Milton Public Library

Strategic Plan FY23 - FY 27

(July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2027)

Approved by the Board of Trustees on June 14, 2021

MILTON
PUBLIC LIBRARY

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I.   INTRODUCTION

A.   Purpose

A long range plan is a substantial undertaking that serves several purposes for the Milton Public Library:

- Management tool for the organization
- Blueprint for service & collection enhancements over the next five years
- Sets the course for the Library based on where we have been, where we are going, and what the future needs of Milton are
- Answers the question: "What is the role of the Milton Public Library in our community?"

In more practical terms a long range plan gives a focus and priority to everyday decision-making that permits us to put decisions into the broader perspective of organizational goals. Also in very practical terms, long range plans are a prerequisite to many grant funding opportunities, including all grants supported by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners.

This plan outlines the priorities of the Milton Public Library for fiscal years 2023 through 2027 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2027)

B.   Committee makeup

A planning committee of thirteen was selected by the Library Trustees to conduct the planning process. The committee was designed to carry through all aspects of the planning process, with varied skills in both community knowledge and library knowledge. The committee began meeting in October of 2019, and continued their work into 2021. The committee was comprised of the following:

Community Representatives (4)

- Josh Coben
- Xu Li
- Aonghus O'Nia
- Frank Schroth

Friends of the Library (1)

- Vanessa Foster (President)

Milton Library Foundation (1)

- John Hitt

Library Trustees (3)

- Ray Czwakiel (Chair)
- John Folcarelli
- Jim Potter

Library Staff (4)

- William Adamczyk (Director)
- Jean Hlady
- Cathy Stapleton
- Sara Truog

Facilitator

- Connie Spiros

C.   Methodology

The plan is based on a methodology using the recommended standards of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, as well as those outlined in the Public Library Association publication "Strategic Planning for Results" by Sandra Nelson, and finally using best practices shared by other libraries in the Commonwealth.

Our approach starts with an exploration of community needs and a conversation about a community vision that spreads beyond the perceived role of the library. This broad analysis permits us to pick up on needs and ideas that may have been missed in a narrower view of library issues.

Community needs become the basis of the review of library service priorities. Library strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results are defined, and a good picture of the state of library service is formed.

Based on the ideas that came out of the community needs assessment, the committee identified several roles and core services to discuss as possible priorities for the strategic plan.

Commentary on the plan has been an important part of the process. Opportunities for commentary occurred at a number of focus groups that were both open to the public, and included individuals representative of different parts of Milton's community. In addition to these 'open' focus groups, we also held groups for Library organizations, including members of the Trustees, Friends, and Foundation. Finally, we held a focus group for Library staff, both gathering their input and soliciting a response to previously gathered information.

D. **Mission statement**

The mission of the Milton Public Library is to promote the love of reading, to make accessible the diversity of human culture and learning, to be a resource for the community's research and information needs and to do all of this in a way that returns value for the community's investment.

The Milton Public Library enriches the community by connecting people to the world of ideas, information, and imagination to support their work, education, personal growth and enjoyment.

E. **Board Approval**

The Milton Board of Library Trustees unanimously approved this Strategic Plan unanimously at their June 14, 2021 meeting. The plan was recommended by the Trustees' Strategic Plan subcommittee and reviewed by all members of the board.

II. COMMUNITY INFORMATION

A. **USER NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

a. **Focus Groups**

The Library conducted a number of focus groups, some with a targeted audience, and others open to the public. The meetings included:

- Staff group
- Trustees, Friends, Foundation
- Parents & Caregivers
- General Public (evening)
- General Public (morning)

Information was also gathered during smaller discussions during Library programs at offsite venues, including senior housing communities, and within Library groups, including the Teen Advisory Board.

The summary results of the focus groups can be found in Appendix A.

b. **User Survey (Change this to 2020 data)**

The Library has been conducting a user survey for several years. Here is some key data from the most recent results (2020-2021):

- 96% at least Agreed - I have a positive experience with Library Staff
- 99% at least Agreed - The Library is safe and comfortable
- 93% at least Agreed - The Library has what I am looking for
- 98% at least Agreed - The Library is well run
- 97% at least Agreed - The Library is a good partner
- Why do you come to the Library?
    - 93% collections
    - 3% programming
    - 1% to use the spaces

The full results of the two most recent surveys can be found in Appendix B. The Library looked at data from both surveys, as one was pre-COVID and another represents use during the pandemic.

B. **COMMUNITY DATA**

a. **History**

Milton was settled in 1640 and incorporated in 1662. Milton grew from an industrialized center along the Neponset River to an upscale residential suburb of Boston. The Town has an old New England quality that is derived from its early settlement and its desire to preserve its history. Milton's history is tangible because historical structures and landmarks are visible and easily accessible.

Milton's first settlers were farmers looking to be self-sufficient on their own land. In 1636, Kitchmaken, Chief of the Indians, deeded to Richard Collicut for "twenty fathoms of wampum" (A History of Milton; Edward Pierce Hamilton; 1957; p. 12) all of what is now Milton. The land was acquired to serve as a plantation for Dorchester. Local Native Americans were utilized for labor on the farms and later in the mills along the Neponset River.

Throughout the 1700's Milton had considerable growth directly related to the mills along the Neponset River. A grist mill was constructed by Israel Stoughton in 1634 along with the first bridge to cross the Neponset River. This bridge opened up the south to settlers and is directly responsible for the large settling done in early Milton. Later a powder mill and a fulling mill were constructed along the Neponset. Commerce introduced itself into Milton Village where industry had already existed, while a steady spreading out of new farms initiated expansion into the south.

During the 1800's Milton became a wealthy suburb of Boston. Many residents of Boston were establishing summer homes in Town, which in the course of years became their winter homes as well. A considerable amount of land was taken from Milton by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and incorporated into the Blue Hills Reservations in 1893. The majority of this land consisted of rolling hills, which served as a park to many of the residents of Milton at that time.

The establishment of streetcar lines fueled a rapid expansion of residential development and between 1870 and 1915, Milton grew into essentially the community it is now, a wealthy streetcar suburb retaining many 19th century country houses, estates, and early 19th century workers' housing. "By the 1900's Milton was a fully developed suburban town of greater than average wealth" (ibid., 57). Industry gradually diminished. The population continued to expand and the demand for homes increased.

b. Regional and Commercial Context

Milton is situated in the Greater Boston Area. While the Town of Milton abuts two major cities, the town itself is decidedly suburban in character. To the north is Boston while to the east lays Quincy. Because of the unique nature of the Town, Milton falls within two subregions of the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). Milton is a member of the Inner Core Committee (ICC) because of its geographic proximity to Boston (and Quincy). Also, because of the town's distinct character difference, it is a member of the Three Rivers Interlocal Council (TRIC). To the south and west, Milton borders the Towns of Canton and Randolph.

This dichotomy, a close proximity to but distinct in character from Boston has been the defining element in the development of the town for over a century. The town first took advantage of its zoning powers in 1922, zoning the entire town single-family residential. Two extremely small commercial areas were

carved out at that time, representing less than 3% of the town's land mass. In recent years the Town has begun revitalization initiatives and other economic development strategies to address the heavy tax burden this past policy has placed on current residents.

Within the corporate limits of the Town there are significant natural resources benefiting not only the Town but the region as well. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR, formerly the Metropolitan District Commission) controls over 2,000 acres (approximately 25% of the town) through its ownership of the Neponset River and Blue Hills Reservations. These Reservations provide both active and passive recreation for all visitors. Houghton's Pond, located in the Blue Hills Reservation, is an important source of freshwater swimming for the greater Boston area. The Blue Hills Reservation is also an attraction for hikers, mountain bikers, horse riders and even downhill skiers. Many individuals come to use the canoe portal near Paul's Bridge located in the Neponset River Reservation.

Milton is an upper-income bedroom community with many significant natural and historic sites. A build-out analysis conducted in 2000 under the auspices of Executive Order 418 placed the town beyond the 90 percent mark; however, a desirable location assures continued pressure on remaining land. These forces need to be carefully balanced between the needs of open space, housing and economic development.

c.   Significant aspects of community data

The following information was taken from reports that can be found in American Fact Finder. Unless otherwise noted, the statistics are from the 2017 American Community Survey made available by the US Census Bureau.

The 2010 Census data showed that Milton had a population of 27,003. Most recent estimates list this number at 27,527, which is an increase of two percent.

Education

Milton is a very well-educated community. Over half (61.8%) of residents have a bachelors degree or higher, vs. a 17.4% statewide average. This is a slight increase over 2010 numbers. 30.8% have graduate or professional degrees, 12 percentage points above the state average. 4.4% percent of Milton residents older than 25 do not have a high school education, compared to 9.7% at the state level. This is an increase of 1.2% from the 2010 Census.

Milton is also a community that supports a number of educational institutions in addition to our public school system. There are currently 18 preschool programs in Milton. There are two K-8 parochial schools, a Catholic girls high school, a Montessori program, and two private schools. Milton is also home to Curry College and Laboure College.

Income & Poverty

Milton has stronger income figures than the typical Massachusetts community. Income levels are more than 40% above the state average, while poverty levels at 4.1% are better than the state average of 11.1%. The average income in Milton is $69,300 as compared to the state average of $48,200.

Household

Milton has a percentage of family households of 77.3%; this is a jump from our 2010 number of 66%. The current Massachusetts average is 63.7%. Here is the breakdown of the size of Milton households versus the state average:

- One person: 19.1% vs. 28.5%

- Two people: 29.6% vs. 32.9%

- Three people: 18.3% vs. 16.6%

- Four or more: 33.0% vs. 21.9%

The median age in Milton is 38.7, as compared to 39.4 statewide. 25.5% of the population is under the age of 18, as compared to 20.4% statewide. The senior community, represented by people ages 65 and older makes up 15.7% of the population as compared to 15.5% statewide.

Race

According to 2017 numbers, 74.2% of Milton's population identify as white, which is lower than the state average of 78.9%. People who identify as black constitute 15% of the population. This is higher than the state average of 7.4%, and higher than Milton's 2010 number of 13.6%. People who identify themselves as solely of Asian origin have grown from 5.9% to 6.6%. Of this population, the majority identify as Chinese.

