



North Castle Public Library Long-Range Plan 2024 Update

In July 2023, the North Castle Public Library (NCPL) Board of Trustees adopted a Long-Range Plan as a guideline to develop and prioritize initiatives to be undertaken over the next 5 to 10 years designed to "establish the Library as our Community's preeminent educational and cultural hub."

This document provides a high-level update on our strategic efforts, highlighting key metrics and their alignment with our objectives. This supplements the reviews and discussions conducted during the monthly Board meetings, underscoring our dedication to aligning efforts with the community's evolving priorities.

Statistics

The NCPL 2023 Long-Range Plan utilized the data from the 2022 Westchester Library System Annual Report to establish benchmarks for the following criteria:

- Books in Circulation
- E-Books Available
- Patron Visits
- Program Attendees

This NCPL update includes year-over-year comparison data on:

- Total Special Programs Offered – unique and standalone programs
- Total Program Sessions – all programs, including recurring sessions

WLS Annual Report Criteria*	2022	2023	2024
			(YTD As of 10/1)
Books in Circulation	52,136	57,266	51,136
E-Books Available	128,717	133,445	140,558
Patron Visits	81,941	92,819	63,721
Program Attendees	33,301	32,808	27,906
Total Special Programs Offered	11	62	111
Total Program Sessions	776	1,161	880

***Notes regarding statistics:**

Books in Circulation: The decrease in circulating books reflects a large-scale project done in 2024 aimed at weeding non-fiction items that have not circulated in over two years and dated reference materials.

E-Books Available: Additional materials purchased based on the patron's interests.

Patron Visits: Extended closure of the Armonk branch during 2024 to repair the trusses resulted in decreased in-person patron visits.

Program Attendees: Accounting for attendance at the Virtual/Hybrid program was modified in 2024 to only count individuals attending via the Library Zoom account and those in person. This change removed any individuals who attended via the presenters' personal Zoom account from the statistics.

Strategic Priorities

The NCPL Long-Range Plan also identified five strategic areas for focus and improvement: Collections, Programming, Facilities, Staffing, and Marketing.

1. Collections

Collection Development

- Additional copies of popular titles have been purchased, decreasing wait times by four days. In 2023, the wait time for an item was an average of ten days; in 2024, the wait time averaged six days.
- NCPL cardholders now have exclusive access to print and e-books via the NCPL website.

Grow Electronic Collections

- Aligned budget priorities with evolving patron materials usage patterns.
 - The E-book budget was increased by 6.25% from 2023 to 2024.
 - The fiction budget was increased by 24% from 2023 to 2024.

Diversified Lending Collection

- The Seed Library was reinstated and expanded in the spring of 2024. Forty-six patrons checked out items from the Seed Library!
- The NY Times All-Access online and the language program 'Mango Languages' were added to the electronic offerings.

2. Programming

Programming Evaluation

- Leveraged findings from a community workshop conducted in February 2023, combined with attendance statistics and patron discussions, to identify programming needs for 2024.
- Programming attendance is reviewed regularly.
- Overall program attendance is trending upwards, with 27,906 attendees as of 10/1/2024 vs 32,808 attendees in the entire year of 2023.
- The Summer Reading Program was successful, with 25,818 total checkouts, 853 participants, 27,030 library visits, and 327 program sessions. In addition, 146 museum passes were borrowed.

Developed Programming Schedule

- Newly introduced programs were well-received by patrons, including Master Gardening, salsa class, Spring Tie Dye, the History of the Yankees, Chess Club, St. Patrick's themed cello concert, and a wildlife show and tell for children.
- New program series in 2024 included a writer's workshop, English as a Second Language classes, a community puzzle, and National Gallery Art Talks.

Seek partnerships

- New library partnerships for 2024 were formed with Chappaqua Public Library, Harrison Public Library, Scarsdale Public Library, Town of Pelham Library, and Warner Library to present programs. New community partnerships for 2024 include the New York Blood Center, Northeast Etsy Artist Collective, Senior Law Day Collaborative, Senior Services of North America, Soul Ryeders, and Unleash Your Inner Voice to provide the community with informational sessions.

3. Facilities

Facilities Updates

- Completed the truss repair project at the Armonk branch.
- Installed an ADA ramp at the North Castle Community Center and Library.
- Smart Boards have been installed in both branches and are fully operational.
- The outside lighting at Whippoorwill Hall has been repaired and replaced.
- Power washing was completed on the exterior of the North White Plains branch.

Facilities Audits

- The NCPL Director and Board of Trustees created and implemented a Request for Proposal, gathered the responses, and selected an architectural firm to perform a complete facilities evaluation of both library branches.

- KG&D was engaged to conduct the facilities and infrastructure audit of the Armonk branch to identify modifications and upgrades required to accomplish the Long-Range Plan objectives. The final assessment report was presented to the Trustees on 9/9/2024.
- The KG&D assessment also identified safety, operational, and functional concerns that were recommended to be addressed within the next year, next 1-3 years, 3-5 years, and 5 + years.
- The NCPL Board has requested the Town Board to allocate \$300,000 in capital funds in 2025 to complete needed repairs identified as items requiring immediate remediation in the coming year.
- The KG&D assessment included requirements for additional multi-use spaces, expanded work and preparation spaces, and additional storage.

Furniture Audit

- A furniture audit was completed at the North Castle Community Center and Library.

Signage Audit

- A new sign was installed at the North Castle Community Center and Library.
- A new sign was installed at the Armonk branch.

4. Staffing

Staff Assessment

- The NCPL Board of Trustees created, implemented, and completed the first annual Library Director performance review.
- In response to requests from the Friends and the community to increase evening hours to pre-Covid levels, funding was requested in the 2025 budget to add personnel to allow for additional hours.
- Additional staffing requests were also incorporated into the 2025 budget to allow for more coverage and enable more flexible program scheduling.
- Reviewed the non-union salaries at neighboring libraries and recommended salary increases for these positions to the Town Board.

Staff Development

- Staff participated in various American Library Association and New York Library Association training opportunities relevant to their positions.
- Regularly scheduled staff meetings with various training components were scheduled throughout 2024.

Staff Expansion

- The 2025 budget proposed to the Town of North Castle includes expanding staff with additional positions to increase library hours.

5. Marketing

Develop Branding

- Reviewed the Town Board proposal for a new website that integrates the Library. It is recommended that the Library retain its individual site, in keeping with staff and patron needs.
- Vendor Research & Evaluation: Conducted a comprehensive review of four vendors based on cost, customization, accessibility, and feature offerings for brand development and website design specific to libraries.
- Collaborative Analysis: Partnered with Library staff to assess the strengths and gaps in NCPL's current operations, branding, and marketing efforts, aligning the vendor comparison with the Library's needs and strategic goals.

Develop Campaigns

- Leveraged email platform Constant Contact to send 421,322 emails to the library community between October 2023 and October 2024.

Empower Staff and Patrons

- Identified and selected the most suitable vendor for website and branding to meet our long-term goals for staff and patrons, with a proposal to be presented to the Town Board for final approval at a future date.

Looking to the Future

The Board of Trustees is proud of the progress made over the past year toward meeting the objectives outlined in the Long-Range Plan, and we are excited about the many initiatives currently in process. This progress would not have been possible without the dedication and commitment of the Library Director and Staff and the unwavering support of the North Castle Town Board, The Friends of the North Castle Library, and the community at large. It takes a village!