

# S t r a t e g i c

## Plan

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**HIGHLAND PARK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
*Information & Imagination*

494 Laurel Avenue • Highland Park, Illinois • 847-432-0216 • [hplibrary.org](http://hplibrary.org)

# INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT

*The Highland Park Public Library provides a wide variety of library programs and services to a population of just under 30,000 in the northern suburbs of Chicago. As a city library, the Board of Trustees consists of seven community members appointed by the Mayor of Highland Park. The Library operates a 42,000 square foot building on Laurel Ave.*

In May 2021, the Library Board and Administration formed a Planning Team to guide the strategic planning refresh process with the goal of establishing a way forward for the Library. Amanda E. Standerfer, a consultant from [Fast Forward Libraries](#), facilitated our planning process. The Library Board would like to acknowledge the members of the Planning Team and thank them for their dedication to this process during a challenging time. Planning Team members included:

- Richard Basofin, Library Board President
- Marcia Beach, Youth Services Manager
- Chad Clark, Assistant Director
- Joel Hurwitz, Library Board Trustee
- Beth Keller, Marketing Specialist
- Heidi Smith, Executive Director

The Planning Team spent a great deal of time during this process gathering community feedback in order to ground the Library's future plans in community needs and desires. During the initial phase of the team's planning process they:

- Spent time reviewing the current plan;
- Conducted a community survey; and
- Held in-person and virtual focus groups.

The Planning Team collected all this data into a Learning Report, which appears as the appendix to this plan document.

The second phase of the planning process consisted of a retreat session with the Library's Leadership Team. This session affirmed some elements of the current plan and started to expand into a new strategic direction. The Leadership Team spent time brainstorming and discussing how to align current library services and activities with the aspirations the Library hopes to achieve with the community, along with dreaming about future initiatives. The Leadership Team was intentional to consider current possibilities and post-pandemic opportunities, knowing that the Library would need to bridge these two points as all navigate the uncertain next steps.

Finally, the Planning Team brought together plan elements into this document for the Board to review, refine, and approve. This plan is just the first step in operating in a more strategic way. The Library Board and staff will need to consider how to transition from planning to implementation. Additional implementation details can be found in the Next Steps section at the end of this document.

# OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

This plan was developed by and for the Library and states the aspirations, goals and tactics that we, the Library, intend to pursue.

## VISION

*The community's trusted forum for enrichment and engagement.*

During the planning process, we affirmed that this vision statement represents the Library's aspirations for the community in relationship with the Library. Building trust between the Library and community is the center of everything we do and important to community members that frequently mentioned the lack of trust and divisions in our society. We want the community to know they can count upon the Library – trust us – to be a place for enrichment and engagement for all aspects of their lives.

## MISSION

*Opening doors to information and imagination.*

We also affirmed our mission, which we believe clearly states how we will carry out our work to achieve our vision. We open doors to enriching lives, educating minds, and engaging with our community. All are invited in to learn, discover, create, and connect. Everything that we do ties back to our mission.

We recognized that we needed to make some structural changes to our current plan, so the following plan represents many of the same key concepts as our previous plan but is organized in a different way to be more descriptive regarding what we want to achieve and how we will achieve it. We've used the following components in our restructured plan:

<b>Aspiration:</b>	The impact we want to have in our community.
<b>Goal:</b>	The focus of our work that will help us realize our aspiration.
<b>Tactics:</b>	The key areas we will work in to attain our goal, supported by an activity plan to guide plan implementation (developed by staff after adoption of the strategic plan).

# ASPIRATION: LIFELONG LEARNING

**GOAL:** We enhance quality of life in the community by tapping into curiosities and helping to increase knowledge and vitality.

We aspire to provide inclusive library services that create opportunities for learning across the lifespan. Our programs and collections reflect the variety of needs and hopes of our community. These diverse library resources and opportunities available to all represent our place as a vital community hub where patrons of all ages can cultivate their interests and find their unique learning needs represented.

TACTICS:	POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We stimulate minds and create bonds with patrons and families of all ages, configurations, and abilities to support literacy development and embed the love of reading and habit of using the Library.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expand school partnerships</li> <li>Spearhead community reading challenges including students learning to read and reading to learn</li> <li>Develop partnerships to expand multi-lingual service options</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We inspire the pursuit of lifelong discovery and cultural enrichment with a focus on increasing diversity and depth of services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner with groups and diverse programming leaders reaching underserved populations</li> <li>Host civic engagement and social justice discussions</li> <li>Create experiential learning spaces and opportunities</li> <li>Evaluate community pandemic recovery needs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are an information literacy authority and help community members navigate the digital world by supporting access to technology.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconnect the community with Digital Media and Maker technologies and expand available equipment</li> <li>Evaluate and enhance our own digital navigation tools: website and catalog</li> <li>Develop instructional videos for digital services</li> </ul>

### Possible measures of success:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of programs and attendance</li> <li>Number of instructional videos for accessing online resources</li> <li>Increased use of online and technology resources</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Patrons express a satisfaction and growth after programming</li> <li>Patrons report increased confidence in using technology and digital offerings</li> <li>Increased programming partnerships</li> </ul> |
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# ASPIRATION: OPTIMIZING RESOURCES

**GOAL: We have robust collections and services that are developed and enhanced to meet evolving community needs.**

Our Library’s collections, programs, and technology services make us an integral community resource. We aim to meet the needs of all ages and stages of our patrons – whether it’s for entertainment, to achieve educational goals, or simply to learn something new. We will continue to assess and refine our collections and services based on the feedback we receive from the community. Increasing awareness in the community of the Library’s services will allow us to proactively reach a more diverse population.

