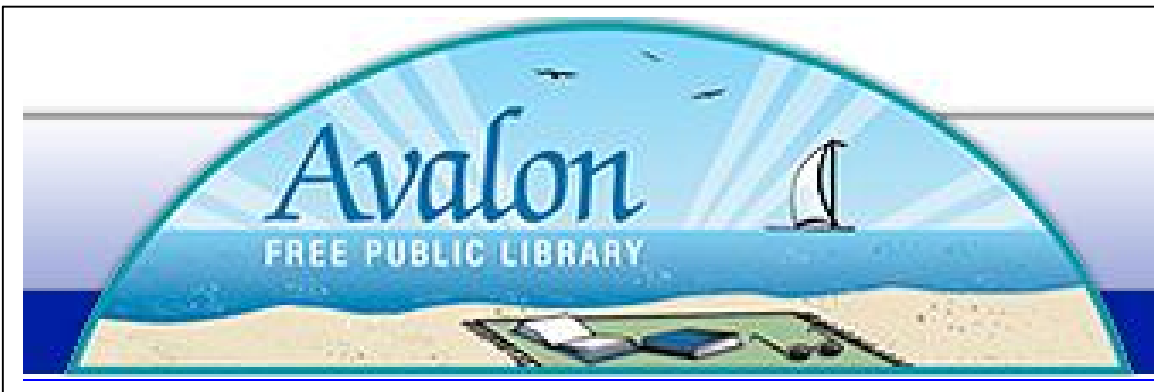


# The Gateway to Avalon

## Avalon Free Public Library Strategic Plan 2010-2012



**Prepared by  
Avalon Free Public Library Planning Committee**

Assistance from  
**Library Development Solutions**  
[www.librarydevelopment.com](http://www.librarydevelopment.com)

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## **Long Range Planning Committee Members**

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Tony Lampazzi  
Bill O'Hara  
Jim Thatcher  
Norman Gluckman

Norman Gluckman, Director

Planning Consultants  
Library Development Solutions  
Alan Burger  
Leslie Burger

## **Table of Contents**

Executive Summary .....	1
The Avalon Free Public Library.....	3
Achievements.....	3
Library Use.....	3
Gateway to Avalon: A Strategic Plan for the Avalon Free Public Library.....	5
Goals and Objectives to Help Achieve the Library’s Vision .....	6

### **Appendix 1 – Blyberg Technology Report**

## **Message to residents**

The Gateway to Avalon, 2010, our third strategic plan since we opened in 2005 is the result of work on the part of staff and board members who refined the shared vision for our new library for the future.

Our community has changed in recent years. Citizens require electronic technology, new media formats and other non-traditional library services, as well as content delivered through traditional methods, like books.

Our new library continues to be a unique institution in Avalon. The Library serves as the place for residents to meet and share ideas, to be entertained, educated, and informed. It is the locus and focus of our entire community in all seasons of the year. The library is unique in that it was born out of an interlocal, collaborative agreement of the Borough, the Avalon Elementary School and the newly formed public library. On September 24, 2002 residents voted to approve this proposition that a new public library would be built in Avalon and would become a partner with the Borough and Avalon Elementary School in creating a new Avalon institution with local control. Mayor Pagliughi and the Borough council provided vision and leadership to lead to the creation of an independent Library Board of Trustees and the new Avalon Free Public Library.

This new strategic plan provides a roadmap for building upon and enhancing our first strategic plan in 2006 and the successful completion of our fifth full year of service to the community. This plan focuses on the resources and successes so that we can fully realize the potential value of the library to our community. As the library accomplishes this goal through 2012, it will continue its focus on cultural activity and lifelong learning for the community. We would like to invite all of our neighbors to renew our commitment in bringing first class library services to Avalon.

*Tony Lampazzi*  
*President, Board of Trustees*

*Norman Gluckman*  
*Library Director*

## **Executive Summary**

In 2006 the Avalon Free Public Library began a Strategic Planning process to develop long and near term strategies for delivering and improving library services to all residents and visitors. The Board established a Planning Committee made up of Board members and library staff to work with planning consultants in developing a plan. <sup>1</sup>

The Planning Committee met in a number of sessions to evaluate the results of the community focus groups, town meetings and survey that provided suggestions for delivering and improving services, to review information about initial library use statistics and determine how the Library Board and staff will respond to community needs in the future.

