

BALTIMORE COUNTY
PUBLIC LIBRARY



FY 2004 - 2006

STRATEGIC PLAN

BUILDING COMMUNITY
THROUGH A LIFETIME
OF LEARNING





**BUILDING COMMUNITY
THROUGH A LIFETIME
OF LEARNING**

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Where you *find* it



Message from the President of the Board of Library Trustees

This document, Baltimore County Public Library's sixth Strategic Plan, provides focus for BCPL over the next three years. It builds on a tradition of excellent customer service that has driven the library system for decades. BCPL continues to be one of the busiest library systems in the country and is being used by more people for more reasons than ever before.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank county residents who provided input into the plan, the Steering Committee and staff who guided the preparation, County elected officials for their continued support of library service, the residents of Baltimore County who inspire and appreciate the service, and dedicated BCPL staff who make the vision a reality every day.

Louis J. Weinkam, Jr.

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County Executive

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Members of the Strategic Plan VI Steering Committee

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Assistant Director

Deborah Wheeler
Assistant Director

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*Coordinator,
Technical Services*

Shelly Childs
*Planning and Evaluation
Coordinator*

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Librarian, Catonsville Library

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North Point Library*

Janice Helliwell
President, BCPL Staff Association

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*Manager Circulation Services,
Randallstown Library*

Barb Salit-Mischel
Assistant Manager, Towson Library

E.J. Woznicki
Manager, Parkville Library

=VI

OUR VALUES AND VISION

learn

BCPL Values

WE VALUE OUR CUSTOMERS
AND STRIVE TO:

- Treat them with courtesy and respect
- Provide fair and equitable access to information
- Provide materials and services that anticipate and respond to the needs of our diverse communities
- Provide a sufficient level of well-trained staff

WE VALUE THE PEOPLE
WHO WORK WITH US AND
STRIVE TO:

- Attract, develop, reward and retain an outstanding staff
- Pursue diversity in the hiring and development of staff
- Create an environment of teamwork and participation
- Be a Learning Organization
- Treat each other with courtesy and respect
- Celebrate our achievements

WE VALUE COOPERATION
AND STRIVE TO:

- Identify opportunities to collaborate with others in the community
- Build partnerships to enhance resources
- Identify opportunities to collaborate within the organization

WE VALUE INNOVATION
AND STRIVE TO:

- Identify and adopt technology that enhances service
- Examine new ideas for relevance to library service
- Embrace constructive change



BCPL Vision

**Baltimore County Public Library
Expanding our communities' possibilities
by touching one mind at a time. BCPL: the best
place to learn, to discover, to imagine, to smile.**

A MISSION IN PROCESS

discover

Our Mission

Baltimore County residents will have access to innovative library services, delivered in an efficient and effective manner, which will:

- Encourage a love of reading
- Address the learning needs of children and adults
- Offer a welcoming community environment.

The Library Creates Community

— BCPL plays an active role in fostering and supporting neighborhoods where residents value learning, respect one another, and celebrate together. Some of the organizational strengths sustaining this role are:

Commitment to Great Customer Service — Customer service is a core value in BCPL. Staff views every customer encounter as an opportunity to create a partnership that will last a lifetime.

Responsiveness to Diversity —

The community BCPL serves is rich in culture, language, traditions, and lifestyles. BCPL celebrates the diversity of its communities by:

- Offering access to a wide range of information
- Offering opportunities for community interaction in a welcoming environment
- Recruiting and hiring a diverse staff.

Effective and Cost Effective

Services — BCPL has received national recognition for providing outstanding service at a much lower cost than other libraries of comparable excellence. Using resources in a way that provides maximum return for the public is a continuing goal for BCPL.



The Process

Baltimore County Public Library designed a planning process, providing a necessary balance of community, customer and staff perspectives while examining community needs and library services. This process created a flexible planning tool allowing the Library to respond to the needs and desires of the community.

A representative community focus group considered the current and future picture of Baltimore County, and then identified areas of community need. A customer survey tool collected additional information regarding current and future descriptors of the county, and also identified themes of community need.

Armed with the information provided by the community, a library steering committee assessed current conditions for the community, and by using a strategic planning tool, they identified the type of responses the Library could use to support the community.

BCPL's Strategic Plan VI incorporated these responses identified from the library steering committee, with additional input from community members, customers and library staff. Library Director Jim Fish led the planning process, facilitated by the Planning and Evaluation Coordinator, Shelly Childs.

