

Community Survey Results for Madison Heights Public Library

Survey Dates: March 25 - May 10, 2024

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This survey was conducted by the Post-Pandemic Public Library Project of the University of Michigan School of Information and made possible in part by the Library of Michigan and Library Services and Technology Act Funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.



Executive Summary

This report contains the results of a survey conducted March 25th-May 10th, with 152 responses, primarily from active patrons. Analysis was conducted by the Post-Pandemic Public Library Project at the University of Michigan School of Information. Key findings include:

- 92.6% of respondents are somewhat or very satisfied with the library.
- 97.4% have a library card.
- Respondents describe the library first as friendly, then as comfortable and clean.
- Borrowing physical and digital materials are the top uses of the library.
- Respondents were asked to rate the quality of a variety of library services and features on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high). Average scores rated from 4.1 for technology to 4.7 for customer service. The building and maintenance were the second-highest ranked category, with an average score of 4.6 out of 5.
- When asked to identify their community's greatest challenge, respondents pointed to markers or economic strain and concerns about local government and taxes.

- Asked to recommend one change that would make their community better, respondents told us they wanted more activities in both the library and the community, as well as places to come together and gather.
- We asked respondents to identify the best part of the library. Approximately 40% identified the staff, followed by the facility, library collection, programs, and convenience.
- When probed to suggest a change to the library, most respondents asked for more of what the library already does, with the top two themes being an increase in library programs and additions to the library collection.

A detailed analysis follows. When reviewing the analysis, keep in mind that this survey had a small number of responses and that most respondents are library patrons. This means that while the information gathered is valuable, we cannot assume that the respondents' perspectives are representative of sentiment in the broader community or service area.

For more information about this project, contact nextlevelleadership@umich.edu.

Methods

The survey was available to patrons in English or Spanish, both as an online survey via the Qualtrics.com platform and in paper format. All responses received were in English. Survey questions were designed by the University of Michigan School of Information (UMSI) team in consultation with similar surveys from other Michigan and U.S. public libraries. The survey was open from March 25th-May 10th. A total of 152 responses were received. Note that this is not a representative sample; take care not to assume that survey responses are consistent with overall community sentiment.

The library was charged with the distribution of the survey via the library's online presence and social media channels and making paper copies available to patrons visiting the physical library.

Paper survey data was manually added to Qualtrics.com platform. Analysis was conducted by the UMSI team from May to October, 2024. Analysis of quantitative data was completed automatically within the Qualtrics platform and are represented in Part I of this report. Four questions called for open-ended responses, known as qualitative data. These responses were imported into the Dedoose.com platform and analyzed first with thematic analysis to identify overarching patterns and then via content analysis to determine patterns or trends in responses and are represented in Part II of this report.

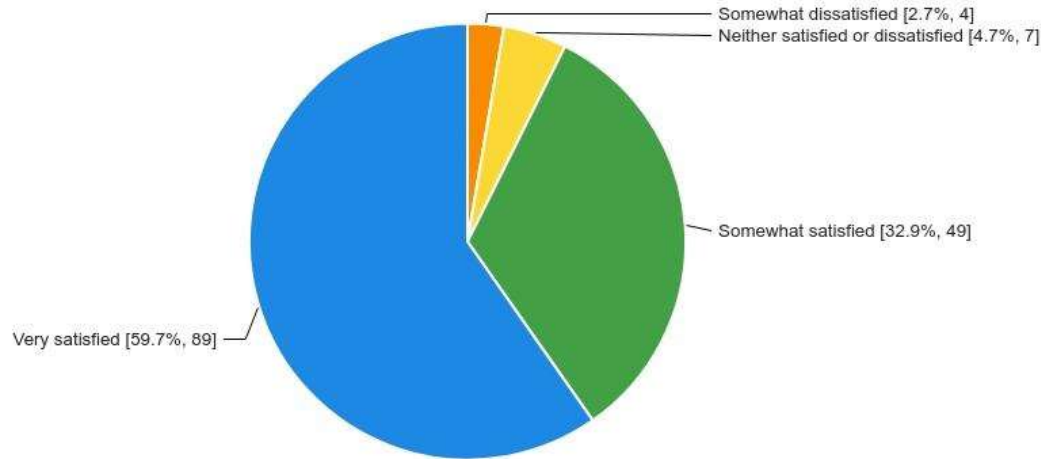
[A copy of the original data is available via Google Drive.](#)

Part I: Quantitative Analysis

High Overall Satisfaction with the Library

Responses to the question, “On a scale of 1 (not at all satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), how satisfied are you with the library overall?”

