Spring Lake District Library Learning Report

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Introduction

As part of the Spring Lake District Library's strategic planning, we have compiled this Learning Report to better understand the community and identify trends that might be important for the future. Preliminary findings presented to the Board on December 4, 2019 and completed Learning Report presented in March 2020.

Data for the Learning Report was collected from the following sources:

- A community survey conducted via SurveyMonkey from November 3 to 22;
- A teen survey conducted via SurveyMonkey in December 2020;
- An environmental scan and SOAR (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results) scan conducted by staff on December 4;
- Community focus group sessions conducted on January 6, 2020 and individual interviews conducted in January 2020;
- A Board and staff survey conducted in December 2019 through January 2020; and
- Community information and demographics collected from a wide variety of course.

Below are the findings across the data sources. This report is presented not as a study of statistical significance, but as context and learning into the strategic planning process to spark further discussion.

Community and Library Context

Spring Lake District Library (SLDL) is in the heart of Spring Lake, Michigan, serving the Village of Spring Lake and Spring Lake Township (population 15,047, 2019 census data) in Ottawa County. In addition, neighboring Crockery Township (population 4,404, 2019 census data) contracts with SLDL for library service. The population of Spring Lake Township has increased by 5.2% since 2010, while the Village's population decreased 7.6% between 2000 and 2010, though 2018 estimates show a 7.3% increase in Village population. 2010 Census data showed the median age at 44.8 years and that around 50% of population was over 45 years old. SLDL is a Class 4 library (serving between 12,000 and 25,999 people) and serves the Village of Spring Lake and Spring Lake Township. The library houses a collection of over 90,000 items, has public access computers, and vibrant programming for residents of all ages in a cozy, comfortable facility.

Estimated median household income in 2017 is slightly lower than estimates for the state of Michigan ($49,612 compared to $54,909), but estimated median house or condo value is slightly above that of the state ($158,701 compared to $155,700). City-Data.com reports that the March 2019 cost of living index of 84.5, which is less than the U.S. average of 100. The overall poverty rate is low, reported as 5.7% in 2017.

Within the 79 Class 4 libraries in the state (2018-2019 statistics), SLDL stands out in a number of ways:

	SLDL	Class 4 Average
Facility size (sq. ft.)	34,500	17,00
Annual operating hours	3,052	3,000
Total collection use	236,095	113,409
Circulation per capita	12.8	6.13
Total materials per capita	8.55	6.74
Total print materials	74,555	53,541
Total collection (physical/electronic units)	156,060	109,204
Total library visits	160,409	80,168
Website visits	49,065	43,626
Public computer sessions	14,862	13,719
Total programs	445	365
Total program attendance	13,799	8,425
Active registered borrowers	7,488	7,212
Staffing FTE	18.05	9.1

The Class 4 library average operating millage levied (for those libraries with this levy) is 1.3086 putting SLDL just slightly above the average for operating millage levied at 1.7248. Considering the high volume of visits, circulation, and programs, the amount levied is used to respond to a higher demand for services above what the average Class 4 library experiences across the state. Higher property values combined with other income sources translate to a higher total operating income than Class 4 libraries (around $1.6 million compared to just under $750,000 average for the state; SLDL per capita operating income of $88.21 compared to $43.13 average per capita operating income for Class 4 libraries in the state).

The higher volume of usage also translates to higher expenditures (and more staff as indicated in the table above), which is to be expected given how SLDL greatly exceeds the average Class 4 library statistics in many ways (see above table):

	SLDL	Class 4 Average
Collections	$135,118	$64,211
Staff	$898,390	$405,407
Overall Budget	$1,386,933	$643,819

The library has not participated in the Library of Michigan's Quality Services Audit Checklist (QSAC) program to date. This voluntary program allows libraries to consider their management standards in eight different areas and determine if they are at the Essential, Enhance, or Excellent level. Completing the certification process does not increase funding or enhance standing (besides bragging rights), so stepping through the process is likely a tedious and unnecessary task. However, the measures (core and elective) are worth reviewing every three years to identify gaps or potential areas of growth as they are recognized as best practice for libraries in Michigan.

Environmental Scan

An environmental scan considers the broader context in which an organization exists and identifies key issues that potentially impact the future of the organization. For this planning process, elements of the environmental scan were identified during the Board and staff meetings on December 4, 2019 and are summarized below.

POLITICAL	ECONOMIC	SOCIAL
• Political divisions • Political unrest • Census 2020 • Upcoming elections • Millage vote • Mistrust	• Downtown redevelopment • Library millage • Stagnant wages • Minimum wage increase • Housing costs • Tourism • Traffic • Increase in property taxes • Low unemployment	• Conservative community • Lack of diversity • Less in-person social interaction, more isolation • Young people not as connected to the library • Family oriented community • Retired population • Summer population increase • Divide in socio-economic status • Born here vs from elsewhere
TECHNOLOGY	**LEGAL**	**LIBRARY SECTOR**
• Swift changes • Still a digital divide • Assumption that everyone has access and is skilled • Privacy • Safety • Technology making us *more* isolated • Digital literacy • Understanding tech needs	• TIF • Legalized marijuana • Gun laws • Millage renewal • Crockery Township contract renewal for library service	• Increase in digital services • Fine free • Diverse programming • How to reach non-users • Outreach • Homebound • Increased awareness • How to stay relevant

SOAR Analysis

A SOAR analysis (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results) narrows the focus from an environmental scan to consider the organization specifically. This exercise helps identify potential directions to explore during the strategic planning process. SOAR elements were identified during the Board and staff meetings on December 4, 2019 and are summarized below.

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
• Customer service • Building & spaces • Programs • Collections	• More outreach • More programs • Increased partnerships

• Receptive to suggestions, forward thinking • Cooperative with other organizations and libraries • Staff and their experience • Technology • Location	• Redesigned space for better flow and visibility, more meeting space • Show the impact in the community • Connecting people • Promoting diversity (in the broad sense)
ASPIRATIONS • Show that the library is a good value • The hub of the community • Community pride • Growing young readers • Unified messaging • Relevant, important part of the community • Fiscally responsible	**RESULTS** • More usage, cardholders • More grass-roots promotion of the library • Quality of life is increased • People have a habit of coming to the library, establish habits with young people • More parking • Successful millage vote • People increase skills and knowledge • People are entertained • Positive reputation • Better strategic partnerships • Increased awareness of what the library offers

Community Survey

As part of their strategic planning process, the Spring Lake District Library (SLDL) conducted a survey to learn more about their patrons: what they value about the library; what collections, services, programs, and spaces they use; and what they would like to see from the library in the future.

A total of 524 community members responded to the SurveyMonkey survey. Based on current census data, respondents to the survey did not mirror the Spring Lake population:

- A higher percentage of women completed the survey (75%) than found in Spring Lake (51%)
- A higher percentage of older adults (age 65 and older) completed the survey (34%) than found in Spring Lake (20%)

For Question #12, responses were recalculated to provide a more accurate average rating. Responses for "Do not use/need this" and "Was unaware that this was offered by the library" were removed from the calculations to provide an actual value rating for the library collections, services, and programs.

For the open-ended comments, two different processes were used. For questions where a majority of the responses were only mentioned by one individual (e.g., What can the library do to increase your satisfaction?), the ideas were grouped together, and themes were created. For questions where a majority of the responses fell into a few main ideas (e.g., If you do not have a library card, please indicate the reasons why.), the ideas were tallied, and the most frequent responses presented in the report.

Where do you live in the Spring Lake District Library service area?

Percent of Respondents

- Spring Lake Village: 18.80%
- Spring Lake Township: 56.80%
- Crockery Township: 11.60%
- I do not live in the SLDL service area: 12.80%
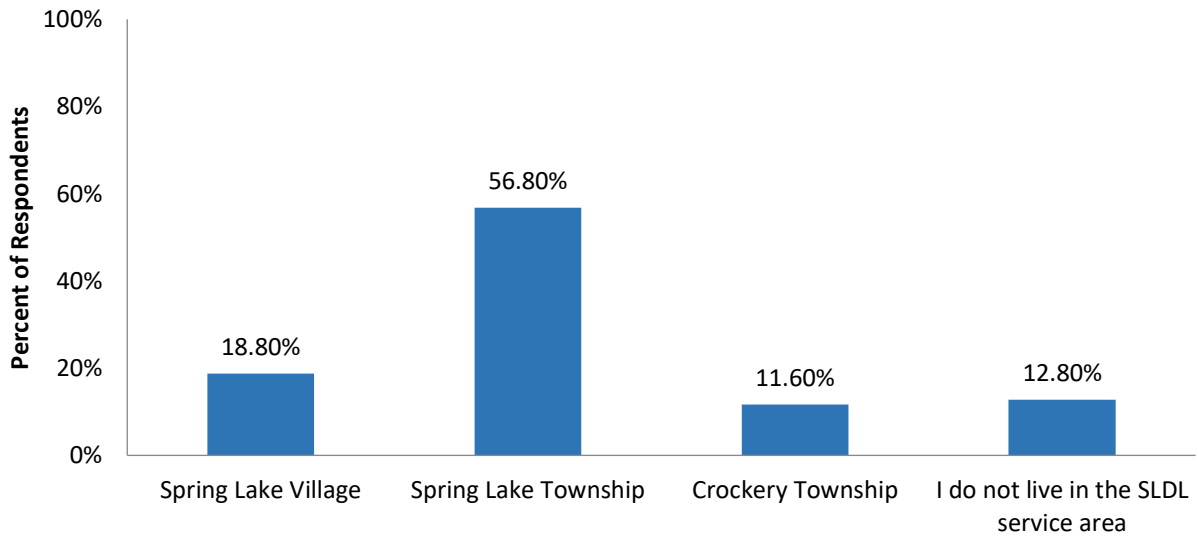
Have you or has anyone else in your household used (in-person or online) the Spring Lake District Library in the past year?

Percent of Respondents

- Yes: 97.80%
- No: 2.20%

How often do you use the Spring Lake District Library?
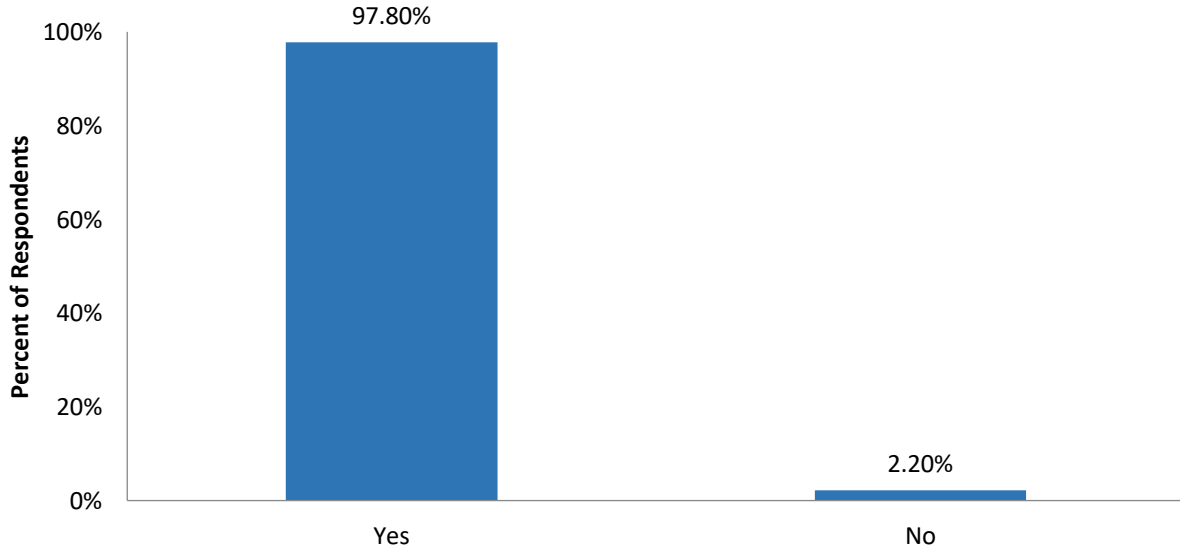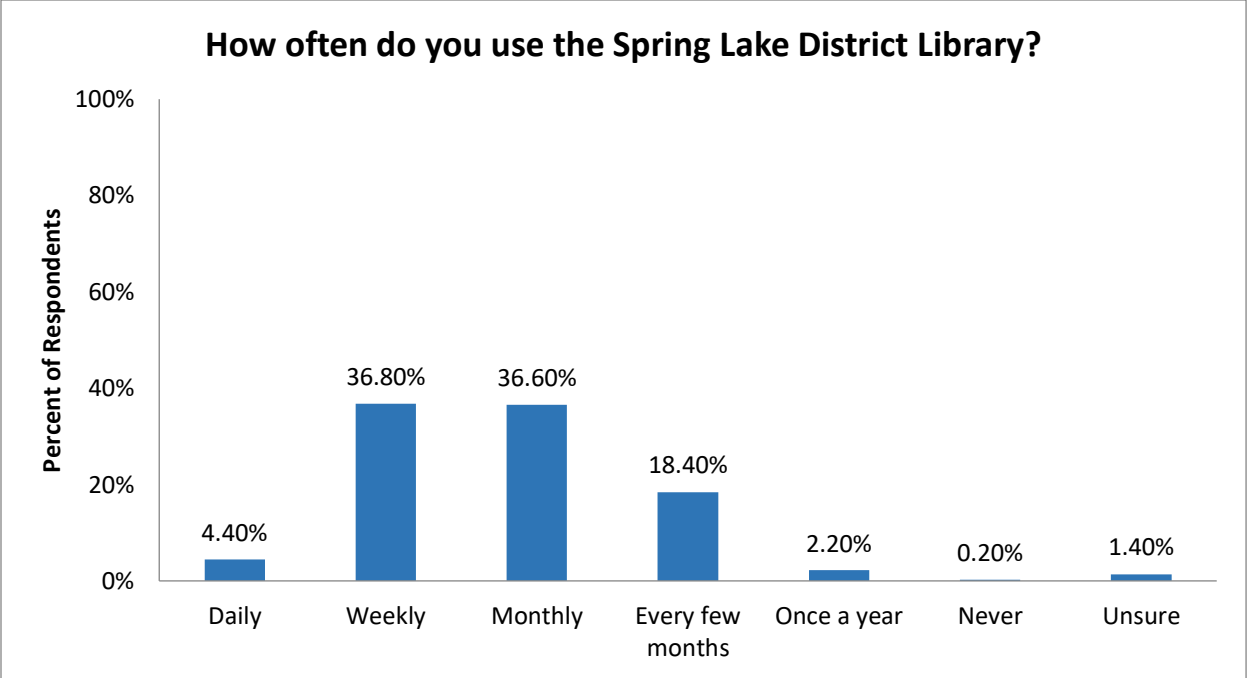
| FINDINGS: | • A majority of respondents (78%) use the library at least once a month. |

