



Berkeley Public Library

Strategic Plan

2019-2024

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Berkeley Public Library Staff

Director -	Ryan Cox
Circulation Coordinator -	Loretta Bohn
Business Manager -	Isabel LaBarbera
Technical Services -	Sonia Stetkus
Youth Services -	Rachel Schukat
Teen & Adult Services -	Cathy Johnson
Archives & Reference -	Sally Conkright
Circulation Clerk -	Zamaira Vega
Circulation Clerk -	Joseph Ocbamichael
Circulation Clerk -	Sonali Rajput
Circulation Clerk-	Mitchell Eichert
Library Page -	Josiah Deford

Berkeley Public Library Board of Trustees

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Ida O'Neal	Vice President
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Strategic Planning Methodology

Both the Board of Trustees of the Berkeley Public Library (BPL) as well as library administration have discussed the need to have a strategic planning document to help guide decisions over the course of the next five years. These decisions include funding and budgetary levels, programming, and capital expenditures. It is vital to the BPL to provide equal and free access to information in any format, whether physical or digital, for all residents of the Village of Berkeley.

In June of 2018, a survey covering capital improvements, collections, and library services was distributed to library staff (*see appendix A*). In late Summer/early Fall 2018, the BPL began the process of gathering information directly from the community with a public survey requesting feedback on a wide range of items including but not limited to library services, operating hours, facilities, management and future improvements (*see appendix B*). Patron surveys were made available in both English and Spanish languages, and an online version of each was also created and embedded on the library's website to facilitate a stronger response rate. Additionally, a SWOT analysis was initially created during the summer of 2018 and updated to reflect information gathered through the surveying process in order to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for the BPL (*see appendix C*).

Profile of the Community of Berkeley

The Village of Berkeley is roughly 15 miles west of downtown Chicago, and is well connected to the surrounding metropolitan area with easy access to both I-290/294 and I-55 as well as being serviced by both Pace bus lines (St. Charles Avenue) and a Metra station. Berkeley is also positioned on the Illinois Prairie Path, which is a network of over 61 miles of bicycle and walking paths over three counties.

According to the 2010 census, the Village of Berkeley has a population of 5,209 residents, with a racially diverse breakdown of roughly 31% white, 31% African-American, and 31% identifying as Hispanic or Latino. The median age for Berkeley is 37.3 years with no clear majority of ages. A third of the households in Berkeley speak a language other than English at home.

Over 88% of Berkeley residents are high school graduates, and nearly 27% hold a bachelor degree or higher. Additionally, the median household income for Berkeley is \$70,217. 6.9% of residents are living below the poverty level and there is an effective unemployment rate of 3.4%. While data specific to the Village of Berkeley regarding home internet access is not available, the rate of 75.1% for the City of Chicago can be taken as a rough approximation.

Of the total population of Berkeley, approximately 1,600 have active library cards at the BPL which represents roughly 30% of the community.

Profile of the Berkeley Public Library

The Berkeley Public Library is governed by a seven-person board of trustees and has, at present, a full-time staff of 1 and a part-time staff of 10. The library building is roughly 11,500 square feet and is open to the public 59 hours a week. The library holds a print collection of approximately 22,500 items, an electronic collection of 30,000 items, and an audio/visual collection of approximately 3,200 items. There are 10 fully accessible PCs for patrons and an additional 3 PCs and 5 laptops for limited patron use (OPAC, print services).

The Berkeley Public Library is a member of the SWAN consortium of libraries, which currently has 97 area library members and boasts 8.4 million titles available. The BPL is also a member of the OCLC cooperative, which extends access for patrons to the collections of nearly 17,000 libraries worldwide.

Current Mission Statement

The Berkeley Public Library provides materials and services to help community residents obtain information to meet their personal, educational, and cultural needs, and serves as a learning and educational center for its residents.

Current Vision Statement

The Berkeley Public Library will foster the spirit of exploration, lifelong learning, joy of reading, and pursuit of information and knowledge for all ages and cultures.

Library History

- June, 1945* - First Library Board formed through efforts of Barbara Fett Pellman.
- October, 1945* - Village approves library use of conference room, 2nd floor of Village Hall.
- March, 1946* - Formal opening of all-volunteer library, open seven hours a week.
- 1961* - First tax appropriation for library services.
- 1968* - Library briefly rents storefront at 1752 Taft Avenue.
- 1968* - Land purchased at corner of Maple and Taft for new library building.
- 1971* - Construction of current library building started.
- June, 1972* - Dedication and formal opening of current library building.
- 1975* - Basement remodel/finishing project completed.
- 1986* - Addition of elevator to building completed.

Strengths and Successes

The BPL is staffed by dedicated personnel who strive to meet the needs of library patrons. This has been accomplished by continual review and redevelopment of library collections, providing a wide range of programming opportunities for both adults and children, and supporting technology access vital to the community.

Over the past several years, library administration and staff have worked to cultivate relationships with both the Village of Berkeley and community groups including the Berkeley Community Garden Club, American Sewing Guild, Berkeley Neighborhood Watch, and more. These relationships have resulted in partnerships to further extend library programs for the public. Events have ranged from outdoor-themed crafts for kids with the Community Garden Club to financial guidance workshops through Proviso Township offices.

