

**Serving Our Community  
2004-2007  
A Strategic Plan  
for the  
Ramsey Free Public Library**

**December 2003**

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2004-2007  
A Strategic Plan  
for the  
Ramsey Free Public Library**

**Developed by  
The Ramsey Free Public Library  
Strategic Planning Committee**

**with assistance from**

**Library Development Solutions**

**Adopted by the  
Ramsey Free Public Library  
Board of Trustees  
December 2003**

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## Attachments

### **Attachment One:**

Voices of Ramsey: A Summary of Comments from Ramsey Residents about the Ramsey Free Public Library

### **Attachment Two:**

Timeline for implementation of Goals and Objectives

## **Ramsey Free Public Library Board**

Director: Wendy B. Bloom  
President: Emily Rennie  
Vice President: Letitia Sage  
Treasurer: Russell Johnson  
Secretary: Marie O'Neill  
Mayor: Richard Muti  
Mayor's Alternate: Peter Malvasi  
Superintendent: Bruce DeYoung  
Superintendent's  
Alternate: Betsey Ohnegian  
Council Liaison: David Bisaillon  
Trustees: Joanne Brown  
Patricia Huot  
Michael Lonier

## **Ramsey Free Public Library Strategic Planning Committee**

David Bisaillon  
Wendy Bloom  
Carol Brighton  
Betsy Coyne  
Tom Dater  
Kathy Elwell  
Rose Griffith  
Michael Lonier  
Thomas Melville  
Michael Meyers  
Diana Nizamoff  
Marie O'Neill  
Emily Rennie  
Carol Tonnon  
Bonnie Waterman

### **Planning Consultants**

Leslie Burger, Library Development Solutions  
Alan Burger, Library Development Solutions

## Executive Summary

In January 2003 the Ramsey Free Public Library Board of Trustees decided to embark on a strategic planning process to determine long term future strategies for improving and expanding library service to Ramsey residents. The Board established a Strategic Planning Committee composed of trustees, friends of the library, community stakeholders, and library staff to work with its planning consultants in developing a plan.

Over the next few months the Planning Committee met in monthly sessions to evaluate the outcomes of community wide focus groups that provided suggestions for improving the library, to review information about community demographics and changes in library use, and determine how the library board and staff should best respond to Ramsey residents needs for library service over the next three years.

This plan represents the results of these deliberations. The plan sets forth a long term vision to guide the development of library service in Ramsey – *to create a 21<sup>st</sup> century destination library that reflects the cultural and educational aspirations of the Ramsey community.* It specifies the library's mission – *to enrich people's lives and build community by providing resources and services that inform, educate, and entertain.* And it outlines seven goals and multiple objectives and strategies to assist in the accomplishment of those goals to help the Ramsey Library to provide the exceptional library service that its residents want and deserve. The seven goals are:

1. To improve the existing library to create a more comfortable environment for users
2. To create a destination library that enables the trustees and staff to meet their vision for library service by expanding the library
3. To expand the library's technology program with a focus on fostering an information literate community and creating a greater technology presence in the library
4. To review, refresh and expand library collections to focus on current titles and topics in all formats
5. To create opportunities for lifelong learning
6. To improve community awareness about the library, its services and programs and to build broad based community support for the library
7. To continue providing responsive services to meet community needs, staying focused on providing friendly, knowledgeable service

A detailed implementation timeline in Attachment Two provides information about the specific strategies that will be used to roll out this

**plan. It is estimated that the total three year cost of implementing these recommendations, exclusive of the costs to significantly renovate and expand the library, will total approximately \$435,000.**

## **A Message from the President of the Ramsey Free Public Library Board of Trustees**

Dear Ramsey Community,

On behalf of the Ramsey Free Public Library Board of Trustees, it is my pleasure to share with you the strategic plan to evaluate and change the Ramsey Library to become a “Library of the Future.”

Ramsey has grown in both number and diversity in its population since the library was designed and built in 1968. Our growth, coupled with a strong citizen demand for electronic technology, new media and other non-traditional library services has served to provide the direction recommended in this plan.