TACTICS:	POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are nimble in responding to community information, education, research, and entertainment needs when selecting and providing access to materials and formats.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invest in increased use of eBooks</li> <li>Launch new collections like youth read-along chapter books with mp3 recordings</li> <li>Assess current users to identify the underserved and underrepresented</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We actively invite new patrons to connect with the Library and become familiar with all we have to offer and remove barriers that prevent access to all library resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create universal signage and welcome materials</li> <li>Update policies and procedures to be more flexible</li> <li>Develop word-of-mouth marketing strategy, “upselling” services to patrons in the Library</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We vigorously evaluate our collections and services, strategy, and execution for peak performance and proactive planning including positioning the Library as the expert for book recommendations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess current resources, their performance, and impact</li> <li>Complete diversity, equity, and inclusion audit of collection</li> <li>Create brief and informal service feedback collection tools for patrons</li> <li>Assess and enhance current methods of sharing Library expertise and popular materials.</li> </ul>

### Possible measures of success:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of pathways to gather patron feedback about their needs</li> <li>Updated policies and procedures that allow for more flexibility</li> <li>Increase in ways to gather patron feedback</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track questions about and feedback regarding discoverability</li> <li>Creation of resource assessment protocol</li> <li>Completion of DEI audit and integration of strategy into selection criteria for materials</li> </ul> |
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## ASPIRATION: ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**GOAL:** We strive to provide the fiscal, physical, and human resources to realize the Library’s vision and forward the Library’s identity as an inclusive community forum.

The future success of the Library depends on our ability to meet the community’s needs and desires for a safe, flexible, and inclusive library. We must be a strong organization to achieve our goals. Welcoming patrons to an expanded physical space will allow us to grow our purpose as a community hub. Tactics to meet this goal will also include specific attention to our internal culture and processes including our fiscal responsibilities and organizational growth.

TACTICS:	POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We invest in effective organizational structure, personnel, relationships, and leadership to provide an inclusive and diverse team.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create staff development committee to enhance and expand training for staff</li> <li>Increase collaboration opportunities among staff and between staff and board</li> <li>Offer coaching support to managers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are preparing for an expanded building with an eye towards enhancements that promote a welcoming, inclusive environment with flexible spaces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design better space for presentations and performances</li> <li>Create areas that can flex to accommodate meetings, reading, work, and social spaces for all ages</li> <li>Prioritize additional parking</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have sustainable financial resources.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop fundraising and grant opportunities for 2025 Expansion project</li> <li>Promote options for estate planning</li> </ul>

### Possible measures of success:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased usage of meeting rooms, flex spaces, children’s spaces</li> <li>Patrons report increased accessibility of collections and services</li> <li>Increased funding from grants and gifts</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of staff training opportunities</li> <li>Number of opportunities for board and staff to collaborate</li> <li>Number of mechanisms for staff to give feedback</li> </ul> |
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# ASPIRATION: CREATING CONNECTIONS

**GOAL:** We engage with users and stakeholders to better understand and support their needs, and increase the visibility and impact of Library spaces, services, collections, and partnerships.

Library staff serve as a bridge for the community’s connection with the Library. Our aspiration is to strengthen these connections and deepen engagement to achieve greater impact in the lives of community members. Patrons want to be part of a place where they feel their needs are represented, so the tactics to achieve this goal focus on the ways we can provide access to all that we offer and an understanding of library services both within and outside of our facilities.

TACTICS:	POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We inspire connections between patrons by designing opportunities for discussion that enhance understanding and a sense of belonging.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop opportunities for civic discourse</li> <li>Train select staff on group facilitation</li> <li>Organize community visioning sessions: “What do we aspire to be?”</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We find creative ways to be in places our community gathers and needs our resources, and we increase community engagement through deliberate and impactful partnerships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop off-site programming with community partners</li> <li>Collaborate with schools for library card sign ups and information literacy programming</li> <li>Plan for regular pop-up library events, i.e. MakerFest</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We cultivate relationships with our community, awareness of our impact on users, and communication of our value.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop community feedback loops</li> <li>Regularly gather stories of impact from community members</li> <li>Create external communications plan including impact report that include stories of impact and calls for support</li> <li>Incorporate the use of a marketing tool like Orange Boy</li> </ul>

### Possible measures of success:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased programs on topical issues</li> <li>Increased community partnerships</li> <li>Number of community events that host the Library</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of ways for patrons to give feedback</li> <li>Patrons report they heard of library programs through partners</li> <li>Increased invitation to partner by local community groups</li> </ul> |
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## NEXT STEPS

After this plan is adopted by the Board in November 2021, staff will complete the activity plan to guide implementation. Implementation is a continual process, as the timing of certain activities will be determined by priority. Review and adjustment of the activity plan will happen on a regular basis.

Evaluation of the plan will be ongoing once the plan implementation is underway. The Planning Team will meet a final time to review and discuss an evaluation framework that will inform what success looks like as the Library implements this plan. Measurements for each goal will vary, and some activities will be best evaluated by collecting data through patron and community feedback focused on intended outcomes. Other activities will be evaluated based on information collected in-house such as circulation and usage statistics, program participation, and social media data. Some goals will be met by creating deliverables, like plans for outreach and engagement. Continued reporting of successes and challenges will ensure that the Library is transparent about progress and open to input.

The Library commits to a comprehensive review and update of this plan at its completion. This plan will move HPPL significantly forward in guiding next steps on plans for investing in the Library team, stronger connections with community members, diversified collections and programming, expanded physical space, and increased opportunities for individuals to learn and grow. This plan is an investment in the future of the Library as a growing and valuable asset of the overall community.





