Kinderhook Memorial Library

One-Year Tactical Plan

January—December 2024

What Guides Us

VISION

The Kinderhook Memorial Library envisions a future where everyone in our service area is an eager and engaged life-long learner.

MISSION

We are dedicated to providing an environment for ongoing learning and opportunities for creativity, self-fulfillment, and community engagement.

VALUES

KML's values are learning, curiosity, connection, belonging, stewardship, and sustainability.

The **Vision** is the aspirational reason the Kinderhook Memorial Library came into existence and what it hopes to achieve perpetually for the community.

The **Mission** is how the Kinderhook Memorial Library will reach its vision and create value for the community. The Kinderhook Memorial Library serves to enrich the quality of life for a diverse and growing constituency of all ages by providing resources, programs, and services which contribute to individual literacy, education, and entertainment. We bring the community together to enjoy, explore, create, and discover. Our resources, programs, and services are provided for free or at a nominal cost to our community.

Kinderhook Memorial Library's **Values** are the lens through which the Library weighs decisions and approaches its work internally and externally.

Librarianship is guided by core values including those expressed in the American Library Association Core Values of Librarianship Statement, the Library Bill of Rights, the Freedom to Read Statement, the Freedom to View Statement, and the American Library Association Code of Ethics. These service values include: access, confidentiality, privacy, democracy, diversity, education, lifelong learning, intellectual freedom, and social responsibility. The Kinderhook Memorial Library affirms these professional values.

We are also guided by the following six organizational values that shape our identity and make clear how our work is directed:

Learning. We believe that learning is a human right allowing us to live and thrive in an ever-changing world, people require supportive learning environments and access to information from diverse viewpoints.

Curiosity. We believe that curiosity and discovery can positively alter a life's path by encouraging the exploration of ideas and viewpoints.

Connection. We believe that the Library is a place for both quiet reflection and collaborative activity. It is comfortable, inclusive, and supports the strength and health of the community through the development of relationships between people and ideas.

Belonging. We believe people who feel they belong can grow. The Library brings people together to access knowledge and build connections. We actively work to ensure that all people see themselves and the diversity of the community reflected in the Library and its resources.

Stewardship. We believe in being trustworthy and accountable. We are staunch stewards of taxpayer and donor dollars. We embrace transparency and engage in all endeavors with honesty and integrity. We are stewards of the Library as an institution, a building, a collection of resources, and of the community.

Sustainability. We believe that the Library must act to advance environmentally sound, socially equitable, and financially feasible practices to both address climate change and to support an informed, resilient, and thriving community.

Background and Introduction

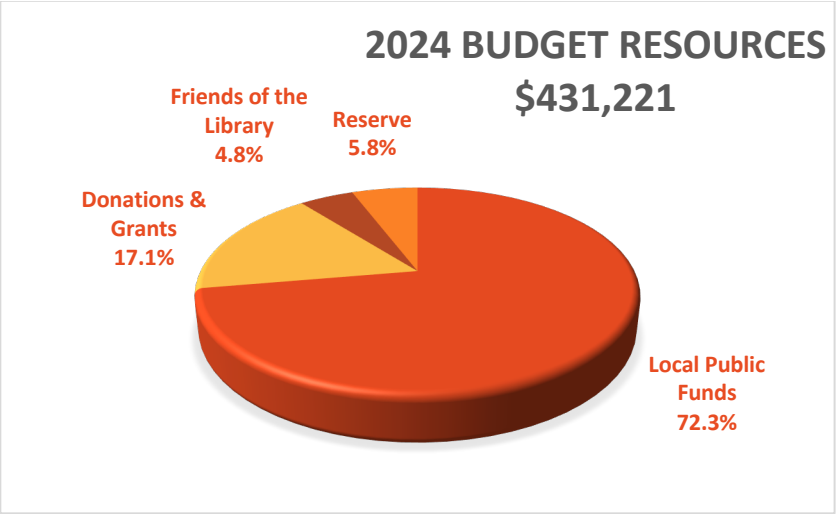
Facilities and Operations

Since the 2018 building expansion, and post-COVID, we have been successfully functioning in our larger space—welcoming all patrons for programs, services, and general facility use. In 2023, Spanish-language signage was added to assist Spanish speakers navigate the Library.

