



Spring Lake District Library Strategic Plan

2020-2023

WELCOME

CONNECT

ENRICH

Introduction & Background

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. 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 in a 34,500 square foot building and circulates over 236,000 items per year. The library features a public access computer lab with a wide variety of software programs available and vibrant programming for residents of all ages. In 2019, the library held 445 programs with 13,799 people attending.

This plan represents the overall strategy for the library over the next three years and is presented to the Board of Trustees for approval in May 2020. Upon approval, library staff will finalize an activity plan to support the overall strategy and evolve while working toward goals. Staff will regularly review progress toward meeting plan goals and report to the Board.

The planning process was inclusive and enlightening. The library remains committed to the community and core services and is excited about the focus this plan will bring through 2023. The Board wrestled with some difficult questions as part of the planning process to bring clarity about the future direction of collections, services, programs, and facilities. The library hopes this plan inspires growth and change over the next three plus years that lead to increased impact in the community.

The library engaged in a strategic planning process with assistance from consultant Amanda E. Standerfer from [Fast Forward Libraries](#). The Planning Team included:

- Maggie McKeithan, Library Director
- Gordon Gallagher, Trustee
- Kathy DeBone, Circulation Supervisor

The Planning Team met several times during the strategic planning process starting in October 2019 to ensure momentum and give input on various aspects of the process. The Planning Team played a vital role in developing the community survey and final plan documents.

Planning Process & Data Highlights

In order to create a cohesive, actionable plan, the Board and staff reviewed a wide variety of existing data, conducted a Community Survey and Teen Survey, gathered input from

staff/Board through a survey and retreat, and spent time talking with community members at focus groups and interviews.¹ The community survey was key for understanding current library strengths, services valued by the community, and areas of focus for future growth.

The Community Survey was completed by 524 community members and 15 teens completed the Teen Survey. A total of 37 people attended focus groups or participated in an interview. Feedback indicated a continued interest in traditional library services, expanded presence in the community through outreach and marketing, and more programming to enrich the lives of community residents.

At the March retreats, Board and staff members reviewed process learning and narrowed strategic directions and goals. Staff focused on possible activities to achieve plan goals. The retreat sessions brought cohesion to the developing plan and allowed for the plan's design to emerge. The Board spent time refining the vision and mission statements at their April meeting.

Vision

Welcome | Connect | Enrich

Our vision is what we hope to see in the community because we have carried out our mission. We want to create welcoming spaces in our physical building and through our outreach events. We seek to connect people to resources and with each other and the library. The community will be enriched through ideas, information, and learning.

Mission

We connect and enrich our communities through access, ideas, and experiences for all.

Our mission is how we carry out our work to achieve our vision. The vision and mission statements are woven together to reinforce our core message and strategic directions. Our mission simplifies our work to communicate the focus of our operations.

¹ See full *Learning Report* in Appendix.

Strategic Directions

This plan is divided into three strategic directions:

Welcome | Connect | Enrich

During the Board and staff retreats, the discussion focused on the key ways the library should move forward to increase usage and support as well as creative ways to engage community members in learning activities. These three strategic directions work together, leading to a sustainable and strong future for the library in the communities it serves. By creating a welcoming atmosphere at the library and through a community presence, the library will help people connect and learn, which will enrich their lives.

Goals, Activities, Measures

The following graphic summarizes the strategic plan, followed by additional detail for each strategic direction, including potential activities for each goal and possible metrics. Library staff will draft the activity plan that will serve as an implementation guide. Regular activity updates will be presented at future Board meetings.

Spring Lake District Library

2020 - 2023 Strategic Plan



Spring Lake
District Library

VISION

Welcome - Connect - Enrich

MISSION

We connect and enrich our communities through access, ideas, and experiences for all.

WELCOME

GOALS

- Spaces are flexible, inviting, and incorporate sustainable practices
- Staff are equipped to provide excellent service to make access easy
- Strive for a strong financial position

CONNECT

GOALS

- Offer programs for all ages that inform, entertain, and build relationships
- Creatively promote the full spectrum of library services to increase awareness
- Develop and deepen presence in the community and partnerships for robust collaboration

ENRICH

GOALS

- Continue to build collections in all formats responding to community needs
- Build broad technology access and confidence for all users
- Promote the joy of learning by encouraging lifelong habits

WELCOME

We invite you to join us.

Spring Lake District Library is a beautiful place to visit. There is ample parking, the grounds are beautiful and inviting, and the interior is warm and welcoming. However, there is always room for improvement and Goal 1 prioritizes the library’s physical structures and landscaping. Staff have noted the need for better sight lines to increase their ability to provide good service and ensure the safety of all patrons. In addition, there is a desire to be sustainable in all ways possible.

Staff are a key asset of SLDL and their relationships with patrons is what keeps them coming back. Goal 2 empowers staff to deepen their service attitude by committing to ongoing customer service training and bringing forward ideas that will make patron access easier.

Finally, Goal 3 keeps the Board’s focus on the library’s financial position front and center. The Board wants to give the community the library it deserves and is keeping an eye on future expenses to balance current spending and long-term saving.

Goals	Possible Activities ²
1) Spaces are flexible, inviting, and incorporate sustainable practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage a space planner to give recommendations• Review and promote green practices• Create inviting outdoor spaces
2) Staff are equipped to provide excellent service to make access easy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement internal communication tool with all staff (Slack)• Engage staff in organizational culture development activities• Review and revise procedures to benefit patrons
3) Strive for a strong financial position	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pass millage renewal• Prepare for renewal of Crockery Township contract• Update financial projections• Develop fundraising/development plan

² Activity Plan finalized by staff after Board adoption of this plan.

Potential Measures of Success³

- Patron satisfaction with building and grounds (survey)
 - Recognition of sustainable practices (by others)
 - Overall patron satisfaction (survey)
 - Funds in reserve fund
 - Number of people using the building and meeting rooms
-

³ Evaluation framework finalized by staff after Board adoption of this plan.

CONNECT

We bring people together.

Spring Lake District Library excels at bringing people together! We offer a wide variety of vibrant programs that help people see new perspectives, learn something new, or just enjoy art and music in the company of others. Goal 1 will ensure our continued focus on our program offerings.

Goals 2 and 3 articulate our aspirations to reach more people in the community in different ways. Goal 2 goes beyond traditional marketing and asks us to consider what community engagement looks like – how to engage people where they are at in a way that is appealing to them. Of course, we'll use traditional marketing tactics as needed, but we hope to expand our reach creatively.

Goal 3 gives focus to our outreach work and community partnerships. We know from the Community Survey that we can work on being more visible in the community. We also know that working with partners can help our visibility while also being mutually beneficial. We can't be everywhere at once or everything to everyone, so Goal 3 will help us be strategic about opportunities for maximum impact.

Goals	Possible Activities
1) Offer programs for all ages that inform, entertain, and build relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create program goals• Conduct post-program evaluations to continuously improve programs• Create quarterly program guide
2) Creatively promote the full spectrum of library services to increase awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue to update website• Develop an engagement plan to coordinate social media and communication• Speak annually to key groups about library programs and services• Promote e-resources
3) Develop and deepen presence in the community and partnerships for robust collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create partnership matrix to evaluate and develop new partnerships• Develop personas for non-user groups the library is trying to reach• Establish an outreach plan to increased community involvement

Potential Measures of Success

- Increased cardholders and circulation
 - Increased of programs and attendees
 - Number of outreach conversions (contacts at outreach events that ultimately use a library service)
 - High satisfaction and learning at library programs
 - Number of partnerships
 - Partner satisfaction survey
 - Increased use of e-resources
-

We help people learn.

Spring Lake District Library is committed to enriching our community and the lives of the people we serve. The main way we do this is by helping people to learn. We help people learn by providing them with materials and collections that meet their needs (Goal 1). We strive to be responsive to trends and interests and we are open to a wide-range of formats.

We help people learn through technology. We go well beyond providing access to the internet and technology tools by sharing expertise (Goal 2). Community members can bring their own technology devices and receive judgement-free assistance to increase their knowledge and expand their learning and entertainment.

Finally, we find learning a joyful activity and create conditions in our community to share that joy (Goal 3). We know that an attitude of continuous learning and a commitment to reading enriches quality of life, so we prioritize activities that involve repeated use (like regular story times) to establish ongoing relationships and the lifelong habit of using the library.

Goals	Possible Activities
1) Continue to build collections in all formats responding to community needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey patrons about interests • Review collection data for trends on popular collections • Expand the Library of Things
2) Build broad technology access and confidence for all users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold computer classes • Promote one-on-one technology help • Review software offerings in lab • Provide WiFi hotspots
3) Promote the joy of learning by encouraging lifelong habits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate story time to determine motivators for participation • Expand summer and winter reading programs and book clubs • Establish regular contact with elementary teachers to promote library usage

Potential Measures of Success

- Increased circulation
 - Increased computer usage
 - Increased usage of e-resources
 - Increased satisfaction with collections
 - Increased youth cardholders
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Next Steps

After this plan is adopted by the Board, 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 is ongoing once plan implementation is underway. Measurements for each goal will vary, and some activities will be best evaluated by collecting data through patron and community surveys. 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 the library significantly forward in guiding next steps on plans for facilities and a millage renewal. This plan is an investment in the future of the library as a continued asset of the overall community.



Spring Lake District Library Learning Report

Submitted by Amanda E. Standerfer, MA, MLIS,
and Sarah Forbes, PhD
March 2020

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:

	<u>SLDL</u>	<u>Class 4 Average</u>
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):

	<u>SLDL</u>	<u>Class 4 Average</u>
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.

<p style="text-align: center;">POLITICAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political divisions • Political unrest • Census 2020 • Upcoming elections • Millage vote • Mistrust 	<p style="text-align: center;">ECONOMIC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown redevelopment • Library millage • Stagnant wages • Minimum wage increase • Housing costs • Tourism • Traffic • Increase in property taxes • Low unemployment 	<p style="text-align: center;">SOCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p style="text-align: center;">TECHNOLOGY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p style="text-align: center;">LEGAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TIF • Legalized marijuana • Gun laws • Millage renewal • Crockery Township contract renewal for library service 	<p style="text-align: center;">LIBRARY SECTOR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

<p style="text-align: center;">STRENGTHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer service • Building & spaces • Programs • Collections 	<p style="text-align: center;">OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More outreach • More programs • Increased partnerships
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receptive to suggestions, forward thinking • Cooperative with other organizations and libraries • Staff and their experience • Technology • Location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	RESULTS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