First and foremost, we envision the evolution of the library to serve as the place for residents to meet, share ideas, be entertained, educated and informed. It will become an even greater presence in the lives of the citizens of Ramsey. We do not have to start at zero, however. We already have a library that provides enrichment – both educational and cultural – for Ramsey residents.

The plan provides a roadmap, both short and long term, for building upon and enhancing these resources so we can fully realize the potential value of the library to our community.

I would like to thank the many groups and individuals who by providing cogent input helped shape the plan.

Emily Rennie

## **Our Strategic Planning Process**

The Ramsey Free Public Library's strategic plan is the result of many hours of discussion by community residents, library staff and Board and Planning Committee members. Each of these groups, through their discussions, insights and commitment to the future of the library, made a valuable contribution to the ideas included in this plan.

In thinking about developing a plan, the library's Board and Director determined that the community's comments and concerns were an essential part of the process in order to develop a plan that reflected and responded to real community library needs. A Planning Committee composed of Library Trustees and Friends, community members, and library staff met to establish the framework for the library's planning effort. This group, assisted by the library staff, organized a series of seven focus groups in which more than 80 residents and staff shared suggestions and ideas for continued library improvement to firmly establish the library as a central feature of Ramsey's community life. The planning process was facilitated by Library Development Solutions, a Princeton, New Jersey based library consulting firm.

The process leading up to the development of the plan included the following:

### **Planning Committee**

The Library Trustees appointed a Planning Committee of Board members, staff, friends and community representatives to guide the development of this plan. This group met monthly to review the outcomes of the focus group sessions, review staff and Board recommendations for the future of the Library, develop a new vision and mission for the library and set goals and objectives for the plan.

### **Planning Assumptions**

The Planning Committee adopted certain key assumptions as an underlying basis for the strategic plan's development. The planners agreed that:

- The Borough is committed to meeting the state mandate for support of public libraries;
- Property reevaluation will result in increased funding for the library;
- The library's operating budget will continue to be supported primarily with public funds;
- Public demand for library services and the building will continue to grow with increased expectations for library improvements and new services for adults and children;



- The borough will respond to public demand for more library programs and an improved facility;
- Public institutions, like the library, that support the community's overall quality of life will remain important to residents;
- The community will continue its strong support for formal and informal educational programs;
- Ramsey residents, particularly those living on fixed incomes, will be reluctant to support initiatives that raise taxes unless they value the service;
- The library will need to become a “firecracker” if it is to capture the community's attention; and,
- The library board, friends, staff and other library stakeholders will think expansively in planning for library services and programs.

### **Library Board Meetings**

The Library Board met with the consultants in February and March 2003 to review planning assumptions, offer their important ideas regarding the future direction of the library, and to assist in organizing the focus group sessions. A number of Board members also participated on the Planning Committee to discuss recommendations and develop priorities based on community comments from the focus groups.

### **Community Focus Groups**

Seven focus groups provided planners with new information and reinforced information about the community's perception of the Library and their desire for new or improved services. Residents also commended the Library and Wendy Bloom, the Director, for many innovative and high quality services and programs that are offered today. The consultants and planners also reviewed valuable data that was available from the Library's 2002 user survey, in which 158 people participated.

