries are reporting that reference requests are declining, it remains an important service at Bernards Township Library: three-quarters of library users indicate they “ask for assistance finding information” when they visit the Library. It is also noteworthy that the Library has a higher percentage of respondents attending adult programs than has been found in other library studies.

To get books for leisure reading	92%
For reasons related to hobbies or personal interests	78%
To ask for assistance finding information	75%
To get materials for entertainment	70%
To borrow movies	67%
To get materials for a child	50%
To make photocopies/have something scanned	42%
To read or work in a quiet place	37%
To attend an adult program	35%
To get health-related information	32%
To bring a child to a story time/other program	31%
To use computers/Internet access and WIFI	31%
For school-related reasons	29%
For the book sale	28%
To get materials for teens	27%
To volunteer or visit/connect with the community	26%
To use the printers	23%
To get tax information/assistance	22%
For personal finance/business related reasons	19%
To borrow free museum passes	17%
Other (see open end responses at end of report)	16%
For job or employment related reasons	15%

Question 5: Using a scale of one to five where one indicates “not at all satisfied” and five indicates “extremely satisfied”, 104 library users rated their level of satisfaction with 21 of the Library’s service attributes.

Question 5.1: Staff courtesy

93% of library users indicate they are extremely satisfied with staff courtesy, and 5% are very satisfied. The mean overall for satisfaction with staff courtesy is 4.87.

Question 5.2: Staff competence and professionalism

87% of library users are extremely satisfied with staff competence and professionalism, and 8% are very satisfied. The mean for satisfaction with staff competence and professionalism is 4.87.

Question 5.3: Length of wait for reserved items

32% of library users are extremely satisfied with their experience reserving library materials, and 33% are very satisfied. 25% of respondents were unable to evaluate the

quality of this service—possibly because they have no experience using it. The mean for satisfaction with waiting period for reserved items is 4.25.

Question 5.4: Inter-library loan service

64% of library users are extremely satisfied with the quality of the inter-library loan service, and 18% are very satisfied. 18% of respondents did not rate their level of satisfaction with inter-library loan—presumably because they have no experience using it. The mean for satisfaction with the inter-library loan service among those who have used the service is 4.79.

Question 5.5: The library's hours

66% of library users are extremely satisfied with the Library's hours of operation, and 28% are very satisfied. The mean for satisfaction with the Library's hours is 4.62.

Question 5.6: The library's collection of adult books

59% of library users are extremely satisfied with the Library's collection of books for adults, and 24% are very satisfied. The mean for satisfaction with the adult book collection is 4.56.

Question 5.7: The library's collection of children's materials

45% of library users are extremely satisfied with the Library's collection of children's materials, and 15% are very satisfied. 45% of the respondents were unable to rate their level of satisfaction with this service attribute—primarily respondents who do not reside in a household in which there is a child. The overall mean among users rating the service is 4.68.

Question 5.8: The library's collection of movies

28% of library users are extremely satisfied and 26% are very satisfied with the Library's movie collection. 15% rate their level of satisfaction as 3 or below, and 31% were unable to rate their level of satisfaction with the selection of movies available at the Library. The mean satisfaction with the movie collection is 4.14.

Question 5.9: The library's collection of audio books

15% of library users are extremely satisfied with collection of audio books, and 16% are very satisfied. 61% of respondents were unable to rate their level of satisfaction because they have not taken out materials from the audio book collection. The mean overall for users rating the service is 4.15.

Question 5.10: The library's collection of music CDs

13% of library users are extremely satisfied and 10% are very satisfied with the Library's collection of music CDs. 69% of respondents did not rate this service attribute. The mean satisfaction with musical recordings is 4.14.

Question 5.11: Computer wait time

24% of library users are extremely satisfied and 15% are very satisfied with the length of time they have to wait to use a Library computer. 59% did not rate their level of satisfaction with computer access. The mean for satisfaction with computer wait time is 4.53.

Question 5.12: The access that the library provides to the Internet

38% of library users are extremely satisfied and 12% are very satisfied with the access that the Library provides to the Internet. 49% did not evaluate this service attribute. The mean overall among Internet users is 4.74.

Question 5.13: The library's collection of online databases and downloadable materials

18% of library users are extremely satisfied and 12% are very satisfied with this library service. 66% did not rate their level of satisfaction. The mean for satisfaction with online databases and downloadable materials is 4.40.

Question 5.14: The library's facility

74% of users are extremely satisfied with their library facility, and 21% are very satisfied. The mean for satisfaction with the facility is 4.70.

Question 5.15: The library's location and parking

61% of users are extremely satisfied and 27% are very satisfied with the Library's location and parking. 11% rate their level of satisfaction as 3 or less. The mean for satisfaction with library location and parking is 4.43.

Question 5.16: Response to reference inquiries

63% of users are extremely satisfied and 10% are very satisfied with the manner in which the Library staff responds to requests for assistance with reference questions. The mean for satisfaction with reference assistance is 4.78.

Question 5.17: The library's collection for teens

12% of users are extremely satisfied and 10% are very satisfied with the Library's collection of materials for teens. 74% of respondents did not rate their level of satisfaction with teen materials. The mean for satisfaction with the teen collection is 4.31.

Question 5.18: The Library's children's programming

34% of users are extremely satisfied and 13% are very satisfied with the materials that the Library makes available for children. The mean for satisfaction with children's programs is 4.63.

5.19: The Library's teen programming

8% of users are extremely satisfied and 5% are very satisfied with teen programs at the Library. 83% of respondents did not rate their level of satisfaction with this library service. The mean for satisfaction with teen programs is 4.13.

Question 5.20: The Library's adult programming

22% of users are extremely satisfied and 15% are very satisfied with the Library's programs for adults. 56% of respondents did not evaluate adult programs. The mean for satisfaction with adult programming is 4.36.

Question 5.21: Access to downloadable e-books and audiobooks

6% of users are extremely satisfied and 6% are very satisfied with the downloadable e-books and audiobooks they can access through the Library. 11% rate their level of satisfaction as 3 or less for this aspect of library service. The mean for satisfaction with downloadable materials is 3.82.

The overall ratings are relatively high, suggesting that the Library is successful in satisfying customer expectations. The high marks for staff courtesy and staff competence indicate that library users have pleasant experiences when they visit the Library. Data indicates that customers are the least satisfied with the Library's collections of audio books, music CDs, and movies, teen programming and downloadable materials.

The study also reveals there are nine services that 50% + of the respondents did not rate, possibly because of their lack of familiarity with those services. The lack of awareness often seems to pertain to some of the Library's newer offerings. This finding would seem to suggest that with targeted marketing efforts, the Library has an opportunity to encourage the public—and potentially some new customers—to try some of the less familiar formats and services offered by their public library.

