

BOROUGH OF TOTOWA PUBLIC LIBRARY

2024 Annual Report



STATE AND CONDITION OF THE LIBRARY FACILITIES

The Borough of Totowa Public Library was constructed in the late 1960s. The original portion of the facility is a two story building approximately six thousand square feet in size and is attached to the Borough of Totowa's Municipal Complex.

In 2012, an addition and renovation project was completed. This project added twenty seven hundred additional square feet to the original structure on two levels. The expansion added a two floor elevator, a Children's Room, a lobby on the upper level, the Eisenhower Community Room, and two ADA compliant restrooms on the lower level. The project also renovated existing space including the Meeting Room, Multipurpose Room, and storage room. Library savings provided the funds for this endeavor.

In 2022, the Main Room Renovation project commenced. This renovation included a Reading Room, Teen Room, updated administrative and staff office space, and an updated new materials section. Funding was provided by the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act with matching funds provided by the Borough of Totowa Mayor and Council, the Library Board of Trustees, the Library Foundation, and the Friends of the Library. This project was completed in October 2022.

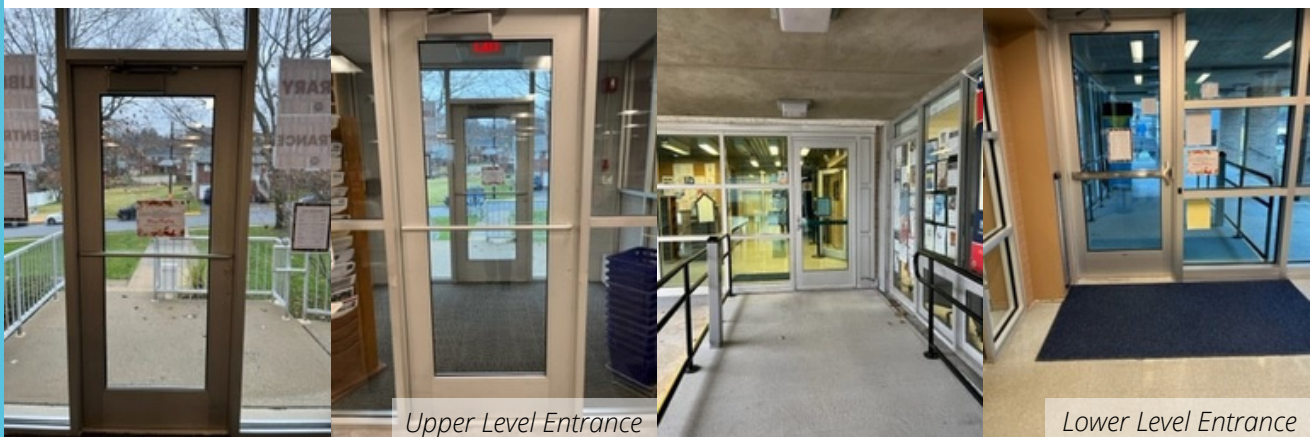
ACCESSIBILITY

There are four entrances to the building. The main entrance is located in front of the building on Cherba Place. There is also a side entrance that connects to the hallway that leads to the Municipal Building Complex. In the rear of the building there are two entrances; the primary door that enters into the lower lobby and a secondary entrance that enters the Multipurpose Room. There are also two Emergency Exit Doors; one on the main floor and one in the Eisenhower Community Room; both emergency exits are located on the western side of the building.

As part of the 2011/2012 expansion, the main staircase was moved to the rear of the building and connects the lower and upper lobby. An elevator was also added in the same 2011/2012 expansion project and connects the two levels. The emergency power control will be replaced in 2024.

In 2022, the rear and front entrance doors were replaced as part of the renovation project, the front entrance was replaced with an ADA compliant door and the rear entrance door was replaced with an ADA compliant door equipped with a mechanical opener. The automatic door is currently not working, plans for 2024 include the repair. The existing rear ramp was replaced with a wider entrance ramp to allow for the door to swing open safely. This improvement was funded in part by the New Jersey Library Construction Bond Act.

Future plans include the renovation of the Rear Entrance including leveling off the area, replacing the concrete sidewalks, adding curbs and recessing curb for improved accessibility.





