

**Baldwin Public Library Plan of Service
2018-2023**



Executive Summary

A plan of service provides an organization with a road map for the future; every public library in New York is required to have such a document.

The Baldwin Public Library used an inclusive, community-focused process to develop this plan. We asked members of the public as well as staff members to share their perceptions of both the Library and the community to determine implications for the Library in the future. The process confirmed that the Library is viewed as the epicenter of Baldwin and that the public expects the Library to be highly involved in the life of the community. There was a deep sense that the Library is a force for positive change in Baldwin.

The goals, intended outcomes, and action steps are organized into three categories: **People**, **Place**, and **Platform**. These categories were suggested by a report issued by the Aspen Institute on the future of public libraries. A summary of the goals follows.

People

- The greater Baldwin community will benefit from a Library that is a leading community organization and has a seat at the table in making Baldwin the best possible place to live, work, and learn.
- All children in Baldwin will enter Kindergarten ready for school.
- All adults in the Baldwin community will discover services at the Library to enrich and improve their lives.
- All residents of Baldwin will benefit from knowledgeable library staff members who have a strong customer service orientation.

Place

- All Library users will benefit from an improved user experience, including a variety of Library spaces that are quiet or active for a range of activities from individual study to group meetings.
- The community will benefit from a greener, more sustainable Library that provides a comfortable, well-maintained facility.
- Baldwin's teens will benefit from enhanced Library services and space that inspires emotional, social, and intellectual growth.

Platform

- All residents will enjoy cutting-edge Library services provided at the best value to help them enrich and improve their lives.
- All residents will be aware of the wide range of services provided by the Library.

Details on each goal can be found in the body of this plan.

Introduction

Every public library in New York State is required to have a Board-approved plan of service. This standard, along with the other minimum standards established by the State Library, are intended to “promote quality local public library service in all communities of New York State, empower libraries to strengthen community relations and promote public support for quality library services, and support a culture of transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement.”

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/ministan.htm>

A long range plan acknowledges that an effective organization focuses its services, rather than attempting to be all things to all people. A solid plan builds on an organization’s strengths while looking toward the future.

Methodology

The Library held a series of focus groups with Jennifer Larsen of Maybe Market Research. Groups were conducted with community leaders, teenagers, and staff members (full time and part time), as well as open groups in which anyone was welcome to participate.

The Library also offered a series of workshops in which community members were invited to share their dreams for Baldwin. They painted these dreams collaboratively on silk panels and provided accompanying text about their dreams. A number of the images are included throughout this document.

The results of these discussions, as well as suggestions received from the public and staff during this timeframe, have informed the goals and activities in this plan.

Findings

Perception of the Community

Community and family-focused residents who band together when it counts.

History of creative and artistic spirit.

School district changing due to budget cuts, but still seen as offering superior opportunities to its students.

Diverse groups of people – both a positive and a possible source of tension.

Geography positions the community as a pass-through, but proximity to city seen as a big draw.

Downtown is not a destination.

Neighbors feel less connected in a town without a vibrant downtown.

Most importantly: The Library is seen as the epicenter. It was described as a downtown destination, a safe gathering place, and an educational and cultural resource.

Perception of the Library

The Baldwin Public Library is viewed positively compared to other libraries in the area, in terms of staff, number / quality of programs offering, technology, and more.

Even though the non-staff group participants were self-selecting active library patrons, there was a relatively low awareness of the breadth of BPLs "non-traditional" offerings. This low awareness spread to younger PT staff members as well.

Because of BPL's central location and the lack of a vibrant downtown, there was the expectation that BPL act as a de facto community center.

Implications for the Library Moving Forward

Staff members and older patrons felt that the mailed *Piper* used to be an effective outreach tool. While it is unlikely that the Library will reinstitute mailing printed newsletters, this is something to consider when evaluating communications.

Focus more attention on attracting middle and high schoolers.

Emphasize BPLs role as a purveyor of arts/culture and not just books.

There was the perception that BPL could do a more effective job reaching out to the community through:

- Advertising in schools, churches, etc.
- Physically having an outdoor presence through events, such as carnivals, outdoor movie nights, etc.
- Acting as a community center
- Helping patrons better keep track of events/programs through email alerts, etc.

Vision Statement

We aspire to serve as the *heart of the community*, a place where Baldwin residents can connect with each other and discover more about themselves through resources and programs in a welcoming, comfortable environment.

