Community Needs Assessment and Visioning for a 21ˢᵗ Century Public Library

Takoma Park Public Library
City of Takoma Park, MD

January 23, 2014

Prepared by

Laura J. Isenstein, Principal

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The City of Takoma Park, Maryland engaged Providence Associates to provide a library needs assessment process, community survey and follow-up report focused on future needs for the Takoma Park Maryland Public Library (TPPL). Laura Isenstein, Principal of Providence served as the consultant and handled all onsite and off-site activities associated with the project.

From November 14 through 16, 2014 Ms. Isenstein facilitated a series of seven "community conversations" at the Takoma Park Maryland Community Center. Of these seven sessions, one was comprised of Library staff (13 staff) ; another was comprised of City department heads and the City Manager (9), another included the Mayor and representative City Council Members (5); and the remainder included 35 city residents who were library users and representative of the demographics of Takoma Park. The conversations identified the perceived current strengths and challenges of TPPL as well as city and library priorities for the future.

To insure broader participation by all residents of the City of Takoma Park a survey was made available online and in hard copy format from TPPL. The survey consisted of nine (9) questions asking respondents to indicate frequency of use, services currently used, strengths, areas for improvement and roles for TPPL; along with information as to gender, age, and length of residence in the City of Takoma Park. For each non-demographic related question respondents were given the opportunity to provide additional comments. A total of 252 residents completed the survey and 212 of those provided open-ended comments.

The complete summary of the "community conversations" and the survey analysis are presented in the appendices in this document.

What follows are the consultant's summary of all survey, stakeholder and community input; a summary of best practices of 21st century public libraries, and recommendations for the City of Takoma Park and TPPL to support the provision of relevant and meaningful services and functional spaces for its diverse population.

SUMMARY OF CITY OF TAKOMA PARK SURVEY REPONDENTS AND COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

Frequency of Library Use

71% of survey respondents use TPPL at least monthly with 52% of those using it several times a month.

Gender, Age and Length of residence in Takoma Park

The vast majority of survey respondents were female (76%) and the remaining were male (24%). This is somewhat typical of gender responses to surveys of this type. The consultant usually sees a breakdown closer to 70/30.

The majority of survey respondents fell into the 31 to 60 age group categories with 36% being 31 to 44 of age and 43% being 45 to 60 years of age. Respondents who were 61 years of age and over accounted for 18% of respondents

Of total survey respondents, 20% have resided in Takoma Park less than 5 years, 20% from 5 to 10 years; 31% from 11 to 20 years and 29% more than 20 years.

Participants of the community conversations (by observation) fell primarily into the 31 to 60 age range, with a few more representing the 61 to 75 age range than occurred in the survey.

Key Roles of the Takoma Park Public Library as identified by survey respondents
- Lifelong learning = 87%
- Support early childhood literacy = 84%
- Place for community engagement, enrichment and discourse = 77%
- Place for families = 74%
- Source of community pride = 71%
- Enhance information and technology literacy = 60%

Library roles identified by attendees of the Community Conversations were:
- City center for lifelong learning, exchange of ideas, and personal enrichment for all ages
- Public service that is essential and valued
- Gathering place for youth, families and adults
- Place to access information in a variety of formats via means (in-person and digital) that are appropriate to changing times and those who live and work in the City of Takoma Park Maryland

TPPL Services Used

The top ten TPPL services used by survey respondents were:
- Borrowing books including books on CD = 94%
- Reading magazines and newspapers in the library = 31%
- Attending library programs for   = 27%
- Requesting assistance from librarians = 24%
- Using the Library's Wi-Fi = 19%
- Participating In Summer Reading Program = 18%

TPPL Services Used continued

- Bringing personal laptop or tablet to use in the library = 17%
- Attending or taking my child to pre-school programs = 17%
- Borrowing music on CD = 15%
- Attending programs for adults   = 15%

Strengths of the Takoma Park Public Library

The following strengths were identified by over 50% of survey respondents

- Approachable and helpful staff = 84%
- Collections = 67%
- Hours of service = 52%

The next set of library strengths resulted from the community conversations and open-ended comments made by survey respondents. These strengths confirm and expand upon those indicated by survey respondents

Library as the Heart of the Community
- Community hub
- Convenient location for city residents
  - Location of library is central for two-thirds of the city's residents
  - Within walking distance for many
  - Proximity of public schools
- Library engages the community and brings people together
- Hours – open 7 days a week
- Local and tailored to City of Takoma Park; not part of a large government bureaucracy

Library Staff
- Approachable and responsive
- Know users by name
- Helpful

Adult Services
- Collection of books and periodicals
- Creative adult programs, e.g. MOOC weekly discussion groups, Friends of the Library book clubs and discussion groups
- Public computing services

Children's Services
- Children's staff is very approachable and helpful
- Welcoming to children and "tweens" after school and to children who are not accompanied by a parent
- Place for children to be and go after school, safe and secure
- Place for children to study
- Excellent children's programs
  - Summer reading program
  - Family programs
  - Preschool programs

Community Indentified Improvements at the Takoma Park Library

Survey respondents were asked to rank needed improvements for TPPL for the next five years from a pre-selected list as Very Important - 5, Important - 4, Somewhat Important - 3, Not Important - 2, or Don't Know – 1). The improvements ranging from somewhat to very important were:

- More books (4.09)
- More digital resources (3.4)
- Book discussion groups/clubs (3.4)
- More space for existing materials (3.2)
- More audio-books (3.2)
- More family programs (3.1)
- More places to sit (3.1)

Hours
- TPPL needs to be open to the public in the mornings, Monday through Friday
- Computer center needs to open to the public in the mornings

Staff
- **Improve customer service attitude and actions of Library Staff**
  - Front desk staff need to be more welcoming and friendly; they are often impatient and unfriendly especially with children
  - Some library staff are not friendly making users feel unwelcome
  - Some staff are rude and grouchy
  - Staff are not proactive in assisting library users; users have to approach desk for assistance
  - Staff composition does not reflect the demographic diversity of Takoma Park residents
  - Staff need to speak Spanish in addition to French to be able to welcome and assist immigrant residents of Takoma Park

Adult Services
- Need more culturally diverse programming reflecting changing demographics of the city and tied to national events such as Black History Month, Native Americans Month, Women's History Month, Hispanic History Month, Ramadan, etc.
- More programs featuring authors and experts in topics of current interest
- Offer non-fiction reading clubs and book discussions
- Offer study circles in collaboration with other area organizations on current topics, e.g. racism, immigration reform, climate change, computer security, today's economy, and more
- Promote the availability of Interlibrary Loan (ILL) services from the Library and proactively offer ILL when materials wanted are not available in TPPL's collection
- In collaboration with local university and community college offer access to technologies and programs fostering innovation and problem solving at the Library
- Engage in outreach to the city's immigrant and lower income communities of Takoma Park making them aware of the library's services and resources that support their needs for information, functioning in a new country, technology access, etc.

Community Indentified Improvements at the Takoma Park Library continued

Adult Services Continued
- Offer programs that appeal to and attract city residents who are in their mid-20s to early 30s

Library Collections
- Increase the amount of newer materials and get rid of materials that are old and dated
  - Weed through and update non-fiction sections of the library as these areas appear neglected
  - Weed out old books when new are added, e.g. a 2 for 1 swap and weed materials that have not circulated within a specified time period in order to reduce the amount of shelving and free up space for other customer uses
- Expand TPPL's print and digital collections and resources
- Offer downloadable e-books
- Alphabetize the audio collections and separate out children's and young adult CD's placing them with their respective collections
- Purchase popular DVDs movies and TV shows
- Purchase more materials in the languages of new immigrants residents, more languages than just Spanish
- Provide more retail-like access and merchandising of print and non-print materials, e.g. subject displays, electronic displays such as "power-walls" (electronic panels) featuring books

Children's Services
- Create a more inviting Children's area with more comfortable seating rather than just tables with chairs
- Zone the Children's area so there are dedicated spaces and collections serving very young children ages 0 through 5, young school ages 6 through 9, and tweens ages 10 through 12
- Upgrade and increase the number of children's audio-books
- Add a young children's (ages 0 to 5) component to the summer reading program and make the "rules" less complicated and more child and family friendly
- Provide a "quiet" area in the children's space for those children who want to study
- Provide more access to digital resources in the children's area, e.g. computers with access to programs and apps that support literacy development, math skills, science aimed at children's supporting children learning for the 21st century
- Provide self-check of materials in the children's area

Teen Services
- Make the library a welcoming place for all teens in Takoma Park by creating a dedicated teen area with comfortable seating, books and resources of interest to this age group
- Engage teens through development and use of Smartphone apps that engage them in discussion of books, manga and anime
- Offer more relevant teen programming
- Collaborate with community agencies and designate library space for tutoring at risk teens

Community Indentified Improvements at the Takoma Park Library continued

Technology

- Library's current Integrated Library System (catalog, circulation, reserve and renewal of materials, fine payment, etc.)
  – Library catalog is difficult to use
  – Self-checkout of materials is not possible
  – Unable to reserve or renew library materials online
  – Unable to access user account from home
  – Unable to pay fines online or in-person with credit cards

- Library website
  – Difficult to use
  – Redesign website to be more user-friendly
  – Current library blogs needs to be kept current and be interactive
  – Need to improve the Library's web presence throughout the city

- Digital Content and Training
  – In addition to "consumption" of digital content, TPPL needs to provide opportunities for users of all ages to "create" content by providing and training on technology equipment and software enabling creative projects, i.e., multi-media, personal histories, photo editing, "everyone a producer..." as much as possible
  – Expand the library/computer center for small groups of people to be able to work/study collaboratively where talking is allowed
  – Incorporate and make visible access to computers and technologies within the library space, not just the computer center rooms
  – Increase the number of computers available for use by the public to better bridge the digital divide between those who have and those who don't

Library Spaces and Facility
- Increase accessibility and visibility of the Library
- Library is not that pleasant a space - it feels cramped and noisy; it currently feels a little old, worn, and musty
- Library bathrooms are not very nice
- Expand library space and modernize feel and look; update to be more welcoming
- Library space for public and staff needs a comprehensive redesign, new furnishing, fixtures, etc.; a total rethink of how the space is allocated and arranged -- not a piecemeal approach.
- Expand areas for people to sit comfortably and use their Wi-Fi devices and internet connections
- More seating and spaces to socialize
- More comfortable furnishings
- More natural light in the building and access to fresh air
- Furnishings and shelving on wheels, that can be easily shifted to make room for programs

