Lapeer District Library
Strategic Plan
2020-2023

RAISING AWARENESS

EXPANDING MINDS

CREATING SUSTAINABILITY

Introduction & Background

Geographically located north of Detroit, Lapeer District Library (LDL) is a Class 6 library serving over just over 60,000 people (around 20,000 cardholders) with one central library and six branches. (LDL services the City of Lapeer and the townships of Arcadia, Burlington, Burnside, Deerfield, Elba, Hadley, Lapeer, Marathon, Mayfield, Metamora, Oregon, and Rich.) The central library in Lapeer is 8,100 square feet and branch spaces equal 7,615 square feet.

Total print and electronic collections are just under 120,000 items with total circulation over 160,000 items per year. The library has a wide variety of programs for all ages, hosting just over 1,300 events annually with total event attendance of over 24,000.

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 December 2019. 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:

- Melissa Malcolm, Library Director
- Yvonne Brown, Assistant Director for Technical Services
- Laura Fromwiller, Head of Reference
- Nicole Uptegraff, Library Assistant
- Allie Campbell, Library Assistant
- Pat Presby, Library Assistant
- Teresa Chase, Business Manager
- Gary Phillips, Board

The Planning Team met several times during the strategic planning process starting in July 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, 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 190 residents and 33 people attended focus groups or participated in an interview. The library also gathered feedback from patrons at service desks at all locations and through social media posts. Respondents indicated interest in more programming, technology assistance, and downloadable materials. This is consistent with the reasons respondents gave for using the library. Respondents are interested in traditional library services and want more.

At the October 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, which were only modified slightly from current statements.

Vision

Empowering our communities through resources, education, technology, and connection.

Where your story begins.

The vision states what the library wants to achieve in the communities it serves. All libraries in the district seek to empower the community by offering materials, programs, access to technology, and connections to each other and community resources. The tagline indicates that the library is just the beginning of the story and an entry to whatever an individual wants to achieve in their life.

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[1] See full _Learning Report_ in Appendix.

Mission

We serve as a community resource, gathering place, and educational hub.

The library's mission states what the library will do to achieve its vision. The library is a community resource by providing print and electronic materials, connections to other services in the community, access to technology, and by responding to the information needs of individuals. The library welcomes all community members and provides spaces to gather and learn, socialize, or relax. The library is an educational hub for community members of all ages and is a place to attend programs and use educational materials. These three core areas are how the library serves its communities and provides value to individuals no matter their stage of life.

Strategic Directions

This plan is divided into three strategic directions:

Raising Awareness | Expanding Minds | Creating Sustainability

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 increasing awareness through outreach and partnerships and expanding minds through programs, materials, and technology, the library's place in the community is expanded to unserved and underserved populations to create stronger community bonds.

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.

Lapeer District Library
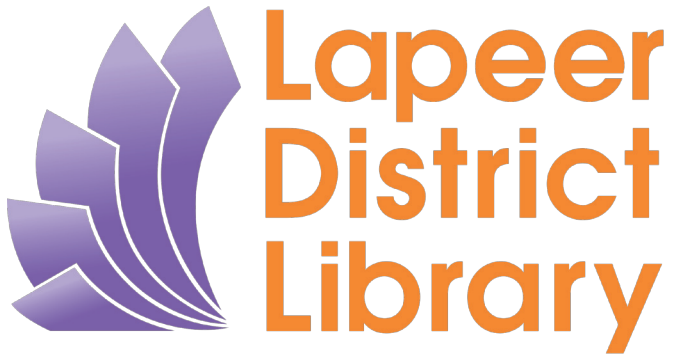
Where your story begins.

Strategic Plan 2020-2023

VISION:
Empowering our communities through resources, education, technology, and connection.

MISSION:
We serve as a community resource, gathering place, and educational hub.

RAISING AWARENESS

We reach our community through clear communication that increases understanding of the value of the library and all we offer.

GOALS

- Strengthen community connections through partnerships and outreach

- Deliver compelling messages to motivate increased engagement

EXPANDING MINDS

We inspire growth and enhance quality of life through diverse programs and access to information and materials.

GOALS

- Focus programs to meet needs for learning, cultural enrichment, and social interaction

- Provide in-demand materials and technology

CREATING SUSTAINABILITY

We have the facilities and resources to meet the needs of our community.

GOALS

- Additional funding to expand resources, services, programs, and spaces.

- Modernize facilities to optimize use of space and encourage visits

Raising Awareness

*We reach our community through clear communication that
increases understanding of the value of the library and all we offer.*

Communication about library collections, programs, services, and facilities is an ongoing process without a defined endpoint. Rather, this strategic direction will focus outreach, partnership, and communication efforts based on careful consideration of what works and where to maximize return on investment.

The library knows that there will always be a segment of the population that does not value the library or use its services. However, working towards the goals below will create a continuous process of compelling communication that will generate excitement to engage more people, thus increasing support.

Communicating the value of the library and all the library offers is central to how the library will achieve the goals in this strategic direction.

Goals	Possible Activities[2]
1) Strengthen community connections through partnerships and outreach	• Research outreach options and create a plan to guide activities • Investigate feasibility of bookmobile services to serve remote geographies of the district • Create partnership criteria to evaluate potential collaborations
2) Deliver compelling messages to motivate increased engagement	• Create an engagement plan for marketing and social media efforts • Hold listening sessions/interviews with non-users to raise awareness and learn about their interests and needs

Potential Measures of Success[3]

• Outreach events result in increased awareness and usage • Increase in social media engagement	• Increase in partnerships that result in increased awareness and usage • Defined levels of engagement and plan for increased engagement

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[2] Activity Plan finalized by staff after Board adoption of this plan.
[3] Evaluation framework finalized by staff after Board adoption of this plan.

Expanding Minds

*We inspire growth and enhance quality of life through
diverse programs and access to information and materials.*

The library's programs, materials, and technology enhance the lives of individuals throughout their lives. Young and old come to the library to learn, explore the world, and satisfy curiosities. The library is also a place of social connection, which in and of itself is a way to learn and enhance life experiences.

The goals in this strategic direction build on the library's success and the community's demand for increased programs, materials (in all formats) and technology. The library's work in these areas is strong and the below goals create focus for growth and creativity in creating new programs to engage new audiences, developing collections that respond to community needs and interests, and keeping up-to-date technology for 21st century life skills.

Goals	Possible Activities
1) Focus programs to meet needs for learning, cultural enrichment, and social interaction	- Programs that respond to community needs, interests, and current events - Programs to create connections and reduce social isolation - Early literacy programs to spark the joy of reading
2) Provide in-demand materials and technology	- Access to current technology and instruction on technology usage - Patron-driven collection development

Potential Measures of Success

- Increased overall circulation
- Increased holdings in various collections based on community input
- Number of programs and attendees
- High satisfaction and learning at library programs
- Number of computer sessions
- Number of computer classes and attendees

Creating Sustainability

We have the facilities and resources to meet the needs of our community.

The previous two strategic directions create the momentum needed to tackle the tough goals in this strategic direction. The Learning Report showed strong support for a new main library and for increased collections, programs, and services. The goals in this strategic direction allow for careful consideration of the way forward and the timing of potential referenda over the next several election cycles.