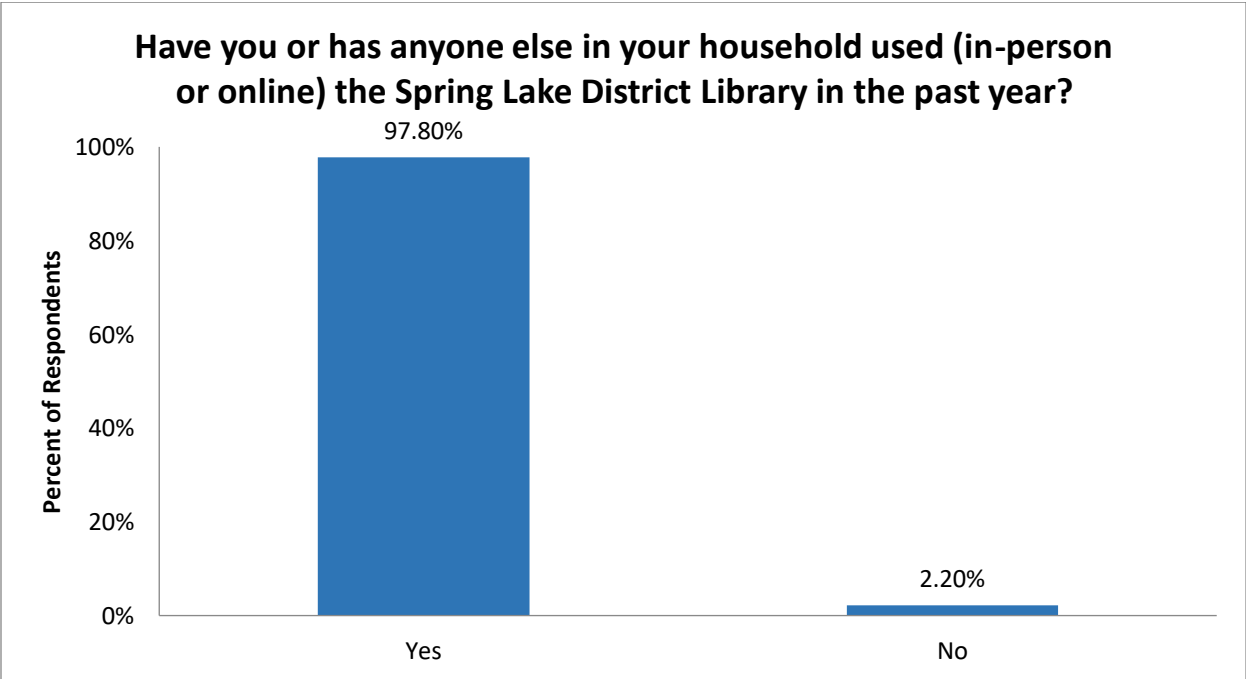
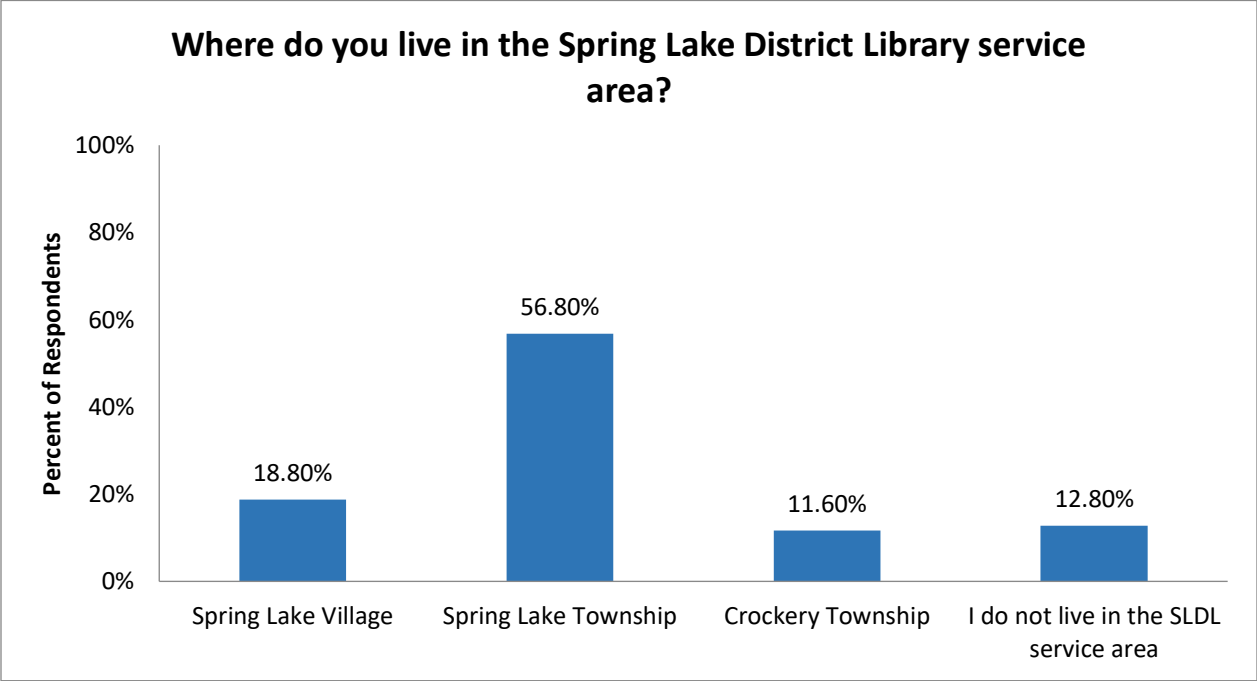
As part of their strategic planning process, the Spring Lake District Library (SLDL) conducted a survey to learn more about their patrons: what they value about the library; what collections, services, programs, and spaces they use; and what they would like to see from the library in the future.

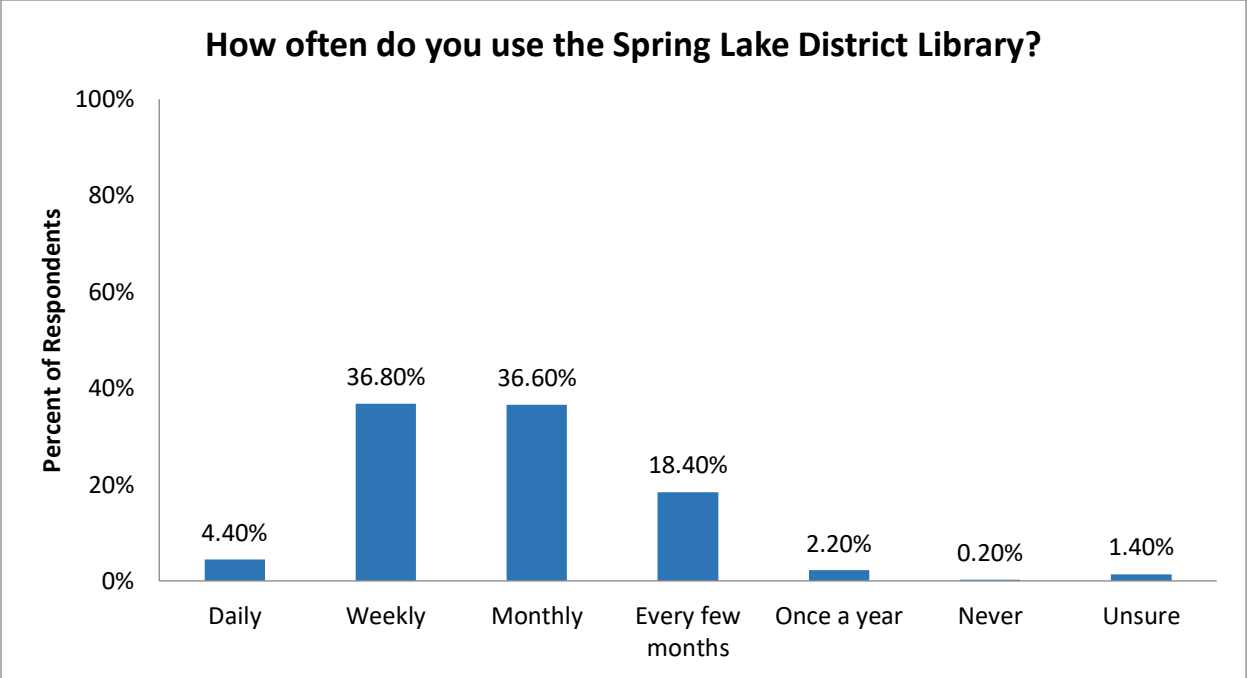
A total of 524 community members responded to the SurveyMonkey survey. Based on current [census data](#), respondents to the survey did not mirror the Spring Lake population:

- 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%)

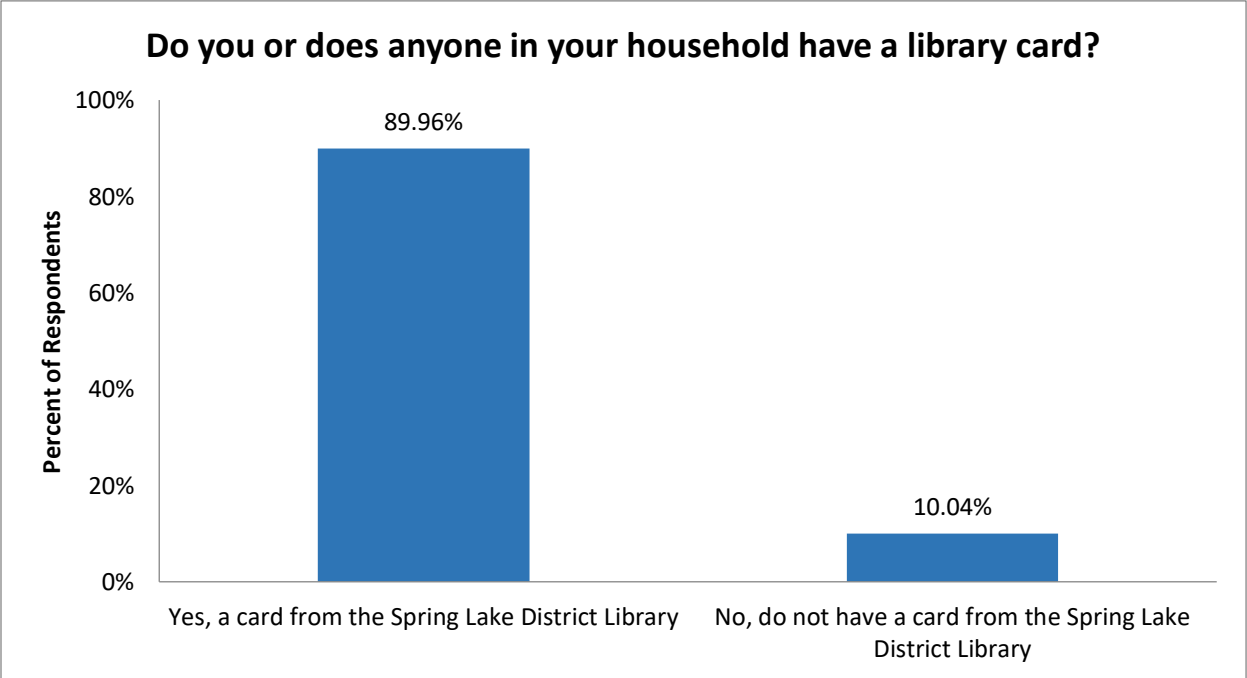
For Question #12, responses were recalculated to provide a more accurate average rating. Responses for “Do not use/need this” and “Was unaware that this was offered by the library” were removed from the calculations to provide an actual value rating for the library collections, services, and programs.

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.





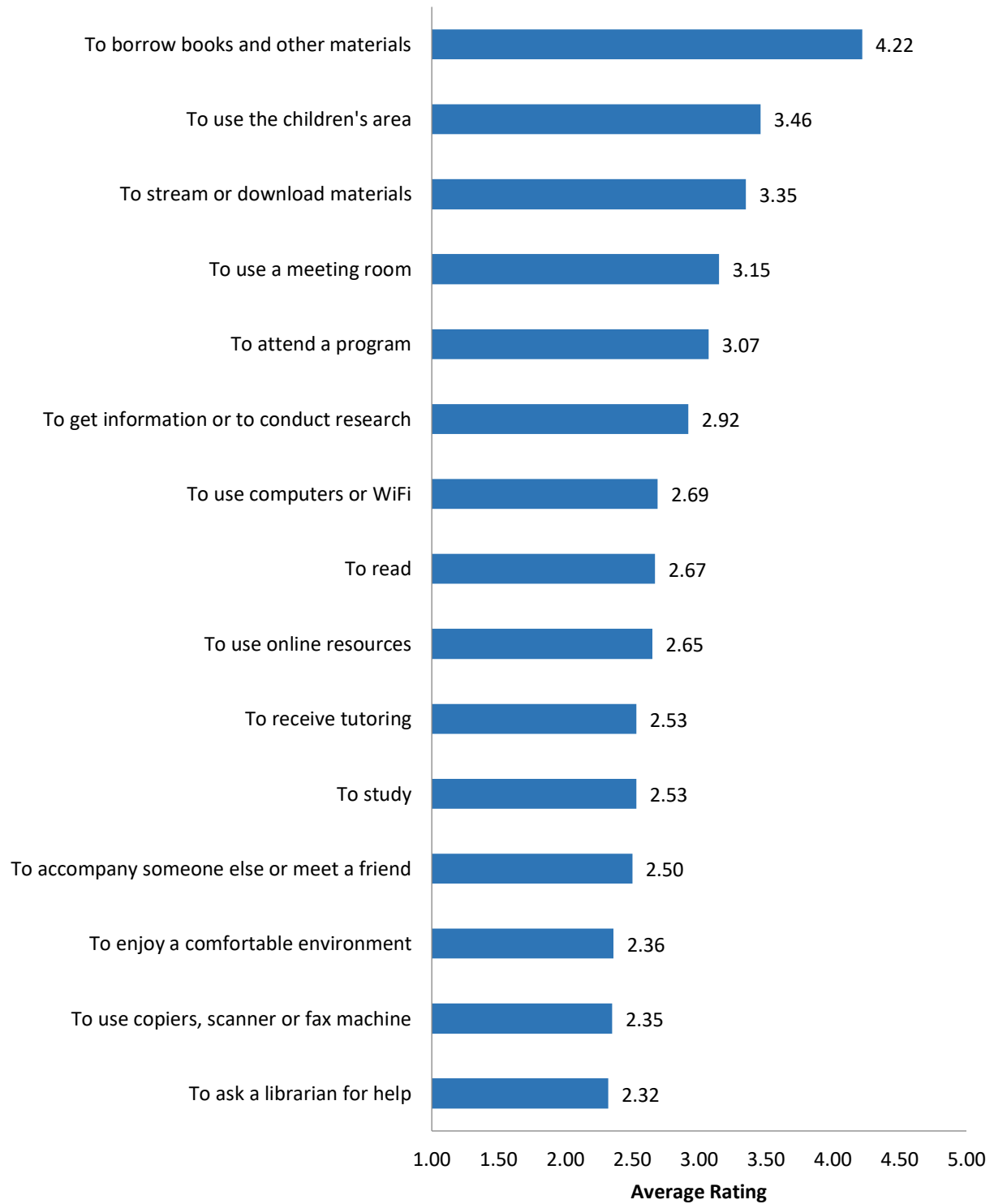
FINDINGS: • A majority of respondents (78%) use the library at least once a month.