### **Library Staff Meetings**

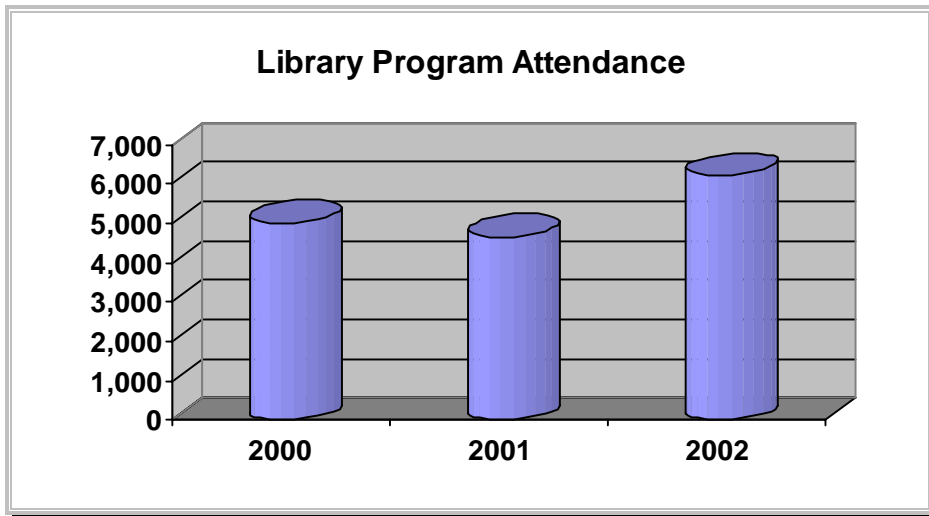
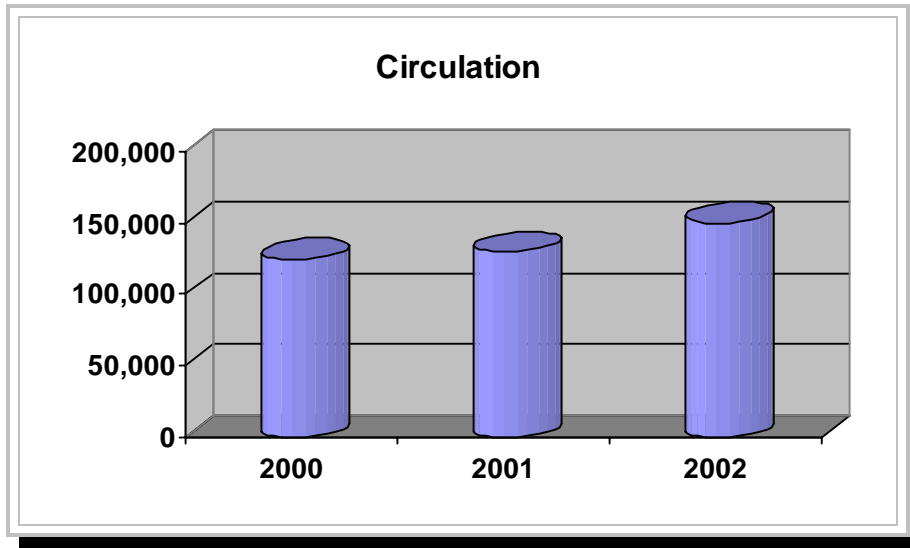
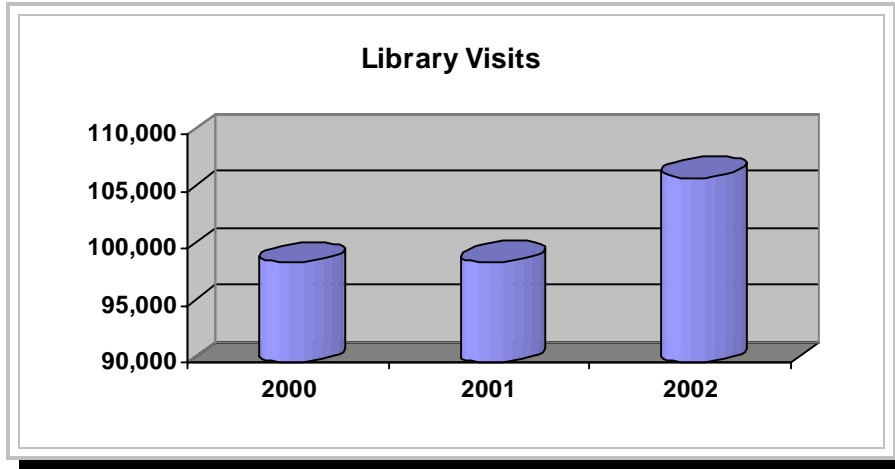
The consultants met with library staff to review community and user comments and to provide an additional forum for staff input and leadership of the planning process. The Library staff offered important perspectives on the feasibility of implementing library services and programs and was instrumental in developing implementation strategies for the plan's goals and objectives.