Means for Library Service Attributes

Staff courtesy	4.87
Staff competence/professionalism	4.87
Interlibrary loan services	4.79
Response to reference inquiries	4.78
Access to the Internet	4.74
Library facility	4.70
Collection for children	4.68
Programming for children	4.63
Library hours	4.62
Book collection for adults	4.56
Computer wait time	4.53
Library location and parking	4.43
Online databases and downloadable materials	4.40
Programming for adults	4.36
Collection for teens	4.31
Length of wait for reserved items	4.25
Collection of audio books	4.15
Collection of movies	4.14
Collection of music CDs	4.14
Programming for teens	4.13
Access to downloadable e-books/audiobooks	3.82

Question 6: Respondents' awareness of the Bernards Township Library website

85% of survey respondents report that they know that the Library has a website, with library users evidencing a higher level of awareness (90%) than non-users. Respondents who reside in a household with children demonstrated the highest level of awareness (94%).

Question 6a: Website Visitation

54% of all respondents and 65% of library users indicate they have visited the Bernards Township Library website. Females, respondents with children, and respondents between the ages of 30-45 are more likely to have visited the website than their survey counterparts.

Question 6b: Frequency of Website Visitation

47% of respondents report that they visit the website "infrequently"; 30% visit it monthly; 20% visit it weekly; and 1% daily.

Question 6c: Reasons for Visiting the Library Website

Among the 106 survey respondents who have visited the Library's website, the reasons cited for doing so are as follows:

Use <i>My Account</i> to renew items, place holds, or check due dates	67%
Search the Library catalog	66%
Learn about events and programs	52%
Check the Library's location or hours	48%
Use Library databases or do research	25%
Download e-books	16%
Visit the Library's Facebook page	1%
Read the Library's blog	1%
Access the Library's Twitter account	0%

Question 6d: On a scale from one to five with one indicating "totally unfavorable" and five indicating "totally favorable", the 106 respondents who had visited the website were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the site.

30% of site visitors characterized their experience as "totally favorable", and 44% rated it as "very favorable". 18% rated the experience as 3 or less.

Question 7: Using a scale of one to five, where one indicates "not at all important" and five indicates "extremely important", respondents were asked to assess the importance of the Library's offering 18 programs and services in the future. (Respondent base = 200).

Question 7.1: Materials, programs and services for pre-school and elementary school children

62% of respondents indicate that it is extremely important and 13% believe that it is very important to offer services for young children. The mean for combined user and non-user respondents is 4.48.

Question 7.2: Materials, programs and services for teens

53% of respondents indicate that it is extremely important and 18% believe that it is very important to provide materials, programs and services to teens. The mean for all respondents is 4.31.

Question 7.3: Materials, programs and services for adults

49% of respondents believe that the Library's programs and materials for adults are extremely important, and 26% think they are very important. The mean for adult materials and services is 4.27.

Question 7.4: Programs and services for senior citizens

58% of respondents think it is extremely important and 25% think it is very important to provide programs and services for seniors. The mean for senior services is 4.49.

Question 7.5: Computer and Internet training programs

44% of respondents think it is extremely important and 25% think it is very important to provide computer and internet training opportunities for the public. The mean for computer training is 4.10.

Question 7.6: More hours

18% of respondents think it is extremely important and 20% think it is very important that the Library increase its hours of operation. The mean for extending hours is 3.17.

Question 7.7: Reference services

55% of respondents indicate that reference services are extremely important, with 22% believing they are very important. The mean for this service attribute is 4.31.

Question 7.8: Coordinated programs with schools

49% of respondents think coordinated programs with schools are extremely important and 24% think that they are very important. The mean for school-library cooperation is 4.31.

Question 7.9: Cultural programs for adults, such as talks by authors

37% of respondents think that it is extremely important that the Library offer cultural programs for adults, and 28% think such programs are very important. The mean for cultural offerings is 3.96.

Question 7.10: Adult literacy programs

36% of respondents believe it is extremely important and 19% think it is very important for the Library to offer adult literacy programs. The mean for such programs is 3.91.

Question 7.11: Information for starting and maintaining a business

25% of respondents think it is extremely important and 21% think it is very important that the Library to make information available to entrepreneurs. The mean for providing information to business owners is 3.56.

Question 7.12: Employment and career information

44% of respondents think it is extremely important and 19% think it is very important that the Library provide information for job seekers and individuals who are exploring career opportunities. The mean for this service is 4.09.

Question 7.13: Non print materials such as DVDs

30% of respondents think it is extremely important and 29% think it is very important for the Library to offer non print materials, such as DVDs. The mean is 3.75.

Question 7.14: More quiet work space

23% of respondents think it is extremely important and 18% think it is very important for the Library to provide more quiet space where customers can read and work. The mean is 3.33.

Question 7.15: Downloadable audio and e-books

47% of respondents think it is extremely important and 21% think it is very important that the Library offer downloadable materials. The mean for this service is 4.21.

Question 7.16: Access to e-readers

32% of respondents think it is extremely important and 16% think it is very important that the Library make e-readers available to library customers. The mean for this service expansion is 3.79.

Question 7.17: Electronic newsletters and program information

33% of respondents rate electronic communications from the Library as extremely important, and 21% believe these communications are very important. The mean for this service is 3.74.

Question 7.18: Materials, programs, and services in languages other than English

19% of respondents think that it is extremely important and 23% think it is very important for the Library to offer materials, programs and services in non-English languages. The mean is 3.23.

The study suggests that residents of Bernards Township want the Library to uphold its current menu of programs and services. Data analysis reveals that survey participants attach the greatest importance to services for seniors, young children and teens, as well as support for education.

Means for Perceived Importance of Library Offerings and Services

Programs and services for senior citizens	4.49
Materials, programs, and services for children	4.48
Coordinated programs with schools	4.31
Reference services	4.31
Materials, programs, and services for teens	4.31
Materials, program and services for adults	4.27
Downloadable audio and e-books	4.21
Computer and Internet training programs	4.10
Employment and career information	4.09
Cultural programs for adults	3.96
Adult literacy programs	3.91
Access to e-readers	3.79
Non print materials such as DVDs	3.75
Electronic newsletters and program information	3.74
Information for starting/maintaining a business	3.56
More quiet work space	3.33
Non-English language materials/programs/services	3.23
Expanded hours	3.17

Question 8: Using a scale of one to five, where one indicates “not at all important” and five indicates “extremely important”, respondents were asked to rate the importance of the Library playing 10 roles in the community.

Question 8.1: Community gathering place

32% of respondents indicate that it is extremely important and 20% believe that it is very important that the public library serve as a community gathering place. The mean for the importance of being a community gathering place is 3.45.

Question 8.2: Place to access computers and learn how to use them

40% of respondents report that it is extremely important and 18% think it is very important that the public library provide computers and teach community residents how to use them. The mean for technology center is 3.64.

Question 8.3: Source of reliable information

72% of respondents report that it is extremely important and 16% think it is very important that their public library be a source of reliable information for community residents. The mean for a reliable source of information is 4.59.

Question 8.4: Cultural venue for the arts

32% of respondents think that it is extremely important and 32% think it is very important for the Library to provide a cultural venue for the community. The mean for cultural venue is 3.77.