Mission Statement

The Baldwin Public Library is an educational, cultural, and recreational institution serving all ages and interests in the Baldwin community. It is the mission of the Baldwin Public Library to provide programs and services to promote enlightened citizenship and enrich personal lives. (Last revised 10/17/12)

Values

As part of this process, the Library staff participated in an exercise to identify their collective shared values. The primary values agreed on, which inform the Library's service every day, were:

- Teamwork
- Compassion
- Growth (includes knowledge, learning, education)
- Flexibility.

Secondary values included:

- Respect
- Professionalism
- Dedication
- Service / Community
- Patience
- Kindness
- Fun / Humor.

Goals / Intended Outcomes / Action Steps

The majority of the goals developed for this plan come directly out of the discussions described above.

The framework is informed by the 2014 Aspen Institute Report, "Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries", which categorizes library resources as People, Place, and Platform. It is also

underpinned by the Public Library Association’s philosophy of community-based planning, as described in *Strategic Planning for Results* by Sandra Nelson.

This plan is meant to be a living document. Several action steps have already been implemented; others will be revisited and potentially revised during the course of the plan’s life.

People

The public library is a hub of civic engagement, fostering new relationships and strengthening the human capital of the community. Librarians are actively engaged in the community. They connect individuals to a vast array of local and national resources and serve as neutral conveners to foster civic health. They facilitate learning and creation for children and adults alike.

(Aspen Report)



GOAL:

The greater Baldwin community will benefit from a Library that is a leading community organization and has a seat at the table in making Baldwin the best possible place to live, work, and learn.

INTENDED OUTCOME:

The Library will help create and support a stronger Baldwin.

ACTION STEPS:

Assist in establishing a Friends of the Library group.

Continue to build community partnerships.

Explore opportunities to work with other organizations on initiatives to improve the community.

Host periodic meet and greets for civic groups.

Investigate the possibility of adding citizenship classes and services.

Continue to offer a yearly volunteer fair.

Create and implement a “Baldwin Reads” event to involve the entire community.

GOAL:

All children in Baldwin will have opportunities to take part in early literacy activities that will enable them to be ready for school.

INTENDED OUTCOME:

Baldwin's youngest citizens will be prepared for their individual future as well as the future of the community.

**ACTION STEPS:**

Change card policy to allow parents to sign up babies for cards from birth.

Create and distribute welcome packets for families with newborns in partnership with local pediatricians.

Expand 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program.

Offer workshops and other activities for the community's youngest children that will encourage healthy brain development.

Provide workshops for parents on the importance of infant brain development and other aspects of parenting.

Offer workshops for expectant parents.

Work with local businesses and organizations to provide story times during community events.

Explore the possibility of providing programming for children at the same time as adult programs.

Expand and strength relationship with school district.



GOAL:

All adults in the Baldwin community will discover services at the Library to enrich and improve their lives.

INTENDED OUTCOME:

The Library will help create a community in which people want to live, no matter what their age or family status may be.

ACTION STEPS:

Consider services for “new adults”, such as an “adulting” series, open mic nights, etc.

Offer new types of programming, such as themed film series including discussions, weekend bus trips, workshops for caregivers, meet-ups for biking, hiking, etc.; and a Baldwin Comic Con.

Investigate a job fair, resume assistance, and / or a career counselor.

Expand English language learning opportunities and resources.

Provide increased outreach to senior centers; offer programs of interest to seniors.

Offer programs of interest to retirees and Baby Boomers (digital scrapbooking, dog training, etc.)

Expand Museum Pass program.

GOAL:

All residents of Baldwin will benefit from knowledgeable library staff members who have a strong customer service orientation.

INTENDED OUTCOME:

Positive experiences will result in improved patron retention and increased community support.

ACTION STEPS:

Evaluate all staff positions to improve staff effectiveness and efficiency.

Enable staff to participate in continuing education opportunities to enhance their skills and service.

Ensure staff members have the technology and tech skills needed to offer exemplary service.

Re-evaluate entire service model to ensure library services remain relevant.

Evaluate policies and procedures with the goal of improved customer service at every juncture.

Place

The public library is a welcoming space for a wide range of purposes—reading, communicating, learning, playing, meeting and getting business done. Its design recognizes that people are not merely consumers of content but creators and citizens as well. Its physical presence provides an anchor for economic development and neighborhood revitalization, and helps to strengthen social bonds and community identity. The library is also a virtual space where individuals can gain access to information, resources and all the rich experiences the library offers. In the creative design of its physical and virtual spaces the public library defines what makes a great public space.