## **Our Library Today**

The Ramsey Free Public Library is committed to excellence. The library continues to improve its services and facility in response to increased resident use and greater expectations of the library. The library is growing more popular among Ramsey and Bergen County residents. Compared to an average 59% registration rate of all BCCLS (Bergen County Cooperative Library System) libraries, 63% of Ramsey residents hold a library card. Residents have commented that the Ramsey Free Public Library is responsive to the needs of the community and that staff readily assist requests for information and materials.

Recent user statistics also reflect a growing trend among libraries in general and the Ramsey Library in particular describing increased book and video loans, increased visits to the library and participation in programs by both adults and children.

The following charts describe the increased use in the Ramsey Free Public Library for library visits, circulation of materials and library program attendance.



## **Celebrating Accomplishments**

Over the last three years, the library staff and Board have much to celebrate about the library and its many accomplishments. These accomplishments have helped increase the value of the Ramsey Free Public Library to the community. Among the most significant accomplishments are:

- Reaffirmation that the library is a public service organization with staff who value their customers and understand that they work at the library to meet the library and information needs of Ramsey residents
- The addition of new staff members who can creatively address the needs of Ramsey's children when it comes to library and information services
- An increase in the number of library materials loaned per year to become one of the top five libraries for circulation increases among the Bergen County Cooperative Library System's (BCCLS) 73 member libraries
- A revitalized Friends of the Library that increased its membership to 500 people
- An expanded array of program offerings for adults and children
- A refreshed collection with the addition of more desirable library materials, a reduction in the number of obsolete, damaged and worn materials, and a renewed focus on collection development
- The addition of PC workstations for library users and staff
- An increase in the number of grant applications and research leading to other sources of funding

## **We Listened: Voices of Ramsey**

In making the decision to develop a long range plan for the library, the Board of Trustees determined that community input to the process was essential in developing a plan that responded to community needs and desires. Two approaches were used to gather data and information from the community regarding their library and information needs – a survey distributed to library users and focus group interviews. The Planning Committee used the data from the survey and focus groups to help shape recommendations contained in this plan.

## **Survey Results**

158 people responded to a library users' survey distributed in the library in 2002. The survey results provide a snapshot of the typical Ramsey Free Public Library user. Significant results included:

- 39% use the library weekly, 4% more than once per week, and 16% once per month
- The primary reasons for coming to the library are (in order of response): for adult fiction (64%) and non-fiction (45%), to borrow a video (42%), to borrow children's books (31%), and books on tape (27%).
- When people are in the library 68% ask for help from the library staff, 35% use a photocopier, 34% read magazines, 30% consult reference materials, and 20% use the Internet computers.
- 60% said they request materials from other libraries using interlibrary loan services.
- 65% indicated they were very satisfied with the current level of library service but only 35% said that the library provided enough computer workstations, study tables and casual seating.
- 86% said that the library is a very important part of the Ramsey community.

## **Community Focus Groups**

The Planning Committee, Library Board, and staff invited members of the Ramsey community to participate in seven focus group sessions to learn more about community needs for library services. Participants included frequent and infrequent library users, nonusers, seniors and retirees, teens, parents, educators and civic leaders, volunteers and Friends from the Ramsey Free public Library and staff. A detailed report summarizing the focus group comments is available in the Library.<sup>1</sup> Many of the issues brought up during the focus group discussions reinforced data collected during the community survey.

Though many participants were satisfied with services and collections that are available today, they enthusiastically discussed improvements to the library that would meet the community's changing needs and provide even better service. Included in the suggestions were:

- Additional and easier access to computers, the Internet and computer instruction.

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<sup>1</sup> Voices of Ramsey - A Summary of Comments from Ramsey residents about the Ramsey Free Public Library.

- After school access to Internet and word processing computers for school research and projects.
- Services, programs and space specifically for children, teens and seniors
- Changes to the library layout to accommodate more seating, reading and study areas, and community meeting space for programs, small meetings and tutoring programs.
- Changes to the library layout to keep children’s activities and collections in one area.
- Continued improvement to the collections with more modern newer materials.
- Increased collaboration between the schools and the library.
- A renewed public relations or marketing campaign to identify the library as the prime destination for community information and resources, popular and current materials, for computer and Internet use and for children and adult programs.
- Increased information and publicity about library funding and advocacy.