Exterior Rear



Illuminated Sign / Front

EXTERIOR

The building's masonry brick exterior remains in good condition. In 2022, the roof above the Main Room was replaced with funding from the Borough of Totowa and library savings. This roof comes with a 25 year warranty. The roof above the Children's Room was installed as part of the 2011/2012 expansion and was starting to leak in several areas as well, this was repaired in 2023.

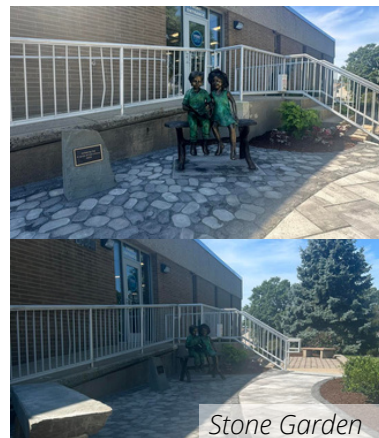
In the past, the library did have water infiltration issues at the front of the building after a very heavy rainfall. Leakage and ensuing damage occurred in the Meeting Room and kitchen. The potential cause of this leakage was addressed by the Department of Public Works in 2019 with the installation of new drainage system in front of the building. Unfortunately, due to the significant amount of rain coupled with the excessive Hurricane Ida rainfall, water has started to creep in the same areas. This will have to be addressed at some point in the future.

A memorial garden with concrete pavers and two benches was constructed in 2005 and is located in the front of the building. It is dedicated to the late library trustee, John Krautheim Sr. The garden was completely transformed in June 2023 by la serra gardens of Totowa. Trees, shrubs, sculptures and flowers were added to the garden.

In 2024, a stone garden with additional pavers, a pathway, shrubbery, and mulch was created to highlight the sculpture donated by the Friends of the Library. The labor for this project was generously donated by Boro Landscaping, a local landscaper.



Memorial Garden



Stone Garden

With funding provided by a library supporter, the late John Soldoveri, an illuminated sign was purchased and placed on the front lawn of the facility in 2008. The sign is dedicated to his late sister, Ida Marotta a longtime library trustee. Plans for 2024 include replacement of this sign with a modernized digital sign. Also there are two outdoor book and media returns in front of the building.

Three masonry benches reside in the rear of the facility.

A garden area with a weeping cherry tree that was provided by the Shade Tree Commission was planted in the rear of the building in 2013.

Prior exterior improvements include replacement of several sidewalks in front of the building. The front door was replaced in 2016.

Window lettering was installed in December 2023.

Exterior lighting at the front and rear entrance were upgraded in December 2023.



Upper Level Entrance

Lower Level Entrance

HEATING VENTILATION & AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC)

The two 25 plus year old Carrier HVAC units were replaced in 2023 with two York units. These units were purchased on the Library's behalf by the Borough of Totowa through the PSE&G Energy Saver Program. The project was paid for in full by the Library in 2023.

Plans for 2025 include a new interior grill and added duct work in the Main Room to improve the room temperature in the Reading Room.

A third Lennox HVAC unit was installed as part of the 2011/2012 expansion. This unit is located on the roof directly above the Children's Room. Currently the unit is inefficient and unable to heat and cool both levels comfortably. The unit also generates a very loud noise while running. The noise problem was addressed in 2014, but only reduces the noise level slightly. In 2023 two TIO wireless sensors were installed, however the inability to regulate temperatures on both levels continues. The installation of a new split HVAC VRF system is still under consideration as a remedy to address the heating and cooling issues.

The Board of Trustees approved a quarterly preventative maintenance contract for the HVAC units in an effort to stay ahead of any potential problems. This inspection is performed four times a year and includes filter and belt changes, lubrication of fan and motors, compressor, condenser and thermostat checks, and refrigerant and pulley checks.



INTERIOR

CEILING, LIGHTING, AND ELECTRIC

In 2022 the ceiling and lighting was replaced as part of the Main Room Renovation project. Funding was provided by the NJ Construction Bond Act Grant, the Borough, Library Savings, the Library Foundation and Friends of the Library.

The electric breaker panels for the facility are located in the Main Room, the Meeting Room storage closet and the Children's Program Room storage room. The panel located in the Main room was updated in 2019 with newly installed exterior switches by two entrances. An additional breaker panel was installed as part of the Main Room Renovation Project. Plans for 2025 include replacing the ceiling and lighting in the Meeting Room.