Community Indentified Improvements at the Takoma Park Library continued

Library Spaces and Facility continued
- Create a better interface between the library and Community Center for promotion of each other's programs

Community's Priorities for TPPL

Functional Spaces
- More space for collections
- Provide adequate space for children including a dedicated children's programming space
- More study space
- Create a Library "commons" space for technology access and study
- Utilize the outdoor space at the library entrance
- Provide a dedicated space for teens

Technology
- Keep up with changing technologies
- Revisit current Integrated Library System (ILS) for more user-friendly and robust functionality supporting increased self-service opportunities, e.g. self-checkout, placing reserves remotely, being able to see covers and Table of Contents of books.
- Provide a public use scanner - most are now incorporated into photocopiers
- More efficient materials handling for staff

Outreach to Immigrant and Lower Income Residents
- Engage in outreach and service delivery to immigrant communities on the fringes within Takoma Park city limits
- Consider "little libraries" and library materials vending in apartment building in Takoma Park's immigrant communities using materials donated to Friends
- Promote library services through agencies and churches serving the immigrant communities
- Promote and enhance library services supporting workforce development and those seeking employment, re-employment by identifying area partners and determining what appropriate services the Library can provide that other agencies cannot

Visibility and Ambiance
- Create a more open, light and inviting library
- Incorporate and make better use of the community center atrium as library space

BEST PRACTICES OF 21ST CENTURY PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The vast majority of Takoma Park residents' noted areas for improvement are reflective of what constitutes "best practices" in today's 21st century public libraries. The primary role of today's public library, large and small, is to serve as *the* place for community gathering, community engagement, and information and technology access for all ages.

- **Community Gathering and Engagement**
  Community gathering and engagement requires spaces for small, medium and large group events and activities, e.g. author/speaker programs, intimate poetry readings and reader's theatre, collaborative study and group discussion spaces for up to 10 persons, business incubator and content creation spaces (maker spaces) for up to 12 persons plus equipment and supplies, classes in using technology hardware and software, children's programming from pre-school story times to large group edutainment to quiet study spaces and so forth.

- **Outreach to Immigrant Communities**
  The vast majority of cities large and small have experienced significant increases in immigrant populations coming to the U.S. seeking a better life for their children and themselves. Many of these new arrivals are not familiar with "public libraries" as they were not a common resource in their native countries. Therefore, public libraries must work diligently to reach out to and engage these residents and families where they live, recreate and worship to make them aware of the resources and services that support and enhance their acclimation to life in a new country and community.

- **21st Century Collections**
  Library collections continue to change with a focus on adult popular fiction; a non-fiction focus on do-it-yourself, health information, current topics, popular history, biography and reliance on Interlibrary Loan services for more specialize research and topics. Print on paper non-fiction collections in public libraries are shrinking by 25 to 50+ percent with people's preferred access to information found in online databases and other vetted e-content available via the Internet/World Wide Web.

  While the print-on-paper publishing world is thriving, access to digital or eBooks is increasing with more titles available in this format for all ages and quality eReader (devices) being affordable along with today's tablets serving as e-readers as well. There is a demand nationally and among Takoma Park residents for eBooks and more digital content.

- **Computer Access and Technology**
  Library consultants' experience has shown that when people are asked where they people go first to learn or find out about something of interest or "need to know," the majority of adults and young adults reply, "the Internet."This is why in the vast majority of U. S. public libraries provide ample access to computers connected to the Internet and loaded with software such as Microsoft Office suite, resume writing software, educational games, Adobe Acrobat and Photoshop to name a few. Computer access in the public library supports the need to
  - learn, formally and informally;
  - develop and strengthen job related skills and apply for jobs online;

- create and refine content; and
- communicate with family and friends who live beyond the city limits.

The beauty of 21st century technologies, that are constantly changing, is that they are used 24/7 by residents of all ages to access library resources and content using smart phones and other personal digital devices such as tablets. These devices are affordable and widespread among all demographic and socio-economic groups. Today's integrated library systems (circulation, reserve and renewal, personal account access, online payment of fines and fees) make this remote access seamless and convenient with the inclusion of mobile apps that can be easily uploaded to Android and Apple devices.

- **Library Spaces**
Library spaces are increasing in size to accommodate the "community" engagement role of the public library. Less space will continue to be allocated to collections on shelves and more space will be dedicated to supporting the community's learning, discussing, presenting, and creating needs. The spaces, furnishings, shelving and equipment in today's public libraries need to have the utmost flexibility in order to be relocated and re-purposed in response to the more frequent changes in how people engage and interact with one another and how they access information.

- **Children's Services**
Today's schools districts are starting to adopt the national Common Core Standards that focus on developing our youth's critical thinking and problem solving skills, collaborative project work and technological access to information to prepare them for our nation's 21st century workforce. Science, Technology Engineering, Arts, and Math (STEAM) learning and activities are also a focus in developing a 21st century workforce. Public libraries are just beginning to refocus youth collections and programming to support discovery and development of these skill sets and interests.

For a description of the elements of 21st century library public libraries please see p. 39 of this report.

CONSULTANT RECOMMENDATIONS (in Priority Order)

The Takoma Park Maryland Public Library is beloved, valued and well-used by residents by city residents of all ages. The library facility is worn and appears dated in comparison to public libraries throughout the greater metropolitan area. The last time any physical renovation and enhancements were completed at TPPL was 1990. That is more than 23 years ago and much of the public library world, services, functions and space needs have changed dramatically since then.

Throughout Montgomery County Maryland public library facilities and services continue to undergo transformation in order to delivery 21st century library service. At least five new buildings have been constructed or are now under construction in Silver Spring, Olney, Wheaton, Gaithersburg, and Rockville. The District of Columbia Public Library system has in the last several years renovated and/or replaced 14 of its branch libraries and is now constructing new libraries at West End, Woodbridge and Northeast in order to provide 21st century services to all DC residents.

While residents of Takoma Park Maryland have access to, are able to, and do use the services and resources of the County and DC public libraries, they have strongly indicated throughout this needs assessment and visioning project the importance and expectation that the City of Takoma Park Maryland to continue to support and invest in their local library and its transformation as a 21st century resource.

Providence Associates makes the following recommendations based on what is needed from TPPL and the City of Takoma Park Maryland to support the roles and priority service improvements highlighted by the city's taxpayers and residents in survey responses and the community conversations.

1. **Identify, specify and issue a detailed Request for Proposal to procure a new Integrated Library System (ILS)**
   To be installed and fully operational no later than the end of FY 2016

   Key Criteria for new ILS
   - Real time system with built redundancy
   - Provides an intuitive user-friendly experience for all ages
   - ILS Modules that are web-based and support
     - catalog including icons of material covers
     - catalog search by author, title, subject, material format, and combinations of these search fields
     - catalog where minor "typos" are accommodated by alternative related term or work suggestions
     - self-checkout of library materials based on ISBN, RFID, or bar code with a fast processing time
     - automated check-in of returned materials
     - automated materials handling system
     - online reserve and renewals of library materials
     - account look-up and review by customer
     - online payment of fines and fees by credit/debit card

Key Criteria for the new ILS continued

- Vendor offers "Service as System" (SAS) option in which they provide off site housing, management and maintenance of servers and the system including automated upload of catalog records thus placing the responsibility and time intensive task with the vendor instead of the Library or the City's IT department.

National ILS vendors with proven track records supporting small public libraries are:
- Polaris Library Systems www.polarislibrary.com/
- TLC (The Library Corporation) www.tlcdelivers.com/

While there are other smaller companies offering ILS services to small libraries, the two cited above have been addressing successfully the needs of public libraries of all sizes in the national market place for many years.

It is worth the City's investment to engage an expert public library technology consultant to assist with this process from developing a Request for Proposal specifying functionality, equipment and performance requirements through the review of proposals received through the negotiation of contractual agreements.

Caution!
Providence Associates strongly recommends that City of Takoma Park avoids "open source" library automation software (Evergreen, Koha, etc.) as they all require considerable labor intensive onsite computer programming expertise not only to maintain the system, but also to develop code for the service modules that are identified above.

2. **Continue to aggressively weed the existing collections (adult, young adult and children's) of materials that have not circulated at least three times a year.**
<mark>Complete by end of FY 2015</mark>
As the vast majority of public libraries, large and small, have finite space. For at least the past decade, libraries can no longer afford to maintain a collection of items sitting on shelves "just in case" someone may want them. In addition, the Collection also needs to be weeded (cleaned up) in preparation for the new ILS system. Many libraries assess their collection usage and expenditures using tools such as Collection Turnover Rates and Holdings-Usage-Turnover Rate comparisons. The current guideline used by this consulting firm for total collection size ranges from 2 to 2.5 items per capita. In the case of TPPL that would translate to 36,000 to a maximum of 54,000 items with at least 25% of those total items always being in circulation.

