

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR CONSULTANT SERVICES (RFP)
MASTER PLAN FOR JENKINTOWN LIBRARY

ADDENDUM 2
LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN

August 21, 2026

The following document includes minor edits from the original Board retreat minutes that were not relevant to the strategic planning effort. In addition, the timelines were impacted by a major flood in December 2024 that required extensive repairs and renovations to the basement and site drainage, before moving forward with the master plan.



Jenkintown Library Board of Trustees

2024 Winter Retreat – Strategic Plan

February 24, 2024

A 21st Century Library for Jenkintown

A Community Anchor Institution and a Safe Space

REVIEWING GOALS, SETTING PRIORITIES

The Board of Trustees embraces the role of the Library as a *community anchor institution*, as defined by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and a *21st Century Library for Jenkintown*. As an anchor institution, the Library must be seen as a *safe space* for families, children, and all community visitors.

Nina and the Library staff met prior to the retreat to select the highest priorities for the Board. These priorities are designed to transform the institution into a *21st Century Library for Jenkintown*. The following challenges and opportunities are in priority order.

A. Work and study space for public and staff use. The library is small and does not have sufficient space for the public to work generally, including on library computers and on their own computers. There are two large tables in the Lamber room, without sufficient outlets for charging devices. There are also no places for privacy such as Zoom meetings for public visitors.

The Community Room costs \$20/hour to use. This is established by policy, even for individual users. While the Community Room is rented once or twice per week, it is also often unused. Staff also have few places to take a break, although they sometimes eat lunch in the Community Room. Downsides to the Community Room include not having sightlines from the main library. Security is also a challenge.

Remedies include a layout change or policy changes for individual use. The staff proposed other options including building a loft above the main library, although this may be prohibited by the Library's historical status. A loft space would function much like a college library for studying. The Lambert Room was not considered because of the huge portraits on the wall.

- B. Library functions and design.** The following functions and design issues are a significant challenge for the Library, the public, and the staff. A very high priority is addressing these issues holistically. They include the following.
- **Accessibility – need for an elevator.** An elevator has been discussed for years. The need for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access to the second floor is self-evident. Currently, the Children's Room is located there with capacity for up to 35 persons. If the Children's Room is relocated, the space could be used for offices or other public purposes.
 - **Children's room.** If the library could be re-designed, the Children's Room might be better located on the main floor to allow flexibility and perhaps expansion for children's programming.
 - **Community room.** This is discussed in Topic A above. A more flexible approach to the Community room as a multi-purpose space needs to be considered.
 - **Study areas.** This is also discussed in Topic A above. Staff ideas include the addition of loft space in either of the two double-height spaces. These spaces are part of the historical building and may have use restrictions.
- C. HVAC.** The boiler is past its expected life and needs replacing. Of the three air conditioning units that were assessed, one is no longer functioning. The infrastructure and future of the Library are dependent on these systems functioning. They are a high priority.
- D. Preservation.** The library should have space and a program for preservation of local history and archival documents – from the Library, Jenkintown Borough, and the community.
- E. Sustainability.** A 21st century library should be sustainable. Staff define this as 0-carbon footprint, the implications of which are significant.
- F. Bookstore.** If possible, the bookstore should be relocated to the main space with possible overflow in the basement. The basement is moldy and not a good environment for books. In addition, the bookstore is an important asset used by people in the community.
- G. Door on exterior basement entrance.** This door has been malfunctioning for years and needs repair or replacement.

- H. Parking lot repaving and beautification.** This has been a high priority for the Board and should be considered in any planning. Included in the planning should be shared uses with Grace Presbyterian, as well as other organizations and people.
- I. Charging stations in parking lot.** This has been discussed and should be part of a parking lot project. It is also consistent with the concept of a 21st century library and the need for sustainability.
- J. WiFi in the building.** The WiFi does not work well and needs an assessment and upgrade. Board members conjecture that this is likely due to the masonry walls and structure which often inhibit WiFi signals.
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PREPARING TO COMPETE FOR GRANTS

The following two grants were discussed and evaluated in the context of a larger effort to address many of the systemic issues identified above.

The COVID-19 ARPA Capital Projects Fund Multi-Purpose Community Facilities Program

- PA funds available = \$44,853,959
- Minimum grant amount = \$250,000
- Maximum grant amount = \$2 million
- No match required.
- Due date = April 20, 2024
- Project completion date = December 31, 2026

The general consensus is that the due date for this grant is too soon to undertake a large project, but that the Library Director, working with the Board might be able to undertake a targeted project, specifically the design, engineering, and installation of an elevator for the second floor. The Property Committee will work with Nina and staff to determine the feasibility of the project and submitting the grant. A meeting was scheduled for March 5, 2024.

Board members recommend soliciting a cooperative agreement from the Borough to manage the grant.

Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) Grant – State of Pennsylvania

The next funding window is Dec 2024 to Jan 2025.

- Minimum grant amount = \$1,000,000
- Is a project which will generate substantial increases in or maintain current levels of employment, tax revenues or other reassures of economic activity.

- Is a project that has a regional or multijurisdictional impact or, in the case of housing, is part of a community revitalization plan.
- Is eligible for tax-exempt bond funding under existing Federal law and regulations.
- Have at least secured 50% non-state financial participation.

Recently, Grace Presbyterian was awarded a large grant to renovate their basement for community functions, as well as to renovate their HVAC systems. The RACP grant should be a high priority for the Library.

Other grant opportunities will be researched by the Development Committee and Nina and distributed to the Board.

LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD

The Board of Trustees is committed to the following steps leading to a master plan and a significant long-range project or projects to address both the October 2023 strategic plan and the priorities identified by the Library Director and staff. The Board views a long-range master plan as an important strategy to become a 21st Century Library. The Board underscores the principle a long-term master plan will energize the community, invite participation and donations, and attract significant public funding. Conversely doing little, nothing, or fragmenting the effort will end with the Library falling into disuse and eventually being abandoned. These are not options.

Step	Description	Est Due Date	Responsible
Step 1	ARPA Grant Solicit funds, plan, and design a new elevator. This includes fast evaluation of moving forward with the ARPA grant.	Apr 20, 2024	Property Committee and Library Director
Step 2	Technical assistance grant Solicit funds for a TA grant to hire a library planner to develop a master plan. Identify and select a library planner.	Aug 31, 2024	Development and Property Committees and Library Director
Step 3	Master plan Solicit a skilled library facilities planner, likely an architect and engineer to assess the building and work to develop a long-term master plan. A master plan is a functional document that provides	Mar 31, 2025	Property Committee and Library Director

	schematics and phases for every step of a project, as well as cost estimates for the effort.		
Step 4	Capital project grants Solicit and secure funding through public grants and private donations to implement the master plan.	Mar 31, 2025	Development Committee
Step 5	IMPLEMENTATION	To be determined	