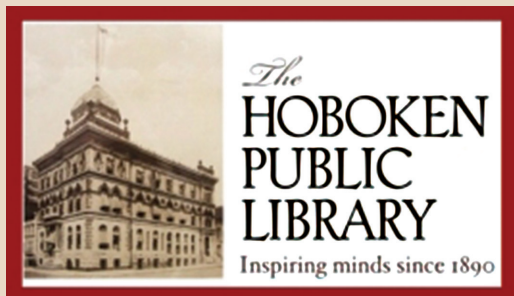


# Reimagine, Restore & *Transform*

**A Strategic Plan for the  
Hoboken Public Library  
2017–2021**



**June 2017**



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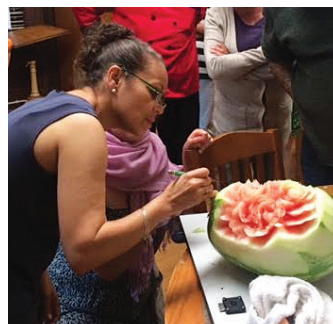
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# Reimagine, Restore and Transform

# In mid 2016,

as trustees of the Hoboken Free Public Library, we commissioned preparation of a five-year strategic plan, for 2017 through 2021.

We did so to enable the Library to respond appropriately and effectively to

- \* the diversity of Hoboken's population,
- \* societal changes,
- \* technological and telecommunications developments,
- \* emerging expectations for the role of free public libraries,
- \* potential synergies with other educational entities, and
- \* other transformations...

...while simultaneously continuing, expanding and improving relevant traditional library services within and from the Library's historic landmark building on Church Square Park.

That was a big assignment! And here's what we've done so far:

During the second half of 2016, the Library's

consultant, Library Development Solutions, worked with members of the public, staff, and representatives of the Friends of the Hoboken Public Library and the Hoboken Public Library Foundation, as well as trustees, to create a plan to **Reimagine, Restore and Transform** the Hoboken Public Library.

Now, that the plan is in your hands – literally and figuratively. We want you to not only read our report but also help us implement our plan with your insights and participation.

We've intentionally included **65 “possible activities”** for us to undertake to achieve our goals and objectives. Not every activity may be possible. Some will be revised. Others will be superseded by better ideas that come from ongoing community input. We intend this plan to be an evolving guidance as we provide opportunities for reading, information and community engagement.

We hope you receive this plan in that spirit—as a springboard for progress—and we look forward to receiving your thoughts as we **Reimagine, Restore and Transform** a civic asset to serve our entire community, the Hoboken Free Public Library.

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Amanda Blaney, *Trustee*

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---

Lina Podles, *Library Director*

The Board of Trustees appreciates the contributions of the following individuals who served on the Strategic Planning Committee:

Ilise Benun, *Trustee*

Amanda Blaney, *Trustee*

Bill Coughlan, *Board of Directors, HPL Foundation*

Sharlene Edwards, *Staff*

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Rosary VanIngen, *Staff*

Kerry Weinstein, *Staff*

## Consultants

Library Development Solutions

Alan Burger

Leslie Burger

Nick Stuart



# Planning for the Future 2017 and Beyond





The Hoboken Public Library understands the need to review our strategic plan every five years, particularly as the increased velocity of change in libraries, publishing, technology, and society creates demand for new resources and services. As part of this process, we assess our progress in meeting identified goals, obtain feedback from the community, and identify priorities for the next strategic plan.

Our new plan to Reimagine, Restore, and Transform the Hoboken Public Library's services and facility reflects our best and most creative thinking about our community. The plan incorporates local ideas, as well as imaginative redesigned services, repurposed space, more active community engagement, new technology tools, and staffing configurations to accommodate these needs.

Library Trustees, Library staff, and members of the community participated in the discussions that shaped this plan. More than 130 people participated in one of the focus groups to share their ideas for the Library's future, providing us with valuable feedback about their current view of the Library. Another 1,800 people responded to the library's online survey, providing valuable feedback about current services and ideas for the future.

From 2011 to 2016, the Hoboken Public Library has doubled the number of cardholders, expanded the number of programs and increased program attendance by 35 percent.





