

**i. Project Narrative:** The Bayonne Public Library is located at 697 Avenue C in Bayonne, Hudson County, New Jersey. The original structure was constructed in 1904 with additional wings added in 1930. The Beaux-Arts and classical revival building sports ionic and Doric columns and richly ornamented architectural details. It is one of New Jersey's original 36 Carnegie libraries, constructed with an \$83,000 grant by the Carnegie Corporation, that are still in use. In a 1959 Memorial Day fire, the central part of the interior and roof were badly burned. After a \$1.25 million restoration, it re-opened to the public in 1963. The Building was rededicated in 1989 as the Free Public Library and Cultural Center of Bayonne.

Today the Bayonne Public Library includes a Reference Department, Study and Reading Rooms, Lending Room, Children's and Young Adults Rooms, and multi-purpose rooms and auditorium used by the community.

The Bayonne Public Library serves as a cultural and community center of the Bayonne community, offering a wealth of resources and a wide variety of programs. There are more than 100 different programs held each year, and a diverse range of community groups utilize the Library's building to host meetings and events. The library's Mary O'Connor Gallery presents performing and visual arts and interactive events to its community. Various meetings and cultural programs are held in the basement of the library building.

Past repairs have not always respected the original design and architecture of the building. The building also suffers from a damaged roof drainage system, antiquated boilers, and a lack of accessible facilities. The project requested via this application includes replacement of a 90-year-old heat plant with new high efficiency boilers. Asbestos containing thermal insulation on piping, ductwork, and boilers will be abated. Plumbing work includes installation of domestic water backflow preventer and replacement of roof storm drainage. The existing hydraulic elevator will be refurbished and new wheelchair lift provided. Restrooms will be retrofitted with grab bars and toilet accessories for barrier-free access. Existing circulation desks will be altered, and the main circulation desk and computer carrels replaced for a barrier-free access. Exterior building facades, facing front courtyard, will be restored. The Children's Room will be expanded to meet public demand.

**State Funding Priorities:**

### **3.1.1 Construction and Rehabilitation to Further Access to Library Services With an Emphasis on**

**Equal Access:** The proposed project is a repair project that will improve the overall quality of the library environment, and as a result will promote equal access for all people to easily use library resources and services. When the physical structure is properly functioning, it will promote improved experiences for all users.

**3.1.2 Enhancement of Public Libraries as Public Spaces and Community Centers:** The proposed project will make it possible for the Bayonne Public Library to better serve as a public space and community center in which people engage and interact for civic, educational, informational, and recreational purposes. The Library is a central part of the community, hosting a wide variety of cultural events each year that are relevant to the community. Examples of programs include ESL classes to support English Language Learners, computer skills classes that focus on employment skills (e.g. resume building, Microsoft Office), and children's programming ranging from birth to high school. We host literacy initiatives for children of all ages (birth-2 years, preschool, elementary grades, middle school, and high school) including story hours, reading programs, homework help programs, and tutoring programs. The Library also recently opened a new community meeting room available to local groups to host programs and events. Program examples have included meditation, anxiety management, and art classes for children and adults of all ages.

In addition to programming, the Library also houses a large archive of Bayonne historical materials, which are available on the building's first floor. The materials have also been scanned and are available electronically via the Library's website.

The Library's building has been closed since mid-March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has transitioned its programming to virtual activities. Librarians have hosted STEM activities, story hours for children of different ages, and bedtime stories and songs for young children over Facebook and Instagram. We have worked to quickly adapt to virtual programming to ensure that the community continues to have regular access to literacy, STEM, and culturally enriching activities while the Library building remains closed to the public.

The proposed project will make it possible for the Library to better implement all of its programs. It will create barrier-free access and repurpose spaces to ensure that the Library can meet the demands of its growing population.

### **3.1.3 Optimization of the Technological Infrastructure to Promote Access to the Internet, Electronic Resources, and Instruction in Their Uses:**

The Bayonne Public Library has 27 internet-connected computers spread throughout the building in the adult, children, and young adult sections. They are used steadily, with regular demand for them. The Library also recently purchased 10 new laptops and a laptop cart that are available for popup programs throughout the building. All floors of the building have wifi access, and the Library hosts its own Integrated Library System. The Library makes several databases available to the public free of charge, including Rosetta Stone Language Learning Software, Job and Career Accelerator and Computer Tutorials, Legal Information Reference Center, Small Business Reference Center, Reference USA, Ancestry Library Edition, EBSCOhost, JerseyClicks, and a variety of children's databases. The Library also has a variety of digital collections on its website, including Bayonne historical artifacts such as collections of photographs of architecture, events, elected officials, streets and parks, and the Military Ocean Terminal. Finally, the Library makes access to e-books available to its registered members.