## **Our Library Tomorrow: A New Vision, Mission and Shared Values for the Ramsey Free Public Library**

The vision, mission and values set the stage for what the Library Trustees and staff hope to achieve during this three-year planning cycle. The goals and objectives provide a glimpse into the specific strategies that the Library Trustees and staff will employ to achieve the vision.

The Ramsey Free Public Library is fortunate to have a community that understands the importance of the Library and the centrality of the library in the overall health of the community. It’s now up to the Library Trustees and staff to create new opportunities to attract more people to the library and to increase use and support for all that the library has to offer.

### **Our Vision**

***To create a state of the art, 21<sup>st</sup> century destination library that reflects the cultural and educational aspirations of the Ramsey community.***

As the Ramsey Free Public Library works to fulfill this vision, library users will experience the following as they use the library and its services.

The Library will:

- provide services and programs that go far beyond those of a traditional library
- offer an exciting, easy to use, safe and comfortable space that accommodates a variety of activities at the same time
- continuously integrate new technology to deliver better services
- bring people together to build a sense of community
- provide a customer driven library program that offers convenience, relationships and great service

The mission describes the library's purpose and its reason for being. The mission guides the allocation of library resources and helps in establishing priorities.

#### **Our Mission**

***The Ramsey Free Public Library enriches people's lives and builds community by providing resources and services that inform, educate, and entertain.***

#### **Values to Guide the Ramsey Free Public Library**

- Our library provides free and equal access to ideas and information for all members of the community regardless of their age, sex, physical condition, or economic, ethnic, religious or political status.
- Our staff protects the privacy of all who use its resources.
- Our staff and trustees are flexible, adaptable and open to change.
- Our staff provides responsive, personalized customer service and assistance.
- Our library empowers people to become independent lifelong learners.
- Our library is a safe, comfortable and supportive community destination.
- Our library records and preserves the historic record of our community and makes it available for future generations

## **Key Strategic Issues**

Library planners reviewed the community comments, analyzed demographic trends in Ramsey and library usage trends. Planners then focused this wealth of information into 5 strategic issues which the plan addresses with its goals and objectives. These are the issues that drive the plan and will guide the library during the next few years.

### **The Library Experience and Hub of the Community**

Residents will frequent public facilities that are convenient and easy to use. This holds true for libraries. Public libraries need to become destinations by offering user friendly services, eliminating obsolete policies, and creating an enjoyable space with easy to use materials and services. This may also include one on one technology instruction and reference assistance, more intuitive catalogs and shelving arrangements as well as convenient book drop off locations, extended hours and after school homework centers. Public libraries can become the community's "living room" or "front porch", a destination of first choice for reading materials and information.

### **Services to Children and Teens**

Intergenerational use of the library is at the heart of its value to the community. Teens especially, need to find a home at the library to support their educational and leisure interests. Children are avid users as their parents bring them to the children's programs, but interest wanes in the middle school years. The challenge for the library is to continue to maintain a safe place for children and teens while developing interesting and creative resources for them.

### **The Library Building: A Community Asset**

Accessible physical space is the key factor in creating "destination" libraries. Comments from the community revealed that they often go to newer libraries in the area for the ease of use, pleasant environment and expanded space for collections and programs. Residents want library space that can accommodate a variety of uses at the same time, from quiet study and reading to group study and programs. If Ramsey has outgrown its existing facility what are the options for the future of our library and community?

### **Technology Access**

Changes in information technology are transforming the way that libraries operate. Internet and email use have become ubiquitous among large numbers of people, both young and old. At the same time there is a digital divide that has developed, not only in terms of affording one's own equipment but in relation to one's skills and knowledge to access new information resources. Many people already rely on their library as the first or only access to electronic information sources. Libraries face a growing challenge in providing adequate access to the computers, software, databases,



infrastructure and instruction that make easy access possible to the whole community.