Today, the Library serves an area that is home to approximately 6,400 individuals through its collection of materials, access to resources, services, and programs for adults, young adults, and children. The Library is open 47 hours per week year-round. It is closed on Mondays and Federal holidays.

The staff includes a director/librarian, an assistant director/children's librarian, and a teen librarian (all of whom work full time and are currently certified), as well as five part-time assistants. The Library has a fifteen-member board of trustees that currently meets eleven times per year. Both the Board of Trustees and The Friends of the Kinderhook Memorial Library provide financial and volunteer support.

The Library's 2024 operating budget is $431,221, with the projection that 72.3% will come from local public funds,17.1% from donations and grants, 4.8% from the Friends of the Library, and 5.8% from the reserve. Reserve funds are currently over $600,000. In September 2023, voters in the towns of Kinderhook and Stuyvesant approved 5% increases in the amount each town contributes in 2024 support of the Library. The Library may seek increased public funding once every two years.



Community Input

Following completion of the building renovation, in early 2019, the Board of Trustees of the Library engaged in the American Library Association's *Libraries Transforming Communities* (LTC) initiative. Libraries are important cornerstones of a healthy community, and the purpose of this initiative was to encourage "libraries to become more reflective of and connected to their communities and build stronger partnerships with local civic agencies, nonprofits, funders, and corporations."

During the summer and fall of 2019, the Library held five Community Conversations in Kinderhook and Stuyvesant. The purpose of these meetings was to learn what kind of community our residents desire, and how the Library can build community partnerships to help implement some of the common goals raised through these conversations. The common themes that arose included:

- Quality of life: aging in place; affordable housing; walkability and transportation; opportunities for young people; and neighborliness.
- Economic development: attraction and retention of businesses; workforce development; and support for local businesses and producers.
- Communication; civic engagement; and civil discourse.

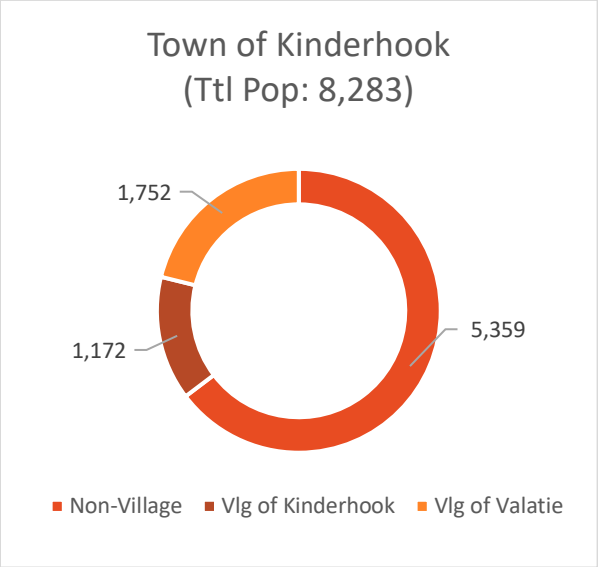
Following the Covid-19 pandemic, in the fall of 2021, an additional Community Conversation was convened to ascertain whether the goals set forth during the original set of meetings remained relevant following the two years of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was determined that while the above goals remained important to the community, the additional goal of sustainability—financial, environmental, and social—was also important.