Key to progress towards these goals is information and community input. The library has financial and building plans that need to be revisited in light of the strategic planning process learning. Once key input is received, the Board can engage in further community conversations that will guide the way forward. Ultimately, work towards increasing awareness and expanding collections, programs, and technology will build momentum that will inform a path to sustainability in facilities and operations.

Goals	Possible Activities
1) Additional funding to expand resources, services, programs, and spaces	• Review options for millage increase • Develop and implement informational campaign about millage
2) Modernize facilities to optimize use of space and encourage visits	• Review Learning Report for community input about future needs and interests • Review building designs to plan a way forward • Develop bond referendum

Potential Measures of Success

• Increased millage • Successful bond referendum	• Increased or re-designed spaces increase usage and patron satisfaction

Next Steps

After this plan is adopted by the Board, staff will complete the appropriate sections of the activity plan to guide implementation. Implementation will be 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 (at least quarterly).

Evaluation of the plan will be ongoing and strategic. 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 increase. This plan is an investment in the future of the library as a continued asset of the overall community.
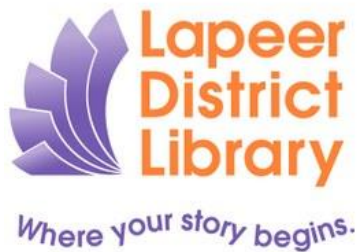
Lapeer District Library
Learning Report

Submitted by Amanda Standerfer, MA, MLIS
With assistance from Sarah Forbes, PhD
October 2019

Introduction

As part of the Lepeer 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.

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

- A community survey conducted via SurveyMonkey, social media, and at library service desks from August 10 to September 9;
- A Board and staff survey conducted from August 12 to September 5;
- Community focus group sessions conducted on September 11 and 12 and individual interviews conducted in September; 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 Context

Geographically located north of Detroit, Lapeer District Library (LDL) is a Class 6 library serving over just over 60,000 people (around 20,000 cardholders) with one central library and six branches. (LDL services the City of Lapeer and the townships of Arcadia, Burlington, Burnside, Deerfield, Elba, Hadley, Lapeer, Marathon, Mayfield, Metamora, Oregon, and Rich.) The central library in Lapeer is 8,100 square feet and branch spaces equal 7,615 square feet. Both numbers are significantly lower than most other Class 6 libraries in Michigan according to the 2018-2019 Michigan Public Library Survey Statistics (https://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/0,9327,7-381-88855_89735_61707---,00.html).

Total print and electronic collections are just under 120,000 items with total circulation over 160,000 items per year. It is difficult to compare usage statistics with other Michigan libraries without considering the rural nature of LDL's service area. However, measures like circulation per capita, physical visits per capita, eMaterial usage per capita, and cards per capita appear to be about average for Class 6 libraries serving broad, rural geographic areas. Total event

attendance of over 24,000 for just over 1,300 events shows strong interest in events for patrons of all ages.

LDL's millage rate of .90 is lower than a majority of Class 6 libraries with rates ranging from .4122 to 2.7. This rate makes saving for capital expenses, expansion, and increased programs, materials, or services difficult as most funds go to maintaining current levels of services.

The LDL geographic area has steadily lost population since the 2010 census. The population of Lapeer County (based on 2018 estimates) is primarily white (92%) with a Hispanic or Latino population of 4.7% and African American population of 1.2%. Median household income in Lapeer County is $56,186 with per capita income of $26,650. There is a 8.7% poverty rate. 90.7% of the population has a high school degree, but only 18.4% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The median resident's age is 40.8.
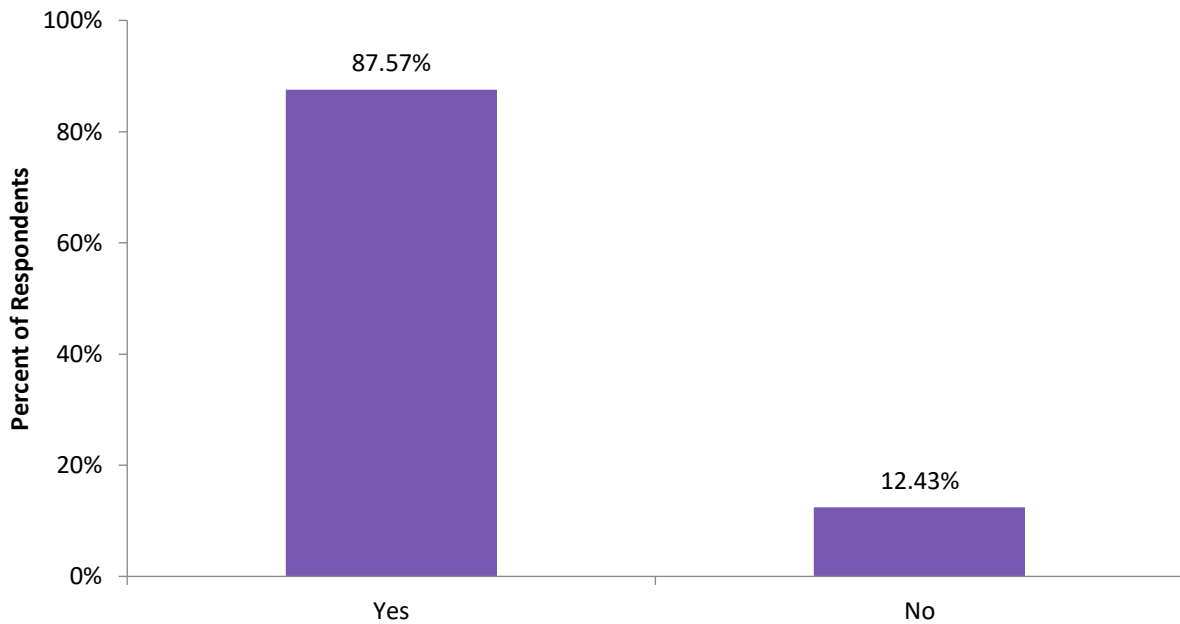
Community Survey

As part of their strategic planning process, the Lapeer District Library (LDL) conducted a SurveyMonkey 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 190 community members responded to the SurveyMonkey survey. Based on current census data, respondents to the survey did not mirror the Lapeer County population:

- A higher percentage of women completed the survey (89%) than found in Lapeer County (49%)
- A higher percentage of older adults (age 65 and older) completed the survey (26%) than found in Lapeer County (18%)
- A lower percentage of young adults (under 18) completed the survey (1%) than found in Lapeer County (21%)

For the open-ended comments, two different processes were used. For questions where most of the responses were only mentioned by one individual (e.g., Please share any final feedback you'd like to give about future collections, services, programs, and the facilities.), the ideas were grouped together, and themes were created. For questions where most of the responses fell into a few main ideas (e.g., If you have a card from another library, please specify the library below.), the ideas were tallied, and the most frequent responses presented in the report.

Have you or has anyone else in your household used (in-person or online) the Lapeer District Library in the past year?

Percent of Respondents

- Yes: 87.57%
- No: 12.43%

How often do you use the Lapeer District Library?