# Highland Park Public Library Learning Report

Submitted by Amanda E. Standerfer, MA, MLIS; Sarah Forbes, PhD.; and Kristin Traniello, MLIS (exp. Dec. 2021)  
August 2021

## Introduction

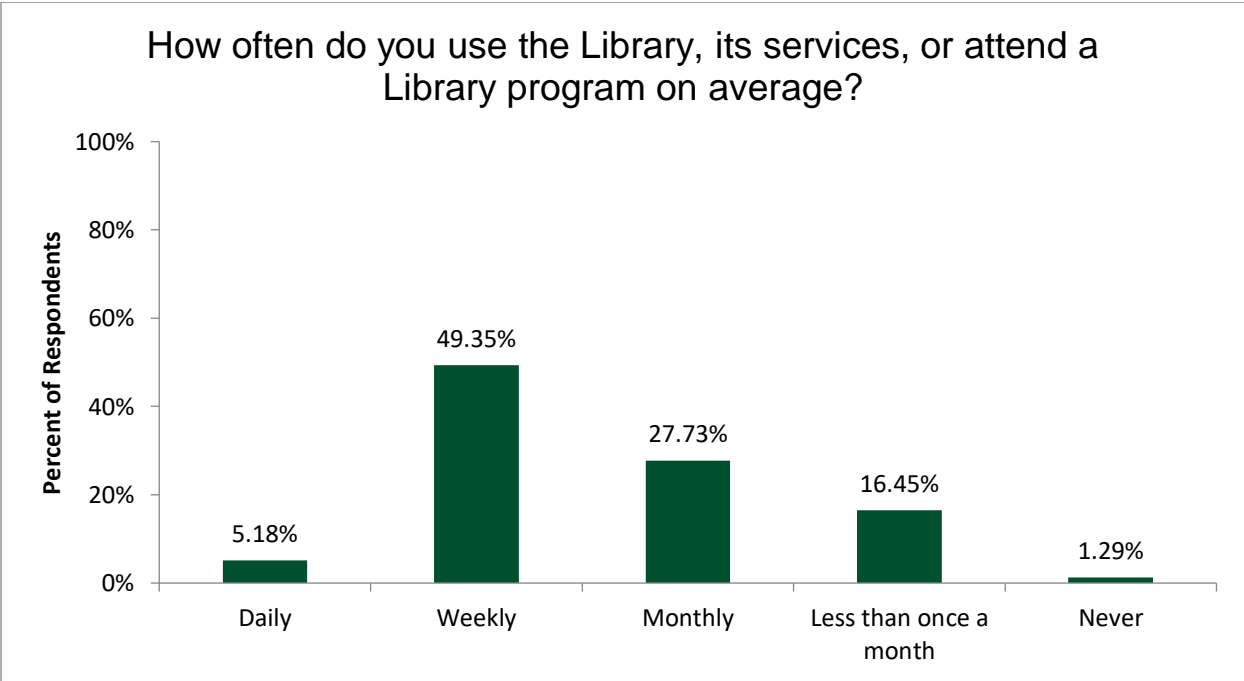
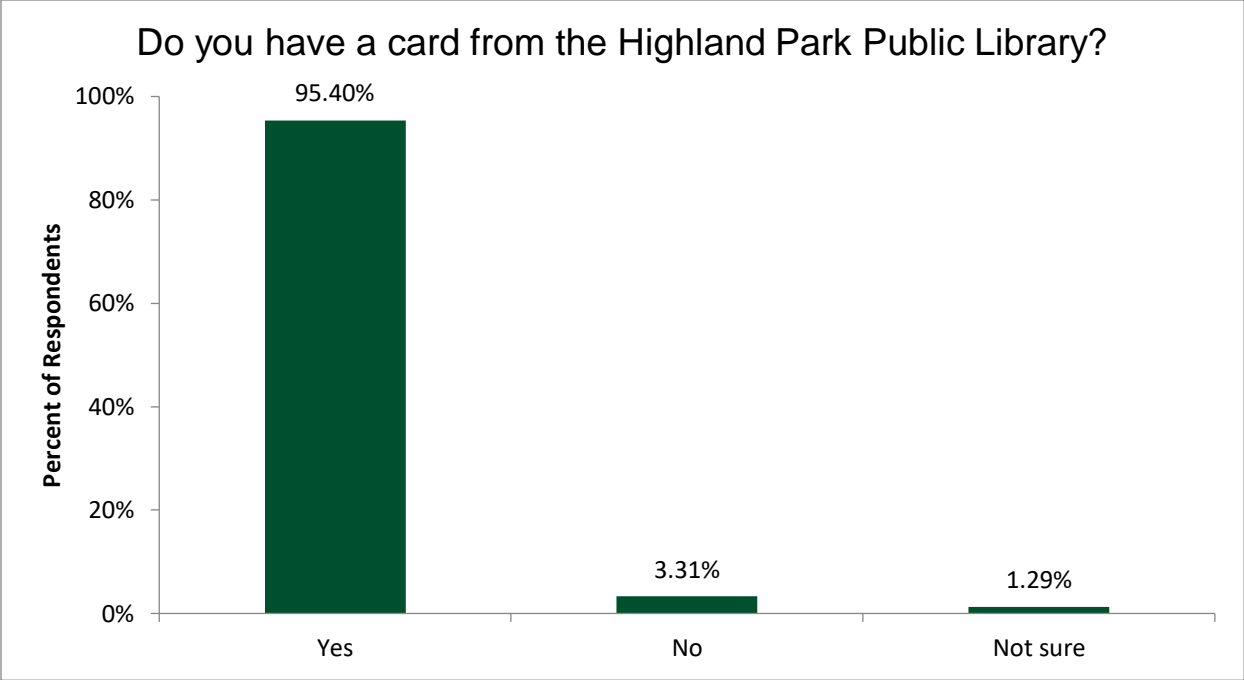
The Highland Park Public Library (HPPL) last engaged in strategic planning during 2018. This process resulted in the Library's current strategic plan for 2019-2021. Given the global COVID-19 pandemic and recent changes in leadership at the Library, it is a good time to review the current plan to ensure it encompasses what the Library hopes to accomplish over the next three years.

For this strategic plan "refresh" process, the Library spent time gathering community feedback through a survey and a series of focus groups (in-person and virtual). This report summarizes the findings from those feedback opportunities.

Next, the Library's leadership team will hold a retreat session to review these findings and make suggested updates to the current strategic plan as well as design activity plans to guide Library staff work to achieve plan goals. An updated strategic plan will be presented to the Board in early fall 2021.