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**



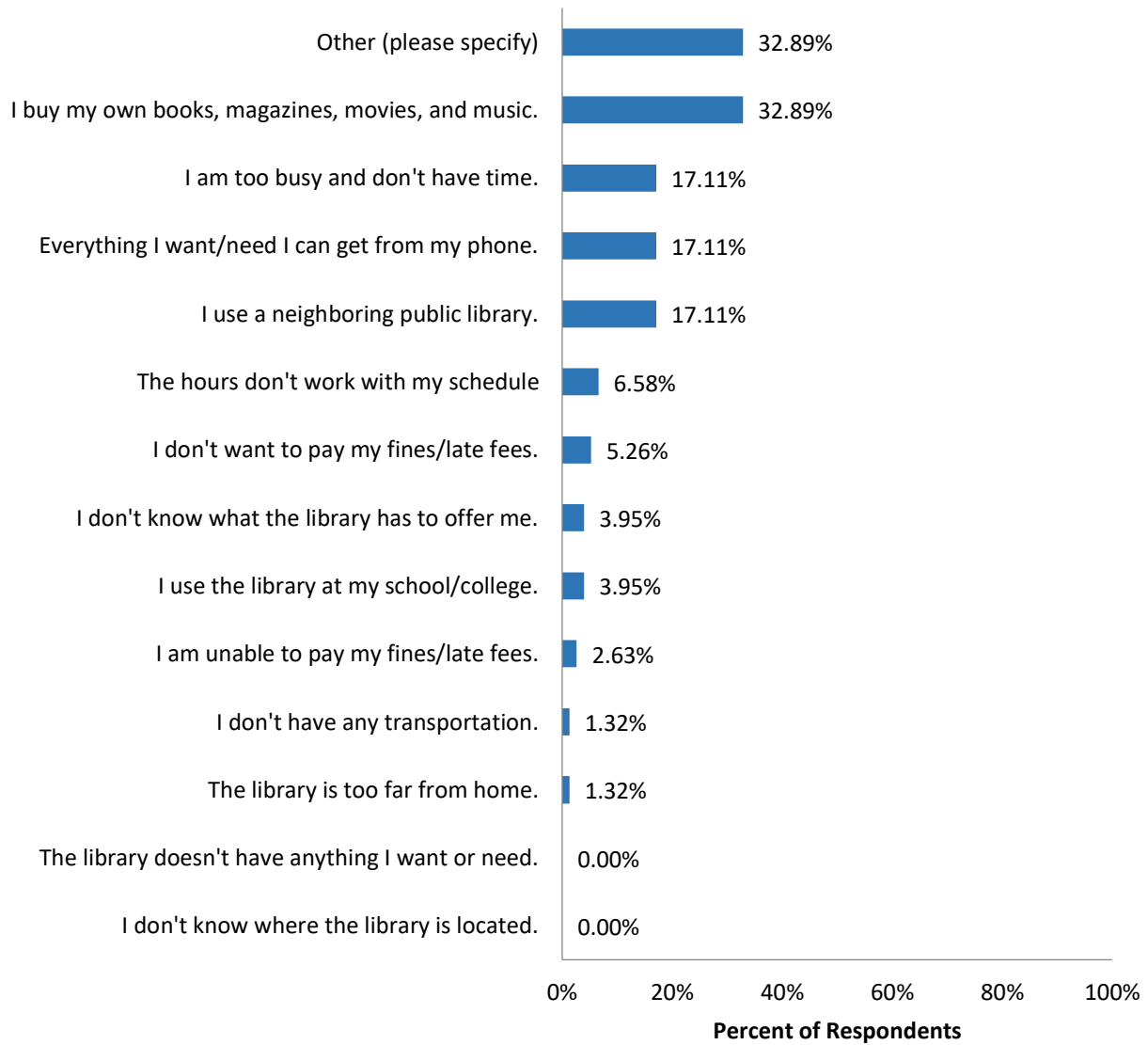
Other reasons for using the library:

- 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.



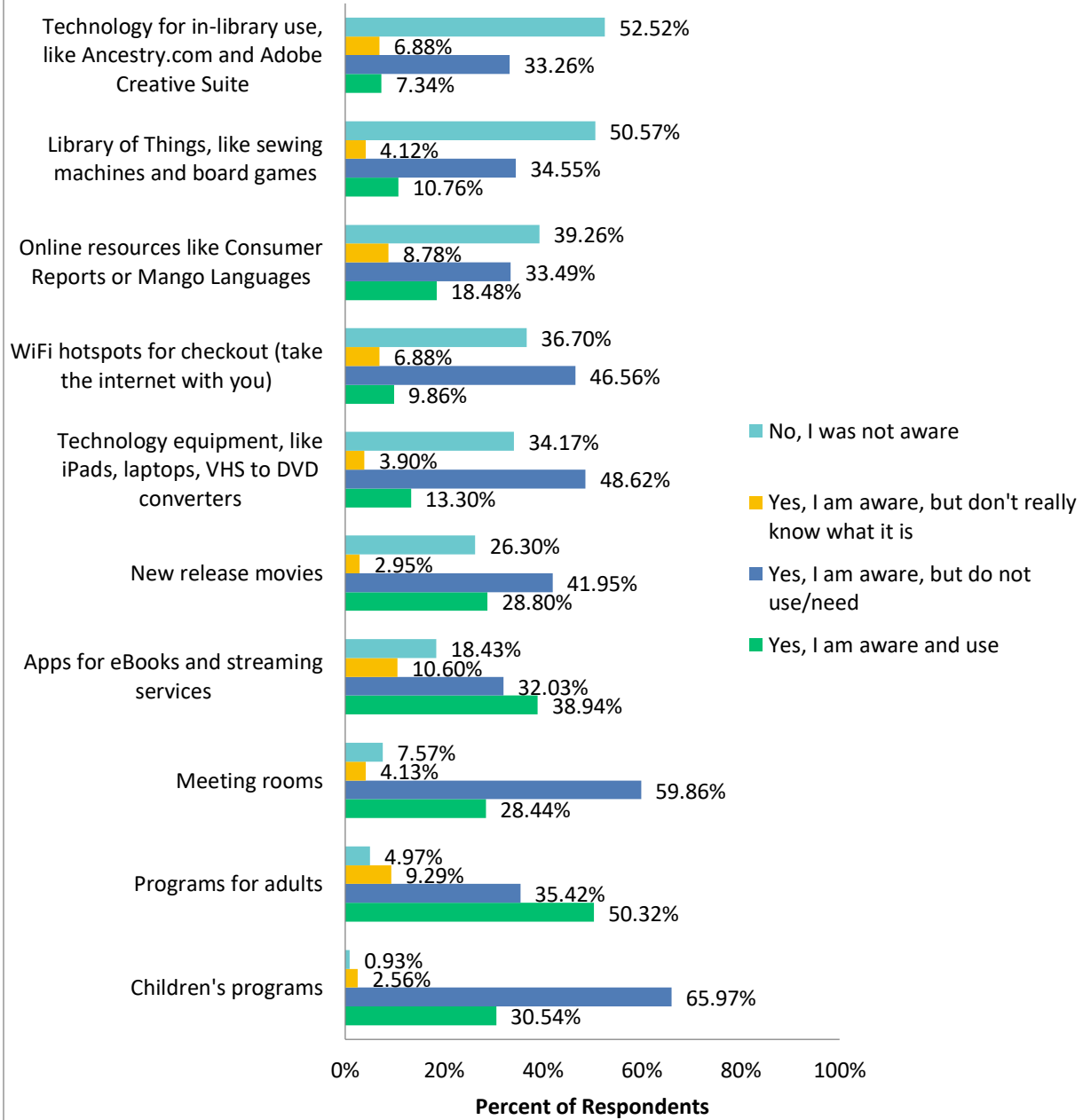
FINDINGS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not using the library regularly is mainly due to owning materials that one would normally acquire from the library, busyness, and more convenient access to materials (either from a phone or a neighboring library).
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If 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.

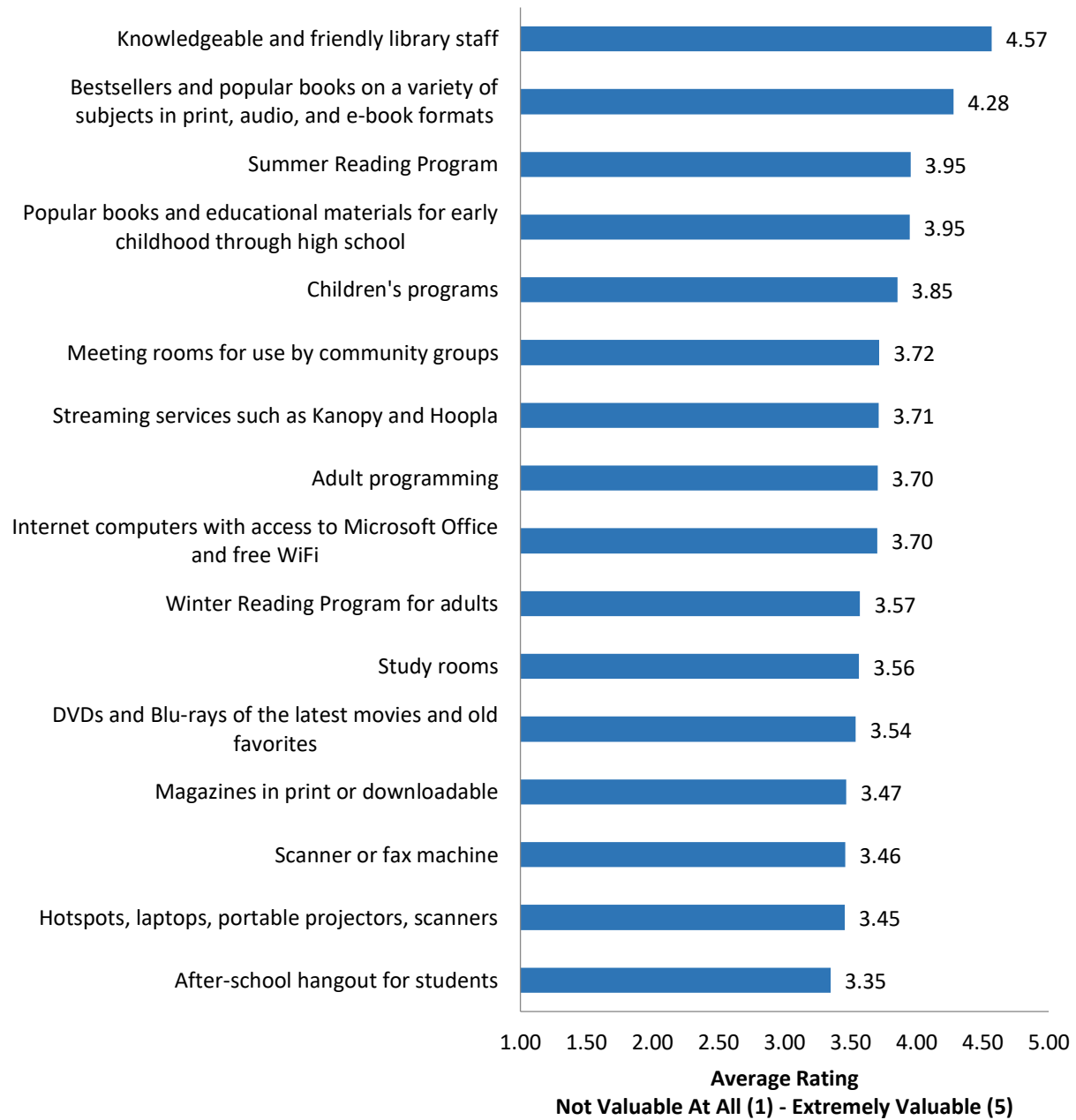
The Spring Lake District Library offers a wide variety of services and programs. Please respond below about your awareness of these services and programs.



