

# THE AVALON FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY

## STRATEGIC PLAN

APPROVED OCTOBER 9, 2014

### INTRODUCTION

The Avalon Library is a mature organization after 10 years of public service. This plan is designed to be timeless – to not apply to a given period. It contains the goals of the Library Staff and Board, which do not change unless a significant change is seen in community needs. Similarly, the basic strategies for the Library Staff to execute do not change unless conditions arise that require a new approach. We review the plan in detail very two years for those requirements

### MISSION STATEMENT

- To foster an environment of life-long learning through library programs and resources.
- To make Information accessible that our patrons require for education, research, self-improvement and recreation
- To promote economic and cultural development in Avalon through superior library services that enhance the quality of life in the community and the county
- To provide library services to our patrons regardless of age, physical limitations, or location
- To serve as a community center where people can come together in secure, comfortable and aesthetically pleasing settings, to meet, communicate and utilize library services
- To identify and/or develop new services and technologies which better serve the library needs of our patrons.
- To facilitate patrons' use of technology as a means of learning, communication, creativity and entertainment.

### GOALS AND STRATEGIES

#### COLLECTION

The collection is an important asset through which the library carries out its mission. Evolving media formats and new technologies are rapidly changing how the collection is developed, stored, used and accessed.

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| Goal A - Develop the collection and associated services that permit rapid and comprehensive response to patron demands wherever they live. |   |
| Strategy A1  | Evaluate eContent as opposed to physical content to determine the most effective format to purchase.  |
| Strategy A2  | Evaluate effectiveness of Library-by-Mail program. Determine if there alternative methods of delivering library materials to our nonresident patrons. If USPS is most effective method upgrade processes and equipment necessary to comply with postal code changes effective 1/1/2015. |
| Strategy A3  | Monitor the demand for Blu-Ray video and MP3 audiobooks to determine if and when the older formats (DVD & wav Audiobooks) can be retired and replaced.  |

### PUBLIC PROGRAMS

The purpose of public programs is to encourage reading, personal growth and learning throughout life. In group interactions, programs foster dialog and community, and enable participants to understand and create connections to the world.

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| Goal B - Provide a broad range of programs which meet the diverse needs and interest of our community. Programming effort will promote reading, literature, an understanding of current affairs, and the arts. |  |
| Strategy B1  | Prepare and maintain a programming schedule that exhibits a diversity of programming. Maintain a two year outlook of program content   |
| Strategy B2  | Maintain detailed records of program offerings and attendance in order to assess their effectiveness   |
| Strategy B3  | Develop a space needs proposal based on the two-year program plan and the proposed schedule changes. Assess detailed options for additional program space.   |
| Strategy B4  | Promote programs vigorously to increase attendance and library traffic. Develop a promotion strategy that includes but is not limited to social media, signage, website, pod and video casts, and newspapers.                |
| Strategy B5  | Encourage collection use by offering programs that stimulate borrowing or use of on-line resources   |
| Strategy B6  | Move programming during the fall, winter and earlier spring, to day time hours to accommodate senior citizens.   |
| Strategy B7  | Evaluate the need for early literacy programming   |
| Strategy B8  | Create maker-spaces where patrons can create arts and crafts, multimedia and digital content. Such capabilities may include such activities as to sewing machines, audio and video production, and 3d scanning and printing. |

#### PATRON SERVICES

The quality of our patrons' library experience is dependent upon the success that the patron has when interfacing with the library. Whether the interaction is face-to-face at the circulation desk or using the online catalog, the friendliness and ease of use are just as critical as the acquisition of the desired information.