Question 8.5: Educational support center for people of all ages

60% of respondents think it is extremely important and 24% think it is very important for the Library to serve as an educational support center. The mean for educational support center is 4.42.

Question 8.6: A place for families and children

60% of respondents think it is extremely important and 20% think it is very important for their public library to provide a place for families and children. The mean for a family center is 4.34.

Question 8.7: A forum for the exchange and discussion of ideas

39% of respondents think it is extremely important and 25% think it is very important for the public library to promote the exchange and discussion of ideas. The mean for a forum for debate is 3.88.

Question 8.8: Place that provides current books, music and movies

69% of respondents think it is extremely important and 16% think it is very important for the Library to provide current books, music and movies. The mean for the Library as a source of current popular cultural materials is 4.48.

Question 8.9: A virtual electronic library

54% of respondents think that it is extremely important and 20% think that it is very important that the Library enable people to download books, music, and audio and engage in online learning. The mean for this role is 4.21.

Question 8.10: A library café similar to Starbucks

18% of respondents indicate that a library café is extremely important, and 17% consider it very important. The mean for a café service is 2.84, by far the lowest of the ten roles rated by respondents.

Means for Ten Possible Community Roles the Library Might Play

Source of reliable information	4.59
Place that provides current books, music and movies	4.48
Educational support center for all ages	4.42
Place for families and children	4.34
Virtual or electronic library	4.21
Forum for the exchange and discussion of ideas	3.88
Cultural venue for the arts	3.77
Technology center	3.64
Community gathering place	3.45
Library café	2.84

Using a scale of one to five, where one indicates “totally disagree” and five indicates “totally agree”, respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements:

Question 9: “The public library plays an important role in our Township.”

75% of respondents totally agree and 18% strongly agree that the Library plays an important role in the Township. The mean across all respondents is 4.68, with males, non-users and non-card holders rating the importance of the Library slightly lower than respondents in other market segments.

Question 10: “It is important that our public library receives the predictable and adequate funding that it needs to provide quality library services in our Township.”

77% of respondents totally agree and 17% strongly agree that adequate and sustained funding for the public library is important. The mean for the support of sufficient funding is 4.69.

Question 11: Age distribution of survey participants

18-29	2%
30-45	16%
46-60	45%
Over 60	37%

Question 11a: Children ages 5-years or younger in household

9% of all survey respondents have a child who is under the age of 6 in their household.

Question 11b: Children ages 6 to 17 in household

42% of all respondents have children in their households who are between the ages of 6 and 17.

Question 11c: Household members age 65+

29% of all respondents have an adult in their household who is 65+ years old.

Question 12: Additional comments regarding the Bernards Township Library

45% of the survey respondents shared additional comments regarding the Bernards Township Library. These comments are generally very favorable and supportive of the Library. The complete list of their comments follows.

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES TO BTL TELPHONE SURVEY QUESTIONS

QUESTION 3: WHAT ARE THE REASONS YOU DON'T USE YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY, OR DON'T USE IT MORE FREQUENTLY?

- I'M HAVING DIFFICULTLY READING
- THE NEWSPAPER.
- I WORK AND FINDING THE TIME TO GET TO THE LIBRARY ISN'T VERY CONVENIENT.
- I HAD KIDNEY FAILURE.
- I JUST MOVED IN.
- MY FAMILY USES THE LIBRARY AND BRINGS HOME BOOKS FOR ME TO READ
- I HAVE A LIBRARY AT MY WORK.
- I'VE JUST BEEN BUSY LATELY.
- I WOULD USE IT MORE WHEN MY CHILDREN WERE YOUNGER.
- I DON'T RETURN BOOKS ON TIME.
- I HAVE A BABY THAT DOESN'T COOPERATE.
- BECAUSE OF ILLNESS.
- I AM 78 YEARS OLD AND I SPEND A LOT OF TIME IN THE GYM-I DON'T THINK ABOUT READING.

QUESTION 4: WHEN YOU GO TO THE LIBRARY, IN WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS DO YOU OR WOULD YOU USE THE LIBRARY?

- I GO AND LOOK AT THE MAGAZINES
- I LOOK AT THE NEWSPAPERS.
- I GO TO DO BOOK SHARING.
- I GO THERE TO ACCESS PERIODICALS RELATED TO MY HOBBIES.
- RENTING VIDEO GAMES.
- TO READ MAGAZINES.
- BRING KIDS TO PLAY.
- AUDIO BOOKS TO BORROW.
- TO READ NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES.
- TO MEET SOMEBODY OR PEOPLE.
- THEY SHOW MOVIES SOMETIMES THAT I ATTEND.
- GO TO READ THE NEWSPAPER AND LOOK AT MAGAZINES.
- TO READ MAGAZINES-MOSTLY HOME & GARDEN, SOUTHERN LIVING, HOUSE BEAUTIFUL, ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST.
- I RESERVED ONE OF THE MEETING ROOMS ONCE A WEEK FOR STUDY.
- THE LIBRARY WAS OPEN DURING A 6 DAY POWER OUTAGE THANKS TO THEIR GENERATOR-IT WAS WONDERFUL-WE WERE ABLE TO RECHARGE ALL ELECTRONICS AS WELL AS CELL PHONES-WE ALL GOT TO WARM UP AND RECHARGE EVERYTHING AS WELL AS GET OUT OF THE WEATHER FOR AWHILE.
- TO ENJOY DISPLAYS THAT THE LIBRARY HAS.
- TO READ THE MAGAZINES.
- LECTURES ABOUT BOOKS OR CRAFTS.
- PERSONAL LOVE OF READING.
- TO LOOK AT THE MAGAZINE SELECTION.
- I USE IT AS A SOCIAL EXCHANGE.
- RESEARCH HOME IMPROVEMENT-TRAVEL RESEARCH.

QUESTION 12: THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN OUR STUDY. WHAT OTHER COMMENTS, IF ANY, WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE ABOUT BERNARDS TOWNSHIP LIBRARY AT THIS TIME?

- I JUST APPRECIATE THAT IT'S THERE FOR US TO USE-IT HAS A LOT OF REFERENCES AND I JUST ENJOY USING IT.
- I THINK THEY'RE DOING A GREAT JOB BUT I THINK THERE IS ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT-BRING IN NEW SOURCES FOR INFORMATION TO HELP PEOPLE START BUSINESSES AND MAINTAIN-I THINK THEY SHOULD ALSO HAVE AN EMAIL LIST TO SEND OUT INFORMATION ABOUT NEW AND CURRENT PROGRAMS THAT ARE AVAILABLE.
- NOTHING-I JUST DON'T WANT TO SEE OUR TAXES GO UP TO FUND SOMETHING THAT'S NOT REALLY NECESSARY IN THIS DAY AND AGE-NOT IN THIS ECONOMY.
- I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE LIBRARY-I ALSO THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE THE INTERLIBRARY LOAN SERVICE BECAUSE NO LIBRARY CAN HAVE EVERY BOOK.
- THE BATHROOMS IN THE BASEMENT NEED TO BE CLEANED MORE OFTEN-THEY ARE FILTHY AND THEY SMELL HORRIBLE.
- IT IS MORE IMPORTANT TO CUT HOURS ON SOME DAYS-MONDAY.
- DISAPPOINTED ABOUT SENIOR AUDIO BOOKS-THEY ARE POORLY ORGANIZED-THE DVD'S AND AUDIO TAPES ARE MIXED TOGETHER-THEY NEED TO BE SEPARATED.
- FOR JOB SEARCH-I USE DUNS MARKET DATABASE THAT OFFERS SPECIFIC INFORMATION
- IT IS AN EXCELLENT LIBRARY AND I'M HAPPY TO HAVE IT IN THE TOWNSHIP.
- IT IS A GREAT LIBRARY AND WE HAVE USED IT FOR 17 YEARS.
- IT'S AN EXCELLENT FACILITY.

