



Moving Forward Together: Imagine the Possibilities

Edison Public Library
Strategic Plan 2022–2025

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Moving Forward Together: Imagine the Possibilities

In 2021, Edison Public Library began a community-wide planning process for a multi-year strategic plan. We wanted to position library leaders to anticipate and respond to challenges in a thoughtful manner with input from staff and the community. A transition in library leadership in 2020, with Keith McCoy ably stepping in as Interim Director for a few months and then the appointment of Allan Kleiman as the new director, set the stage for thinking about new possibilities for the library.



During this planning cycle, Edison Public Library again requested information from library patrons and all residents to elicit ideas about the library and its future. More than 1,300 people completed our survey responses and provided thousands of comments. We also met with staff and trustees to inform the process about our next steps, as well as with 80 residents in small discussion groups. We are grateful for the time that everyone spent talking to us.

The library's vision, mission, and strategy provide an exciting roadmap for services that respond to and anticipate the needs of our community. We are confident that our library, as it embraces new challenges, will be a highly valued destination at the heart of our community.

Consultants Leslie Burger and Alan Burger of Library Development Solutions assisted by providing a planning framework and facilitating meetings with the Board and staff.

Edison community members told us that the library needs to:

- *refresh and declutter its collection and add more new print titles and digital content*
- *provide teens and preteens with expanded programs, homework help, tutoring, and structured after-school resources*
- *adapt its policies and services to respond to the changing demographics*
- *of Edison, including increasing numbers of parents who both work, more children and active seniors, and a growing, diverse population*
- *expand access for all to digital resources and devices*
- *address library parking issues, where possible*
- *provide Sunday hours*
- *make more programs available on weekends*
- *connect residents with each other through programs and focused conversations and discussions about topical issues*
- *increase community awareness about the library's facilities and services*

Accomplishments

Edison Public Library (EPL) had many significant accomplishments during the last two years, even during the pandemic, including the following:

- developed a dynamic re-design and implementation plan to improve the North Branch and repurposed space at the Main Library and Clara Barton Branch
- cleaned and reorganized facility space as the libraries reopened post-COVID-19 to provide safe environments for staff and residents
- extensively weeded and curated collections to provide high-quality content
- initiated design planning work to increase library seating and to add new spaces including study rooms, meeting spaces, teen and children's spaces
- expanded digital collections and resources and purchased additional high demand titles
- eliminated all customer fines and fees
- offered Sunday hours at the Main Library
- expanded marketing for library programs and services
- reviewed and updated many policies
- streamlined AP, AR, payroll, and other functions related to the township



During the initial pandemic closure in 2020, and shortly after the libraries reopened, the Edison Public Library began a strategic assessment process to:

- 1) elicit community comments about the library and ideas for the future
- 2) evaluate what other libraries offer to their communities
- 3) plan operations and program improvements in response to comments and to the community's changing needs
- 4) discuss and implement its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do
- 5) ensure that the library will be able to serve future generations
- 6) determine staffing, hours, policies, collections, and facilities that are required to deliver the kind of service that Edison residents expect and deserve
- 7) realign administration and management organizationally to support the strategic priorities.

Our Roadmap: Moving Forward Together

Edison Public Library is supported and used daily by thousands of residents who value the library's role in the community. Our vision and mission are guided by the relationships we build with residents every day.

Vision

The vision for Edison Public Library focuses on a future where it is at the heart of community life.

Current Vision

To be an essential community resource that promotes engagement, cultural enrichment, and learning in a welcoming, inclusive, and collaborative environment.

POSSIBLE VISION STATEMENTS:

1. *Edison Public Library: the place where everyone in our community has a place.*
2. *Edison Public Library: the community's place to engage and grow.*
3. *Edison Public Library: the community's place to imagine the future and move forward together.*
4. *Edison Public Library is the place where everyone in our community can engage, learn, and grow. (Developed at last planning meeting)*



Mission

Our mission describes what we do every day and our impact on those who use the library. It guides us in the services we provide, the choices we make, and our interactions with residents.

Current Mission Statement

To provide excellent library services and resources in a welcoming and respectful environment to best serve the entire Edison community.