III. LIBRARY SERVICES

A.   Usage and output measures

 Below we address data about Library usage during FY19. This information is derived from data gathered by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners. This data will serve as the benchmark for Library services and provide a starting point to refer to in our goals and objectives. While we now have FY20 data available, these numbers were directly influenced by COVID-19. FY19 represents the most recent 'normal' data available. As would be expected, the FY20 data showed sharp increases in the use of digital collections due to the closure of the Library building beginning in March 2020.

Circulation

Circulation measures the number of materials that are checked out of the Library. These can be books, DVDs, eBooks, or any other item available physically or digitally from the Library.

Overall circulation in FY19 was 325,670 items. This circulation was distributed among three major age groups: Adults 55%, Teens 3%, Children 42%. This number does not reflect overall use of the Library, but rather reflects the number of items these age groups checked out. For instance, we have a very large middle school population. This group uses the Library regularly for several hours a day. They use the Library as a meeting space, computer lab and homework space, but they don't check out a lot of materials. It is difficult to capture this 'library usage', but we attempt to do so through attendance numbers and computer use statistics.

Looking more closely at the overall numbers, 28.1% of materials that were used in FY19 were part of our digital collections. This represents a very large increase as compared to previous years. Five years ago, during FY15 digital usage was only 7% of total usage. The other largest categories were: Physical Books 56.2%, DVDs 9.3%, and audiobooks 2.4%.

Turnover

Turnover measures approximately how many times the average item in the collection is checked out during the fiscal year. These numbers allow us to see what segments of the collection are being used most frequently. The high turnover materials are usually designated as NEW items.

In FY19, the Library's overall turnover rate was 1.85. This was an increase over the previous two years of data collection.

The collections that saw the strongest turnover were:

- NEW Lease Adult Fiction – 20.88
- NEW Adult DVDs – 15.60
- Children's Playaway Book Kits - 13.64
- NEW Fiction – 12.19

- Children's NEW Books – 11.48
- NEW Lease Adult Non Fiction - 9.21
- NEW Paperback - 8.46
- Children's Boardbooks - 8.10
- Children's Non Fiction Series - 7.37
- NEW Books on CD - 7.36

Hours of Service (Pre- COVID-19)

Milton has very good operating hours, offering 60.5 during a normal week. This expands to 64.5 hours when we are open on Sundays. Since our last long range plan, our weekend hours have been targeted for budget cuts, but the Library has been able to maintain the hours.

One possible way to extend hours would be to offer Sunday hours all year round. We are currently open 24 Sundays a year.

Services

More than 15,000 residents have active library cards (they have been used in the past three years). This represents approximately 57% of the population. This figure is very good compared to the state average of 52%, but still leaves a lot of room for growth.

The Library offers thirty public internet computers, and free public wifi access. In FY19 we averaged over 450 public computer sessions a week. This number is beginning to decline, but our wifi use is steadily increasing. We averaged 158 daily unique users of our wifi during FY19.

Another service the Library offers is public meeting space. The Library is a place for the community to gather. In FY19, there were 1,155 room bookings for our spaces. There is demand for this service, and we need to gauge how much we can offer.

Programming

Programming has grown considerably since the Library reopened. In FY19 we offered 649 programs to residents of all ages and more than 17,000 people attended the programs.

There is considerable demand for more programming, but this would require more staffing to plan and present the programs.

B. Collection Holdings

Milton's collection grew to nearly 150,000 volumes, including both print and digital resources in FY19. We have seen large increases in our digital collection which accounts for 23% of the collection, while physical growth has been more moderate. Just ten years into a new building, we have already expanded our collections to near capacity. We have seen significant growth in audio-visual collections,

and new book collections. We have done some moving of shelves, but anticipate more space concerns in the future.

C. **Staffing**

The Library has experienced large growth in all of the services offered to the community, yet we have done so without greatly expanding the staff that offers the services. At the beginning of the previous plan, the Library had 12 full-time staff and 6 part-time staff. We have been able to increase to 13 full-time and 7 part-time staff. This increase has met some of increased demand for library services, but current staffing levels often leave us short staffed in a building with three floors and multiple public service desks. In addition, we would need increased staffing levels in order to increase many of the services discussed in this document.

IV. CORE SERVICES, GOALS & POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

1. The Library is Milton's Community Hub, offering a safe, comfortable, and user-friendly space.

   a. *GOAL: The Library will make changes to building spaces to meet the needs of our users, and to increase findability and safety.*

   i. ACTIVITY: The Library will undertake a thorough space needs study, responding to the post-COVID landscape.
      Years 1-2
      - Undertake a space needs assessment to: review meeting room spaces; explore open seating spaces; and evaluate efficient use of staff spaces

      Year 2
      - Review Café options
      - Create furniture inventory and replacement plan

      Year 3
      - Implement space needs plan
      - Begin furniture replacement plan

   ii. ACTIVITY: The Library will continue to improve a safety plan.
      Years 1-5
      - Identify additional safety measures beyond current procedures
      - Evaluate and implement new safety services and procedures based on patron and staff feedback
      - Work with the Milton Police Department to identify and implement new procedures

   iii. ACTIVITY: The Library will explore opportunities to expand parking, or other ways to access the building.
      Years 1-2
      - Undertake a parking lot study
      - Explore better publicizing of public transportation options
      - Explore incentives for walkers/bikers, including bike rental, bike storage, etc.

      Year 2-3
      - Implement parking lot plans
      - Explore ride share volunteer driver options

   iv. ACTIVITY: The Library will identify and implement more hands-free, self-serve solutions in the building.
      Years 1-2
      - Explore hands-free solutions for public spaces, including restrooms, doors, etc.
      - Explore expansion of self-serve check out stations and technology

Year 2-3
- Implement hands-free solutions
- Implement self-serve technologies

b. **GOAL: The Library will be the community hub for the residents of Milton.**

i. ACTIVITY: The Library will create a MPL Welcome Center.
   Years 1-5
   - Prepare and distribute welcome packages to new residents
   Years 1-2
   - Identify Welcome space in the Library (part of space planning)
   - Explore and implement a staff greeter, expanding on the role created during the COVID response
   Year 2
   - Develop regular orientation tours or open houses at the Library
ii. ACTIVITY: The Library will provide spaces for community groups to meet and grow.
   Years 1-2
   - Use Space Needs study to identify additional spaces for community groups
   Year 3
   - Implement Space Needs plans
   - Increase publicity for community meeting spaces

2. **The Library will provide excellent customer service and feature the expertise of its staff.**

    a. *GOAL: The Library will provide staff development opportunities to strengthen and increase expertise and knowledge base, and to prepare for a post-COVID world.*

- i. ACTIVITY: The Library will continue to focus on regular staff development program, including a full in-service day annually.
  - Years 1-5
    - Provide quarterly in-house staff development opportunities using in-person, online and hybrid options
    - Research and hire consultants to supplement trainings
    - Encourage staff to participate in outside trainings, conferences, and webinars
    - Encourage staff to participate in COVID related trainings, including customer service in the 'new normal'
  - Year 1
    - Explore the opportunity to provide all day-workshops for Library staff
    - Explore the possibility of requiring professional Library staff to attend at least two offsite or online trainings or workshops per year
  - Years 2-5
    - Establish annual full day staff development programs
    - Implement required professional development for librarians on staff
- ii. ACTIVITY: The Library will investigate Paralibrarian certification.
  - Year 1
    - Explore the benefits of the MBLC/MLA sponsored Paralibrarian Certification program
  - Years 1-2
    - Work with the Town and Staff Union to implement benefits for achieving certification
  - Years 2-5
    - Provide staff the opportunity to enter the certification program and encourage staff to do so

    b. *GOAL: The Library will investigate and implement user first, customer service initiatives.*

- i. ACTIVITY: The Library will address wayfinding and signage issues within the Library and its online presence.
  - Years 2-3
    - Review Library website; look at common navigation issues
  - Year 3-4
    - Investigate the Library's wayfinding, navigation issues

- Identify signage needs
- Work with a consultant on signage best practices
- Investigate the concept of a Library concierge service (referral service for local groups/programs)

Year 4-5
- Implement wayfinding/navigation improvement
- Implement signage plan
- Implement concierge service
- Work with consultant to update website and address navigation issues

ii. ACTIVITY: The Library will improve both physical and digital access and adaptability to meet and exceed ADA and other recommendations.

Year 1
- Assess the Library building for ADA compliance and other recommendations
- Assess the Library website for improvements
- Inventory available adaptive technologies and services, and explore expanding these
- Investigate the creation of gender neutral restrooms

Years 2-3
- Implement changes to the Library building
- Implement changes to the Library website
- Expand access to adaptive technologies

Years 4-5
- Review the building and website to assure compliance with up-to-date standards

c. *GOAL: The Library will collaborate with local organizations to provide a range of social services and assistance with workforce development.*

i. ACTIVITY: The Library will explore partnership with BID-Milton Hospital to expand health services.
Year 1
- Explore programming partnerships with BID-Milton Hospital

Years 2-5
- Use BID- Milton Hospital resources to expand Library health programming, collections, and staff training

ii. ACTIVITY: The Library will explore partnerships to provide access to social services.
Years 1-2
- Investigate the demand for social services in Milton and identify the major needs

Years 2-3

- Work with community agencies to identify social service providers who meet current demands
- Partner with agencies to develop an implementation plan; whether this is additional programming, or office hours for a social worker
- Explore the possibility of having a social work intern at the Library

Years 3-4

- Implement social services plan

iii. ACTIVITY: The Library will promote access to tools, resources and programs to prepare our residents for the post-COVID workforce

Years 1-2

- Investigate the community needs for workforce development assistance
- Investigate the community resources for workforce development
- Investigate library programs, collections and services currently available in Massachusetts for workforce development

Years 2-3

- Develop and implement a plan to address the workforce development needs of the community
    - If public space is a need, refer this to the Space Needs plan in Priority 1, Goal A
    - Use community partnerships to offer workforce development programs
    - Implement new collections and resources to meet community needs

3. **The Library will offer access to a wide variety of collections and services, while also promoting innovative ideas and initiatives to all members of our community.**

   a. *GOAL: The Library will focus on outreach to all of our Milton residents.*

      i. ACTIVITY: The Library will focus on neighborhood outreach
         Years 1-2
         - Identify underserved neighborhoods using Town and Library demographic data and partnership with Equity & Justice For All Committee
         - Explore the options for pop-up libraries or book mobile services; including potential locations
         - Explore options for hybrid and online services to these neighborhoods
         Years 2-5
         - Provide direct services to underserved neighborhoods, including pop-up and mobile solutions
         Years 2-3
         - Identify potential locations for and the viability of a remote access solution
         Years 3-4
         - Implement remote access solution
      ii. ACTIVITY: The Library will focus on 'event' related outreach.
         Year 1
         - Identify current and potential town and community groups for the Library to partner with
         - Identify the potential to provide library services through town and community groups
         - Identify the potential for town and community groups to provide additional services to Library patrons
         Year 2-3
         - Create partnerships with town and community groups
         Years 2-5
         - Implement Library services provided through town and community groups
         - Implement additional services provided by outside groups to Library patrons
      iii. ACTIVITY: The Library will focus on community wide Library & Partners initiatives (similar to Milton Moves)
         Year 1
         - Explore new and continuing town-wide initiatives
         - Develop a multi-year plan for new and sustained initiatives
         Years 2-3
         - Implement new town-wide initiatives

- Determine if current initiatives should be sustained, changed, or ramped down

    iv.   ACTIVITY: The Library will focus on underserved populations to help address diversity, equity, and inclusion gaps within our community.