Approximately four years ago, library hours of operation were extended an hour on Fridays from 5:00pm to 6:00pm. This added over 50 hours of public service annually; library use and direct feedback from patrons has been positive regarding the change.

Future Challenges

As with any public library, there are operational challenges that have to be met. The library is funded primarily through funds collected through taxes, which is a revenue source that is not anticipated to increase significantly in coming years. Because of this, the library will be prepared to seek supplemental alternative funding sources for future large-scale projects as needed. The library meets all minimum standards required for state aid and continues to economize the costs of office supplies, library materials, and technology services. Library administration and staff pursue outside funding sources, including direct donations and the application of grants, to supplement existing collections and programming.

The current library building was first opened to the public in 1972. While the library facility has seen significant alterations since that time (most notably the addition of an elevator and improvements to public access such as automatic doors), much of the library remains largely unchanged and has not fully kept pace with either technology or ADA compliance. In the past two years library staff have begun using non-traditional space in the library in order to provide programming by repurposing the unfinished area on the lower level traditionally used only to store used books as a crafting and activity room.

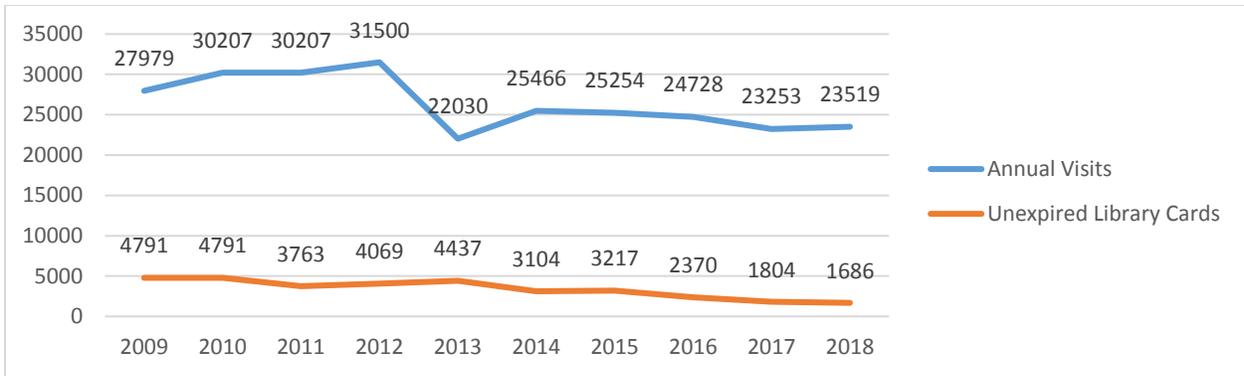
In recent years, the BPL has made a priority of improving the level of technology available to patrons and help bridge the digital divide that exists in the community. Prior efforts have included both direct (publicly accessibly computers, WiFi access on both levels of the building, updates to the library's website, and print/scan services) as well as indirect (staff computers, support software, etc.) support. The library will seek to maintain this momentum moving forward by providing a ground-up website rebuild to improve integration of the library catalog as well as increased accessibility on mobile devices; incremental replacement of both public and staff hardware as existing equipment reaches end of life; and improvements to the technology infrastructure (WiFi, network wiring, server maintenance).

Historical Benchmarks / Levels of Use

Patron Visits & Membership

Annually, the library experiences around 23,500 visits. These visits include picking up/dropping off of library materials, computer use, program attendance, and limited general library use (reading, WiFi access) that does not directly involve library staff.

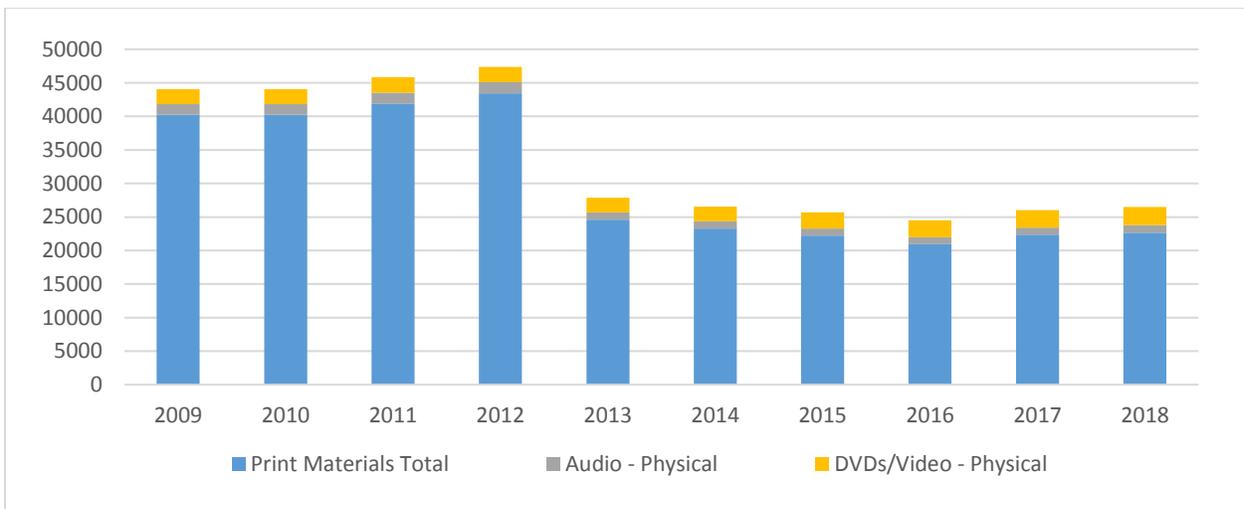
Currently, the BPL has over 1,600 library cards registered to residents of the community. This is a marked decrease over previous years, due in part to automated purging of library accounts (expired with no or only limited fines owed). Current levels account for roughly 30% of the community.