While the Library is about to add additional programming space, it will still fall far short of the space required to support a community of Hoboken's size. The current facility is undersized to meet these needs and the gap in need vs. current space is documented in a Space Analysis that was completed during this strategic planning process.<sup>1</sup>

The challenges that these statistics and other data illustrate have been in the forefront of the thinking of the Board of Trustees and the Library's ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee. Foremost, in the mind of trustees, staff and citizens who served on that committee was the question of how the Library will continue to transform itself into one of the community's most valued public resources.

At the center of the discussion was the Library's challenge to deliver high-quality service given the building's constraints and the demands of a changing and rapidly growing population. The need in Hoboken is immediate and the expectation is high that the Hoboken Public Library can find imaginative ways to support a modern service program.

The Library's Lower Level, Restore and Reimagine Project, providing new and inspiring meeting spaces that are certain to please the community, will be completed in 2017. This project focused on reimagining and restoring the Library building as an investment in our community. This plan will guide thinking about repurposing space on other floors to meet the same community-driven criteria. An investment in the Hoboken Public Library is an investment in the Hoboken community.

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<sup>1</sup> The January 2017 space analysis report detailing the gap in space is available in the library.





# What's Changed in Hoboken





In the five years since the last strategic plan, there have been many changes in Hoboken. Among the most significant are the following:<sup>2</sup>

- People want to use the Hoboken Public Library in different ways today. They are no longer reliant on information obtained from static reference and research sources and are more focused on working, studying, and gathering at the Library.
- Digital literacy is an essential contemporary skill required by adults, teens, and children. The Hoboken Public Library can help people of all ages navigate information, communication, and entertainment.
- Mobile communications and search devices allow us to connect and learn all the time, anywhere.
- In Hoboken, as elsewhere since the 2008 recession, telecommuting, entrepreneurship, and self-employment have increased, creating new needs for jobseeker resources and services.
- Climate disruptions, witnessed during Superstorm Sandy, recognize the Library as a place of refuge and work during storms, and a civic space to discuss the community's response to those disruptions.

<sup>2</sup> Focus Group participants were asked what has changed that will affect the way in which the Library provides services.



# Hoboken: We Hear You





What did we learn from Hobokenites during this most recent planning cycle? This time we heard about the Library's need to:

- Restore the building's historically interesting elements
- Renew and refresh all spaces so the building works as best as it can given its age
- Repurpose spaces that no longer serve community needs to ones that adapt to changing interests
- Provide refreshed collections with more new print, A/V, and digital content
- Respond quicker to Hoboken's rapidly changing demographics, especially in response to young families moving in and the growth of pre-K and full-day kindergarten
- Become more responsive to the needs of teens
- Increase options for being connected or disconnected, including access to meeting and quiet study space
- Assume a leading role in connecting residents with each other and in collaborating with local organizations
- Increase awareness of the Hoboken Public Library's resources and role in the community



# This Is our Vision for the Future





*To surprise and delight people every day with an experience that educates, enlightens, or entertains.*

■ **We will help people learn and grow.**

The Library's programs, collections and services help us achieve and expand our potential at all stages of life.