**3.1.4 Growth in the Critical Public Library Services Available to New Jersey Citizens:** The proposed project will make it possible for the Bayonne Public Library to expand the amount of space it can use for public programming. In particular, it will convert more spaces to multi-use rooms, making possible more children's programming, for which there is increasing demand. The increased public programming space will also make it possible for the Library to increase its programs for adults, including employment assistance, job training, career assistance, and college preparation and tutoring.

We expect the City of Bayonne's population to hit 70,000 in the next 10 years, and we are outgrowing our space. The proposed project will allow the Library to grow and accommodate anticipated population growth. It will address the community need for a larger Children's Room by expanding into adjacent storage spaces.

### **Project Evaluation Criteria:**

### **3.2.1 Extent to Which Barrier-Free Improvements are Needed in the Public Library Building:**

Although first and second floor restrooms have been upgraded for barrier-free access, they lack all required grab bars and accessible toilet accessories. The circulation desks also need to be altered for a barrier-free access, and new signage needs to be installed in the building and certain furniture replaced for accessibility. Reconstruction of basement restrooms for a full accessibility is not a part of this project and will be addressed by the Library in the future. The existing hydraulic elevator will be upgraded to meet the code requirements for barrier-free access, and a wheelchair lift will be installed on the first floor to access raised floor area.

**3.2.2 Socioeconomic Profile:** The City of Bayonne is located in Hudson County and has approximately 63,000 residents and a population density of 11,214 per square mile. Its population is relatively diverse. According to the 2017 American Community Survey, 71% of residents are White, 11% are Black or African American, 7% are Asian, and 11% are either two or more races or another race. Of the total population, approximately 25% identify as Hispanic or Latino. The Median Household Income (MHI) is \$56,701 (74% of the state MHI), and 15.7% of residents live below the poverty level, as compared to 10.7% statewide. Approximately 30% of residents were foreign born, suggesting a significant population that speaks English as a second language.

There are 25,933 total housing units in the City, including 23,743 occupied units and 2,190 vacant units. Of the total occupied units, 9,192 are owner occupied and 14,551 are renter occupied. Approximately 30% of residents ages 25 and older have a high school diploma, 16% have some college, 26% have a Bachelor's degree, and 9% have a graduate degree.

**3.2.3 Current Needs:** The Library cannot provide safe, secure services with the state of its current facility. The building needs upgrades to its mechanical and electrical systems, as some of them date to the original building construction. The enclosed Certification of Need for Mechanical and Electrical Systems, developed by French and Parrello Associates, describes the condition of the systems and the need for their replacement and upgrade for safe and energy efficient delivery.

The buildings existing storm drainage system from the roof to the existing combined sewer connection(s) is in failing condition with several instances of flooding due to poor roof drainage, leaking roofs, and failing storm drainage piping/infrastructure. The failing storm drainage has caused several areas of the building to be abandoned.

**3.2.4 Digital Divide:** According to 2019 U.S. Census figures, approximately 19% of Bayonne households do not have a broadband Internet subscription. This supports the high demand for public computers that the Library experiences daily. We have expanded the number of computers available to the public in the last two years to better meet the heavy demand. There is a daily two-hour time limit for individual computer usage, which Librarians can increase for individuals who are working on job applications, completing homework assignments, or working on other types of important job and school tasks.

**3.2.5 Future Projected Needs:** The City of Bayonne's population grew approximately 3% from 63,015 in 2010 to 64,897 in 2019. It is expected to keep growing over the next twenty years, with significant new residential and commercial development underway at the Peninsula at Bayonne that will result in approximately 4,000 new units of housing. As the City continues to grow, the Library's needs will intensify. Its public meeting spaces are already often at capacity, and its children's programming continues to grow in attendance. In 2018, the Library's total circulation was 34,543, 15% of which were non-print materials. Total attendance in the Library was 150,000, and there were 435 total Library sponsored programs, including 317 programs for children.

**3.2.6 Resiliency:** Despite its old HVAC systems and faulty roof, the Bayonne Public Library building is a designated cooling center during the summer and a warming center during the winter months. It has served as an important community gathering spot during periods of extended power outages. Many residents were without power for two weeks or longer following Superstorm Sandy in 2012 and Hurricane Irene in 2011. They came to the library to charge phones and other devices, warm up, and socialize with each other during a difficult time, as the Library never lost power.