- I FEEL THE PARKING SHOULD BE BETTER-THE EVENTS THAT THEY HAVE SHOULD BE SCHEDULED BETTER-OTHERWISE EVERYTHING ELSE IS PRETTY GOOD.
- I FEEL THAT THEY DO A GREAT JOB-FULFILLING ALL MY NEEDS WHEN I GO THERE.
- THEIR PROFESSIONALISM IS UNSURPASSED.
- I WOULD LOVE FOR THERE TO BE MORE EBOOKS AVAILABLE.
- GREAT FOR KIDS-THEY HAVE EVERYTHING KIDS NEED TO OCCUPY THEIR TIME-
- HAVE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR DISABLED USERS.
- THEY'RE THE BEST YOU CAN GET-KIND AND PERSONABLE.
- I WAS VERY IMPRESSED BY HOW HELPFUL AND NICE THE STAFF HAS BEEN TO ME-I'M NEW TO THE AREA AND WHEN I WAS IN THE LIBRARY, I MADE AN ERROR IN COPYING-I MADE TOO MANY COPIES AND THEY CAME OVER AND EXPLAINED WHAT I DID AND HOW NOT TO DO IT AGAIN.
- I LOVE THE LIBRARY-I AM SO THANKFUL THAT WE HAVE SUCH A STRONG PUBLIC LIBRARY THAT WE CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF WHEN POSSIBLE.
- IT IS A WONDERFUL PLACE, BUT I FEEL IT DOESN'T HAVE SUFFICIENT COPIES OF THE CURRENT BOOKS-I HAVE TO WAIT A LONG TIME FOR THEM TO COME IN.
- IT'S A GREAT FACILITY AND IT HAS GREAT PEOPLE-IT IS VERY WELL DONE.
- OUR LIBRARY IS WONDERFUL-THEY ARE INNOVATIVE AND FAR AHEAD OF OTHER LIBRARIES IN THE COUNTY-I HAVE NO CRITICISMS ABOUT THE LIBRARY
- THE PEOPLE THERE ARE VERY HELPFUL AND KIND WHEN IT COMES TO NEEDING TO FIND SOMETHING.
- I HAVE NO COMPLAINTS-THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN GENEROUS WITH THEIR HELP- THEY'VE BEEN VERY PLEASANT AND HELPFUL.
- I'M JUST HAPPY THAT IT'S THERE WHEN I DO NEED IT.
- I ALWAYS WISHED THAT THEY HAD A PLACE FOR PEOPLE TO STUDY TOGETHER FOR EXAMPLE WITH A TUTOR.
- I'M VERY HAPPY IT'S THERE-A LIBRARY IS AN ASSET TO ANY COMMUNITY.

- IT'S A GREAT RESOURCE-FOR PEOPLE THAT DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO OTHER RESOURCES DUE TO LACK OF FINANCES-IT'S GREAT THAT WE LIVE SO CLOSE BY.
- THEY HAVE A GREAT ADULT BOOK SELECTION.
- IT'S A VERY GREAT PLACE FOR ME TO USE.
- IT'S A VERY IMPORTANT PLACE IN OUR COMMUNITY-VERY IMPORTANT THAT IT'S FUNDED-THE STAFF IS DOING A GREAT JOB.
- THE LIBRARY SHOULD RECEIVE ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE PROGRAMS IT PROVIDES TO THE COMMUNITY.
- THEY ARE AWARE OF THE COMMUNITY NEEDS.
- THEY NEED MORE WAYS TO DOWNLOAD EBOOKS BECAUSE THE WAIT TIME IS RIDICULOUS.
- A GREAT RESOURCE AND I LIKE THE FACT THAT WE ARE CONNECTED TO THE GREATEST LENDING PROGRAMMING-THE STAFF IS ALSO VERY PROFESSIONAL.
- I LOVE OUR TOWNSHIP LIBRARY.
- I ENJOY GOING TO THE LIBRARY.
- I LOVE IT AND IT'S A GREAT PLACE TO GO TO GET WORK DONE.
- I HAVE HEARD GOOD THINGS ABOUT THEIR SENIOR PROGRAM-THE CHILDREN'S SECTION IS VERY GOOD.
- I APPRECIATE THE FACILITIES AND THE STAFF AND THAT THIS LIBRARY IS IN OUR COMMUNITY.
- I THINK IT'S A GREAT PLACE-MY KIDS GREW UP USING IT AND I LOVE IT MYSELF.
- IT IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO ME THAT THE LIBRARY OFFER EBOOKS- OTHER THAN THAT, I LOVE IT, AND HAVE NOTHING ELSE TO SAY.
- I THINK IT'S BRILLIANT-IT'S A LOVELY PLACE TO BE AND IT NEEDS TO BE FUNDED TO KEEP IT GOING.
- I DON'T USE IT AS MUCH AS I USED TO BECAUSE IT JUST DOESN'T FIT MY CURRENT LIFESTYLE, BUT IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO OUR COMMUNITY-OUR LIBRARY SHOULD LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO MOVE TOWARDS ELECTRONIC MEDIA AND EVERYONE SHOULD SUPPORT IT.
- I LOVE MY LIBRARY AND COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT IT.

