



**2022-2025**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**



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# LIBRARY BOARD & STAFF

## Board of Library Trustees (2020-2022)

- Sandhya Nankani – President\*
- Jennifer Choi – Secretary
- Stephen Galli – Treasurer
- Dorothy Hayden
- Jin Y Hur Kupperman
- Elaine Kass\*
- Ana Sandoval\*
- Melinda Iannuzzi – Mayor of Demarest
- Michael Fox – Superintendent of Schools
- Superintendent's Alternate – Lisa Carson

## Full-Time Library Staff

- Parinda Desai – Library Director\*
- Orla Cassidy – Supervising Information Services Librarian\*
- Bridget Lyne – Head of Circulation
- Cara Scott – Youth Services Librarian, October 2021 to present\*
- Kate Gorman – Head of Youth Services, April 2012 to August 2021\*

\*Member of the Strategic Planning Committee



## Contact

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Parinda Desai, Director

[director@demarest.bccls.org](mailto:director@demarest.bccls.org)

# LETTER from the BOARD PRESIDENT

Over the last decade, the role of public libraries has evolved. In this “Experience Age” of mobile phones and screens, virtual reality, and the metaverse, the public library has become an institution that provides more than fiction and nonfiction. It offers citizens access to digital media and information literacy; community art, and STEM education programs, book clubs, and even public meeting spaces! In early 2019, the Demarest Free Public Library embarked upon the creation of a new strategic plan to determine ways in which we could serve and support our community as we look ahead to the future.



The last time such a process was conducted was in 2015 and it resulted in meaningful changes to the library, such as increased technology services, Saturday hours, and updates to the Children’s Room. The pandemic slowed down our process, but I am pleased to share that the Demarest Free Public Library Five-Year Strategic Plan 2022-2025 has been completed.

The goals and objectives that are outlined in our Strategic Plan were greatly informed by community input gathered through a broad public survey, as well as focus groups and public forums with key segments and stakeholders who have chosen Demarest as a place to live, serve, and work—from seniors, teens, and young parents to ESL learners, business owners, and community leaders. What emerged from these conversations with townspeople was the confirmation that our library is a unique institution in our town. It serves as the place for residents to meet and share ideas, to be entertained, and to become educated and informed. It is the connection that unites our entire community in all seasons of the year. The new strategic plan provides guidance for the staff and Board of Trustees to build upon so that we can fully and enhance and realize the value of the library to our community.



# LETTER from the BOARD PRESIDENT (cont'd)

The completion of this strategic plan would not have been possible without the tireless work of our strategic planning committee, comprised of staff and Board members—and under the able direction of our Library Director, Parinda Desai. I would like to thank her for the flexibility, creativity, and vision she brings to work each and every day. I would also like to thank our strategic planning consultant Cindy Czesak for advising on this process and facilitating the various forums and focus groups. With 37 years of experience in public libraries, she has been active in a number of library organizations nationally and in the state of New Jersey, including the New Jersey Library Association and the American Library Association. Deep appreciation goes to our dedicated and innovative staff, volunteers, Board of Trustees, and the members of the Strategic Planning Committee. And, last, but not least, thank you to our patrons and community for your passion and love of our library.

Please take the time to read this document and view it as a blueprint for the future of the Demarest Free Public Library. We look forward to your feedback and your frequent visits, and we sincerely welcome your ideas for new ways to grow and flourish.

Warm regards,  
Sandhya Nankani  
President, Demarest Free Public Library Board of Trustees

# VISION & MISSION



## VISION STATEMENT (OUR ASPIRATIONS)

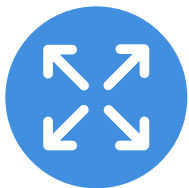
*Where our community gathers, connects,  
grows, and discovers.*

## MISSION STATEMENT (OUR PURPOSE)

The Demarest Free Public Library is a welcoming place for our community, offering programs and services that encourage lifelong learning, inspire creativity and exploration, and foster connections.

# GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Our Vision and Mission Statements inform our goals. Each year these goals inspire specific objectives, which are measurable targets designed to complete our goals. The objectives below are the focus of 2022; new and/or revised objectives will be developed every year.



## **Optimize available space in the community to meet evolving needs.**

- Evaluate current collections and make decisions about improving space
- Make plans to develop a modern and convenient library facility
- Update technology in teen and children's room



## **Increase public awareness and use of the library's services and programs.**

- Experiment with offering new types of programs on different days and at different times
- Work with local teens to improve young adult programming
- Explore options for meeting the needs of diverse populations in town