Percent of Respondents

- Weekly: 36.72%
- Monthly: 25.99%
- Every few months: 22.60%
- Once a year: 5.65%
- Never: 5.08%
- Unsure: 3.95%
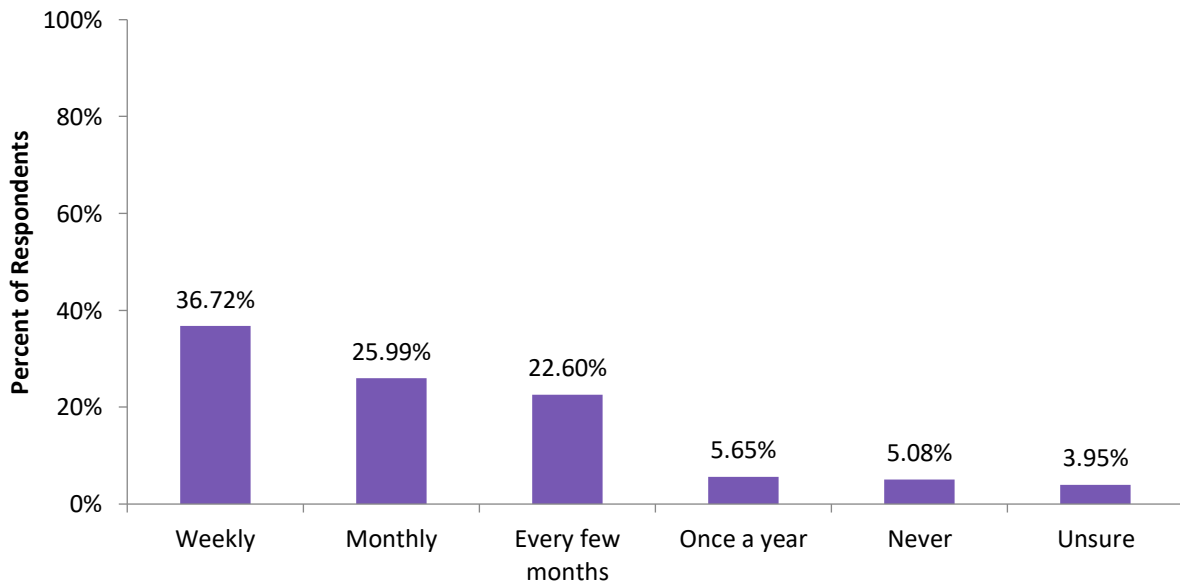
FINDINGS:	• A majority of respondents (88%) have used the LDL in the past year. • A majority of respondents (63%) use the LDL at least once a month.

Do you or does anyone in your household have a library card?
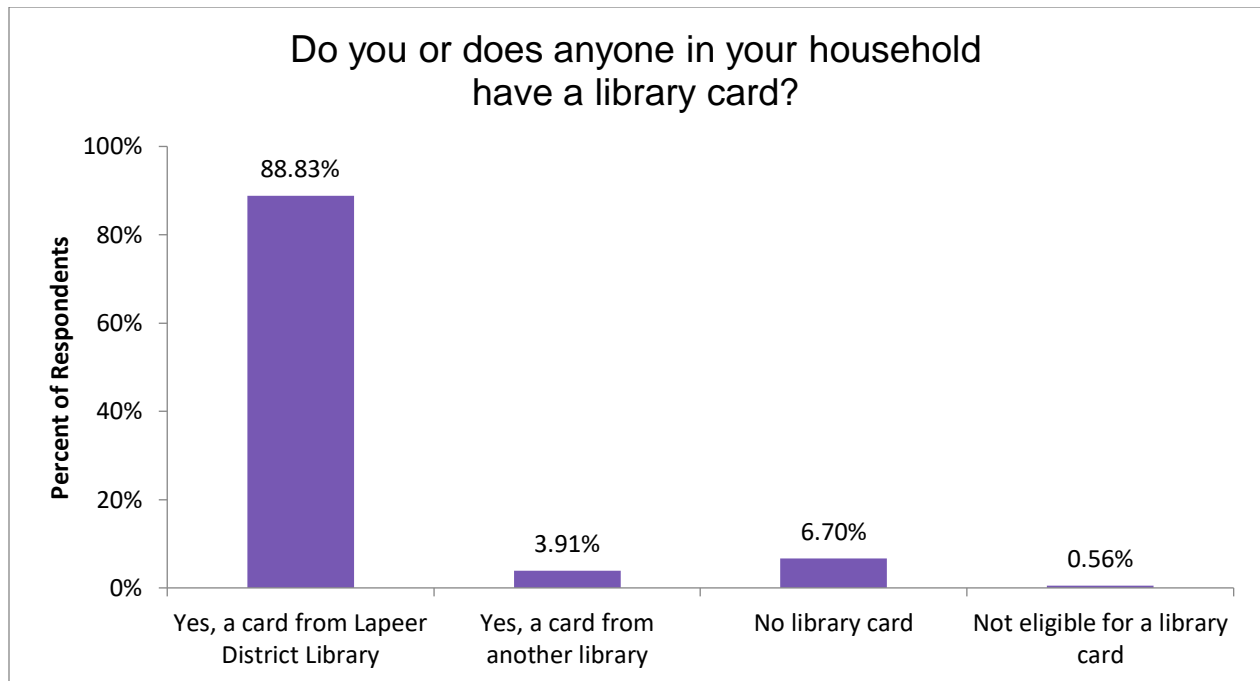
If you have a card from another library, please specify the library below. (*Most frequently cited)
• Bay County Library System
• Bellaire Public Library
• Caro Area District Library
• Dryden Township Library
• Genesee District Library*
• North Branch Township Library*
• Oxford Public Library*
• Rawson Memorial Library
• Ruth Hughes Memorial District Library

If you do not have a library card, please indicate the reason(s):
• Recently moved back to the area
• Not a priority yet
• Purchasing own materials (e.g., internet, e-books)
• Physical limitations (e.g., wheelchair) prevent visiting
• Not much of a reader

Please pick your top 5 reasons for using the library or library collections, services, or programs and rank them 1 to 5 with 1 being your main reason for using the library. (Please skip this question if you do not regularly use the library.)