Do you or does anyone in your household have a library card?
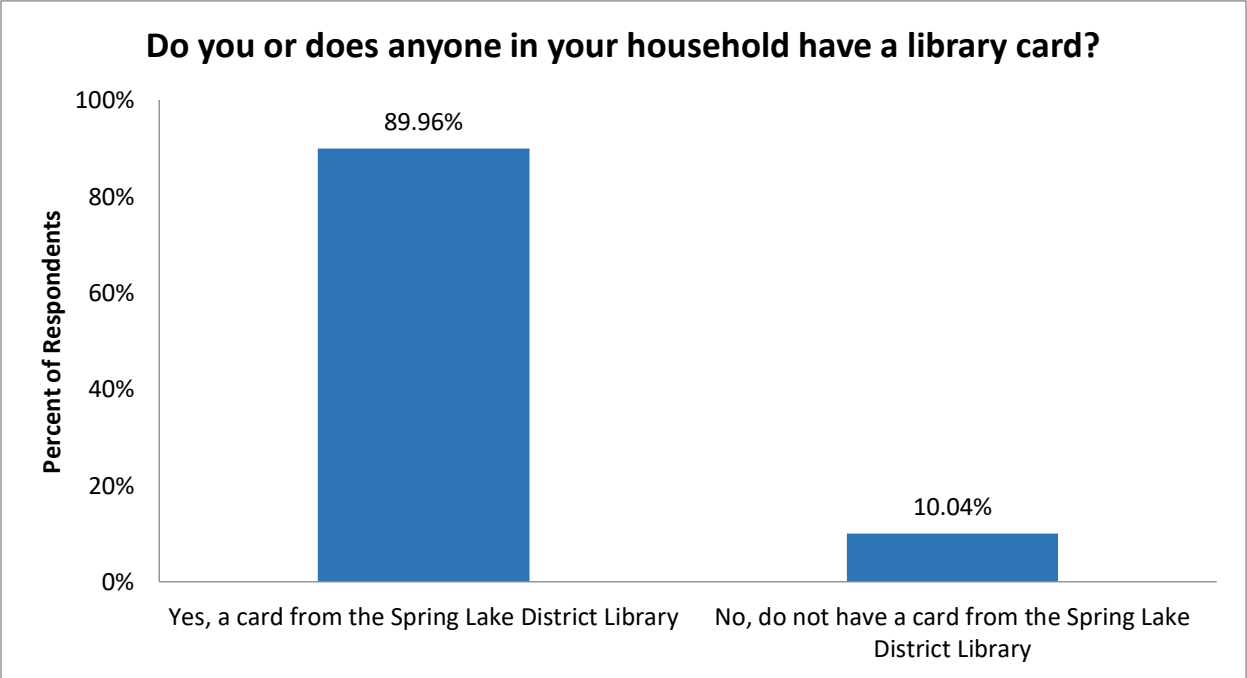
If you do not have a library card, please indicate the reason(s) below:
• Have a card from another library (Loutit District Library, Fruitport District Library)
• Recently moved to the area
• Not a priority

Please pick your top 5 reasons for using the library.
High ranking = 5

Reason	Average Rating
To borrow books and other materials	4.22
To use the children's area	3.46
To stream or download materials	3.35
To use a meeting room	3.15
To attend a program	3.07
To get information or to conduct research	2.92
To use computers or WiFi	2.69
To read	2.67
To use online resources	2.65
To receive tutoring	2.53
To study	2.53
To accompany someone else or meet a friend	2.50
To enjoy a comfortable environment	2.36
To use copiers, scanner or fax machine	2.35
To ask a librarian for help	2.32

Average Rating

Other reasons for using the library:
• To buy used books
• To pick up free magazines
• To tutor students
• To donate books
• To shred papers

FINDINGS:	• Traditional services (e.g., borrowing books and other materials, using the children's area) were the main reasons for using the library. • Respondents are less likely to use the library as a destination to spend time or meet someone.

If you do not use the library regularly, why not? Please mark all answers that apply.

Reason	Percent
Other (please specify)	32.89%
I buy my own books, magazines, movies, and music.	32.89%
I am too busy and don't have time.	17.11%
Everything I want/need I can get from my phone.	17.11%
I use a neighboring public library.	17.11%
The hours don't work with my schedule	6.58%
I don't want to pay my fines/late fees.	5.26%
I don't know what the library has to offer me.	3.95%
I use the library at my school/college.	3.95%
I am unable to pay my fines/late fees.	2.63%
I don't have any transportation.	1.32%
The library is too far from home.	1.32%
The library doesn't have anything I want or need.	0.00%
I don't know where the library is located.	0.00%

Percent of Respondents

FINDINGS:	• Not using the library regularly is mainly due to owning materials that one would normally acquire from the library, busyness, and more convenient access to materials (either from a phone or a neighboring library).

If you use another public library, please specify which one and briefly describe why you use that library and indicate what you use at that library.
Libraries used: Loutit (Grand Haven), Zeeland, Fruitport, Hackley Library, Herrick, Hudsonville, Muskegon Heights Branch Library, Allendale Township Library, Norton Shores, Coopersville, Holland, Port Charlotte (Florida), and Green Valley (AZ).
Reasons used: More convenient, close to work or shopping, larger selection of books, quicker access to books, enjoy the environment, near retirement home, like programs at other library, enjoy specific staff member, free video rentals, genealogy research, reference materials, movies, study rooms, covered parking, more hours, Book Club in a Bag, computers, better PC monitors, no fines, audiobooks, or overall atmosphere.

The Spring Lake District Library offers a wide variety of services and programs. Please respond below about your awareness of these services and programs.

Technology for in-library use, like Ancestry.com and Adobe Creative Suite
- No, I was not aware: 52.52%
- Yes, I am aware, but don't really know what it is: 6.88%
- Yes, I am aware, but do not use/need: 33.26%
- Yes, I am aware and use: 7.34%

Library of Things, like sewing machines and board games
- No, I was not aware: 50.57%
- Yes, I am aware, but don't really know what it is: 4.12%
- Yes, I am aware, but do not use/need: 34.55%
- Yes, I am aware and use: 10.76%

Online resources like Consumer Reports or Mango Languages
- No, I was not aware: 39.26%
- Yes, I am aware, but don't really know what it is: 8.78%
- Yes, I am aware, but do not use/need: 33.49%
- Yes, I am aware and use: 18.48%

WiFi hotspots for checkout (take the internet with you)
- No, I was not aware: 36.70%
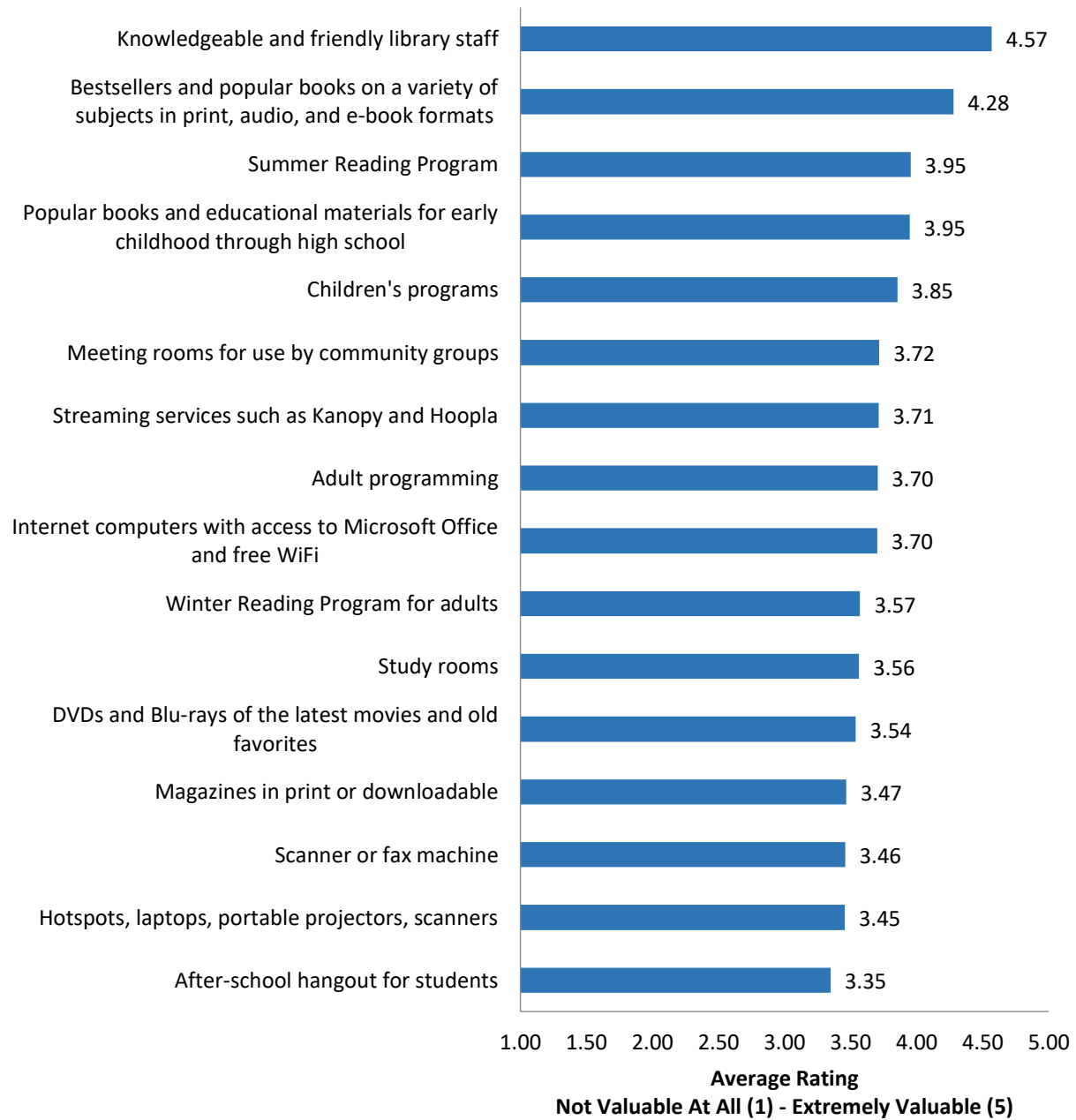- Yes, I am aware, but don't really know what it is: 6.88%
- Yes, I am aware, but do not use/need: 46.56%
- Yes, I am aware and use: 9.86%

Technology equipment, like iPads, laptops, VHS to DVD converters
- No, I was not aware: 34.17%
- Yes, I am aware, but don't really know what it is: 3.90%
- Yes, I am aware, but do not use/need: 48.62%
- Yes, I am aware and use: 13.30%

New release movies
- No, I was not aware: 26.30%
- Yes, I am aware, but don't really know what it is: 2.95%
- Yes, I am aware, but do not use/need: 41.95%
- Yes, I am aware and use: 28.80%

Apps for eBooks and streaming services
- No, I was not aware: 18.43%
- Yes, I am aware, but don't really know what it is: 10.60%
- Yes, I am aware, but do not use/need: 32.03%
- Yes, I am aware and use: 38.94%

Meeting rooms
- No, I was not aware: 7.57%
- Yes, I am aware, but don't really know what it is: 4.13%
- Yes, I am aware, but do not use/need: 59.86%
- Yes, I am aware and use: 28.44%

Programs for adults
- No, I was not aware: 4.97%
- Yes, I am aware, but don't really know what it is: 9.29%
- Yes, I am aware, but do not use/need: 35.42%
- Yes, I am aware and use: 50.32%

Children's programs
- No, I was not aware: 0.93%
- Yes, I am aware, but don't really know what it is: 2.56%
- Yes, I am aware, but do not use/need: 65.97%
- Yes, I am aware and use: 30.54%

Legend:
- No, I was not aware
- Yes, I am aware, but don't really know what it is
- Yes, I am aware, but do not use/need
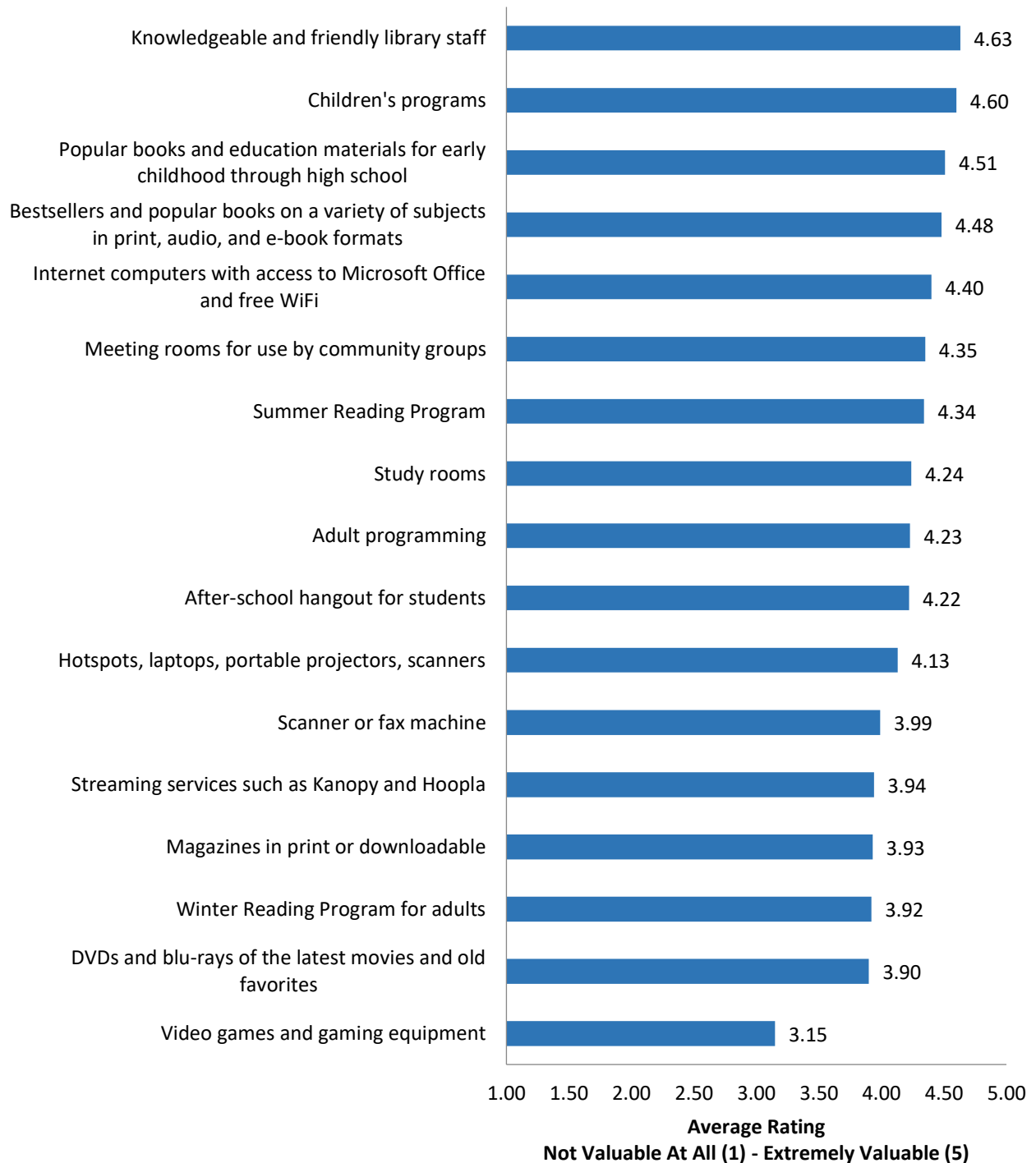- Yes, I am aware and use