(Aspen Report)

GOAL:

All Library users will benefit from an improved user experience, including a variety of Library spaces that are quiet or active for a range of activities from individual study to group meetings.

INTENDED OUTCOME:

The Library will be an enticing “third place” for the entire community; the Library will be the go-to spot in Baldwin.



ACTION STEPS:

Make space on second floor for comfortable seating.

Create a new, larger Quiet Study Room, a Small Group Study Room, and investigate options for providing more group study spaces.

Create more spaces for people to sit throughout the Library through improved space planning.

Investigate possibility of flipping collections (reference upstairs, popular materials downstairs).

Revamp Circulation area to improve the flow of people and materials.

Continue to replace outdated furnishings throughout the Library with more contemporary, comfortable, colorful pieces.

Continue efforts to develop Expansion Area.

Invest in improved security cameras.

Create a coffee shop or area with vending machines for coffee and snacks, potentially in the Book Sale area.

Add art throughout the building.

Evaluate use of staff throughout building spaces to improve the user experience.

GOAL:

The community will benefit from a greener, more sustainable Library that provides a comfortable, well-maintained facility.

INTENDED OUTCOME:

The Library will contribute to improving the Baldwin environment while also being a strong steward of the community's resources with which it has been entrusted.



ACTION STEPS:

Maintain and improve existing infrastructure, using sustainable methods whenever possible.

Complete Window Project in the 1964 building.

Plan for a new roof.

Investigate possibility of adding solar panels to the roof.

Continue to replace current lighting with LED lights.

Establish staff committee to investigate green initiatives.

Add recycling bins throughout the building for public and staff.

Use greener cleaning products.

Add plants throughout the building.

**GOAL:**

Baldwin's teens will benefit from enhanced Library services and space that inspires emotional, social, and intellectual growth.

INTENDED OUTCOME:

Teenagers will remain connected to their community and the Library as they develop; they will remain library users and supporters as adults.

ACTION STEPS:

Investigate ways to improve and expand Teen Zone.

Replace furniture in the Teen Zone with pieces that are colorful and teen-friendly.

Bring the Teen Zone out to the community with programs at the middle and high schools.

Consider additional programming that fosters teen creativity and synthesis of skills, such as a film festival and painting / drawing programs.

Provide programs for teens that will help them grow into strong, capable adults, such as programs on careers / resume preparation, financial literacy, etc.

Platform

The public library is user-centered. It provides opportunities for individuals and the community to gain access to a variety of tools and resources with which to discover and create new knowledge. The platform enables the curation and sharing of the community's knowledge and innovation. A great library platform is a "third place" —an interactive entity that can facilitate many people operating individually and in groups—and supports the learning and civic needs of the community.

(Aspen Report)

GOAL:

All residents will enjoy cutting-edge Library services provided at the best value to help them enrich and improve their lives.

INTENDED OUTCOME:

The Library will leverage its resources, which are provided by the community, to affect the public good.



ACTION STEPS:

Expand Online Reader's Advisory.

Revamp website to make it fresh, attractive, and easy to use. Provide dynamic, current content that encourages community members to visit and use the site.

Update Library's technology infrastructure on an on-going basis.

Investigate and, when appropriate, add to the Library's collection of online services.

Transition from desktop to mobile devices for both the public and staff whenever possible.

Investigate and implement new services that will meet community needs.

Investigate ways to provide maker services for all ages, not necessarily in a dedicated space.

Consider expanded hours if / when possible.



GOAL:

All residents will be aware of the wide range of services provided by the Library.

INTENDED OUTCOME:

More Baldwin residents will become Library users and supporters.

ACTION STEPS:

Create a plan to promote programs and services through social media, eBlasts, and staff word of mouth.

Strengthen relationship with the Baldwin School District. Visit schools to promote summer reading each spring.

Expand outreach endeavors such as Outside the Lines; increase presence at community events.

Reach out to people moving into the community through the schools and other organizations.

Each department will develop outreach goals.

Consider a bi-annual mini-newsletter to be mailed to all residents, highlighting key upcoming events.

Improve signage both inside and outside the Library.

Provide service at the train station at least once morning per week during the summer.

Plan for the 100th anniversary of the Baldwin Public Library (October 2019).

Adopted by the Baldwin Public Library Board of Trustees

October 18, 2017