Some standard tools for assessing collection use include:

- "Collection Turnover Rates" = dividing the circulating collection holdings (Adult Fiction, Large Print, Foreign Language, Non-Fiction 000 – 999, Biography; Children's Picture Books, Early Readers, Fiction, Non-Fiction, Graphic Novels, etc.) by the total annual circulation in each category to determine how many times on average those collection circulate in a year's time. We recommend an overall turnover rate no lower than 3 for TPPL. See example on the following page.
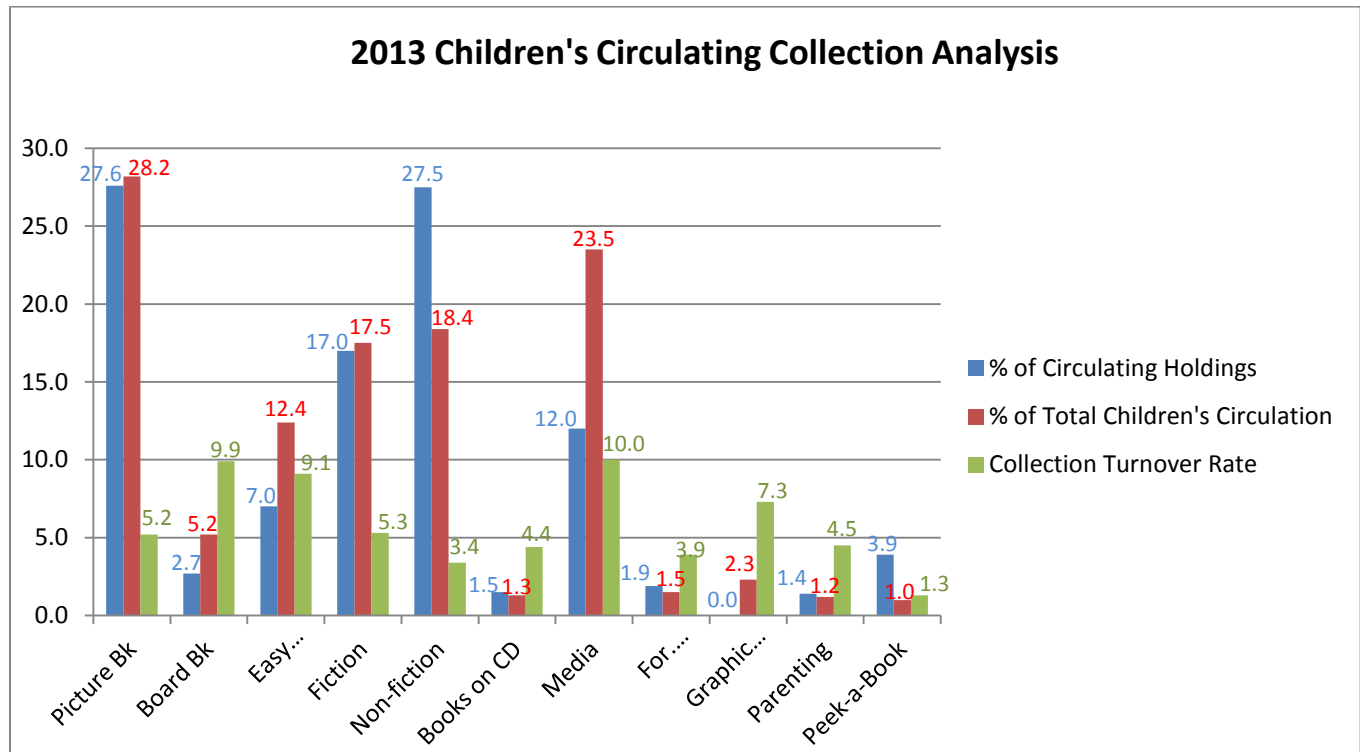
Turnover Rate Assessment Example

Collection 2013	Circulating Holdings	Total Annual Circulation	Turnover Rate
Adult			
Adult Non-Fiction	3,197	4,305	1.35
Adult Fiction	4083	11634	2.85
Adult Books on CD	653	2,099	3.21
Adult LP (Large Print) Fic/NF	317	891	2.81
Adult LP Non-Fiction	36	36	1.00
All DVDs	1,133	11,077	9.78
Adult Music CDs	248	394	1.59
Total Adult Collection	**9,667**	**30,436**	**3.15**
Children (Ages 0 - 12)			
Picture Books	2,745	8,539	3.11
J Fiction	2,076	4,759	2.29
J Non-Fiction	1,858	2,792	1.50
J Music CD	67	56	0.84
J Books on CD	131	315	2.40
Total Children's Collection	**6,877**	**16,461**	**2.39**
Teen (Ages 13 - 18)			
Teen Fiction	763	1,579	2.07
Teen Non-Fiction	335	299	0.89
Teen Books on CD	40	105	2.63
Total Teen Collection	**1,138**	**1,983**	**1.74**
Total 2011	**17,682**	**48,880**	**2.76**

- "Holdings Compared with Circulation and Turnover Rates" compared with total circulation = helps a library better allocate its annual materials budget to support what is used by the community. This involves comparing the percent of dollars expended on a collection category with the percentage of total annual circulation represented by that category.

  In the example on the following page, the information can be used to not only weed the collection, but also re-allocate expenditures to better support collections that are more popular with users and get greater use.

Holdings Compared with Circulation and Turnover Rates Example

2013 Children's Circulating Collection Analysis

Legend:
- % of Circulating Holdings
- % of Total Children's Circulation
- Collection Turnover Rate

Category	% of Circulating Holdings	% of Total Children's Circulation	Collection Turnover Rate
Picture Bk	27.6	28.2	5.2
Board Bk	2.7	5.2	9.9
Easy...	7.0	12.4	9.1
Fiction	17.0	17.5	5.3
Non-fiction	27.5	18.4	3.4
Books on CD	1.5	1.3	4.4
Media	12.0	23.5	10.0
For...	1.9	1.5	3.9
Graphic...	0.0	2.3	7.3
Parenting	1.4	1.2	4.5
Peek-a-Book	3.9	1.0	1.3

3. **Issue a Request for Proposal (RF) to engage an experienced innovative Library Interior Space Planner/Architect** to work with the City, Library, and community to determine the total amount of space needed to transform the current TPPL into a public library for the 21st century based on the prioritized roles and services improvements identified in this report.
==Begin in FY 2016==

Focus should be on:
- Determining the need and feasibility to expand the library beyond its current square footage and foot print
- Investigating the feasibility of breaking through the library walls to incorporate the two computer center rooms, currently accessible only from the Community Center, into the library space as this is a library provided and supported service, along with capturing some or all of the community center atrium area between the two rooms to provide some small dedicated library meeting, collaboration and discussion space
- Assessing the condition and remaining life expectancy of the Library's Mechanical, Electric and Plumbing systems
- Upgrading, improving and perhaps relocating the library restrooms
- Eliminating the large service desk and replacing it with two shelf-check stations and a staff kiosk supporting library card registration and assisting customers with account issues. All other service

staff should rove the public space to proactively serve the public using hand-held tablets connected to the ILS system and the Internet.

- Identifying a self-service materials return drop adjacent to or directly into staff workroom for sorting and re-shelving
- Improving the layout and functionality of current staff work space and perhaps relocating it to provide a more seamless use of and access to public service functions.
- Recapturing and opening up the current "reference room" useable public space
- Providing computing and technology access (laptops or tablets) for children within the area designated to service children
- Reducing the height of materials shelving for a more open feeling of space and improved visibility and monitoring of all spaces by customers and staff – no more than 78" for adult materials and 42" to 66" for children's materials
- Adding more comfortable seating for adults, children and families
- Adding design elements, furnishings, fixtures, equipment, paint, carpet and new fenestration that provides a welcoming, bright and comfortable feel at entry and throughout the entire library
- Adding intuitive way-finding and digital signage that incorporates the primary languages spoken in Takoma Park, e.g. English, French and Spanish
- Providing conceptual and schematic designs for a renovated TPPL
- Preparing a phased plan for recommended improvement and associated cost estimates

4. **City begins to allocate funds supporting the final approved plan in #3, to include design development and construction documents in order to issue construction bids to implement improvements to the Takoma Park Maryland Library.**

   Begin in FY 2017

APPENDIX I

Community Conversations Summaries
November 14 – 16, 2013

Session 1 – TPPL Staff, 13 participants

Strengths of the TPPL

- Responsive to customer requests for collection items either through direct local purchase or inter-library loan
- In constant dialog with community via customer interaction and nearby schools – K-12 and colleges
- Know our customers by "name" and vice versa
- Staff
  - multi-lingual – French and basic Spanish
  - diverse in experience and depth of knowledge in a variety of subjects
  - cohesive team, focused on solutions, invested and trusted, dialog well together
  - No rigid staff roles – everyone "pitches in" to get the job done
- Supportive leadership
- Programs are well attended
- Embrace technology and have been early adapters
- Strong and supportive Friends of the Library group – raise funds for library's "stand-alone" summer reading program and other efforts

Challenges faced by TPPL

- Staff work area is too small, noisy and has no cubicles
- Only one paid part-time shelver working 15 hours/week to put all returned and received materials back on shelf, some volunteers but not reliable enough
- Not enough space for shelving materials making it difficult to find items for customers, e.g. 15 different places to shelve children's materials
- Need for expanded hours beyond the new Sunday hours; open earlier in the day, perhaps 9 a.m.
- Need for collaborative work spaces/areas for customers
- Need to accommodate customer payment of fines and fees with a credit card
- Need outside (outdoor) seating areas for those using the library's Wi-Fi before, during and after hours
- City IT department unable to address library's need for expanded and enhanced user technologies; if TPPL isn't able to do it themselves, it doesn't happen
- Current ILS provider, AutoGraphics, is not able to customize or change TTPL's catalog interface and functionality to reflect the capabilities of today's best ILS practices in public libraries
- Need a more dedicated and engaging Teen area in the library
- Need small group meeting rooms accommodating 2 to 6 persons for tutoring and school group work assignments

Session 2 – City Department Heads, 9 attendees

Strengths of TPPL

- Books for Children
- Convenient location for TP residents, in the center of the city
- Place for children to be and go after school, safe and secure
- Computer Center (managed and staff by TPPL) used by people of all ages for many purposes, e.g. filling out and submitting job applications
- Periodical area provides comfortable places to sit

Challenges of the TPPL

- Not perceived as a good place to "hang-out"
- No large room area/spaces
- To avoid duplication of effort among city departments and activities
    - Voter registration is a good example of collaboration between departments
    - Can't separate Community Center from the Library
    - Increase access to technology for city residents
- Place for seniors programs and technology are in the Community Center with technology managed and offered by TPPL and programs offered by both TPPL, Recreation and Housing and Community Development
- Community Center and Library buildings need to be redone – more meeting spaces and better accessibility and visibility for the Library
- Capital and operating funds necessary to elevate library spaces and resources

Session 3 – Community residents, 12 attendees (diverse in age, length of residence, ethnicity)

Strengths of the Library

- City residents are connected to their library
- Library engages the community and brings people together
- Responsive not bound in bureaucracy
- Staff are friendly and helpful
    - Remarkable
    - Creative children's programs, e.g. Summer Quest
    - Book clubs for adults
    - MOOC (discussion of massive online class content for personal enrichment)
- Programs for all age groups

Challenges

- Children's area is too small
- Need to engage in outreach to the Spanish-speaking communities in the city of Takoma Park Maryland
- Need an improved and more user friendly automation system that can free staff to assist patrons in other ways
- Cluttered circulation desk space
- Lack of space – expand the Library and the Community Center
    - Go upward and include a green roof-garden
    - Current reference alcove in Library is not being used
    - Library is dark rather than bright and engaging

Priorities (in no particular order)

- More space for collections
- Adequate space for Children and dedicated children's programming space
- More study space
- Create a Library "commons" space for technology access and study
- Create a more open, light and inviting library
- Utilize the outdoor space at the library entrance