FLOORING

The flooring in the Main Room was replaced in 2022 as part of the Main Room Renovation project with funding provided by the previously aforementioned sources. A combination of carpet and vinyl flooring was used. The floor tiles in the Eisenhower Community Room, Meeting Room, lobbies, and reading area were installed as part of the expansion in 2011/2012 and are in fair condition and beginning to show wear. Additionally the carpeting in the Children's Room was installed as part of the expansion in 2011/2012 and is also beginning to show wear in certain areas. The last section of flooring is in the Multipurpose Room and is in poor condition. Plans for 2025 include the replacement of this flooring.



Ceiling Lights



Breaker Panel



Flooring in Main Room



Flooring in Meeting Room

Flooring in Multipurpose Room

INTERIOR ROOMS

The Main Room and all of the additional rooms were painted as part of the 2022 Renovation Project. Additionally all of the rooms included in the expansion project were painted in 2012 including the lobbies, workroom, hallway, administrative offices and Teen Room. The remaining rooms include the Multipurpose Room and kitchen, these rooms were painted in 2013 and will be repainted in 2024 as part of a capital improvement project. In 2025, the Meeting Room will be partitioned and possibly enclosed.



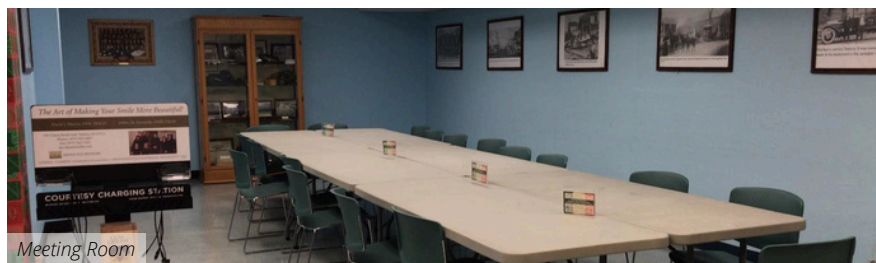
Reading Room



Teen Room



Multipurpose Room



Meeting Room



Eisenhower Community Room

MAIN ROOM



RESTROOMS

Two ADA compliant restrooms were installed on the lower level in the Meeting Room as part of the expansion in 2012. The hot water heater that heats water for these two rooms was replaced in August 2023. There are two additional restrooms on the lower level that are outdated and in need of updating. The two public restrooms located on the upper level in the Main Room were completely renovated by the Department of Public Works in 2020.



Upper Level Restrooms

KITCHEN

With funding provided by the Borough of Totowa Public Library Foundation and the Friends of the Library, a renovation of the 40-year-old kitchen was performed in August 2013. This project included the removal of a handicap accessible restroom in the old section of the lower level in order to gain more space. The renovations included new cabinets, Formica countertop, a deep sink, a double oven range, a microwave and a freezer. A section of the cabinets has suffered water damage due to previous water infiltration; the relocation or repair of this section is under consideration. A four-burner Bunn coffee maker was purchased in 2016 to accommodate the needs of the ever-growing groups that meet on a regular basis.



Kitchen

FURNITURE, FIXTURES, AND ART

FURNITURE

Main Room

Desks:

- Three Staff Desks were purchased in 2012
- A circulation desk was purchased for the Main Room in 2022 as part of the Renovation project.

Public Seating:

- New Public Seating was purchased as part of the 2022 Main Room Renovation Project including six tables, four computer tables and eight computer chairs. Additionally six soft lounge chairs, twenty armless chairs and two "c" shaped tables
- Public seating in the Teen Room was replaced as well as part of the Main Room Renovation Project, this includes two round top tables and four chairs.

Shelving:

- The shelving for reading materials in the Main Room is original (over 40 years old) and will need to be replaced eventually. In 2020, as a result of a major weeding project, four stacks were removed in the nonfiction section to make way for the planned Reading Room. The Department of Public Works dismantled the units and re-purposed most of the shelves in other areas of the stacks that were in need of replacement. The rest of unused shelving was put into storage.
- A shelving unit was purchased by the Friends of the Library for the "NEW" section in 2022.
- In 2016, media shelving was purchased by the Borough of Totowa Public Library Foundation.