Percent of Respondents

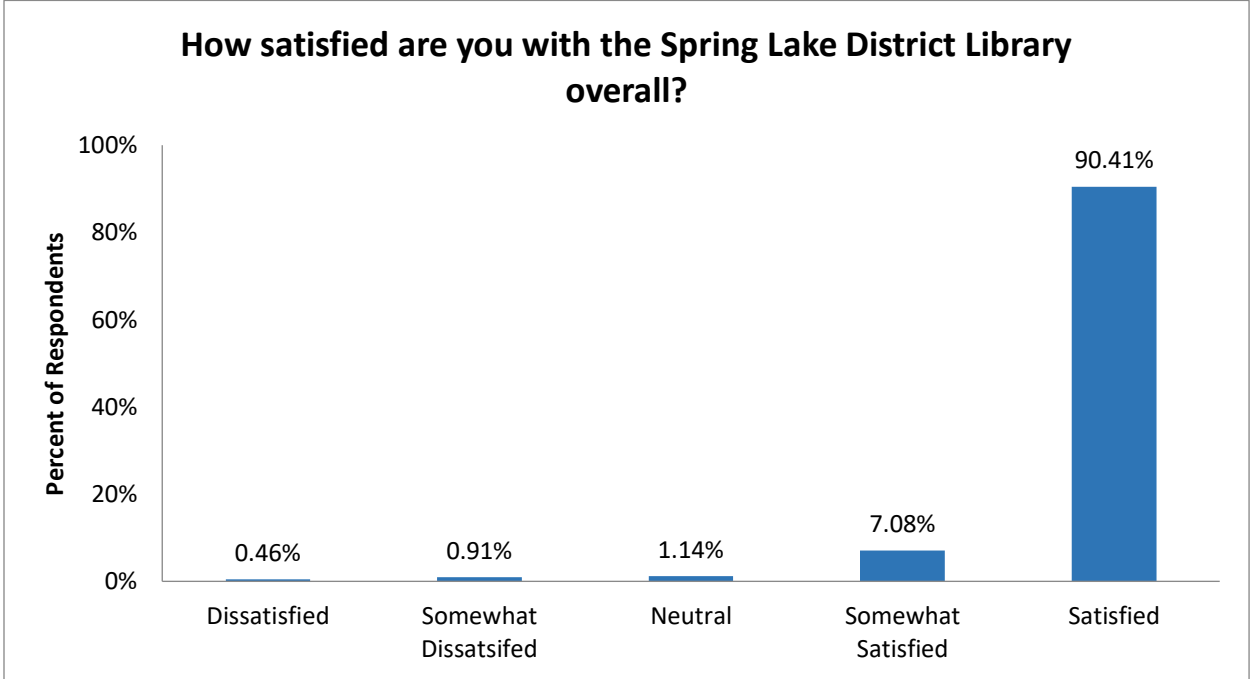| FINDINGS:	• One-third to one-half of respondents were unaware of technology-related services. One-third to nearly one-half of respondents were aware of the technology-related services, but they do not use or need them.

Please rate the following collections, services, and programs in terms of their value to YOU PERSONALLY or to YOUR FAMILY.

Service/Program	Average Rating
Knowledgeable and friendly library staff	4.57
Bestsellers and popular books on a variety of subjects in print, audio, and e-book formats	4.28
Summer Reading Program	3.95
Popular books and educational materials for early childhood through high school	3.95
Children's programs	3.85
Meeting rooms for use by community groups	3.72
Streaming services such as Kanopy and Hoopla	3.71
Adult programming	3.70
Internet computers with access to Microsoft Office and free WiFi	3.70
Winter Reading Program for adults	3.57
Study rooms	3.56
DVDs and Blu-rays of the latest movies and old favorites	3.54
Magazines in print or downloadable	3.47
Scanner or fax machine	3.46
Hotspots, laptops, portable projectors, scanners	3.45
After-school hangout for students	3.35

Average Rating
Not Valuable At All (1) - Extremely Valuable (5)

Please rate the following collections, services, and programs in terms of their value to THE COMMUNITY.

Item	Average Rating
Knowledgeable and friendly library staff	4.63
Children's programs	4.60
Popular books and education materials for early childhood through high school	4.51
Bestsellers and popular books on a variety of subjects in print, audio, and e-book formats	4.48
Internet computers with access to Microsoft Office and free WiFi	4.40
Meeting rooms for use by community groups	4.35
Summer Reading Program	4.34
Study rooms	4.24
Adult programming	4.23
After-school hangout for students	4.22
Hotspots, laptops, portable projectors, scanners	4.13
Scanner or fax machine	3.99
Streaming services such as Kanopy and Hoopla	3.94
Magazines in print or downloadable	3.93
Winter Reading Program for adults	3.92
DVDs and blu-rays of the latest movies and old favorites	3.90
Video games and gaming equipment	3.15

Average Rating
Not Valuable At All (1) - Extremely Valuable (5)

FINDINGS:	• Respondents identified knowledgeable and friendly library staff, bestsellers and popular books, and popular books and educational materials for early childhood through high school as the most valuable aspects of the library for themselves as well as the community.

How satisfied are you with the Spring Lake District Library overall?

Bar chart — Percent of Respondents:
- Dissatisfied: 0.46%
- Somewhat Dissatsifed: 0.91%
- Neutral: 1.14%
- Somewhat Satisfied: 7.08%
- Satisfied: 90.41%

FINDINGS:	• Nearly all respondents (97%) are somewhat satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.

What can the library do to increase your satisfaction?

- **Increase programs:** After school programs, playgroups with emphasis on learning, more for teens and tweens, more adult programs, wide variety of times for programs so people with work schedules can attend, toddler activities in the evening or Saturday morning, lower adult reading program goals, movie nights, book club, more adult craft programs, longer summer and winter reading programs, more tech classes, programs for 30-40 year olds, career education and academic/science programs for teens, pair youth and retired people in a mentoring program, and more music programs.

- **Increase collections and access:** Have more new release books available to reduce hold times, allow audiobook renewal, more eBooks, free rental of movies, more classic audiobooks, more nonfiction, more instructions about how to use online card catalog and online resources, more reference materials, software checkout, classic books in teen section, more new movie releases, reduce fines, more travel books, more diversity in books (LGBTQ+), leave new titles in the new section for longer than 6 months, get Money Magazine, more art

books, make online services easier to use, more inspirational fiction, more large print, more teen books, more current fantasy books, have a DVD player to check out, expand graphic novels, and bring back the Dewey Decimal System.
• **Outreach:** Reach out to the community more, more active social media, slow down the digital sign, promote values reflective of the community, bilingual (English/Spanish) services, sell used books at lower prices, continue to work with community groups, reach out to homeschool population, and partner with local businesses to showcase what they offer to the community.
• **Enhance atmosphere:** Update seating and layout, move computers to a more private area, allow covered beverages, better designated kids area (especially for babies) that is more interactive, regular customer service training, more quiet spaces, make sure there are human touches to the technology, leg rest by reading chairs by fireplace, headphones for children's computers, book drop drive through is tight, environment seems formal, better section off children's area, more study rooms, allow community groups to use meeting room for free, and allow food in a snack area.
• **Hours:** Increase operating hours, especially on Fridays and Sundays.

What are the best parts of living in this community?
• Friendly people, neighbors, caring, atmosphere, family
• Schools, school system, educational resources
• Small community, village, beautiful, quiet, safe
• Bike, bike paths, trails, walk, outdoor activities, lakeshore, parks, beaches
• Good access, proximity, location, Lake Michigan

What are the difficulties and challenges of living in this community?
• Housing costs
• Lack diversity
• Cost of living is expensive
• Conservative area, slower to change, small town politics
• Summer traffic and construction
• Limited choices (as compared to a larger community)
• Winter
• Economic inequality

Where should the library focus its resources over the next several years in order to increase its value to you and the community?
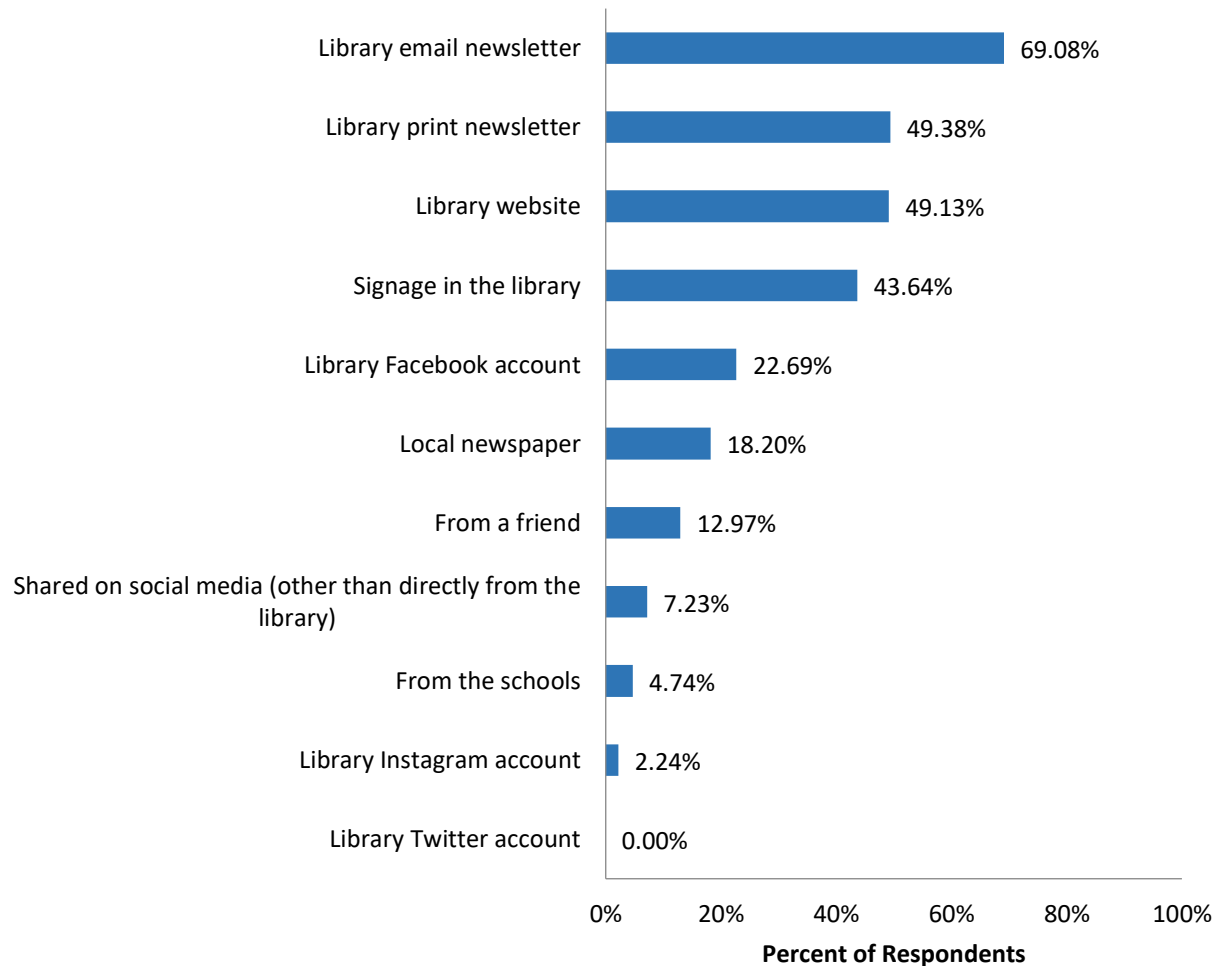
Category	Average Rating
Programs for school aged children (6-10)	4.19
Programs for younger children (ages birth-5)	4.17
Technology support	4.09
Programs for middle school (11-13)	4.04
Programs for seniors (55 and up)	3.93
Programs for high school (14-18)	3.93
Programs and materials for job seekers	3.85
Homebound delivery services/outreach	3.84
Programs for adults (any age)	3.82
More downloadable materials	3.78
One-on-one technology assistance	3.67
Space where people can create/make things	3.66
Partner with nonprofits/additional services	3.64
Programs to help small businesses	3.54
Having a presence at community events	3.53
More quiet study and group study space options	3.48
More meeting room space for events/performances	3.42
Space for people to collaborate/use technology	3.40
ESL classes and more foreign language materials	3.35
Outreach visits to local daycares	3.33
Passport application services	3.29
Notary services	3.29
Special collections	3.24
Partner with local businesses/programming off-site	3.22
One-on-one private meeting space	3.19
More materials in other languages	3.08

Average Rating
Not At All Important (1) - Extremely Important (5)

Other areas the library should focus its resources:
• More materials in Spanish, French, German, Italian, Dutch, and Latin
• Access to more online resources, especially genealogy resources
• Expand hours of operation to allow those who work until 5:00 pm to use the library
• Offer historical tours of Spring Lake
• Expand book collections; purchase books requested by patrons
• Provide passport photo services
• Focus on core mission and do not spread the staff too thin

FINDINGS:	• Four of the top six most important areas relate to children's programming.