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| Goal C – Each patron should feel, on each visit to the Library or Library website, that their patronage is important to the Library and the staff, that they are fully empowered to manage their interaction with the library, and that they are entitled to a successful transaction with the library. |   |
| Strategy C1   | Provide funding and incentives to individual staff members who develop and implement systematic improvements to patron service practices.   |
| Strategy C2   | For the convenience of our patrons the library will accept credit card payment at the printing kiosks and at the front desk. The library will also have an ePay options through the online catalogue to pay for overdue books and other obligations |
| Strategy C3   | Develop apps for various library services   |
| Strategy C4   | Evaluate the Millennium ILS to determine whether or not it continues to meet the library's needs  |
| Strategy C5   | C continue to develop its website to make it friendlier, easier to use and provide new services   |
| Strategy C6   | Evaluate the library networks to identify weaknesses and potential upgrades. A plan will be developed for the maintenance and upgrade of the network.   |
| Strategy C7   | Offer assisted listening devices in all lecture and work shop areas.  |

## CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS

The library is a focal point of the community. It adds significantly to the quality of life of our patrons. It is critical to the welfare of the community that the library quickly resume operations after catastrophic events. In these conditions it will be the library's prime mission to help patrons restore normalcy of services.

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| Goal D – Develop plans for both normal and emergency operations to insure continuity of basic library services. |  |
| Strategy D1   | Develop emergency action plans for the restoration resources and services in conjunction with those being developed by the school district and Borough   |
| Strategy D2   | Work with the Borough's Office of Emergency Management and Avalon's Information Officer to identify services and resources the library can provide to facilitate the continuity of government, care of evacuees, dissemination of information and the restoration of normalcy. |
| Strategy D3   | Support a culture of readiness both internally and in the community by exercising emergency procedures in simulation, providing workshops on and disseminating information about emergency preparedness.   |
| Strategy D4   | Move much of the IT infrastructure to remote locations to insure the survivability and quick restoration of library services in the aftermath of an emergency  |

## COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The library will seek opportunities to collaborate with local businesses, civic organizations and government to support their activities through resource sharing

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| Goal E1 - Avalon School -Work with the school district and Friends of the Library. Promote reading and information literacy for children in both the elementary and middle school. |   |
| Strategy E1a   | Augment the print collection in both Elementary and Middle school libraries by providing age-appropriate eResources including databases and eMedia which support curriculum goals   |
| Strategy E1b   | Provide in-service training for teachers on the use of the library's eResources in the class assignments.   |
| Strategy E1c   | Provide students' parents with information about age appropriate library resources  |
| Goal E2 - Work directly with local civic groups to share mutual resources and talents.   |   |
| Strategy E2a   | Provide workshops, classes and online line resources to promote technology and information literacy by teaching the necessary skills require to use latest consumer technology and online resources.  |
| Strategy E2b   | Coordinate programming with Civic Organizations in efforts to in order to avoid conflicts and identify areas of collaboration   |
| Strategy E2c   | Partner with the Avalon Historical Society in setting the agenda and funding for collection development and public programming at the Avalon History Center. Form joint committees to plan and oversee collection development and programming activity. |

## ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

### GEOGRAPHICALLY DIVERSE PATRON BASE

The geographic distribution of Avalon’s patrons is unique. As a result of Avalon being a resort community and having a liberal membership policy for county residents, the primary residential address of over 85% of our patrons is not in Avalon.

| Avalon Cardholder By Location | Non-Res. Home-owner | Res. Homeowner | County | Seasonal Visitors | Avalon Business | Borough Employee | COIL | Total |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|------|-------|
| 2013                          | 5819                | 1239           | 2496   | 261               | 115             | 102              | 39   | 10071 |
|                               | 57.8%               | 12.3%          | 24.8%  | 2.6%              | 1.1%            | 1.0%             | 0.4% |       |