Total estimated annual visits and active library card accounts by fiscal year.

Collection

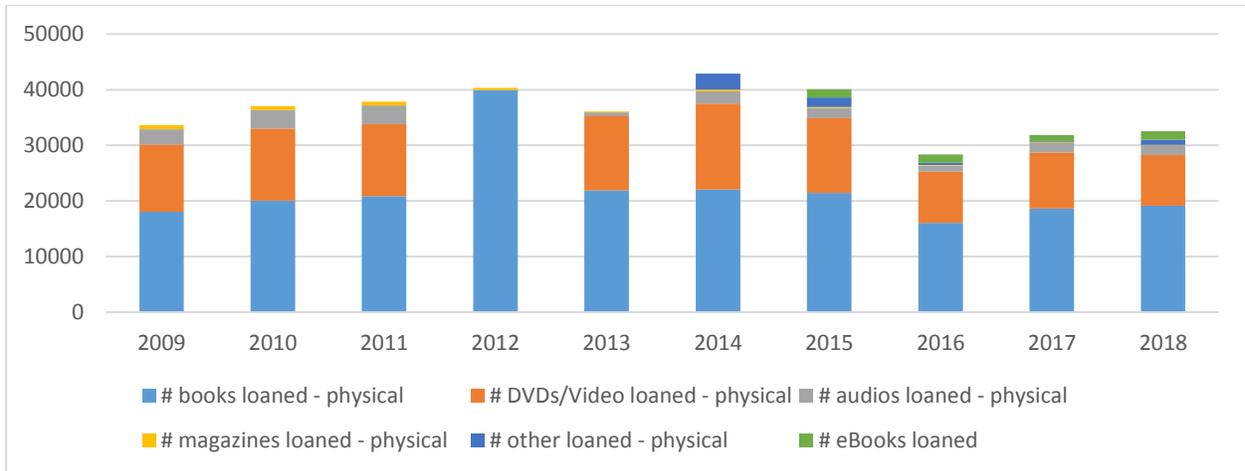
The BPL offers a total collection size of over 60,000 items including roughly 23,000 print items; 2,700 DVDs; 1,100 audio recordings; and 38,000 eBooks and digital resources. Formats also include large print materials and subscriptions to over 20 periodicals. Library staff regularly evaluate existing collections for condition, accuracy, and patron interest.



Total physical collection size by fiscal year.

Circulation

For the purposes of monitoring use of the library's collection, one item circulation is defined as either a checkout or renewal of a single item (physical or digital). The library circulates over 30,000 items annually. This amount has increased approximately 8% over the past three years.

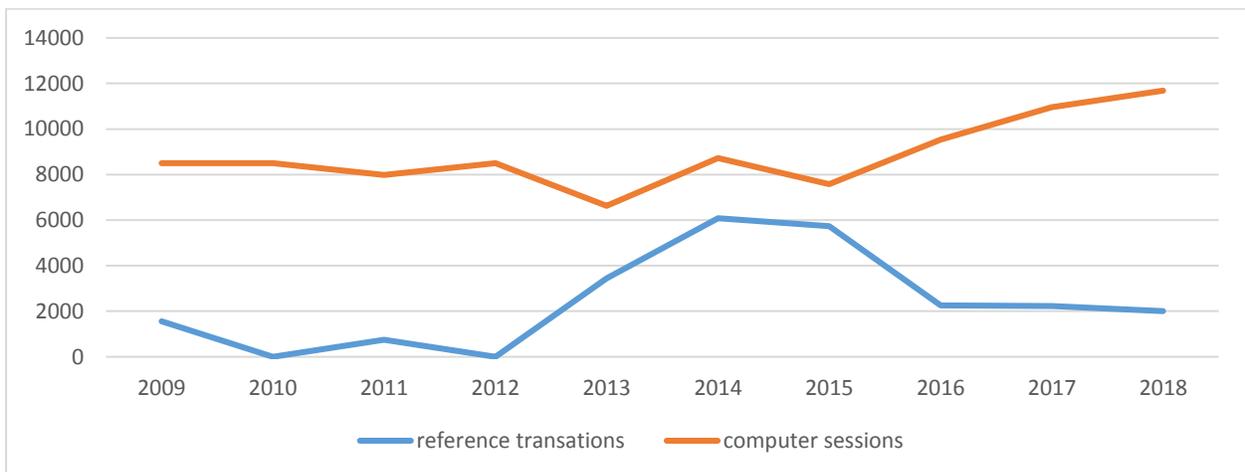


Total circulation of materials by fiscal year.