- Provide a dedicated space for teens
- Incorporate and make better use of the community center atrium as library space
- Provide a scanner (most are not incorporated into photocopiers)

Niche Priorities for TPPL
- Core literate collection
- Children's Programming
- Personal customer service by skilled and knowledgeable staff
- Sustainability – library provides resources that residents don't need to acquire as their own
- Amazing graphic novel collection
- Community resource

Session 4 – Community Residents, 12 attendees (primarily representing long term residents of Takoma Park 15 to 40 years)

Strengths of TPPL
- Staff know my name
- Amazed at the range of new books
- MOOC – staff support and knowledge of MOOC topics
- Entry point for residents new to the community
- Exceptional staff
- Location of library is central for two-thirds of the city's residents
- Friends of the TPPL organization – respected, trusted, appreciated
- Strong children's programs

Challenges
- Library needs to be represented at New Hampshire Ave Crossroads and in the Maple Ave. corridor which are the "immigrant" centers for Takoma Park MD
- Provide more materials in the languages of immigrant communities
- Supporting the needs of city's "at-risk" youth through volunteer tutors who work with non-English speakers
- Providing for loud areas and quiet areas in the library
- Unknown impact of the new Montgomery County Silver Spring Library
- TPPL looks and feels like the 1950's

Priorities for TPPL
- Outreach and service delivery to immigrant communities on the fringes within Takoma Park.
- Consider "little libraries" and library materials vending in apartment building in Takoma Park's immigrant communities. Materials donated, materials donated to Friends
- Promote library services through agencies and churches serving the immigrant communities
- Promote and enhance library services supporting workforce development and those seeking employment, re-employment by identifying area partners and determining what appropriate services the Library can provide that other agencies cannot
- More efficient materials handling for staff
- Keep up with changing technologies

- Revisit current Integrated Library System for a more user-friendly and robust functionality supporting increased self-service opportunities, e.g. self-checkout, placing reserves remotely, being able to see covers and Table of Contents of books.
- Offer scanning services

Session 5 – Community Residents, 3 (held on Friday evening)

Strengths
- Convenient location
- Services, collections and programs for children
- After school convenience for children and families
- Staff is exceptional - personal, less institutional, interaction between staff and community ("They know my name.")
- Excellent in responding to community needs
- Place to get books and other materials
- Resources for all incomes including computer access
- "I moved here because of the Takoma Park Maryland Library; if the Library or relocated, I would move away."
- Center during weather emergencies providing access to electricity, heating/cooling, etc.

Challenges
- Space challenged
- Lack of meeting spaces for book clubs, MOOC, children's and other library programming
- Technology books are dated
- Need for greater integration with Recreation Department and with private (external) resources
- Library is the "Step-child" of the City

Session 6 – City Council, 5 attendees (an additional council member attended one of the community sessions for a total of 6 council persons engaged in this process)

City Council Priorities for Takoma Park
- Financial stability
- Resolving the issues of double taxation (city and county taxes)
- Embracing diversity (ethnic, economic) and moving toward an inclusive city
- Children – quality of life
- Maintain the "small town" feel
- Address needs of lower income residents
- Improve communication and expand partnerships

Role of TPPL as viewed by Council
- Place for the community to participate and give back
- Programs for pre-school children are an opportunity to attract new immigrants to the library
- Leverage resources

- Education - able to make situational decisions as to when digital is a more appropriate resource than print
- Business incubator for budding entrepreneurs

Strengths
- Ability to access specialized archival resources for free via TPPL
- Exceptional resource for the community
- Public computing services

Challenges/Opportunities
- Provide greater visibility and more direct flow to the Library from within the Community Center
- City needs to take a comprehensive look at how to embed the Library throughout the Community Center facility – spaces, programs and resources to become a "center for community engagement."

Session 7 – Community Residents, 8 attendees

Strengths of TPPL
- Programming for all ages – something for everyone
- Location
- Small well-developed collection
- Heart of the community
- Feels like home – unique and reflective of Takoma Park, but must not become "smug"
- Welcoming to all

Challenges
- Lack of space in general; staff work areas are overwhelmed
- Need more functional space
- Need to optimize existing space
- Need to reduce size of collection; get rid of older little used materials
- Community center is an "antiseptic" environment compared to the library
- Senior space in Community Center is under-utilized
- Library catalog is "clunky; get rid of it"
- Some library policies are barriers to use, e.g. that of not being able to use computers without *physically* presenting your library card (having your library barcode number on your cell phone is not acceptable)
- Online catalog is not user-friendly
- Adult library users have issues with student behavior after school
- Greater and more effective coordination between the City, Community Center and Library
- Longer evening hours

Community Survey Results

Q1 How often do you visit the Takoma Park Maryland Library?

Answered: 252   Skipped: 0

Several times a month	51.59%
Monthly	19.44%
Three to six times a year	14.29%
Rarely	10.32%
Daily	4.37%

0%   20%   40%   60%   80%   100%
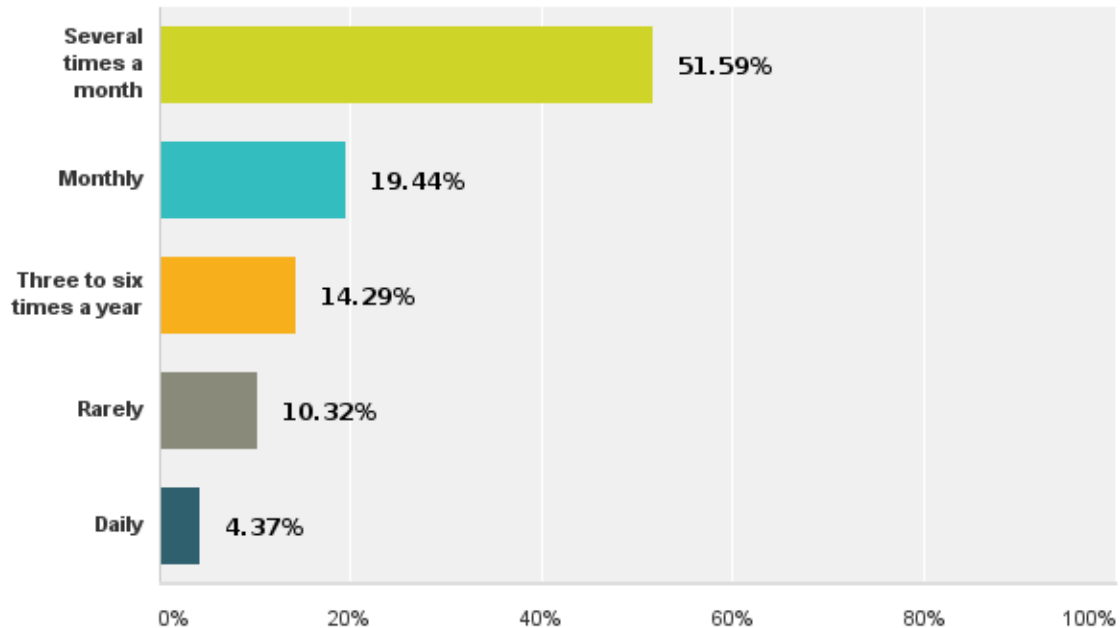
Q2 What services provided by the Takoma Park Maryland Library do you use? Check all that apply.

Answered: 252   Skipped: 0

Service	Percentage
Borrow books and/or books on CD	94.44%
Read magazines and newspapers...	31.35%
Attend Library programs f...	26.59%
Request assistance from Libra...	24.21%
Use Wi-Fi at the Library	19.05%
Participate in the Summer Reading...	18.25%
Bring my own laptop or tablet to ...	17.46%
Attend or take my pre-school...	16.67%
Borrow music CDs	15.48%
Attend Library programs f...	15.08%
Use the Library's online...	13.89%
Study at the Library	13.10%
Borrow magazines	12.30%
Use the Library's computers	9.52%
Volunteer at the library or for the...	7.94%
Attend Library programs f...	5.56%

See full listing of answer choices on the next page.

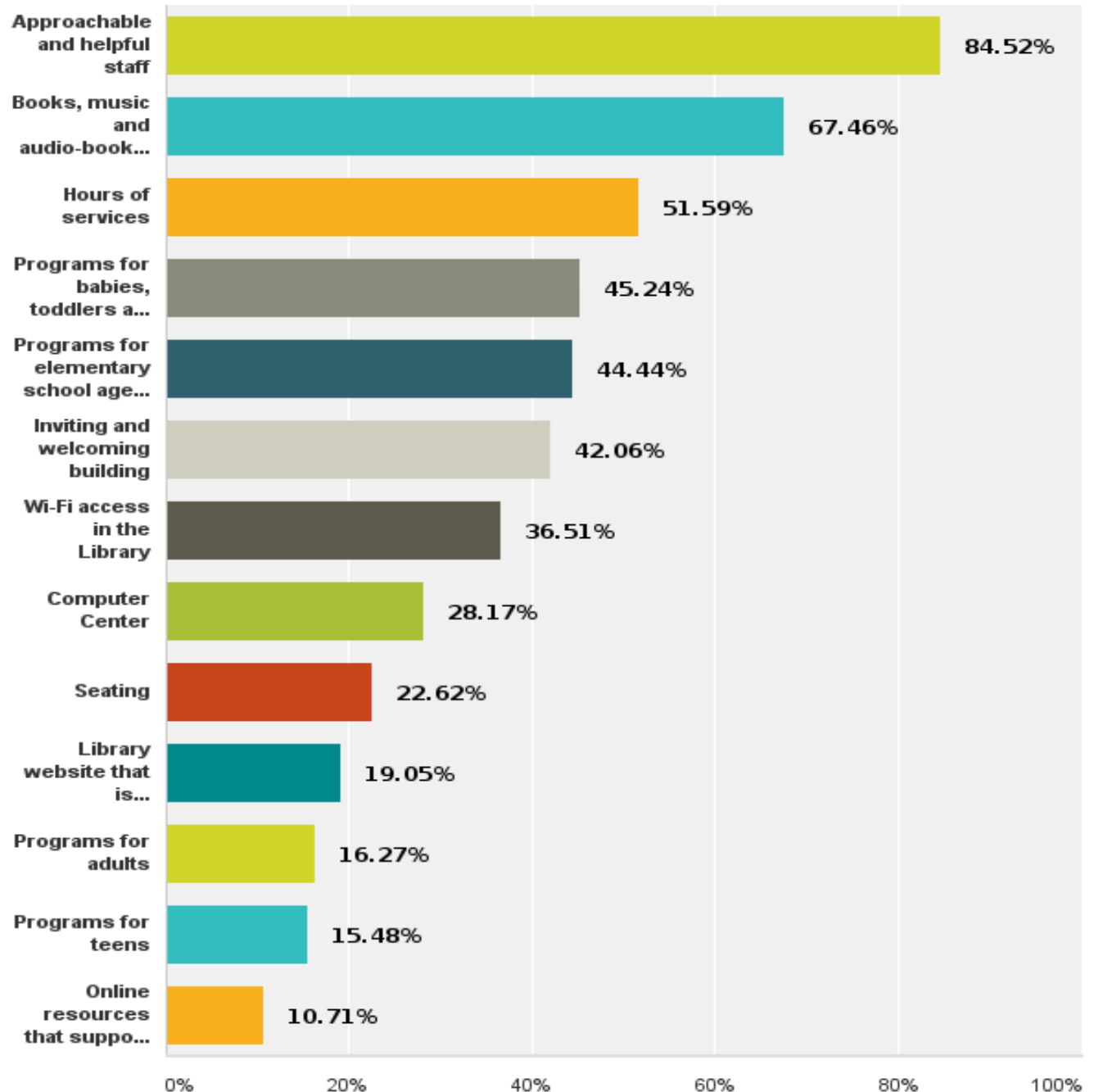| Question #2 Answer Choices	Responses –
Borrow books and/or books on CD	94.44%
Read magazines and newspapers in the Library	31.35%
Attend Library programs for families	26.59%
Request assistance from Library staff for recreational reading and research	24.21%
Use Wi-Fi at the Library	19.05%
Participate in the Summer Reading program	18.25%
Bring my own laptop or tablet to use at the Library	17.46%
Attend or take my pre-school child/grandchild to Library storytimes and events	16.67%
Borrow music CDs	15.48%
Attend Library programs for adults	15.08%
Use the Library's online resources	13.89%
Study at the Library	13.10%
Borrow magazines	12.30%
Use the Library's computers	9.52%
Volunteer at the library or for the Friends of the Library	7.94%
Attend Library programs for teens	5.56%