## Community Survey

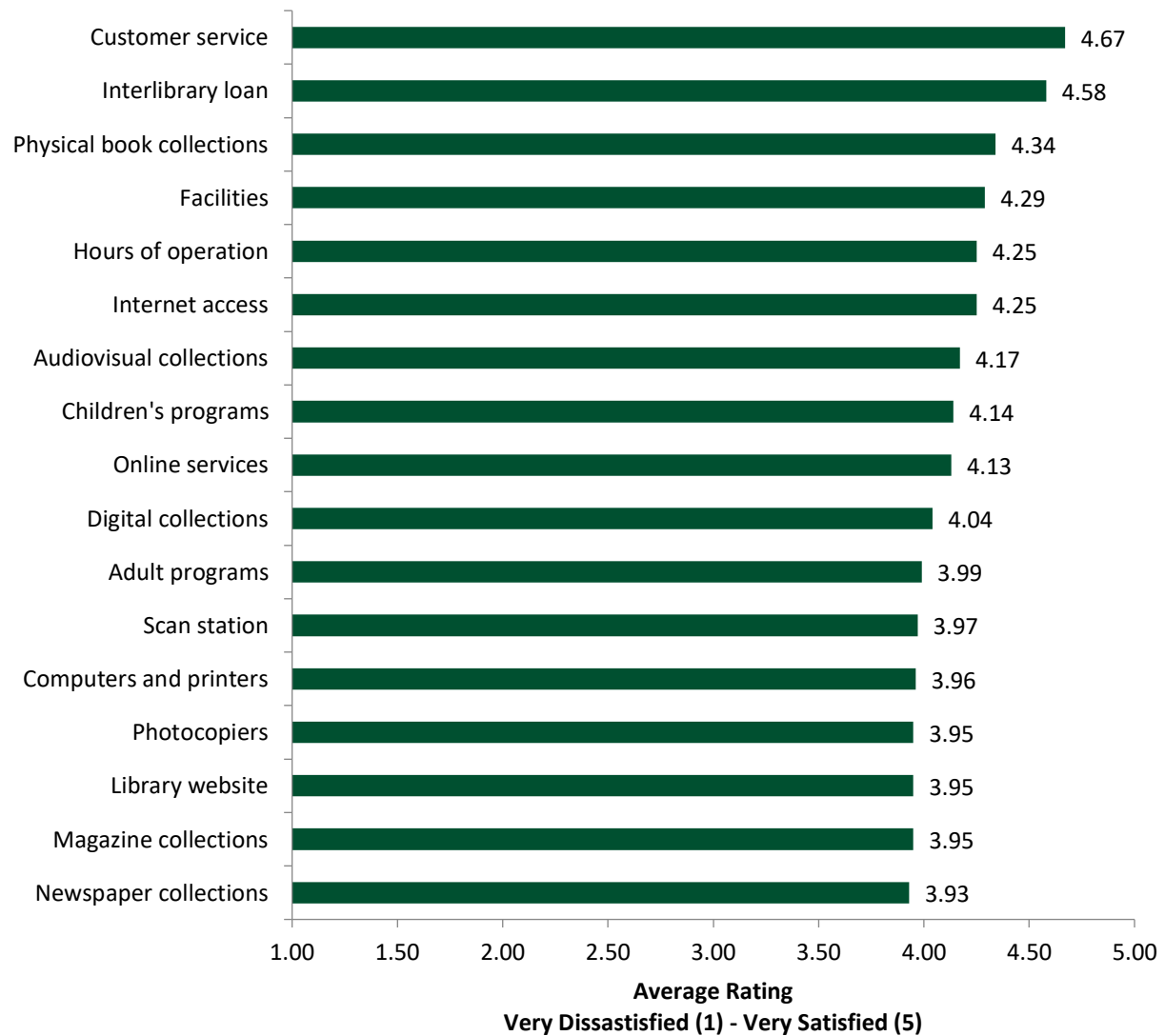
As part of their strategic planning process, the Highland Park Public Library (HPPL) conducted a SurveyMonkey survey to learn more about their patrons: what collections, services, programs, and spaces they value; and what they would like to see from the Library in the future. A total of 548 community members completed the survey.

