

## **Strategic Planning Focus Group Results: SUMMARY**

9 focus groups were conducted. The board, staff, and the Friends of the Library helped formulate the survey that was distributed to the public. The results of that survey were then analyzed and helped formulate focus group questions for the public. Six public focus groups were conducted by the same moderator in July and August 2023. There were 31 members of the public who participated, and the discussions are summarized below.

### **1. Q1: What brings you here? Why did you sign up for a focus group?**

- a. Love of libraries and this library in particular
- b. Preserve the library for future generations.
- c. Show support for the excellent staff
- d. Show support for intellectual freedom
- e. Promote cooperation and engagement within the community
- f. Preserve the daily impact that library has on each member of the community
- g. Fight against the misconceptions and misinformation surrounding libraries
- h. Provide a voice for various demographics, families, children, regular customers, those that don't use it very much
- i. Big fan of the building
- j. Digital materials such as Hoopla and Overdrive/Libby
- k. Books, books and more books
- l. Internet access
- m. More diverse programming
- n. More teen and tween programming
- o. Home schooling programming

### **2. Q2: Do you attend programs? Yes or no and why or why not? Discussion about programs ensued.**

- a. Attendance
  - i. There was an equal mix of program attendees and those that do not attend
- b. Reasons they attend
  - i. Socializing and camaraderie
  - ii. Enjoy the topics
  - iii. Lifelong learning
  - iv. Interesting topics
- c. Reasons they don't attend
  - i. Inconvenient times and days
  - ii. Not promoted enough
  - iii. Not interesting topic

- d. Common themes and ideas:
  - i. Shared programming with other libraries and partners
  - ii. Lots of suggestions to have “ask the expert evenings” or “ask the professional or share hobbies.
  - iii. Conduct some less interactive programs on Zoom especially in the winter months
  - iv. Music, all kinds and intergenerational
  - v. Art shows with local galleries?
  - vi. Local authors
  - vii. Writers Groups
  - viii. Poetry
  - ix. Art History and lectures with local experts/galleries etc.
  - x. Evening times for people who work
  - xi. Other venues: health clubs/studios, restaurants, historical society etc.
  - xii. Seed gardens was a big hit as a program. More innovative and unique topics like it and Mahjong and Forest Bathing.
  - xiii. Tutoring
  - xiv. HASP in Holland
  - xv. Bridge Club/Cards
  - xvi. Conversational Spanish
  - xvii. Film discussions
  - xviii. Movie night
  - xix. Civic Education
  - xx. Touch a truck
  - xxi. 30-something meet-ups or program with them in mind
  - xxii. Home Schooling Support
  - xxiii. Student Advisory Board
  - xxiv. Teen Programs
  - xxv. Train club
  - xxvi. Robotics
  - xxvii. Game nights
  - xxviii. Adult education partnership with a college or university
    - 1. Zoom or recorded
- e. Common concerns and questions
  - i. Simple and well-defined topics.
  - ii. Some desired political content, some did not but many agreed that current events were important.
  - iii. Can you repeat an event?
  - iv. Late afternoons and evening offerings
  - v. Record it on Zoom for future viewing

- vi. Provide companion materials for checkout at each event and lists of resources.
  - vii. Book Discussion with more choices and options.
    - 1. Drop-in Book Discussions
    - 2. Evening or later afternoon for the employed
    - 3. Community Reads
  - f. Five areas of programs were featured in the survey:
    - i. Health and wellness and personal growth:
      - 1. Cooking classes
        - a. With local chefs was also suggested
      - 2. Meditation, Tai-chi, Gongs
      - 3. Exercise/walking group
      - 4. Mental health
        - a. Work-family balance
        - b. Longevity
    - ii. Financial health and development
      - 1. Job fairs,
      - 2. Professional mentoring fairs,
      - 3. Professional expertise fairs,
      - 4. Retirement planning and updating
      - 5. Small business creation
    - iii. Civic engagement and community conversation
      - 1. Local issues such as parking, ordinances, sustainability, recycling, governance, social justice and social issues
    - iv. Utilize the library's green space
      - 1. On-site recycling center, community gardens,
    - v. Hands-on materials such as DIY crafts, technology etc.
      - 1. How to sessions for a lot of crafts
      - 2. Makerspace workshops for all ages
      - 3. Tech-help: Once a month (This was a much repeated request.)
- 3. Q3: What materials do you use, don't use? What would you like to see more or less of? Discussion ensued.**
- a. The focus of these groups was on how to enhance the physical collection: Moderator did share that an online suggestion function within the shared catalog was forthcoming.
    - i. More challenging literary materials:
      - 1. Booker prize,
      - 2. NPR suggestions,
      - 3. Staff suggestions
      - 4. Classics
      - 5. Literary fiction