Year 1
- The Board of Library Trustees will create a board subcommittee to work on diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives at the Library; this board will meet regularly throughout the year
- Use Library and Town data to identify underserved age groups
- Review previous three years of programs and attendance to identify strengths and weaknesses
- Work with the Equity & Justice For All Committee to identify underserved groups and the best ways to improve communications and services
- Investigate what other libraries are doing to reach out to millennials and other younger age groups

Years 2-3
- Work with community groups to identify Library programs, collections and services that meet the needs of the group
- Provide at least one program geared towards millennials per quarter

Years 3-5
- Implement the recommendations of the age group planning discussions

   b.   *GOAL: The Library will offer access to physical and digital collections, while also offering access to non-traditional resources.*

    i.   ACTIVITY: The Library will expand the Library of Things.

Year 1
- Investigate possible additions or subtractions from the collection
- Investigate patrons' knowledge of the Library of Things

Years 1-5
- Review use of current Library of Things

Years 2-3
- Implement recommended changes to the collection
- Implement publicity improvements based on patron survey

Years 3-5
- Implement possible additions or subtractions from the collection

    ii.   ACTIVITY: The Library will promote partnerships with local book clubs.

Year 1

- Identify local book clubs, including hosts, topics, and interest in working with the Library
- Survey book clubs to measure interest in book club kits, or use of Library spaces

Year 2-5

- Create and refresh book club kits
- Work with local book clubs to build and refresh the collection
- Make Library spaces and technology available to host online or in person book discussions

iii. ACTIVITY: The Library will expand awareness of Library collections.

Years 1-2

- Evaluate the Library use and placement of displays and signage
- Evaluate the Library use of web and social media promotion of collections
- Investigate physical and online opportunities for increased staff recommendations

Years 3-5

- Implement recommendations for physical displays and signage
- Implement a regular social media plan for promoting library collections
- Implement an expanded staff recommends section in-house and online

c. GOAL: The Library will offer fast, convenient, and contemporary technology and digital services.

i. ACTIVITY: The Library will provide a robust technology infrastructure.

Year 1

- Review/Evaluate Library technology infrastructure, including wiring, switches, servers, etc.

Year 2

- Create a technology replacement plan
- Work with Town IT, GDS, and Capital Committee

Year 3-5

- Implement technology replacement plan

ii. ACTIVITY: The Library will provide easy access for printing and other remote office functions.

Year 1

- Investigate wireless printing solutions
- Review current computer access and printing solutions
- Explore alternative public computer and printing solutions, including replacing desktop stations with laptops or server-based terminals

Year 2

- ● Implement wireless printing solution
- ● Create public computer replacement plan
- ● Survey Library users to determine other 'home office' needs the Library can provide (faxing, color copying, high speed copying, etc.)

Years 3-5

- ● Implement public computer replacement plan
- ● Implement 'home office' solutions

iii. ACTIVITY: The Library will provide effective and efficient online and hybrid programs.

Year 1

- ● Investigate creating a hybrid programming space in a meeting room, or portable studio space

Year 2-3

- ● Implement plan for hybrid programming space/portable studio

4.   The MPL will be a destination for residents of all ages to explore programming activities for enjoyment, information, and increasing awareness.

   a.   GOAL: The Library will continue to focus on Children's Programming.

   i.   ACTIVITY: The Library will review Children's Programming options and explore new ideas.

   Year 1
   - Review previous three years of programs and attendance to identify strengths and weaknesses
   - Produce a survey to identify patron demand for programs
   - Library staff will investigate new programming ideas by reaching out to the library community, attending workshops, etc.
   - Library staff will investigate new and continuing programming options for hybrid and remote attendance

   Year 2
   - Implement changes or make adjustments based on previous research
   - Investigate opportunities for more interactive programming

   Years 2-4
   - Introduce at least one new program per quarter

   b.   GOAL: The Library will evaluate and reinvigorate adult programming.

   i.   ACTIVITY: The Library will review current programming and attendance.

   Year 1
   - Review previous three years of programs and attendance to identify strengths and weaknesses
   - Work with Diversity & Inclusion Working Group and the Town's Equity and Justice for All committee to identify places to improve programming
   - Investigate programming levels at similar libraries
   - Produce a survey to identify patron demand for programs
     - Study the attendance of in person versus online programming

   Year 2
   - Create a yearly template for recurring programs or themes
   - Implement changes or make adjustments based on previous research

   ii.   ACTIVITY: The Library will offer more programs by 'experts in their field'.

   Year 2
   - Using the results of research from Activity i., identify topics that would be of interest for community lectures

- Identify potential speakers from local colleges and community organizations
  - Work with Equity and Justice For All committee for recommendations
- Identify opportunities for self-help experts

Year 3

- Implement a quarterly 'Experts' lecture series featuring local professors, etc.
- Implement a quarterly 'Self Help' series using local experts

iii. ACTIVITY: The Library will focus on technology-based programming.

Year 1

- Review all technology-based training and programming at the Library for the previous three years
- Inventory all of the digital services offered by the Library as potential trainings
- Investigate technology training at area libraries
- Survey program attendees to identify needed classes

Year 2

- Create a patron-responsive technology training curriculum
- Investigate opportunities for offering training offsite in the community

Year 3

- Implement offsite training at one or two locations

Year 4

- Reassess technology training curriculum
- Expand offsite training if needed

iv. ACTIVITY: The Library will focus on diversity in programming.

Year 1

- Review previous three years of programs and attendance to identify strengths and weaknesses
- Work with Diversity & Inclusion Working Group to identify places to improve programming
- Investigate what inclusive programming other libraries are

Year 2

- Implement recommendations based on results of research
- Provide at least one inclusive program per quarter

Years 3-5

- Include one or more inclusive programs per month

c. **GOAL: The Library will create a unified, managed publicity program for all age groups.**

i. ACTIVITY: The Library will work with a PR consultant to look at Library needs.

    Year 1
    - Create and publish an RFI & RFP for prospective publicity consultation work
    - Identify a budget for project; work with Library Foundation and Trustees

    Year 2
    - Hire a PR consultant to create a messaging, publicity strategy for the Library
        - This includes print/digital media, calendar, templates, identifying current and new audiences

    Years 2-3
    - Implement new PR plan
    - Determine if the Library should create a permanent PR-related position

    Years 3-4
    - Request new PR- related position, if deemed necessary

Revised 3/2

APPENDIX A
LRP - FOCUS GROUPS SUMMARY

Strengths

The PEOPLE
Staff, welcoming, helpful, "where they know your name", good human connection, some with high energy
Chris mentioned for tech help. Sara for recommendations for childrens books
Non judgemental - no eligibility.
Less "old school" - no shushing. Youth friendly - kids and teens want to be there.
Good Volunteers

The SPACE
Physical space - well lit, well used, safe for children and teens, attractive, encourages visits
Variety of spaces, small, large, quiet, loud, small nooks, big rooms for big events.
Technology hot spots
New Pods, Quiet Study - great for patrons who work from home, well liked, well utilized
Fish tank, sofa in back of children's room
Teens love their space, kids and parents love story times
Happy, comfortable space, fireplace rooms, you can always find a place to go in the Library
Train Table

A COMMUNITY CENTER/OUTREACH
Mission- a community space for all.
Heart of the Town, free, safe, informative, social, lots of events, bulletin board, public bathrooms, café, art, info hub
"I see people of all ages" - "I see the same people and can make friends."
24/7 Library - some users never come to the bldg
No need to dress up at the Library
Clean, flowers, inviting, feels like being home
Hours - good but would like more
Great collaborations/Outreach - Fuller, Winter Valley, schools, pre-schools, Farmers Mkt, Home Inc.
Art Exhibits for free - no need to spend money to go to museums
Just one library instead of multiple branches means resources and support are focused on one location.
Good financials - Library is in good financial shape

ACTIVITIES/OFFERINGS
Contemporary programs, especially childrens, also special programs
Miss Jen's guitar, music in general, Cooks & Books, Melodrama, Yoga, owls
Open Play Fridays - expand to other days
Collection is good, mention of French books
Story times, not as crowded as Quincy
Activities with structure, helps youngest children
Museum passes and online reservation
Favorites: Book Shop, Puzzle swap, Winter Concerts, Teas, Spub Club, Summer Reading, Cookbook Club,Films, Author talks
MR especially Amor Towles
Book Club Line up looks good

The PEOPLE - comments all came from staff session

Need MORE staff and subs

Para librarian certification

With staff turnover, look at nature of work and hire accordingly.

More community service opps for high school kids

Professional Development day for staff - once a year. Library is closed for whole day. Allows staff to expand in job.

Also offers town a time to educate on new procedures including safety measures.

More consistent staff communication - create a staff WIKI. Staff turns on computers and learn about news/updates.

More diversity in staff - from Community Session

The SPACE - from Community sessions

Physical space - underutilized, look for more meeting space, re-working existing space (Keys Room)

Storage spaces near staff kitchen - better uses?