The Library appreciates the library users, the members of the Library Board of Trustees, library staff, and Friends of the Library who contributed to BCPL's Strategic Plan VI.

Strategic Directions

Four strategic directions are essential to Baltimore County Public Library's continued achievement in addressing community needs. Presented with each strategic direction are its indicators of success, which are the targeted areas that will be used to measure achievement of the strategic direction.

The annual workplan process will provide the specific activities and initiatives needed to accomplish each indicator of success. It is the Library's belief that this format of evaluation will provide a flexible planning tool that will allow the Strategic Plan to accommodate the dynamic processes and environment that it exists in.

While maintaining other areas of service, over the next three years BCPL will place a special emphasis on these directions by providing innovative and customer-focused services in the following areas:

LOVE OF READING

To promote the joy of reading by providing materials that are easily accessible and by creating opportunities for library customers of all ages to engage with books.

- Library customers of all ages will have increased opportunities to engage with books.
- Self-directed book discussion groups will be established for adults in Baltimore County.
- Library customers will have increased opportunities to participate in activities that promote reading for enjoyment.
- The use of new materials (produced in the preceding 18 months) in various formats will increase.

LIFELONG LEARNING

To help county residents succeed in school and life by providing the information, resources and activities they need to develop their abilities and pursue their interests.

- A majority of library customers will indicate that they used the Library to learn more about personal interests, or to find information needed for school, work, or a hobby.
- An increasing number of new students in Baltimore County Public Schools will receive library cards.
- BCPL will continue to cooperate with other educators in the county in support of formal education programs for library customers of all ages.
- The number of opportunities available for preschoolers to participate in emergent literacy activities will increase.

COLOR MY WORLD WITH BOOKS



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smile

COMMUNITY SPACE

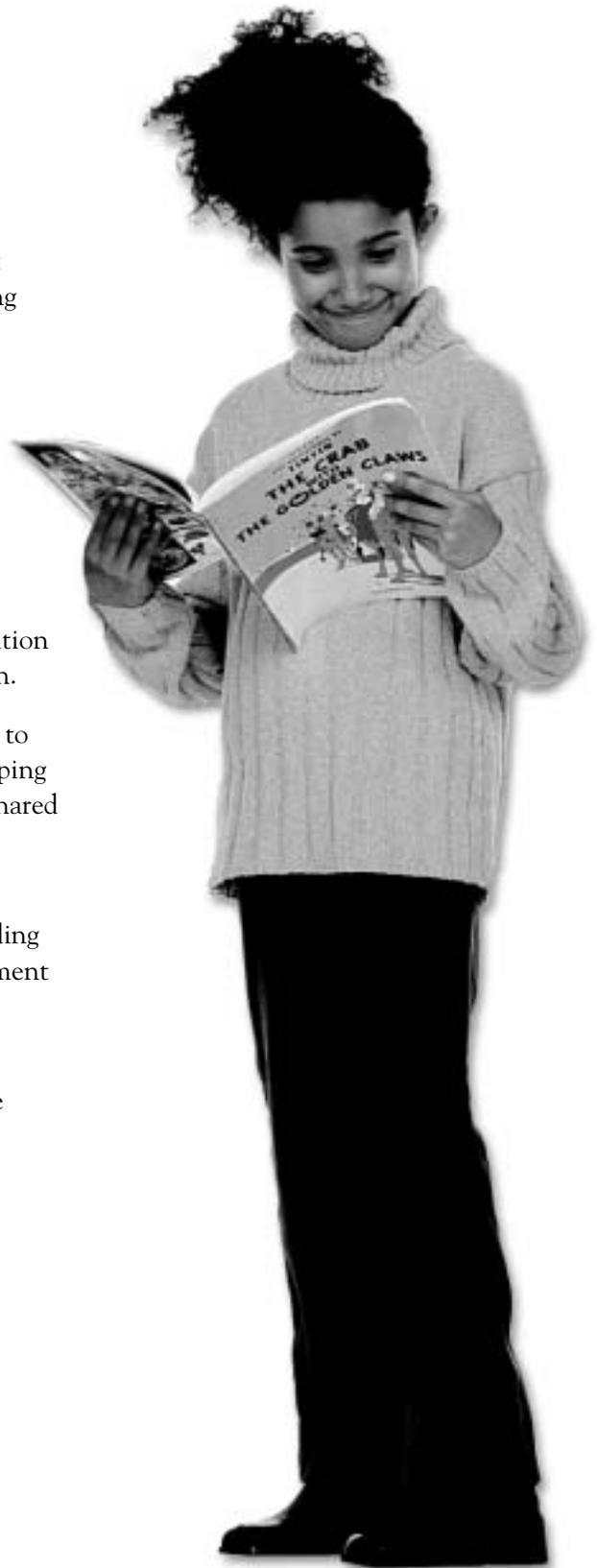
To create welcoming environments that foster a sense of community and encourage customers to participate in shared library experiences.