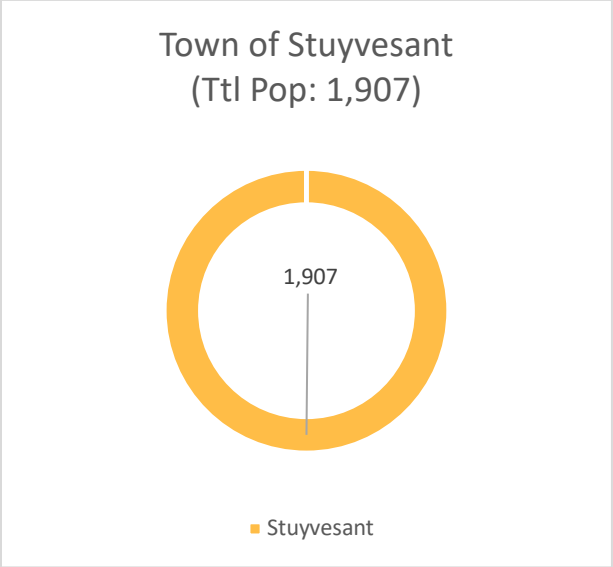
Sustainable Libraries

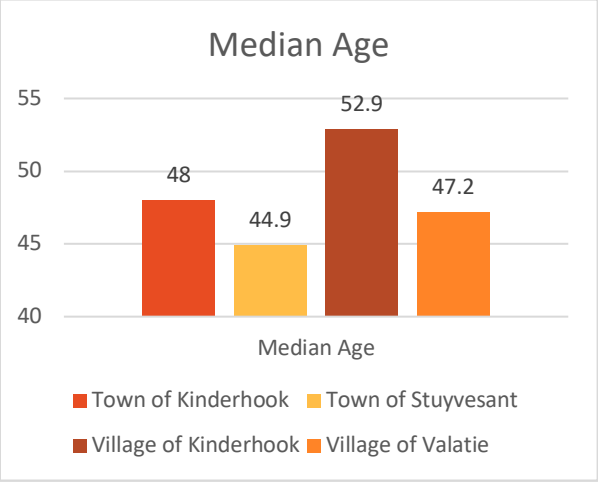
To address the goal of Sustainability, the Library has made a commitment to participate in the Sustainable Library Certification Program through the New York Library Association. The Sustainable Libraries Initiative (SLI) provides library leaders with a path to foster sustainable libraries and communities that will thrive in the coming years. The Sustainable Library Certification Program and SLI community of practice focuses leadership to enable the library, and our community, to become more environmentally sound, socially equitable, and financially feasible.

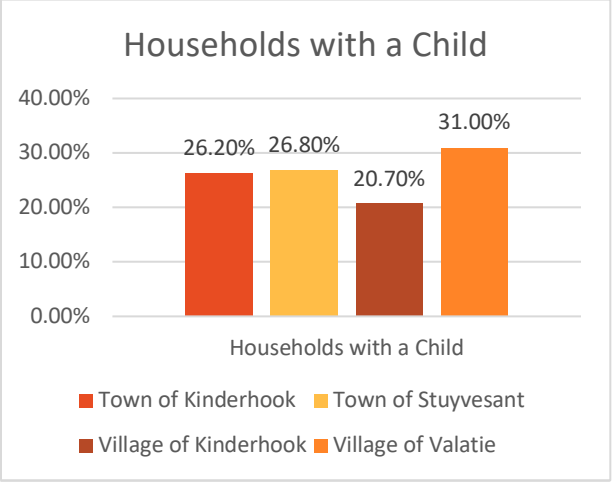
Service Area Demographics

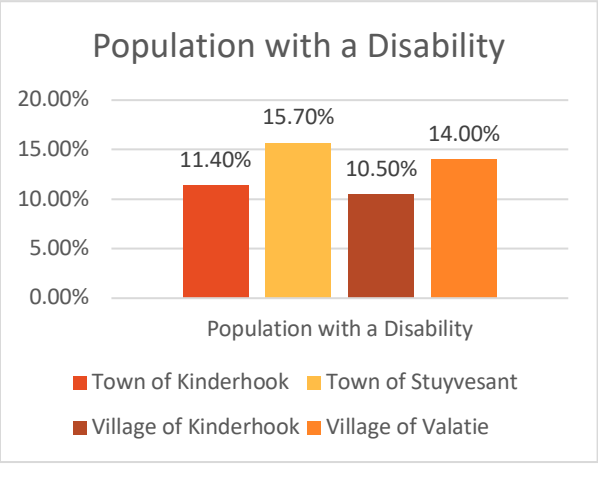
(2020 American Community Survey and U.S. Census)