Library Services: Computer Sessions & Reference Transactions

A computer session is defined as up to a one-hour period of time by a single patron of the library's ten publically available computers. In the past three years, the library has seen an increase of over 15% to 11,500 sessions annually.

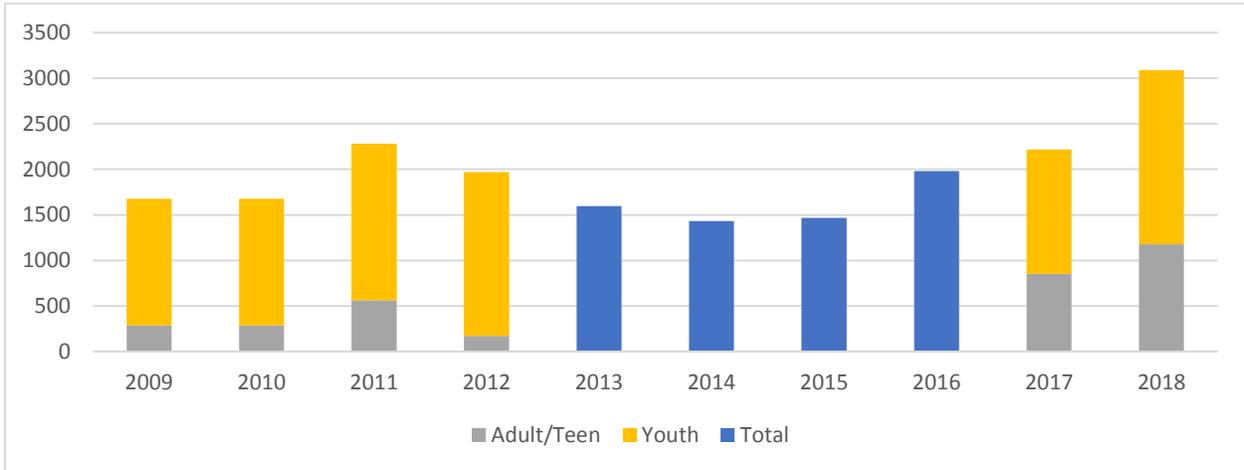
Reference transactions include questions answered by library staff, unscheduled research assistance, technology help (password recovery, software help, etc.), and general instruction. The BPL has roughly 2,000 reference transactions annually.



Total computer sessions and reference transactions by fiscal year.

Library Services: Program Participation

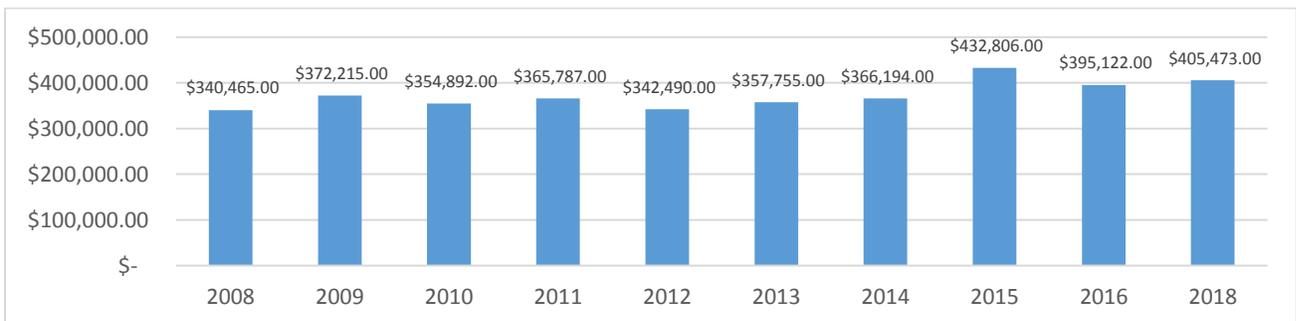
The BPL offers a wide range of programs and events, from weekly youth story times to one-time historical presentations by guest presenters. Program participation covers both traditional and passive programming. Library staff regularly evaluate program participation and examine new options to address the interests and needs of the community.



Total program participation by fiscal year.

Revenue

Revenue amounts displayed below include all sources of revenue including public funds received as a result of annual levies, both State of Illinois and individual grants, donations, fines and fees collected, as well as funds received as reimbursements from staff for health insurance coverage. Funds from tax-based revenue and State of Illinois grants are not always received in the same fiscal year, so year-to-year trends can be somewhat misleading.



Total revenue received by fiscal year.

Goals and Objectives

After review of the SWOT analysis, staff and public survey results, and historic benchmarks, the BPL Board of Trustees and library administration identify the following goals as important to further the mission of the Berkeley Public Library.

Public Service

The Berkeley Public Library will continue to strengthen its role as a provider of both materials and services for the educational and recreational needs of the community.

Goal: The BPL will work to increase visibility in the community by increasing the number of active library accounts by 5%.

- **Objective:** Periodic membership drives will be made in connection with community partners including village and school district special events.
- **Objective:** Library staff will make use of mobile technology options in order to facilitate library card registration off site.