This new plan represents a renewed analysis of the current state of the library and the community. The plan describes a long term vision to guide the development of library services in Avalon – ***The Avalon Free Public Library will serve as the informational and cultural Gateway to Avalon for all residents and visitors. The library will be a welcoming, warm and friendly gathering space for all.***

The Plan also describes the library's mission – ***The Avalon Free Public Library encourages a literate and informed community by providing free and open access to first class collections, services and programs that inspire inform and enrich our community.***

This new plan continues to follow similar goals and objectives and outlines the strategies to guide their implementation.<sup>2</sup> The goals are to:

1. Expand library collections to meet current needs in the most popular and current formats. This will be achieved by reviewing and expanding the current collection development policy, developing collections to meet specific community needs, increasing the collections of popular titles and materials and increasing the materials budget for needed resources.
2. Sustain and expand the library environment that allows a friendly, knowledgeable staff to provide responsive services. This includes assessing current hours and reviewing the existing space to create a more comfortable and easier to use destination for library users.
3. Expand services and programs for lifelong learning from toddlers to seniors. This will be achieved through the development of additional programs,

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<sup>1</sup> See the previous plan which is available on the Library's web site for all background documentation on the planning process.

<sup>2</sup> The new plan included discussions with Board members, staff, administration and the Avalon Borough IT Manager, , as well as analysis of statistical data relating to Library and History Center use.

services, cultural activities and staffing for children, teens, adults and seniors and through greater collaboration with other Avalon organizations.

4. Build a broad base of support and advocacy for the library by expanding community awareness of the library, its programs and services, through marketing, advocacy and increased user activities.

## **The Avalon Free Public Library**

In 2001, Avalon's mayor, council and involved citizens discussed the possibility of an Avalon Free Public Library. The community had been served by a branch and the resources of the Cape May County Library System. In 2002, Avalon residents voted to leave the county system and establish the Avalon Free Public Library. They also voted at that time to renovate the existing school space and include the library as part of that renovated space.

## **Achievements**

The Avalon Free Public Library can celebrate many accomplishments since its founding. Among the achievements that deserve attention is the award of Five Star Library Status for the second year in a row, among only a handful of New Jersey or national libraries.<sup>3</sup> Others include:

- Developed the interlocal agreement among the Borough, School Board and Library Board for building the library/school facility
- Hired and developed a professional and competent staff
- Increased local library card holders by 50%
- Provided 18 computers for public use
- Developed popular adult and children's programs
- Increased popular community support for the library
- Appointed trustees who support the library and understand the importance of their role as library advocates
- Served 33,000 people with diverse adult and children's programs, including the Bay-Atlantic Symphony Concert Series, from 2007 to 2009.
- Developed a popular Books By Mail program, currently used by over two hundred people
- Successfully integrated the History Center into the operation and mission of the library
- Development of a highly successful and award winning email newsletter
- Created and participated in the establishment of reciprocal borrowing among other shore community libraries<sup>4</sup>