- I THINK IT'S DOING A GREAT JOB.
- THE LIBRARY SHOULD OPEN AN HOUR EARLIER ON SUNDAYS.
- IT IS A WELL PLACED, WELL ORGANIZED LIBRARY THAT DOES NOT NEED TO BE CHANGED ONE BIT AND I WOULD HATE TO SEE THEM MAKE CHANGES-BECAUSE IT MIGHT RUIN THE PERFECTNESS OF THE LIBRARY NOW.
- NOTHING ELSE-YOU COVERED EVERYTHING.
- IT HAS IMPROVED OVER THE YEARS.
- IT'S TERRIFIC.
- IT'S DOING A GREAT JOB.
- IT'S A GOOD LIBRARY BUT SEEMS A LITTLE SMALL FOR THE TOWN TO ME- OTHERWISE IT'S GOOD.
- IT IS PART OF THE COMMUNITY-A PLACE YOU CAN GO TO READ A BOOK OR MAGAZINE-IT IS LIKE A SOCIAL ASPECT OF THE COMMUNITY-IT IS THE CENTER OF THE COMMUNITY.
- THAT WAS A BIT TOO LONG FOR A SURVEY.
- I HAVE SEEN WEIRD PEOPLE AT TIMES AND I DON'T LIKE THAT-THEY SIT AT THE COMPUTERS-PORN-I DON'T LIKE THAT-THE LIBRARIANS AREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE POLICING THE COMPUTERS THAT I KNOW OF, BUT I DON'T LIKE IT-THEY SHOULD PUT OUT A NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL INSTEAD OF JUST POSTING IT ON THE LIBRARY BULLETIN BOARD-SO IF YOU DON'T GO AND LOOK YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON-IT WOULD BE SO MUCH EASIER.
- I THINK IT'S A GREAT PLACE-WE LOVE IT-I JUST WISH WE HAD THE TIME TO USE IT MORE OFTEN THAN WE DO.
- THE CHILDREN'S PROGRAM DOES A WONDERFUL JOB OFFERING PROGRAMS FOR THE CHILDREN THAT GO ON AFTER HOURS-MAGICIANS-TRAVELING ZOO SHOWS- DRAMA PROGRAMS-TRILOGY-SOMETHING LIKE THAT IT WAS CALLED-DOUBLE THUMBS UP ON THE CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS.
- I THINK IT IS AN EXCELLENT LIBRARY-ONE OF BEST IN THE COUNTRY-THE VARIETY AND QUALITY OF PROGRAMS AVAILABLE.
- THIS SURVEY WAS A LITTLE TOO LONG.

- I AM A TOWNSHIP RESIDENT FOR 25 YEARS AND SEE THE PROGRESS THE TOWNSHIP HAS MADE FOR THE LIBRARY.
- THE HANDICAPPED PARKING IS ON A SLOPE AND IT IS HARD TO GET OUR OF YOUR CAR.
- I ENJOY THE LIBRARY SO I DID NOT MIND TAKING THE TIME TO DO THE STUDY.
- GREAT PLACE-SOLID PLACE FOR BOOKS AND INFORMATION-THEY DO A GREAT JOB IN HELPING PEOPLE.
- THE WAITING LINE FOR A CURRENT BOOK IS BAD.
- ONE OF THE MOST WONDERFUL PLACES AROUND-I GO TWICE A WEEK-DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO WITHOUT IT-.
- I LOVE WORKING THERE-LIBRARY PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN BEING PART OF THE COMMUNITY.
- MY KIDS USE THE LIBRARY FREQUENTLY AND THEY APPRECIATE THE COMPUTERS AND THE COLOR PRINTERS BECAUSE THEY USE THEM FOR SCHOOL.
- I THINK THE REFERENCE LIBRARY STAFF AND CHILDREN STAFF ARE EXCELLENT AND THE CIRCULATION STAFF ARE RUDE AND UNPROFESSIONAL
- I THINK THE LIBRARY IS GREAT.
- IT IS A VERY GOOD LIBRARY, HOWEVER I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE ADULT ENTERTAINMENT PROVIDED SUCH AS MOVIES.
- IT'S A GREAT LIBRARY-WE GO THERE A LOT.
- I LOVE OUR LIBRARY-I THINK THEY PROVIDE SO MANY THINGS FOR THE COMMUNITY.
- I THINK THE LIBRARY IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE COMMUNITY AND IT SHOULD GET THE ADEQUATE AMOUNT OF FUNDING THAT IT NEEDS.
- I THINK THE EBOOKS ARE A GREAT IDEA-BUT THEY ARE HARD TO DOWNLOAD AND THERE AREN'T ENOUGH.
- IT'S A GOOD RESOURCE AND I DON'T USE IT ENOUGH.
- I THINK IT IS OUTSTANDING-WE ARE SO LUCKY.
- IT IS A VERY IMPORTANT COMMUNITY RESOURCE THAT SHOULD BE PROTECTED FINANCIALLY AND POLITICALLY.

- I LOVE THE LIBRARY-OTHERWISE I WOULDN'T HAVE ENGAGED IN A HALF HOUR INTERVIEW WITH YOU-.
- JUST WANT TO SAY THAT I THINK THEY DO A GOOD JOB-.
- I THINK IT'S VERY EFFICIENT-THEY FIND THE INFORMATION THAT I NEED WHEN I ASK FOR IT, AND THAT'S ALL I NEED-.
- I'M A VERY POOR JUDGE BECAUSE I'VE USED IT SO LITTLE-VERY HAPPY WITH THE COUPLE OF TIMES I WAS THERE THOUGH.
- I LIKE WHEN THE LIBRARY TELLS ME WHEN THE BOOKS ARE DUE THROUGH EMAIL-I ALSO LOVE THE CHILDREN'S DEPARTMENT-.
- YOU COULD MAKE YOUR STUDIES A LITTLE SHORTER.
- I THINK THAT THE STAFF IS AMAZING AND IT'S A VERY IMPORTANT RESOURCE FOR OUR FAMILY-. IT'S A GREAT PLACE AND I AM GLAD IT'S THERE-SOME DAY I WILL USE IT-.
- I LOVE THE LIBRARY SINCE I HELPED MOVE IT FROM ITS OLD LOCATION TO ITS NEW LOCATION-WE WERE PART OF THE GROUP THAT PACKED THE BOOKS AND MOVED THEM-WE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN MEMBERS OF THE LIBRARY AND MY CHILDREN LOVE THE LIBRARY-.
- I LOVE THE LIBRARY-I DON'T GO THERE ANYMORE, BUT I USED TO TAKE MY KIDS THERE-WE NEED THE LIBRARY.

TELE#: _____

INTERVIEWER: _____

DATE: _____ TIME: _____

ASK FOR ADULT 18 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER.

Hello. I'm _____, calling on behalf of Bernards Township Library. We are conducting a study to learn how our public library can better serve residents in our Township and would like to include your opinions. The interview will only take about 12 minutes.

1. First, are you a resident of Bernards Township?

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	TERMINATE
Don't know	3	TERMINATE

1a. Are you 18 years of age or older?

Yes	1	CONTINUE
No	2	TERMINATE

1b. Do you have a current card for the Bernards Township Library?

Yes	1
No	2

2. In the last year, approximately how many times have you used the services of Bernards Township Library? Please include accessing information from the library using a home computer or calling a library with questions. **(ENTER NUMBER AND CIRCLE CODE BELOW)**

_____#/Times

0 - 2	1	CONTINUE SKIP TO Q.4
3 - 5	2	
6 - 8	3	
9 - 12	4	
13 - 25	5	
25+	6	

- 2a. Do you use the services of other libraries?