Children's Room

Desks:

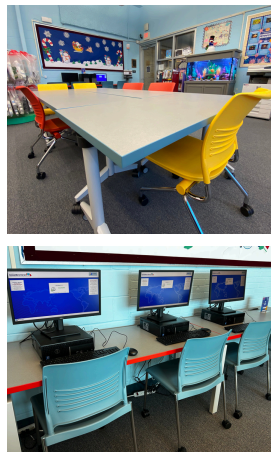
- The Circulation Desk and librarian's desk was purchased in 2009. The Circulation Desk was resurfaced in 2024.

Public Seating:

- In 2009, soft benches with two chairs that resemble books were purchased and in 2014 a loveseat was added with funds from a dedicated gift.
- The rest of the fifteen-year-old public seating was replaced in 2024. The purchase included four pirouette nesting tables, two adjustable height activity tables, one computer table, twelve armless chairs, four small 4-leg chairs. Additionally soft seating was purchased including a bariatric chair and six crescent shaped ottomans.

Shelving:

- The perimeter of the Children's Room is lined with shelving that has been a part of the building since its opening in 1969. Over the years, additional shelving has been added. Notably, a double-faced Picture Book Shelving Unit was purchased in 2016 with funding from the Borough of Totowa Public Library Foundation and a dedicated gift. In 2024, two double-faced shelving units were acquired to replace three original standalone units that were previously positioned in the center of the room. These nearly fifty-year-old units were discarded in December 2024.



Lower Level

Public Seating:

- Eighty chairs were purchased in 2005 with funds from a NJ State Grant. The remaining chairs are over forty years old and were repainted in 2012. Five portable stackable chairs were purchased in 2020 are available for loan.

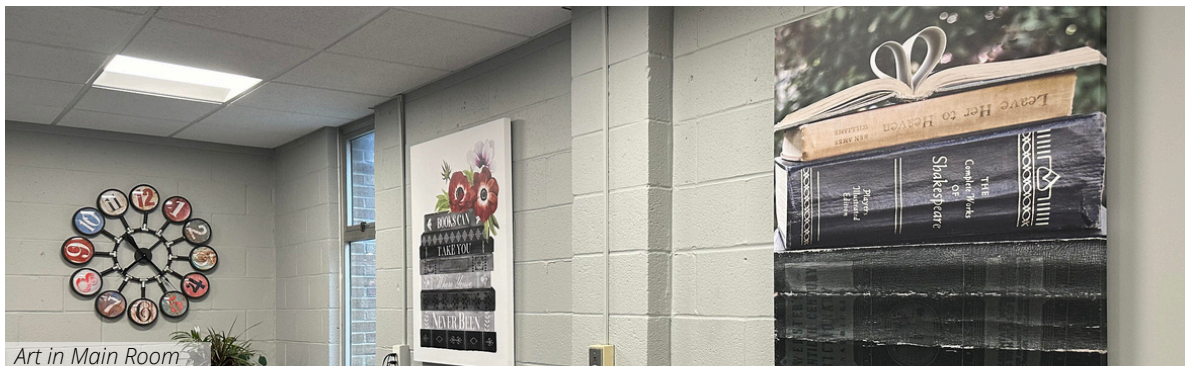
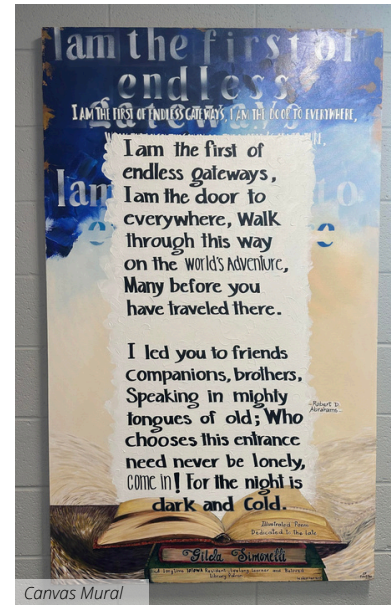
Tables:

- The Library Foundation purchased ten lightweight folding tables and a cart in 2012. Eight additional tables were purchased in 2018 followed the purchase of two more in 2020. These tables are used for most library programs and are available for loan. Several of these tables were discarded due to breakage. In 2025, the majority of these tables will be replaced by eight pirouette tables that will fold and nest together.
- In 2018, three card tables to accommodate the needs of bridge and mahjong clubs.