## **Library Use**

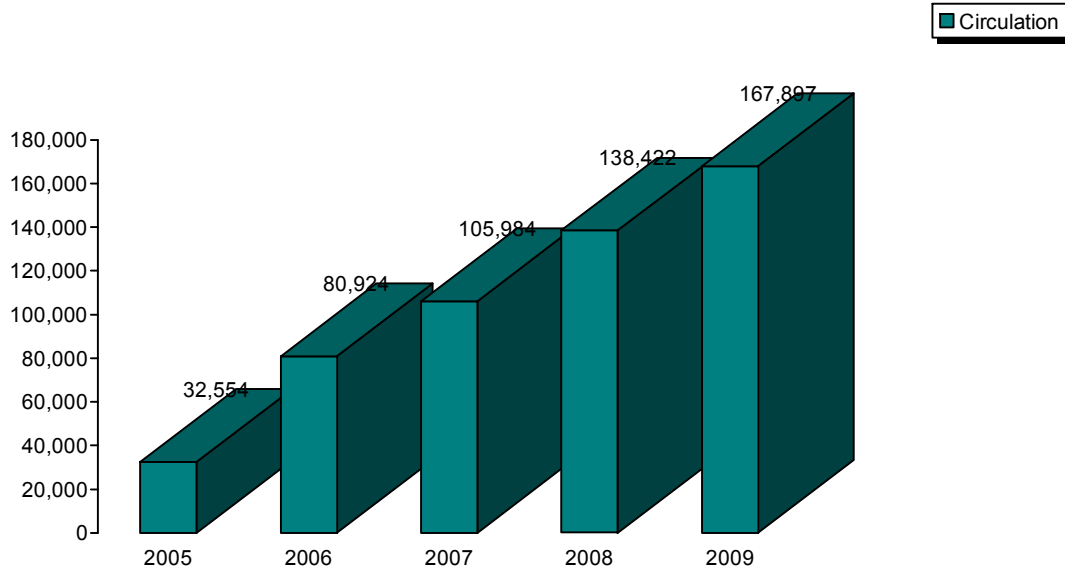
Use of the library continues to grow every month since its opening. Despite the fear that the Internet, Google and Wikipedia would make libraries obsolete, the opposite has happened. People are coming to the library to use high speed connections that allow them to access information more quickly than at home; or as their only source of Internet access. And to the surprise of many, people still continue to read and use libraries to explore new avenues for learning.

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<sup>3</sup> Awarded by Library Journal, based on circulation, visits, Internet use and program attendance per capita

<sup>4</sup> Absecon, Margate, Ocean City, Northfield, Linwood and Atlantic City

The Avalon Free Public Library is a very busy library; it has become, as its vision states - the *Gateway to Avalon*. . The interesting and amazing statistics since 2006 to date are:



Library use has grown at an incredible pace. The library has exceeded the 100,000 circulation mark for three years now and is just short of 170,000 for 2009, which is a 21% increase over 2008. The cost of the library's success has been at times a very noisy and very crowded library, especially at times in the summer. The Library now faces the following challenges:

1. In order for the growth in use of the library to continue, how does the Library provide an environment that is welcoming and easy to use for all ages and at all times of the year;
2. How does the Library use technology, digital formats and innovative methods for delivering content ;
3. What additional space will be available for library-related use, both within the school structure and/or in other areas of the Borough, including the History Center;
4. If the above is not resolved, then what policy changes need to be made now to limit and restrict library visits and use and provide a more user friendly environment?

## **Gateway to Avalon: A Strategic Plan for the Avalon Free Public Library**

The vision and mission set the stage for the library to achieve its goals during each of the planning cycles. The goals and objectives provide a roadmap for the strategies that the Library Board and staff will use to achieve the vision.

### **Vision**

***The Avalon Free Public Library will serve as the informational and cultural Gateway to Avalon for all residents and visitors. The library will be a welcoming, warm and friendly gathering space for all.***

As the library works to fulfill this vision, library users will experience the following as they use the library, its facility and services.

The Library will:

- Inspire people to read, learn and grow
- Develop a first class offering of collections, services and programming
- Create a library experience that brings people together in a sense of community, discovery and celebration
- Offer an exciting, easy to use space that accommodates a variety of activities at the same time
- Provide a library with digital resources available 24/7 through the library and the web site
- Collaborate with other community organizations for the benefit of the community
- Make Avalon an even better place to live and visit

### **Mission**

***The Avalon Free Public Library encourages a literate and informed citizenry by providing free and open access to collections, services and programs that inspire, inform, educate and enrich the entire community.***

## **Goals and Objectives to Help Achieve the Library's Vision**

The Avalon Free Public Library Director, Board of Trustees and staff will focus on these key goals to help achieve the vision. The plan accomplishments will be reviewed annually.