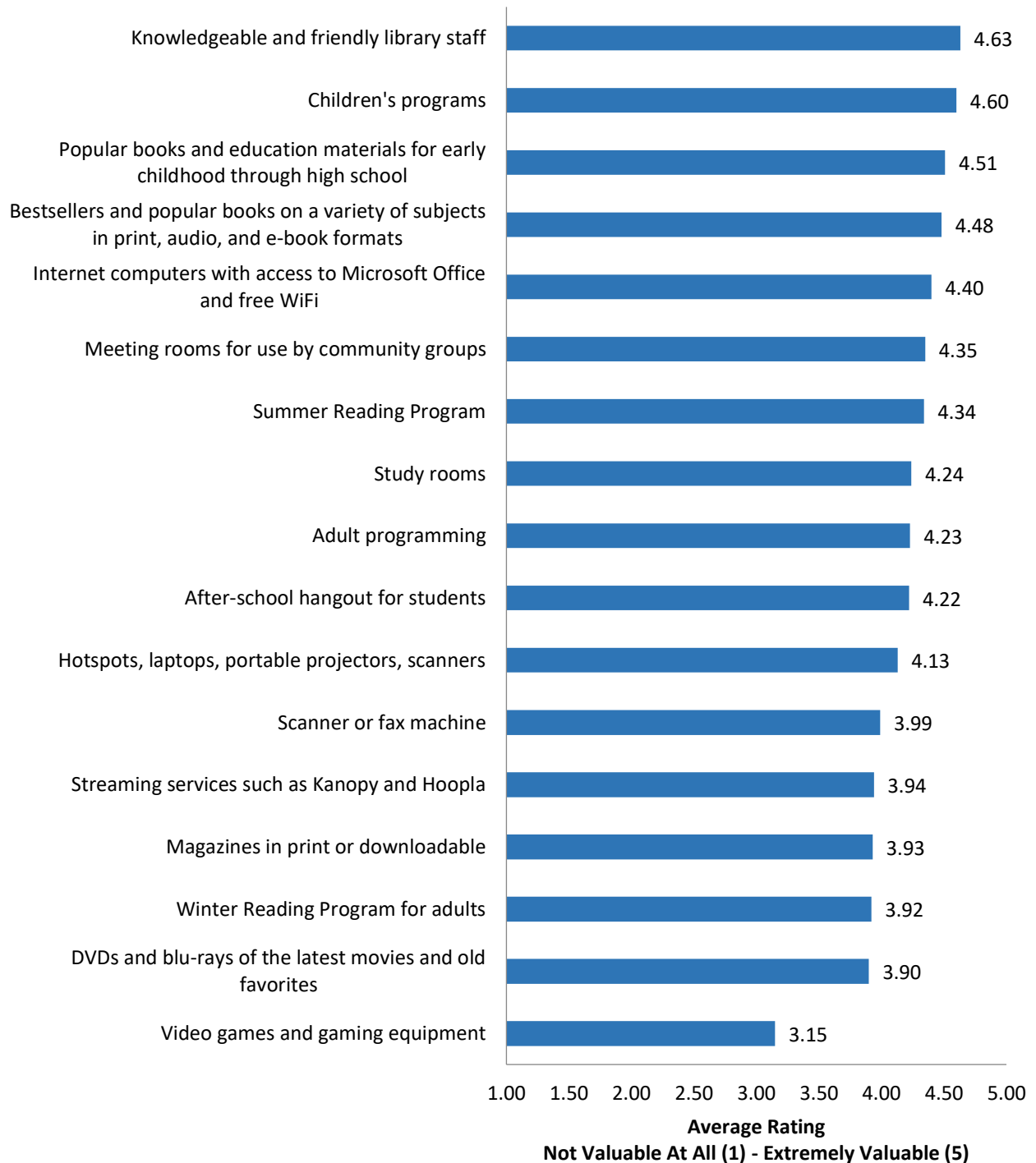
FINDINGS:

- 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.

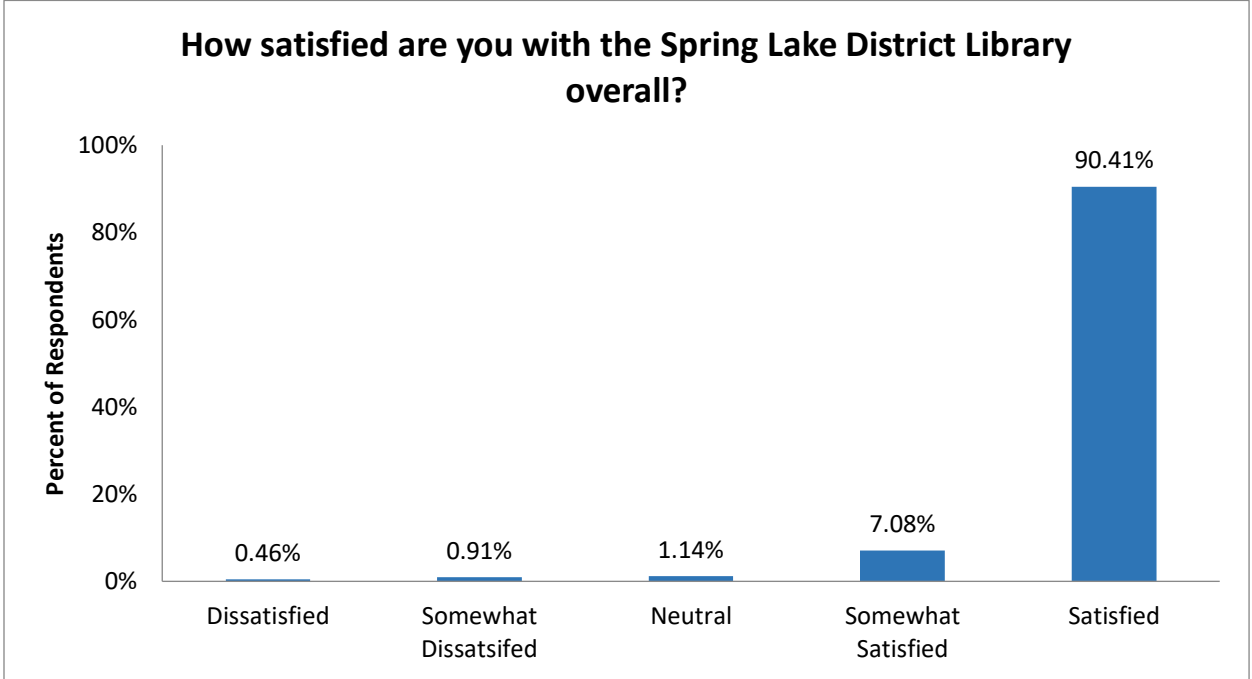
Please rate the following collections, services, and programs in terms of their value to YOU PERSONALLY or to YOUR FAMILY.



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



FINDINGS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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FINDINGS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly all respondents (97%) are somewhat satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.
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What can the library do to increase your satisfaction?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hours: Increase operating hours, especially on Fridays and Sundays.

What are the best parts of living in this community?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendly people, neighbors, caring, atmosphere, family
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools, school system, educational resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small community, village, beautiful, quiet, safe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bike, bike paths, trails, walk, outdoor activities, lakeshore, parks, beaches
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good access, proximity, location, Lake Michigan

What are the difficulties and challenges of living in this community?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack diversity
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost of living is expensive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservative area, slower to change, small town politics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer traffic and construction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited choices (as compared to a larger community)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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?



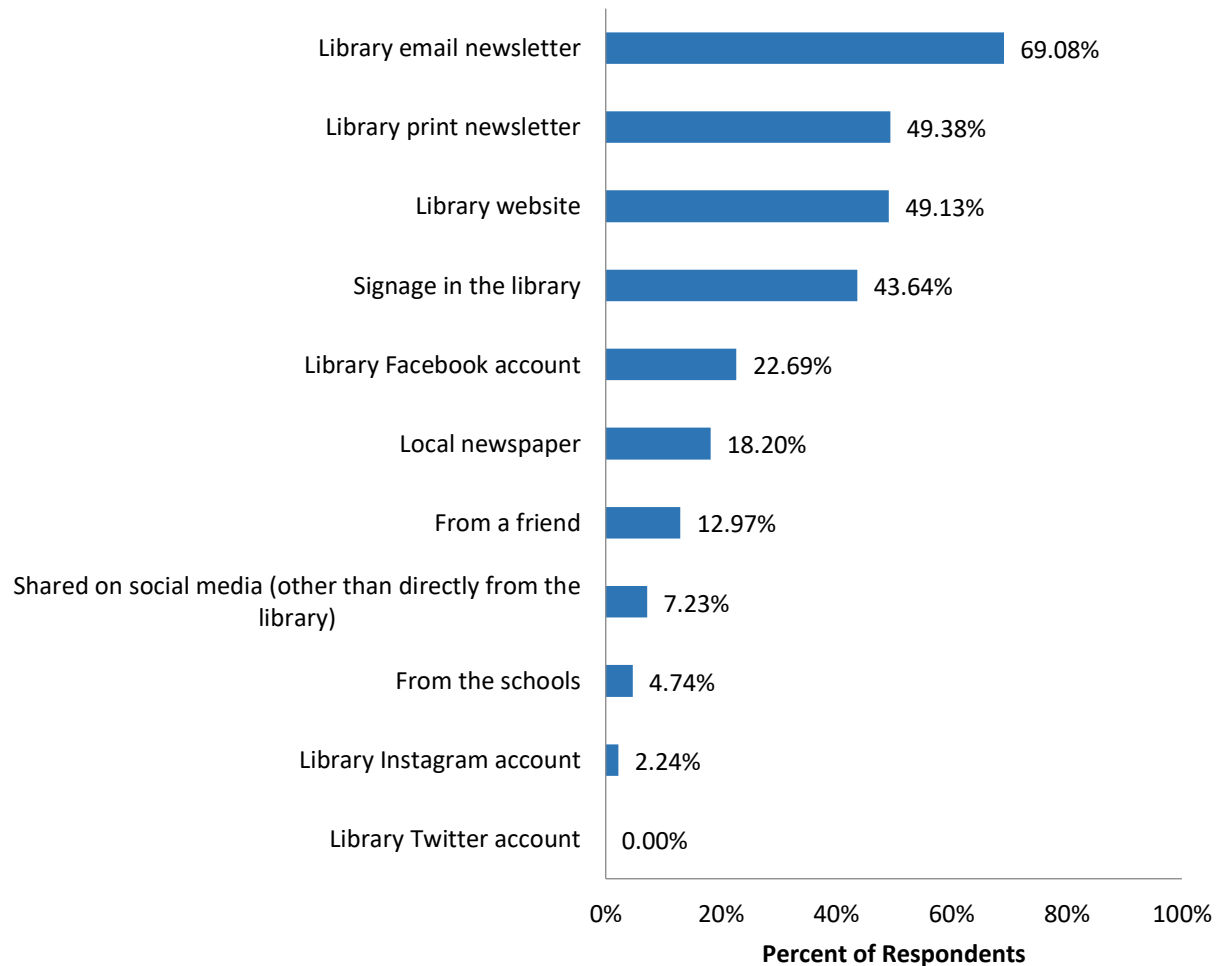
Other areas the library should focus its resources:

- 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.



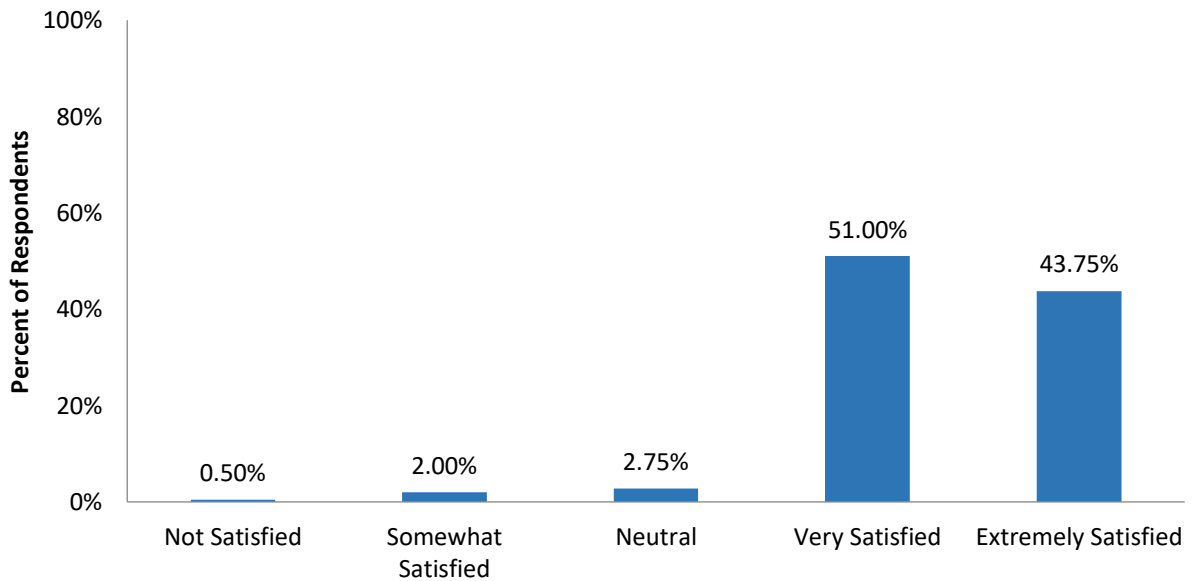
Other preferred ways to receive library news:

- 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?