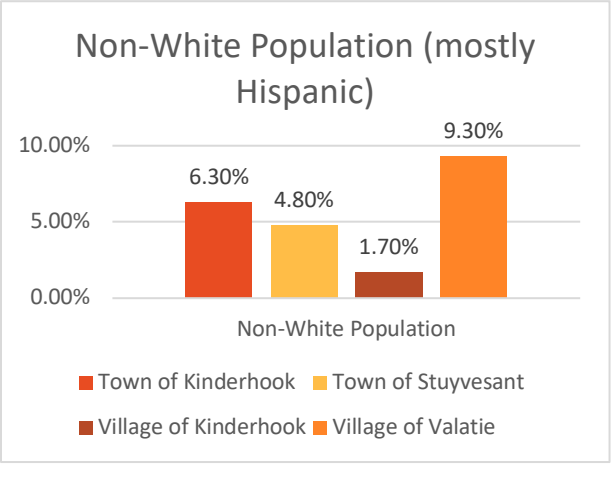


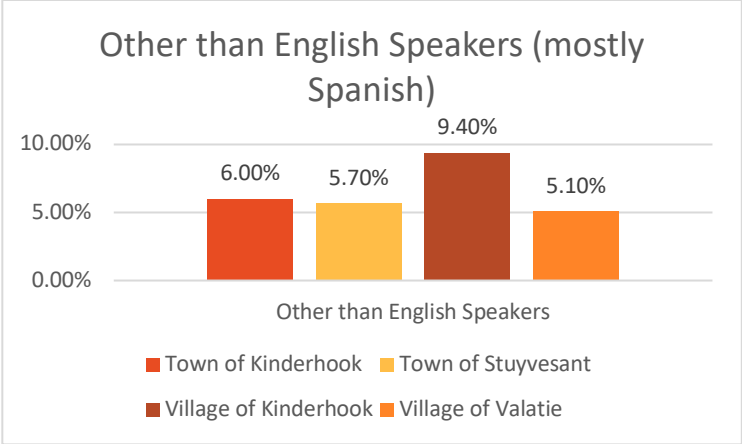


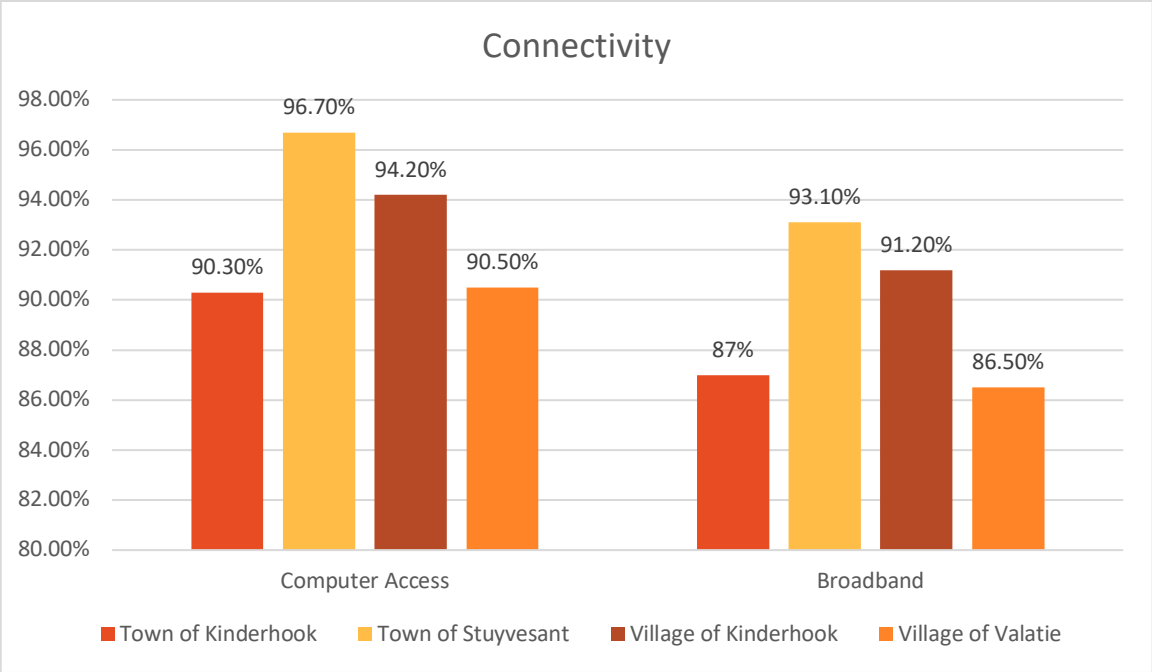









Other than English Speakers (mostly Spanish)
10.00%
5.00%
0.00%
6.00%
5.70%
9.40%
5.10%
Other than English Speakers
Town of Kinderhook
Town of Stuyvesant
Village of Kinderhook
Village of Valatie