Goal: Attendance at adult/teen library programs will increase by 5%.

- **Objective:** New adult and teen library programs that suit public interest will be developed. Past successes will be used as 'case studies' to inform decisions on subject matter, format, and scheduling.
- **Objective:** Library staff will participate in seminars and workshops in the identification of patron interests and the development of library programs to match.

Goal: Circulation of library materials will increase by 5%.

- **Objective:** The BPL will build its collection by acquiring items, both physical and digital, that match the community's needs and interests.
- **Objective:** Storage and shelving solutions that allow the maximum number of materials in limited space will also be evaluated to allow higher-traffic collections to grow.

Goal: Patron visits to the library will increase by 5%.

- **Objective:** Library staff will continue to refine methods of promotion and outreach in order to most efficiently market the library's materials and services to the community.
- **Objective:** Large-scale community events will continue to be developed in order to better inform the community of materials and services available.

Modernization

The Berkeley Public Library will actively work to modernize the library building, grounds, and technology to ensure a useful, welcoming, and safe space for all members of the community.

Goal: The BPL will provide facilities that function for community members with a variety of needs including the differently-abled, seniors, and the very young.

- **Objective:** The BPL will review ADA recommendations and best practices and move to provide a facility that is 100% ADA compliant.

Goal: The BPL will improve outdated or aging building features including mechanical, structural, and aesthetic components to provide for an incremental modernization of the building.

- **Objective:** The BPL Board of Trustees will establish a *Building & Grounds Fund* to facilitate future accrual and fund allocation for the maintenance and improvement of the library facility.
- **Objective:** The BPL administration, in conjunction with the Board of Trustees, will develop a schedule of fund allocation to address building needs (i.e.: flooring, signage, shelving, and lighting).
- **Objective:** The BPL administration, with the Board of Trustees, will consult with outside agencies to evaluate existing library spaces and features for alternative use and repurposing.
- **Objective:** The BPL administration will continue to investigate alternative funding methods for the replacement and/or refurbishment of the library building and grounds.
- **Objective:** The BPL administration, with the Board of Trustees, will continue to evaluate and implement solutions in regards to the safety of the public, staff, and collection.

Goal: The BPL will continue to serve as a primary point of access for technology that meets the informational and recreational needs of the community.

- **Objective:** The BPL will continue to offer the current generation of commonly used software on public computers including operating systems and productivity software such as Microsoft Office.
- **Objective:** The BPL administration, with the Board of Trustees, will make mobile connectivity devices available for the community.
- **Objective:** The BPL will work to update the network and communications infrastructure of the library facility to meet current and expected future needs of the community.

Goal: The BPL will provide both support and opportunities to those in the community working to improve their technology-related skills.

- **Objective:** Library staff will attend workshops and seminars to improve their knowledge of hardware and software applications that meet the needs of the community.
- **Objective:** Library staff will continue to develop training and programming opportunities for library patrons.

Financial

The BPL will work to continue to insure the financial security of the library so as to be in the strongest position to fully serve the community.

Goal: The BPL will seek methods to increase funds available for the operation of the library by 3%.

- **Objective:** The BPL Board of Trustees and library administration will annually review accounts and investments in order to seek the most secure and responsible management of public funds.

- **Objective:** The BPL Board of Trustees will adopt a *Fund Balance Policy* in order to appropriately fund various components of library operation.
- **Objective:** The BPL Board of Trustees will adopt a *Capital Assets Policy* to insure that capital assets are properly valued, tracked, and maintained/replaced as necessary.

APPENDIX A: Vital Supplemental Documents

Both the Berkeley Public Library Board of Trustees as well as library administration recognize that this strategic planning document is most valuable when considered with the support of additional supplemental documents. Below is a list of those documents.

- Library Investment Policy

The BPL's Investment Policy (*accepted Nov. 16, 2016*) defines how funds controlled by the Trustees of the Berkeley Public Library are to be invested and managed.

Abbreviated Policy Statement: "...it is the policy of the Board of Trustees of the Berkeley Public Library to invest all funds under their control in a manner that provides the highest investment return using authorized instruments while meeting the Library's daily cash flow demands in conformance with all state statutes governing the investment of public funds."

http://berkeleypl.org/Investment_Policy_2016.pdf

- Library Collection Development Policy

The BPL's Collection Development Policy (*revised March, 2019*) guides decisions by library administration and staff in the evaluation and acquisition of new materials for the library collection. http://berkeleypl.org/collection_development

- Library General Policies

The BPL's General Policies (*revised March, 2019*) stipulate basic library service information including hours of operation, holiday closures, and general supplemental services.

http://berkeleypl.org/general_policies

- Library Mechanical and Electronics Inventory

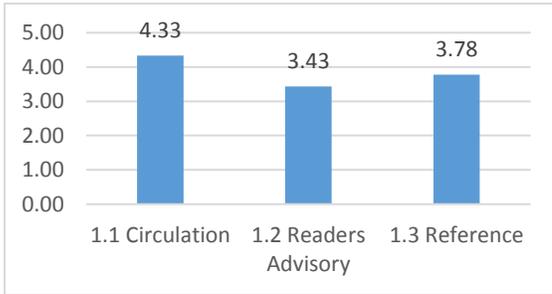
The BPL's inventory tracks building/mechanical and electronic/technology acquisitions and provides dates of purchase, estimated lifespans, and any applicable warranty information.