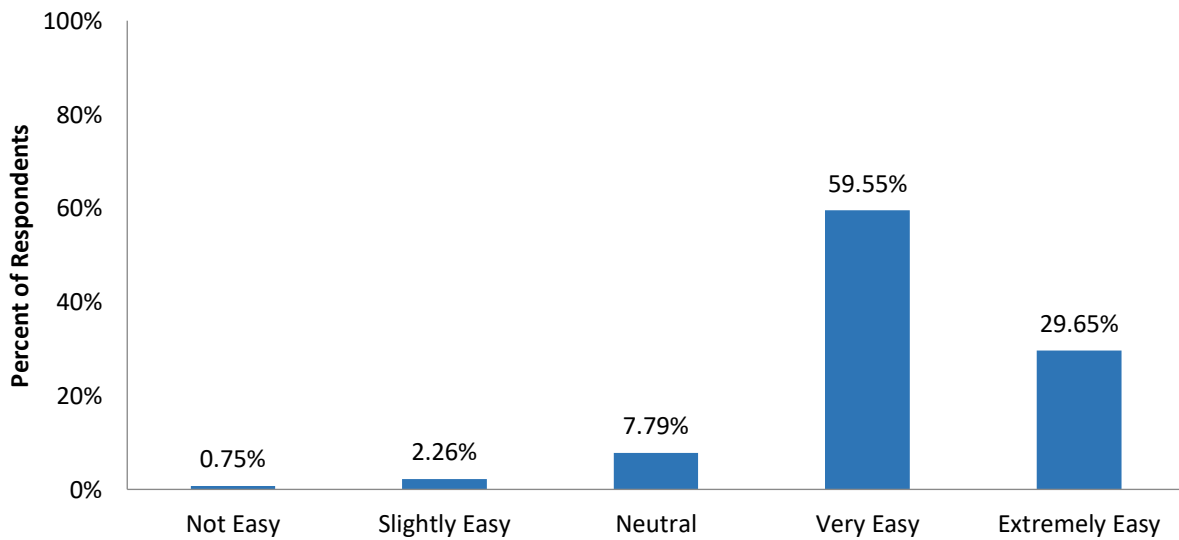
FINDINGS:

- 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.



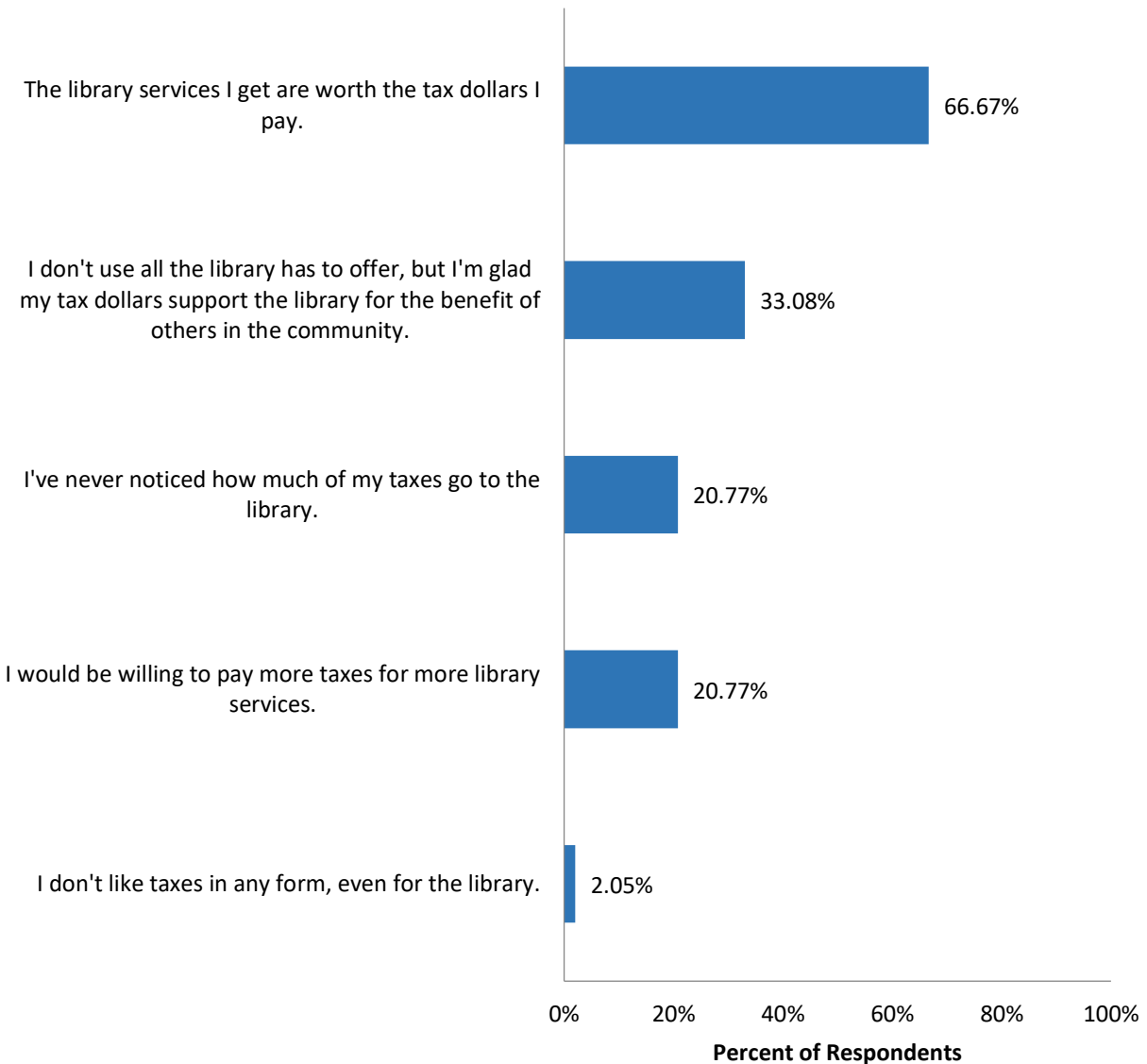
FINDINGS:

- 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.)

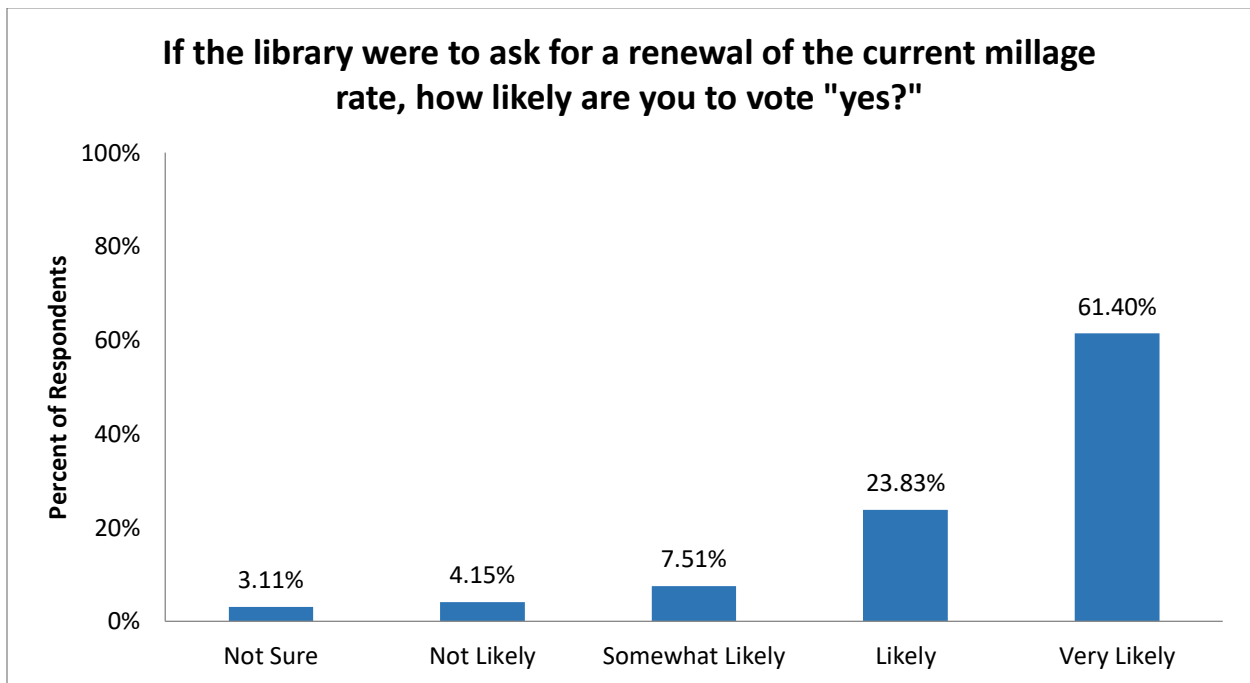


FINDINGS:

- 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



FINDINGS:

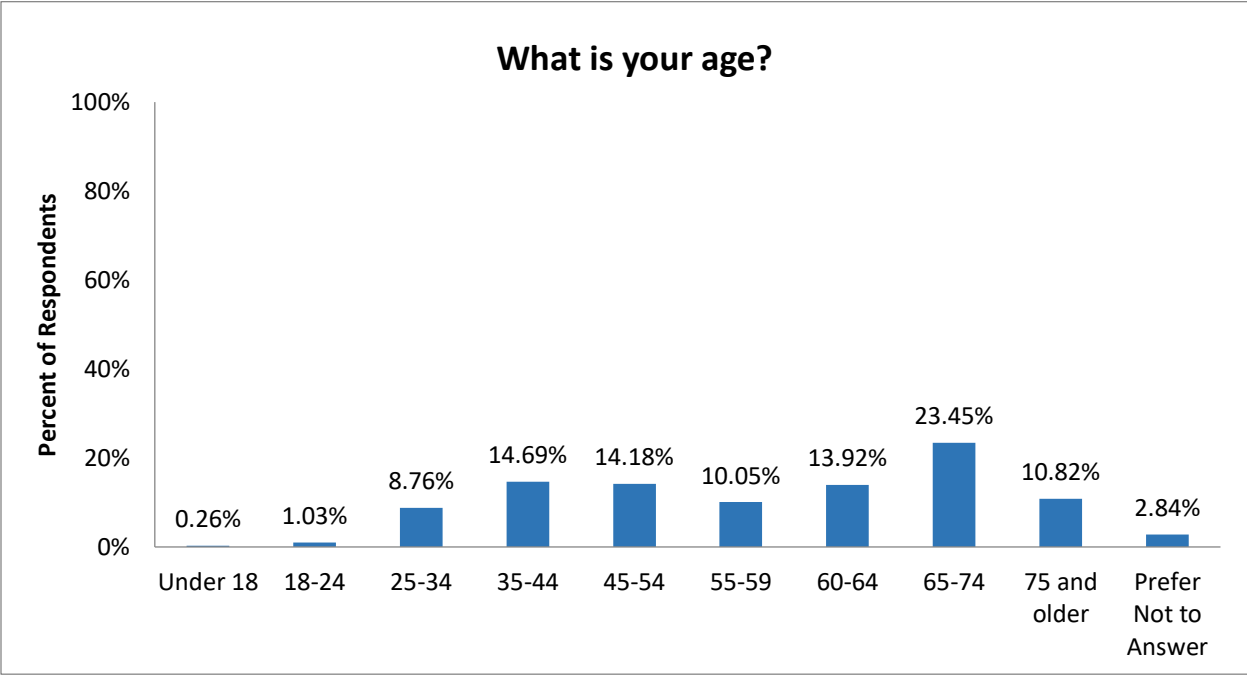
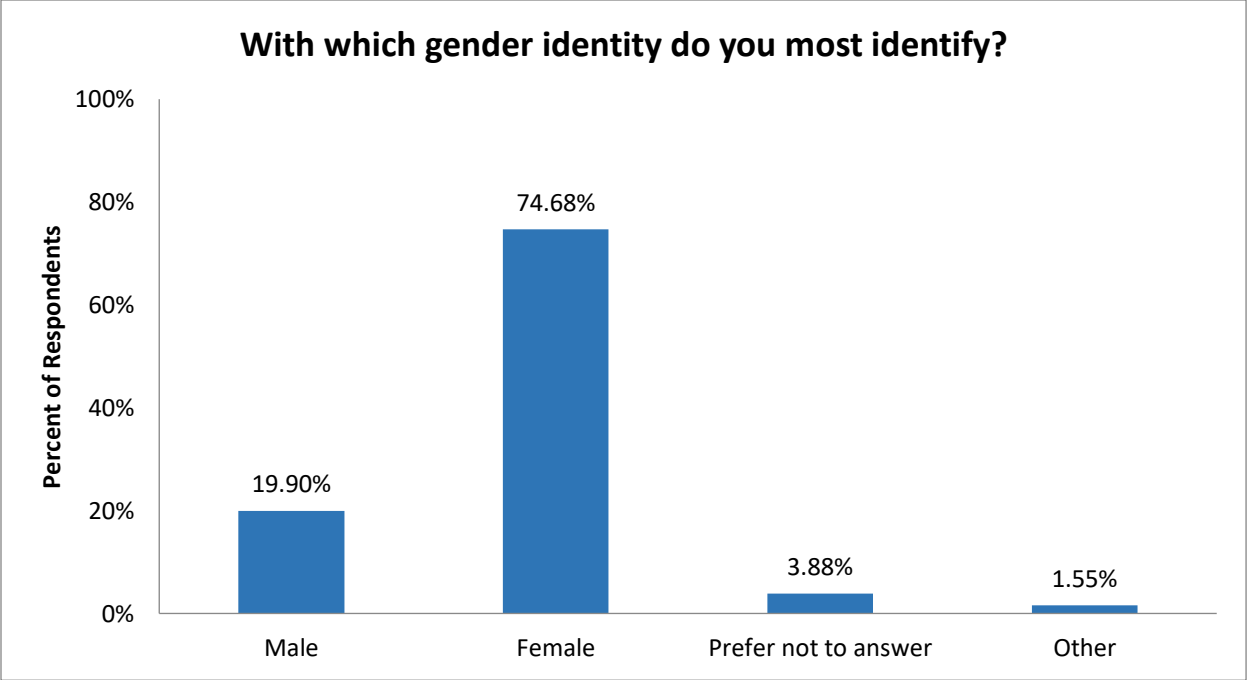
- A majority of respondents (85%) would likely or very likely vote yes to a renewal of the current millage rate.