- BCPL will improve library environments to provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere.
- The Library will increase opportunities for community members to interact with the Library and each other.
- The Library will continue to provide customer-driven services to celebrate Baltimore County's diverse population.

EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE SERVICES

To maintain an emphasis on cost-effective management. To continue to develop the ability of staff to identify best practices and offer outstanding customer service.

- Staff skills in problem solving, decision making, effective leadership, and change management will be increased.
- BCPL will continue to develop and refine its position as a Learning Organization.
- The Library will continue to build partnerships, developing a clear understanding of shared goals.
- The Library will continue to invest in staff by providing opportunities for development and training.
- Initiatives to promote excellent customer service will continue.



HIGHLIGHTS AND STATISTICS

Customers of all types made more than **5,340,000 visits** to the Baltimore County Public Library, finding materials ranging from books to DVDs, using computers with free Internet services at 16 locations and having needs met by friendly, customer-focused staff. Surveys show that 78% of households in Baltimore County use the Library.

The **Baby Boosters** program welcomed parents and caregivers to enjoy activities with their babies at all libraries. This program was honored nationally with the American Library Association's John Cotton Dana Award for excellence in public relations. The program has expanded to include an enthusiastic corps of **Story Timers** volunteers delivering story times for babies and toddlers.

Children filled the libraries this summer as more than 25,000 of them signed up for the **Summer Reading Club**. Every county in the state used the theme initiated by BCPL and supported, in part, by the Maryland State Department of Education.

Five libraries now offer adaptive reading and computer equipment for customers with special needs.

The BCPL Foundation held its very successful second annual fundraising gala, **Novel Night**. In addition, the number of branches with very supportive Friends groups has increased to eight.

Baltimore County purchased two **new bookmobiles** as replacements for aging vehicles.

BCPL enhanced its online catalog with a table of contents and book-jacket graphics. Our award-winning Web site, www.bcpl.info was also updated and redesigned.

Ask Us Now, a virtual reference service launched in partnership with the Harford County Public Library, went statewide under BCPL's leadership and is now available 24/7.

Books were a major focus this year as BCPL celebrated the 20th anniversary of its **Great Books** program with author Jerry Spinelli as a special guest, and BCPL held its first-ever adult Winter Reading Club, **Read and Plant a Seed**.

Customers visiting the Towson Library witnessed a major renovation, and can now enjoy the new **Moss Bay Café**. Other renovations included the Hereford Library, which expanded its space by more than 27%, and the newly ADA-compliant Rosedale Library.

"Baltimore County Public Library strives to fulfill the customer's learning needs throughout their lifetime, from the smallest child to the oldest resident."

Jim Fish, Library Director



It is no wonder that the Baltimore County Public Library excels as one of the top libraries in the country, making effective and efficient use of tax dollars in providing services and materials. The **HAPLR Index** ranked BCPL as #4 of large library systems. BCPL achieved this with far less expenditure per capita than the top three. In fact, to reach the financial support level of #1 would require a 70% increase in BCPL's operating budget.

Statistical Highlights Fiscal Year 2002

Service Area

Population Served	754,292
Square Miles Served	610
Active Borrowers	487,029

Public Usage/Library Usage

Checkouts	9,535,461
Info. Requests	1,777,707
On-Site Visits	5,340,823

Electronic Use

Public Computers	350
Online Visits	1,745,801
In-House Use	517,400
Computer Classes	443
Class Participants	4,147

Program Attendance

Programs in Libraries	2,695
Attendance	97,882
Summer Reading Club	24,283

InterLibrary Loans

Items Loaned	6,295
Items Borrowed	3,353

Resources/Outlets

Combined Hours (weekly)	954
Full-Service Branches	15
Minilibraries	1
Bookmobiles	3