<http://berkeleypl.org/sites/all/themes/skeletontheme/files/inventory8.2018.pdf>

Appendix B: Staff Survey Results

Staff were surveyed to receive feedback on how they feel about various library services, facilities, and collections. Staff were asked to give each item a rating of 1 to 5 (1 being poor, 5 being excellent). Library staff were also invited to write in recommendations pertaining to each section. Nine staff members submitted responses (library director did not participate).

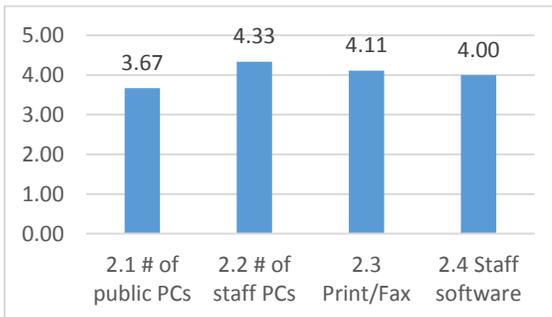
Public Service



Recommendations:

- *New handicap-accessible circulation desk (lower surface for wheelchair bound, elderly).*
- *More training/professional development in these areas.*
- *Circulation staff should focus on circulation with readers advisory and reference referred to other staff*
- *Improve circulation staff communication and information on all issues, not just circ.*
- *Do a public survey mailer in water bill*

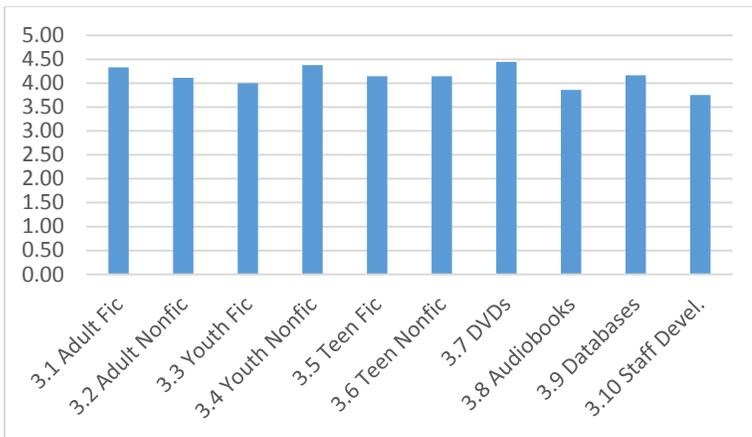
Technology



Recommendations:

- *Add card readers*
- *Software that requires patrons to log in, enforces log off times/limits.*
- *More public PCs, especially in Children's area with software programs.*
- *More laptops for programs like computer classes, Minecraft, etc.*
- *Portable barcode scanner for staff*
- *Photoshop, Illustrator, Adobe Acrobat*

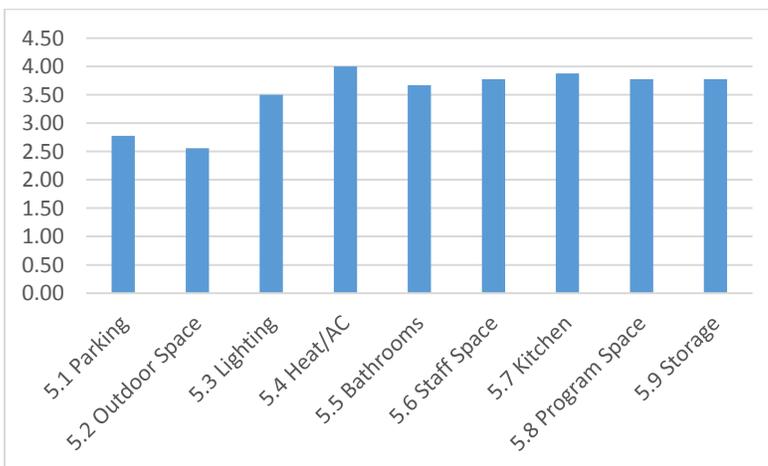
Collection



Recommendations:

- *Databases seem ok for now by may change in future*
- *More youth audiobooks*
- *More consistent resources available across all staff departments*

Facilities



Recommendations:

- *Indoor lighting ok, outdoor parking lot lighting needs improvement.*
- *Make book room into maker space*
- *Upstairs bathrooms not ADA compliant.*

Looking Forward

Staff were asked to list projects they felt were important in the 12 months, 2-3 years, and 5-10 year timeframes.