### **Goal One: Patron Services**

**Avalon Free Public Library users will find easy access to 21<sup>st</sup> Century resources, services and tools that they need.**

#### **Objectives:**

- 1.1 Provide an annual budget for library materials and technology. Develop separate technology development and replacement budgets
- 1.2 Increase the number of current and popular titles of books and DVDs to reduce wait time and satisfy needs
- 1.3 Establish computer instruction and add required staff or volunteers to assist, including instruction on email, databases, MS Word and Internet use
  - Provide a “gadget garage” space so customers can experience hands-on opportunities with new technology, such as iPods, MP3's, palms, digital cameras, etc...
- 1.4 Continue to locate all digital resources on the library website to accommodate use from home and improve the website to be a 24/7 interactive branch
- 1.5 Review current usage and add 6 to 12 additional wireless notebooks for inside borrowing, especially in the summer

### **Goal Two: Library Space, Comfort and Convenience**

**Avalon residents and all library users will be drawn to the Avalon Free Public Library as a welcoming destination of knowledgeable and innovative library services.**

#### **Objectives:**

- 2.1 Review the configuration of library space to meet needs of users. Use trends and statistics to determine needs for technology, materials, furniture and space
  - Review library space requirements with a space analysis to identify the gap between existing and needed space
  - Review school/library space for refinements and improvements and assemble a joint school/library task force to determine additional space for the library
  - Consider vending machines or vendor resources and locate a space for coffee, juice and snacks

- Continue to review use of library space with a space planner and decide on a new configuration of shelves, displays and furniture within the next year
  - Increase functional staff work space by reworking the staff work area in back of the circulation desk before summer 2010
  - Expand the idea of the local and national history book collection now in the History Center with additional purchases and promotion of the collection. Review use of this room to provide easier access to Library users for this part of its collection.
  - Review use of this room with the space planner to determine optimum use of furniture and open space for browsers and readers
- 2.2 Review and change key aspects of the library to improve access and use:
- Provide access to printers from all computers, including users own notebook computers
  - Due to increased usage and congestion at the circulation desk, install a self check-out circulation system
  - Create more space for books, new displays and current and popular materials
  - Examine and enhance the exterior of the library to be more welcoming and warmer, such as using banners, signage, menu board of events
  - Provide a flexible signage package for inside the library for all shelves, and for directional purposes
- 2.3 Continue to use new and innovative technology to create a bridge to all Avalon supporters when they are away from Avalon
- Look to develop “webinars” (online seminars) for customers away from the library
  - Maintain and expand the Books By Mail program to include more residents and Avalon guests
  - Consider newer methods of distribution of library content in newer digital formats and vending formats (such as Redbox or Brodart vending)
- 2.4 Respond to experiences of the first three years by providing staff development and organization to meet specific needs of Avalon residents and visitors:
- Consider reorganizing staff into public service and technical services/network staff teams for ease of hiring, training, staffing and scheduling
  - Retain an IT contract or staff employee to handle all issues relating to the automation system, catalog, web site,

maintenance of hardware, instructional training and to develop and execute the library's technology plan

- Create a programming committee to manage all the aspects of the extensive community programming the library sponsors
- Review and rewrite all employee policies to be library specific in a new AFPL Employee Handbook
- Provide a staff blog or Intranet to communicate directly with all staff members
- Create and implement a formal staff development plan to keep staff engaged and learning as they provide service

### **Goal Three: Collaboration and Community Relations**

**Develop strategic and principled partnerships with Avalon and County organizations and towns which will benefit the library, the organization and the community.**

#### **Objectives:**

- 3.1 The Avalon Free Public Library has a cultural and learning mandate. A key element of the library's identity is collaboration to advance the cultural mission of the library. Any proposal for collaboration has to clearly enhance the Library's ability to provide those values to the community. The Library will identify a likely new collaborator each year of the plan.
- 3.2 Assist the History Center in meeting its mission with appropriate direction and strategic use of its space for joint Library/History Center collections and programs
- 3.3 Review and revise all policies concerning Cape May County residents' use of the AFPL and AFPL residents' use of the Cape May County Library and related fee structures to respond to the current environment of overcrowded AFPL summer use

### **Goal Four: Governance, Library Management and Marketing**

**Continue to develop a responsive and responsible governance structure and measurement tools and insure sustainable funding and advocacy to continue improvements and respond to community needs:**

#### **Objectives:**

- 4.1 Continue to develop strong relationship between the Director and the Board
- 4.2 Continue to develop and manage the relationship among the interlocal agreement partners
- 4.3 Operate monthly Board meetings with transparency and concern for all Avalon resident's concerns