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.

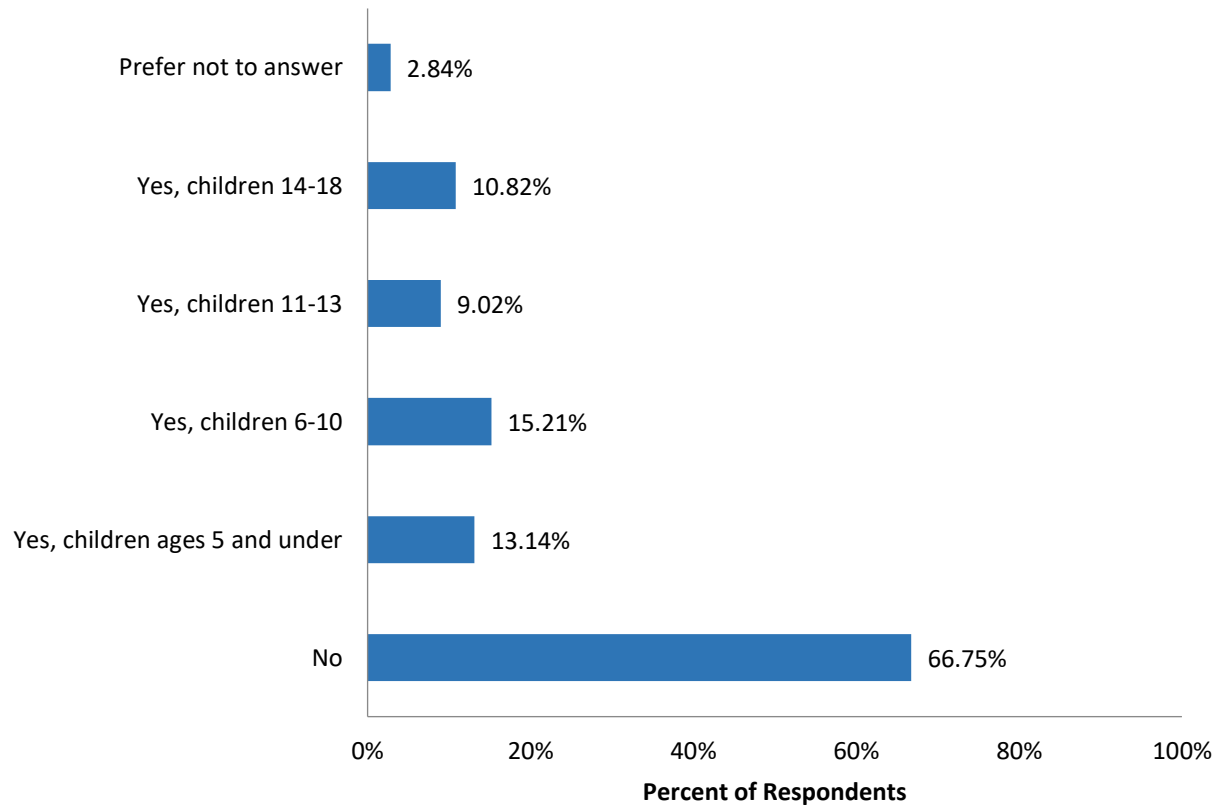
Please share any final feedback you'd like to give about future collections, services, programs, and the facilities.

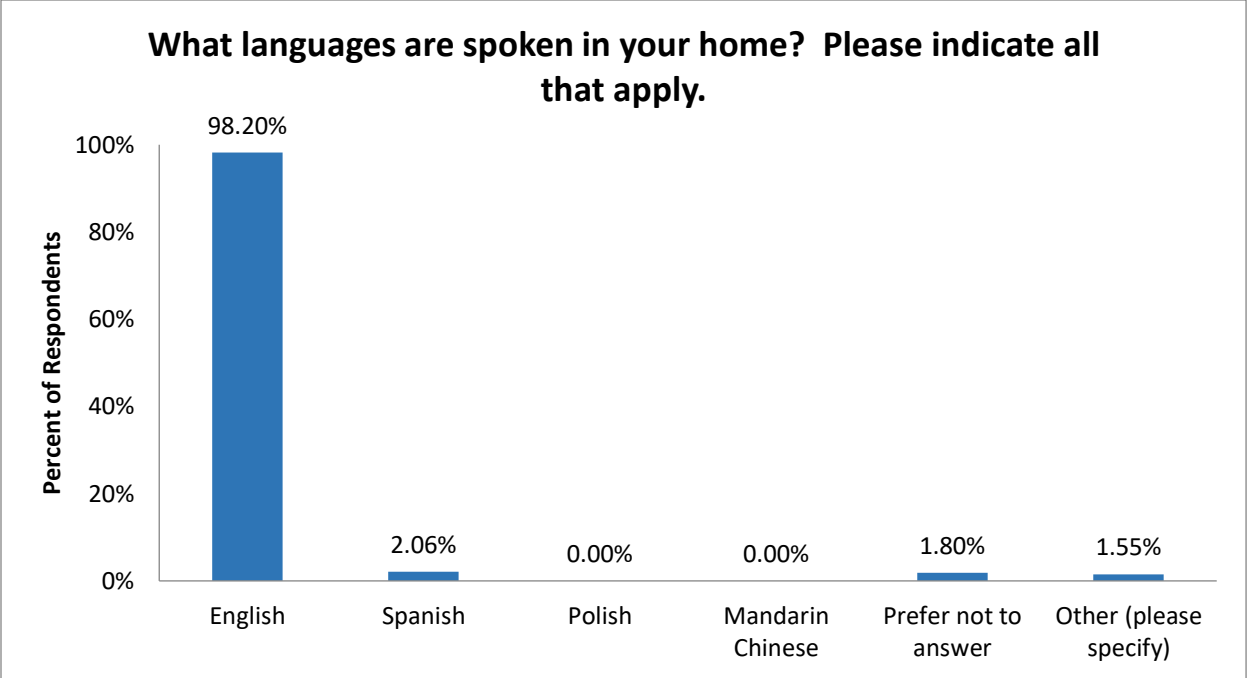
- Expand the events, programs, and classes offered at the library (e.g., language learning, music, fiber arts, animals, science, book signings, hands-on learning, and lectures)
- Expand the collections at the library, including books (e.g., science fiction, health-related, inspirational fiction, fantasy, 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)



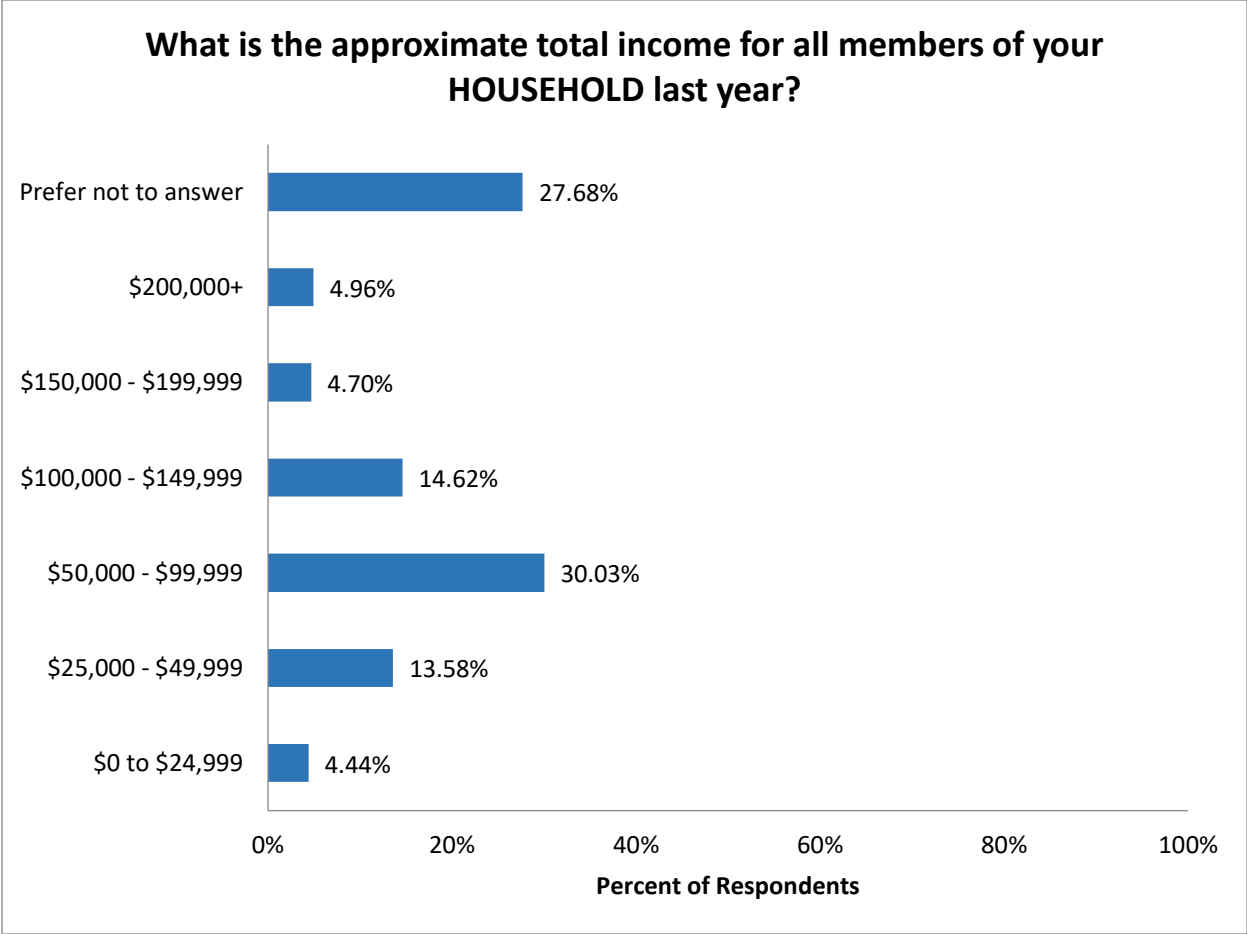
FINDINGS: • Responses to the survey were nicely distributed across age groups.

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





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



OVERALL SURVEY FINDINGS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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Teen Survey

