

Rachel Kohl Community Library

Long-Range Plan 2025–2030



— RACHEL KOHL — COMMUNITY LIBRARY

*Prepared for the RKCL Board of Trustees
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Rachel Kohl Community Library

Long-Range Plan 2025–2030

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Introduction

The Rachel Kohl Community Library’s 2025–2030 Long-Range Plan describes and guides the library’s priorities for the next five years. This plan includes a demographic profile, strategic goals and objectives, and ways to measure our success.

Recognizing that technology, funding, and community needs will evolve, we commit to remaining flexible and responsive.

Criteria for Goal Setting:

- Alignment with the library’s mission and values
- Practical and achievable
- In the best interest of the public
- Supported by financial and human resources
- Generates measurable value
- Offers opportunities for community partnerships

Background & History

- **1979:** In 1979 the Community Township Library, as it was then known, opened in a vacant closet at Concord Elementary School.
- **1981:** the library joined the newly formed Delaware County Library System which offers services to member libraries. In addition, the library’s service area was expanded from the original three communities of Concord, Bethel and Chester Heights to include Chadds Ford and Thornbury.
- **1989:** Through private donations and a \$300,000 federal library grant, land on Smithbridge Road was purchased to build a stand-alone library. In 1989, the Rachel Kohl Community Library opened and was named for the woman who, with a cadre of volunteers, created the community treasure we now enjoy.

Mission

The Rachel Kohl Community Library aims to improve the quality of life in our communities by providing resources that enable residents to learn, meet, grow, and thrive.

Vision

The Library will be a valued learning, leisure, and enrichment center, connecting the communities we serve now and into the future.

Values

What we do and believe

- Remove barriers by creating an accessible, safe, and welcoming space
- Provide outstanding customer service with dignity, compassion, and respect

- Build community participation and engagement inside and outside library walls
- Anticipate and create tomorrow’s library while responding to today’s needs
- Act as a catalyst, connecting the community to information, knowledge, and each other

Community Snapshot

The Rachel Kohl Community Library serves five municipalities:

- Bethel Township: 2,737 cardholders (2024)
- Chadds Ford Township: 978 cardholders (2024)
- Chester Heights Borough: 907 cardholders (2024)
- Concord Township: 5,812 cardholders (2024)
- Thornbury Township: 1,267 cardholders (2024)

See Supporting Figures in Appendix.

Community Profile among 5 municipalities:

- Median household income: \$164,034
- Employment rate: 57.3% (weighted average)
- Residents with bachelor’s degree or higher: 58.3%
- Under age 18: 22%
- Over age 65: 21.2%

Foundational Pillars

We commit to be:

Pillar 1: A Library that serves a growing and changing population

Population has grown 37% in 20 years. Youth and seniors are high users of library services, influencing programming and collection choices.

The collective population of our 5 municipalities has increased dramatically from 30,034 to 41,642 (+37%) over the last 20 years. The area has gone from primarily rural to ex-urban. This is a wealthy, highly educated area, attracting new residents due to the well-regarded school districts. Although we believe that the rate of new housing will stabilize – only because of lack of developable land, the population will still evolve with younger families moving in. At the other end of the spectrum, there are many over 55 communities and continuing care communities located in our 5 municipalities.

The very young and older populations are typically the biggest library users, both in programming and circulation. Close to 45% of our population are in these 2 age groups. This has had and will have a large impact on our programming and collection development choices, not only in title selection but format selection as well.

Pillar 2: A Library of the Future

Digital resources (Libby, Kanopy) are increasingly popular. RKCL will continue to adapt and expand access to technology and digital content.

There is a grossly inaccurate belief that ‘nobody reads anymore and therefore who needs a library?’ We prove everyday how wrong that assumption is. With the wide popularity and availability of e-readers, tablets and smartphones, it is easier to access a wide range of books, movies, magazines and music and people can now carry entire libraries in the pockets. These platforms also offer features like adjustable font sizes, background colors and even text-to-speech options, making reading more accessible to people with different needs and preferences.

Pillar 3: A Library as a Gathering Place

Community surveys highlight that programs are the #1 requested service. RKCL will continue to expand as a hub for community engagement.

People want to utilize libraries for more than reading and literature. The community survey conducted during June 2025 revealed that 68% of respondents were interested in library programs skewing more towards adult programming: 41% Adult events and programs, 24% Children’s events and programs.

Also, to the survey Question, “*What is one thing the Rachel Kohl Community Library could do to better serve the community?*” We received 88 responses. Since this was an open comment section, answers were subjective, but clear themes emerged:

- Programming requests: 30 responses (34%)
- Expanding the collection: 15 responses (17%)

These two categories stood out as the most specific suggestions, along with familiar areas of interest such as more seating and study spaces, and greater awareness of our available resources—including rental spaces.

Strategic Goals & Objectives

Goal 1: Build RKCL’s Collection to Reflect a Changing Population

- ◇ Identify gaps in current resources through surveys and focus groups
- ◇ Incrementally increase materials spending to reach 12% of the budget per state recommendations

Goal 2: Develop Programs to Meet Current & Future Needs

- ◇ Expand community programs (e.g., cooking, dance, youth activities)
- ◇ Retain successful ongoing programs

Goal 3: Increase Usability & Awareness of Resources

- ◇ Develop a strong RKCL brand
- ◇ Create and implement a comprehensive marketing plan

Goal 4: Strengthen Library Infrastructure

- ◇ Facilities: Create a Library Campus Plan (capital + operational budgets, maintenance, upgrades, sustainability)
- ◇ Staffing: Assess needs, attract, retain, and develop employees
- ◇ Volunteers: Identify and engage talented volunteers
- ◇ Board: Enhance engagement, education, and governance effectiveness

Goal 5: Ensure Financial Sustainability

- ◇ Pursue new revenue streams (grants, partnerships)
- ◇ Identify cost-saving opportunities
- ◇ Adhere to responsible budgeting practices

Appendix:

Municipality	Cardholders (2024)
Bethel Township	2,737
Chadds Ford Township	978
Chester Heights Borough	907
Concord Township	5,812
Thornbury Township	1,267

Community Snapshot: Our Five Communities

Bethel:

[https://data.census.gov/profile/Bethel township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania?g=060XX00US4204506024](https://data.census.gov/profile/Bethel%20township,%20Delaware%20County,%20Pennsylvania?g=060XX00US4204506024)



As of 2024, Bethel had 2,737 cardholders.

Chadds Ford:

https://data.census.gov/profile/Chadds_Ford_township,_Delaware_County,_Pennsylvania?g=060XX00US4204512442



As of 2024, Chadds Ford had 978 cardholders.

Chester Heights

[https://data.census.gov/profile/Chester Heights borough, Pennsylvania?g=160XX00US4213232](https://data.census.gov/profile/Chester%20Heights%20borough,%20Pennsylvania?g=160XX00US4213232)



As of 2024, Chester Heights had 907 cardholders.

Concord

[https://data.census.gov/profile/Concord township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania?g=060XX00US4204515488](https://data.census.gov/profile/Concord%20township,%20Delaware%20County,%20Pennsylvania?g=060XX00US4204515488)



As of 2024, Concord had 5812 cardholders.

Thornbury

[https://data.census.gov/profile/Thornbury township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania?g=060XX00US4204576576](https://data.census.gov/profile/Thornbury%20township,%20Delaware%20County,%20Pennsylvania?g=060XX00US4204576576)



As of 2024, Thornbury had 1267 cardholders.