Reason	Weighted Average
To borrow books and other materials	4.41
To use the children's area	3.17
To attend a program	3.08
To enjoy a comfortable environment	3.05
To use copiers, scanner or fax machine	2.95
To use computers or WiFi	2.89
To get information or to conduct research	2.86
To ask a librarian for help	2.66
To read	2.60
To use online resources	2.52
To accompany someone else or meet a friend	2.48
To stream/download materials	2.46
To use a meeting room	2.12
To attend a Family Literacy Center workshop	2.00
To study	1.86
For tutoring	1.72
To attend Alzheimer's support group	1.51

Weighted Average

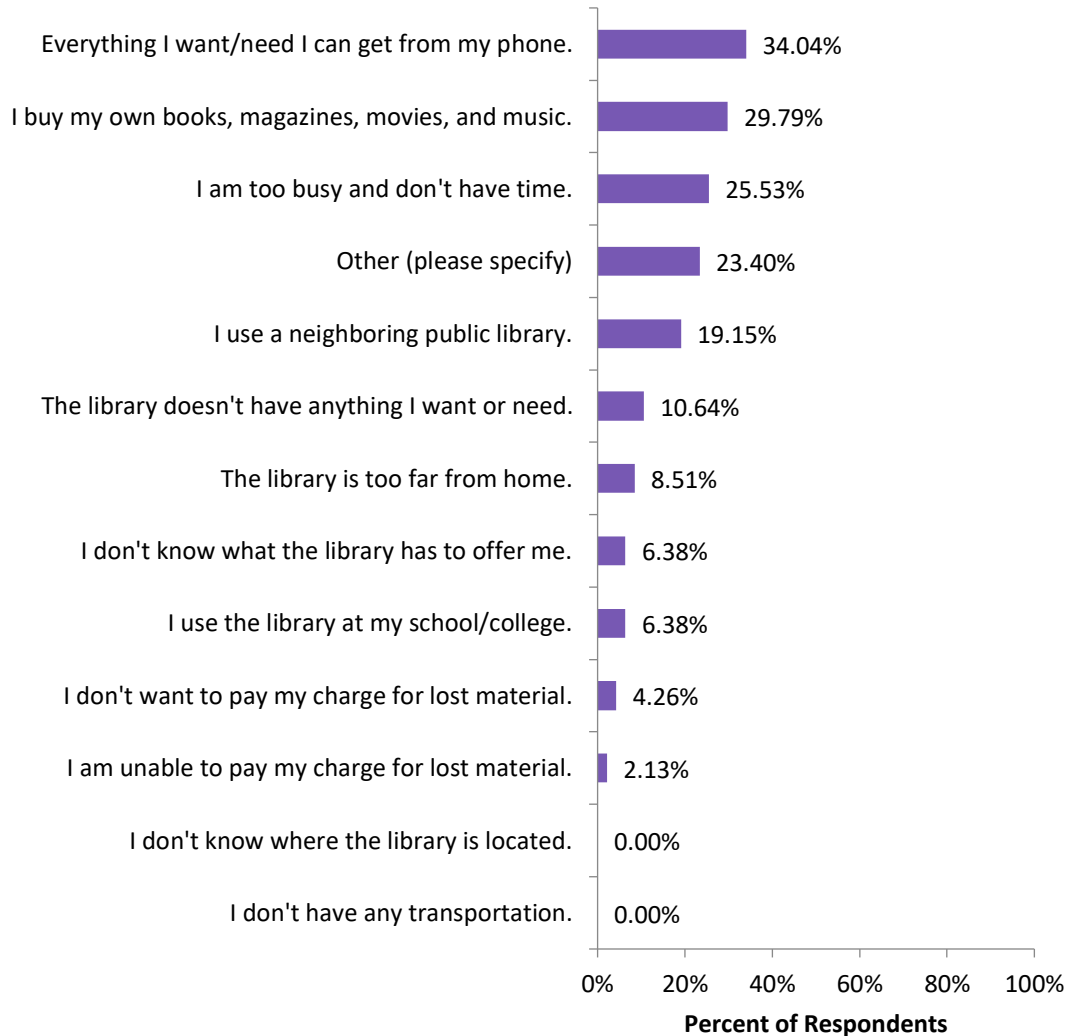| Other top reason for using the Library or Library collections, services, or programs: |
|---|
| • To attend programs (e.g, writer's group, books in a bag reading and discussion, book sale) and community events |
| • To work remotely |
| • To volunteer or to teach classes |
| • To use resources (e.g., puzzles) |
| • To rest in an air conditioned space |

> I participate in the monthly writing group as well as the books in a bag reading and discussion program.

FINDINGS:	• The main reason respondents use the library is to borrow books and other materials, following by using the children's area, both of which are traditional services of the library. • Respondents are least likely to visit the library for studying, tutoring, or attending Alzheimer's support groups. This is likely due to the fact that very few students and very few elderly citizens responded to the survey.

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

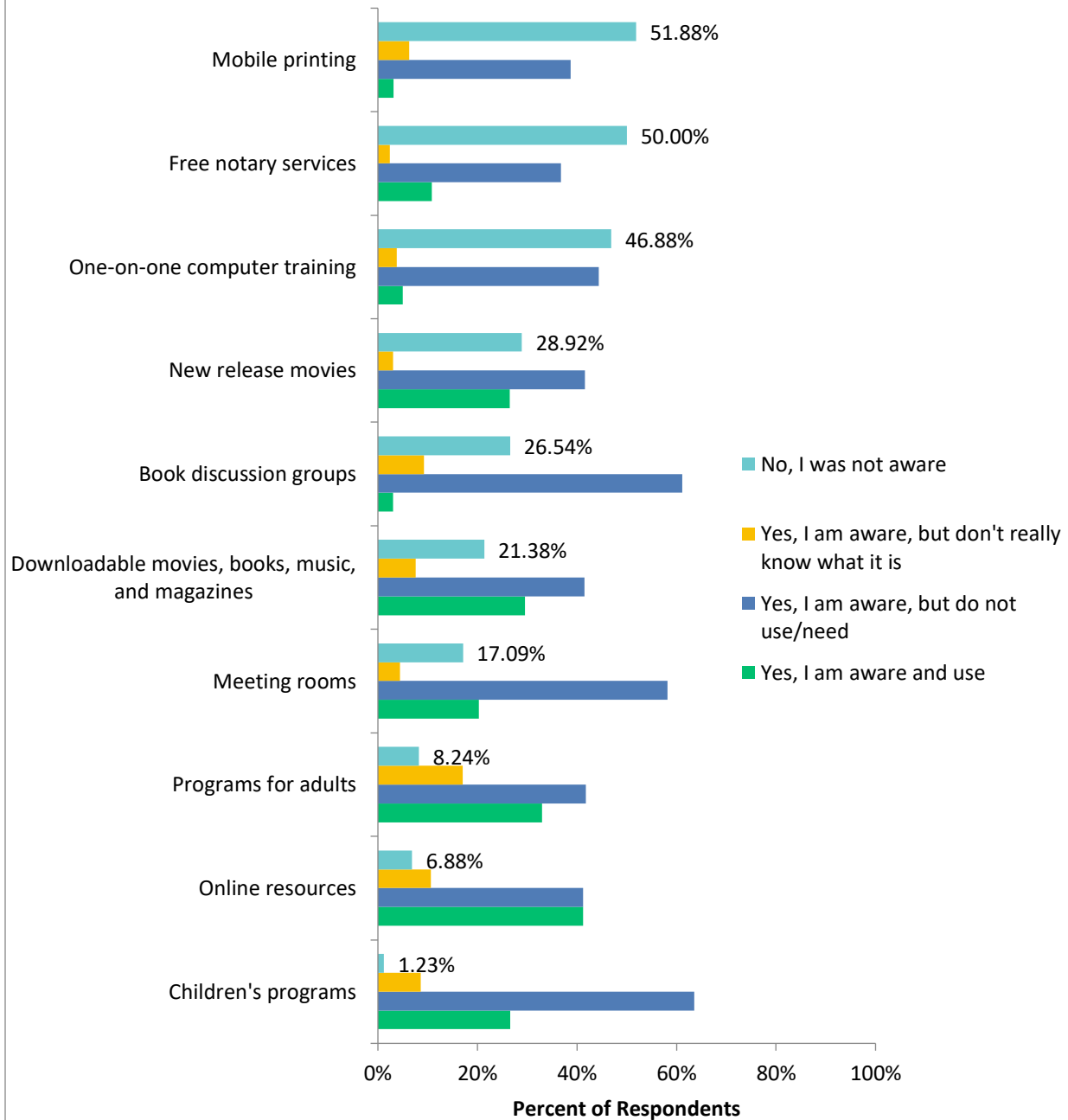| Reason	Percent
Everything I want/need I can get from my phone.	34.04%
I buy my own books, magazines, movies, and music.	29.79%
I am too busy and don't have time.	25.53%
Other (please specify)	23.40%
I use a neighboring public library.	19.15%
The library doesn't have anything I want or need.	10.64%
The library is too far from home.	8.51%
I don't know what the library has to offer me.	6.38%
I use the library at my school/college.	6.38%
I don't want to pay my charge for lost material.	4.26%
I am unable to pay my charge for lost material.	2.13%
I don't know where the library is located.	0.00%
I don't have any transportation.	0.00%