### **Advocacy, Marketing and Resource Development**

The Ramsey Free Public Library relies primarily on Borough tax support to fund its programs, collections and services. The Library will need to explore additional funding opportunities as well as explain to the community the unique role of the library in the Ramsey community. The library is the main intergenerational public space serving all residents of the community in an environment of diminishing public spaces. Libraries will need to renew their image and offerings to appeal to all residents in a changing environment.

## **Serving the Community: Goals and Objectives**

These goals and objectives provide the roadmap for the Ramsey Free Public Library to guide the development of the Library's budget and operations in living its vision and fulfilling the library's mission.

<b>GOAL 1:     Improve the existing library to create a more comfortable environment for users</b>
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### ***The Need***

*We live in a world in which people are seeking “experiences.” Whether it’s a trip to the supermarket, a visit to a bookstore or a shopping expedition to the mall, retailers and not-for profit service providers are seeking ways to differentiate the services they offer from other competitors. The Ramsey Free Public Library needs to find ways to ensure that the library continues to be a destination for those looking for a public library experience by offering services and programs that respond to changing demographics, expectations and needs. This goal addresses the challenge of taking a 35 year old library and making physical modifications that will continue to attract current users and encourage people who do not currently use the library to see what it has to offer.*

### **Objectives:**

- 1.1     By June 2005, evaluate the current library space and make short term improvements that make it easier for people to use the library.**

### **Strategies:**

- Identify equipment and furniture no longer required and arrange for temporary offsite storage until it can be sold or offered to other libraries (Jan. 2004)

- Schedule a semi-annual “sparkle day” to clear the library of unused/little used items to improve the overall appearance (remove the drapes, paint, clear the store rooms, etc.) (Jan. 2004 and ongoing)
- Replace the circulation service desk with updated furniture that accommodates current functions (January -March 2004)
- Add a second drop box for media returns (March 2004)
- Engage an interior designer/architect to evaluate the current space and develop recommendations for short term, low cost solutions to improve space (January - August 2004)
- Relocate the children’s area and reference area (June - August 2004)
- Provide more comfortable seating (November 2004 - January 2005)
- Purchase and install new tables and chairs for the children’s area (November - January 2005)
- Improve lighting throughout the Library (January 2005)
- Work with the Borough to implement improvements in the library parking lot (January - June 2005)

**1.2 By March 2004, create opportunities to highlight and display library resources**

**Strategies:**

- Create areas for display of new and topical materials (Ongoing)
- Purchase display tables and shelving (January - March 2004)
- Create a display area for community information and flyers (January - March 2004)

**GOAL 2: Create a destination library that enables the trustees and staff to meet their vision for library service by expanding the library**

***The Need:***

*Goal One addresses short term improvements to the library building to retain current users and attract new users in updated space. On a long term basis, Ramsey needs to develop a library expansion plan that will result in a modern library facility capable of accommodating a variety of community needs for library service. This is a more long term project which focuses on the need to provide additional space to accommodate new technologies, expanded programming for children, teens and adults, more space for library materials, and community meetings. The long term goal is to have a new library or significantly renovated and expended library in place in time for Ramsey’s centennial celebration in 2008.*

**Objectives:**

**2.1 By December 2005, identify a preferred strategy for expanding or relocating the library**

**Strategies:**

- Engage a library building consultant and/or architect to determine the optimal size for an expanded library and evaluate options for expanding the library at the current site versus a new location (November 2004 - June 2005)
- Incorporate some of the following features into an expanded library design: separate children's room and story room; separate teen area with space for teen materials, computers and listening and viewing stations; a community room with a stage and piano; smaller meeting rooms for tutoring, group projects, small meetings; improved work space for staff (November 2004 - June 2005)
- Engage an architect to develop a concept plan and preliminary costs for an expanded library (June 2005- Dec. 2005)
- Evaluate the various options and costs and agree upon a preferred approach (November – December 2005)

**2.2 Secure funding and community support for the library expansion project (January 2006 - Dec. 2006)**

**Strategies:**

- Work with the Borough to identify options for financing the new library (January – March 2006)
- Obtain a commitment from the Borough for municipal funding (March 2006)
- Identify the amount of funds to be raised privately and work with a fundraising consultant on a feasibility study for raising funds to support the library project (March – June 2006)
- Implement a capital campaign to support the library expansion (September 2006 – December 2006)