Q3 In your experience, what are the strengths of the Takoma Park Maryland Library? Check all that apply

Answered: 252   Skipped: 0

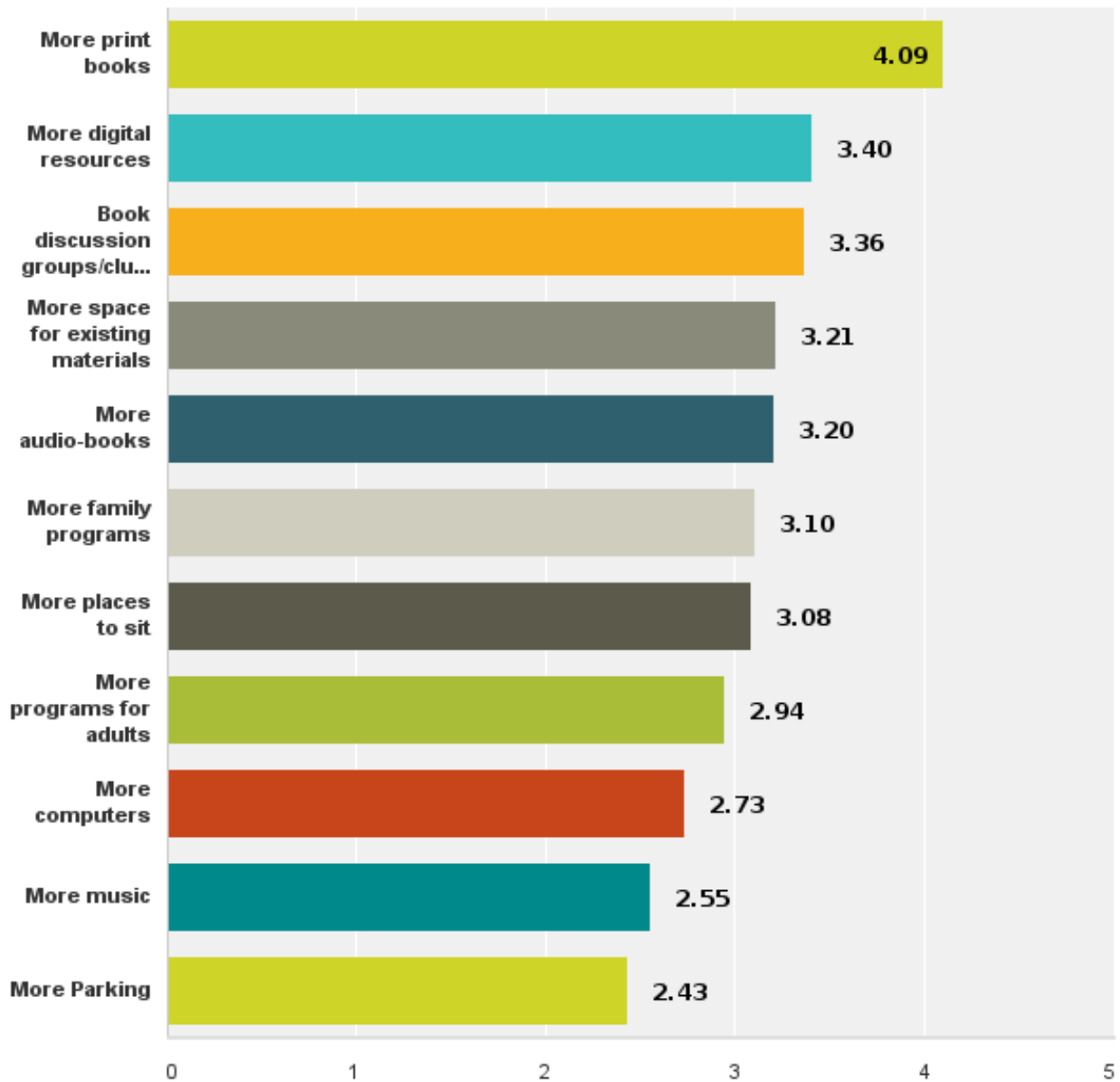| Category	Percentage
Approachable and helpful staff	84.52%
Books, music and audio-book...	67.46%
Hours of services	51.59%
Programs for babies, toddlers a...	45.24%
Programs for elementary school age...	44.44%
Inviting and welcoming building	42.06%
Wi-Fi access in the Library	36.51%
Computer Center	28.17%
Seating	22.62%
Library website that is...	19.05%
Programs for adults	16.27%
Programs for teens	15.48%
Online resources that suppo...	10.71%

See full listing of answer choices on the next page.

Question #3 Answer Choices	Responses –
Approachable and helpful staff	84.52%
Books, music and audio-book collections that reflect my interests	67.46%
Hours of services	51.59%
Programs for babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers	45.24%
Programs for elementary school age youth	44.44%
Inviting and welcoming building	42.06%
Wi-Fi access in the Library	36.51%
Computer Center	28.17%
Seating	22.62%
Library website that is informative and easy to use	19.05%
Programs for adults	16.27%
Programs for teens	15.48%
Online resources that support my information needs	10.71%

Q4 In determining improvements you would like to see at the Takoma Park Maryland Library over the next five years, please rank the importance of the following items.

Answered: 252   Skipped: 0

Item	Value
More print books	4.09
More digital resources	3.40
Book discussion groups/clu...	3.36
More space for existing materials	3.21
More audio-books	3.20
More family programs	3.10
More places to sit	3.08
More programs for adults	2.94
More computers	2.73
More music	2.55
More Parking	2.43

Q5 What role does the Library play in the lives of Takoma Park Maryland residents? Check all that apply.