Percent of Respondents

Other reasons do not use the library regularly:
• Materials available at home (e.g., reading books already owned, accessing resources online)
• Using other libraries
• Working during library hours
• Check-out period is not long enough

I wish the library had more space.

FINDINGS:	• The predominant reason respondents are not using the LDL regularly, is that they can access what they need from their phone. This is likely due to a strong survey response by the millennial generation. • Respondents are also purchasing their own materials and feel that they do not have time to visit the library. • Finances and transportation do not seem to be factors in determining whether they will visit the library.

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

- Mobile printing — 51.88%
- Free notary services — 50.00%
- One-on-one computer training — 46.88%
- New release movies — 28.92%
- Book discussion groups — 26.54%
- Downloadable movies, books, music, and magazines — 21.38%
- Meeting rooms — 17.09%
- Programs for adults — 8.24%
- Online resources — 6.88%
- Children's programs — 1.23%

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

FINDINGS:	• Two of the top three services respondents were unaware of are related to technology (mobile printing, 52%; one-on-one computer training, 47%). • While responses to other questions suggest a need for additional marketing of services, it appears that a majority of respondents are aware of most these services, but do not need to use them.

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
Programs for school aged children (6-10)	4.22
Programs for younger children (ages birth-5)	4.20
Technology support	4.15
Programs for middle school (11-13)	4.11
Programs for high school (14-18)	4.06
Programs for adults (any age)	3.97
More downloadable materials	3.88
Programs and materials for job seekers	3.82
Partner with area nonprofits	3.76
Space where people can create/make things	3.69
Larger main library	3.68
More outreach to the community	3.63
More quiet study and group study space options	3.59
Programs to help small businesses	3.58
One-on-one technology assistance	3.58
ESL classes	3.20
Space for people to collaborate using technology	3.16
Offer a bookmobile	3.06
Offer pick up/return sites around community	3.05
More materials in other languages	2.70

Average Rating
Not Important (1) - Very Important (5)

Other areas the library should focus its resources over the next several years:
• Create more space to house books, sort donated books, have private meetings, make the library more accessible for handicapped individuals, create a bigger children's area, install a café
• Expand collection of materials in foreign languages (e.g., Spanish), books on CD, bestselling books, TV shows on DVD
• Update the interior to create a cozy reading nook, install a working fireplace, and modernize with a clean, spacious, comfortable feel
• Expand programming to include guest speakers on various topics
• Expand outreach in the community through a bookmobile and additional smaller libraries in lower socioeconomic areas

A working fireplace in the main library would be a draw.

A small café with simple things like bagels and coffee might be nice.

Bigger children's area and a bigger space to hold children's events.

More Little Libraries in areas with high concentrations of people with lower incomes.

FINDINGS:	• Programs for children of all ages, as well as adults, comprise five of the top six areas for focus in the future.

Please share any final feedback you'd like to give about future collections, services, programs, and the facilities.
Collections:
• Respondents would like to see more large print books, more current non-fiction books for both adults and children, more fiction books for adults, more classic children's books, more young adult books, more ebooks, more variety on Hoopla, and more DVDs.
• Respondents would like to have older books retained rather than sold.
• Respondents would like to borrow other items beyond books.
Services:
• Respondents would like to see Ancestry.com for genealogy, displays for community collections, more modern computers and updated technology, a café, more comfortable seating areas, faster interlibrary loan service, and friendlier librarians.
Programs:
• Respondents would like to see more programs, and more children's programs held on weekends when working parents can attend.

- Respondents suggested sharing the history of the library and expanding book clubs.
- Respondents also suggested more outreach to the community.

Facilities:
- Respondents would like to have more parking and designated parking spaces.
- Many respondents felt that the library needed more space overall and suggested a new building; others felt that the existing building meets community needs.
- Respondents would like the library to have a more modernized feel.
- Respondents provided specific areas that need increased space, including rooms for studying, workspace for small businesses, conference rooms, programming space, and the children's area.

Other:
- Respondents would like to see expanded hours as well as better advertisements of all that the library offers.

As this community grows, the library will become increasingly important as a gathering place for community groups and friends, and as a place of learning for all citizens regardless of their level of income, employment situation, or interests.

Shared workspace for small businesses with no offices/home offices who need to get out and have a space to work in, network, and not feel obligated to buy coffee all day.