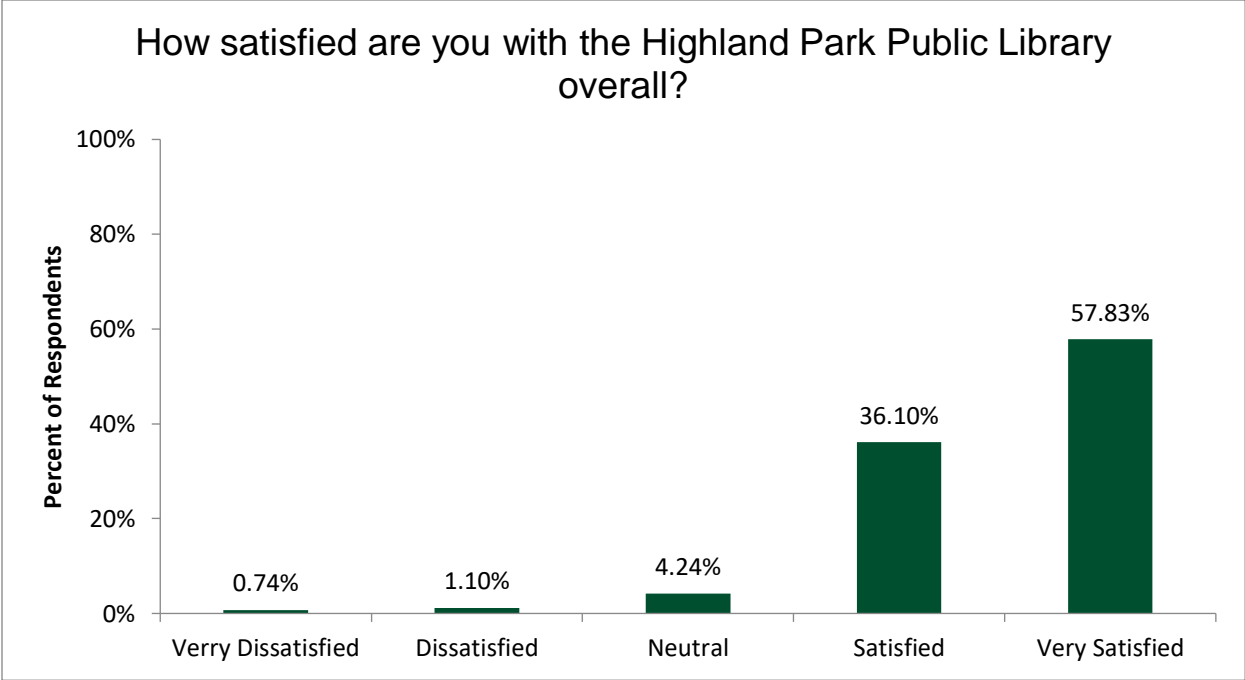


**FINDINGS:**

- A majority of respondents (95%) have a card from the HPPL, with over half of respondents (55%) visiting at least weekly.

## How satisfied are you with each of the following Library services?

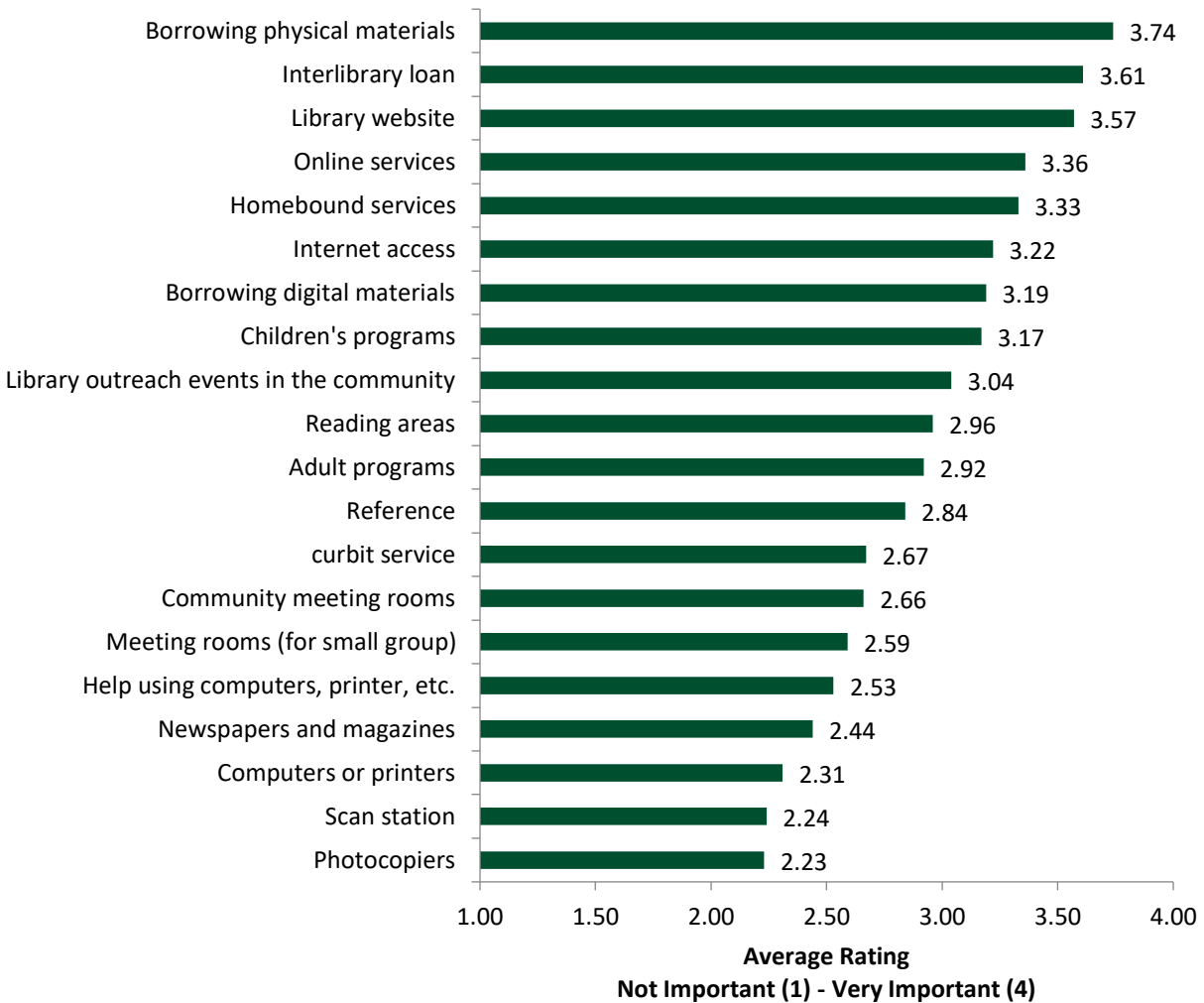




**FINDINGS:**

- Respondents are satisfied with the current Library services, and a majority of respondents (94%) are satisfied or very satisfied with the Library overall.
- For the same question in the 2018 community survey 95% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the Library overall.

## How important are each of the following Library services to you?



### FINDINGS:

- Respondents rated traditional library services as most important (borrowing physical materials, interlibrary loan, library website); with hardware located in the Library less important (computers or printers, scan stations, photocopiers).
- In the 2018 community survey, respondents were asked to rate the value of various Library services and programs to themselves and their families. The top five responses were: knowledgeable library staff, bestsellers and popular books on a variety of subjects in print, audio, and e-book formats, DVDs and Blu-rays of the latest movies and old favorites, popular books and educational materials for youth

pre-school through high school, and lectures by authors and notable speakers.