Answered: 245   Skipped: 7

| Role	Percentage
Provides lifelong learning f...	87.35%
Supports early childhood...	84.49%
Place for community engagement...	77.14%
Place for families	73.88%
Source of community pride	71.02%
Enhances information and...	59.59%
Provides considerable return on...	57.14%
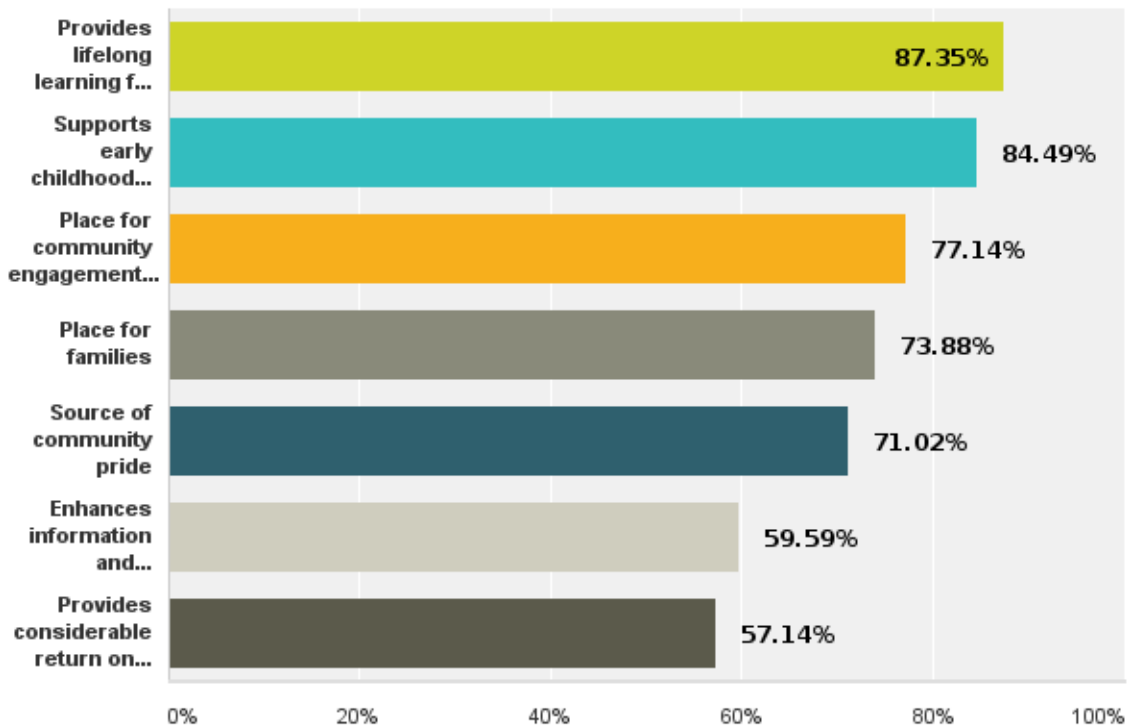
6. **In your opinion, what are the five most important changes the Library needs to make in the next five years to insure its relevance and value to residents of Takoma Park? Please list and describe below.**
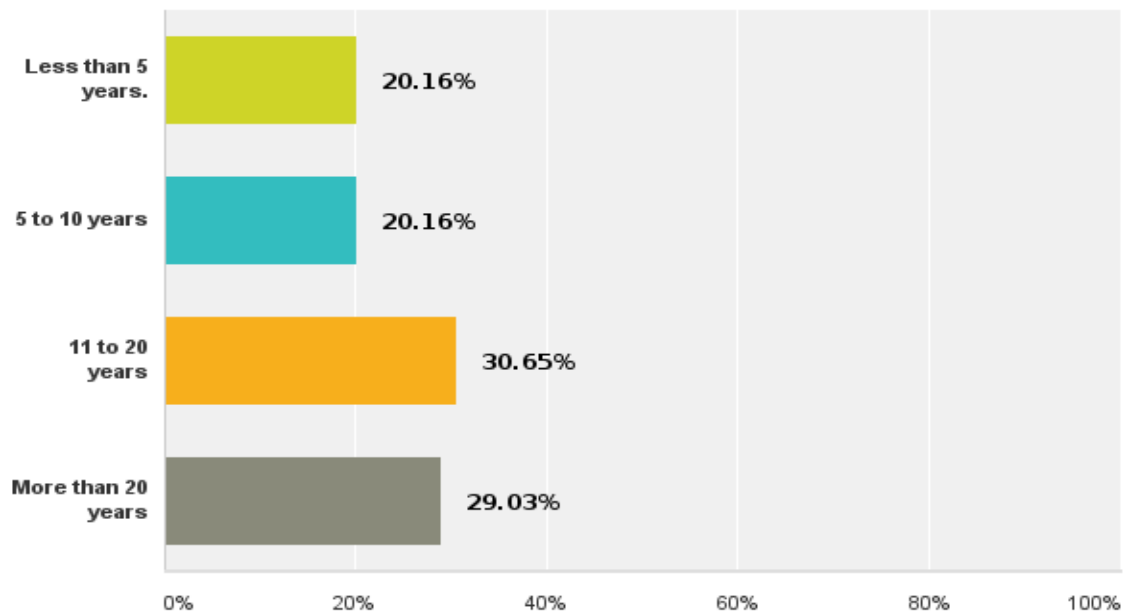
See Open-Ended Comments on p. 29
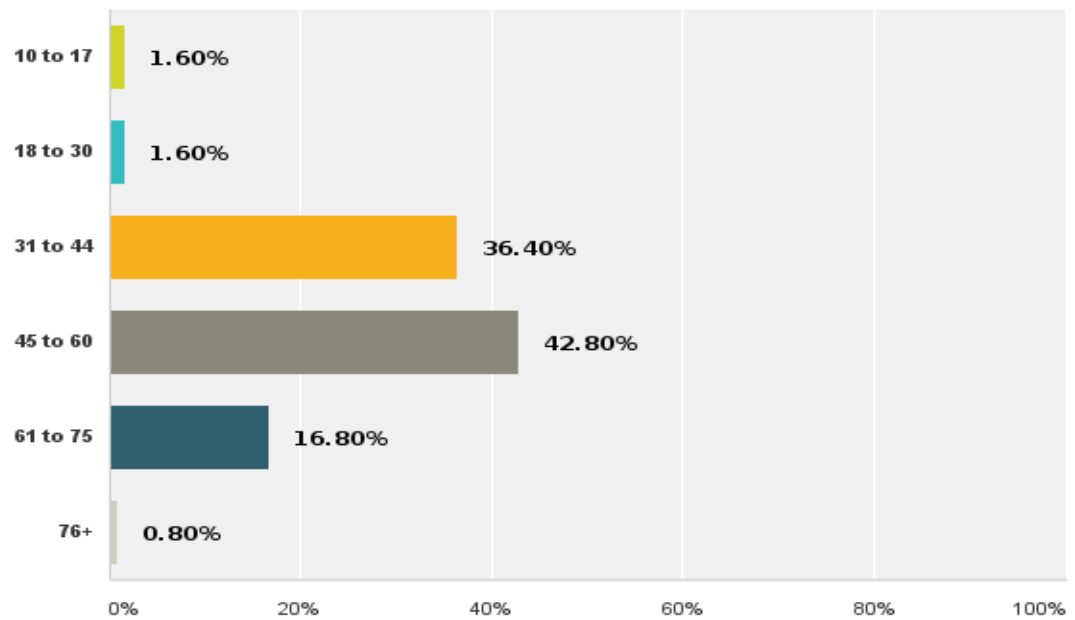
Q7 What is your gender?

Answered: 246   Skipped: 6
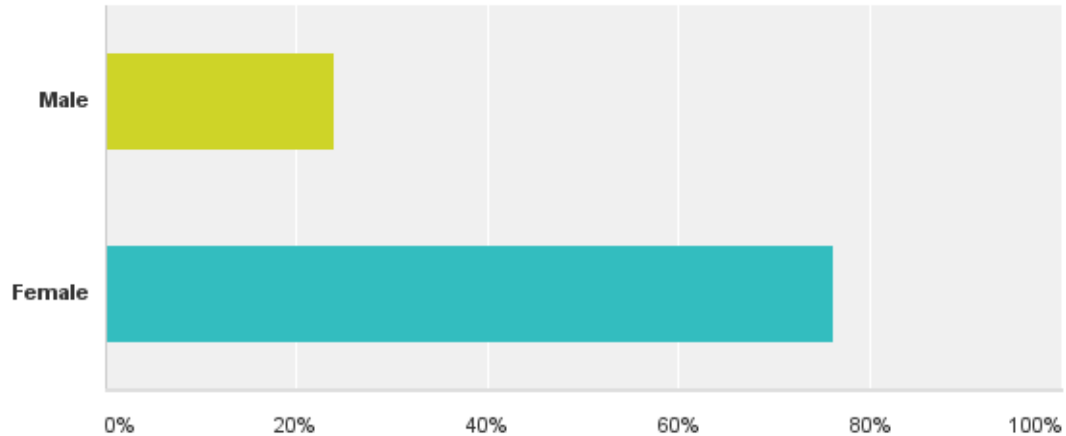
Q8 How long have you lived in Takoma Park, Maryland

Answered: 248   Skipped: 4

Q9 What is your age?

Answered: 250 Skipped: 2

Age	Percentage
10 to 17	1.60%
18 to 30	1.60%
31 to 44	36.40%
45 to 60	42.80%
61 to 75	16.80%
76+	0.80%

#2. SERVICES USED AT TPPL

Children's
- Arts and crafts for kids Field trips to the Library
- Kids hang out there after school
- Go with my grandson to the library, or meet him there to stay or take him elsewhere
- My son goes to the library after school sometimes to finish his homework.
- Attend library programs for children (8 year old daughter)
- Attend library programs for children (not teens, not preschool)
- I expect the services I use will increase as my kids age

Adults
- College seminar (MOOC)
- Friends of the Library reading clubs
- To stay warm or cool during a power outage
- Charged my phone when the power was out!

Miscellaneous
- copy crossword puzzle from NYT Sunday magazine
- borrow DVDs
- very occasionally read magazines; haven't attended a program in years but did at one time
- Make copies
- I have written that I volunteer, but I have volunteered but my services have not yet been requested.

#3 STRENGTHS of TPPL

- **Hours**
  - Sunday hours much appreciated
  - Love the Sunday hours
  - Great to have Sunday hours
  - Sunday hours are great
  - So happy with Sunday hours
  - It's wonderful to have Sunday hours. Please keep them!
  - Continue with Sunday hours
  - Please keep weekend hours!
  - Continue to stay open on Sundays
  - Open 7 days a week

#3 STRENGTHS of TPPL continued

- **Community Hub**
  - Very important community resource!
  - A community center; a gathering place for Takoma residents; a meeting place sometimes between PBES, TPES and TPMS
  - Even though I don't use the Library much, I support it for community use and am glad many people use it.
  - Location close to recreation center
  - Community feel
  - Location
  - Convenience to residence; community service.
  - It is close to me.
  - Convenience, close by
  - independent from the county
  - it is a local library

- **Library Staff**
  - Fabulous staff
  - It has friendly staff and the computer room staff is very helpful
  - Some of the staff are wonderful
  - Some staff are wonderful, kind, helpful.
  - I find the staff helpful when assistance is requested.
  - I think that the staff is approachable and helpful.

- **Adult Services**
  - Great selection of periodicals that matches my interests; critical given paltry Montgomery County Libraries' collections
  - creative programming such as the MOOC weekly discussion group
  - Information (e.g. blogs) on new books, award winners, etc.
  - haven't used teen or adult programs but aware they exist and look great
  - I like the service of letting me know via email that my books are due.
  - Great books
  - The book I am looking for almost always is available, or will be soon.
  - serial collection
  - I have not tried to access the library's online resources because I have had a fairly old fashioned idea about libraries but I recognize that needs to change

- **Children's Services**
  - The children's staff is very approachable and helpful; others not so much.
  - Welcoming to after school tweens and kids
  - Safe interesting place for my kids after school
  - Kids & teen programs are really excellent! Wish we had the time to attend even more...
  - Children's Collection/Location
  - Outstanding children's section
  - Wonderful, wonderful children's book section and programming

#3 STRENGTHS of TPPL Continued

- **Children's Services continued**
  - We love the children's collection and the staff's knowledge of the material. I don't know this lit so I've turned to the staff many times for recommendations.
  - a resource for all ages, especially school age and below, is wonderful.
  - Amazing children's librarian
  - excellent children's book collection
  - Summer reading program
  - My kids grew up using the TP Library, and I am now expecting my first grandchild, who I hope to bring to kid programs too!
  - Generous, inclusive attitude toward kids without parents, ages 9-13ish.
  - a spot to take my child to just enjoy being around books;
  - comment based on the emails on PEN list that appear to be mostly advertising for families and young children
  - There are a number of children who use the library for studying after school so more programs for them is important.
  - Children feel comfortable and excited to go and explore and learn
  - Keep up the amazing family/preschool programming

#4 and # 6 NEEDED AND IMPORTANT TPPL IMPROVEMENTS (grouped by topic)

- **Hours**
  - I wish the library opened earlier -- noon openings are ridiculous
  - Earlier hours for computer center
  - Expand open hours
  - Offer morning hours
  - Morning hours for computer center

- **Staff**
  - Front desk staff needs more consistent and friendly customer service. A number are quite impatient and unfriendly, especially with children.
  - Friendlier staff
  - More welcoming, patient, Spanish-speaking staff
  - While some of the library employees are exceptional and a HUGE asset, there are some who are not very friendly and make the library feel less welcome.
  - Some staff are practically rude.
  - Some staff are really, truly grouchy
  - Demeanor of some staff could be friendlier/more welcoming.
  - I feel I have to ask staff first instead of them being proactive in asking how they can help me. It would help if they were not sitting behind a desk in front of a computer. Perhaps self check in would make them more accessible.