149 Responses



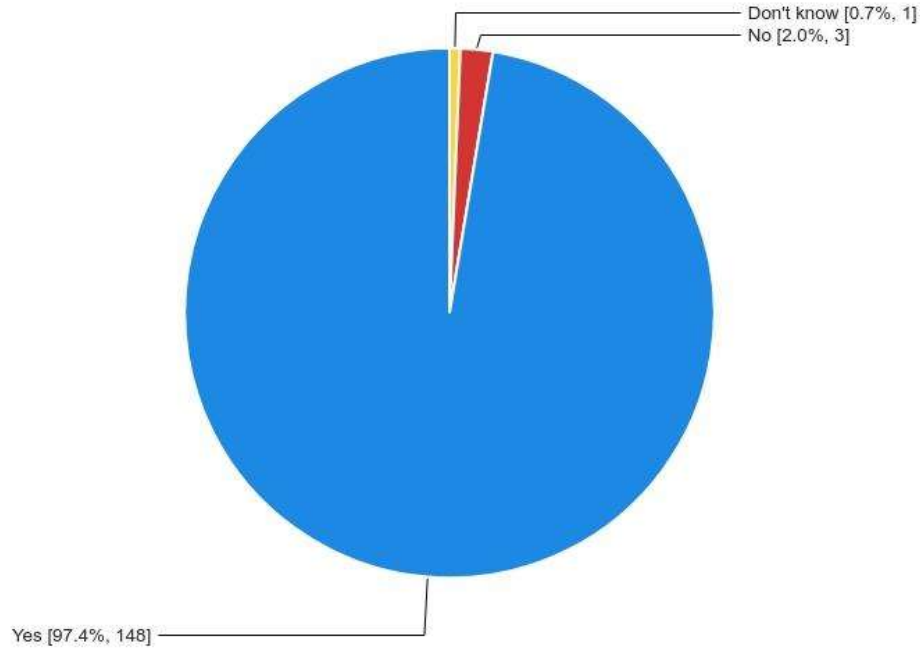
Observations:

- 92.6% of respondents are somewhat or very satisfied with the library overall.
- No respondent expressed extreme dissatisfaction.

Majority of Respondents Have Library Cards

Responses to the question, “Do you have a library card?”

152 Responses



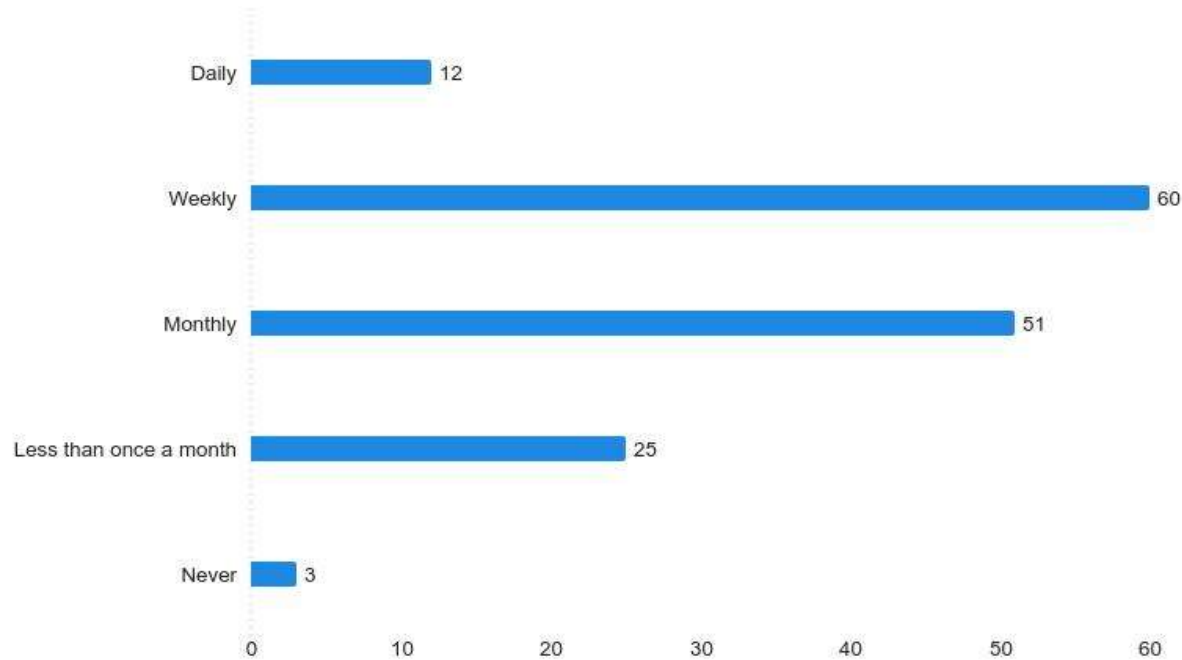
Observations:

- Note that over 97% of those who responded hold library cards. This means that survey data skews toward responses from those who already use the library.
- One should not assume that the responses presented here are representative of the broader community. More research is needed to uncover the views of those who do not currently use the library.

Most Respondents Visit Weekly

Responses to the question, “How often do you visit the library, check out materials, use its online resources, or attend library events?”

151 Responses



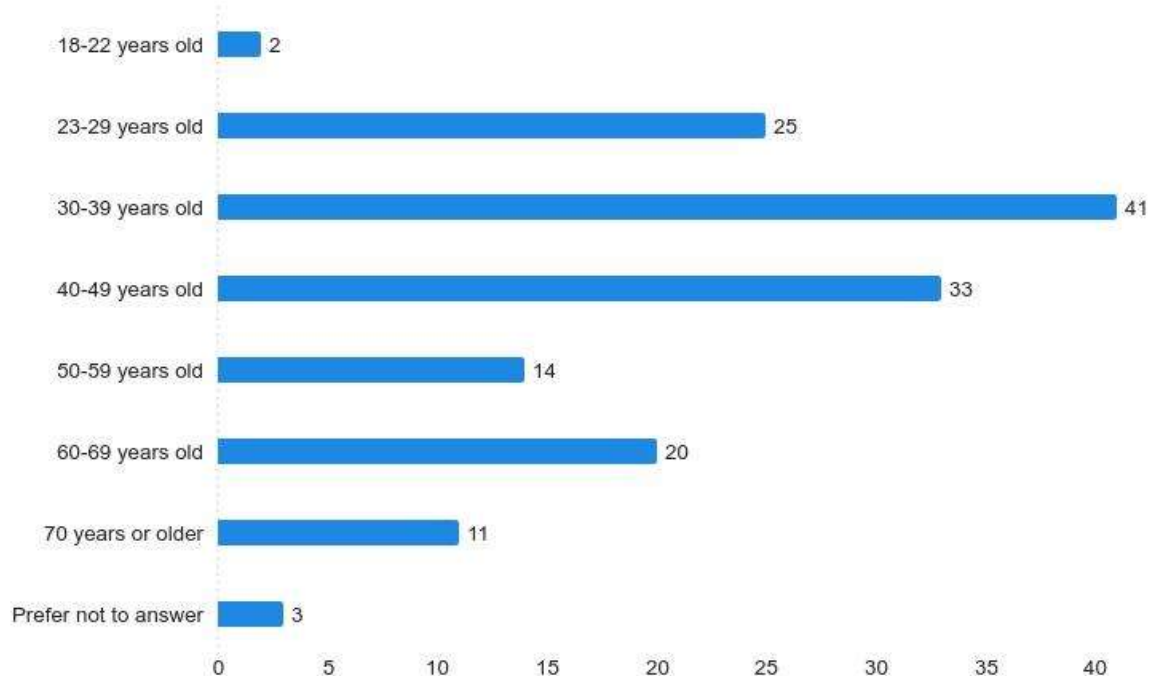
Observation:

- The perspectives of less-regular or seasonal visitors may be underrepresented in these findings.

Respondents Are A Variety of Ages

Responses to the question, "What is your age?"