Where do you learn about library news and events? Check all that apply.

Library email newsletter	69.08%
Library print newsletter	49.38%
Library website	49.13%
Signage in the library	43.64%
Library Facebook account	22.69%
Local newspaper	18.20%
From a friend	12.97%
Shared on social media (other than directly from the library)	7.23%
From the schools	4.74%
Library Instagram account	2.24%
Library Twitter account	0.00%

Percent of Respondents

Other preferred ways to receive library news:
• Facebook
• Email newsletters
• Text
• Mailed newsletter
• Library's outdoor electronic billboard
• Articles in church bulletins

FINDINGS:	• Most respondents are learning about library news and events through the library, both in print and digitally.

## How satisfied are you with the current library facilities?

Bar chart — Percent of Respondents:
- Not Satisfied: 0.50%
- Somewhat Satisfied: 2.00%
- Neutral: 2.75%
- Very Satisfied: 51.00%
- Extremely Satisfied: 43.75%
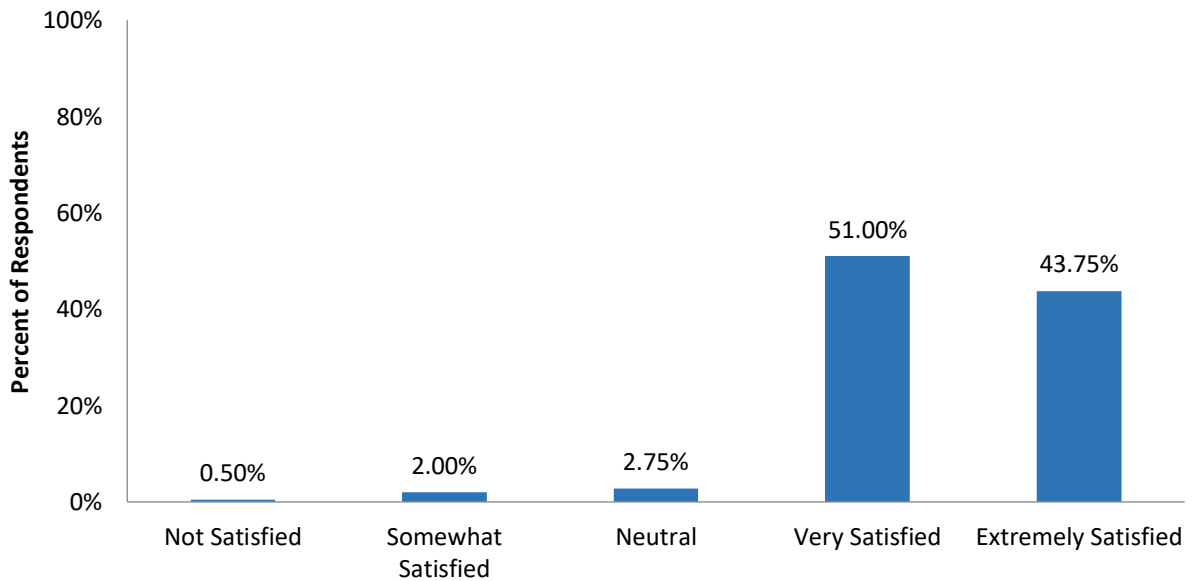
FINDINGS:	• Nearly all respondents (95%) are very satisfied or extremely satisfied with the current library facilities.

What changes to the facility would improve your satisfaction?
• Outdoor improvements include redesigning the drop off box (create more space, less sharp turn, better lighting), creating an enclosed playground, and enlarging the parking spaces
• Indoor improvements include replacing the bathroom doors so that you only have to push, adding more small group meeting/study areas, adding more seating, creating floor layouts to promote interaction, creating natural lighting, redesigning the children's area, redesigning the teen area, adding a gaming room, improving the space for the used book sales, providing more signage, adding coffee/beverage service, creating a community art gallery, and adding greeters
• Several respondents indicated that noise was an issue and suggested closing off/soundproofing the children's area, enforcing quiet policies, and creating an overall quiet atmosphere
• Respondents also suggested improvements to programs and services, including adding more movie days, removing the fee for renting movies, providing more information on Facebook, scheduling programs at times that will allow working parents to attend, expanding hours of operation, providing more computer support, increasing book collections (new releases, Christian, nonfiction audiobooks), allowing small pets inside the library, and creating an app

Please rate the ease of access to the library's collections, services, programs, and facilities.
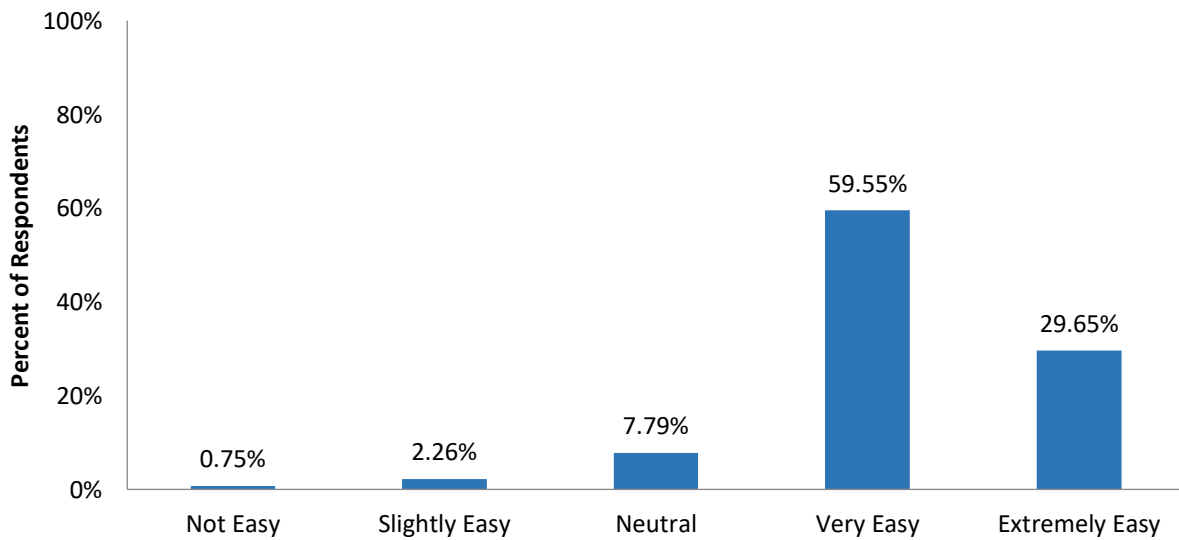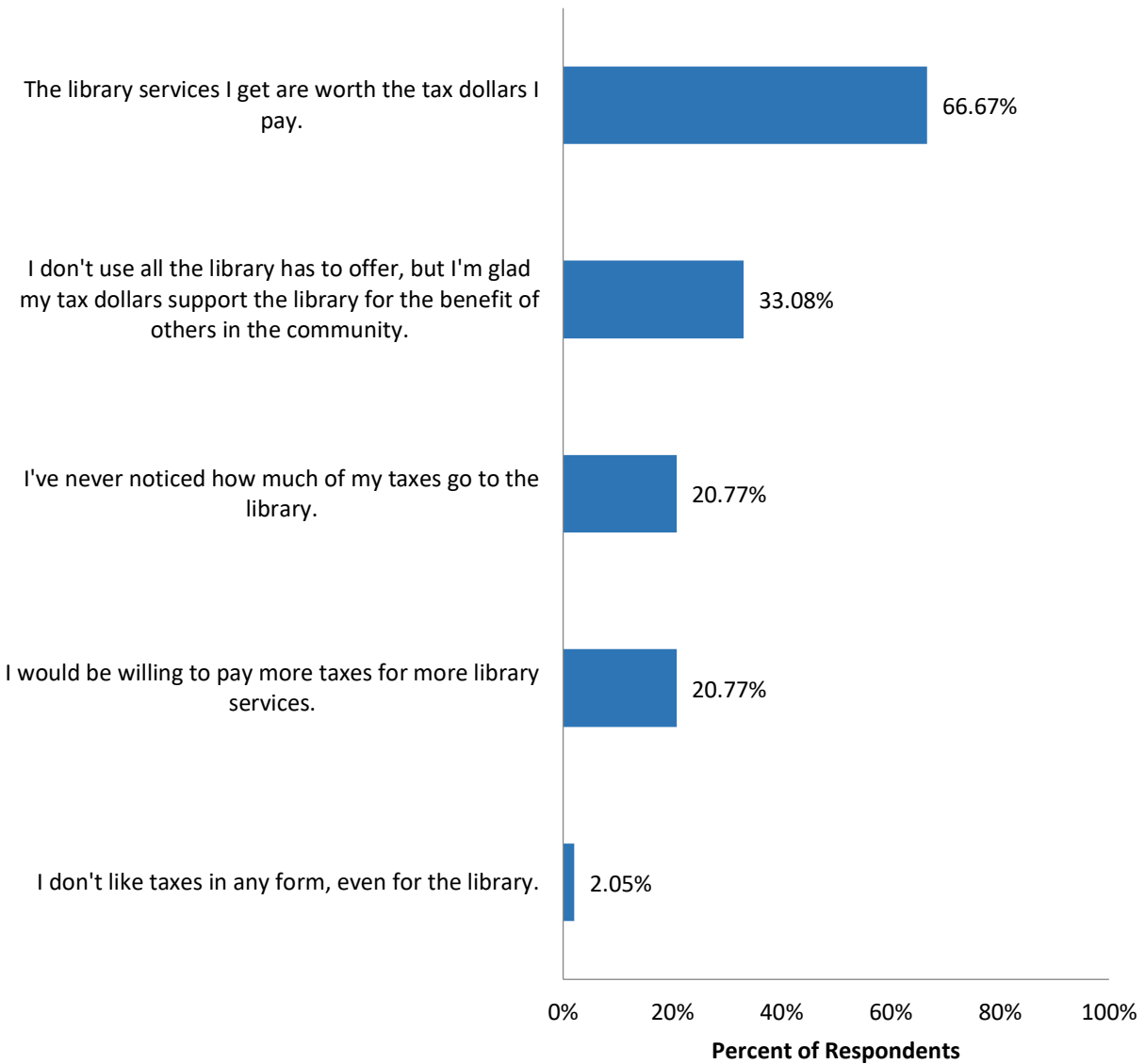

FINDINGS:	• A majority of respondents (89%) rated the ease of access to the library's collections, services, programs, and facilities as very easy or extremely easy.

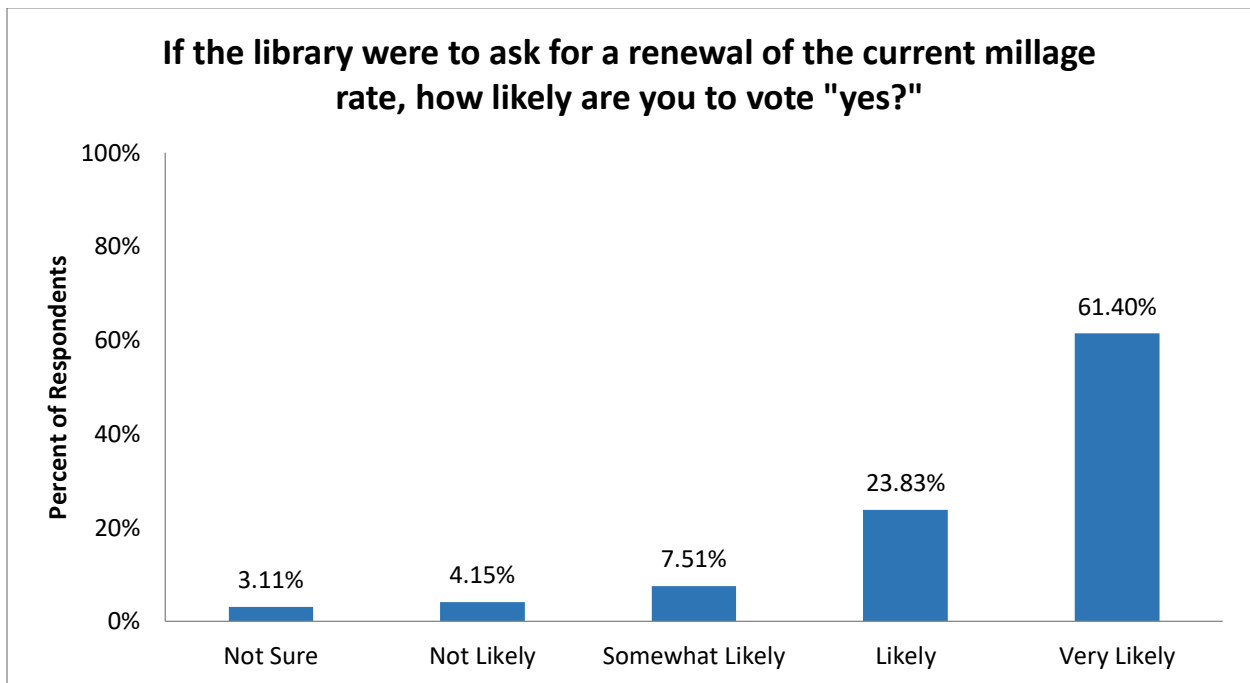| What changes could the library make to improve your accessibility to collections, services, programs, and facilities easier? |
|---|
| • In general, respondents suggested raising awareness of all the library has to offer, with more staff to assist patrons, a class for new patrons, an app, and additional hours of operation. |
| • Accessibility to collections could be improved by providing childcare so that parents can read and explore the collections, making it easier to search for materials, bringing back the Dewey decimal system, creating a self-checkout desk and a child-friendly check-out desk, removing the DVD rental fee, finding a way to adjust the height of the search computers, marking the genres of CDs, making it easier to access the dashboard, and adding more books. |
| • Accessibility to services could be improved by making it easier to print. |
| • Accessibility to programs could be improved by scheduling late afternoon programs for children, and reviewing the timing of programs. |
| • Accessibility to the facilities could be improved by addressing the parking issue, creating more signage, and addressing the tight turn in the drive up return. |

Each household in the library's service area pays taxes to the library for access to materials, programs, and library resources. What is your overall feeling about your tax dollars that go to the library? (Please select all that apply.)