POSSIBLE MISSION STATEMENTS:

1. *Edison Public Library, where people and ideas meet to change lives.*
2. *Edison Public Library, where ideas, technology, and people intersect to build a better community.*
3. *Edison Public Library, the heart of the community, opens doors for curious minds.*
4. *Edison Public Library is welcoming, inclusive, and dedicated to excellence. (Developed at last planning meeting)*



Service Values

Edison Public Library staff and trustees embrace the following values in delivering service to the community:

- We welcome every person visiting the library with respect and joy.
- We offer a fulfilling library experience for everyone in our diverse community through a combination of welcoming facilities, accessible resources, and friendly, knowledgeable staff.
- We invest in our staff so they can learn, grow, and provide exceptional service.
- We provide access to the latest technology and instruction so everyone can participate in our digital society.
- We support literacy, learning, and community partnerships to encourage active civic engagement.
- We are committed to providing assistance for learning English
- We believe that equity, diversity, and inclusion will help all our staff and patrons thrive and grow.
- We are thoughtful stewards of public resources.

Strategic Priorities – Imagine the Possibilities

This strategic planning process targeted the following priorities to provide focus and direction from 2022 to 2025. Quantifiable metrics for each will assess the library's progress and guide annual board and staff planning and budgeting discussions.

- **Priority One** Edison Public Library is the community's #1 destination for learning for all ages
- **Priority Two** Edison Public Library is the local leader in technology resources, and instruction to support digital literacy and fluency
- **Priority Three** Edison Public Library will engage residents of all ages by increasing awareness and support
- **Priority Four** Edison Public Library leaders will provide inspiring and effective guidance to deliver excellent service

Strategic Priorities

Priority One

Edison Public Library is the community's #1 destination for learning for all ages.

Develop collections, programs, and spaces that make Edison Public Library the destination for all types of learning experiences

Library staff and trustees will position the library as a vibrant and not-to-be-missed destination. Staff and trustees will continually address and adapt library services to address the way people seek information, read, use library space, and interact with each other, especially given the changed social environment during 2020 and 2021. Repurposing space and collections and developing new programs will ensure that the library remains fresh and relevant for residents of all ages. Staff will ease access to the library, add new formats, and develop partnerships to engage all neighborhoods and languages that constitute the Edison community.

Objectives

1.1 Develop plans to refresh and repurpose all library locations and increased access for community and individuals

- 1.2 Make it easier to use the library and to browse the library collection**
- 1.3 Develop a staffing plan that responds to community needs, aligns staff with strategic priorities, and makes EPL the most desirable library to work in Middlesex County**
- 1.4 Provide virtual and in-person after-school activities for children and teens**

Priority Two

Edison Public Library is the local leader in technology resources, and the center for instruction and digital literacy and fluency

The library anticipates people's technology needs and provides access to digital resources, computer hardware, software, and apps. The library will become the place where everyone can get expert technology assistance and tech instruction (in English and other languages). The library will ensure that no Edison resident will be left behind in a world that increasingly relies on digital fluency.

Objectives

- 2.1 Create a state-of-the-art, technology discovery center to support community and staff digital learning**
- 2.2 Establish and staff a professional technology department to lead and manage the library's technology and digital infrastructure and public services**
- 2.3 Create an overall technology plan to address current and future community needs**
- 2.4 Make the library the community's "go-to" place for technology and tech help**

Priority Three

Edison Public Library will engage residents of all ages by increasing awareness and support

Make Edison Public Library the most used and useful local destination. Marketing and communication will increase awareness about the library to new audiences via online and onsite programs and activities.

The library will invite, welcome, and engage all residents to experience and use its resources by reducing barriers, including parking, language, and communication. Increasing reach and penetration will attract an enthusiastic group of participants to a wide offering of programs and new support for library services and resources.

Objectives

3.1 Expand advocacy and support

3.2 Increase use of the library by more residents

3.3 Offer programs with a purpose and with partners

3.4 Develop new private/public funding opportunities

Priority 4

Edison Public Library leaders will provide inspiring and effective guidance to deliver excellent service

The staff team and Board of Trustees are invested in the community and its success, committed to the library's vision and mission, and eager to lead in a revitalized direction. How we work together and provide ongoing board and staff development will be a priority to accomplishing our goals. We are committed to evaluating our policies and practices to ensure they are serving our community's needs.

Objectives

4.1 Align the library board with the strategic priorities

4.2 Align staff and staff resources with the strategic priorities

4.3 Review and align EPL with standard business practices

Moving Forward Together: Imagine the Possibilities

Moving Forward Together: Imagine the Possibilities is the result of a planning process initiated in 2021 by the Library's Board of Trustees and Director. More than 1,350 community residents responded to an online survey, 80 people participated in Community Conversation Focus Groups, and Trustees and staff met with the plan's facilitators to discuss the future direction for the library. The planning process elicited more than 3,500 comments from the community, identified challenges and opportunities for the library, and generated priorities, objectives, and possible activities that build on the library's previous successes. This plan will ensure that Edison Public Library becomes a trusted, vibrant center of civic life in Edison for many years to come.

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