- **Adult Services**
  - Generally, library is weak; lacks the resources to be much value as a collection of information
  - wish more books on health
  - Sadly the TP library has not meet my needs
  - More culturally diverse programming, media, and positive images are needed. Takoma Park brings together many different cultures and I don't see that richness reflected enough in the book choices, display images, programs, or even library staff. Not that these things should be relegated to simply one month, but I don't even see relevant programming or images for Black History Month, Native American History Month, or Ramadan. Some of the books on the walls that are presumably geared toward people of color are faddish and, in my opinion, insulting.
  - More culturally appropriate programming Could we get author presentations? Something like Politics and Prose does?
  - Speaker series like politics and prose
  - It'd be interesting to see author or speaker series similar to Politics&Prose. Might be way to really establish the library as a destination
  - More active programming for adult research/writing/learning programs
  - Examine offerings in terms of group reading - whether have more political events, foreign language, skills acquisition, depending upon demographics of community interest.
  - study circles on topics like racism, immigration reform, etc. in collaboration with other community groups - make space available and/or promote and identify resources for such ongoing discussion and problem solving
  - Help community understand things like the economy, climate change, technology, etc. in digestible form and from reliable sources for non-specialists. Washington should have some such experts.
  - Have non-fiction reading clubs, including contact with experts, that help people
  - Can the TP library get materials from other libraries on inter-library loan?
  - I wish the no-cell phone policy would be better enforced.
  - More links with rest of Takoma through events linking to business and non-profits.
  - Some kind of innovation lab where people can find resources (access to experts, technology, community leaders, other interested community members, etc) they can use to resolve problems and develop new ideas.
  - The library needs to have a fee-based co-working space which is open more hours than the library
  - Now that I am in my mid-twenties, there are not as many programs (i.e., book clubs) that capture my interest.
  - As my parents age, I would appreciate book clubs or programming for them in addition to those provided by the community center
  - Outreach to satellite locations in the community closer to people who need the programs. Perhaps a program at TP Rec Bldg on New Hampshire Ave.
  - Outreach to 'non-white' and lower income communities in Takoma Park to develop increased utilization

#4 and # 6 NEEDED AND IMPORTANT TPPL IMPROVEMENTS (grouped by topic) continued

- **Collections**
  - Newer books. A lot of the material is really old.
  - Much larger collection of new books.
  - Expand print and digital collection
  - Weed through and update some of the non-fiction sections of the library. Some of these appear neglected.
  - Weed out old print books when new are added, could be 2/1 swap to create less shelving and more seating. "Old" could be "not checked out in 5 years"
  - I go to the library for BOOKS! I would love for the library to participate in Maryland Overdrive for digital book sharing.
  - Make accessing digital books and media available to all
  - Very important: maintain periodical subscriptions.
  - Better browsing (either online or in person) of audiobooks
  - Books, Books, Books
  - More culturally diverse book selection Library collection cannot compare with ones in Montgomery or PG counties.
  - Would like to see audio collection alphabetized, and kids & YA CDs separate... think it needs to be done.
  - Consider buying DVDs
  - Get DVDs
  - DVD movies and TV shows for kids!!
  - I have no idea if the library has books with big type, but it should, given the number of seniors in town and an aging-in-place population.
  - More books on health and nutrition.
  - More ebooks (and copies of what you do have) available for all ages
  - Need to move to loaning out of electronic books. I want to check out a book on my iPad from the library, read it, and then return/delete it.
  - Better and more digital resources
  - If TKPK can't keep up with published books, maybe a way to have digital material would be a good way to go.
  - Mostly wish there were more books & wouldn't have to go to Montgomery County libraries so often. but for its size it's an outstanding library and no complaints
  - Inter-library loans with Montgomery County and DC so not all materials need to be on site; ability to reserve a book online and pick up when it is available; e-reading materials to borrow for overdrive/kindle
  - A large variety of books or ability to order them from other libraries through inter-library loan or other services.
  - Encourage purchase of books in the language of our residents beyond Spanish
  - e-book borrowing
  - More retail like. Some libraries call them powerboards. More face out books perhaps on rotating or popular themes. I hardly ever see anyone "in the stacks"

#4 and # 6 NEEDED AND IMPORTANT TPPL IMPROVEMENTS (grouped by topic) continued

- **Children's Services**
  - The additional of an Educational Librarian to assist with students who frequent the library targeting pedagogical needs.
  - I'd also like to see a regular weekly chess time like they do at Long Branch, possibly with mentors
  - A more inviting children's section with comfortable chairs rather than all tables/chairs, and with specific sections (i.e. picture books, bigger kid books, etc.). A lot of the other libraries also have small toys for kids to play with, like magnetic letters or even trucks and dolls.
  - Could there be a separate check out area for kids?
  - Audio books for children are very limited, disorganized and tucked away -- need better display/more space.
  - Children's audio books needs to be upgraded and added to
  - Too many times my kids are told to be quiet during an activity in the kids' area, when we are just there to look for books.
  - The kids' summer reading program is unique and special, but totally inappropriate and un-understandable for young kids. As a result, my kids are not interested because we couldn't even figure out the complicated rules. Please make this more all age friendly!
  - The children's room is a central part of our family's life. Our children go there every day after school to do homework or find books or wait for activities to start. Both kids and parents see their friends around the library. It is a terrific central community hub. We would love to see this area expanded so that there is more room for kids of all ages. Maybe a separate and monitored "quiet room" area for older kids who want to study and do homework? A separate nook for younger (about preschool) kids? The children's room desperately needs more space.
  - Primary emphasis should be on programs for children & teens
  - Continue programs for families/teens
  - Make the layout easier for people with children to walk through- more room between tables.
  - Become a go-to information hub about digital resources especially for children. I currently would not consider asking librarians about helpful apps for my child
  - Increased programming for elementary school age kids.
  - Closer connections to local schools, so that students find information and resources that are integrated with what they are doing in school.

- **Teen Services**
  - Additionally, the library staff needs training in making the library a welcoming space for youth and teens of color. Programming that is relevant to, and builds positive images for, teens of color (particularly male teens of color) is needed
  - Work with high school(s) to provide more programs, tutoring, educational materials for at risk youth to try to help prevent drop-outs.
  - More programming that pulls in teens
  - Develop activities, programs, tutoring, etc. for at risk youth
  - Finding more ways to engage youth--including things like smart phone apps to help find books, more ways to connect with friends about books, etc.

- **Technology**

  TPPL's Integrated System (Catalog of materials, circulation, reserving materials, renewing materials, etc.)
  – Find using the online catalog difficult
  – Improve online catalog
  – Better online catalog access
  – Better catalog and eBook resources
  – Check out system is slow, and resource heavy (the silly stickers). What about a more efficient and client driven system, i.e self check out? Printed out receipt of checked out items (egg Takoma DC library).
  – Would LOVE to be able to reserve books on the library's website!
  – Ability to reserve things online and then access online account easily to see status of books, etc.
  – Computerize the system so you can send an email when a book is coming due. Love that system from the MoCo libraries
  – I would like the library to have on-line holds, renewal etc.
  – Ability to pay fines online.
  – Please take credit cards for fines

  TPPL Website
  – upgraded website/library catalog
  – Improve the library's web presence
  – Better website
  – Better website
  – Website redesign
  – Better web site
  – The website is difficult to use and could be improved to be much more user friendly!
  – The library needs a more active blog.

  Technology Content and Training
  – Training on A/V equipment enabling creative projects by patrons, i.e., videos, personal histories, "everyone a producer..." as much as possible, within budget limitations.
  – The library needs to have an annex space somewhere else in Takoma Park where makerspace activities can take place
  – Expand the library/computer center for small groups of people to work/study together.
  – Work on interface with Recreation Dept. programs and offer more "how to" or distance learning and language study opportunities.
  – Online book download
  – More power outlets for laptops.
  – I don't think the tech sections are utilized well or placed conveniently. I just saw the ref computers for the first time the other day. They are very very dusty. I guess no one else sees them either.
  – More technological updates including combining books, literature and digitization
  – More computers
  – The library needs to have more training to boost community members' digital competences, including computer programming classes.

Technology Content and Training continued
‒ Better access to the senior computer rooms
‒ The library needs to lead, rather than follow, national library trends in the transition from the analog public library to the digital public library
‒ The library needs to be more involved in bridging the digital divide.
‒ Build capacity as a place where everyone, but kids especially, can explore the range of digital and online information; for example, explore a "making" space, possibly in collaboration with the Rec program (see DC's MLK library for other ideas)

- **TPPL Spaces and Facility**
‒ Space - we have lived here for 30 years and witnessed incredible spending on space for City employees, much of which is unusable public space, poorly designed. The library, which serves the entire population of TP has too little floor space for staff offices and the collections.
‒ It is not that pleasant a space - though the children's room is nice. It feels cramped and noisy
‒ The library must be physically expanded to house a larger collection of books and music and research/study locations for both individuals and groups.
‒ Updated space that is more inviting. I don't feel welcomed when I come in
‒ The library space needs a comprehensive redesign, new furnishing, fixtures, etc. A total rethink of how the space is allocated and arranged -- not a piecemeal approach. It currently feels a little old, worn, and musty
‒ PLEASE replace the seating in front of the magazine section. It is worn out and uncomfortable.
‒ Expanded areas for people to sit and use their Wi-Fi devices and internet connections.
‒ Seating could use an upgrade
‒ Seating at the library is not great. There are not enough chairs near the magazines.
‒ Seating area and the ability to drink/purchase coffee and snacks near
‒ It's about the quality and design of "more places to sit"
‒ More comfortable living-room like reading areas,
‒ More space, including more seating and some social space.
‒ More space for special activities that does not supersede library users looking for books or reading space. A few years ago the Community Center/City Administrative building was redone. Nothing was done to improve the Library at the time. It was completely ignored. It would have been a good time to make minor improvements to the Library.
‒ It should have more space to accommodate adequate private and group study rooms, the current library do not fulfill all the requirements
‒ Places for pairs or groups to study together More center areas -- e.g., for conversations, discussions, and specific groups --
‒ Provide more (inclusive) opportunities for community engagement Study and informal meeting spaces where talking is allowed.
‒ it needs to grow to better serve the growing population.
‒ The library needs a reference desk that can be moved out of the way.
‒ Study desks and book cases on wheels, so they can be easily shifted to make room for community programs
‒ Create better interface between library and community center in promoting programming of each entity.