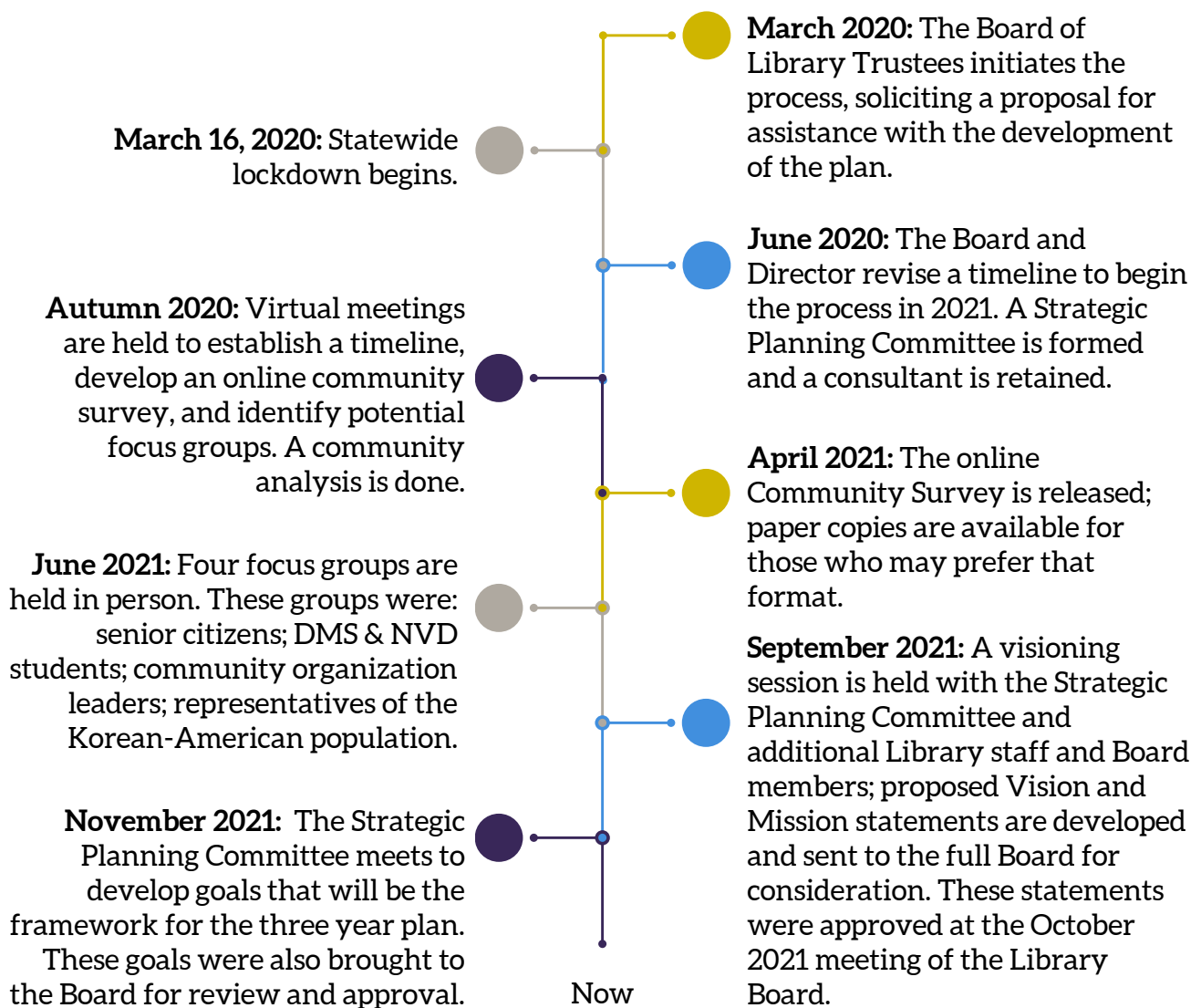


## **Build a foundation to strengthen the library's role within the community.**

- Improve fundraising capacity
- Collaborate with Demarest institutions to share resources and outcomes
- Work with community members to spotlight and share their diverse skills and talents

# METHODOLOGY

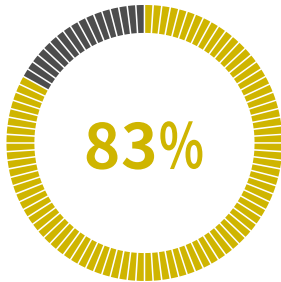
The strategic plan was developed over the past two years. It incorporates critical lessons learned from the pandemic and community outreach. We sought the community's opinions through a survey and through focus groups, analyzed the data, and carefully framed a new vision, mission, and set of goals and objectives for the Library.





# KEY OUTCOMES

Respondents to the community survey had the following observations:



83% of respondents consider the library to be a **good** or **excellent** service.

## RANKING OF SERVICES BY IMPORTANCE:

- **91%** – the ability to borrow materials from other BCCLS libraries
- **78%** – availability of print materials
- **67%** – digital content provided through BCCLS (Libby and research databases)
- **63%** – children’s programming
- **58%** – availability of physical media
- **46%** – digital services offered by Demarest (Hoopla and Kanopy)
- **43%** – adult programming



80% of respondents consider the library building to be **good** or **excellent**.

About 80% consider having space in the library to study or work to be **at least somewhat important**.