- When asked in 2018 about the value of various Library services and programs to the community, the top five responses were: knowledgeable library staff, popular books and education materials for youth pre-school through high school, bestsellers and popular books on a variety of subjects in print, audio, and e-book formats, summer reading club for kids, and weekly storytimes for preschoolers.

#### What do you like most about the Library?

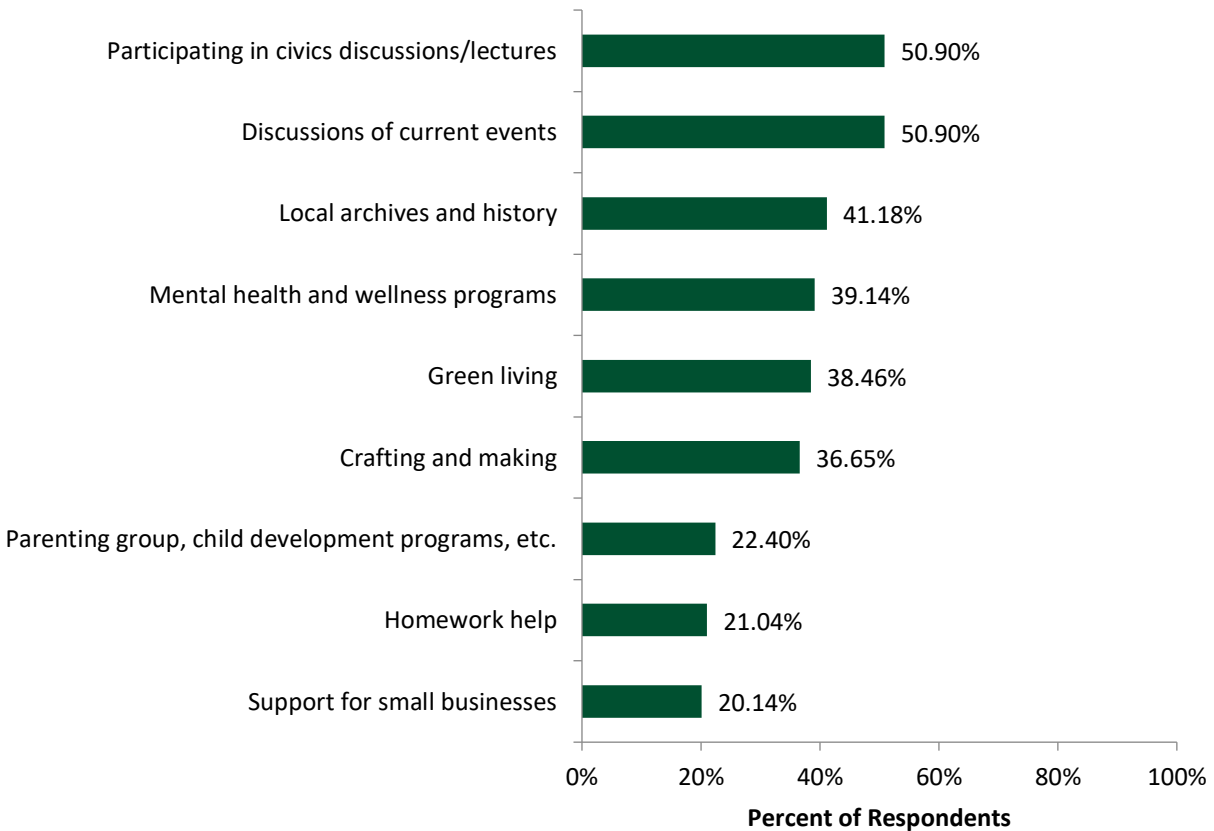
- Respondents like the following **collections** at the Library: great selection and availability of adult and children’s books; DVDs; CDs; magazines; eBooks; eAudiobooks; book displays (e.g., new fiction, new nonfiction); Staff Recommendations shelf; Book Club shelf; free shelf of publisher’s sample books; and local history
- Respondents like the following **programs** at the Library: concerts; children and youth programming; story time; take home activities; staycation boxes; summer reading program; author presentations; lectures; classes; virtual adult programs; Zoom Shakespeare Project; and traveling train layout
- Respondents like the following **services** provided by the Library: media lab; interlibrary loan; online services; hold services; research assistance; Libby; Kanopy; Hoopla; Overdrive; Roku; curbside services; computers; internet; prints; scanners; technology services; reference services; book sales; and account update emails
- Respondents like the following aspects of the Library’s **building and grounds**: beautiful building and architecture; natural light; calm; enriching; quiet atmosphere; welcoming; cozy; feels like home; bright and comfortable reading areas; comfortable chairs; front room with the fireplace; meeting rooms; layout and organization; spacious; space to work; kids’ section; space for study groups; large windows; convenient location; parking; and landscaping
- Respondents like the following **other** aspects of the Library: friendly, well-trained, knowledgeable, helpful staff; no checkout limits; automatic renewal; automated check in and check out; easy check out and return process; removal of fines; community focus; webpage; purchase requests; safe; free; accessible; reciprocal visiting program; and the hours

#### How could the Library or its services be improved?

- Respondents would like to see the following improvements with the **collections**: wider selection of digital books, magazines, and newspapers; additional copies of digital books; more new mysteries; new bestsellers section; bilingual books for children; expanded selection of movies, music, and video games; free music