- **TPPL Spaces and Facility continued**
  - I do want to see the library remain as a bricks and mortar institution, but with more and more online and social media, and social presence
  - Expand space modernize feel and look
  - The Library's bathrooms are not very nice.
  - More comfortable and modular furniture
  - More sunlight. More fresh air.

- **Parking**
  - Parking is also an issue since parents (including me) use the library lot to pick up children. More parking would be wonderful.
  - It needs to somehow (though I don't know how) expand parking for those few times a week that its lots are full
  - More parking for events like circle time
  - I don't think I've ever been to the library (when I drove) that I couldn't find a space. I usually walk to the library, and think that many people who live in the city could, but I understand that there would be a need for seniors or disabled people or people with children to be able to park. How often is the parking lot full?

#5 ROLES of TPPL

- **Return on Takoma Park Taxpayer's Investment**
  - I have no idea what's spent on the library, so I can't judge its tax efficiency.
  - I can't say if it provides ROI - I haven't seen the financials.
  - I don't know how many tax dollars go into it, so can't answer the "considerable return" question. But as a taxpayer, I'm glad we have it!
  - I don't know how many tax dollars are allocated to library so can't judge the return, but I love our library and feel it's a very important part of the community.
  - Can't tell if it provides considerable return because I don't know what percentage of my taxpayer dollars is being spent on it.

- **Children**
  - The children's library is so welcoming (as is the staff) that my children already feel at home there - that says a lot and means a lot to their future literacy.
  - The children's library and programs should be singled out as excellent.
  - Provides a safe place for kids to do homework and hang out after school.
  - Provides a safe place for kids after school--it's an ad-hoc day care center. I admit our daughter spent two years killing time there until we could get her. This is a huge issue.
  - Educational support for kids who do homework after school. This benefit may be hard to measure but I believe it is greater than it appears.
  - I still love to see the kids of Takoma live and learn, it needs to remain a vital place for all generations.
  - Links Kids to fun learning outside of school.
  - Safe learning space outside of school hours for local schools
  - gives kids a safe place to go after school and do homework

- **Children continued**
  - Provides safe place after school for those who need it.
  - Provides an extremely valuable resource as a place for after school study for TPES, PBES & TPMS students. Children & YA support has had a huge impact on my son's reading life.
  - It is a safe, inviting place for my children to visit frequently.
  - It is a space for children to go after school to study and read.
  - Safe place for children to hang out after school - a community hub
  - The library is a terrific place for kids to go after school. The children's room welcomes kids of all ages who want to read, study, be tutored, find books for school projects, etc. The librarians are friendly, knowledgeable, approachable, and eager to help. It is a very important part of our family's life
  - love it that my daughter went to a regular library program as part of school when she attended PBES; it was a great resource for her also when entered middle school
  - It's a great place for kids to do homework after school.
  - I don't think the value of the library can be over-stated in terms of how it supports childhood literacy AND community enrichment. Babies who start off coming to library events are forever tied to the place, the books, and a respect for both.
  - The library is a community resource that is conveniently located near elementary and middle schools. The hours are great and it is a valuable after school safe place for kids. It is an integral part of the community center even if it is not formally part of it.
  - Conveniently located near three schools (Takoma Middle, Takoma Elementary and Piney Branch), so my kids from very early age were able to walk to the library after school and explore books. Both of my children, but especially my youngest, are very avid readers in part due to that exposure. The convenience of the location is VERY important.
  - After school and homework help expand computer skills programs K-adult
  - It has been a successful resource for the teen in our house
  - Love the library, love the creative, out of the box programs like Eagle Bear, etc.
  - More bad kitty books, books in French for kids, easier for kids to find books, Legos and Lego books, teenage mutant turtle books

- **Workforce development**
  - **Provides support for people seeking employment and to people with limited** computer experience who need to take care of personal business on the computer. -
  - Helps community members search for and apply for jobs
  - A lot of poor folks would not have access to computers/internet otherwise.

- **Local City Service**
  - Our library is truly one of the jewels in the crown that is Takoma Park.
  - It is an amazing resource, one can find easily accessible both classics as well as just published literature and nonfiction. MUCH easier to access these books than at MCPL.
  - Limits the need to personally acquire both books and periodicals - resource conservation. also provides wifi for those who don't have this resource elsewhere
  - Library remains a place that connects people to information they need and want and to each other
  - Serves neighborhood...all income levels
  - A part of what makes Takoma Park Takoma Park

- **Local City Service continued**
  – In my opinion, the library is in the top 3 of the most critical institutions in the city.
  – The library is one of the essential elements that makes Takoma Park a unique, vibrant community. Although I don't go frequently, my kids use it a lot!
  – It feels like the heart of the community
  – Being a place for homeless/semi-homeless. Addressing needs of recent immigrants. Being a place for unattended children after school. Being a place for folks who want a place to work w/laptop.
  – Is welcoming, respectful and sensitive to the needs of all kinds of community members, including the elderly, non-native speakers of English, adults who didn't have a chance to receive a solid education in their youth. A gateway to turning these people into community leaders while helping them with their own lives.
  – So many valuable programs for patrons - from the college process support eves to the cultural programs to the P & P programs, etc.
  – Fantastic place for people of all ages to relax and find out about things.
  – It serves as a community center in many ways. A very important asset to our community.
  – "Place for community engagement" - this might be possible but the space is not much used for this purpose
  – Provides a great and valuable example of a community-based service
  – It's the intellectual heart of our community. Invaluable. The single most important use of my City taxes.
  – The library, public works, and the police are the key services of the town. The rest is secondary at best.
  – New ideas, projects can easily be discussed and if feasible developed--the lack of bureaucracy is really an important asset!
  – The library is the place where useful information about Takoma Park is located, from guides to local businesses to background on issues being discussed on the council, to local flora and fauna.
  – Provides a free space for self education. Especially if you can't afford Wi-Fi, books, or have an extra room for quiet study. And expert technical assistance.
  – Teaching everyone about Web resources and how to access and use them.
  – Emphasize the value of the library as a "third space" in the community in communication, marketing and outreach;; explore other collaborative efforts that can leverage the physical space as an entrance to the digital space - games are one example, but there are many other types of online communities that the library should be making accessible to TP.

Miscellaneous Issue (of 252 responses the following 9 comments were the only ones made on this topic)

- **Use of Montgomery County Department of Libraries, DC Public Libraries and Takoma Park MD Public Library by Takoma Park MD residents**
  - I think we don't need a library and can use Montgomery County's resources instead. Long Branch is near one side of the City; Silver Spring is near the other. How does library usage by TP residents, per capita of city residents, compare to library usage in Montgomery County or other jurisdictions? If our usage is lower, we should rethink the library - the space and money can be used for other valuable city services. I use the Montgomery Co. library because its holdings are much larger and I can access all of them via interlibrary transfer. TakPk's collection can't compare.
  - Since there are at least two Montgomery County libraries and the Takoma, DC library close enough for city residents to make use of, I think it's important for the Takoma Park library to distinguish itself (somehow) in what it offers. How is it most-used currently? Can those uses be built upon as strengths? I think it would be hard for our library to compete with the resources the County library seems to have, and I don't think it's a good idea to try to compete in all categories of library use. Have you ever considered becoming one of the County libraries? (Did I just say something verboten?)
  - Without working with other independent libraries, the TPPL content will constantly be behind the county library system...so best to focus on things they do not do
  - Libraries are critically important. But not clear what is different in Takoma versus Montgomery County.
  - Too small and under budget to do much of anything. Either put more resources into to it or use space for another function of value to community - i.e., meeting rooms.
  - I rarely enter the library. I often check the library online searching for a book, I may have found what I was looking for once. I still can't determine if this library has any kind of ebook/overdrive loan services. I end up at MCPL and have getting a DC library card is on my list of things to do.
  - I do think we should consider becoming part of the Montgomery County Libraries system rather than being a stand-alone library. We can still add in additional staffing and programming to keep our library the special gem we all love.
  - The library will not have the funding to compete against the other county libraries, so they should focus on programs specific to the community.
  - Connection with the Montgomery county library loan system

ELEMENTS of
21ST CENTURY PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- Customer driven
- Library as "Destination" *the* place where the community connects and engages
- Inviting, comfortable, spacious, attractive, colorful and brightly-lit facilities
- Flexible adaptive spaces for a variety of service functions e.g. training and conference rooms, lectures, theater, gallery, café and more
- Convenient, transparent access to and delivery of services
- Community resource for lifelong learning and literacy
- Interactive spaces for children ages 0 to 12, encouraging and supporting love of reading, purposeful play, imagination, discovery and learning
- The "happening" place for teenagers - inspiring and supporting learning, creativity and social interaction
- Family spaces for interaction, learning, activities and events
- A resource for adults engaging them through programs, technology and volunteer opportunities
- Collections that are current and responsive to community interests
- Plentiful up-to-date technologies and virtual services; e.g., Wi-Fi, laptops, e-book readers, tablets, downloadable e-content, classes focused on a broad range of digital literacy skills, makerspaces for multimedia content creation, dynamic easy-to-use 24/7 website, resources supporting small business, workforce development, ESL and more
- Building layouts and adjacencies that maximize the customer's library experience
- Facilities designed with future flexibility to re-purpose spaces as community needs change over time
- Service models that maximize the customer experience, foster staff interaction with users, and streamline operations

T1 Visions Touch Table
Photo Courtesy of Agati Furniture: www.agati.com