I support the creation of a new, larger central library.
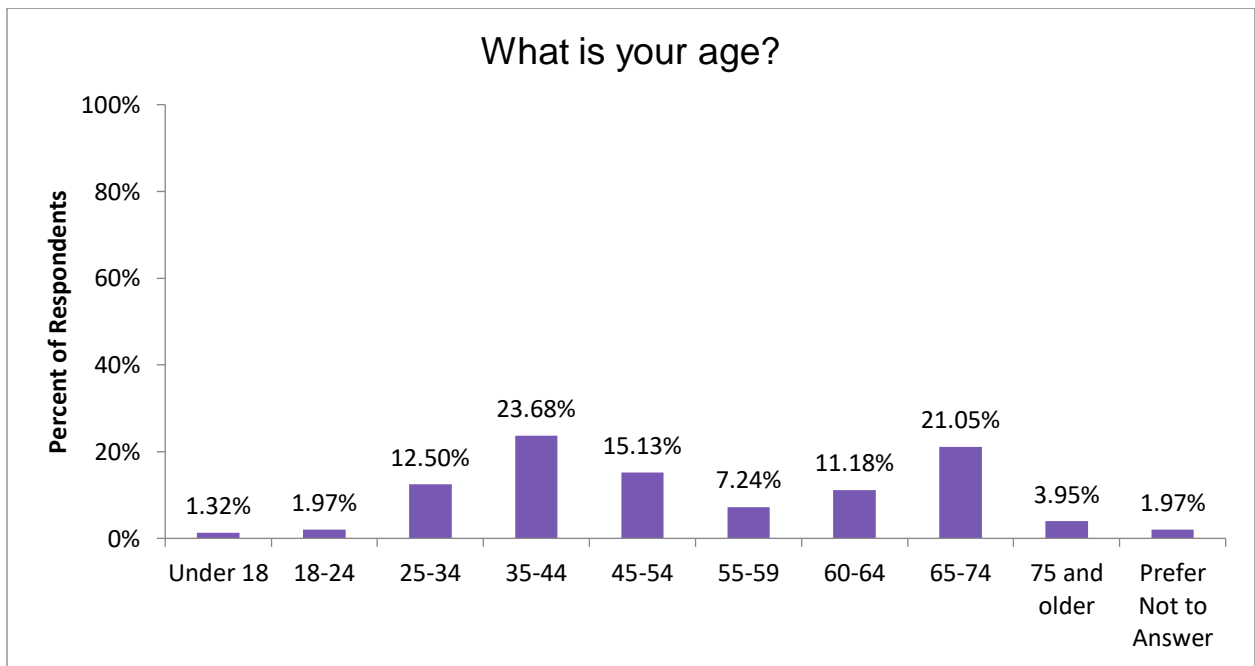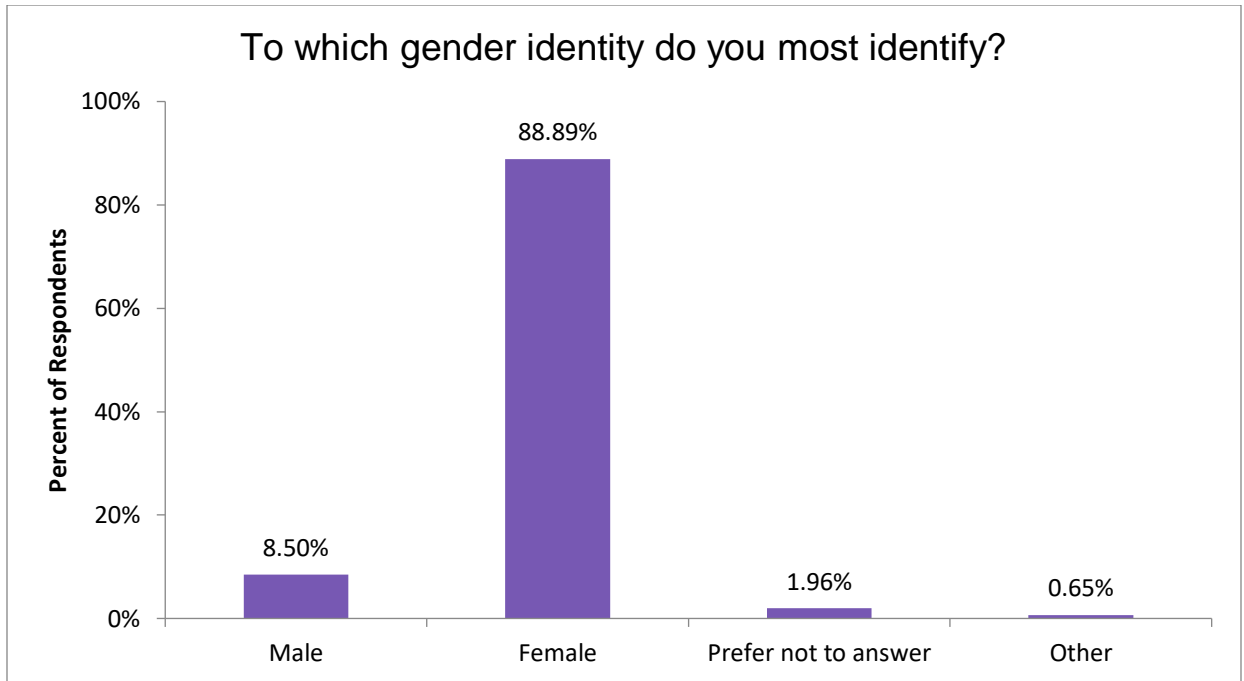
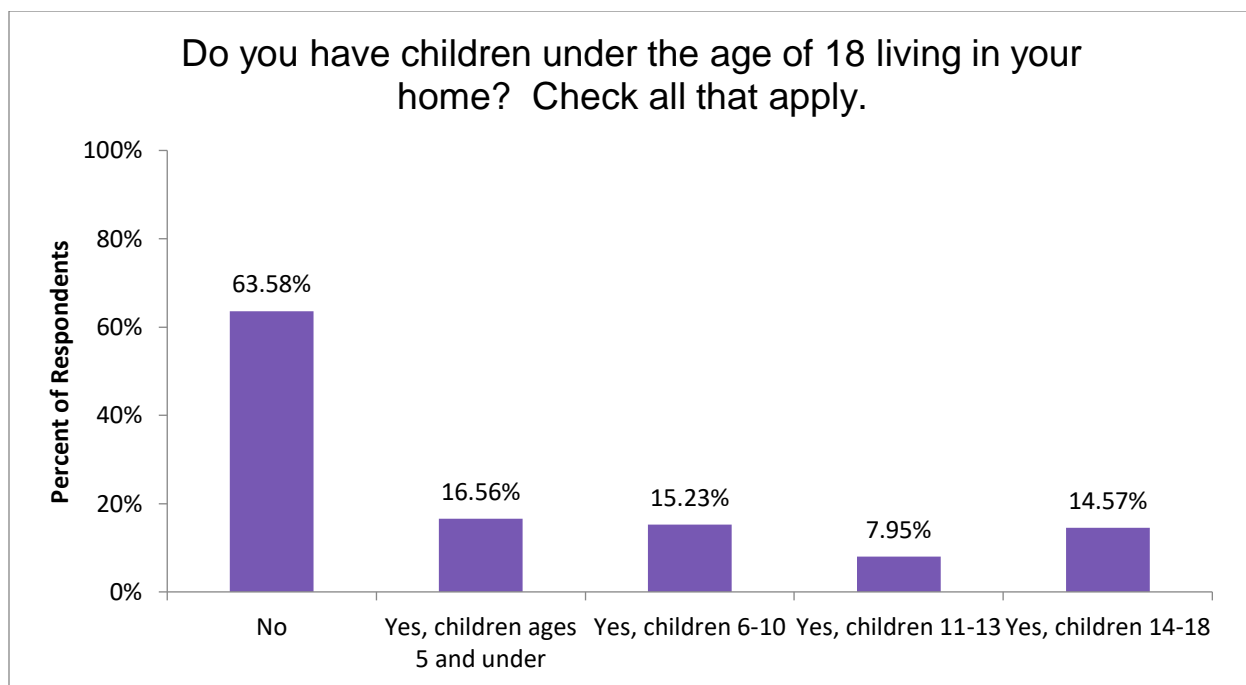More comfortable seating areas.

Larger collections and more programs at the branches.

More eBooks.

Need more awareness that we have a library. It's in a great location to be seen, but if you're not driving by it, you may not know we have a library in town.

I love Lapeer and would love to see residents develop a more supportive relationship with their public library system. I think that a lot of people have an old-fashioned idea of what a library is and what it can do for them, and I don't know the best way to change that, but I am willing to help.