Response	Percent of Respondents
The library services I get are worth the tax dollars I pay.	66.67%
I don't use all the library has to offer, but I'm glad my tax dollars support the library for the benefit of others in the community.	33.08%
I've never noticed how much of my taxes go to the library.	20.77%
I would be willing to pay more taxes for more library services.	20.77%
I don't like taxes in any form, even for the library.	2.05%

Percent of Respondents

FINDINGS:	• A majority of respondents (67%) see a return on investment.

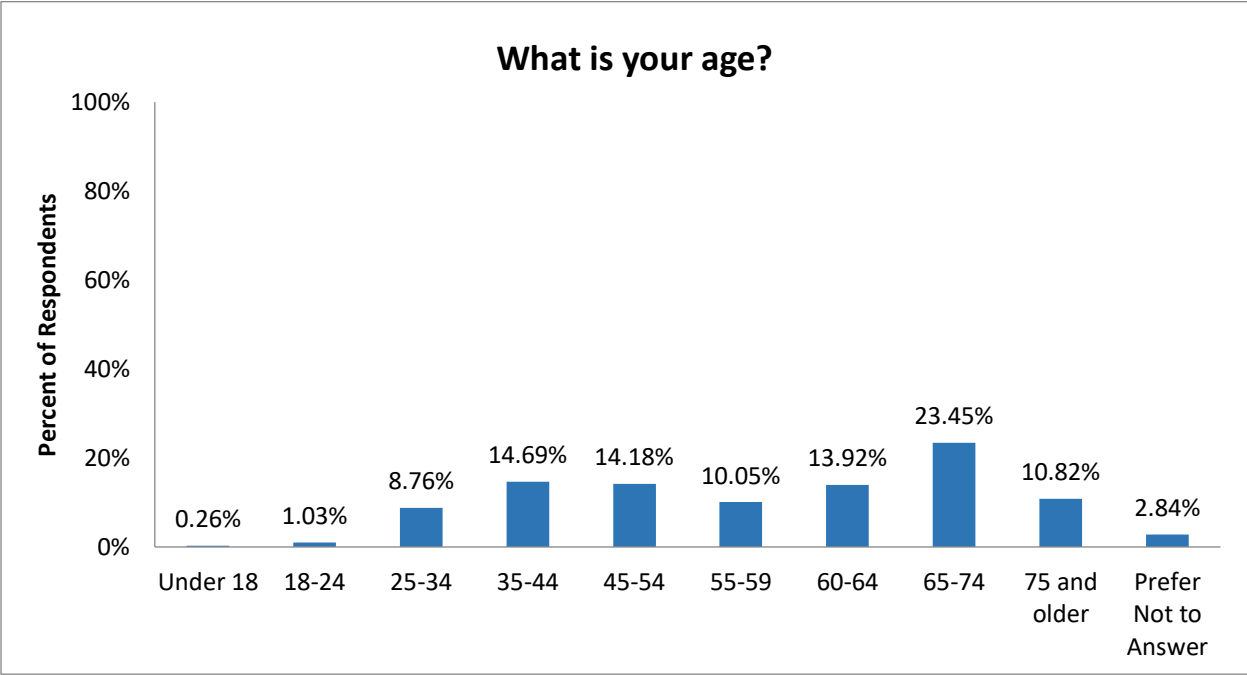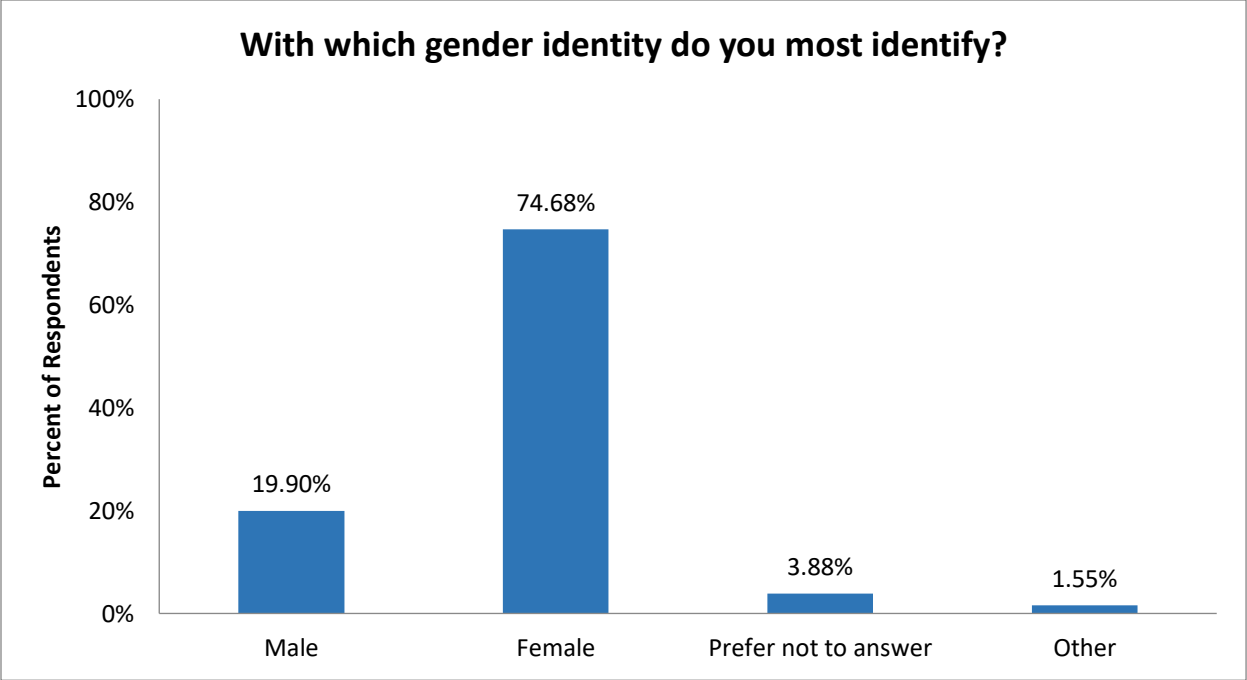| Other thoughts about tax dollars going to the library: |
| --- |
| • Review the current budget/use of taxes (e.g., could the landscaping budget be used for more materials and programs) |
| • Taxes are too high for what some respondents need, especially if the current operating hours do not align with their work schedules |
| • Taxes are redundant with libraries in close proximity |
| • Millage is too high |

If the library were to ask for a renewal of the current millage rate, how likely are you to vote "yes?"

Percent of Respondents

Category	Percent
Not Sure	3.11%
Not Likely	4.15%
Somewhat Likely	7.51%
Likely	23.83%
Very Likely	61.40%

FINDINGS:	• A majority of respondents (85%) would likely or very likely vote yes to a renewal of the current millage rate.

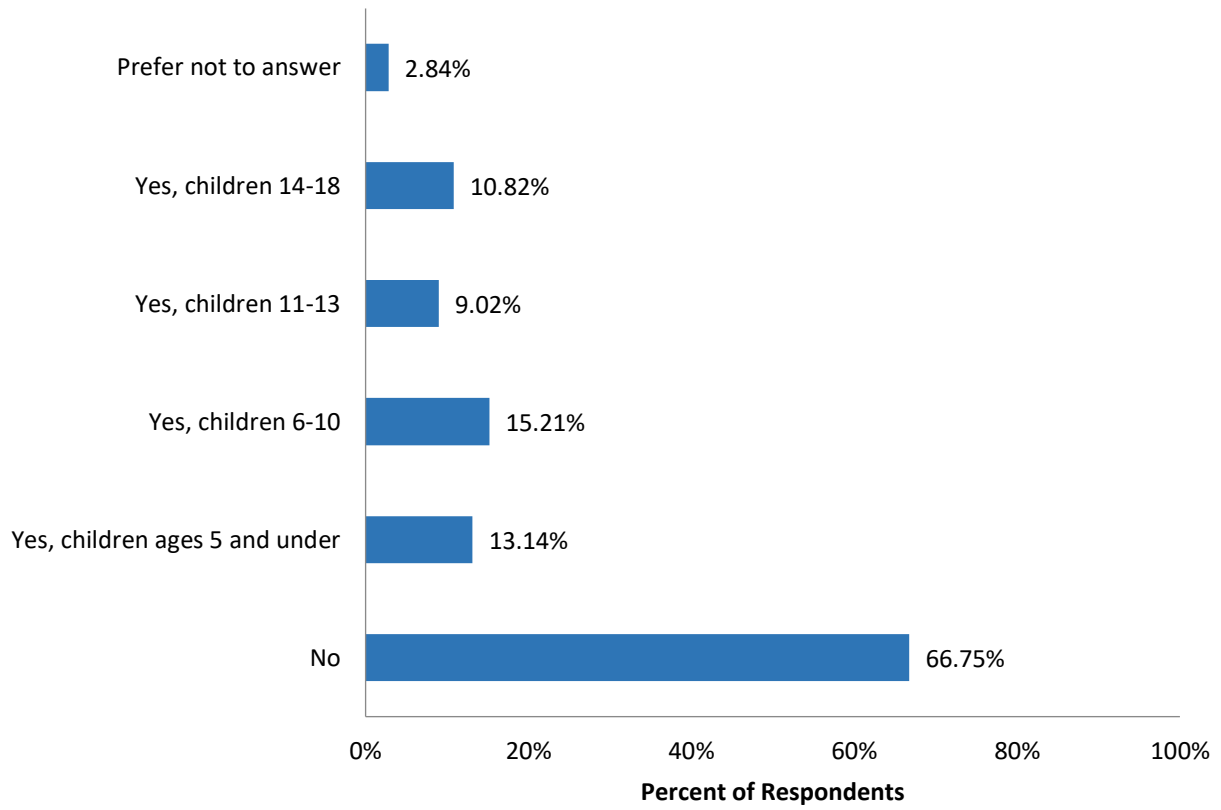| What would increase your likelihood of supporting a renewal of the existing millage rate to maintain the level of property taxes you pay to the library? |
| --- |
| • Though a few respondents would not support the millage rate renewal, most respondents were supportive of the library and willing to support the millage renewal. |
| • Respondents indicated that it would help to have more transparency; that is, raising awareness of who uses the library, the benefits and value of the library, the current budget, and how the taxes would be used. |
| • Respondents also indicated that increasing programs and services would help, providing ideas such as one-on-one technology assistance, additional multimedia resources, adult educational services and informational lectures, expanded hours of operation, language learning, playgroups, pre/teen activities, youth programs, and a homeschool community program. |