149 Responses



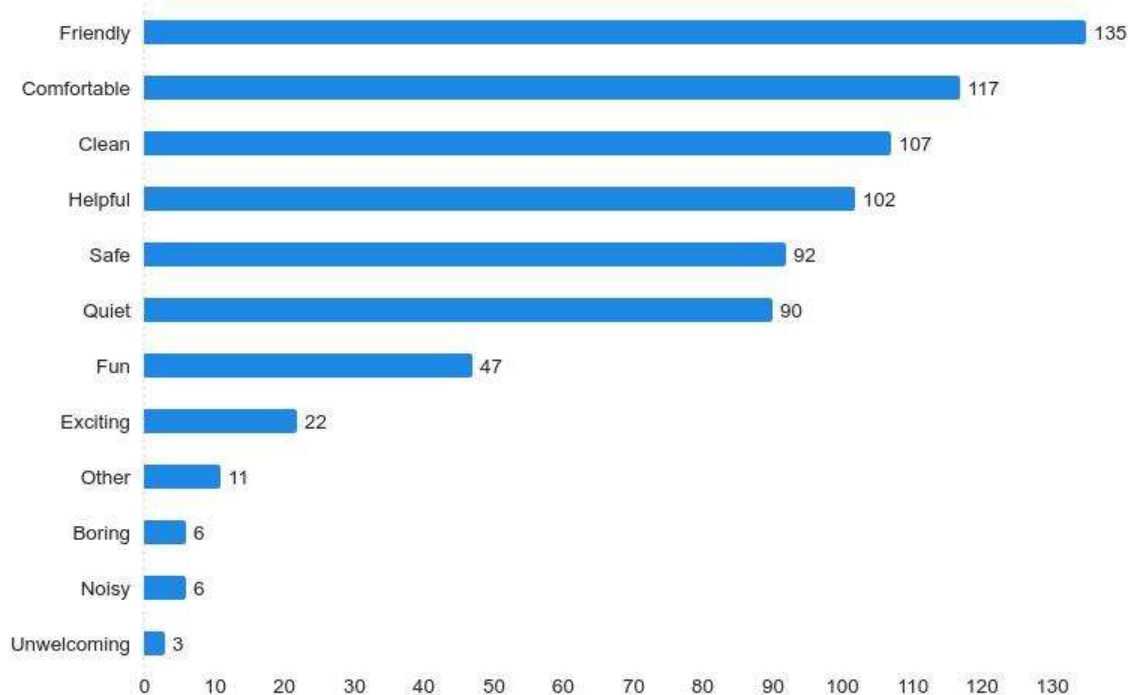
Observation:

- The survey was only to be taken by those 18 years of age or older.

Friendly and Comfortable Atmosphere

Responses to the prompt, “Check all that describe the library’s atmosphere.”

149 Responses



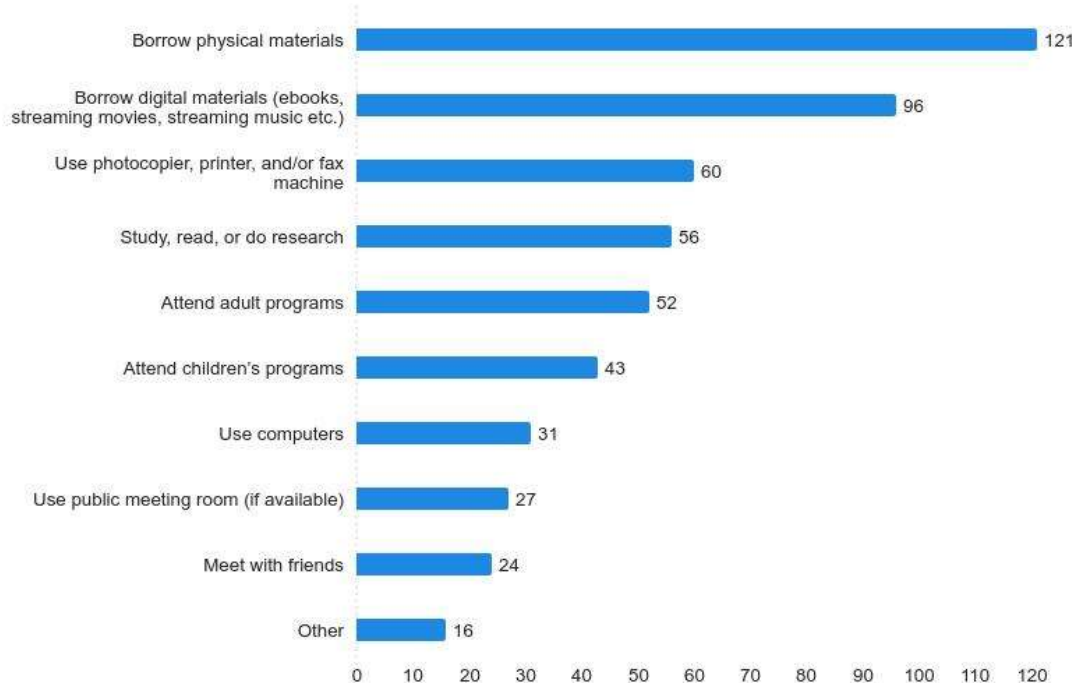
Eleven people marked “Other,” adding these comments:

- “Great for little kids. We gave the librarians some feedback about the placement of some items and they listened!”
- “Love the seed library, tool rental, makerspace areas and classes”
- “Confusing”
- “Knowledgeable and welcoming staff”
- “Noisy at night”
- “I usually check out my DVD's and leave”
- “[V]ery good stuff”
- “Great kids section”
- “[K]ind, warm”
- “[V]aried & interesting”
- “[S]afe space”

Borrowing Physical and Digital Materials Top Library Use

Responses to the question, “What do you, or would you like to, use the library for?”

147 Responses



Sixteen people marked “Other,” adding these comments:

- “Video games”
- Programs they offer”
- “Use the creative arts materials”
- “Use the maker space”
- “Borrow tools and use sewing machine, etc.”
- “3D Printer, [C]ricket machine”
- “Work”
- “Maker's space”
- “[M]aybe have an ASL group”
- “3d printer room”
- “3D Printer!”
- “Joined the Lit Wits book club”
- “[T]o relax and read”
- “[C]reative tech, Library of Things, media conversion”
- “[V]isit with my favorite librarians”

Additional notes in margins of paper surveys:

- “If they don't have the DVD I want, it only takes a few days to get it”
- “No TV/movie content of interest”

Very Good Marks for the Quality of the Physical Collection

Responses to, “On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how do you rate the quality of the following library services: Physical library collections (books, movies, video games, etc.).”

4.2

Average Score Out of 5

	1 = poor	2 = fair	3 = good	4 = very good	5 = excellent
Percent	0.0%	2.1%	19.4%	34.7%	43.8%
Number Count (out of 144)	0	3	27	59	63

Observations:

- 78.5% of respondents described the quality of the physical collection as “very good” or “excellent.”
- 97.9% of respondents described the collection as “good” or above.
- In future research, consider learning more about how patrons’ collection satisfaction could be improved.

Digital Collection Quality Mirrors That of Physical Collection

Collection Responses to, “On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how do you rate the quality of the following library services: Digital library collections (eBooks, streaming video, streaming music, etc.)”

4.2

Average Score Out of 5

	1 = poor	2 = fair	3 = good	4 = very good	5 = excellent
Percent	1.5%	0.0%	15.9%	37.9%	44.7%
Number Count (out of 132)	2	0	21	50	59

Observations:

- 82.6% gave scores of 4 or 5 to the digital collections, whereas 78.5% gave physical collections a score of 4 or 5. It is unusual for a library’s digital collection to get higher scores than the physical collection! For future research, consider asking more questions about digital materials preferences, needs, use, and barriers to adoption.

Technology is Rated as Very Good

Responses to, “On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how do you rate the quality of the following library services: Technology (computers, printers, scan, and fax).”

4.1

Average Score Out of 5

	1 = poor	2 = fair	3 = good	4 = very good	5 = excellent
Percent	1.7%	3.4%	23.5%	30.3%	41.2%
Number Count (out of 119)	2	4	28	36	49

Observations:

- 71.5% of respondents gave scores of 4 or 5 to technology. It is notable that nearly 1 in 4 respondents rated technology “good.” In further surveys or patron conversations, it may be useful to further delve into how scores could be improved and satisfaction raised.

Library Programs and Events Rated as Very Good

Responses to, “On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how do you rate the quality of the following library services: Library events & programs.”