- 4.4 Hold a board retreat before the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter 2010 to develop a Board succession planning process in order to ensure ease of change in officers and mission
- 4.5 Continue to conduct a twice yearly statistical review of circulation, visits, programs and all other significant measures
- 4.6 Review the interlocal agreement annually to adjust for changes in the uses of resources and space
- 4.8 Implement a new AFPL Technology Plan 2010 using the Blyberg Report, which is an appendix to this plan
  - Review report and allocate resources for each of the High Priority items
- 4.9 Consider the need to develop improvements to the ILS catalog through customization by contracting with an outsourced programmer
- 4.10 Investigate and consider an open source ILS system to replace the existing ILS
  - Create a timeline for meeting vendors and an initial discovery period
- 4.11 Maintain a furniture replacement plan and sufficient surplus in the budget to address needs as they arise due to damage, weather, use, expansion
  - Create additional seating space
  - Add at least one flat screen monitor for announcements and events
- 4.12 Develop a professional identity, marketing and awareness campaign – allocate budget and staffing:
  - Hire a graphic designer to design icons, colors and images for the library
  - Continue to facilitate the mission and leadership of the Friends of the Library organization to focus on the appropriate level of advocacy, volunteerism and support.
  - Market the library's identity in everything the library does

AFPL Strategic Plan and Technology Plan  
Prepared by John Blyberg – for Library Development Solutions

## **Initial Impressions**

Avalon Free Public Library is in a unique situation because of the seasonal nature of the Avalon community. This poses some challenges in developing a technology program that can accommodate the increased summer population yet adapt to meet the requirements of library users in the off-season. Additionally, Avalon's location and geographic limitations as an island pose some problems with regards to Internet connectivity that are upstream of the library and town.

The library is also in a unique position because of the fact that it is in the same building as the elementary school. This poses some space challenges and has led to some special resource-sharing arrangements with regards to technology.

The Avalon History Center is also a part of the Avalon Free Public Library but is currently underutilized as a potential resource.

The issues that arose during the site visit can be arranged into three distinct categories:

- A. Network infrastructure issues,
- B. Public technology needs, and
- C. Planning for an online digital strategy.

### **A. Network Infrastructure**

*Immediate steps:*

1. **[HIGH]** The library should take immediate steps to remediate any security issues identified by Capsicum Group and documented in their audit report dated May/June 2009.
2. **[HIGH]** The existing wiring closet should be solely dedicated to housing network equipment and server hardware.
3. **[HIGH]** The library should schedule time to shut down all equipment in the wiring closet so that it can be emptied of non-essential equipment and professionally cleaned.
4. **[HIGH]** A cooling unit should be installed in the wiring closet and the closet closed and locked when access is not needed.

*Next steps:*

1. **[HIGH]** Internet access on the island is going to be a chronic problem for the foreseeable future, but overuse can be addressed and partially alleviated as a part of a network redesign plan.
  - a. **[HIGH]** The library should reconfigure their internal network into three separate networks (network diagram on file)

Appendix 1

- i. [HIGH] Public network - used for all public PCs, OPACs, and public wireless internet access.
    - ii. [HIGH] Staff network - used for all staff PCs, circulation terminals, and protected staff wireless access.
    - iii. [HIGH] Server network - used for all internally hosted servers, printers, and other network infrastructure devices and management IPs.
  - b. [HIGH] Once restructured, selective (pin-hole) access lists can be maintained on Router B so that staff, server, and town networks are protected from public access.
  - c. [MED] The library should continue to use the borough as an ISP for the staff and server networks.
  - d. [MED] The library should purchase additional separate and dedicated Internet access either through Comcast or another firm to provide access to the public. Router A will serve as the gateway for that connection.
  - e. [MED] A single VLAN-capable switch should be employed to virtually segment the three networks.
  - f. [MED] Currently, the town provides the library with 3 IP addresses, each capped at 3 Mb/s. The library should request that the town instead cap their aggregate internet usage at 9 Mb/s with the understanding that public traffic will not travel through the town network. Staff will rarely use 9 Mb/s, but certain circumstances may require burstable speeds.
2. [MED] The library needs to upgrade its current server hardware and balance some of the existing services across two additional servers for redundancy.
  - a. [HIGH] The existing windows server hardware needs to be upgraded.
  - b. [HIGH] An additional server should be purchased and installed as a backup active directory controller.
  - c. [MED] Comprise services should reside on a dedicated windows server.
  - d. [HIGH] Any additional equipment should be installed and maintained congruently with any changes made in response to the Capsicum Group security recommendations.
3. [LOW] The library should abandon JSE Computers as their web hosting facility in favor a tier-1 virtual hosting service like Rackspace or Amazon's EC2.
  - a. [LOW] A tier-1 hosting firm can provide a service level agreement that is more in line with the expectations of the library and provide the flexibility and stability necessary for pursuing a successful digital strategy.
4. [LOW] The library should expand their wireless access capabilities to increase coverage within the existing building and out to the parking lot.
  - a. [LOW] A managed wireless infrastructure, such as Cisco's lightweight wireless management solution, is recommended.
  - b. [LOW] Install wireless access points for public access at the Avalon History Center.