**GOAL 3: Expand the library's technology program with a focus on fostering an information literate community and creating a greater technology presence in the library**

***The Need:***

*In the last seven years libraries have become technology dependent organizations. Increasingly much of the information that was once available only in expensive reference books is produced only in online, subscription databases. To accommodate its users, the Ramsey Free Public Library needs to invest in a technology infrastructure that permits its users to access technology based information in convenient locations throughout the library. This means greatly expanding the availability of PCs in the library so people visiting the library can obtain needed information via databases or the World Wide Web. This goal*

*incorporates a conservative approach to enhancing access to technology in the library that is totally dependent on the budget available to support this project.*

**Objectives:**

**3.1 By December 2004, create a greater technology presence in the library**

**Strategies:**

- Purchase or lease 6 additional Internet ready PCs for public use (March 2004)
- Group PCs in a “cluster” to highlight their availability (March- April 2004)
- Purchase additional PCs for staff use in order to streamline work flow and improve efficiency (June 2004)
- Purchase additional PCs for the children’s area (June 2004)
- Install a wireless network throughout the library (June 2004)
- Purchase laptops with wireless cards that can be loaned to patrons for use throughout the library (September 2004)
- Develop a wireless laptop training center in the library’s meeting room (September 2004)
- Install flat screens and PCs or tablet PCs on the book stack end panels for easy access to the catalog (December 2004)

**3.2 By December 2004, improve the library’s technology infrastructure**

**Strategies:**

- Develop a technology plan for the library to provide recommendations for purchasing servers and creating a server room, increasing bandwidth for Internet access, upgrading the PC processors (September 2004 - January 2005)
- Install an LCD projector in the meeting room (March 2005)
- Create a staff intranet for easier sharing of organizational information (January 2005)

**3.3 By June 2004, use technology to streamline work routines and improve efficiency**

**Strategies:**

- Use a dedicated printer and software to produce computer generated spine labels for library materials (June 2004)
- Provide training for staff in MSWord, Excel and PowerPoint (Ongoing)

**GOAL 4: Renew, refresh and expand library collections to focus on current titles and topics in all formats**

***The Need:***

*Libraries are about books and information. To a great extent library use increases or decreases based on its current inventory of up to date, current, in demand titles that appeal to the interests of all age groups in the community. In the last few years the Ramsey Free Public Library has successfully refocused its collection to provide more copies of in demand titles but it needs to increase its materials budget significantly to keep up with community demands.*

**Objectives:**

**4.1 Revisit the current collection development policy annually**

**Strategies:**

- Develop new selection criteria that reflects demographic changes in the community and changes in people's interests (Current and ongoing)
- Use BCCLS statistics to review circulation trends of all formats and "dusty book" holdings percentages (Ongoing)
- Analyze current use and trends to determine areas of the collection that need expansion or reduction (Ongoing)
- Develop an ongoing weeding policy to provide shelf space for desirable titles (ongoing)
- Identify books that are beyond repair and remove from the collection (Ongoing)

**4.2 Develop collections to meet specific community needs**

**Strategies:**

- Increase the number of college guides and other college prep materials to assist the high school and families in making college decisions (ongoing)
- Expand the health, travel, gardening, home decoration and cook book collections to meet growing needs of retirees and adult users for more current materials (Ongoing)
- Purchase more popular novels in Spanish, Polish, German and other languages that may be spoken or read in the community (Ongoing)
- Make it easier for library users to offer suggestions for purchase (Ongoing)
- Communicate new purchases to the community (Ongoing)

### **4.3 Increase accessibility to popular titles and resources**

**Strategies:**

- Increase the library materials budget (June 2004)
- Create shorter loan periods for popular materials to increase turnover (June 2004)
- Purchase more copies of current materials to meet demand (Ongoing)
- Review ideas to help create an increased materials budget (Ongoing)
- Increase public awareness about the collection (Ongoing)

<b>GOAL 5: Create opportunities for lifelong learning</b>
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***The Need:***