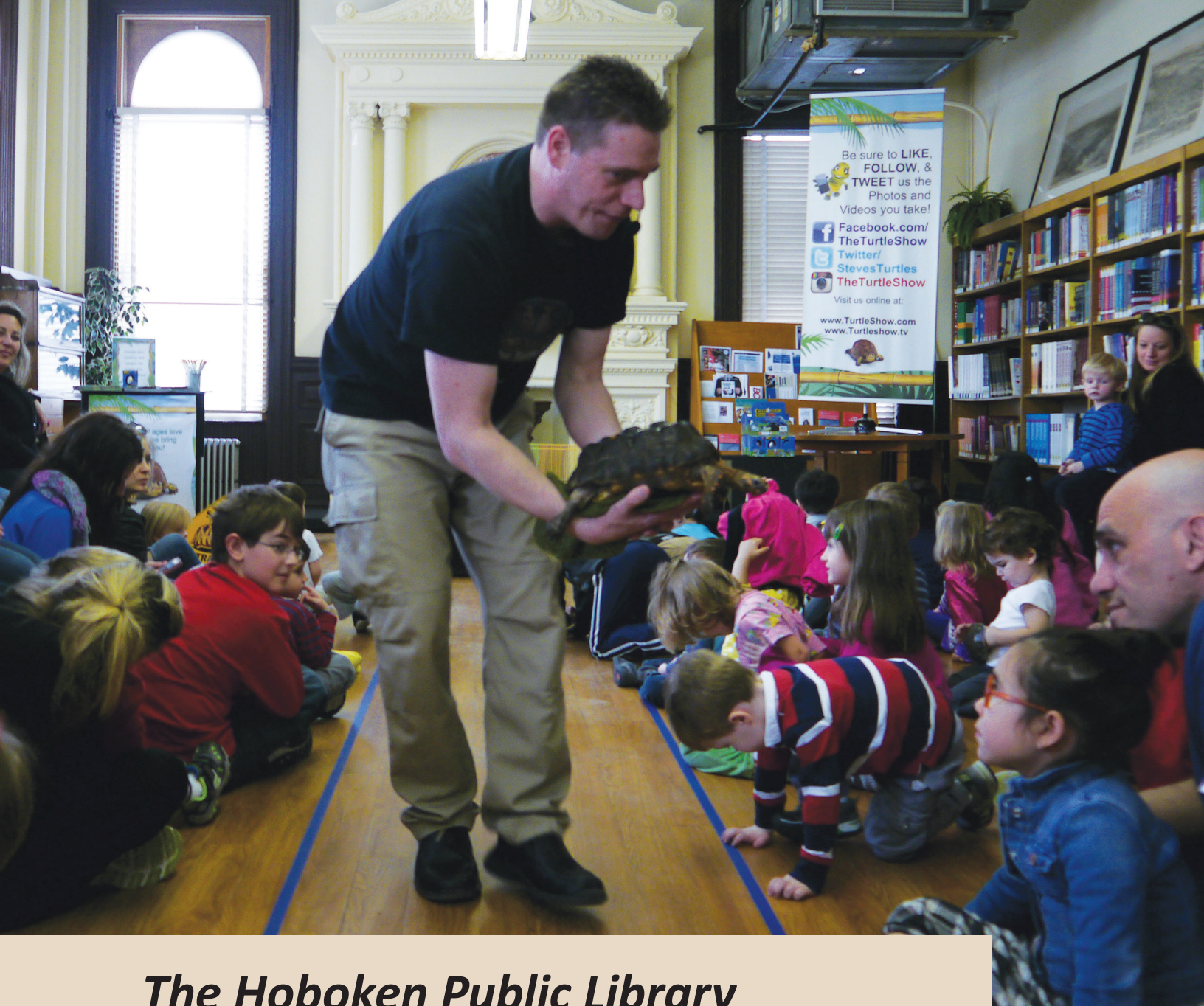
■ **We will build community and make Hoboken a better place to live.**

Our democracy requires informed participants. We bring people together in safe and welcoming environments to explore ideas and discuss issues that affect our lives and the life of our community.



# This Is our Mission





***The Hoboken Public Library connects people with each other, ideas, and opportunities to support lifelong learning, personal growth, and community development.***



# These Are our Values





The Library's first strategic plan of 2010–2015 helped set the Library on a course of listening to the community and responding based on key values. They are:

- To be a center for community engagement and learning
- To respond to the community with services based on their needs
- To provide service opportunities and physical facilities that work well and support people's needs
- To continue to grow the library's capacity to serve residents every day
- To hire talented staff and provide an exceptional work environment
- To change people's lives for the better as part of providing the basics of life and improving Hoboken
- To embrace Hoboken's past, celebrate its present, and discover its future



# Our Strategic Priorities





This plan will accomplish three major goals:

**Goal 1:** Develop service models that **reimagine** the role of the Hoboken Public Library.

**Goal 2:** **Restore** parts of the Hoboken Public Library facility to preserve the past, celebrate the present, and create the future