Library Collections

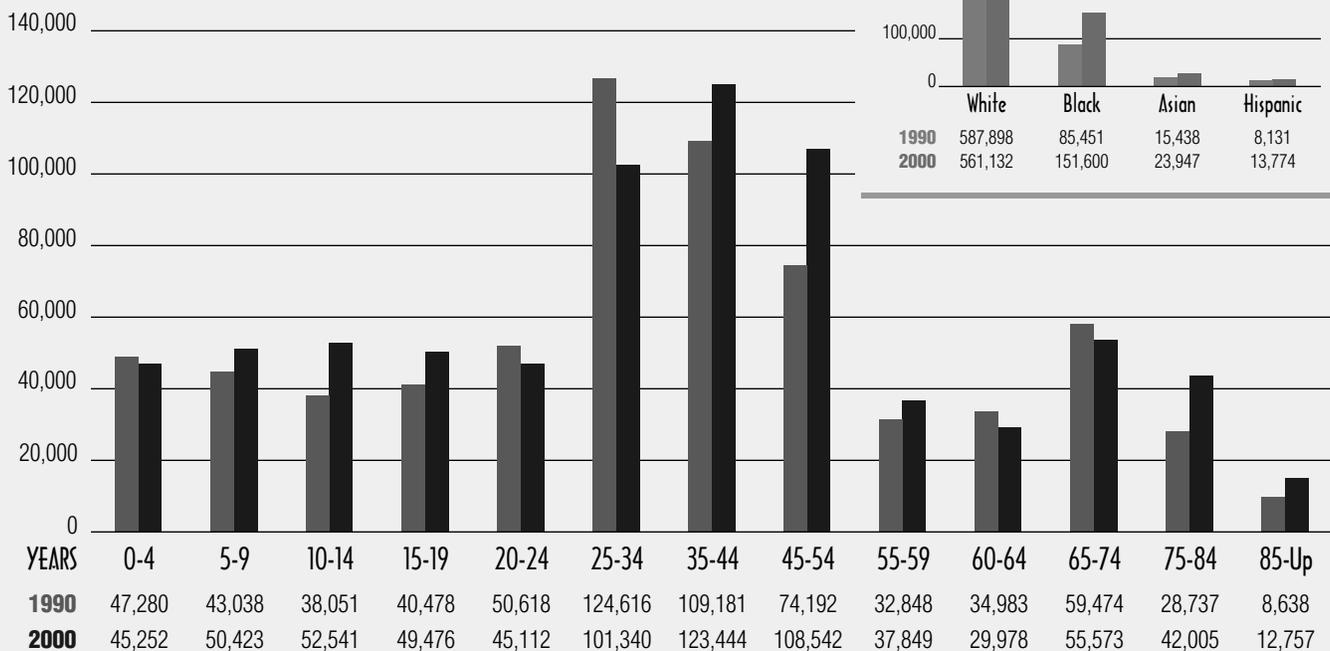
Adult Books	919,993
Children's Books	627,714
Young Adult Books	38,954
Total Books	1,586,661
Videos	57,514
DVDs	7,004
Compact Discs	59,625
Talking Books	44,746
Cassettes	29,440
Periodical Volumes	96,401
Electronic Databases	27

Staff

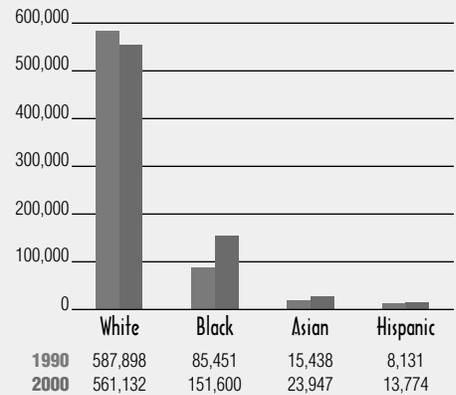
FTEs	468.8
Volunteers	416
Hours Volunteered	43,847