Non-resident patrons account for 80% of library circulation

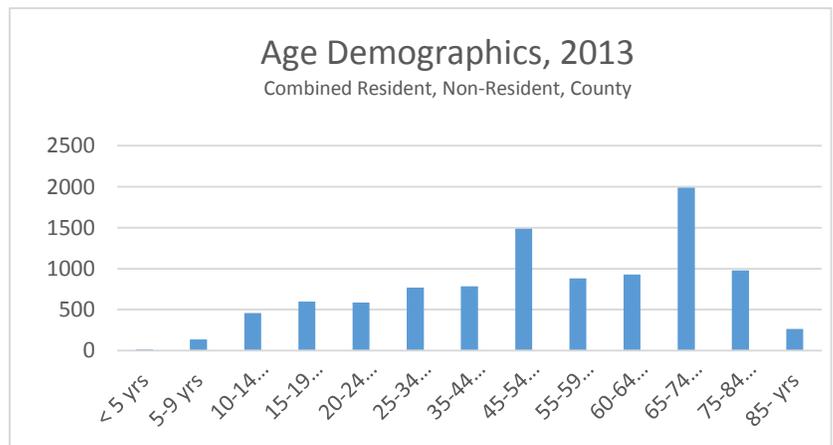
| <i>Circulation by Patron Type*</i>                    | Avalon Business Employee | Borough Employee | COIL Member | County Resident | NR Homeowner | Resident | Seasonal Visitor |
|---|--------------------------|------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|----------|------------------|
| 2013  | 989                      | 6441             | 619         | 33894           | 68960        | 27911    | 1609             |
| % of 2013 Circ  | 0.7%                     | 4.6%             | 0.4%        | 24.1%           | 49.1%        | 19.9%    | 1.1%             |
| <b>* Circulation figures for eMedia not included.</b> |                          |                  |             |                 |              |          |                  |

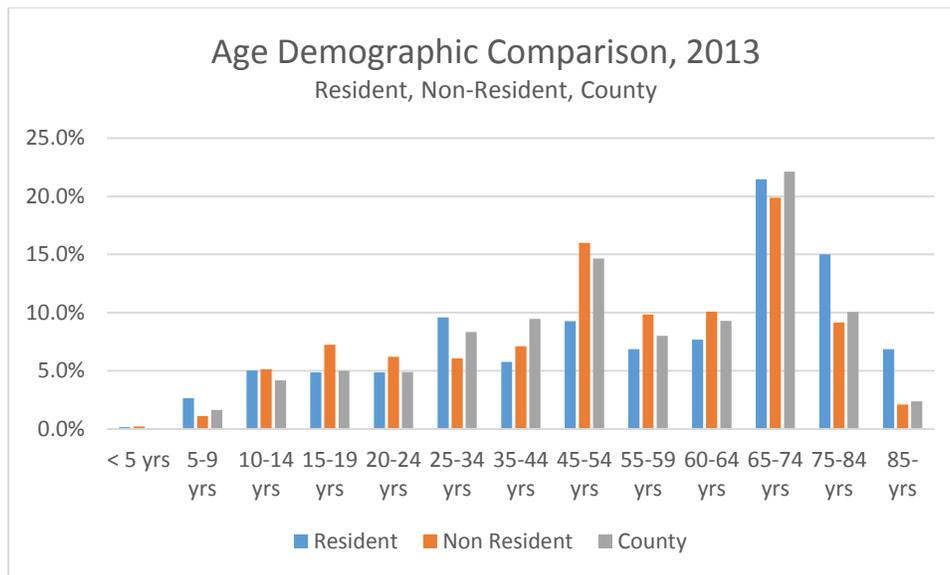
In 2013, non-resident home owners represented 58% (5,819) of the library’s patron base and circulated 68,960 items or 49.1% of all circulation. The primary addresses of Avalon’s non-resident home owners were in 37 states and 5 foreign countries.

Since the opening of the library, county residents could apply for free library cards. In 2013, there were 2,496 Cape May County residents who had Avalon library cards. They accounted for 24% of 2013 circulation. In 2013, 1239 resident home-owners had library cards and checked out 27,911 items or 19.9% of all circulation.

The largest age demographic in our patron base is the 65+ group. This group includes over 40% of patrons. According to the 2010 census, there were 1334 people residing year round in the borough. This was a 38% drop the 2000 residential population (2,143). While the loss of population was reflected in all age ranges, it was not uniform. Young families (ages below 18, 18-24, and 25-44) constituted almost 48% of the decline. This loss shifted the medium age of the population to 61.8 years. The largest demographic now in the borough is the 65+ age range which is 40.5% of the 2010 population.

As of March 2014, there are a total of 52 Avalon resident children attending K-8. 26 Students attend Stone Harbor Elementary School (grades k-4), and 26 are at the Avalon Middle School (grades 5-8). Approximately 35 children are attending high school at various locations on the mainland.