**Goal 3:** Provide Library infrastructure to **transform** the Hoboken Public Library



# Goals



# Goal 1: Develop service models that **reimagine** the role of the Hoboken Public Library.

## **Objective 1: Become a creative and safe event forum for public engagement and an incubator of new ideas**

### **Possible Activities:**

- a. Respond to local issues and topical events with facilitated discussions and related programs
- b. Collaborate with the city and other organizations in planning and promoting cultural and civic events
- c. Use YouTube, webinars, and local broadcasts to extend Library programs to additional audiences
- d. Create opportunities for gathering and learning in non-traditional spaces inside and outside of the Library
- e. Launch an annual “One Book-One City” Hoboken community-wide reading event

## **Objective 2: Promote the Library as a central place for learning and personal growth for Hobokenites of all ages**

### **Possible Activities:**

- a. Increase library visits and program attendance
- b. Develop an annual plan to guide Library program offerings throughout the year – develop all “programs with a purpose”
- c. Review current and new early literacy and early learning efforts to provide the most appealing and effective programs for children
- d. Experiment with new learning experiences for adults, especially topical programs that foster community engagement with discussions facilitated by academics, experts, and skilled moderators
- e. Incorporate more visual and performing arts performances into the Library’s programming
- f. Continue creation and building on successful model of “program days” that focus on a theme, i.e., Maker’s Day, Senior Day, Hoboken Public Library Author Fair, 50 Things You Can Learn at the Library Day
- g. Expand career and jobseeker services to include entrepreneur resources
- h. Provide technology and software training classes in person, online, one-on-one, and in groups
- i. Continue integrating STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art & Design, Math) and the ideas of coding behind the Maker Space in all parts of the library’s programming and space use
- j. Hire staff to support additional programming



### **Objective 3: Improve collections and implement new methods for content delivery**

#### **Possible Activities:**

- a. Continue to offer additional online content, including films, music, e-books, and other media
- b. Rebuild the Library's print collection, replace and refresh titles, especially those in high demand, and continue to reduce its size in subjects where digital content provides more accurate information
- c. Acquire new flexible display fixtures to highlight high demand and topical collections
- d. Design, create, and promote a "Genius Bar"- like area to provide all-day device and download assistance from skilled staff members

### **Objective 4: Deliver convenient and imaginative library services that respond to changing community interest and lifestyles**

#### **Possible Activities:**

- a. Develop new methods for "touching base" with community members and diverse community groups, especially underserved groups
- b. Improve in-library access to residents with disabilities, including expanded home delivery and other methods, for reaching those who cannot get to the Library
- c. Offer and promote new programs for children and adults with learning differences
- d. Expand and standardize library hours

### **Objective 5: Deliver world-class digital library service**

#### **Possible Activities:**

- a. Implement the recent Technology Review recommendations
- b. Develop and implement a multi-year technology plan, using the New Jersey State Library template
- c. Use a digital display monitor at the library's entrance to create a daily "menu-driven" message for each visitor
- d. Create a digital learning lab with up-to-date and experimental software and devices and provide instruction for use
- e. Incorporate mobile technology applications for book and information requests, catalog searches, and card holder account management, inside and outside of BCCLS
- f. Become early adopters of new and emerging public and staff productivity technologies



## **Goal 2: Restore** parts of the Hoboken Public Library facility to preserve the past, celebrate the present, and create the future

### **Objective 1: Extend the Lower Level project to reimagine and restore other parts of the facility to accommodate the needs of the community**

#### **Possible Activities:**

- a. Create flexible, adaptable architectural and interior design on all floors to accommodate the contemporary interests and needs of Hoboken's population
- b. Accommodate both individual and community needs for spaces to gather, read, collaborate, discover, talk, and learn
- c. Use new productivity tools (data gathering software, project management tools, sophisticated door counters, statistics, website use, PrinterOn, etc.) to enhance the Library's information about use and to accommodate user experiences
- d. Incorporate, where possible, energy-efficient design to manage the operating costs of the building

### **Objective 2: Actively pursue expanding library space**

- a. Develop a flexible Master Facility Plan for the Hoboken Public Library
- b. Find additional space for providing library services to the community, e.g., kiosks, pop-up branches, and bookmobiles

### **Objective 3: Develop Library fundraising efforts to extend the restoration project to all floors**

#### **Possible Activities:**

- a. Specify roles for the Trustees, Friends of the Library, and the Hoboken Public Library Foundation in assisting in fundraising to support building restoration
- b. Coordinate ongoing Library fundraising efforts with the Restore project fundraising
- c. Develop a case statement and appeal for potential donors
- d. Host a series of small, intimate dinners and talks to inform potential donors about the exciting changes planned for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd floors