4.1

Average Score Out of 5

	1 = poor	2 = fair	3 = good	4 = very good	5 = excellent
Percent	0.8%	5.0%	24.0%	28.1%	42.1%
Number Count (out of 121)	1	6	29	34	51

Observations:

- 70.2% of respondents gave scores of 4 or 5 to library programs and events, with nearly 30% rating programs as “good” or lower.
- In future research or conversations with patrons, it may be useful to gather more information about perceived programming needs, availability, hours, and topics.

Staff's Customer Service is Outstanding

Responses to, "On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how do you rate the quality of the following library services: Staff's customer service."

4.7

Average Score Out of 5

	1 = poor	2 = fair	3 = good	4 = very good	5 = excellent
Percent	2.1%	2.1%	2.1%	15.8%	78.1%
Number Count (out of 146)	3	3	3	23	114

Observations:

- Nearly 80% of respondents scored customer service as "excellent." this is the library's highest category. Congratulations to the staff for its superb connections with customers and to the library administration for its ongoing training and support.

Strong Trust in Staff’s Selection of Materials

Responses to, “On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how do you rate the quality of the following library services: Staff’s ability to select materials to include in the library collection.”

4.4

Average Score Out of 5

	1 = poor	2 = fair	3 = good	4 = very good	5 = excellent
Percent	1.6%	1.6%	11.8%	24.4%	60.6%
Number Count (out of 127)	2	2	15	31	77

Observations:

- At a time when library collections have been criticized at a national level, an average score of 4.4 is a sign that the library’s collection decision-making correlates strongly with community wants and needs.
- 85% of respondents reported that the staff’s ability to select materials was “very good” or “excellent.”

Building Facility and Maintenance Are Excellent

Responses to, “On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how do you rate the quality of the following library services: Building facility and maintenance.”

4.6

Average Score Out of 5

	1 = poor	2 = fair	3 = good	4 = very good	5 = excellent
Percent	0.7%	2.2%	7.2%	15.2%	74.6%
Number Count (out of 138)	1	3	10	21	103

Observations:

- 89.8% of respondents rated the building facility and its maintenance as “very good” or “excellent.” This is the library’s second-highest rating. Congratulations to the facilities staff!

Part II: Qualitative Analysis

Goals of Open-Ended Questions

The survey asked four open-ended questions (see Appendix A). The first two open-ended questions focused on community needs and desires:

- Complete the sentence: The biggest challenge my community is facing right now is...
- Complete the sentence: One thing that would make my community an even more amazing place to live would be...

These questions, while not specifically focused on the library, were designed to elicit responses to help the library inform its collections, services, and programs. The responses in the following pages should not be seen as a library's to-do list; the library leadership and board may find that some articulated needs are outside the scope, mission, budget, or capability of the institution. However, there may be some community wishes or needs that can be addressed, at least in part, by making changes to library collections, services, or programs.

The second pair of questions did focus directly on libraries:

- What is the best thing about your community's library?
- If you could change one thing about your community's library, what would it be?

These questions were intended to surface the everyday positives that occur in Michigan's libraries. Positive responses can be excerpted in social media posts, shared with staff and board at meetings to boost morale, and as an acknowledgement of the overall good work of the institution. The final question gives patrons a chance to suggest a change that would improve the library for them.

Major themes are shared, with accompanying quotes, in the pages that follow. Space precludes us from listing every response in this report; thus, a complete set of all open-ended responses can be found in the full spreadsheet linked at the end of this document.

Community Challenges: Major Themes

The survey received 90 responses to, “Complete the sentence: The biggest challenge my community is facing right now is...” The top 2 themes are listed below, with representative quotes added below.

Theme #1: Economic Strain (16 responses)

- “Lack of funds”
- “Personal economic challenges?”
- “Making ends meet financially.”
- “Maintaining households with all the inflation”
- “Inflation”
- “[F]inancial difficulties/unemployment”
- “[I]solation compounded by the rising cost of living”
- “Money”
- “Poverty”
- “[B]usinesses closing”

Theme #2: Comments Regarding Local Government (10 responses)

- “Stretching their budget”
- “Taxes!”
- “Communication between gov and residents, community amongst residents”
- “Our community has a lot to offer, but it seems like there isn’t great communication on any of it.”
- “[N]ot many services on the South-end”
- “[C]ost of running the city”
- “[O]ur outrageous tax rate”

Wishes for the Community: Major Themes

The survey received 83 responses to, “Complete the sentence: One thing that would make my community an even more amazing place to live would be ... ” The top 2 themes are listed below, with representative quotes added below.