**3.2.7 Extent to Which Current Public Library Standards are Met:** The Bayonne Public Library did not meet the criteria for state aid last year and has worked diligently to rectify challenges. Specifically, it has

undertaken a large weeding of the periodicals collection and streamlined and added new titles to attain state standards. The Library has also had challenges clearing red tape with the city to hire new librarians, but it is currently on track to advertise and hire up to the state minimum staff level as soon as the Governor announces that libraries can reopen. Finally, the Library's Board of Trustees is now active and fully seated with seven members, which will contribute to our efforts to attain State Library Aid standards in the future.

**3.2.8 Extent to Which Current Building Standards are Met:** The current facility does not meet State building codes for lighting energy conservation and separation of storm and sanitary sewers. It is also not fully ADA compliant.

**3.2.9 Functionality of the Public Library Building:** The Bayonne Library does not currently work well as a library for all. The restroom facilities, library spaces, elevator, and library furnishings need to be upgraded to meet barrier-free code requirements. The Children's and Young Adult Rooms need to be expanded to meet higher demand.

**3.2.10 How the Investment Furthers Existing Functions:** The Project will make it possible for the library building to function to its maximum potential. It is classified as a repair project and will not directly address collections management, technology, dedicated space, etc. However, it will ensure that the physical plant is properly maintained and prevent destruction to the physical space and book collections via water leakage, mold development, and rotting wood.

**3.2.11 How the Project Provides New Services:** The proposed project will make maximize the library building's functions and make it possible for the library to serve the entire community. First, it will create barrier-free access throughout the building. Second, it will increase the amount of multi-purpose meeting spaces throughout the building to accommodate the City's growing population and increasing demand on library programs and services.

**3.2.12 Degree of Community Support/Partnerships:** The Bayonne Public Library partners with a wide range of community groups. The proposed project will strengthen these relationships and make it possible

for them to utilize their library building use. A few examples of community groups that utilize library space for meetings and events include:

- Bayonne Census Committee
- Bayonne Reads
- Bayonne Board of Education
- Bayonne Memorial Day Parade Committee
- Bayonne Historical Society
- Hudson County Alliance of Teen Artists
- Bayonne Community Garden Committee

**3.2.13 Effects of Staffing, Maintaining and Operating Proposed Facility:** The proposed project will include the installation of a new boilers. As a result, the Library will no longer need a boiler operator on staff, as the new boiler won't require an operator to ensure it is properly functioning. The custodial staff member who is currently assigned as boiler operator will be able to free up that time to focus on other tasks and responsibilities, resulting in annual cost savings for the Library. The project will also reduce the number of public service desks, which will free up librarian staff to use that time for other functions.

**3.2.14 Cost-Effectiveness of the Project:** The proposed project's costs are reasonable and will provide considerable value. The total project cost is 2,000,000, which works out to a cost of \$31.75 per resident. The proposed project represents the most cost-effective approach to addressing the Library's significant needs.

**ii. Have Alternate and/or More Efficient Approaches Been Considered:** The proposed project will provide essential renovations that will address pressing needs. The consultants evaluated the condition of mechanical and electrical systems, the building's physical conditions, and its functionality. Only the most critical needs will be addressed by this project.

**iii. Library's Efforts to Address the Ongoing Physical Maintenance of the Current Library Building over the Past Five Years:** The Library and the Bayonne DPW work together to ensure that all physical maintenance of the library building is kept in working condition. Although the building has significant needs, the DPW has worked to maintain the building and keep it operating as best it can with a limited budget.

**iv. Shared Space:** No percentage of this project is a shared space.

**v. Non-Public Library Purposes:** No percentage of this project is in an area used for non-public library purposes.

**vi. Why These Repairs Are Necessary:** The proposed repairs are necessary because they will address critical building deficiencies.

**vii. Barrier-Free Improvements:** Although first and second floor restrooms have been upgraded for a barrier-free access, they lack all required grab bars and accessible toilet accessories. The circulation desks need to be altered for a barrier-free access, new signage needs to be installed in the building, and certain furniture needs to be replaced for accessibility. Reconstruction of basement restrooms for a full accessibility is not a part of this project and will be addressed by the Library in the future. The existing hydraulic elevator will be upgraded to meet the code requirements for barrier-free access, and a wheelchair lift will be installed on the first floor to access raised floor area.