- 6. Non-sexist science fiction
  - 7. More complex mysteries
  - ii. Create or increase the following collections:
    - 1. Double the fiction and non-fiction collections.
    - 2. YA collection since adults read them too!
    - 3. Double the collection (Multiple requests)
    - 4. Music Theory
    - 5. Faith-based/Christian Authors/Spiritualism
    - 6. Rotating collections with other libraries
    - 7. Local history, animals, plants etc.
    - 8. Focus on purchasing requests for growing the collection and not just weeding what isn't being used.
  - iii. Other Suggestions
    - 1. Staff recommendations and other offerings at the front of the library
    - 2. Not a lot of awareness of magazines or newspapers in either digital or traditional format but interest is there.
    - 3. Instead of weeding, use Better World Books as a partner
    - 4. Share circulation data with patrons: What's being read.
      - a. Bibliocore training was suggested by the moderator
  - b. The digital collection was also discussed:
    - i. There was general confusion about the difference between Hoopla and Overdrive/Libby and how to use and access each.
      - 1. It was agreed that training was needed for digital collection usage.
    - ii. Larger collection is needed but appreciative of what is available from all the other libraries and cooperatives.
- 4. Q4: How do you feel about the waiting times for holds for physical materials? For digital materials?**
- a. No issue with holds for physical materials
  - b. Concerns about holds for digital materials
  - c. Universal praise for access for items from Lakeland Libraries
  - d. Lots of questions about not being able to find what they needs. The moderator asked about MelCat and Interlibrary loan options.
    - i. Many participants were unaware of this state-wide borrowing options.
    - ii. Participants suggested that training on MelCat would be greatly appreciated.
- 5. Q5. The building was completed in 2020. Let's talk about it.**
- a. Too big, too small or just-right?
    - i. Mostly just right but with concerns about the future.
    - ii. Love the light

- iii. Love the space and almost every part of the library was mentioned at least once.
- iv. Study rooms: more are needed
- v. Small tables and single seats where they will fit
- vi. Snack bar/coffee station
- b. What is your favorite space?
  - i. Patio was universally applauded as a wonderful space. There were suggestions for more outdoor electrical plugs.
  - ii. Front area with new books
  - iii. Meeting room
  - iv. Business area (printer/copy
  - v. Magazine alcove
- c. Were you aware of the study rooms or magazine alcove with the fireplace?
  - i. Some people were not aware. More than what seemed typical
  - ii. This question always brought up the idea of having regularly scheduled tours and more reasons to use the library and not just pick up holds.
- d. What do you think about the noise level in the building?
  - i. Each group responded similarly: Yes, there is noise when children are present but it's good noise.

**6. Q6: The outside space is still a bit undefined. Any ideas?**

- i. Recycling on site.
- ii. Herb garden and container gardening
- iii. Peaceful benches
- iv. Space for programs
- v. Exercise
- vi. Walking paths
- vii. Planting on the roof?
- viii. Mini-meadows
- ix. More rain barrels and shared access to the rain.
- x. The idea of a small stone-based amphitheater for reading time for children was provided as an example and was well received.

**7. Q7: Final comments:**

- a. Communication came up during all the discussions.
  - i. Get the word out better, more often:
    1. The perception is that events weren't posted clearly or at the top on social media or in the newsletter.
    2. Use the screen in the lobby more.
    3. Summary newsletter with events up front.
    4. Upcoming programs on bookmarks at or with checkout.
    5. Weekly column
    6. Interactive newsletter with more links, podcasts,

7. Text alerts for programs
  - a. Advance notice
  - b. Reminders
  - c. Opt in for texts, not opt out. (Moderator asked this and suggested a current vendor could meet this need.)
8. Create a survey to see how people want to receive information.
9. All participants were grateful for the opportunity and appreciative of the process.