<p>downloads; better organization of graphic novels; larger display of recent acquisitions; and a different system for browsing children’s books</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents would like to see the following improvements with <b>programs</b>: expand adult, young adult, and children’s programs; activities for older kids (e.g., chess, games, book club); weekend programming for children with working parents; programming for Latinx community; topical based programming (e.g., computer literacy, food, writing, history, art, travel, music, civic education, parenting); classes on how to use library services; virtual programming; and no cost programming</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents would like to see the following improvements in <b>services</b>: makerspace and maker tools; expanded library of things; services for shut-ins; tutoring; updated reference binders in the children’s area; increased time on computers; updated equipment; expanded staff recommendations; shorter eBook borrowing time; faster interlibrary loan; more accurate catalog search feature; more recommendations on the website; and expanded databases</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents would like to see the following improvements to the <b>buildings and grounds</b>: bigger building; better use of the lobby space; repurpose the Brenner Room into flex space; better space for presentations and performances; increased number of meeting rooms; more usable youth section; create more comfortable spaces for reading; more work areas; more power outlets in the reading room; café; free meeting space for non-profits; high shelves difficult to access; more inviting elevator; more accessible returns; computer and study tables in a quieter section; designated cell phone area; more parking; and repair potholes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents would like to see the following improvements in <b>other</b> areas: longer hours; weekend hours; early morning hours; expanded marketing and social media presence; removal of overdue fines for children’s materials; bilingual staff; expanded staff; friendlier staff with more training on customer services; reduce wait time for checkouts; enforcement of quiet rules; more timely return of phone calls; outreach to families that don’t use the library; welcoming environment for Spanish speakers; outreach to Latinx community; improved catalog search function; mobile library card; more intuitive website; more visible login button on the landing page; website redesign for accessibility; and more hyperlinked icons rather than URLs</li> </ul>

We are thinking about future Library programs, services, and partnerships! Which of the following are topics or services that you or your family would like to see at the Library? Please check all that apply.



**Other topics or services that you or your family would like to see at the Library:**

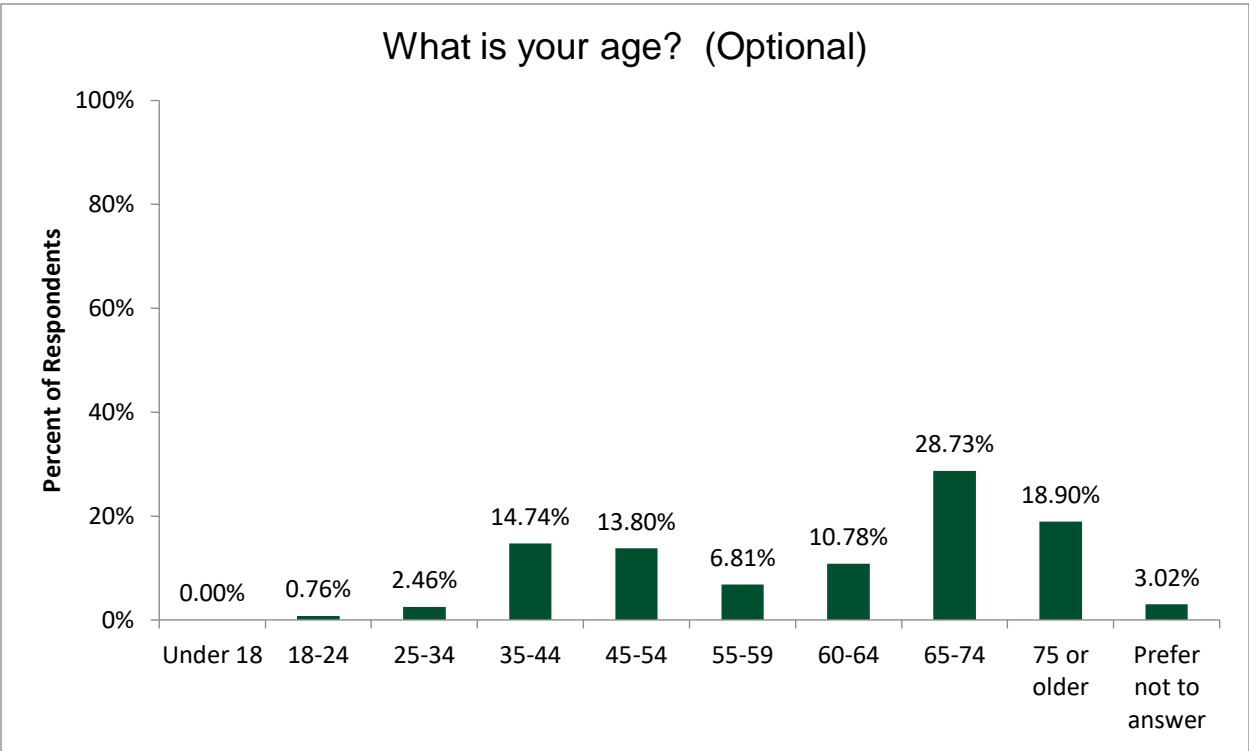
- Respondents would like to see the following topical programs:
  - Children: afterschool programs for D112 kids; visits by children’s authors; and older youth activities
  - Fine arts: art displays; poetry readings; chamber music; movie showings, including foreign films; theater; concerts; dramatic readings; and Klezmer
  - Books: book discussions; and author visits
  - Classes/lectures: series hosted by university scholars; nature talks; personal finance; wellness and weight loss; language instruction (French, Spanish, Italian); career classes; cultural education; celebrating diversity; discussions of faith groups; planning for retirement; and technology
  - Hobbies: photography; digital archiving classes; chess club; card game classes; exercise classes; and dance classes



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Other: community engagement; early adult social groups; and virtual program offerings</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respondents would like to see the following additions: travelogues; book reviews; community resources; tutoring; technology assistance; volunteer opportunities; staff member dedicated to genealogical research; expand network for interlibrary loans to include Chicago Public Library; new technology; food; and quiet areas</li> </ul>