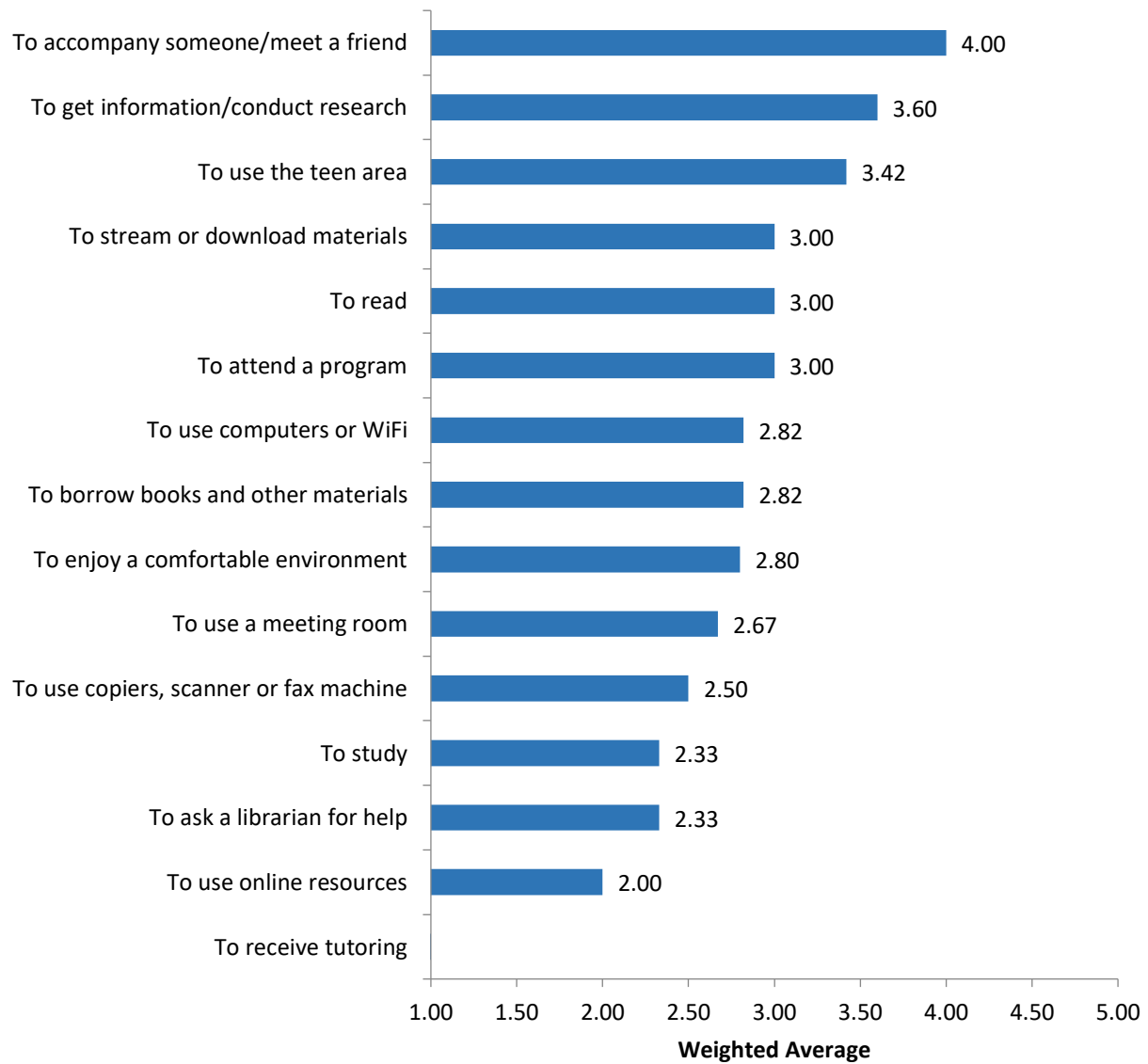
As part of their strategic planning process, the Spring Lake District Library (SLDL) conducted a survey to learn more about their teenage patrons: what they value about the library; what collections, services, programs, and spaces they use; and what they would like to see from the library in the future.

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



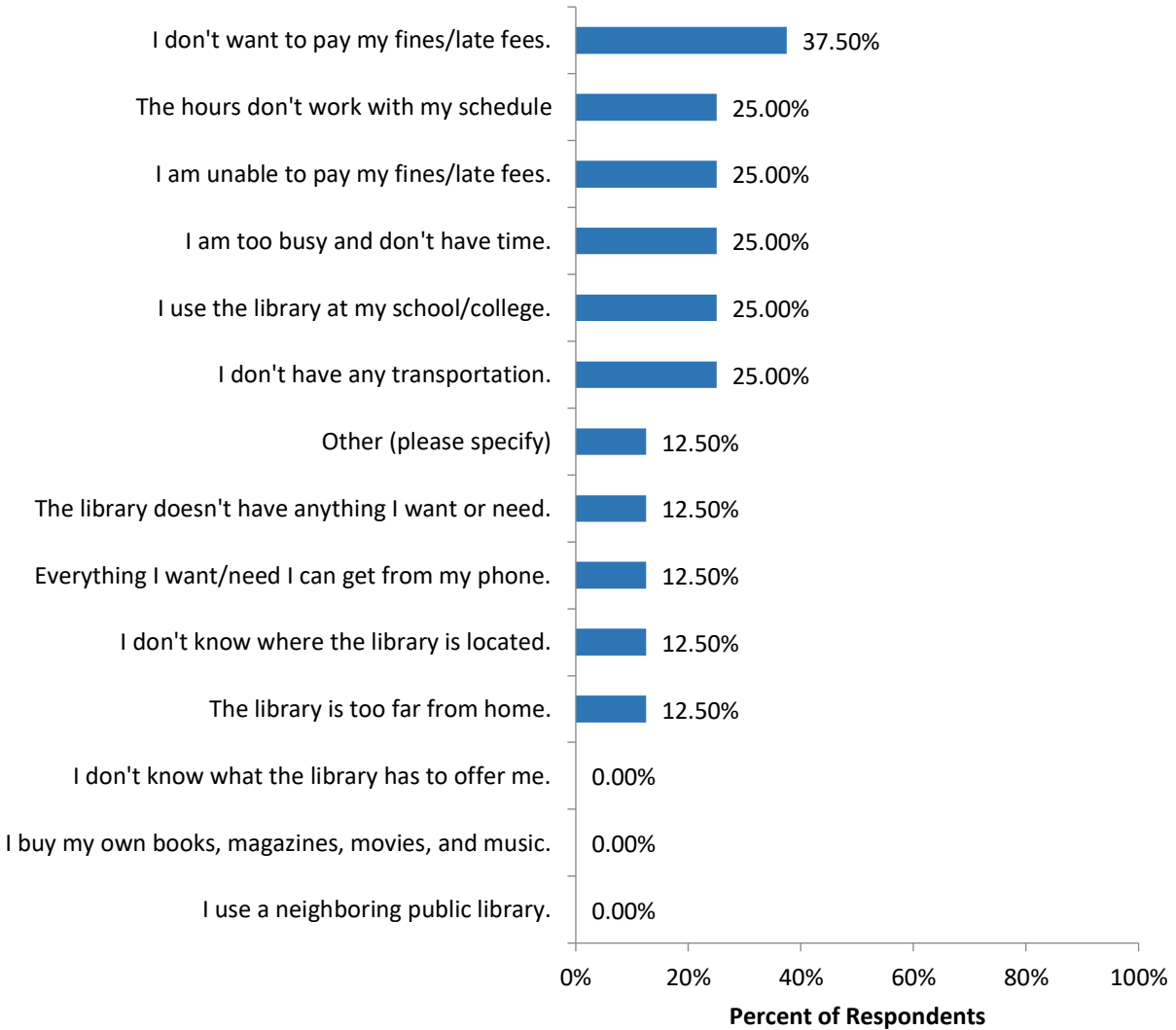
Other reasons for using the library:

- 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.

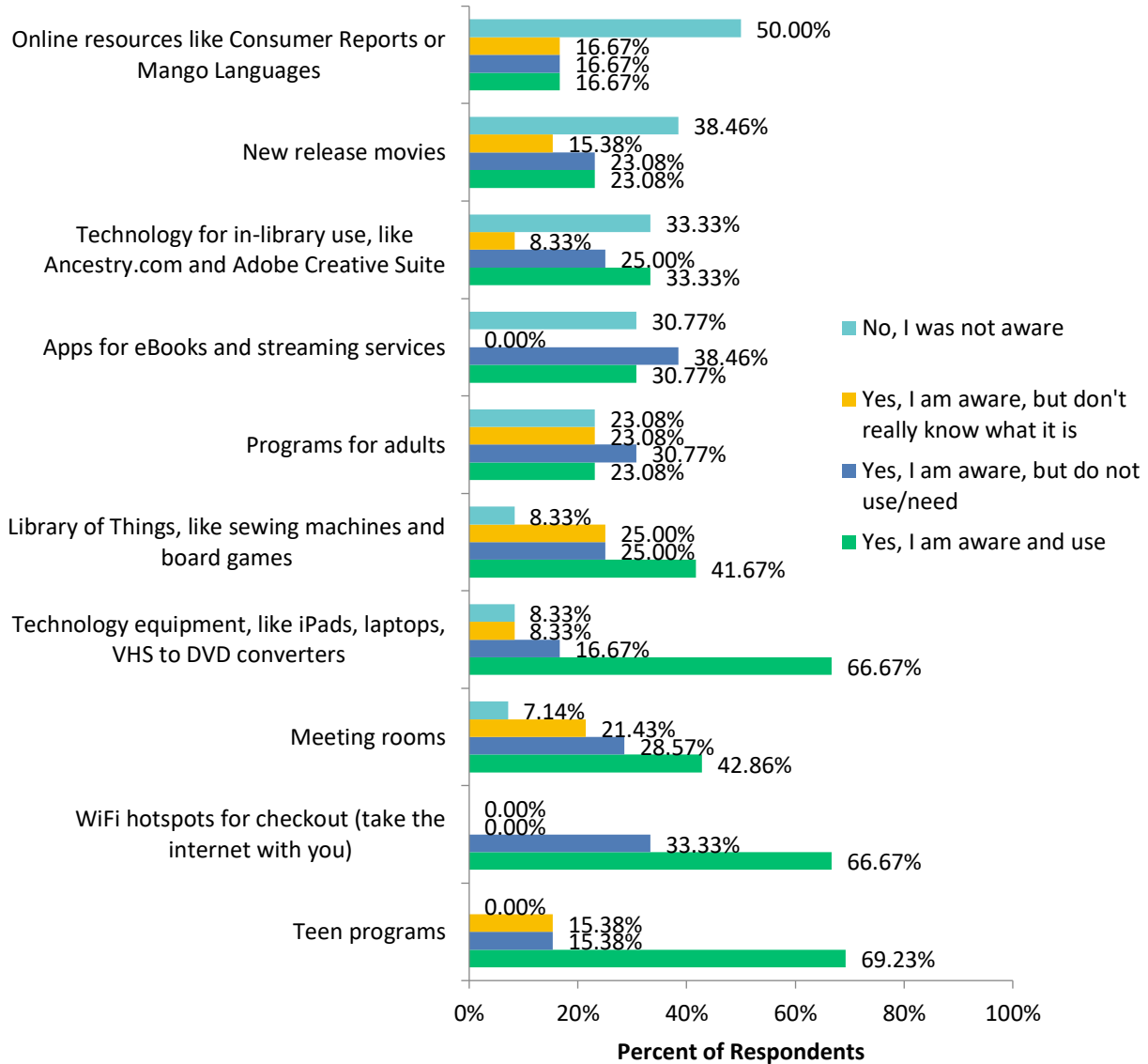
If you do not use the library regularly, why not? Please mark all answers that apply. (Please skip this question if you answered the previous question.)



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.

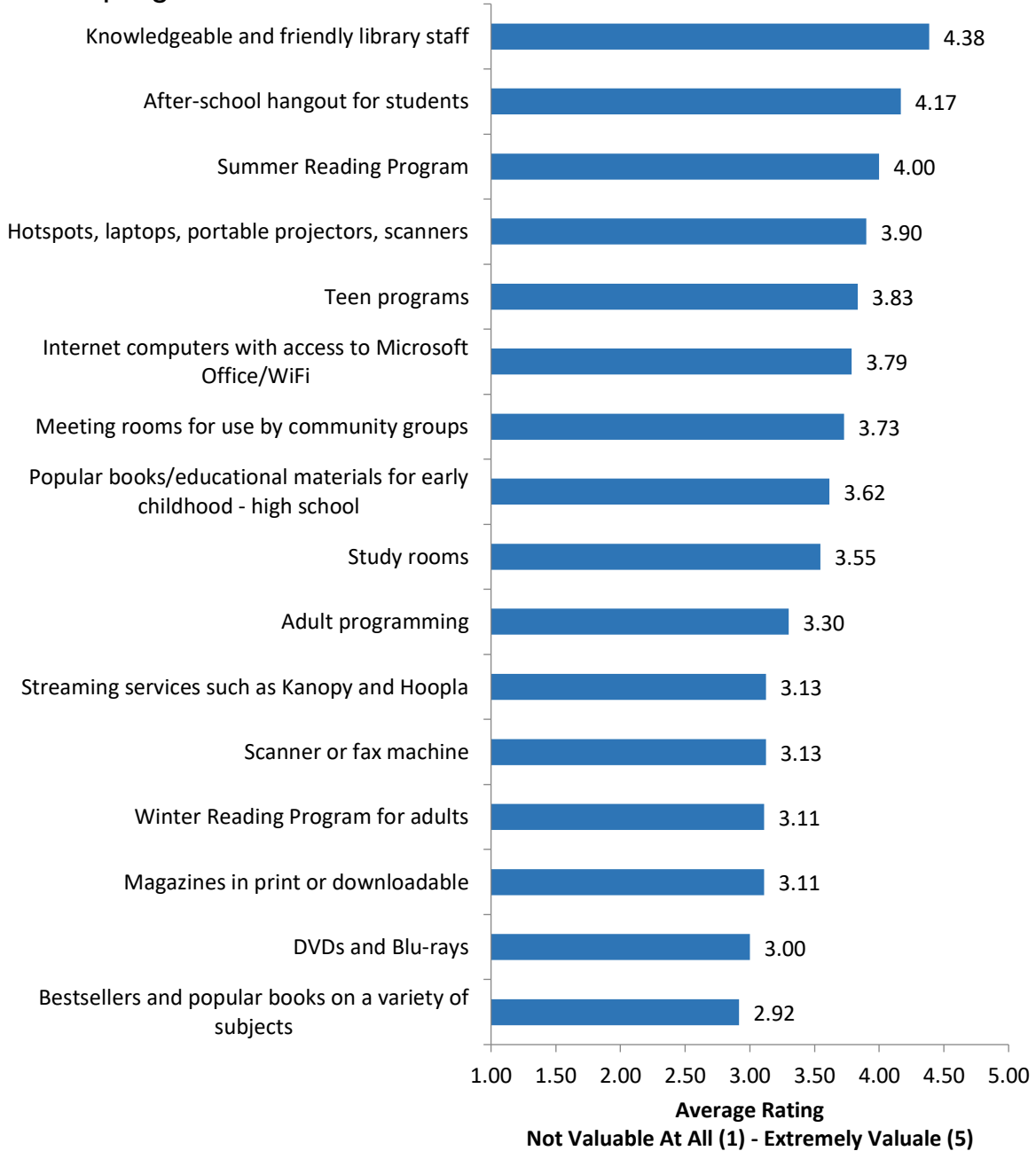
The Spring Lake District Library offers a wide variety of services and programs. Please respond below about your awareness of these services and programs.