**Objective 4: Build enthusiasm for and involvement in the Hoboken Public Library through appealing, relevant communication methods**

**Possible Activities:**

- a. Develop a new branding and marketing plan
- b. Grow the Library's email database
- c. Initiate a colorful, brief bi-weekly email newsletter with events for the week delivered directly to patron inboxes and send out targeted program information based on patrons' interests
- d. Engage community and cultural organizations, book clubs, social clubs, and other Hoboken organizations in conversations about their needs and potential partnerships with the Library
- e. Use social media and networks routinely to engage the community



# Goal 3: Provide Library infrastructure to **transform** the Hoboken Public Library

## **Objective 1: Align staff responsibilities in a way that enables a reimagined and transformative library experience to everyone in Hoboken**

### **Possible Activities:**

- a. Design and develop a staffing plan that can adapt to emerging needs of the Hoboken community and consider marketing, human resources, facility management and technology functions as critically important to the library
- b. Rewrite job descriptions to incorporate new responsibilities, skills, and talents required for each position
- c. Ensure that all staff have the technology skills and competencies needed to provide confident and exceptional customer service
- d. Budget for support staff to attend regional, state, and national library conferences
- e. Develop a culture where staff engage in co-learning experiences, sharing presentations and ideas from each other and other organizations
- f. Implement a shared knowledge base for staff to post, read, discuss, retrieve, and store information and learning tools
- g. Replace the reference and information function with “adult services” encompassing reader’s advisories, user experience, program planning, information giving, technology assistance, and troubleshooting
- h. Continue developing an annual staff development day focused on specific training needs for all staff
- i. Change public service desk staffing to enable off-desk time for program planning, reader advisory, and community outreach
- j. Develop an employee handbook and a performance evaluation system for all staff and administration
- k. Establish best practices for the Board, director and staff
- l. Begin exit interviews of staff who resign or retire from the HPL

## **Objective 2: Develop and implement a plan to provide dynamic high-quality service**

### **Possible Activities:**

- a. Identify and establish temporary pop-up(s) or mini-branch(es) at convenient, high-traffic sites
- b. Investigate storefront or similar space to accommodate the growing need for more children’s activities and resources, especially in other areas of Hoboken (Northwest)
- c. Continue to replace and introduce furniture and equipment that can be used in restored and unrestored spaces in the Library



- d. Plan for a modern, exciting teen area or room that appeals to the needs of the growing teen population
- e. Offer café or lounge vending space to accommodate teen's after-school needs, as well as social gathering space in the library and use the café or lounge space for live music and social events

### **Objective 3: Create a secure financial future for the Hoboken Public Library**

#### **Possible Activities:**

- a. Review annual support expectations from the Friends and Foundation groups
- b. Expand local business support in the form of support for specific initiatives
- c. Determine policies for use and fees for community meeting spaces in the Library
- d. Identify areas where operating costs can be reduced or contained and processes streamlined