Next 12 Months:

- *Add video games, remove CDs from collection*
- *New HVAC unit (south), improve lighting in foyer*
- *Consider self-check-out station where existing fax/scan is*
- *More computer and technology classes/programs*
- *Continue to maximize limited space*
- *Notary public available*
- *Replace flooring*
- *Better outdoor signage for programs*
- *Staff meetings should cover PTO info*
- *Lighting – outdoors, lobby*
- *Replace rugs at entrance*
- *Less part-time and lower wage positions, better living wages so staff can support themselves*

2-3 Years:

- *Add card readers*
- *New carpeting/flooring in main library*
- *New circulation desk area*
- *Add second study room as it is becoming requested more often*
- *Additional meeting room/program spaces*
- *Additional parking and larger bike rack*
- *ADA/wheelchair access at curb in front of library*
- *New carpet on main level*
- *Library staff union*
- *Work to provide unbiased service to all people in the community*

5-10 Years:

- *Bigger parking lot, maybe an expansion*
- *Improved lighting in main library and lower level meeting rooms*
- *Bathrooms on main floor as handicap accessible*
- *Update mission and vision to adapt to aging community*
- *Expand collections – all areas*
- *Long-term focus on the ethics of the library profession*

Appendix C: Public Survey Results

The community was encouraged to participate in the planning process by filling out surveys. Surveys included questions in the following general categories: demographics of the respondent, library use (how they are using and would want to use the library in the future), an evaluation of current library services, an evaluation of the library's collection, and operations and facilities. The library was able to obtain over 150 responses, roughly 3% of the community, to the various forms of the survey made available.

Demographics

85% of respondents identified themselves as residents of the Village of Berkeley, and 89% of respondents reported that they already had an active library card (either at the BPL or elsewhere). Participants were also asked to report what age range they were a part of. 71 were 50 or older, 28 were aged 40-50, 16 were aged 30-40, 14 were aged 20-30, 14 aged 10-20, and 8 were aged 0-10.

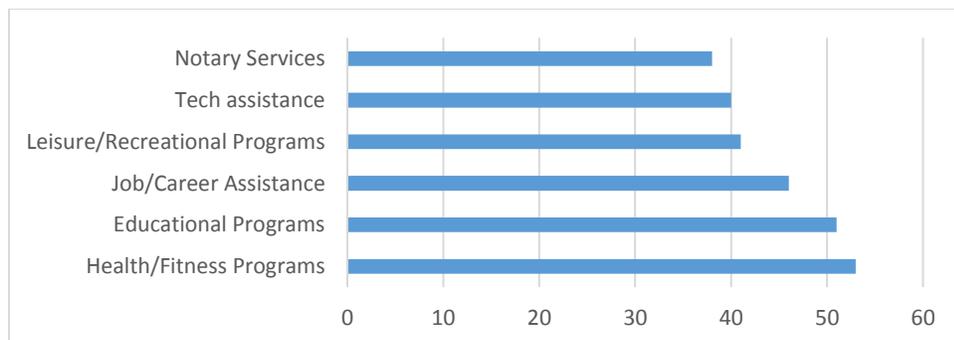
Library Use

51% of respondents reported that they use the BPL either 'multiple times per week' or 'once per week'. The optional follow-up question, "If you use the library only infrequently, why?" saw 'limited need' as the top response, with 28% of responses submitted.

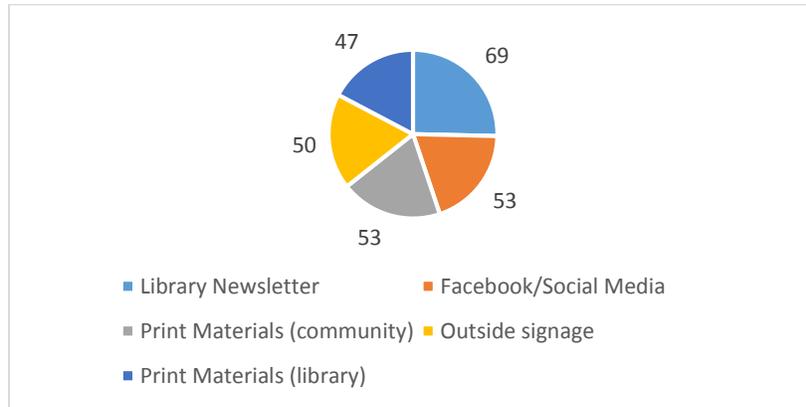
The community was asked if current library hours were acceptable, and while 91% of responses were in the affirmative, there were several responses that included adding Sunday hours and extending Friday/Saturday hours.

The top responses for library services currently used were *Checking Out Materials* (110), *Using Public PCs* (63), *Attending Adult Programs* (34), and *Attending Youth Programs* (34).

When asked what services respondents would be interested in having available at the BPL, all options received rather strong responses, with *Health/Fitness Programs* receiving the most attention:



Respondents were also asked what method for promotion of materials and services they preferred. Responses were well spread, indicating that all methods should continue to be incorporated in future public relations plans:



Evaluation of Current Services

For the following five questions, participants were asked to rate current library offerings on a scale of 1 (worst) to 5 (best). Responses were then grouped into one of two categories: those rated 4 or 5 and those rated 1, 2, or 3.

- Is the library easy to use?* 95% Rated 4 or 5
- Is the library staff helpful?* 94% Rated 4 or 5
- Does the library have materials you want?* 78% Rated 4 or 5
- Does the library offer programs you enjoy?* 76% Rated 4 or 5
- Does the library have the technology you need?* 77% Rated 4 or 5

While the response rate to the first two questions is exceedingly strong, the last three indicate that progress can continue to be made moving forward. ‘Does the library have materials you want?’ in particular will continue to be a significant task as the size of the library compared to other area libraries puts the BPL at a disadvantage. Efforts should be concentrated on collections within the library most browsed by the public.