Baltimore County Age Distribution

SOURCE: Baltimore County Planning Board 01/17/02



Baltimore County Population by Race



WHERE YOU FIND IT

Arbutus

1581 Sulphur Spring Road
Suite 105

Catonsville

1100 Frederick Road

Cockeysville

9833 Greenside Drive

Essex

1110 Eastern Boulevard

Hereford

16940 York Road

Loch Raven

1046 Taylor Avenue

North Point

1716 Merritt Boulevard

Parkville-Carney

9509 Harford Road

Perry Hall

9440 Belair Road

Pikesville

1301 Reisterstown Road

Randallstown

8604 Liberty Road

Reisterstown

21 Cockeys Mill Road

Rosedale

6105 Kenwood Avenue

Towson

320 York Road

White Marsh

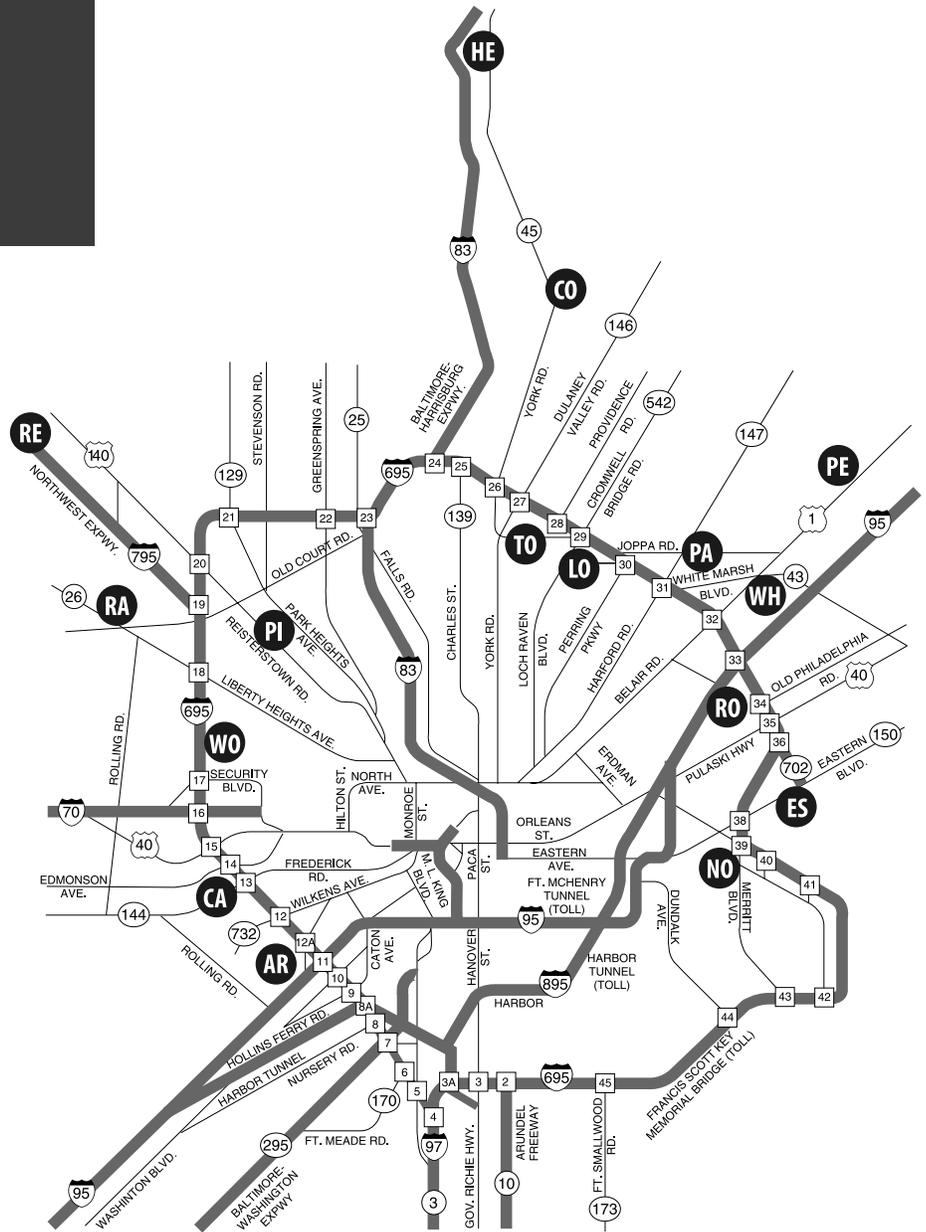
8133 Sandpiper Circle

Woodlawn

1811 Woodlawn Drive

E-Library

www.bcpl.info



WHERE IDEAS GROW



BALTIMORE

COUNTY

PUBLIC

LIBRARY

Where you find it





Where you find it



Administrative Offices
320 York Road
Towson, MD 21204-5179
www.bcpl.info