### **Objective 4: Launch a new, easy-to-navigate website that serves as the library's digital portal**

#### **Possible Activities:**

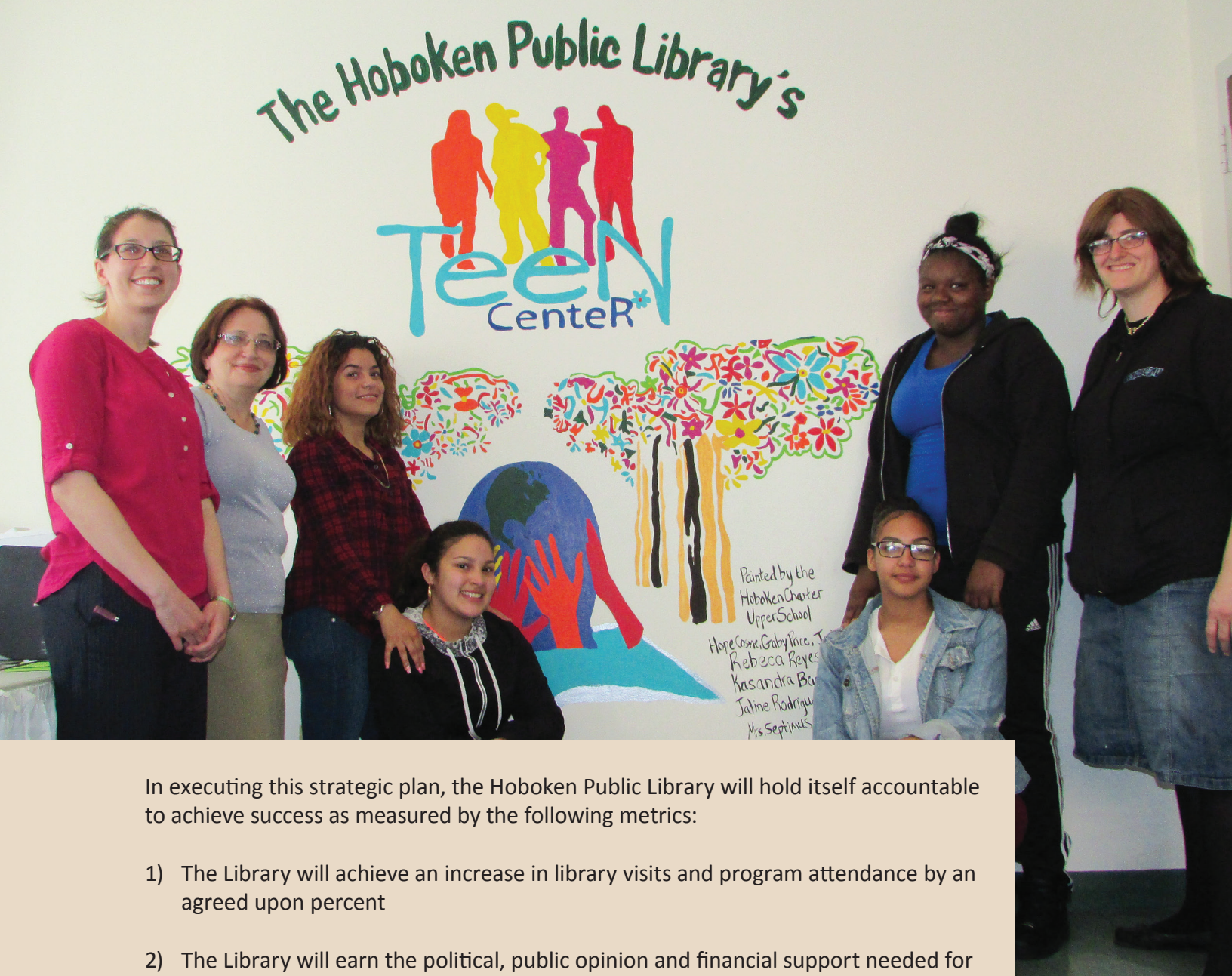
- a. Work with a website designer to revise the landing page and other key pages to address immediate issues and to create a new website that will serve as a digital branch
- b. Make the library's homepage intuitive to search for library items, place holds, download/stream content, and find program and calendar information
- c. Create a website that staff can easily update and create appealing, interactive content





# These Are our Metrics





In executing this strategic plan, the Hoboken Public Library will hold itself accountable to achieve success as measured by the following metrics:

- 1) The Library will achieve an increase in library visits and program attendance by an agreed upon percent
- 2) The Library will earn the political, public opinion and financial support needed for the 2017–2021 Strategic Plan to be successful.
- 3) Hoboken’s residents will recognize and tell others that the Library is a key center of community life, measures as a net promoter score in the Library’s annual survey.
- 4) All demographic groups in the community are engaged in the Library.
- 5) The Library receives positive, consistent media coverage and social media feedback.
- 6) Library use increases as measured by agreed upon traditional and new metrics, including:
  - a. Circulation (print and digital) per capita
  - b. Visits per capita
  - c. Program attendance per capita
  - d. Public internet computer use per capita
  - e. Wi-Fi access use per capita.
- 7) Hoboken residents (in the Library’s annual survey) place the HPL as one of the top community assets.