Collection Information

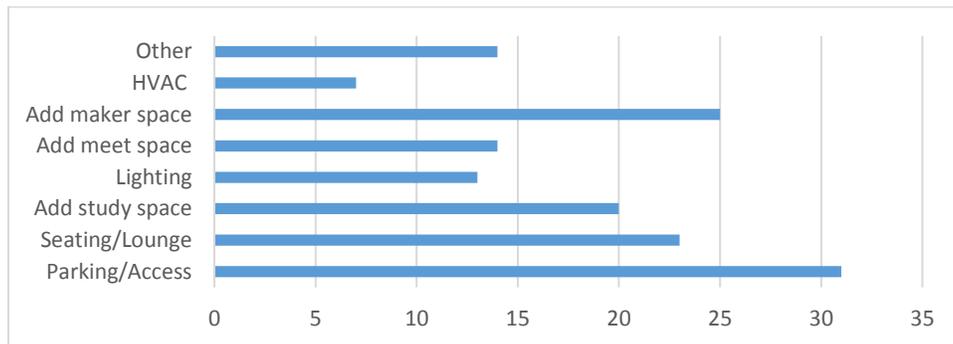
Survey participants were asked to report the collections in the library they browsed most often, with multiple responses encouraged. Of the collections, *Adult Fiction* and *DVDs/AV* were the highest reported, with 62 and 66 responses respectively. *Adult Nonfiction* (44) and *Youth Fiction* (27) followed.

Similarly, participants were then asked to report what collections in the library needed improvement. Perhaps unsurprisingly given the previous responses, the two collections most reported were *DVDs/AV* (24) and *Adult Fiction* (16).

Operations and Facilities

Participants were asked if they considered current library hours of operation (M-TH 10 to 9, F 10 to 6, SAT 1 to 5) adequate. Over 90% of responses received affirmed that current hours are adequate. Of the respondents that marked 'No', later Friday hours and partial Sunday hours were most often given in the write-in space provided.

Participants were also asked how best to improve space and given a list of broad potential areas of focus related to the library facility.



Generally speaking, the concept of adding usable public space to the library is shown to be a primary concern of the library's community, with additional parking, a maker/crafting space, improvements to seating and lounging areas, and additional study spaces all receiving strong response rates.

Respondents were encouraged to write in responses not already provided ('Other'), and of those the most common comments received were related to additional public computers, new/expanded seating and study furniture, and a 3D printing/craft area.

Appendix D: SWOT Analysis

<p style="text-align: center;">Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An experienced and energetic public service-oriented staff • Diverse existing collection supporting range of needs and interests • Strong bonds with several community groups • Wide range of youth programming available • Expanding teen and adult/senior programming • Available public space on lower level • Potential of repurposing areas of lower level (book sale area, etc.) • Public access computers, WiFi, & print services 	<p style="text-align: center;">Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of current strategic plan • An aging building and infrastructure • Parking/outdoor space limited • Existing library space limits collections and meeting spaces • Heavily relied upon to fill a wide variety of roles within the community • Smaller staff size means large-scale projects (inventories, changes to collection, etc.) take longer • Limited hours open over weekends • Building is not considered fully ADA compliant.
<p style="text-align: center;">Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State funding available (1-for-1 matching) for remodeling projects • Heavily relied upon to fill a wide variety of roles within the community (including education, recreation, health/fitness, and career assistance) allows for continued/increased diversification • Restarting and/or expanding Friends group to support library goals • Strengthening bonds with area schools • Due to increased usage of public computers, new technology to support range of patron interests • Expansion of non-print collections and support services • Grants and supplemental funding available for electrical/infrastructure updates 	<p style="text-align: center;">Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stagnant revenue • Other area libraries are in a better position (financially, staff size) to target patron interests • Lack of technology in homes in community • Lack of awareness of library materials and services in community • Shrinking/stagnant size of community • Long term trend of limited/decreasing circulation of library materials. • Lack of existing infrastructure to support patron, staff, and collection security.

Appendix E: Potential Metrics to Measure Success

Library Visits

The library now has an optical pedestrian traffic counter at the front public entrance to the library. Readings from this system are now logged weekly and will provide month-to-month and year-to-year data.

Circulation

Circulation statistics by item type (book, DVD, eBook, etc.) are already compiled and reported on a monthly basis. This granularity allows for sub-sections of the library collection to be evaluated on an individual basis for performance. Of particular note is the new non-print object collection 'Super Useful Stuff'.

Public Computer Usage

Patron computer usage (public PCs) is currently tracked on a per-patron per-hour basis. This allows for both general trends throughout the year as well as identifying high traffic days/times.

Database Access

The library's research database offerings should be tracked for usage levels moving forward to inform decisions regarding the type and subject matter of database subscriptions (annual decision, spring).

Facebook/Social Media Presence

As the library works to increase its social media/online presence, information regarding views and 'reach' helps to inform decisions on special events and library programs.

Approved by Berkeley Public Library Board of Trustees March 20, 2019

Ayes 5 Nays