Berkeley Heights
 Bernardsville
 Boonton Holmes
 Butler
 Library of the Chathams
 Chester
 Clarence Dillon (Bedminster & Far Hills)
 Denville
 Dover
 Dunellen
 East Hanover
 Florham Park
 Franklin Township
 Kemmerer (Harding Township)
 Jefferson Township
 Kinnelon
 Lincoln Park
 Long Hill
 Madison
 Manville
 Mendham Borough
 Mendham Township
 Middlesex

Montville Township
 Morris County
 Morris Plains
 Morristown/Morris Township
 Mount Arlington
 Mount Olive
 Mountain Lakes
 New Brunswick
 New Providence
 Parsippany-Troy Hills
 Lake Hiawatha
 Mount Tabor
 Pequannock
 Randolph
 Raritan
 Riverdale
 Rockaway Borough
 Rockaway Township
 Roxbury
 Summit
 Washington Township
 Wharton
 Whippanong

3. What are the reasons you don't use your public library or don't use it more frequently? **(Record all responses.)**

	Q3
I don't have a way to get to the library.	1
I don't read a lot.	2
I don't have a library card.	3
I have other places to get reading materials.	4
I use the Internet to get information.	5
The library's hours are not convenient for me.	6
The library is too far away.	7
The staff is unfriendly/unpleasant.	8
The library does not have what I need.	9
I don't have time to use the library.	10
I use another library.	11
I owe a fine or fees.	12
I prefer to buy my own books	13
There is no place to park.	14
There is no quiet room to read or study.	15
There are no electronic devices that I can borrow.	16
Other	17

SKIP TO Q.6

4. When you go to the library, in which of the following ways do you or would you use the library? **(READ LIST AND RECORD BELOW.)**

For school related reasons	1
To get materials for entertainment	2
To get health related information	3
To get materials for a child	5
To get books for leisure reading	6
To use library computers and to use Internet access and WIFI	7
To volunteer or visit and connect with the community	8
For reasons related to hobbies or personal interests	9
To ask for assistance finding information	10
To read or work in a quiet place	11
For personal finance or business related reasons	12
For job or employment related reasons	13
To bring a child to a story time or other children's program	14

To attend an adult program	16
For the book sale	17
To make photocopies or have something screened	18
To borrow free museum passes	19
To get materials for teens	20
To borrow movies	21
To get tax information/assistance	22
To use the printers	23
Other	24

5. On a scale of one to five where one is “not at all satisfied” and five is “extremely satisfied,” how satisfied are you with the following aspects of your public library? “I don’t know” is also an acceptable answer. **(READ LIST STARTING WITH ITEM X'D)** Respondent base is all individuals who use the BTL 3+ times per year.

X'D		Not at All	↔	Extremely
	Staff courtesy	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	Staff competence and professionalism	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The length of time you wait for reserved items	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The interlibrary loan service	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The library's hours	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The library's book collection for adults	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The library's collection for children	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The library's collection of movies	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The library's collection of audio books	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The library's collection of music CD	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	Computer wait time	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The access that the library provides to the Internet	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The library's collection of online databases and downloadable materials	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The library's facility	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The library's location and parking	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	Response to reference inquiries	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The library's collection for teens	1 2 3 4 5	DK	
	The library's children's programming	1 2 3 4 5	DK	

	The library's teen programming	1 2 3 4 5 DK
	The library's adult programming	1 2 3 4 5 DK
	Access to downloadable e-books and audiobooks	1 2 3 4 5 DK

6. Are you aware that Bernards Township Library has a website?

Yes	1
No	2

6a. Have you visited the Library's website?

Yes	1
No	2

6b. How often would you say that you have visited the site?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Infrequently

6c. When you go to the library's website do you:

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Search the library catalog?	1	2
Use <i>My Account</i> to renew, place holds or check on due dates?	1	2
Check the library's location or hours?	1	2
Learn about library events and programs?	1	2
Use the library databases to do research?	1	2
Visit the library's Facebook page?	1	2
Read the library's blog?	1	2
Download e-books?	1	2
Twitter	1	2

- 6d. When you visited the Library’s website, on a scale of one to five with one being totally unfavorable to five being totally favorable, how would you rate your overall experience when considering ease of navigation, functionality, content, graphic presentation, etc.?
7. On a scale from one to five where one is “not at all important” and five is “extremely important,” how important do you think it is for Bernards Township Library to make the following types of information or services available to residents of our community in the future? **(Circle number below.)**

X'D		Not at All		↔	Extremely		
	Materials, programs and services for pre-school and elementary school children	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Materials, programs and services for teens	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Materials, programs and services for adults	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Programs and services for senior citizens	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Computer and Internet training programs	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	More hours	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Reference services	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Coordinated programs with schools	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Cultural programs for adults, such as talks by authors	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Adult literacy programs	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Information for starting and maintaining your own business	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Employment and career information	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Non print materials such as DVD's	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	More quiet work space	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Downloadable audio and e-books	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Access to e-readers	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Electronic newsletters and program information	1	2	3	4	5	DK
	Materials, programs and services in languages other than English	1	2	3	4	5	DK

8. There are a number of roles that a public library can play in the community it serves. On a scale of one to five, with one being “not at all important” and five being “extremely important”, how important is it personally to you that the Library provides:

<u>Role</u>	Not at All ↔ Extremely
A community gathering place	1 2 3 4 5 DK
A place to access computers and learn how to use them	1 2 3 4 5 DK
A source for reliable information	1 2 3 4 5 DK
A cultural venue for the arts	1 2 3 4 5 DK
An educational support center for people of all ages	1 2 3 4 5 DK
A place for families and children	1 2 3 4 5 DK
A forum for the exchange and discussion of ideas	1 2 3 4 5 DK
A place that provides current books, music and movies	1 2 3 4 5 DK
A virtual/electronic library where people can download books, music, and audio and engage in online learning	1 2 3 4 5 DK
Library café similar to Starbucks	1 2 3 4 5 DK

9. On a scale from one to five where one is “totally disagree” and five is “totally agree,” please tell me the extent to which you agree with the following statements: **(CIRCLE ONE NUMBER BELOW PER QUESTION.)**

“The public library plays an important role in our Township.”

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

10. “It is important that our public library receives the predictable and adequate funding it needs to provide quality library services in our Township.”

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

11. In which age category do you belong: **(READ)**

18 to 29	1
30-45	2
46-60	3
Over 60	4

11a. Are there any children in your household 5-years-old or younger?

Yes	1
No	2

11b. Are there any children in your household between the ages of 6 and 17?

Yes	1
No	2

11c. Are there any members of your household who are 65 or older?

Yes	1
No	2

12. Thank you for participating in our study. What other comments, if any, would you like to make about Bernards Township Library at this time? **(PROBE AND CLARIFY)**

END INTERVIEW.

RECORD SEX OF RESPONDENT	
Male	1
Female	2

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP LIBRARY
Leadership Interviews

Executive Summary
February, 2012



BERNARDS TOWNSHIP LIBRARY
Leadership Interviews Executive Summary

Over a period of approximately six weeks, members of BTL's Board of Trustees and senior management team conducted sixteen in-depth interviews with persons identified by the Board and management team as community leaders in Bernards Township. Each interviewee has a singular perspective of the Township and BTL; however, for convenience, this report provides an overview of responses to each question.