To which gender identity do you most identify?

Male	Female	Prefer not to answer	Other
8.50%	88.89%	1.96%	0.65%

What is your age?

Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-59	60-64	65-74	75 and older	Prefer Not to Answer
1.32%	1.97%	12.50%	23.68%	15.13%	7.24%	11.18%	21.05%	3.95%	1.97%

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

Bar chart showing Percent of Respondents:
- No: 63.58%
- Yes, children ages 5 and under: 16.56%
- Yes, children 6-10: 15.23%
- Yes, children 11-13: 7.95%
- Yes, children 14-18: 14.57%

OVERALL SURVEY FINDINGS:	The data suggests two opposing views of the library with respect to services and space.
	• In terms of services, one set of respondents expressed a desire to see the library focus on traditional core services: books, a place for children, and programming. Another set of respondents reported that they are unable to see the value of the library in a digital society. These individuals can get what they want, when they want, with a few clicks.
	• In terms of space, one set of respondents reported that the current building as sufficient for meeting the needs of the community. They are not interested in raising taxes to fund a new building. These individuals also reported that there are other organizations and resources in the community to cover some of the needs (e.g., community center). Another set of respondents would like to see the current building expand or build a new building. They have identified specific needs (e.g., more room for books, larger children's area, and space for programs) that would serve the community.

Additional Feedback Gathered

During the community survey period, the library posted a variety of questions on Facebook (on the library's page and the Lapeer County Topics page) and also posed questions at service desks at all locations. These outreach efforts had mixed results. Facebook posts reached 200-1,200 people and had between 0 and 224 engagements (an engagement being a click, a "like," or a comment). Here are some responses from these input methods that are relevant to the strategic planning process:

My favorite thing about the library is…
• Books/movies. (13 responses)
• Staff. (19 responses)
• Classes. (9 responses)
• Services. (2 responses)
• Coloring pages. (1 response)
• Cooling area. (1 response)
• Computers. (1 response)
• Atmosphere (safe, cozy, small, quiet)
• Other responses: car magazines, notary services, free books and DVDs, SLP, eBooks that Amazon would charge for, free computers and wifi, cookbooks, all at no direct charge to me.

Patrons were asked to fill out a heart answering the question: Why do you love the library?
• Books (21 responses)
• Staff (13 responses)
• I love to read (6 responses)
• Crafts (5 responses)
• Free stuff (3 responses)
• Meet friends there (3 responses)
• Story times (3 responses)
• Atmosphere (2 responses)
• Other responses: Friends of the Library, watching TV, movies, getting help from staff, comfy chairs and spaces to sit and read, location, fax services, and notary services.

In the future, the library should…
• Focus on the building and technology: Expand to a larger facility and update technology, create a maker station, new furniture, cozy reading nook, up to date children's area, outdoor spaces for programs, study spaces, meeting rooms, fireplace, coffee shop, and better parking.
• Focus on materials and resources: More books, movies, and computers, and devices to check out.

- More programs, guest speakers, and after school transportation for a small fee.

If money were no object, I would tell the library to…
• Expand cultural and educational programming (and an indoor space to hold the programs), install lots of computers, and have 2 separate designated spaces for children's and teen's collections, add meeting spaces and study rooms, and build adequate office/work spaces for the poor library staff…oh…and nice places to read with a fireplace. And install Little Libraries throughout the community.
• Have the kind of early childhood resources and programming that West Bloomfield does. They have children's areas designed to foster early childhood development in multiple ways, a multitude of materials available and changed regularly, and highly educated early childhood specialists on staff who get to know the children who visit and connect with them warmly — which truly enhances the experience. I know Lapeer does not have this high funding, but it would change our community if we did.
• State of the art computer lab.
• Coffee shop.
• Music room.
• Expand hours.
• Bigger building.
• Better internet.
• More eBooks and other eResources.
• More parking.
• A fireplace.

I think more people would use the library if…
• They came in and looked at all that is available.
• Promote more to the community.

The library needs more…
• Hours.
• Advertising.
• Book clubs.
• Parking.
• Computers.
• Ways to search the database.
• Hotspots to check out.
• Teen programs.
• Access to digital media.
• Access to graphic novels.
• Support from community leaders.

Patrons were asked to fill out an arrow answering the question: What one thing does the library need to focus on in the next three years?
• Charging stations at all computers.
• More computers.
• Comics and manga.

Several Facebook polls were posted, including these:

What is your preference? (26 votes)	
Physical book	**eBook**
92%	8%

Would you support a bond vote for a new library in Lapeer? (90 votes)	
Yes	**No**
82%	18%

Comments:

- Interest in seeing a new, updated proposal that is different from the last proposal.
- Desire to see a new library closer to the center of the population.

Would you support an operating referendum to increase library services, materials, and programs? (35 votes)	
Yes	**No**
94%	6%

Focus Groups & Interviews

We held focus groups on September 11 and 12, 2019 at a variety of locations, including the main branch, the Columbiaville branch, and a local restaurant. Six focus groups were held with a total of 33 attendees.

Each group began by discussing what made them proud about the Lapeer District Library (LDL). Respondents were especially eager to talk about the success of the book sales and indeed all of the programs, though they also noted the challenges with the lack of space for this highly popular activity. They also noted the deep historical roots in the community, both through the building itself as well as the deAngeli name. The staff were also singled out as a source of pride, whether it was the specific manager of their branch or favorite department or a more general

appreciation. They also were proud of the library for trying new things, such as the trivia nights that are held off-site and the summer lunch program.

We then moved to what questions people had when thinking of the library and again, these responses mostly revolved around a lack of space and the challenges that brought up. They also wondered about some staffing issues, including the need for a marketing/PR person as well as more staffing at the branches for additional hours. Finally, there were a lot of questions about the efficiency of the current spaces as well as some other barriers to access, such as transportation and lack of parking.

We moved on to a discussion about how the library was serving the community, specifically how the library enriched the community. Respondents noted the depth of resources and the ease with which they could access them through interlibrary loan. They spoke enthusiastically of the unique programs, such as the programs that focus on showing the many faces of Lapeer. They also noted that it was a safe, non-judgmental space that allowed them to explore new ideas.

When thinking about lifelong learning, the respondents had some ideas to promote more connections, especially between the library and the local schools. The need to "hook" children early was mentioned frequently and they suggested having different library card drives and programs hosted within the school. For adults, they suggested more education opportunities, especially around technology and learning more about who is available in their community that might be a resource. There was also a need for more skills-based learning, such as resumes, library e-resources, and life skills, such as babysitting and cooking.

As we began discussing the library's role in community engagement, there was a definite split between those respondents that saw them as currently participating in many community events and those that did not see them. However, the main theme was that more outreach and direct marketing would be beneficial. In addition to connecting more with the schools, the respondents were especially interested in seeing more services delivered to residents that could not travel to the library.

Finally, we wrapped up our in-depth conversation by focusing on ways that the library might improve the customer experience. Again, the primary focus was on the lack of space at both the main building and the branches as well as the lack of parking. The respondents also noted that the current spaces could be friendlier to people of all sizes and abilities. They saw the library as having the potential to be a destination for kids, families, teens, and adults, but that the spaces would need to be developed to help them use the library in ways that encouraged the community to stay and enjoy the space.

