

INTRODUCTION

Preplanning for this long range plan began in October 2019. A committee chair was appointed, a working committee was being assembled, and strategies for public input were designed. Just as the process was getting underway, we found that we had to close the library, practice social distancing and communicate electronically. It is not an understatement to say that this moment in time is an extraordinary time for public services. Just when you think you know what strong, responsive library service demands, an event like the coronavirus pandemic comes along and changes everything. Long standing processes that have come to define public libraries – in person reference service, loaning books/music cd's/dvd's, access to public computers/scanning/photocopying, children's story times, programming, using a community meeting room – are now put on hold. Digital streaming has become front and center. Moreover, the understanding that an event like this may happen again within the time frame of this plan, necessitates the need to rethink and realign priorities. This document represents the thoughtful, ongoing work to determine the way forward for library services, so very important to the Middletown community.