Connectivity
98.00%
96.00%
94.00%
92.00%
90.00%
88.00%
86.00%
84.00%
82.00%
80.00%
90.30%
96.70%
94.20%
90.50%
87%
93.10%
91.20%
86.50%
Computer Access
Broadband
Town of Kinderhook
Town of Stuyvesant
Village of Kinderhook
Village of Valatie

Focus Areas and Tactical Goals

In addition to maintaining the current level of programs, services, and resources for our community, over the next year, the Kinderhook Memorial Library will make efforts to ensure triple-bottom-line sustainability, expand its reach to the whole community, leverage partnerships, and develop the Board and staff. To do this, we have identified five main goals which will, when accomplished, lay the foundation for, and significantly inform, a longer-term strategy starting in 2025:

Goal 1
- Provide Welcoming and More Environmentally Friendly Spaces for All

Goal 2
- Improve Community Engagement and Outreach

Goal 3
- Responsibly Utilize Resources and Ensure Financial Sustainability

Goal 4
- Expand and Deepen Partnerships

Goal 5
- Enhance Board and Staff Development

Goal #1: Provide Welcoming and More Environmentally Friendly Spaces for All

We will continue to select, acquire, curate, and provide free and easy access to materials, in all formats, that meet the varied needs and interests of our community. We will offer innovative and valued programs, events, displays, and services that address community needs.

We will maintain a modern and efficient facility for our staff and patrons. We will seek to install and utilize more efficient and environmentally friendly systems, solutions, products, and landscapes.

We have a relatively new and efficient building and efforts are already underway to attain SLI certification. But there is more that we can do.

Over the next year, the Kinderhook Memorial Library will:

- Determine the on-going commitment to the SLI practice to enable the library, and our community, to become more environmentally sound, socially equitable, and financially feasible. (Sustainability)

- Explore and develop a plan to ensure continuity of Library service and building access in times of extended power outages, emergencies, and disasters. These include solar power, back-up batteries/generators, and other more environmentally friendly solutions. (Building and Grounds)

- Investigate the feasibility, options, and cost of fully eliminating the oil-fueled boiler system and replace it with a more environmentally friendly solution. This will both reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and have long-term cost savings. (Building and Grounds)

- Research and identify more environmentally friendly and energy-saving products and systems in anticipation of future replacement needs. (Building and Grounds)

- Once the results of our community listening efforts are evaluated, we will work to make sure that our library resources and services best match the needs of the community.

Goal #2: Improve Community Engagement and Outreach

We will communicate clearly, openly, and with consistency, both internally and externally. Our efforts will enhance our active outreach, and inclusion of our diverse patrons, to grow the Library's engagement with the community. These efforts will help grow appreciation of the library's value more broadly across the community.

There are still unresolved questions from the prior strategic plan regarding how to best expand our services and offerings throughout the community. Over the course of the next year, this tactical plan will allow us to scope, test, and learn for possible longer term strategic investment and execution.

Over the course of the next year, the Kinderhook Memorial Library will:

- Hire, as part of the 2024 approved budget, a new part-time Publicity and Outreach Assistant to, along with staff, evaluate the effectiveness of the newsletter, reduce costs while maintaining quality, and explore more cost-efficient, effective, and timely methods to communicate about Library services and programs. (Staff)

- Research and test ways to reach and deliver information and services to currently underserved populations, such as non-English speakers, homebound individuals, and individuals in remote portions of the service area. (Staff)

- Create a plan for a community tutoring center, including a pilot program and expansion options, timeframe, partnerships, funding sources, facility and staffing needs, schedule, and target users. Implement the pilot program, assess its effectiveness and long-term feasibility, and plan for next steps. (Staff)