More exhibit space and better space design

Dark in entrance space.

After Hours open the Library - Amazon locker model for book pick up?

Improve WIFI

The SPACE - most are from Staff session

Health and Safety

Concern about safety on LL - lock door to limit access.

Childrens Room access from the garden space. NOW, Kids wander off toward the entrance doors.

Café ventillation to outside.

More phones throughout the building.

Signage - do not block entrance - 5 minute drop off

Plants - hire a company to take care of plants (like fish tank contract)

Update air exchange system.

Improvements - Exterior

Parking - MULTI level parking garage (all sessions)

Parking - Uber deals. Have vans from senior housing locations bring folks on a regular basis. (all sessions)

Rides to the Library - Friends initiative to match drivers with seniors who need rides.

Identify patrons who need parking most and make close spots availble to them.

Walk/ride to the Library - get a free book. Incentive for not driving.

Encourage walking to the Library

Canton Avenue - front entrance - fix broken pot.

Improvements - Interior

Better "way finding" signage throughout, with languages including braille

As Library circulation changes (fewer books) - re-work space for better usage

Move Café to entrance lobby - perhaps add swinging doors to reduce noise impact.

Need to move teens somewhere other than a fish bowl

Turn art closet into a small meeting room.

More sound absorbing materials in entry space

Full kitchen near Keys Room - add oven.

Digital Media Lab - podcasts, movies, music production. Like Hingham?

Self check out stations in kids room.

New furniture where over-used.

Book bins in entry - need repair inside.

Printing Kiosk (SAM)

A COMMUNITY CENTER/OUTREACH

Open Houses: invite groups of seniors, church group coffee hours, "new to Milton" - create Library as "go to" stop

Target audiences who can't easily get to Library. Cider in the Reading Rooms - Offer rides from WV, Home Inc. Unquity, etc.

Create list of what the Library offers the community - present at Library, but also around town as part of outreach

Welcome Postcard - send to new residents to encourage library card and see what else Library has to offer

E. Milton chamber offers a new to Milton welcome packet - LOOK AT THIS.

Bookmobiles - reach out to all neighborhoods and demographics, by age, by economics

A Community newsletter to tell patrons what's happening in Milton and close by.

Advertisewhat the library offers - Milton Scene, targetted emails, website, superintendants blast, Instagram

Meet Up Groups speaking Spanish or French

Attend back to school nights to talk about Library.

Create joint calendar with other OCLN libraries in area.

Bulletin board- move to wall by elevator - more central and visible.

Food Trucks, more fun things that draw patrons into the building

"Blue" Library Sign - directing residents to location of Library.

Social Worker - ongoing drop in session structure

The ACTIVITIES

for children

Kids programs at different times; kids mid day, more outdoors for all ages

Parenting workshops - Parent University

More Free Play -weekdays and Saturdays - times for kids to play valuable. Hingham has space near story room, with toys.

Saturday story times for parents who work, and perhaps in Keys room for bigger groups

Story Times about holidays- loved Halloween party with costumes.

Musical programs for teens and families. More music and movement for younger kids.

Separate kids by age (0-12 mos) and older pre-school kids. Also more programs for elementary kids

While stories are being read, maybe some toys for kids to keep busy for those who have trouble with that

More social justice programs for kids.

More suggestions of books from all staff, including children's room staff

Need a NO TECH ZONE - many parents from 10/21 session. Trying hard to keep kids away from tech. Not Library-like.

Rocking chairs and nursing areas

Work with Home School parents - Maddy Cooper interested in sharing her thoughts mtcoop13@gmail.com.

French board games, YOGA for elementary school age, books with CDs packs

for other demographics

Draw in new demographics; 25-40 yr olds with no kids, 30-50 yr olds, more men, diverse audiences. Match volunteers

Bring in residents for whom library is not part of their daily life.

More diverse presenters- look at courageous conversations list of authors

More food events and ALCOHOL - draws more people into Library (staff)

Museum Passes - holiday special passes - Edaville Railroad, Topsfield Fair, Jordans Enchanted Village

ESL classes

Poetry series, paint nights - even without wine, yoga, expand on "social" aspect of the Library

Expand online scholarly data via your Library card

Volunteering programs for kids and parents to do together.

Mental health, mindfulness - meditation, group therapy, resource sessions

Library of Things, laptops for check out and use in building

OUTDOORs: Yoga, Blue Bikes, walking path between front of building and parking lot

Develop dialogue with youth center

More workshops, classes on software, using your own computer

Specialized programs that make MPL unique - ex Chessapalooza. Try bridge, social media.

Home office support - printing, scanning, etc.

Announcement at end of night - make message more light and fun - like SW airlines messages. Funny

Aspirations

Policies

No fines!

Alcohol at events

Exterior

Buy yellow house - host events - more parking spaces.

Satellite parking

Parking - churches, wetlands, vertical or elevated parking, underground, self drving cars that drop patrons at dor and park.

Trolley to library, bicycles that share rides, find new ways to get to the Library

Cross walk and light for crossing Canton Avenue

Blue bike set up at Library.

Solar panels on top of building.

Interior

Create a Starbucks type environment in the Café - make it a place people want to meet - OR roof top café

Create direct access to Keys Room from outside

Offer Key Card access to VIPS for after hours.

New Initiatives

Re-Invent Adult Programs. Keep Oscars, Cookbook Club, look for new ideas. Match target audiences.

Target families for which the Library is not part of their lives. - BIG question of how to do this.

Use "census methods of door to door - visit homes to find new Library users.

Make Library a voting location - brings in new audiences

Red box, Pop up Libraries, shipping containers - for neighborhoods throughout town.

Hire P/T publicity outreach person to promote library on social media.

Pay consultant to find non-users who would benefit from using the Library.

Results

Measurements

Circulation and attendance at programs

Goal: 100% of children and teens have library cards. Maximize school visits. - STAFF

Focus Groups and Surveys - Only 3 questions, or Only 5 minutes to complete.

FC, COA, churches, schools, Farmers Mkt, senior housing, Monster Dash, Road Race, Soccer, CVS, voting locations

Measure traffic as digital trends expand - books will take up less space in the future.

New library cards

After hour users

Measure those who enter Library without being counted - programs, book shop, etc.

More than just numbers!

Create narratives, testimonials - encourage patrons to talk about why they come to the Library

Goal: Every citizen uses the Library in some way. Count the ways to use the MPL

Frequent user benefits - free books, what else?

Raise standard of activity - inter library loans

More efficient use of space

Gather Input from others

School librarians, church bulletins, Little Libraries, Superintendant eblast

Insert a survey in tax bills/census

Need to better track individual traffic as a percentage of population.

Find new ways to measure traffic but not by placing barriers to entry (use of cards to enter building - not good)

OVERALL Comments

Regularly review, track, and announce publicly the successes.

Be more pro-active regarding financial planning - plan for future "difficulties" (Leroy)

Advocate for resources and be more visible in the community with advocacy. Mobilize supporters to help - school model.

LIBRARY USE SURVEY RESULTS
4 year comparison

	2017	2018	2019	2020
• **Total Respondents**	769	560	463	424
• **Gender** = Female respondents	76%	77%	77%	77%
• **Age** = Number of respondents 40+	87%	88%	85%	<mark>93%</mark>
• **Library Card** = have a library card	99%	98%	97%	**98%**
• **You can find what you're looking for** =				
at least agreed	97%	93%	94%	*92%*
• **Have positive experiences with staff** =				
at least agreed	96%	97%	98%	**99%**
• **What do you do at the Library** =				
use the collections	77%	79%	79%	*73%*
attend programming	11%	10%	11%	**14%**
use Library spaces	7%	6%	6%	**8%**
• **How often do you visit** = at least monthly	91%	90%	90%	**91%**
• **Why don't you come more often** =				
Hours	53%	28%	20%	*18%*
Parking	32%	31%	18%	<mark>29%</mark>
Location	13%	8%	3%	3%
• **Who do you come with** =				
Alone	69%	66%	71%	**75%**
Children	24%	25%	21%	*18%*
Spouse/Friend	3%	6%	6%	*4%*
• **The Library is safe & comfortable** =				
at least agree	99%	99%	99%	**100%**
• **The Library is clean** = at least agree	98%	97%	98%	98%
• **The Library has what I'm looking for** =				
at least agree	90%	90%	91%	*90%*
• **Collections & programs reflect diversity** =				

Bold = increase   Italics = decrease   Highlight = change of 5+ %

at least agree	94%	95%	96%	96%
• **Collections are up to date** = at least agree	95%	95%	97%	96%
• **Quality of adult programs** = high	93%	91%	95%	<mark>90%</mark>
• **Quality of children's programs** = high	97%	97%	95%	*91%*
• **Quality of teen programs** = high	83%	83%	87%	*85%*
• **Quality of the web page** = high	87%	89%	90%	**91%**
• **How often do you use the site** =				
Weekly	31%	26%	28%	**32%**
Monthly	39%	44%	39%	39%
Month +	30%	31%	33%	*29%*
• **Have a productive technology**				
experience = at least agree	97%	98%	98%	*97%*
• **The Library has a clear mission** =				
at least agree	96%	98%	97%	**99%**
• **The Library is well run** = at least agree	98%	98%	99%	99%
• **The Library is a good partner** =				
at least agree	97%	98%	99%	*97%*

Answers to write in question: What are three ways the Library can improve
Based on 234 responses

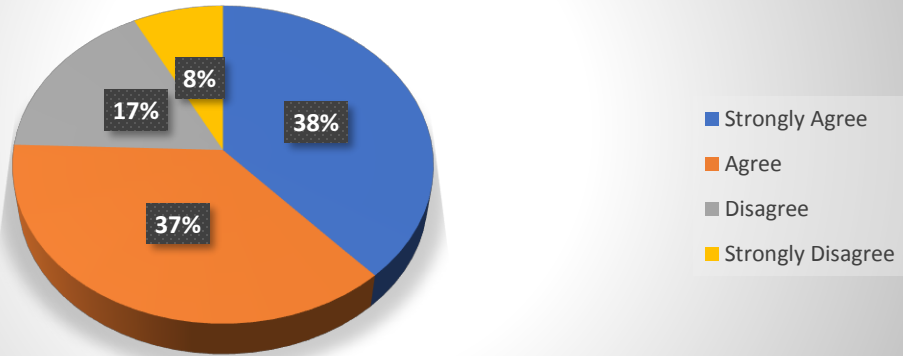|	2018	2019	2020
• Collection improvements/additions	44	55	54
• Parking	70	45	54
• Hours	42	19	33
• Programming related	30	22	30
• Building and space ideas	---	---	19
• Noise/more quiet spaces	39	19	16
• Technology (more and improvements)	17	12	16
• Cleanliness (bathrooms)	29	13	12
• Children's program related	---	---	12
• Staff related	---	---	11