FINDINGS:

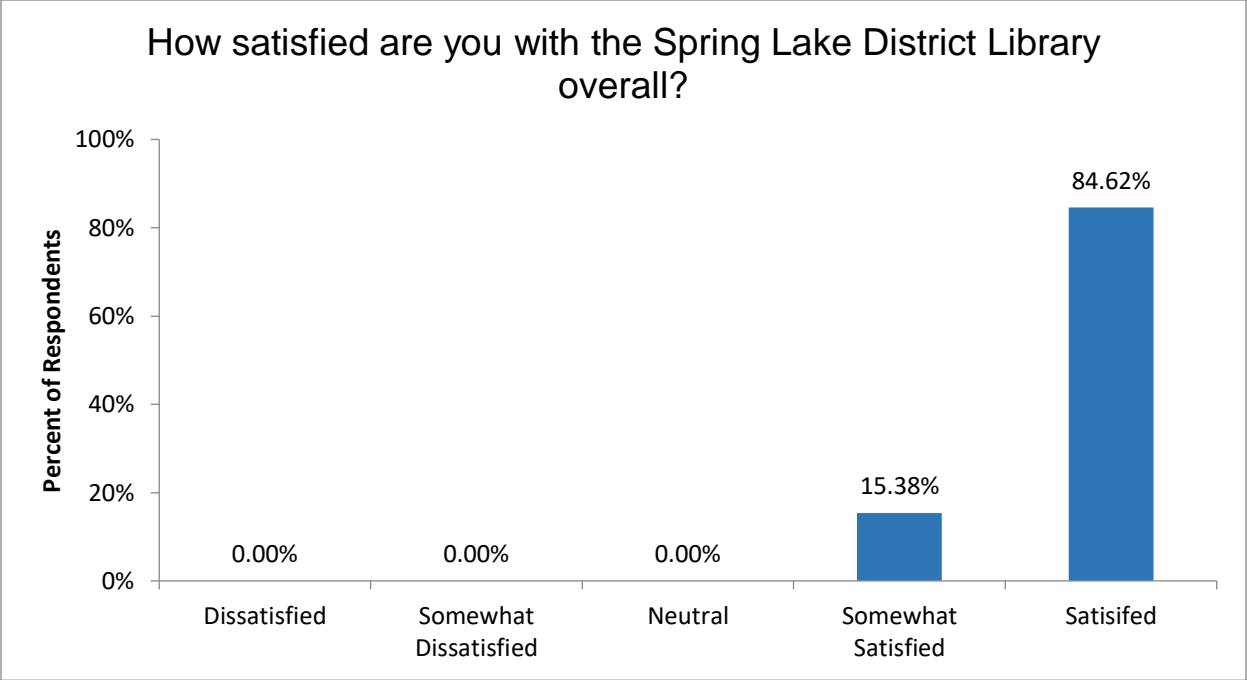
- One-half of respondents were unaware of online resources.
- One-third of respondents were unaware of new release movies, and technology for in-library use.
- A majority of respondents are aware of and use technology equipment, WiFi hotspots, and teen programs.

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



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.



FINDINGS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All of the respondents were somewhat satisfied or satisfied with the library overall.
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What can the library do to increase your satisfaction?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance the collection of bestselling authors (e.g., Harper Lee)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add vending machines and food
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide better markers for the whiteboards
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquire an Xbox one
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add a big slide

What are the best parts of living in this community?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone is friendly and knows each other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The schools and the library
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to resources

What are the difficulties and challenges of living in this community?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weather (i.e., snow/ice)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who do bad things (e.g., drugs, vapes, juuls, foul language)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Being different
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not enough food
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.



Other areas the library should focus its resources:

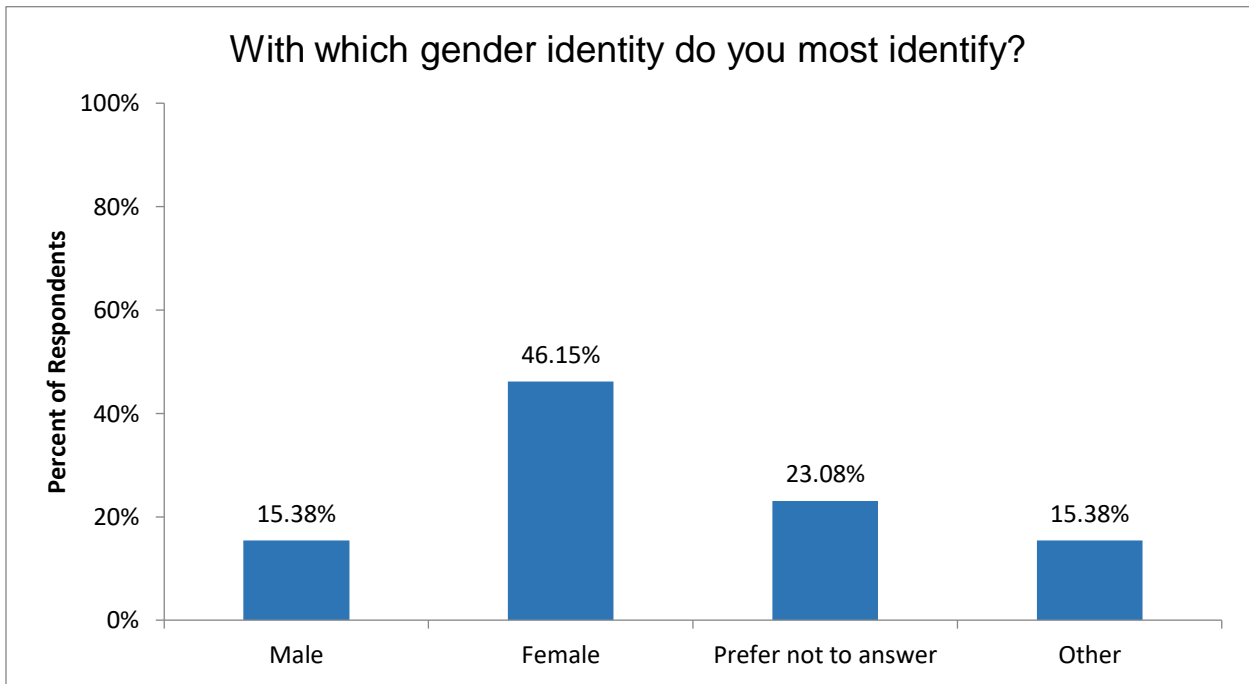
- Food

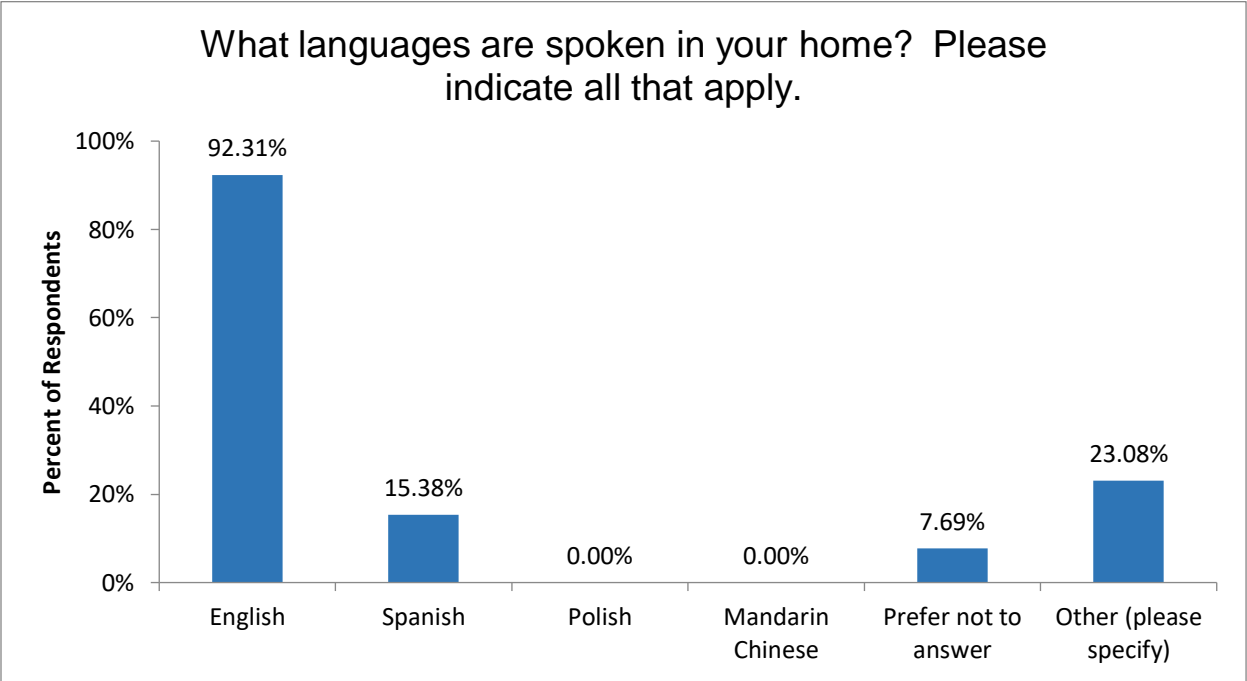
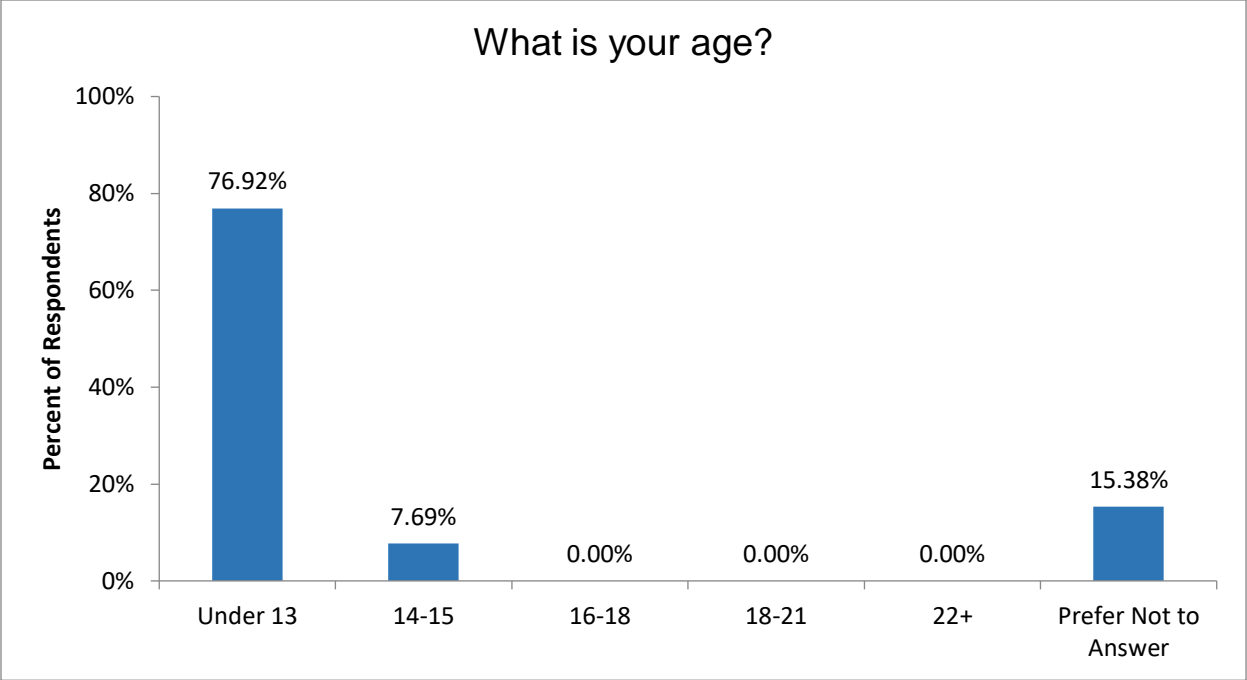
FINDINGS:

- 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





Other languages spoken in your home:

- Icelandic

OVERALL SURVEY FINDINGS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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).
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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 shelvees 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 pursuing 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/SpringLakePlanDowntownDevelopmentPlan.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/>