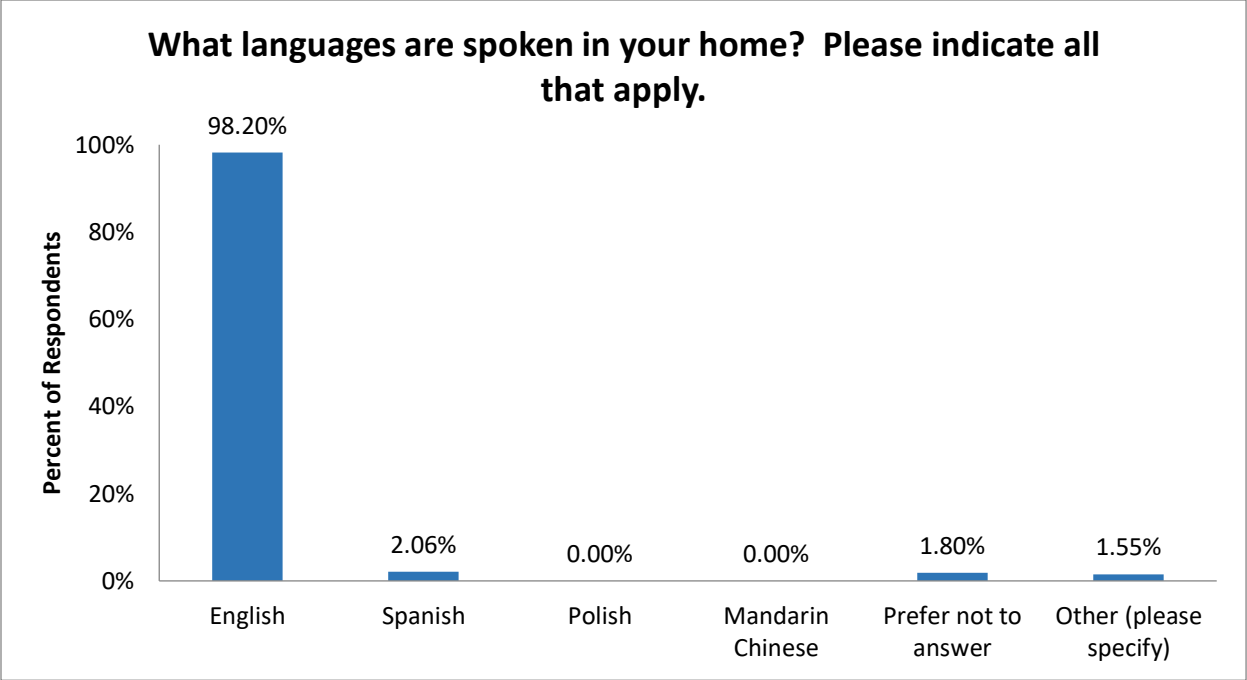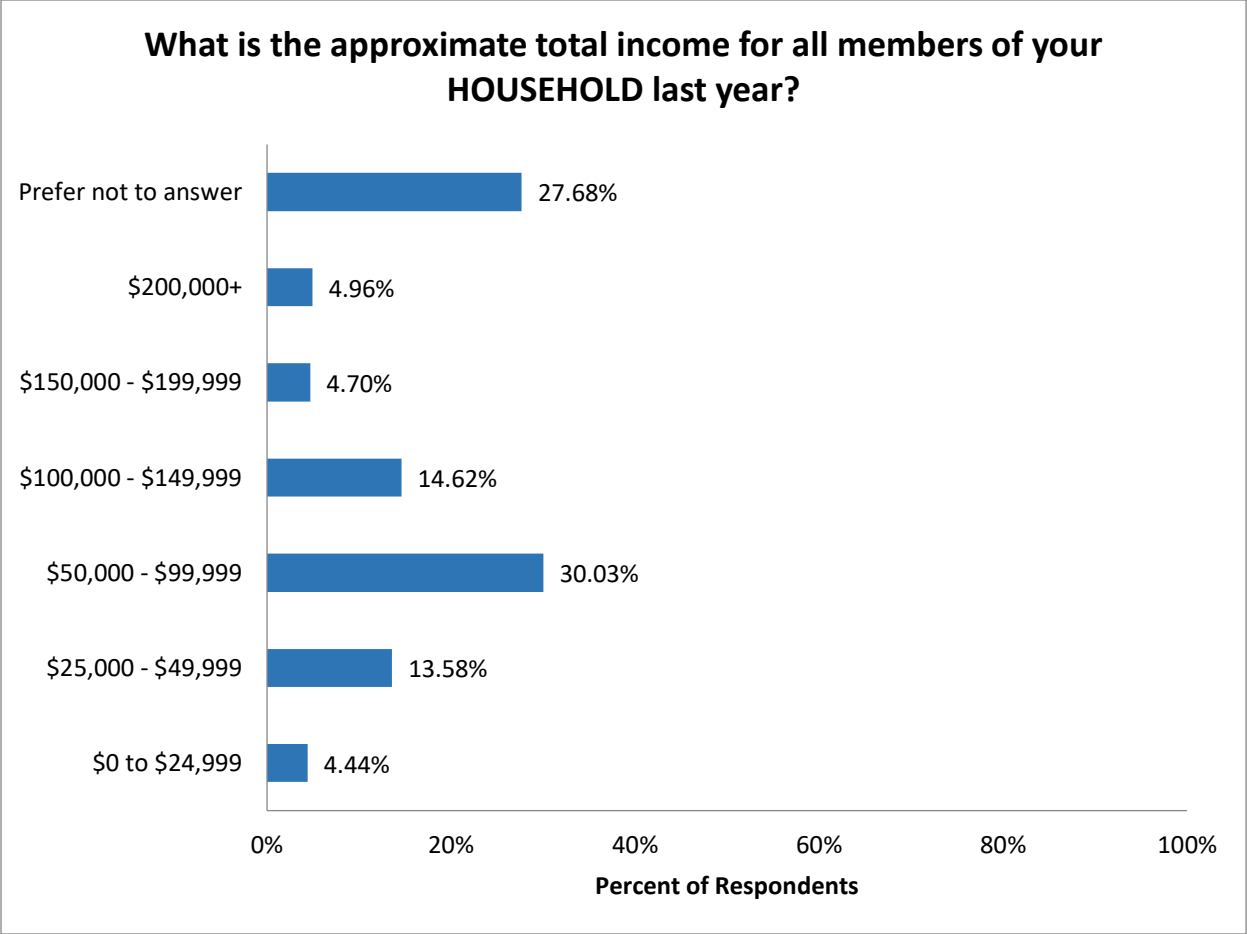| Please share any final feedback you'd like to give about future collections, services, programs, and the facilities. |
| --- |
| • Expand the events, programs, and classes offered at the library (e.g., language learning, music, fiber arts, animals, science, book signings, hands-on learning, and lectures) |
| • Expand the collections at the library, including books (e.g., science fiction, health-related, inspirational fiction, fantasy, young adult series, craft, and cookbooks), audiobooks (e.g., non-fiction, classic, historical), music, and movies; continue the book sales |
| • Continue to raise awareness of all that the library offers |
| • Consider providing transportation assistance, delivery service, and outreach to assisted living facilities |
| • Respondents would also like to see a more visible Director, height adjustable computer stations, more library catalog computers in the children's area, paper towel dispensers in the bathroom, easier to read overdue book emails, and a return to the Dewey decimal system |
| • Respondents did express concerns about the content on Kanopy and programs that other libraries are incorporating (e.g., drag queen story time) |

With which gender identity do you most identify?

Percent of Respondents

- Male: 19.90%
- Female: 74.68%
- Prefer not to answer: 3.88%
- Other: 1.55%

What is your age?

Percent of Respondents

- Under 18: 0.26%
- 18-24: 1.03%
- 25-34: 8.76%
- 35-44: 14.69%
- 45-54: 14.18%
- 55-59: 10.05%
- 60-64: 13.92%
- 65-74: 23.45%
- 75 and older: 10.82%
- Prefer Not to Answer: 2.84%

FINDINGS:	• Responses to the survey were nicely distributed across age groups.

Do you have children under the age of 18 living in your home? Check all that apply.

Response	Percent
Prefer not to answer	2.84%
Yes, children 14-18	10.82%
Yes, children 11-13	9.02%
Yes, children 6-10	15.21%
Yes, children ages 5 and under	13.14%
No	66.75%

Percent of Respondents

What languages are spoken in your home? Please indicate all that apply.

Percent of Respondents

Language	Percent
English	98.20%
Spanish	2.06%
Polish	0.00%
Mandarin Chinese	0.00%
Prefer not to answer	1.80%
Other (please specify)	1.55%

Other languages spoken in your home:
• American Sign Language
• German
• Korean
• Swedish
• Tagalog

What is the approximate total income for all members of your HOUSEHOLD last year?

Income Range	Percent
Prefer not to answer	27.68%
$200,000+	4.96%
$150,000 - $199,999	4.70%
$100,000 - $149,999	14.62%
$50,000 - $99,999	30.03%
$25,000 - $49,999	13.58%
$0 to $24,999	4.44%

Percent of Respondents

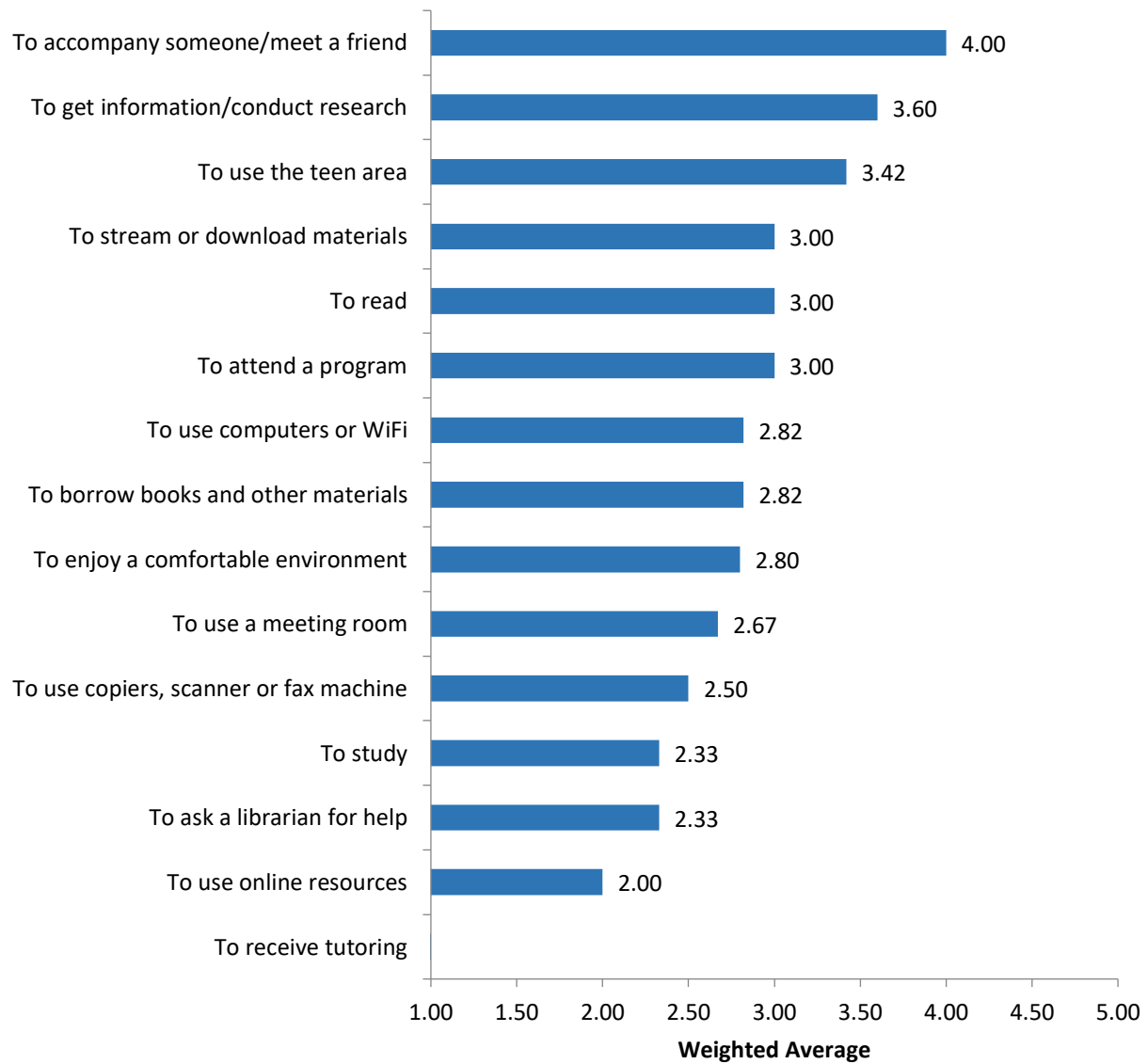|	
OVERALL SURVEY FINDINGS:	• Responses to the survey reflect a very traditional community. Respondents want to access books and other materials from their local library, as well as attend programming, both for children and adults. Programs are what a majority of respondents are aware of and use. Respondents find value in books and educational materials, the summer reading programs, and children's programs both for themselves as well as the community. They are happy to support the library financially, but they want to know that their taxes are being spent wisely. • The Spring Lake community values the library for the materials, programs, and services it provides to children. Even though two-thirds of the respondents do not have children living at home, they see community value in supporting children through the library.

Teen Survey

As part of their strategic planning process, the Spring Lake District Library (SLDL) conducted a survey to learn more about their teenage patrons: what they value about the library; what collections, services, programs, and spaces they use; and what they would like to see from the library in the future.

A total of 15 youth responded to the SurveyMonkey survey.

For Question #4, responses were recalculated to provide a more accurate average rating. Responses for "Do not use/need this" and "Was unaware that this was offered by the library" were removed from the calculations to provide an actual value rating for the library collections, services, and programs.

For the open-ended comments, all relevant comments were listed. There were not enough responses to create themes.

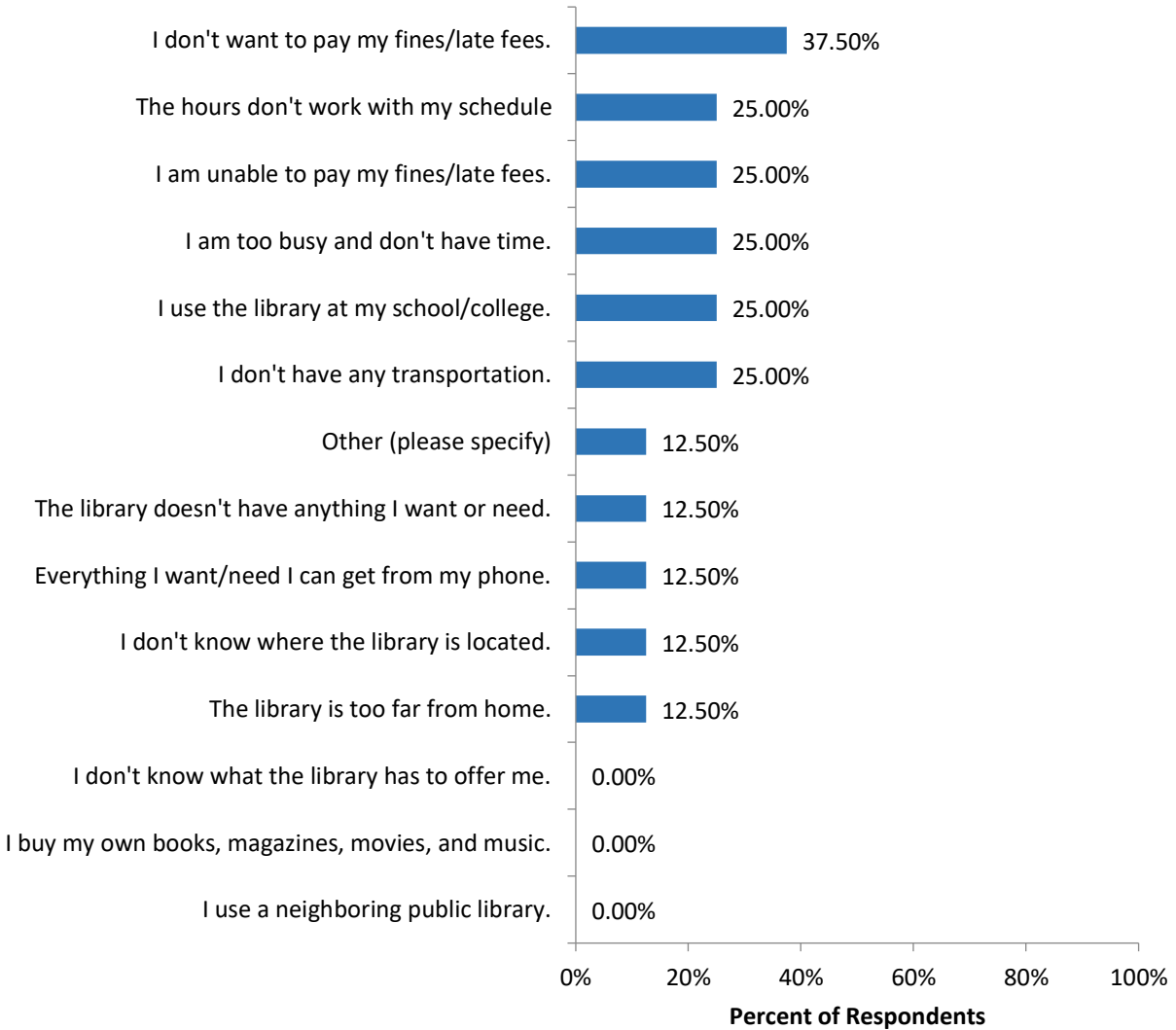## Please pick your top 5 reasons for using the library.
High rank = 5