1. Have you (or members of your family) personally used the services of the Bernards Township Library?

All of the Township leaders who participated in this study have personal experience using and or visiting BTL. When similar interviews have been conducted for other libraries, leaders have not evidenced the same high level of awareness on the part of community leaders.

1a. If you have used the library services in the past, how would you describe your experiences?

Leaders overwhelmingly characterized their experiences as very positive. The staff receives high marks for efforts to provide quality service. Helpful reference service, excellent children's programs, and customer amenities such as being able to reserve books on the website were specially mentioned. One interviewee reported that BTL "is the best library he has ever used."

1b. From your perspective as a leader in Bernards Township, why do you think that some residents do not use their public library?

Reasons most often cited include:

- Lack of time/over-scheduled families
- Some people may be intimidated by the new technology/others may think the library is not up-to-date
- Some seniors get out of the habit of reading
- There are people who prefer to buy their own books
- Some no longer have young children
- Some people think it is easier to purchase e-books than it is to download them from the Library
- The Internet is the preferred source of information for teens and young professionals
- Lack of awareness of services offered
- Some residents live at a distance from the Library and are not as aware of it

2. *What are some of the current perceptions or attitudes in Bernards Township regarding the public library, its services, and its value to residents of the community?*

Top notch and great value — those are just a few of the positive things leaders have to say about the Library. Although they believe that BTL is a valued institution in the Township, several interviewees noted that the Library is not a popular topic of conversation. Leaders observed that BTL's programs and services for younger children are popular and heavily used, but student use drops off after elementary school. The fact that the Library is part of a network is considered a plus. The resources for job searches and resume writing and materials for homeschoolers are important community resources.

3. *What are some of the important roles the Bernards Township Library plays in the Township? (Explore educational center, community focal points, technology center, resource for popular culture materials, source of reliable information, etc.)*

The variety of responses to this question indicates that Leaders understand that BTL plays a number of roles in the community. However, roles such as support for education and literacy, an inter-generational community gathering place, and tech center were cited more frequently than others. One respondent noted that BTL could be a source of entertainment since entertainment options are fairly limited in the Township.

4. *Libraries across the country are evaluating the access to technology they provide to the public — this would include computers and Internet access. How important is it for BTL to take the lead in providing electronic access and in introducing other new technologies in the Township? Should BTL be on the cutting edge?*

Most of the interviewees validate the importance of the Library's role in introducing and providing access to new technology; however, several offer the opinion that Bernards Township is an affluent area, and that most residents do not depend on the Library to provide them with technology. A role the Library can play is to teach people how to use the technology they have efficiently.

Leaders also acknowledge that keeping pace with constantly changing technologies is costly and risky but necessary if the Library is to remain relevant. Sustaining adequate access to technology may become more difficult in the future if funding becomes more of an issue. The interviews also reveal that even individuals who would be considered well-informed do not know about the technology and electronic resources the Library already makes available.

5. *What changes are taking place in Bernards Township? How will some of these trends affect the programs and services that BTL will offer in the future?*

The three most frequently noted trends are:

- The ever growing use of technology, including the popularity of e-books
- Increasing cultural diversity, especially of new ethnic populations that were previously not as prevalent
- Sustained concerns about funding and budget reductions

Other trends mentioned are:

- Demographic shifts — more residents 65+
- More families with children
- Pressure to consolidate resources
- Digitization
- School budget cuts

6. *BTL serves many constituencies. In an environment of fiscal constraint, what should be the Library's priorities when considering families with children, teens, seniors, English language learners, etc.*

Leaders perceive that the Library does and should continue to do a good job of serving families with children. Because the programming for seniors gets so much attention, the belief is that market segment is well served. Some respondents wondered if the Library's shouldn't be paying more attention to teens and young adults. None of the interviewees suggested that the Library should put less emphasis on serving any of the demographic groups, but they also acknowledge that the Library cannot be all things to all people.

7. *Do you believe that residents of our Township understand how their public library is funded?*

Interviewees unanimously agree that the general public has little or no understanding of how the Library is funded. While some may know that the Library receives money from the Township, few are aware that the State mandates that a certain percentage of property taxes be given to the Library.

One leader suggested that residents pay far more attention to the municipal budget and to the school budget than they do to the Library's budget. If the Library were forced to make cuts in the future because of reduced funding, the Library budget would probably receive more attention.

7a. *Is it your perception that the public library has adequate funds to provide quality services?*

Responses suggest that leaders do not think of BTL as a struggling organization. However, population growth and the necessary investments in expensive technology will probably mean that the Library's financial resources will not go as far in the future.

One leader opined that a public library is necessary service in any community and that no library ever has enough money.

7b. As a leader in Bernards Township, is it your view that the public library represents good value for the tax support it receives?

Leaders agree that BTL represents excellent value and provides a favorable return for the tax support it receives. One leader observed, "I believe the Library provides good value relative to other services provided to residents. This may represent a potential marketing opportunity to leverage what the Library accomplishes with a modest percentage of tax dollars."

7c. Are there ways that you think BTL contributes to economic development in the Township?

Prior to being interviewed, many leaders had not thought about the Library's contribution to economic development in the community. This would seem to indicate that the Library could expand its "case" with the community by linking its services to:

- Property values/quality of life in the Township
- Support for a literate workforce
- Job and career exploration
- Support for entrepreneurs (resources, discussion groups, etc.) and partnerships with other organizations
- Support for older residents who cannot retire/retraining on technology
- Technology access and training

7d. Are there ways that you think BTL can support academic achievement for our children?

Respondents clearly understand that the Library is an educational partner in the community and already provides many services that help students. A problem is that the Library cannot really help kids beyond sixth grade, because it isn't considered cool.

Additional initiatives for supporting education might include:

- Cooperative efforts with Board of Education or maybe Parks & Recreation
- Expanded programs for teens/young adults
- Help for parents with college aid, choice of college for their children, career choices, etc.
- Library provides materials and experiences that give them a liberal arts perspective
- Online instruction, textbooks, and downloadable books
- Sustained summer and after school programs
- Continuing education for older residents

- Provide balance by being the institution that still promotes books
- Courses on SAT/ACT prep, writing college essays and filling out applications (many families cannot afford to pay for these services)
- Make list of tutors available

8. *What do you think is the outlook for Bernards Township Library in the future?*

Most leaders view the Library as an organization with a bright future. It offers good services, has leadership in place, and enjoys a favorable reputation. However, several respondents cautioned that BTL still faces financial challenges that are cause for concern. Interviewees recommended that as BTL looks to the future it should:

- Stay on top of technology
- Emphasize the fact that the Library is a community gathering place
- Create an environment with more “wow” appeal
- Look to acquire adjoining properties if they become available to alleviate the shortage of parking
- Continue to offer a good mix of materials
- Cultivate close connections with residents — especially through the use of technology

9. *What do you think BTL’s priorities should be in the future?*

Community leaders recommend that BTL:

- Operate in a fiscally responsible manner
- Sustain staff training
- Keep physical plant up-to-date
- Expand programming — possibly by partnering with other community organizations/programs on current events
- Provide a pleasant environment
- Focus on needs of children and teens with summer and after school programs
- Focus on life-long learning for seniors
- Continue to provide job and career information
- Improve ease of access for e-readers
- Show people how to best use the technology they have
- Offer AP exam study guides as e-books and travel guides downloadable to iPhones
- Stay on the cutting edge with technology and programs — don’t become a dinosaur
- Continue to expand computer-based programs and services
- Educate residents about the services being offered
- Capitalize on digitization opportunities

10. Do you believe that the public is well informed about all of the services that are available to them through their public library?