Respondents to the focus group meetings shared these opinions:

## LIBRARY'S IMPORTANCE IN THE COMMUNITY

As a gathering place

Provides a wide collection of print and digital resources

Supports the education of children

Offers programs for all ages

Provides access to technology

## HOPES FOR THE LIBRARY

More cultural programming

Grow as a community hub

More teen programs

Expand educational offerings

Spread awareness about library's resources

# BOROUGH OF DEMAREST



## KEY DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Population (2019) 4,942

Area 2.08 square miles

Number of households 1,747

Median age 44.2 years-old

Proportion of population under the age of 18 28.7%

Proportion of population 65 years-old and older 15.9%

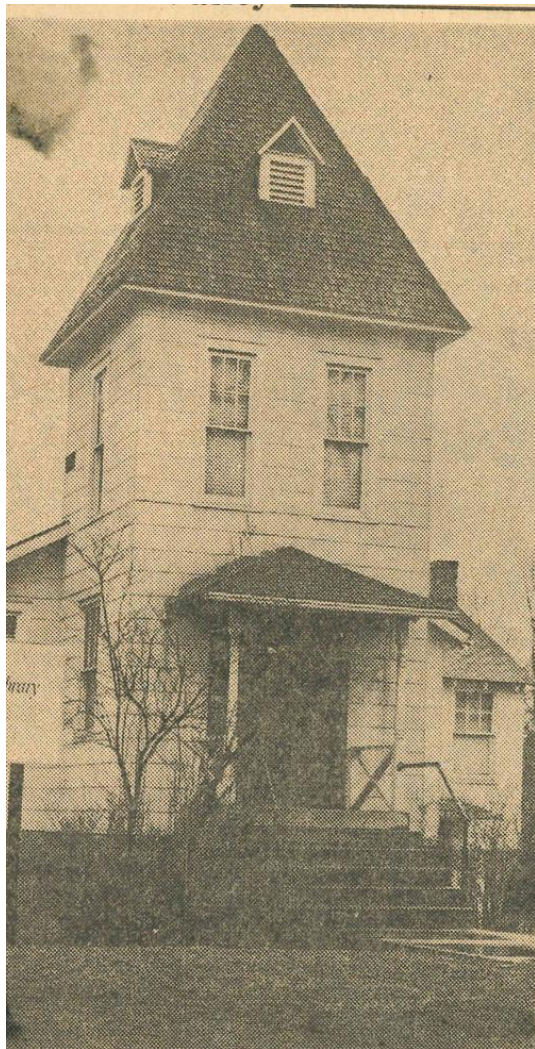
Average household income \$154,500

Proportion of population aged 25 or older with a bachelor's degree or higher 70.9%

# THE LIBRARY

## HISTORY

The Demarest Public Library Association was formed as a private association library in 1964 after an ad hoc committee and town meeting elicited local interest. With help from the community, the Association purchased the old Methodist Church building, which was formerly a YMCA hut from Camp Merritt during World War I. Renovations were completed in June of 1966 and the library was opened to the public.



The Library joined the Bergen County Cooperative Library System in 1986. A new, ADA accessible entrance with an elevator was added in 2005. In 2009, a referendum was passed to establish a municipal library. The Demarest Free Public Library was then incorporated and the Association was dissolved. In late spring 2011 a major renovation was undertaken to add a two-story addition to the Insley Street side of the library with a teen room added downstairs, a renovation of the children's room, the addition of a conference room upstairs, and a reconfiguration and expansion of the adult reading area. The Insley Street and Children's Room entrances were remodeled in 2021.



# STATISTICS (2021)

## REGULAR HOURS OF OPERATION

**Sunday:** 1pm to 5pm  
**Monday:** 9am to 8pm  
**Tuesday:** 9am to 5pm  
**Wednesday:** 9am to 8pm  
**Thursday:** 9am to 8pm  
**Friday:** 9am to 5pm  
**Saturday:** 9am to 1pm

## ANNUAL VISITS

14,470



## STAFF

4 full-time  
6 part-time  
2 pages



**COMPUTER SESSIONS**  
3,500

**WIFI SESSIONS**  
14,346



## PROGRAMS

Number of programs offered

404 programs

Program attendance

5,503 people

## SUMMER READING

Number of participants

72 children and teens

Number of books read

1,305 books

## STATISTICS (2021) cont'd

Collection size	32,572
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BCCLS reciprocal borrowing	7,838
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Number of cardholders	2,450
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### ANNUAL CIRCULATION

Adult books and magazines	13,633
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Media	15,640
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Children's books	12,524
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Young adult books	8,625
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Digital collections	10,378
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Museum passes	72
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# NEXT STEPS

With our new strategic plan in place, we have a course to guide us that was shaped by feedback from our community. We have already begun prioritizing our established goals and many of our objectives for 2022 are underway.

Throughout the life of this strategic plan, we will continue evaluating and modifying based on the community's needs, setting new objectives for evolving circumstances, and using benchmarks like statistics and patron feedback to measure our success. This will include Director Check-Ins at which patrons are invited to bring their ideas and criticism to our Library Director, and an annual survey.

Publishing this document (and its summary) is a key aspect to the Library holding itself accountable. We hope that you will support us in accomplishing our objectives and driving forward our vision of the library's future.

## **Board of Trustees Demarest Free Public Library**