Reason	Weighted Average
To accompany someone/meet a friend	4.00
To get information/conduct research	3.60
To use the teen area	3.42
To stream or download materials	3.00
To read	3.00
To attend a program	3.00
To use computers or WiFi	2.82
To borrow books and other materials	2.82
To enjoy a comfortable environment	2.80
To use a meeting room	2.67
To use copiers, scanner or fax machine	2.50
To study	2.33
To ask a librarian for help	2.33
To use online resources	2.00
To receive tutoring	

Weighted Average

Other reasons for using the library:
• Roblox

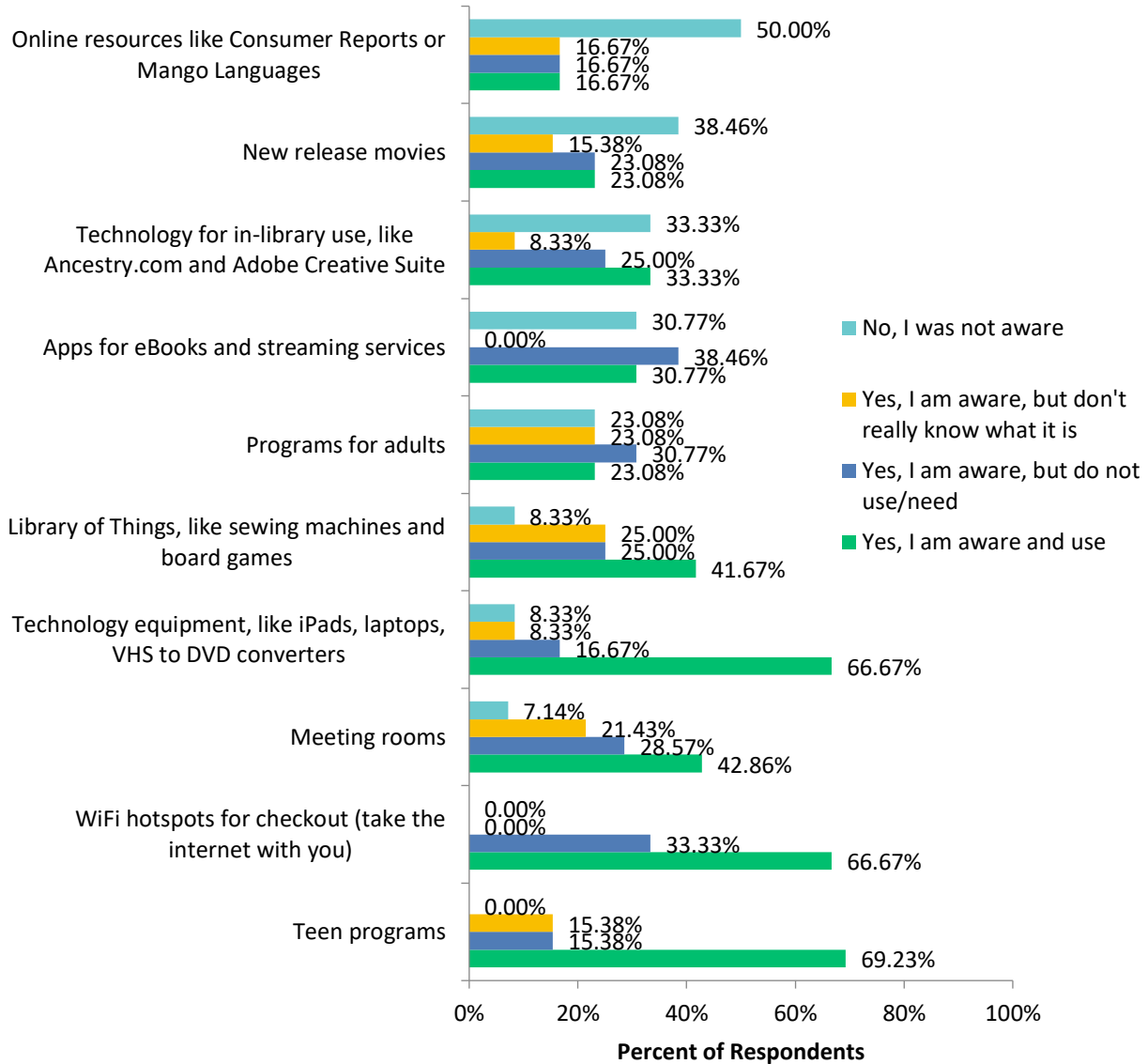| FINDINGS:	• Respondents use the library as a social gathering place to meet friends, use the teen area, stream materials, read, and attend programs. • Respondents are less likely to use the library to study, ask for help, use online resources, or receive tutoring.

If you do not use the library regularly, why not? Please mark all answers that apply. (Please skip this question if you answered the previous question.)

Reason	Percent
I don't want to pay my fines/late fees.	37.50%
The hours don't work with my schedule	25.00%
I am unable to pay my fines/late fees.	25.00%
I am too busy and don't have time.	25.00%
I use the library at my school/college.	25.00%
I don't have any transportation.	25.00%
Other (please specify)	12.50%
The library doesn't have anything I want or need.	12.50%
Everything I want/need I can get from my phone.	12.50%
I don't know where the library is located.	12.50%
The library is too far from home.	12.50%
I don't know what the library has to offer me.	0.00%
I buy my own books, magazines, movies, and music.	0.00%
I use a neighboring public library.	0.00%

Percent of Respondents

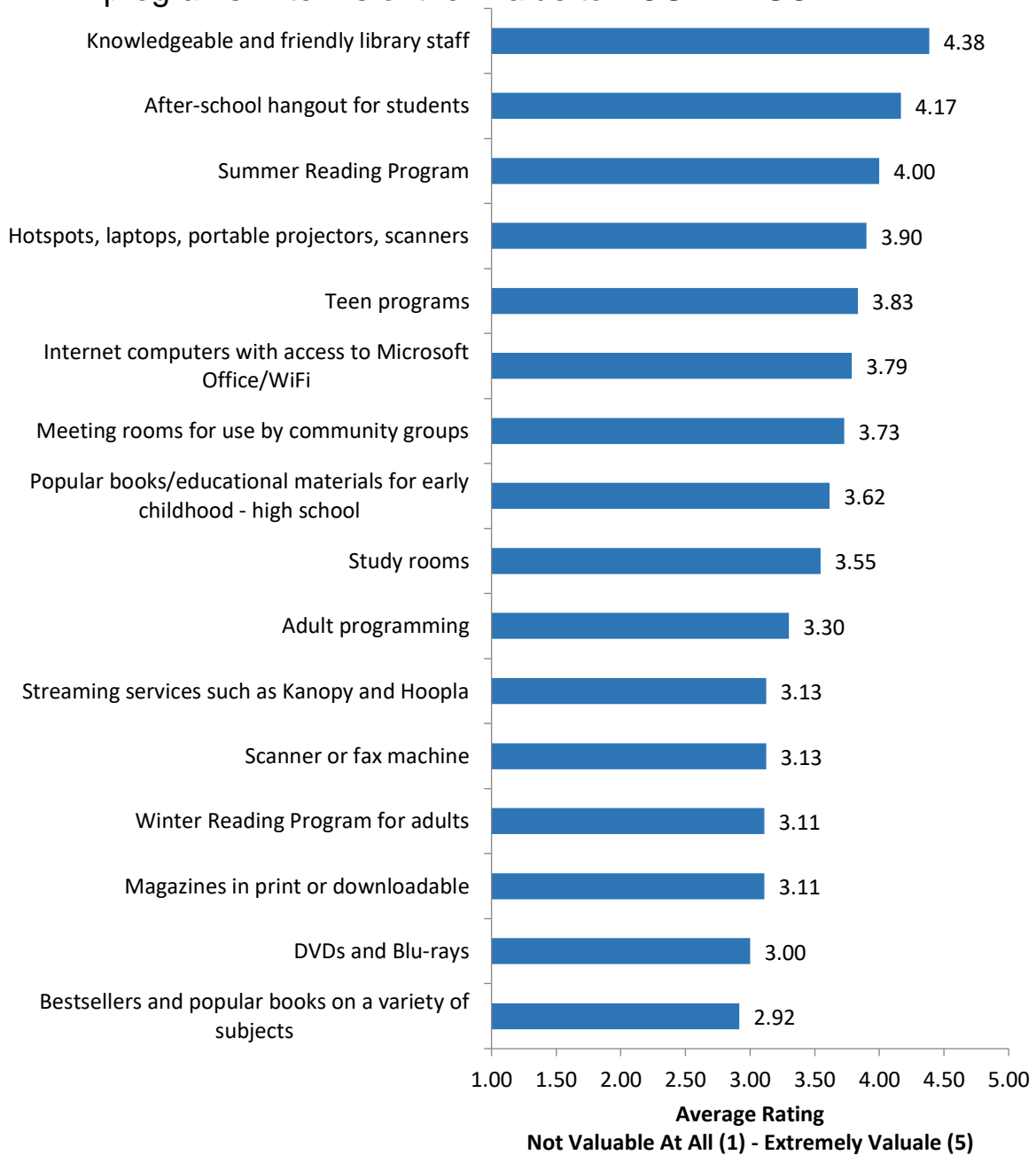| FINDINGS:	• Not using the library regularly is mainly due to an unwillingness or inability to pay fines. Other barriers include busyness, lack of transportation, and access to library resources at school.

The Spring Lake District Library offers a wide variety of services and programs. Please respond below about your awareness of these services and programs.
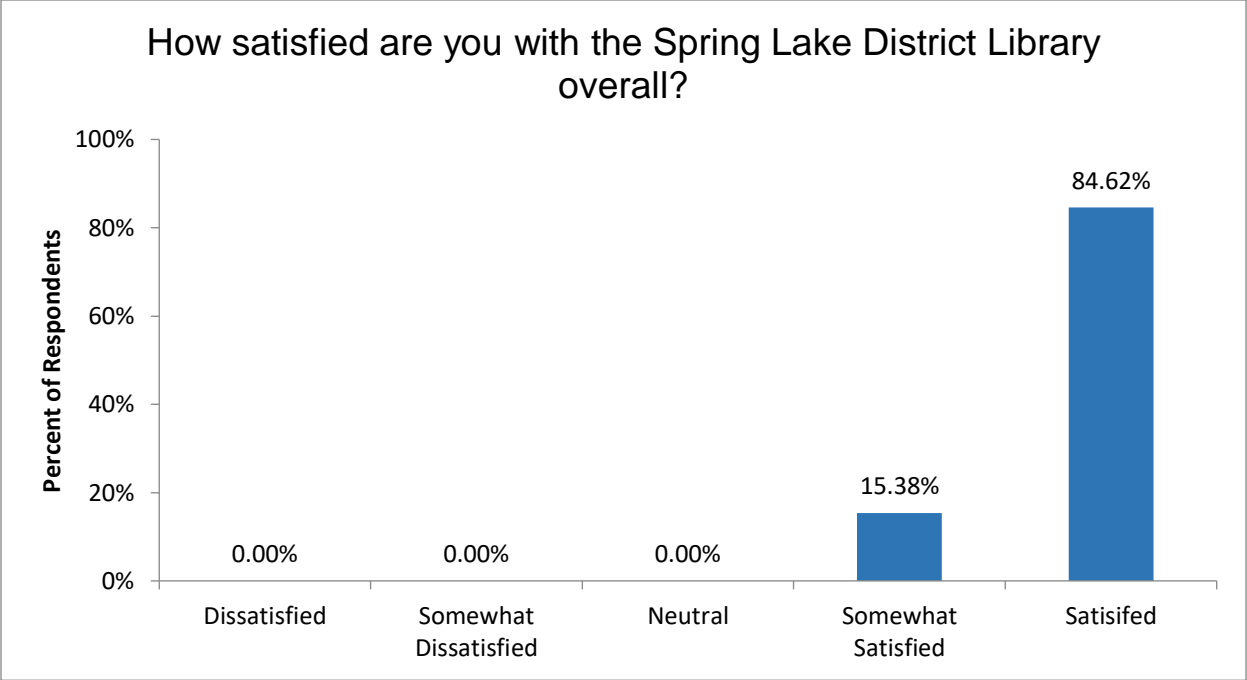
Online resources like Consumer Reports or Mango Languages
- 50.00%
- 16.67%
- 16.67%
- 16.67%

New release movies
- 38.46%
- 15.38%
- 23.08%
- 23.08%

Technology for in-library use, like Ancestry.com and Adobe Creative Suite
- 33.33%
- 8.33%
- 25.00%
- 33.33%

Apps for eBooks and streaming services
- 30.77%
- 0.00%
- 38.46%
- 30.77%

Programs for adults
- 23.08%
- 23.08%
- 30.77%
- 23.08%

Library of Things, like sewing machines and board games
- 8.33%
- 25.00%
- 25.00%
- 41.67%

Technology equipment, like iPads, laptops, VHS to DVD converters
- 8.33%
- 8.33%
- 16.67%
- 66.67%

Meeting rooms
- 7.14%
- 21.43%
- 28.57%
- 42.86%

WiFi hotspots for checkout (take the internet with you)
- 0.00%
- 0.00%
- 33.33%
- 66.67%

Teen programs
- 0.00%
- 15.38%
- 15.38%
- 69.23%

Legend:
- No, I was not aware
- Yes, I am aware, but don't really know what it is
- Yes, I am aware, but do not use/need
- Yes, I am aware and use

Percent of Respondents (0% – 100%)

FINDINGS:	• One-half of respondents were unaware of online resources. • One-third of respondents were unaware of new release movies, and technology for in-library use. • A majority of respondents are aware of and use technology equipment, WiFi hotspots, and teen programs.

Please rate the following collections, services, and programs in terms of their value to YOU PERSONALLY.