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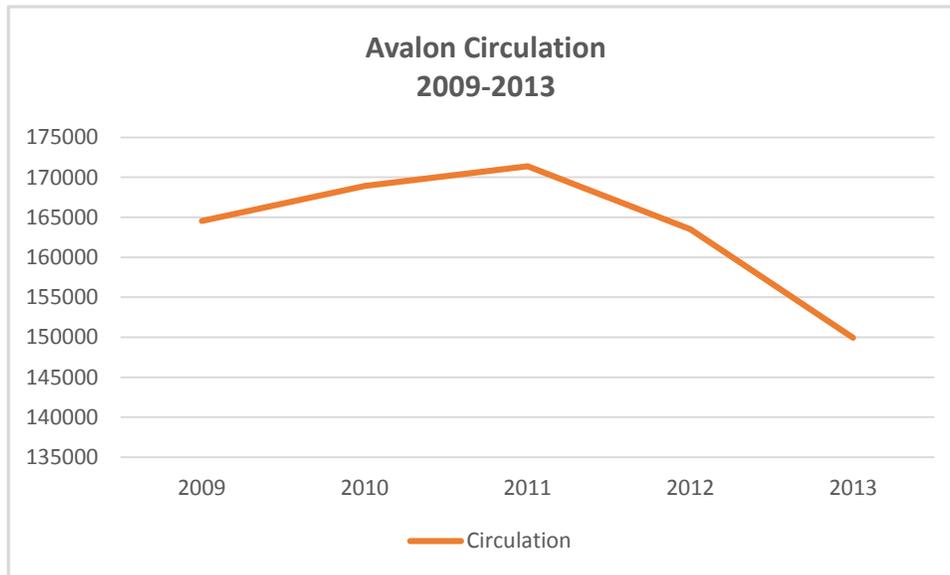
#### THE COLLECTION

As of February, 2014 the collection consisted of 60,213 physical items plus 178 magazine and newspaper subscriptions. Additionally, patrons had access to 12,617 eContent items.

| The Collection is composed of 60, 213 items + 22 databases/services + 178 magazine / Newspapers Subscriptions 5485 eAudiobooks + 6994 eBooks + 93 eVideos + 45 eMusic |              |                               |                              |              |
|---|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Books</b>  | <b>39720</b> | <b>Adult</b>                  | <b>Fiction</b>               | <b>12273</b> |
|   |              |                               | <b>Non-Fiction</b>           | <b>9852</b>  |
|   |              |                               | <b>New Jersey Collection</b> | <b>419</b>   |
|   |              | <b>Youth and Young Adults</b> | <b>Fiction</b>               | <b>9138</b>  |
|   |              |                               | <b>Non-Fiction</b>           | <b>8038</b>  |
| <b>Audiobooks</b>   | <b>4427</b>  | <b>Adult</b>                  | <b>3689</b>                  |              |
|   |              | <b>Youth and Young Adults</b> | <b>738</b>                   |              |
| <b>Videos</b>   | <b>11058</b> | <b>Adult</b>                  | <b>8660</b>                  |              |
|   |              | <b>Youth and Young Adults</b> | <b>2398</b>                  |              |
| <b>Videogames</b>   | <b>1227</b>  |                               |                              |              |
| <b>Music CD</b>   | <b>3781</b>  | <b>Adult</b>                  | <b>3662</b>                  |              |
|   |              | <b>Youth</b>                  | <b>119</b>                   |              |

## CIRCULATION

Circulation has declined since 2011 by 19%. With the exception of eContent, all formats have declined in circulation. Historically, the single largest circulating format is video. In 2013, video circulation represented 35.6% of all circulation or 53337 videos. Adult print represented 24.9% and juvenile print 15.9%. Non-resident patrons account for 80% of library circulation.



It should be noted that circulation declines have occurred throughout the New Jersey Library community during this period. From the New Jersey State Library annual surveys:

| Category                          | Average annual change in circulation, 2009-2013 |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| All Libraries                     | -1.6%   |
| All Municipal Libraries           | -2.0%   |
| All County Libraries              | -1.6%   |
| Avalon Free Public Library        | -2.7%   |
| Another Coastal Community Library | -2.7%   |