Bold = increase	Italics = decrease	Highlight = change of 5+ %

2020-2021 Milton Public Library Annual Survey and Pandemic Response Survey

Pandemic Specific Questions

### I continue to use the MPL on a regular basis during the pandemic

- 45% — Strongly Agree
- 34% — Agree
- 14% — Disagree
- 7% — Strongly Disagree
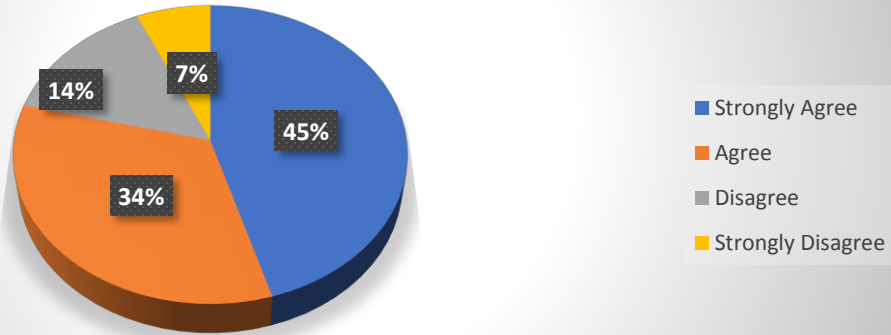
I continue to go to the MPL and depend on services during the pandemic

- 38% — Strongly Agree
- 37% — Agree
- 17% — Disagree
- 8% — Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX B.2

When I go to the library during the pandemic I am able to get what it is I need from the public library ?

- Strongly Agree — 51%
- Agree — 41%
- Disagree — 5%
- Strongly Disagree — 3%
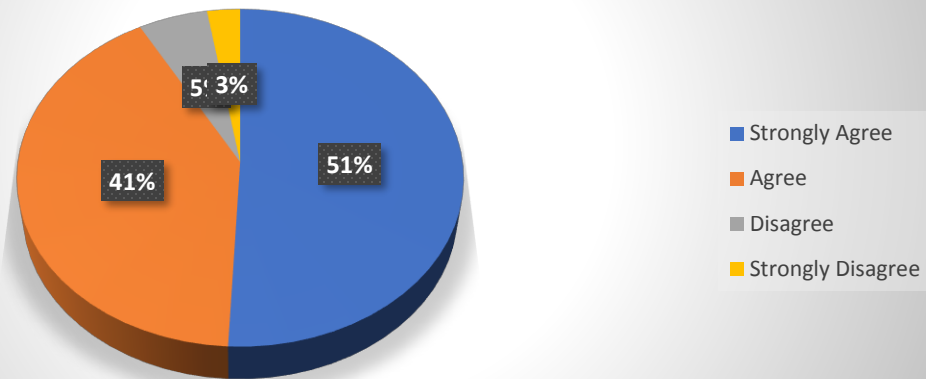
When I approach a service team that greets visitors to the library during the pandemic, I always have a positive experience.

- Strongly Agree — 76%
- Agree — 20%
- Disagree — 1%
- Strongly Disagree
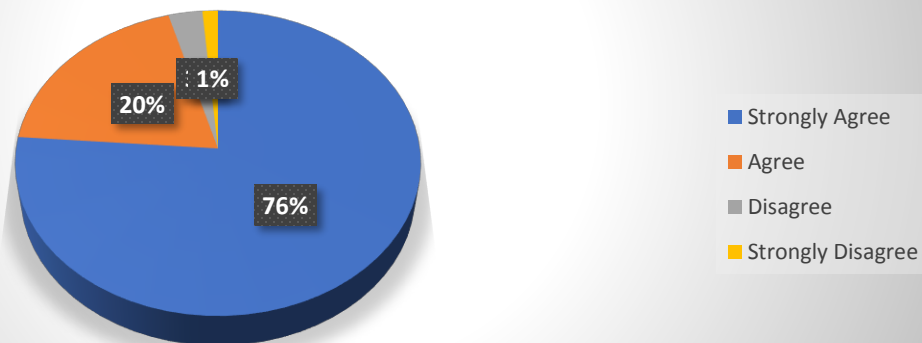
When I approach a service team at the library during the pandemic, the library staff always follows appropriate safety protocols during the pandemic.

- Strongly Agree — 76%
- Agree — 22%
- Disagree — 1%
- Strongly Disagree
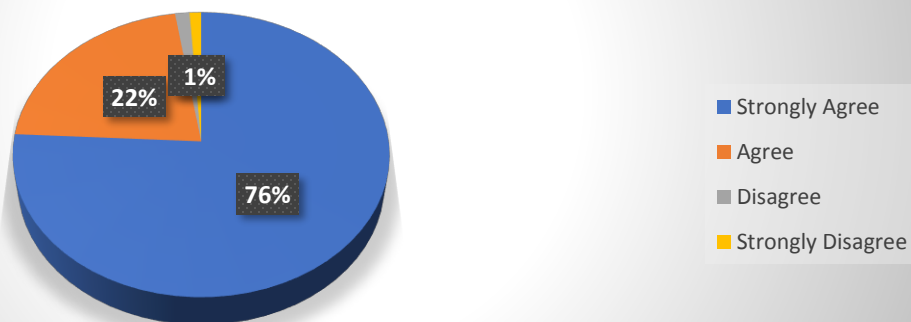
Which of the following best captures what you do when you attend the library during this unique time with modified services and programming:
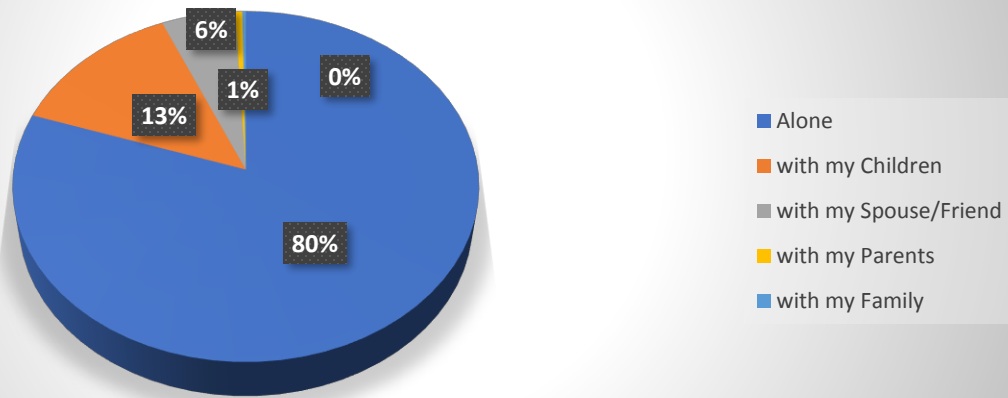
3% 3% 1%

93%

- Access Collections
- Attend Programs
- Use Technology
- Use the Space
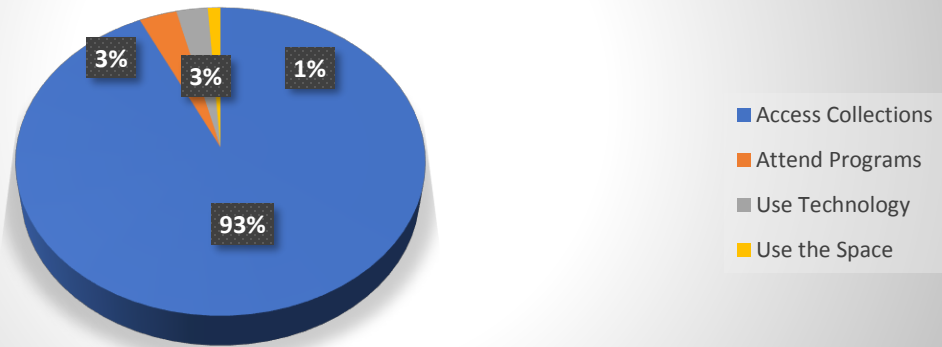
How often have you visited the library during the pandemic these last 9 months?

11% 4% 9% 29%

47%

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Every 6 Months
- Once a Year
- Never
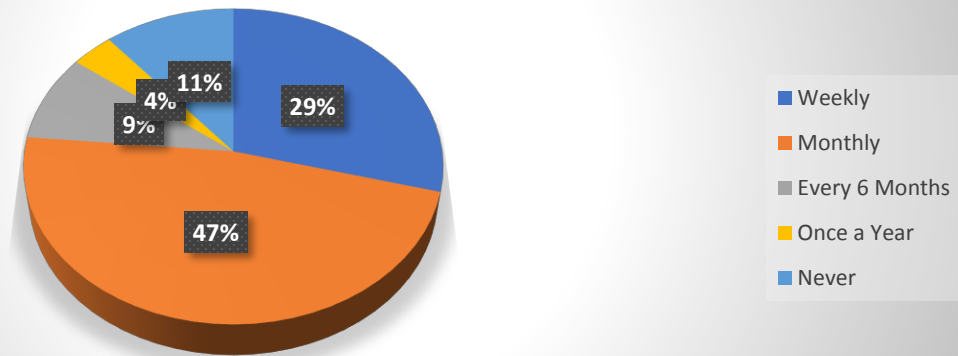
The Library always has what I'm looking for, despite the modified services and programming during the pandemic.