Category	Average Rating
Knowledgeable and friendly library staff	4.38
After-school hangout for students	4.17
Summer Reading Program	4.00
Hotspots, laptops, portable projectors, scanners	3.90
Teen programs	3.83
Internet computers with access to Microsoft Office/WiFi	3.79
Meeting rooms for use by community groups	3.73
Popular books/educational materials for early childhood - high school	3.62
Study rooms	3.55
Adult programming	3.30
Streaming services such as Kanopy and Hoopla	3.13
Scanner or fax machine	3.13
Winter Reading Program for adults	3.11
Magazines in print or downloadable	3.11
DVDs and Blu-rays	3.00
Bestsellers and popular books on a variety of subjects	2.92

Average Rating
Not Valuable At All (1) - Extremely Valuale (5)

FINDINGS:	• Respondents identified knowledgeable and friendly library staff, after school hangout for students, and the summer reading program as the most valuable aspects of the library for themselves. • Traditional services, such as books, magazines, and movies, held less value.

How satisfied are you with the Spring Lake District Library overall?

Percent of Respondents

Category	Percent
Dissatisfied	0.00%
Somewhat Dissatisfied	0.00%
Neutral	0.00%
Somewhat Satisfied	15.38%
Satisified	84.62%

FINDINGS:	• All of the respondents were somewhat satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.

What can the library do to increase your satisfaction?
• Enhance the collection of bestselling authors (e.g., Harper Lee)
• Add vending machines and food
• Provide better markers for the whiteboards
• Acquire an Xbox one
• Add a big slide

What are the best parts of living in this community?
• Everyone is friendly and knows each other
• The schools and the library
• Access to resources

What are the difficulties and challenges of living in this community?
• Weather (i.e., snow/ice)
• People who do bad things (e.g., drugs, vapes, juuls, foul language)
• Being different
• Not enough food
• Nothing new

Where should the library focus its resources over the next several years in order to increase its value to you and the community? Please rate the items below based on your opinion of their importance to the future of the library.

Item	Average Rating
Space where people can create/make things	3.77
Technology support	3.58
More quiet study and group study space options	3.54
Programs for middle school (11-13)	3.46
Passport application services	3.36
More meeting room space for events/performances	3.23
Partnering with local businesses/programming off-…	3.23
Space for people to collaborate using technology	3.23
Programs for high school (14-18)	3.23
Partner with area nonprofits/additional services	3.15
One-on-one private meeting space	3.09
Programs to help small businesses	3.08
Programs for school aged children (6-10)	3.08
Outreach visits to local daycares	3.00
Programs for seniors (55 and up)	3.00
ESL classes and more foreign language materials	3.00
Programs and materials for job seekers	3.00
Homebound delivery services/outreach	2.92
Notary services	2.91
Having a presence at community events	2.91
Special collections	2.91
Programs for adults (any age)	2.85
Programs for younger children (ages birth-5)	2.77
More materials in other languages	2.69
More downloadable materials	2.62
One-on-one technology assistance	2.50

Average Rating
Not At All Important (1) - Extremely Important (5)

Other areas the library should focus its resources:
• Food

FINDINGS:	• Respondents would like to see the library focus on increasing space for people to create and make things, technology support, more quiet study space options, and programs for middle school.

Please share any final feedback you'd like to give about future collections, services, programs, and the facilities.
• Food
• More study rooms
• Respondents appreciate the library and what it has to offer

With which gender identity do you most identify?

Gender	Percent of Respondents
Male	15.38%
Female	46.15%
Prefer not to answer	23.08%
Other	15.38%

What is your age?

Percent of Respondents

Age	Percent
Under 13	76.92%
14-15	7.69%
16-18	0.00%
18-21	0.00%
22+	0.00%
Prefer Not to Answer	15.38%

What languages are spoken in your home? Please indicate all that apply.

Percent of Respondents

Language	Percent
English	92.31%
Spanish	15.38%
Polish	0.00%
Mandarin Chinese	0.00%
Prefer not to answer	7.69%
Other (please specify)	23.08%

Other languages spoken in your home:
• Icelandic

OVERALL SURVEY FINDINGS:	• Responses to the survey reflect a youth mindset. They look to the library as a place to foster their social lives, through the dedicated teen area, a place to meet friends, and a place to attend programs. • About half of the respondents do not use the library regularly, with many of the barriers outside of their control (e.g., lacking money to pay fines, lacking transportation to the building).

Focus Groups & Interviews

We held five focus group sessions including a community leader breakfast on January 6, 2020. A total of 37 people attended. In addition, we conducted five interviews with community members unable to attend the focus group sessions and others identified by the library as stakeholders. Below is a summary of feedback from the sessions and interviews.

How does the library enrich the community?

- The wide variety of collections
- WiFi hotspots
- One-on-one tech help
- The variety of programs offered
- Museum passes to check out
- Book Clubs
- Volunteer opportunities
- Reading programs
- Supplements school collections
- Beautiful building, focal point of the community
- Book sales
- Outreach in the community, relationships with other organizations and businesses
- Neutral place to gather
- Early literacy programs

How can the library foster literacy and lifelong learning?

- Reading programs
- Tie in with sports
- Reach out to new community members (welcome wagon)
- Think about how the library can support people through life transitions
- Support forming the habit of reading and coming to the library
- Engage in literacy beyond books: digital, financial, health literacy
- Give people paths of learning to explore
- Job and career training
- Consider peer-to-peer programs or mentoring programs, especially around technology
- Increase computer classes
- Bring in more music and cultural programs
- Offer language learning opportunities
- Consider programming for families focused on reading
- Help people connect through their love of books

What are some things the library could do to reach out into the community?

- Reach people not aware of library services
- Deepen relationship with schools
- Connect out in the community in unexpected places
- Consider a bookmobile
- Increase social media presence
- Tie into more community events
- Send information out to more people (like in water bills)
- Do more with the outside sign
- Cultivate "library cheerleaders" to help with word-of-mouth messaging
- People have assumptions about the library, make sure to have a unified message

- Co-host events (in and out of the library)
- Upgrade the website
- Be proactive about incentives to bring new and more people in
- Intentionally network with groups in the community
- Reach out to senior living centers
- Define target audiences and find out how to reach them
- Use partnerships to increase awareness
- Get students cards and have class visits to create habit of coming to the library

How could the library enhance patron experience?

- Go fine free
- Eliminate DVD fee
- Make pathfinders/bookmarks for "sensitive" topics that people might not want to ask about
- Have more copies of high demand books
- Install a café
- More small meeting spaces
- Keep books on new shelf for a longer period of time
- Toys to check out
- New shirts for shelvers so they are easily identifiable
- Consider a physical separation of the children's area
- Reposition the check out desk for more visibility and a friendly face when you walk in
- More privacy for computer users
- Have "low sensory" times for families with autistics children
- Make events easier to find on the website
- Reinstate the Dewey Decimal System
- Have self-service holds
- Sunday hours in the summer
- More book displays

Board & Staff Survey

We conducted a Board and staff survey in December 2019 through January 2020. A total of 20 responses were received, four from Board members and 16 from staff. Below is a summary of responses:

What is your favorite thing about working at the library or serving on the Board?

- The opportunity to serve people, help them find what they want
- The books and resources
- Every day is different, job variety, ability to be creative
- Great environment, enjoy co-workers
- Impacting the community in a positive way
- Conserving a local institution for future use, great community resource

What's working well at the library? What are we good at?

- Programs for all ages
- Customer service, emphasis on patron needs
- Knowledgeable, friendly staff
- Friendly, welcoming atmosphere
- Access to materials

What could use some improvement? What keeps you from enjoying your experience with the library more fully?

- More environmentally friendly practices
- Assignment of tasks don't always align with job
- Reorganization of public spaces for greater visibility
- Expanded community partnerships
- Updated computer systems
- Increased communication, increased input from staff about changes, clear communication when things are changed
- Continue to be curious about what patrons want and respond to their needs, don't be held back by past practices
- Need increased hours
- Age-appropriate technology support
- More variety and diversity in programming
- Different card catalog system and computers for patrons to use the card catalog
- Better parking
- Increased outreach to the community

How could the library help you better perform/succeed in your role at the library? What do you need to be a better Board/staff member?

- Increased communication, especially about changes
- Opportunities for training
- Stand up computer stations
- Staff is very open and support each other, keep it up!
- Some hours off the desk to work on other duties and be creative
- Review salary structure to make sure it's aligned with other libraries in the region
- Increased financial transparency
- A strategic plan to unify our direction and message

What do we think the library could do to address unmet community needs?

- Meet with community organizations to learn about needs
- Regularly conduct a community survey and focus groups to continue to learn about community needs
- Encourage staff to report patron comments
- Think outside traditional service models
- Increased hours
- Fine free
- Create an outreach librarian position
- Create a teen librarian position
- Learn how people find out about library services and programs
- Outreach to schools and older populations
- Regularly review demographic trends
- Increased meeting room space
- Intentionally seek out non-users and engage in conversations about the library

What do we hear from constituents/patrons that the library could do to address unmet community needs?

- More youth/teen programming
- Technology assistance for seniors
- Increased hours
- More social opportunities
- Increased space for small groups to meet
- A better printing system
- More programming for all ages

What do you think are the top five priorities the library should focus on in the next three years? Why is each important?

- Growing young readers
- Remodeling the library's spaces, create more meeting room/study room space, separate the children's area, create better lines of sight for service desks
- Increase community engagement
- Information literacy
- Focus on tweens to establish firm reading and library habits
- Pass the millage for operating budget
- Increased programming for all ages
- Focus on customer service
- Keep a relevant collection
- Be innovative about updating services
- Make sure wages and benefits attract and retain employees
- Study demographic trends
- Review policies and procedures
- Continue to update technology
- Look for ways to be more inclusive and serve the needs/wants of the entire community
- Offer more digital services
- Board and staff training so they are equipped to lead and operate the library
- Fine free
- Flexibility
- Review budget and spending policies and practices
- Big displays/exhibits to attract people
- Increase staff diversity
- Increase environmentally friendly practices
- Think beyond books
- Keep building in good repair, it's a community asset
- Be out in the community more
- Partner with more community organizations and businesses
- Keep up with library trends

What do you see happening in the community if the library is doing its best work?

- People have a safe, clean place to go and interact
- Awareness by a majority of the community
- The library is a trusted community institution that fulfills many community needs

- People are engaged in informed
- Partners contact us for help
- Residents care about each other and cultivate a warm and welcoming place to live
- Circulation and usage will increase
- The building will be very busy
- Library events happening in the building and throughout the community
- Full parking lot
- Diverse staff, Board, and patron base
- Library has a great reputation
- Library is the community hub
- The library is a home for modern explorers

Summary of final comments:
- It's an exciting time to be in the library world with all the new ideas and changes.
- It's vital to continue to learn and grow.
- We have an amazing library.
- The library should consider pursing a Library Journal star rating.
- Praise for the new director.
- Continuing to use institutional knowledge and collaboration is important.
- It's OK to positively embrace change!

Other Community Organizations

Spring Lake Village has a master plan with a community vision that includes focus on the community being progressive and sustainable while offering excellent quality of life as well as strong education, historic and cultural facilities. Goal 3 of the master plan is to, "Enhance and improve parks, recreation, and community facilities, …" While the emphasis throughout seems to be on waterfront activities which undoubtedly are economic drivers for tourism, the goal specifies using public facilities to increase access to the arts and cultural resources.

There are five schools K-12 in the Spring Lake Public School district with three more schools in nearby Spring Lake Township & Ferrysburg providing many possible partnerships for reaching more youth patrons. In addition, the school is one partner in the Greater Spring Lake Area Recreation Commission that plans, promotes, coordinates, and operates indoor and outdoor recreation programs.

The SLPS Annual Education Report (AER) indicates that students taking various Michigan Student Test of Educational Progress (content and subject tests administered from 3rd to 8th grade) had a much higher level of proficiency than the state overall (2017-2018). Spring Lake High School also reported a 100% graduation rate in the same year. In short, the schools are posting excellent numbers for quality education.

Free and reduced lunch levels are around 40-48% depending on the grade. Diversity in the schools is growing with around 70% of students reporting as white, 15% as Black or African American, 7% as Hispanic, 4% as Asian, and 1% or less as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander, or two or more races.

There are 13 colleges or universities within 37 miles of Spring Lake, MI. Grand Valley State University is in the top 100 largest universities in the nation in terms of enrollment and fosters a, "commitment to economic, social, and environmental sustainability," goals which could in some ways parallel those of the library. Students at these local institutions of higher learning could be potential patrons and the universities themselves could all be great partners.

Muskegon Community College located only 12 miles from Spring Lake offers Experiential Learning opportunities for community through lecture series, educational trips, guest speakers, and more.

The Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University is an interesting resource in that one of their top three goals is, "Informed Community Change: Guiding nonprofits, foundations, institutions, and neighborhood groups in using data to do good." The Johnson Center has a Community Data and Research lab and can help collect and interpret national and local data and then share the data for use in, "awareness building, local and regional decision making, program evaluation, and more."

Spring Lake has a downtown development plan that includes promoting activities and infrastructure to generate pedestrian traffic in Village business areas which includes promoting activities in public spaces. Another goal of the Downtown Development plan is, "collaborations." The library is already actively partnering with downtown partners and should consider more opportunities during this strategic planning process.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation ranks Ottawa County as Michigan's second-healthiest county in Michigan. This is an interesting designation and could be promoted, supported, and exploited further.

Grand Haven Area Community Foundation (GHACF) serves northwest Ottawa County including Spring Lake and considers grants that, "seek to enhance the quality of life and promote a healthy, inclusive, collaborative, and diverse community in Northwest Ottawa County." The library's endowment funds are held with the GHACF and donations are actively solicited.

The Tri-Cities College Access Network (TCAN) under the Grand Haven Area Community Foundation has a goal of ensuring the successful futures of Tri-Cities students. Initiatives include College Application Week, MI College Goal, and the Early Childhood Education Expo, all efforts that could be of interest to the local library.

Resources reviewed:

http://www.springlakevillage.org/
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spring_Lake%2C_Michigan
http://www.springlakevillage.org/wp-content/uploads/planning/SpringLakePlanDowntownDevelopementPlan.pdf
http://www.springlake.org/about
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottawa_County,_Michigan
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottawa_County,_Michigan
http://gis.cridata.org/community-profiles/26139?profileTypeId=4
https://www.gvsu.edu/
https://www.muskegoncc.edu/social-sciences/experiential-learning/
https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/grand-valley-state-university-2268

https://www.ghacf.org/youth/tri-cities-college-access-network-tcan/
https://www.springlakeschools.org/recreation-commission/