<b>FINDINGS:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Just over half (51%) of respondents would like to participate in discussions of civics and current events.</li> <li>● Less than a quarter of respondents (20-22%) would like parenting or child development programs, homework help, or support for small businesses. This is likely a result of the age distribution of respondents.</li> </ul>
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What do you hope to spend more time on in the next year?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respondents plan to spend time in pursuit of <b>intellectual growth</b> through reading; listening to audiobooks; listening to podcasts; learning languages; learning about retirement; learning computer skills; learning how to start a website/blog; learning how to play canasta; learning photoshop; studying for licensing exam; taking writing classes; taking graduate courses; attending adult programs; attending lectures; and attending parent and child development programs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respondents plan to spend time in pursuit of <b>hobbies</b>, including traveling; going on vacation; gardening; crafting; weaving; knitting; quilting; embroidery; painting; music; watching movies; cooking; writing; photography; and technology</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respondents plan to spend time with their <b>families</b>; visiting family; and visiting grandchildren</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respondents plan to spend time focused on <b>self-improvement</b> with physical activity; health, fitness, and nutrition; mental health, self-care, and de-stressing; mindfulness; yoga; spiritual growth; and green living</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respondents plan to spend time being <b>social</b> by attending children’s events; socializing; spending time with friends; making more friends; online dating; attending the theater; and attending concerts</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respondents plan to spend time focused on <b>others</b>, including volunteering; helping charities; registering people to vote; ministry work; racial and environmental justice; criminal justice reform; political elections; and geopolitics</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respondents plan to spend time in <b>organizational</b> pursuits, such as organizing their life; home improvements and organization; organizing photographs and digital archives; and decluttering</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respondents plan to spend time in <b>research</b> focused on genealogy; using the archives; and history</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Respondents plan to spend time focused on their <b>careers</b> through business planning; starting a business; finding a new job; and finding work-life balance</li> </ul>



**FINDINGS:** • Over half of respondents (58%) are at or near retirement age.

**OVERALL SURVEY FINDINGS:**

- Based on the survey data, respondents are very supportive of the Highland Park Public Library. The high praise for the staff and customer service, along with the collections, programs, and services offered are likely contributors to the frequency with which they visit.
- While more space is usually desired, respondents showed great appreciation for the current building, both from an architectural design standpoint as well as the inviting atmosphere.
- Given that a majority of respondents plan to focus on reading and learning over the next year, the Library is in a prime position to support those goals. It might be worth focusing on the suggestion to expand marketing and social media presence as they may be others in the community with similar goals.

## Focus Groups

In August 2021, the Library held a series of in-person and virtual focus groups with community stakeholders. A total of 35 people participated in the sessions.

In each focus group session, participants discussed why the Library was so important to them and to the community at large. Participants described the Library as a place for discovery, connection, equity, and community pride. They emphasized the community's need for resources like books and programming to support lifelong learning and to encourage a love of reading. The beautiful physical space of the Library gives people of all ages and backgrounds a unique space to study and play safely. Multiple people voiced a sense of ownership of the Library as "their place" or "home." Participants with young children raved about the many ways the Library supports families with programming and collections. HPPL's staff were cited as the libraries greatest resource. In the participants' eyes they did a great job during the pandemic. They are welcoming, proactive, knowledgeable, and eager to help.

Participants identified the Library as a "Hub of Community," a place unlike any other where people can connect across ages, ideologies, and economic status. The Library was called "the last great equalizer" because of its open access to resources and programming for everyone. Participants believed that the Library could bring people together for civil discourse and increase civic participation among community members. The Library could play an active role in helping people understand people who are different than themselves. Given the Library's welcoming environment and great meeting spaces, participants noted that more community groups could use the space for meetings and events. The Library could work with the Chamber of Commerce for "welcome baskets" so new community members know quickly of the Library's services.

Part of bringing a community together is ensuring everyone can equally access resources. Participants listed many ways in which the Library could help increase access to information and resources for everyone:

- Welcoming staff and space
- Partnerships with other institutions
- Information literacy programs
- Better parking
- More outreach
- Expanded Library building
- Programming for all ages
- More large print materials
- No fines
- More digital access to materials to serve homebound people
- Improved website
- Technology and spaces adapted to serve people with disabilities

Libraries play a special role in society by promoting reading and lifelong learning. Regarding reading, the Library can help develop connections between people and books, ensuring that collections are diverse enough for everyone to see themselves in characters' stories. Some

other suggestions included encouraging parents to read to their children, promoting a “One Book” program and reading contests, and hosting book clubs, storytelling hours, and author readings.

Besides reading programs, the Library can encourage lifelong learning by helping people develop new interests through diverse programming. Participants’ suggestions included:

- Community-led programming (tons of arts and music talent in town)
- Foreign language and yoga classes
- Book groups + book group leader training
- Civic forums with local community leaders
- Collaborations with historical societies, schools, and other institutions
- Trivia
- Picnics and open houses
- History programs
- Lending closet
- Tool Library
- Makerspace
- ELL programs
- Tutoring
- Local news programming

For lifelong learning, it was important to participants that the Library attract more adults with programming that did not just revolve around the needs of young people and senior citizens. Participants suggested expansion of the Library building and parking options in order to attract more people to Library programming. Timing of events is also important to consider when trying to serve certain audiences. Despite the many suggestions for improved programming, participants emphasized that the Library did a great job with virtual programming during the pandemic and suggested that virtual programming exist indefinitely.

Because libraries serve the entire community, it takes a lot of work to let everyone know how the Library can support them. For the Library to reach more people, participants suggested that the Library spend more time at community events and schools, collaborate with other institutions and community groups for cross-promotion, and incentivize participation with the Library through contests and events. Participants had ideas about having free books at train stations and hosting book sales. Although the Library serves everyone, multiple participants say the Library should focus on reaching new families in town. Messaging from the Library should amplify its strengths and core purposes better and should better promote all the Library’s offerings.

Overall, participants are incredibly proud of HPPL and find it a necessity for the community. They do see opportunity for the Library to expand its parking and physical space and better serve certain populations like adults (20s-50s) and people with disabilities. To serve more audiences, the Library could increase collaborations with other community institutions and diversify its programming. The physical space of the Library should be welcoming and safe—people should feel comfortable with staff and with other community members inside. Some

participants worried about children's safety in the Library. They suggested more oversight of the children's area and of young people's internet usage. Because the Library has been a vital part of the participants' lives, they want the Library to increase its visibility in the community through more outreach and marketing efforts. There was an intense desire from participants to feel connected to their community and they felt like the HPPL was the best place to do so.