6% 1% 37%

56%

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree
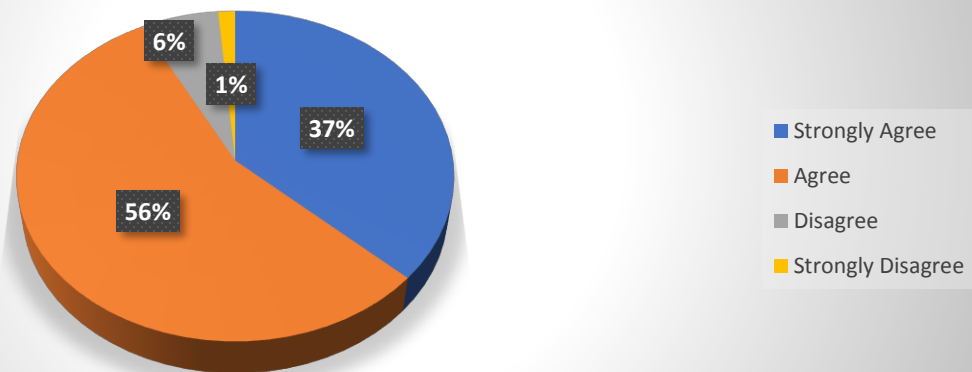
When I have visited the Library during the pandemic I am generally:

- Alone — 80%
- with my Children — 13%
- with my Spouse/Friend — 6%
- with my Parents — 1%
- with my Family — 0%

The library is safe and the staff maintain protocols that maintain safety during the pandemic.

- Strongly Agree — 74%
- Agree — 25%
- Disagree — 0%
- Strongly Disagree
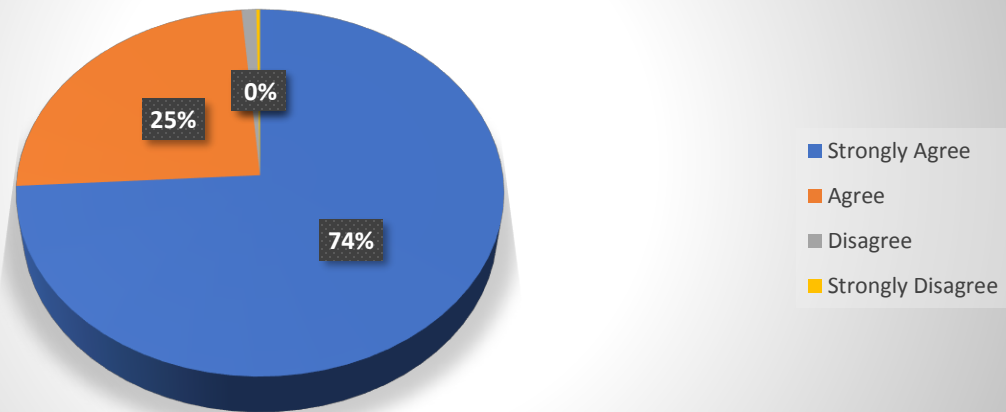
If service and hours at the library were expanded, with all state safety parameters in place, I would come to the library regularly.

- Strongly Agree — 36%
- Agree — 39%
- Disagree — 22%
- Strongly Disagree — 3%
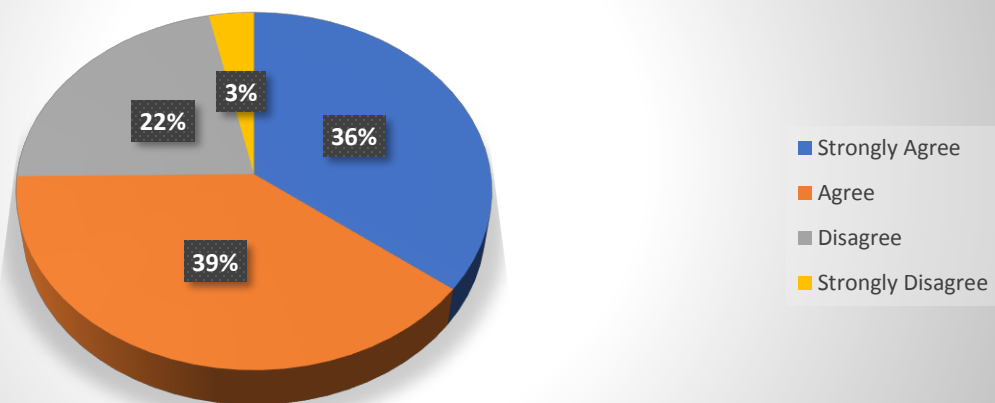
The library offers high-speed access to the internet and the equipment to support the community during the pandemic.

10% 2%
33%
55%

- ■ Strongly agree
- ■ Agree
- ■ Disagree
- ■ Strongly Disagree
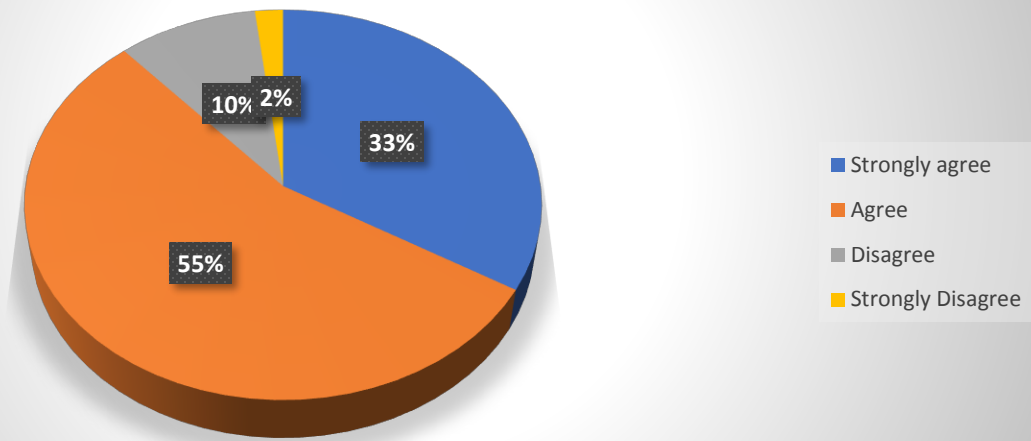
The library curbside service has been effective and maintains safety for staff and visitors.

1%
2%
31%
66%

- ■ Strongly agree
- ■ Agree
- ■ Disagree
- ■ Strongly disagree
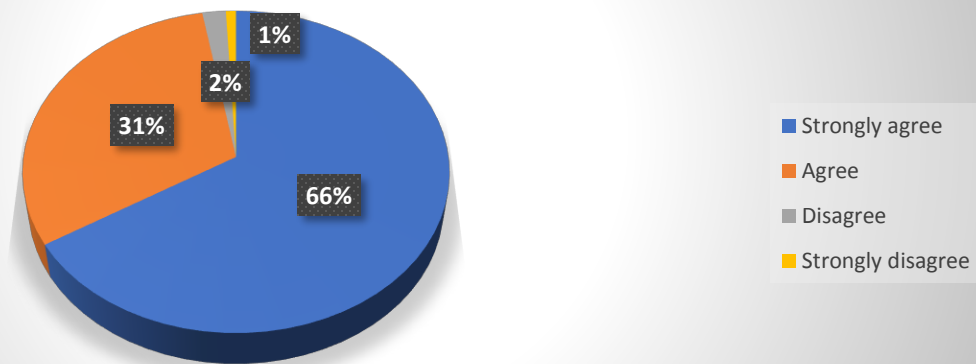
How would you describe the quality of Children's Programming at the library during the pandemic?
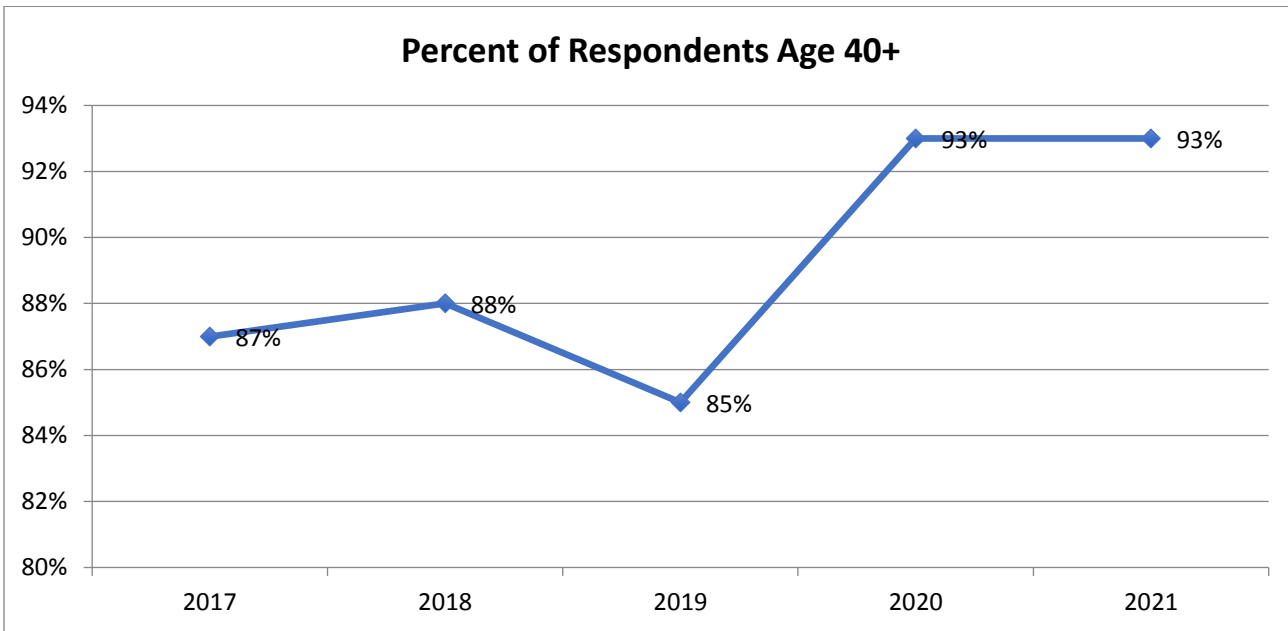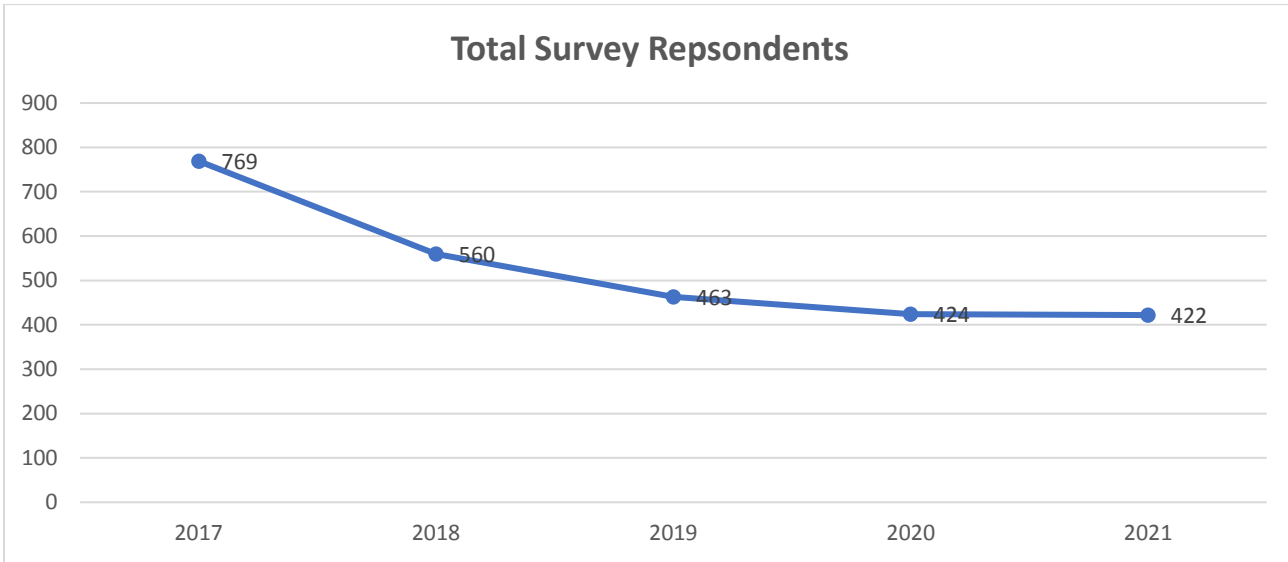
19%
81%