In addition to focus groups, interviews were conducted the week of September 16, 2019. Four people responded to the request for interviews. The interviews did have some similar themes, but because the interview subjects were not as familiar with the library and its services, a few

outlying themes came up, such as a lack of awareness around what the library offers. However, they were all aware of the limited amount of space and the interest in finding a solution.

Board & Staff Survey

Twenty-three staff members and three Board members completed the Board and Staff Survey. Below is a high-level overview of trends for each question.

What is your favorite thing about working at the library or serving on the Board?
• Interacting with patrons and providing good service, helping people find resources they want from children to adults.
• Learning new things all the time.
• Flexibility in schedule.
• Relationships between staff members, warm environment.
• Overall a great place to work.
• Trying new programs.

What's working well at the library? What are we good at?
• Service to patrons, staff goes above and beyond.
• Providing access to resources through MeL (interlibrary loan).
• Staff knowledge.
• Programs for patrons of all ages.
• Working together as a team.

We are good at serving the public in different capacities. If we do not know the answer, we try to direct them to someone who does.

What could use some improvement? What keeps you from enjoying your experience with the library more fully?
• Space is very limited, study space, parking, room at computer stations and for collections.
• More outreach so the community knows what is available.
• More communication to keep everyone aware of changes.
• Additional safety measures.
• Patron behavior can sometimes be challenging.
• Funding for library services, additional staff, and increased wages.
• More technology.
• More programs.

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?
• Additional training opportunities (Board and staff), training throughout the year on updated policies and procedures, training on technology.
• A larger building, time to do more organizing of current spaces.
• Increase in staff to handle workload.

What do we think the library could do to address unmet community needs?
• Offer opportunities for the community to give input.
• Increased funding.
• Continue to be involved in community groups to learn about the community and how the library can respond to needs.
• Review branch hours to see if they are meeting the community needs.
• Consider new ways of outreach, bookmobile, partnering with other community organizations.
• Continue to have programs that are diverse and tackle big topics to show that the library is an important part of the conversations happening in the community.
• More technology, find out what patrons want and add to the collection for use in the building or for check out.
• More marketing and communication, show value to the community.
• Increased space for more meeting rooms and study space.

How will we know that we are successful in having impact in the community?
• Increased use of the library due to increased awareness of what the library offers.
• Increased patron satisfaction, positive comments from patrons.
• Bond for a new building.
• Increased program attendance.
• The community recognizes the library as the place to go for information.
• Increased cardholders and circulation.

When you ask people what they can do at the library and they know they can do other things than just check out books.

What do you think are the top five priorities the library should focus on in the next three years? Why is each important?
• More space and parking.
• Increased awareness through outreach, more visibility in the community.
• More technology.
• Increased resources (books and eResources).
• More staff and higher wages.
• Increased staff communication.
• Children's services.
• Reaching nonusers and underserved areas of the district and increasing their understanding of the value of the library.
• Increased funding for library operations, materials, programs, and staff.
• More programming for patrons of all ages.

What do you see happening in the community if the library is doing its best work?
• The community comes together at the library – it's a central hub and gathering place.

The library will be the hub of the community, where everyone touches base to see what is going on and how to get involved.

• Bond millage passes.
• The library is known as *the* place to go for information, services, and connections.
• Increased usage, more people with library cards, more program attendance, more circulation, more use of online resources.
• Education levels in the community increase, more needs being met, increased satisfaction of library services.
• Stronger sense of community pride, the community is enhanced.

Other Community Organizations

We reviewed the websites and strategic plans for several key community organizations in the region. Below are a few highlights of our learning that are potentially important as we consider the library's strategic plan:

- While the Lapeer Area Chamber of Commerce's main focus is on promoting and fostering a stable business climate, another piece of their vision is to enhance the quality of life in the community. Their tagline, "Creating a brighter future, together," shows their commitment to bringing the community together, which is something that survey respondents and focus group/interview participants also desire for the library.
- The Family Literacy Center, based in Lapeer County, works with students on math and literacy skills as they prepare to take the GED and enter employment and training programs. Already a library partner, the Family Literacy Center's programs complement other library literacy programs.
- The Lapeer Art Association's focus is to bring together members of the community around art. Given interest expressed in the library continuing cultural and thought-provoking programming, the LAA's work might align in program areas.
- The library has several endowment funds with the Lapeer County Community Foundation. The funds are a great way to promote giving to the library and promote long-term funding options for value-added services.
- Part of the Lapeer County Community Mental Health's (LCCMH) vision potentially aligns with library programs and services in that they promote health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities and support lifelong learning. Literacy and personal fulfillment are library values that integrate with holistic health and the library offers resources and services that support patrons of LCCMH.
- There are numerous public and private schools in LDL's service area. The Lapeer County Intermediate School District also operates the Education and Technology Center that provides career and technical instruction for high school students seeking jobs in high demand technical careers.
- Within 50 miles of Lapeer, numerous opportunities exist for higher education. Several institutions offer classes in Lapeer. The library supports students by providing access to resources, technology, and study space.

- The United Way of Lapeer County is focused on early literacy and having children reading at grade level. This mission aligns with the library's early literacy programs, which help students succeed over their entire school careers.
- Lapeer Team Work Incorporated, a nonprofit community rehabilitation organization that provides jobs, opportunities, and independence for community members with barriers to employment, has a mission to maximize personal growth, community inclusion, and self-sufficiency through training, education, and vocational opportunities. Library resources can support individuals in Team Work programs by providing computers to practice skills and apply for jobs as well as reading materials that help build job skills.
- Lapeer Community Schools are currently working on their strategic plan. The plan largely focuses on the bond proposal that would provide funds for capital improvements throughout the district. Other goals that might impact the library's planning process include an expanded role of the schools in the community and expanded academic opportunities.

While not an exhaustive list of community organizations throughout the LDL geographic area, these points provide an overview of learning from key community organizations and institutions that relate to the LDL strategic planning process.

Sources reviewed:

Baker College: https://www.baker.edu/
Greater Lapeer Transportation Authority (providing low-cost public transportation in some of the library's service area): http://www.go-glta.org/
Historic Farmers Market of Lapeer: http://www.historicfarmersmarketoflapeer.com/
Family Literacy Center: http://readlapeer.org/
Lapeer Area Chamber of Commerce: https://lapeerareachamber.org/
Lapeer Art Association: http://www.lapeerart.org/
Lapeer Community Schools: http://lcs.sharpschool.net/
Lapeer County: http://lapeercountyweb.org/
Lapeer County Community Foundation: https://lapeercountycf.org/
Lapeer County Community Mental Health: https://www.lapeercmh.org/
Lapeer County Intermediate School District: http://www.lcisd.k12.mi.us/
Lapeer Development Corporation: http://www.lapeerdevelopment.com/
Lapeer Team Work Incorporated: https://www.lapeerteamwork.org/
Mott Community College: https://www.mcc.edu/index.shtml
Stone Soup Food Bank: http://www.stonesoupfoodpantry.org/
United Way of Lapeer County: https://www.unitedwaylapeer.org/