Theme #1: People are Looking for Things to Do (20 responses)

- “More activities that didn’t involve drinking for adults.”
- “Improved recreation options”
- “Fun events & programs”
- “More activities for families to take part in”
- “More adult education programs.”
- “[A]ctivities like at the active (older) adult center that are open to younger adults.”
- “A better downtown and more events to attend locally.”
- “More free activities for little ones”
- “Events to bring everyone together”
- “More kid friendly activities like, I would love to have a story time or kids club where they do a craft and read a book.”
- “More community events”
- “[A]ctivities for 20-30 somethings”
- “[M]ore live concerts I like they used to have before covid”

Theme #2: Desire for Gathering Spaces (13 responses)

- “More parks and recreation”
- “More walkability/public transportation/public common spaces, and inviting walking-accessible shop/dine/entertainment.”
- “A community center for all ages”
- “Community gardens. Share with the neighbors”
- “To have outdoor gathering places for adults”
- “A recreation center for kid’s and adult programs and sports”
- “A youth center for kids”
- “More ways to meet one another”
- “More outdoor parks/activities (ex: pickleball courts)”

Library Appreciation: Major Themes

The survey received 106 responses to, “What is the best thing about your community’s library?” The top 5 themes are listed below, with representative quotes added below.

Theme #1: Love for Library Staff (43 responses)

- “The staff is warm and kind. Books are great.”
- “The people. They are very nice and helpful”
- “The kind and efficient staff.”
- “The amazing people who work there.”
- “Friendliness of staff and their knowledge base.”
- “Continuing to update to meet the current community needs, as well as the friendly helpful staff.”
- “Both the relaxing atmosphere and the helpfulness of staff in finding what you need.”

Theme #2: Appreciation for New Facilities (39 responses)

- “There are lots of places to sit to read. The staff is very friendly. I love the remodeled library and remodeled children’s section.”
- “The new renovation was great”
- “The new area for kids”
- “Friendly, comfortable, welcoming, nice collection and great internet network with other libraries”

Theme #3: Strong Collection (30 responses)

- “I like the maker’s space, but I constantly have digital books checked out.”
- “Downloadable for Kindle books”
- “I love their online selection”
- “It is full of materials and resources for everyone to use.”
- “I appreciate being able to watch old TV and movies for free. The librarians have always been nice and helpful.”

Theme #4: Library Programs Keep People Coming (18 responses)

- “Children’s programs, activities”
- “I haven’t used it much since recently moving here but I love the seed library. This is such a great idea for the community”
- “The fun programs they offer”

Theme #5: Convenience and Access (12 responses)

- “Availability”
- “Accessibility”
- “It’s easy to use”

Desired Library Change: Major Themes

The survey received 106 responses to, “If you could change one thing about your community’s library, what would it be?” The top 5 themes are listed below, with representative quotes added below.

Theme #1: Increase Library Programming (29 responses)

- “More children events”
- “More programs”
- “More adult activities”
- “More activities. More participation in book club and book club starting later. More authors coming to the library.”
- “Add video games to check out. Also more programs/events geared to teenagers and programs/events geared towards younger adults”
- “Better variety of programs. Nothing for someone my age.”
- “More actives, programs, and books for kids 13 and up.”

Theme #2: Collections Suggestions (28 responses)

- “More ebook and Kindle book choices.”
- “That there aren’t enough newer physical books”
- “Increase in book availability so I don’t have to wait as long for copies”
- “A wider variety of contemporary romance novels.”
- “Add vinyl records. I go to Royal Oak to check out music.”

Theme #3: Changes to Library Facilities (26 responses)

- “Larger study rooms”
- “More community space”
- “More comfy places to sit and more art”
- “Make it even bigger!”
- “Larger? Have another branch within appealing/safe/attractive walking distance?”

Theme #4: Don’t Change a Thing! (11 responses)

11 respondents indicated that they would not change anything or do not know what they would change about how the library currently operates.