- ■ High
- ■ Low
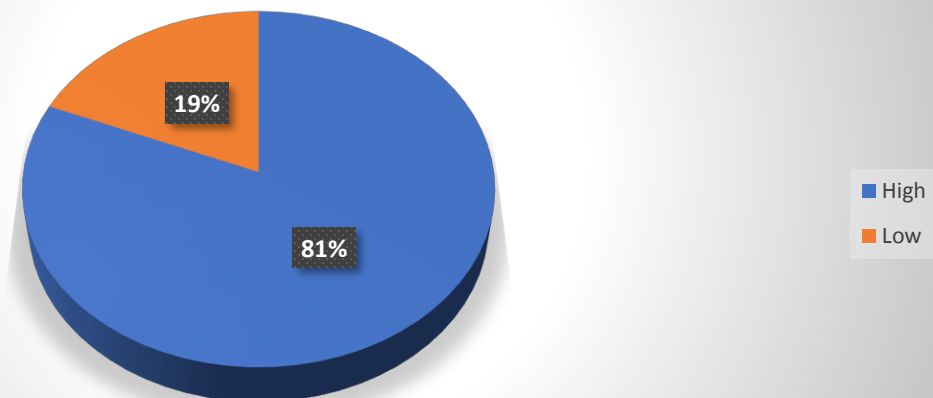
The MPL has maintained the mission and vision during the modified services during the pandemic.

- 2%
- 31%
- 67%

Legend:
- ■ Strongly agree
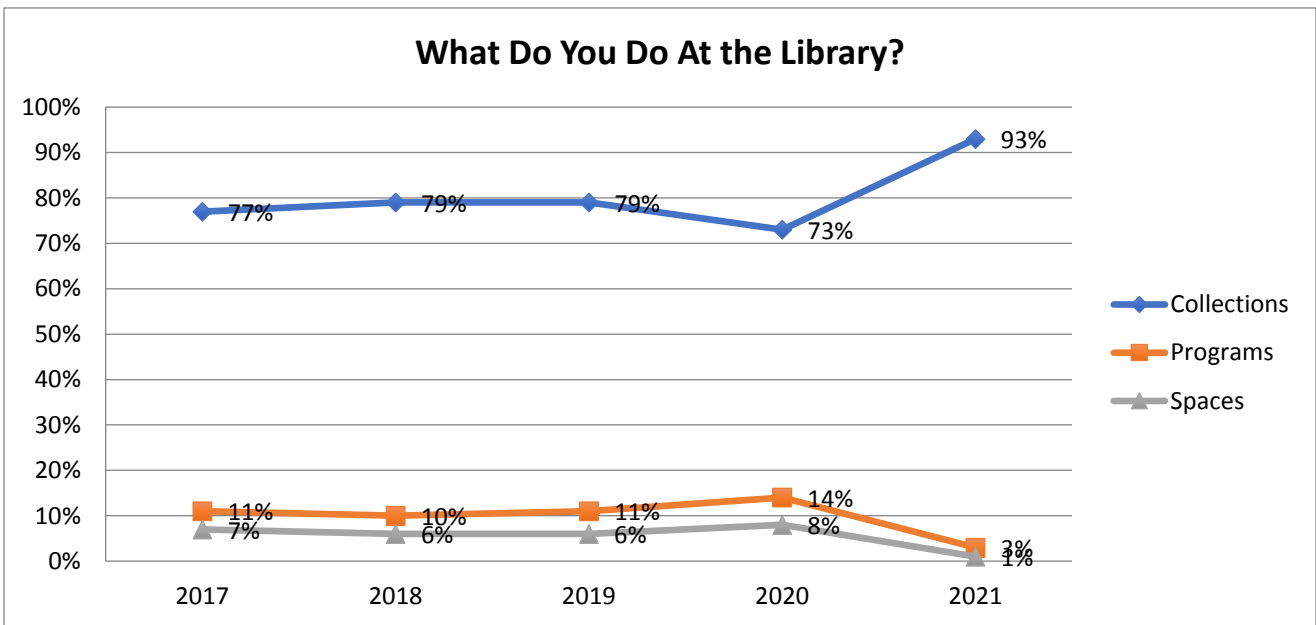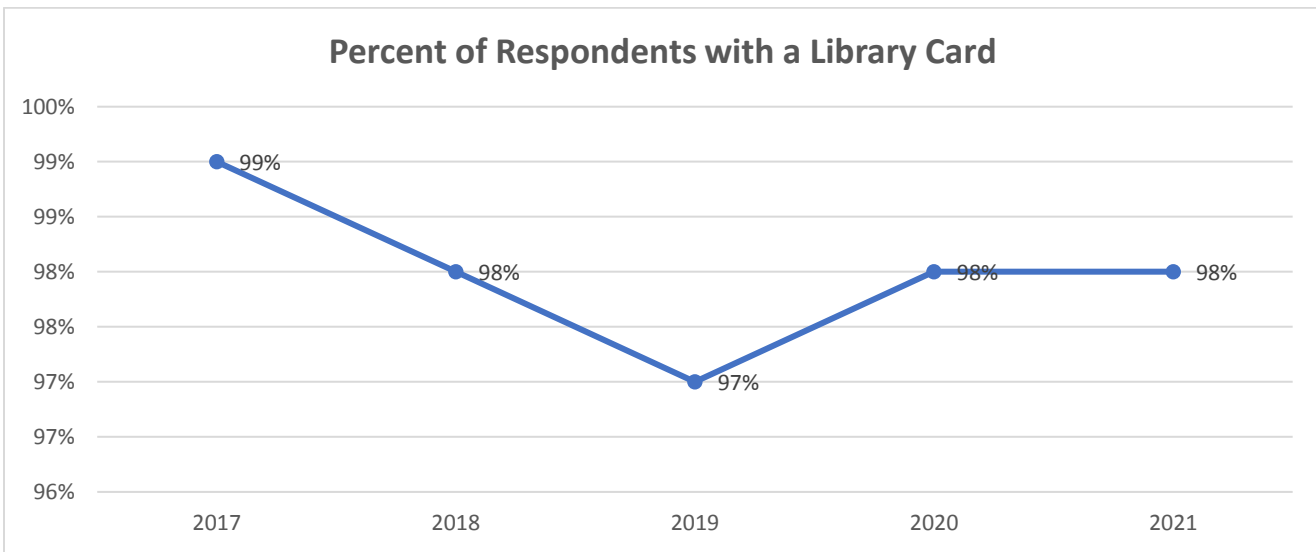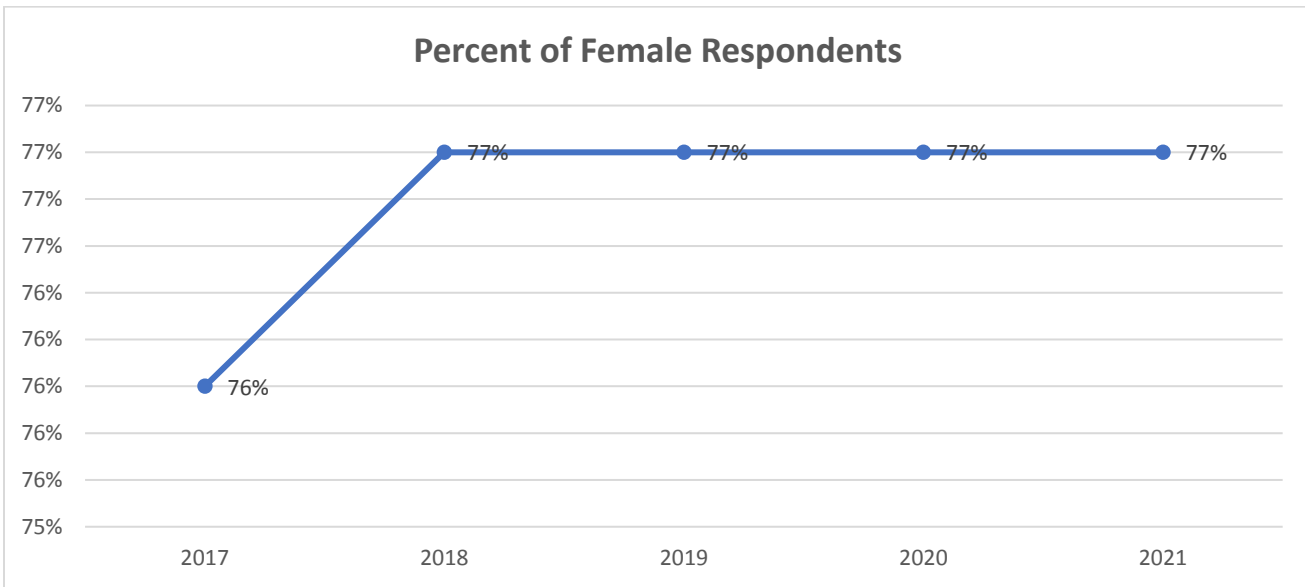- ■ Agree
- ■ Disagree
- ■ Strongly disagree
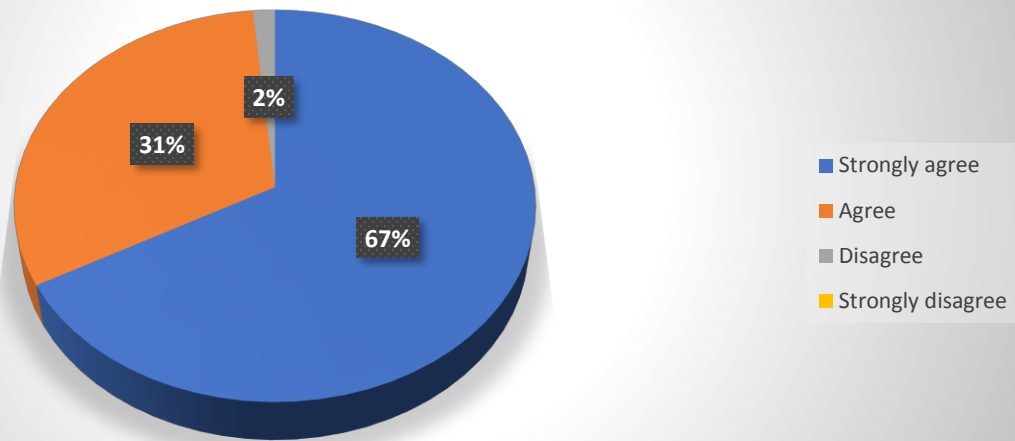
If the library had to close for an extended period of time or had to significantly reduce programming/hours how would you be affected?