- Create a plan for a physical presence in Stuyvesant, including a pilot pop-up and expansion options, timeframe, funding sources, facility and staffing needs, and schedule. Implement the pilot pop-up, evaluate usage and level of community support, and plan for next steps. (Staff and Stuyvesant Trustees)

Goal #3: Responsibly Utilize Resources and Ensure Financial Sustainability

We will secure our financial sustainability, assuring short- and long-term financial strength. This includes creating a plan to spend down our excess reserves and developing a long-term plan to increase revenue to meet our current and future needs.

We start this tactical plan with healthy financial controls and ample resources. The Library is fortunate to have a sizeable reserve for both investment and for rainy-day needs. A plan to spend down these excess resources will accompany the execution of the goals in this plan. We also are well-supported through our taxpayer approved municipal funds, but we also need to grow our private donor and grant support to ensure the Library's financial health and flexibility.

Over the next year, the Kinderhook Memorial Library will:

- Create a plan for a comprehensive resource development program with diversified funding streams including public funding, Friends support, annual giving, major giving, sponsorships, and events, as well as grants for priority projects. (Development)

- Evaluate, manage, and enhance investment strategies that align with our values to maximize benefit to the Library. (Finance)

- Develop a fiscally responsible plan to spend down any resources that are identified beyond standard operating needs and rainy-day reserve funds. (Finance)

Goal #4: Expand and Deepen Partnerships

We will cultivate and maintain viable and effective partnerships to position the Kinderhook Memorial Library as a well-supported, trusted, collaborative and reliable partner within, and for, the community.

The Kinderhook Memorial Library is an important center for the community. We currently have productive partnerships with local businesses, municipal leaders, and other service organizations, but more can be done to fully understand and meet the needs of our community.

Over the next year, the Kinderhook Memorial Library will:

- Review and enhance the memorandum of understanding (MOU), located in the Kinderhook Memorial Library Friends of the Library Policy, with Friends of the Kinderhook Memorial Library. MOU is reviewed by both Boards annually. (Operations)

- Conduct a new series of ***Community Conversations*** to include:

    - diverse groups of residents and others throughout the Library's service area, asking about visions for the community and, specifically, the Library;

    - local community leaders, including those from municipal governments, service organizations, cultural institutions, educational institutions, businesses, and others, asking about the challenges and opportunities they see for themselves and the community and how the library might be able to help. (Ad hoc committee)

- Make efforts to develop productive and collaborative relationships with other local libraries, specifically Valatie and North Chatham. (Staff and Board President)

Goal #5: Enhance Board and Staff Development

We will recruit, develop, and retain effective, skilled trustees and highly trained staff. We will build team and organizational capabilities, a culture that supports the Library's strategy, and the delivery of services.

With the introduction of term limits for the Board of Trustees, and resulting Trustee turnover, we need to attract, build, and replace skills across all areas in which the Board provides support and governance for the Library. Board recruitment, development, and efficiency will be the focus of this goal. Importantly, we will harness the passion of our volunteer board members and leverage or build individual capabilities to achieve our goals.

Over the next year, the Kinderhook Memorial Library will:

- Create a recruitment plan for Trustees to build a Board that represents the diversity in our community. Based in a passion for the Library, we will seek to attract—or develop through training and mentorship—a board that represents a range of perspectives, skills, and life experience that will allow us to be both inclusive and effective. (Governance)

- Align the overall functioning, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Board of Trustees to the Library's mission and governance requirements. Assess current practices and make changes that will enhance both the work of the whole Board as well as the engagement and contribution of each individual trustee. This will be reflected in our board meetings, committee work, and further development of guidelines and training for all Trustees. (Governance)

- Assess current staff makeup and job descriptions to optimize areas of responsibility and task delegation. Explore internal structures used by other libraries of a comparable size. (Staff)

- Identify diversity, equity, and inclusion principles and training to be implemented with the Board and staff to ensure that the Library is a safe place, offers all services and programs on an equitable basis, and enhances access for those that currently have barriers (either real or perceived) to what the Library has to offer. (Operations)