Theme #5: Updates to Library Technology (8 responses)

- “More computers”
- “Have a computer lab and have video game borrowing.”
- “More events, more technology, and a lending library for equipment”
- “[M]ake printing easier”

Quotables

Survey responses that might be useful to include in social media posts, newsletters, board reports, grant proposals, or other library documentation

- “It’s clean, quiet, and the kids area is closed off so I feel safe letting my kindergartner play and be independent in there”
- “The staff are amazing. Friendly and always willing to help.”
- “There’s something for everyone”
- “So convenient! Excellent parking, hours of operation, buy books that I suggest, etc. (Much better than Clawson and Royal Oak libraries which I sometimes use)”
- “It’s a nice quiet place to browse and enjoy books”
- “They are willing to meet everyone where they are at. Every time I’m there they are helping people find answers or access a necessary service.”
- “It’s clean, the staff is friendly and helpful, there are great resources there and while I have not necessarily had a need for these resources yet, I am happy they’re available to the community. I also love the maker space opportunities there”
- “[I]t’s a library! it’s existence is the best thing!!”
- “It’s a safe, fun place for my toddler to grow and learn.”
- “The resources are great, but the absolute best thing about my library is the staff. They are priceless! 😊”
- “We just came in for the 1st time & it was an amazing experience for both me and my son.”

Limitations of Study

This study describes some useful patterns and themes that can help the library celebrate its strengths and accomplishments while providing a fresh opportunity to calibrate its programs and collections to current community wants and needs.

All studies have limitations, and professional research acknowledges those limitations. That is, no single survey can answer every question about libraries. In this case, the response rate was low relative to the overall service population of the library and consisted almost completely of feedback from existing library patrons. Perspectives of seasonal residents or non-users might surface different and/or distinct results.

Possible Next Steps

The library may find it useful to gain deeper community insight via 1:1 interviews. The University of Michigan School of Information may be able to help as part of its students' class-based real-world community needs practice. Learn more at <https://www.si.umich.edu/employers/client-opportunities> or email umsi.client.engagement@umich.edu.

Appendix A: Survey Questions as Formatted for Print Survey

This survey - for adults over age 18 only - is being conducted to help your public library make better-informed decisions. Participation in this survey is voluntary. You may skip questions you do not feel comfortable answering. Return your survey to your library or mail to K. Fontichiaro, U-M School of Information, 4427 North Quad, 105 S. State St., Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1285. Questions: nextlevelleadership@umich.edu.

What library (system) do you most often use?

Some libraries have more than one location (branch). If this is the case, which branch do you visit most regularly?

How often do you visit the library, check out materials, use its online resources, or attend library events? *(Please cross one)*

- Daily
 Weekly
 Monthly
 Less than once a month
 Never

Do you have a library card? *(Please cross one)*

- Yes
 No
 Don't know

What is your age? *(Please cross one)*

- 18-22 years old
 23-29 years old
 30-39 years old
 40-49 years old
 50-59 years old
 60-69 years old
 70 years or older
 Prefer not to answer

On a scale of 1 (not at all satisfied) to 5 (very satisfied), how satisfied are you with the library overall? *(Please cross one)*

- 1
 2
 3
 4
 5

Check all that describe the library's atmosphere. *(Please cross all that apply)*

- Friendly
 Noisy
 Safe
 Comfortable
 Unwelcoming
 Fun
 Helpful
 Quiet
 Boring
 Exciting
 Clean
 Other

What do you, or would you like to, use the library for? *(Please cross all that apply)*

- Borrow physical materials
 Borrow digital materials (ebooks, streaming movies, streaming music etc.)
 Use public meeting room (if available)
 Meet with friends
 Study, read, or do research
 Use computers
 Attend adult programs
 Attend children's programs
 Use photocopier, printer, and/or fax machine
 None of the above

Other

On a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), how do you rate the quality of the following library services?

	1 (poor)	2	3	4	5 (excellent)
Physical library collections (books, movies, video games, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital library collections (eBooks, streaming video, streaming music, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Technology (computers, printers, scan, & fax)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Library events & programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff's customer service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff's ability to select materials to include in the library collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Building facility and maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Complete the sentence: The biggest challenge my community is facing right now is...

Complete the sentence: One thing that would make my community an even more amazing place to live would be...

What is the best thing about your community's library?

If you could change one thing about your community's library, what would it be?



To respond or



To respond or



Appendix B: Original Dataset Is [Available Online](#)