Even though the Library uses a variety of information distribution channels, there is general consensus that most residents have a limited awareness of all the services BTL makes available. Most residents seem to know about the traditional services that the library offers, but many of the less traditional ones are under-utilized. Only regular library users understand the full range of services that are offered.

11. Do you have any additional thoughts that you would like to share with BTL's Strategic Planning Team as it begins its information gathering and planning process?

Leaders had many positive and supportive comments to make regarding the Library and its importance to Bernards Township. The following are representative of their remarks:

- Library can make use of the Fellowship Village newsletter
- Use the YMCA as a model
- Coordinate with Township webmaster to add library events
- Create Starbucks-like gathering place
- Use school district newsletters to distribute information
- Motivate and reward high-performing staff
- Partner with Township Parks and Recreation and Health Departments to expand programming
- Make use of renovated Township meeting room
- Use Bernards Township Community Center as an alternate venue for teens after school or at night
- Offer teen programs on subjects such as dealing with stress, college prep, personal finance, investment club, career planning
- Expand cultural programs that are not just crafts and reading
- Make sure BTL is identified as a municipal service — positioning the Library as being totally independent may be counterproductive
- Share information from the new plan as much as possible
- Leverage the talent of residents when planning Library programs
- Counteract the perception that the Library is just a pile of books/work on promoting aspects of library services that the public is not aware of
- Take advantage of major opportunities for collaboration
- Library should do a blog like the one that the Long Hill Library does

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP LIBRARY
Trustee Survey

Executive Summary
February, 2012



BERNARDS TOWNSHIP LIBRARY
Trustee Survey Executive Summary

A self-administered survey was conducted among members of the Board of Trustees to solicit their input regarding issues which would be explored as part of the strategic planning process. Seven of the eight Trustees participated in the survey. The following report summarizes their responses.

1. What are the strengths of the BTL?

The most frequently mentioned attributes include:

- Quality customer service provided by a friendly and knowledgeable staff
- Strong programming—particularly for children and seniors
- Excellent resource for the community with a welcoming, pleasant environment
- Reciprocity with other libraries through MAIN
- Responsive to changes in technology— i.e., WIFI access
- Good collection including non-print formats
- Accessible location

2. What are the weaknesses of the BTL?

Trustees perceive that the Library has the following limitations:

- Insufficient marketing communication
- Inability to capitalize on use of new technologies and social media
- Inadequate parking
- Location which is not convenient for Township residents who live further away from the Library facility
- Building which may not be large enough for the size of population served
- Connection to Friends group
- Staff training

3. Which market segments are best served by BTL?

Several Trustees note that the Library serves all market segments fairly well. Families with young children and seniors are well-served as are individuals who reside close to the Library facility.

4. Which market segments are underserved?

Teens, individuals residing in outlying areas such as The Hills, non-English speakers, empty nesters, and residents with physical disabilities are characterized as underserved.

5. *What trends or changes taking place in Bernards Township will affect the future delivery of public library service?*

The trends most frequently cited by Trustees include:

- Adoption/ use of new technologies
- Increased customer expectations regarding service delivery/on time/any time
- Decreased, uncertain funding levels for public libraries
- Upheaval in the publishing industry
- Unemployment
- Increased ethnic diversity
- Aging of Township population
- Population growth
- Loss or consolidation of services as a result of reduced funding

6. *How can the BTL reflect and respond to the ethnic diversity that characterizes the Township?*

- Increase program offerings and materials in other languages.
- Solicit more input from individual ethnic groups to better understand their needs and preferences regarding library services.
- Collaborate with schools to understand/plan services for ethnic populations.

7. *What are the barriers that prevent some residents from accessing services of the BTL?*

Trustees believe that some individuals do not use the services of BTL for the following reasons:

- Physical limitations
- Lack of transportation
- Time constraints
- Library's hours of operation
- Limited access to technology or the inability to use technology
- Lack of awareness of library services
- Cultural barriers

8. *What are the obstacles which prevent BTL from delivering the best possible service?*

Obstacles mentioned are:

- Complacency—thinking that everything is fine
- Sense of futility—some things are out of our control and we can't do anything about them
- Budgetary constraints

- Inadequate space/limited parking for large events
- Lack of technical skills
- Staff may not have skills such as marketing

9. *How well is BTL currently marketing its programs and services?*

While some Trustees express concerns about the appropriateness of a public library spending money on marketing, others feel that current marketing efforts are not adequate and that marketing actually represents an opportunity going forward. Others observations regarding marketing efforts are:

- Other libraries seem to be doing more
- Need for more customized marketing for individual market segments
- Many residents do not know about online services
- In the past the Library has not sought recognition or awards
- Effectiveness of current marketing should be re-evaluated
- BTL does a fairly good job using marketing capabilities of local schools
- Library has not aggressively pursued partnerships

10. *How effective have BTL Trustees been as advocates for the Library?*

Several Trustees expressed the opinion that they have successfully advocated for the Library and that to date, funding has not been a serious issue. They also observe that the Board has traditionally had a productive relationship with local elected officials. Going forward, the big challenges will be to remain relevant to a greater number of Township residents and to anticipate future funding constraints.

11. *What are the three most important issues which the Library's strategic plan should address?*

The Library's new strategic plan should focus on answering such questions as:

- How to keep pace with emergent technologies and competitive with other service providers?
- Will technology be the end goal or should it be the driving force for achieving other goals?
- How should space be allocated in the future?
- Should/how can the Library create a Starbucks-like environment?
- What will be the mechanism for monitoring trends and best practices in service delivery?
- How can the Library provide easier access to local community support programs?
- How can BTL better serve residents of The Hills?
- How will the Library continue to have sufficient funding?
- How can the Library do a better job of reaching out to more Township residents?
- How can the Library ensure that staff has adequate training for new challenges?

- Will the facility, as presently configured, be adequate to deliver desired services?

12. Any additional thoughts about BTL or the community assessment process:

“The best data will come from the community users and should be gathered and analyzed through this process. The physical issues with parking should be addressed as well, identifying funds and/or sources of funding (i.e., Friends) if deemed important enough for future growth and expandability of the Library.”

“The Friends of the Library needs to be re-activated. Partnerships and ties with local businesses could be strengthened.”