**Long term:**

1. [LOW] The library should consider the possibility of running fiber optic cable between the library and the History Center.
  - a. A dedicated fiber optic connection would:

Appendix 1

- i. Provide a high-bandwidth between the two facilities and give the library the flexibility and opportunity for expanded digital service offerings.
- ii. Allow the library to move its current server equipment to the History Center where it would be more secure and free up space at the library.
- iii. Centralize IT management for both the library and History Center within a single, consolidated network.
- iv. Anticipate additional technology needs as a result of future expansion of either the library or History Center.

**B. Public Technology**

1. [MED] The library should purchase an upgrade and maintenance contract with a PC vendor that will ensure that all public and staff workstations are up-to-date and capable of running new software.
2. [LOW] All LCD monitors could be upgraded to 24” wide displays. Larger monitors help increase productivity, reduce eye strain, and provide a better end-user experience.
3. [LOW] In an effort to encourage seasonal users to take advantage of wireless internet, additional 15 - 20 laptops should be made available for circulation.
4. [LOW] The existing iMac workstations are out-of-date and should be replaced with the latest model.
5. [LOW] Several additional public workstations could be made available in the reading room of the History Center.
6. [LOW] Tools for creating rich media content should be made available at both the library and History Center.
  - a. Flip video cameras could be given to children to allow them to record their vacation experiences.
  - b. Digital video and still cameras could be made available to users who do not have their own.
  - c. MP3 players and other media delivery platforms could be made available to beach-goers.

**C. Online Digital Strategy**

1. The library’s web site is the primary method of maintaining contact with residents during the off-season.
2. The web site is an importance source of information for residents, year round and has “scooped” the local paper on occasion.
3. The website would benefit from the involvement of more staff members.
4. Key considerations for the library’s digital strategy include:
  - a. Blogging
  - b. Outreach to seasonal residents during the off-season
  - c. Community-building
  - d. Important news bulletins
  - e. Discussion forums
  - f. Incorporation of rich media content
    - i. Podcasting
    - ii. Videos

Appendix 1

- iii. Screen-casts
  - g. Library and community calendar of events
  - h. Integration of web 2.0/social networking tools
  - i. The ability for staff to add content and create customized pages easily
  - j. Possible accommodation of “sub-site” hosting for community organizations
- 5. The use of a robust content management system (CMS) will be necessary to accommodate these key considerations.
  - a. [MED] The library’s needs are more complex than what a simple blogging solution such as *WordPress* can address. The library should consider a more robust CMS such as *Drupal* or *Joomla*.
  - b. [LOW] Given the complexity of the library’s digital strategy needs, the library should work with a professional web design firm who has experience developing library website solutions around a CMS.
  - c. [www.yourlibrarysite.com](http://www.yourlibrarysite.com) is an example of a firm that designs custom Drupal solutions for libraries.

**Prioritization**

Prioritization is based on the premise that stability of back-end and infrastructure needs to be established before the front-end, patron-facing technology can be implemented properly. Therefore, priority in this case should not be interpreted as how important these recommendations are with respect to the overall technology and digital strategy of the library but, rather, to how the library should work these actions into its timeline.

[HIGH] These are high-priority actions that should be taken immediately as they are in response to potential points of failure. Taking these actions will minimize risk and strengthen the library’s back-end infrastructure.

[MED] These are medium-priority actions that are not in response to an impending threat, but should be considered ways in which the library can further strengthen its infrastructure and contribute to its overall stability.

[LOW] These are low-priority actions that are primarily focused on patron-facing technology, usability, and digital strategy.