ART, FIXTURES, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

ART

- A twenty-foot canvas mural was donated to the Library in 2019 and is on display in the Multipurpose Room. The mural was created by Passaic Valley High School Art Society honor students and features characters from children's literature.
- In 2022 a canvas mural, illustrating the poem "Inscription for a Library Doorway" by Robert Abrahams was painted by local artist Evelyn Perez. This painting is dedicated to longtime library patron Gilda Simonetti and hangs in the Reading Room.
- In November 2023, ten paintings were donated to the Library by local artist Dawn L. Garrison
- In December of 2023, additional book themed art was purchased for the Main Room.
- In 2024, a 175 lb bronze sculpture of a boy and girl reading on a bench was purchased by the Friends of the Library.



FIXTURES

- A ninety-gallon freshwater aquarium was installed in June 2014, seed money for this aquarium was provided by Totowa Girl Scout Troop 70088. The aquarium is home to over eight species of fish. The aquarium tank and filter was replaced in 2024
- Two folding moveable portable walls were purchased in 2016.
- A step and repeat banner replete with the Library Logo was purchased in 2020.

Musical Fixtures and Instruments:

- In 2018, an Oklahoma Sound Series 700 Podium/PA system was purchased with funds from a dedicated gift.
- A donated used upright piano resides in the Eisenhower Community Room.
- Five Electronic Keyboards were purchased in 2024.



Electronic Keyboards

Notable Fixtures:

- In 2020 with funds from the CARES Act, touchless water faucets, sensor enhanced toilets and hands free hand dryers and water fountains were installed.
- In 2021 the Totowa Love and Care Cabinet was created by the DPW. The cabinet was painted with contest winning designs by a local artist. The cabinet is located in the rear of the building and is stocked with non-perishable food, pet food, cleaning supplies and paper products. Residents are encouraged to take what they need and leave what they can.



Care Cabinet

SECURITY SYSTEM

The security monitoring system was upgraded in March 2023. A 16 channel DVR with a power supply light 3.6 MM superhigh, interior dome, def infrared cameras were installed. In addition, two 55-inch Smart TV monitors were installed in the Director's office and staff room. Panic buttons were upgraded in March 2023 and are strategically positioned for the safety of staff and patrons.



Main Room Public Computer Area

TECHNOLOGY

- The main server that provides Internet access for the Library is housed in the Teen Room in a secure locked cabinet. A NETGEAR battery backup was purchased in December 2017 and is housed in the cabinet.
- Internet access was upgraded in November 2023. The new service is a ethernet virtual private line with a connection to PALS Plus. It uses Verizon internal fiber network to segment traffic for a WAN connection to PALS Plus. Additionally a new CISCO router was installed.
- Password protected free Wi-Fi access is provided by Optimum/Cablevision. In 2023, Wi-Fi wiring, hardware and access points were upgraded and replaced with Meraki access points . This upgrade significantly improves the user experience.
- A standalone Dell management console to support Envisionware was purchased in 2019 and is housed in the circulation desk in the Main Room.
- Computer Inventory includes seventeen new Optiplex machines purchased in 2024. These machines replace the computers that were purchased in 2018. These machines are used by staff and the public.
- In 2022 three iPads were received as part of the NJHealthConnect Grant. They are available for loan.
- Sixteen Dell Latitude 3310 laptops and a mobile cart were purchased with funding from the ARPA grant with IMLS and NJSL support. In 2024 they were primarily used in house for youth programs.