- 10%
- 37%
- 53%

Legend:
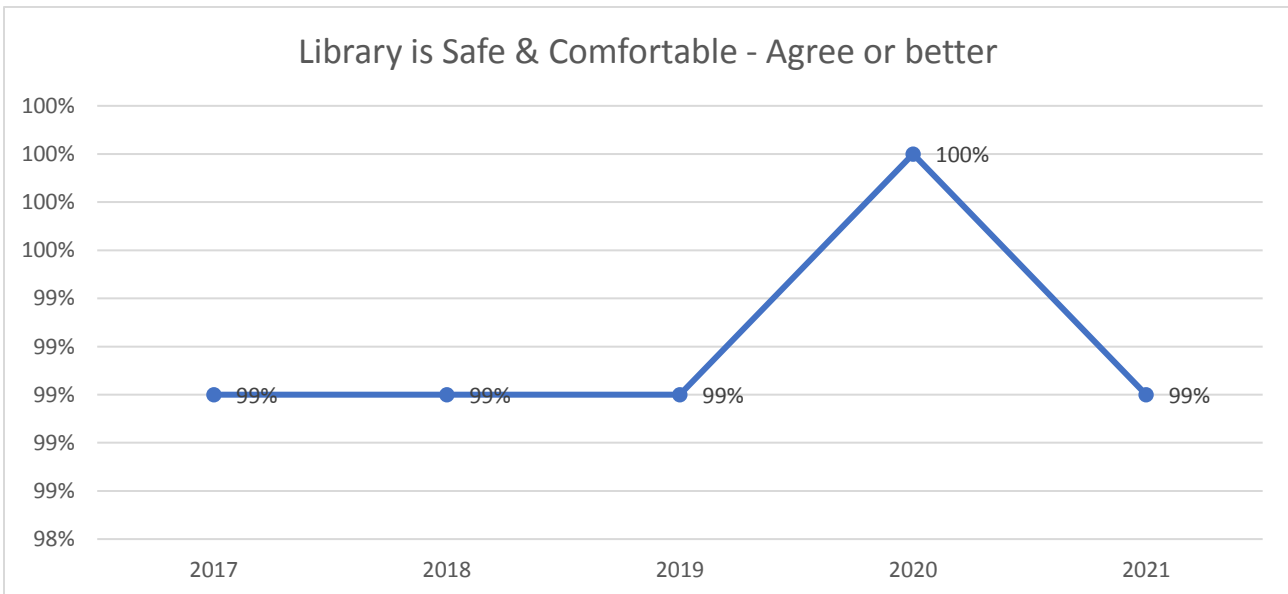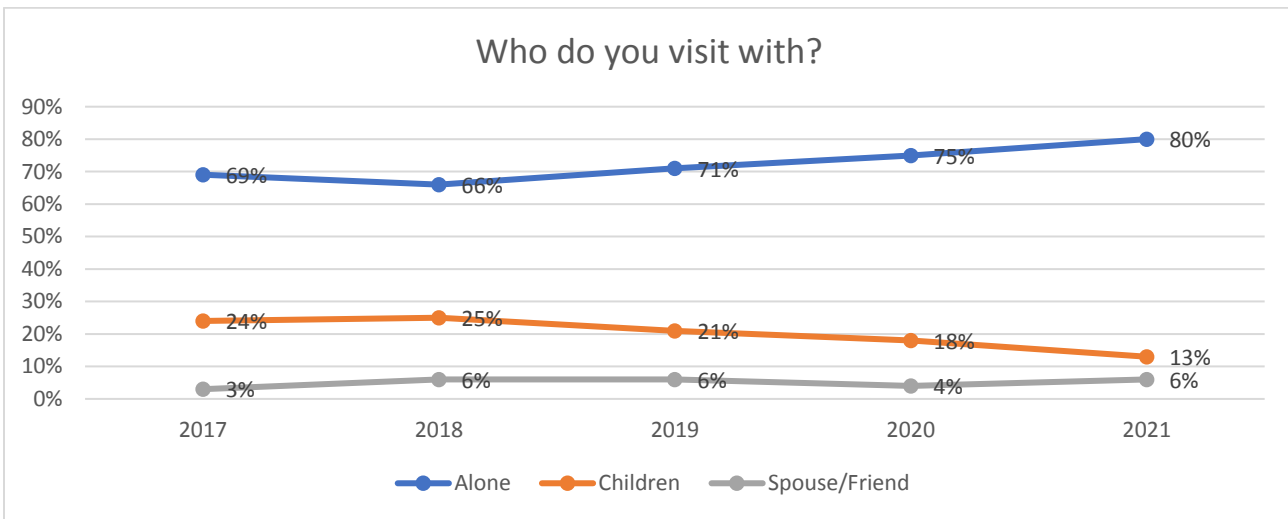- ■ Very Affected
- ■ Somewhat Affected
- ■ Not at All
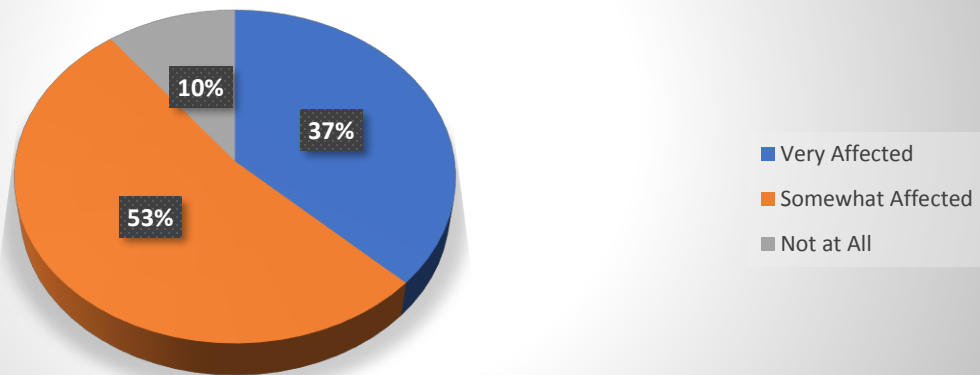
Standard Questions: Five Year Comparison

Total Survey Repsondents

Year	Respondents
2017	769
2018	560
2019	463
2020	424
2021	422

Percent of Respondents Age 40+

Year	Percent
2017	87%
2018	88%
2019	85%
2020	93%
2021	93%

Percent of Female Respondents

Year	Value
2017	76%
2018	77%
2019	77%
2020	77%
2021	77%

Percent of Respondents with a Library Card

Year	Value
2017	99%
2018	98%
2019	97%
2020	98%
2021	98%

What Do You Do At the Library?

Year	Collections	Programs	Spaces
2017	77%	11%	7%
2018	79%	10%	6%
2019	79%	11%	6%
2020	73%	14%	8%
2021	93%	3%	1%

Library has what I'm looking for - Agree or Better

Who do you visit with?

Alone   Children   Spouse/Friend

Library is Safe & Comfortable - Agree or better

APPENDIX B.2

Collections are up to date - Agree or Better

Year	Value
2017	95%
2018	95%
2019	97%
2020	96%
2021	98%

Quality of children's programs - Percent rated HIGH

Year	Value
2017	97%
2018	97%
2019	95%
2020	91%
2021	81%

Quality of the web page - Percent rated HIGH

Year	Value
2017	87%
2018	89%
2019	90%
2020	91%
2021	92%

How often do you visit the web site?

Legend: Weekly — Monthly — Longer

Year	Weekly	Monthly	Longer
2017	31%	39%	30%
2018	26%	44%	31%
2019	28%	39%	33%
2020	32%	39%	29%
2021	36%	36%	28%

Library has a clear mission - Agree or better

Year	Value
2017	96%
2018	98%
2019	97%
2020	99%
2021	99%

Library is well run - agree or better

Year	Value
2017	98%
2018	98%
2019	99%
2020	99%
2021	99%

APPENDIX B.2

Library is a good partner - agree or better