*The Ramsey Free Public Library can provide a variety of resources to assist people in meeting their lifelong learning goals. Whether it's attending a library program, participating in computer training class, taking an independent study exam, or attending a book or film discussion group there are many ways to learn at the library.*

**Objectives:**

#### **5.1 Create ongoing programs to attract all ages to the library**

**Strategies:**

- Expand programming for all ages (June 2004)
- Inform the community about all the library resources available to help them (Ongoing)
- Make the library the “winter venue” for the town with expanded programming (Ongoing)
- Expand the budget to include more adult, children’s and teen programming (June 2004)
- Create a homework help center with tutors and exam night activities (June 2005)
- Develop a series of technology training programs for all ages and especially for retirees and seniors (June 2005)
- Use the library for tax preparation when the Borough offices are closed – a tax cram night (April 2004)
- Develop the skills and a timetable for grant writing to obtain funding to support programs and new services (Ongoing)

**GOAL 6: Improve community awareness about the library, its services and programs and build broad based support for the library**

***The Need:***

*The Ramsey Free Public Library needs to continuously communicate all that it has to offer. Current and potential customers should understand that the Library is a valuable resource in their day to day lives and how to find and use library resources either by visiting the library and using the library's web site. From the focus groups and town meeting we learned that there are specific segments of the community who are currently underutilizing the library. The Ramsey Free Public Library needs to broaden its reach through continuous promotion, merchandising and marketing to make the Library an even more exciting destination.*

**Objectives:**

**6.1 Create a heightened awareness throughout Ramsey so there is a constant positive “buzz” about the library**

**Strategies:**

- Develop a marketing plan for a new logo and public identity for the library (December 2004)
- Work with the local press to ensure regular story placement about the library (Ongoing)
- Create a brochure about the library and its services for new residents (Ongoing)
- Use e-mail alerts to inform people about library activities (June 2005)
- Contribute a library news item to the Borough's quarterly newsletter (Ongoing)

**6.2 Develop stronger partnerships with community agencies and schools**

**Strategies:**

- Work with school administrators and parent groups to identify opportunities for common programs and support services for students, teachers and parents (Ongoing)
- Work with the schools to place a link to the library on their web sites (Ongoing)
- Identify community agencies and organizations to form alliances with the library (Ongoing)
- Cooperate with local businesses to develop marketing plans that promote library use (Ongoing)

**GOAL 7: Continue to provide responsive services to meet community needs, staying focused on providing friendly, knowledgeable service.**

***The Need:***

*Good customer service distinguishes the Ramsey Free Public Library from its book store competitors. The ability to invest in training that permits Library staff to continually update their skills is important to maintaining the high quality service that community residents have come to expect from their library. Providing up to date physical and technological systems will ensure that the staff have the tools required to provide exceptional library service.*

**7.1 Provide opportunities for staff to continue developing a service attitude**

**Strategies:**

- Increase the current level of service by providing additional staffing at the service desks during busy hours (June 2004)
- Reexamine staffing patterns (Ongoing)
- Identify staff training and development needs and provide opportunities for staff to learn new skills (Ongoing)
- Reexamine work flow routines in the technical services area (March 2004)
- Streamline work routines in all public service positions (March 2004)

**7.2 Implement physical and system changes to enhance library services**

**Strategies:**

- Upgrade the library's phone system to include messaging capabilities (March 2005)
- Have a dedicated phone to call other libraries to find out if book is available for pick up (June 2004)
- Create service desks that encourage people to interact with staff (March 2004)
- Redesign the library's existing space so good customer service is more easily provided (March 2004)

**Measuring Success**

This is an ambitious plan that will significantly change the quality of library service in Ramsey. It is essential that library staff and trustees set aside time annually to assess progress in meeting the plan's goals and objectives, to make mid-course corrections that may be required to deal with changing circumstances and needs, and to celebrate their accomplishments. The results of this effort should be reported on an annual basis to all of those who helped shaped the



plan – the Planning committee, focus groups participants, members of the Friends of the Library, library staff – as well as members of the Library Board of Trustees and the Borough governing body.