- Currently there are two hotspots in the collection and are loanable. They were purchased with funding from the ARPA grant with IMLS and NJSL support.
- Presently the library has three copy machines. Included in this inventory is a newly leased 2022 multi-functional machine. It offers standard black and white copying, faxing, and scanning capability. It also has the ability to sort and fold jobs. It will be used primarily by the staff. The other two machines are the 2018 models. They were retained as part of the lease end agreement. One is in the Main Room and the other is in the Children's Room. Both machines provide the public with copying, printing, scanning, and faxing services. All three machines have monthly maintenance agreements. Additional electronic devices for staff and program use include a projector and inflatable movie screen.
- Wireless printing software was installed in 2014 and is made available via GO Print.
- A typewriter is available for public use.
- An Ellison machine and laminator were purchased in 2009 and are located on the lower level in the Multipurpose Room.
- Telephone service was upgraded to a Nextiva Cloud hosted system in 2018. The original contract included thirteen lines however, four unused lines were dropped from the contract in 2024. The telephone upgrade included the installation of three phone lines on the lower level. The system offers a myriad of functionality including an external paging system and web based phone message availability.
- An ActivPanel was purchased with funds provided by the Friends of the Library and delivered in January 2022. This device is used for various programs including computer classes, coding, story times, games, and movie showings.
- A 76 inch Dell Interactive Monitor was purchased with ARPA funds in 2022.



Laptop Cart

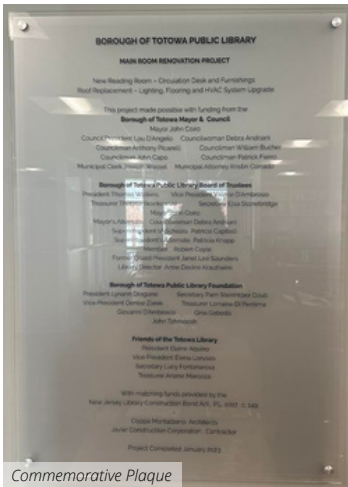
Dell Interactive Monitor

ADDITIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

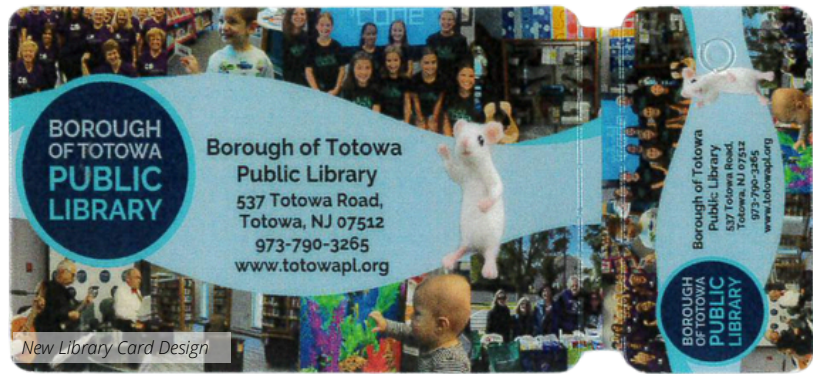
Additional interior improvements include nine acoustic panels in the Eisenhower Community Room (2015), a privacy wall and new storage closet in the Meeting Room (2014). Electric panel upgrade and lighting replacement in hallway by kitchen (2019). The Friends of the Library purchased two commercial wall fans for the Eisenhower Community Room in 2019.

NOTABLE MILESTONES

The completion of Main Room Renovation Project was celebrated on April 25th 2023. A plaque commemorating the event was installed in the Main Room and a new library card was created.



Commemorative Plaque



New Library Card Design

In April 2024, the Friends of the Totowa Library unveiled a 175 lb bronze statue of children reading, now gracing the library's front garden. This heartfelt addition, made possible through their tireless fundraising efforts, celebrates literacy and provides a serene space for all to enjoy.



Friends of the Totowa Library



FUTURE PLANNING

Capital Projects for 2025 and beyond include the following:

- Replace the illuminated sign that is located on the front lawn with a digital sign.
- Renovate the Meeting Room & Multipurpose Room on the lower level. The plans for this project include replacing the storefront of windows with solid walls and some windows, new flooring and lighting, partitions and painting.
- Renovate the rear entrance area with new curbs, steps pavers, railings and a retaining wall, in order to create outdoor seating and meeting space.
- Renovate restrooms in Multipurpose Room Wing
- Replace flooring in lobbies and Eisenhower Community Room
- Replace carpeting and lighting in Children's Room.



Windows on lower level



Rear Entrance

In closing, the Library has come a long way since its humble beginnings in 1957. It continues to expand and respond to the ever changing needs of the community. Through dedication, hard work and the generosity of many, it has become the hub of the community and serves as a gathering place for residents of all ages.



FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY BOROUGH OF TOTOWA
UNION BLVD. CIRCA 1957

