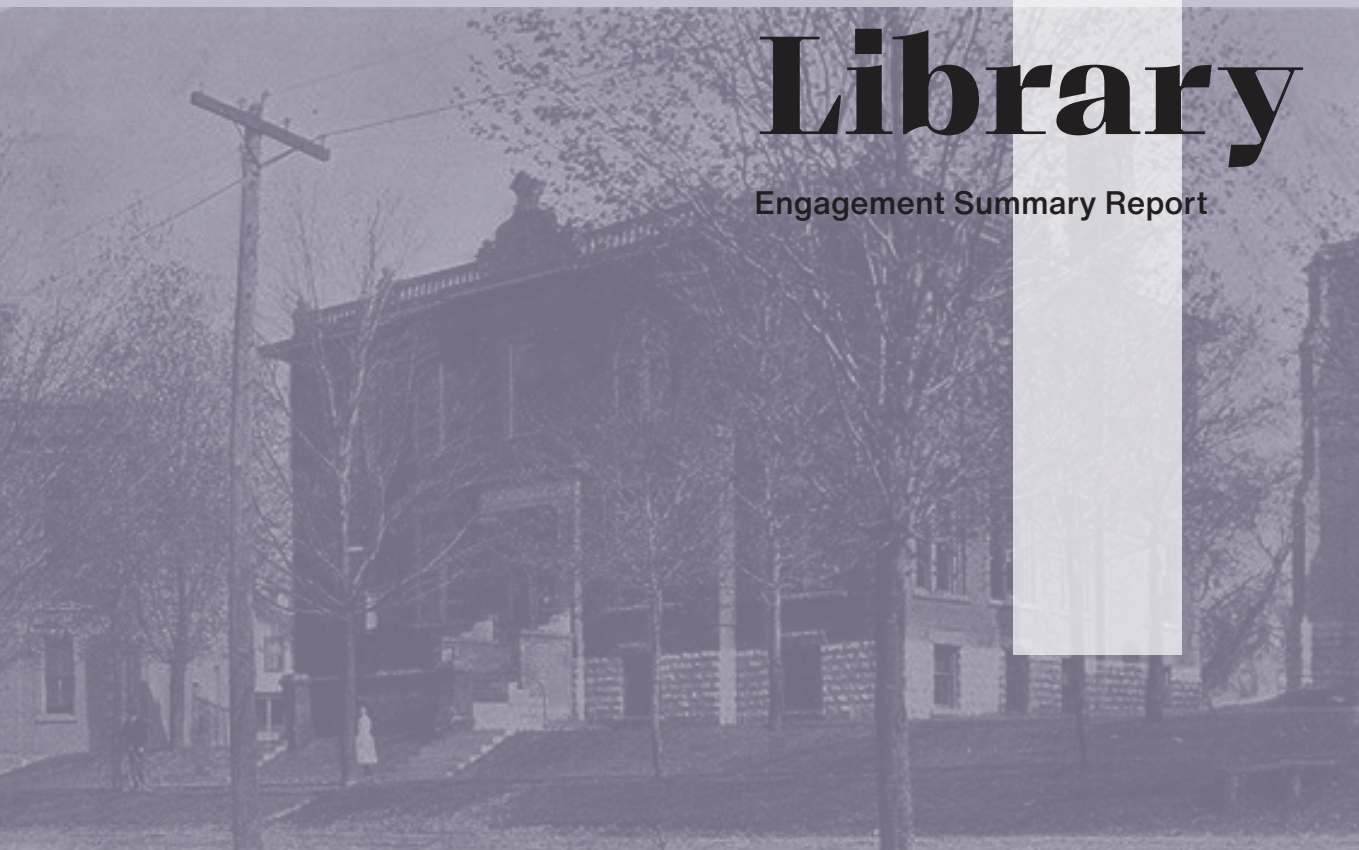


July 15, 2022

Stratford Public Library

Stratford Library

Engagement Summary Report



Land Acknowledgement

As we gather, we acknowledge that we are meeting on the original land inhabited by Indigenous peoples from the beginning.

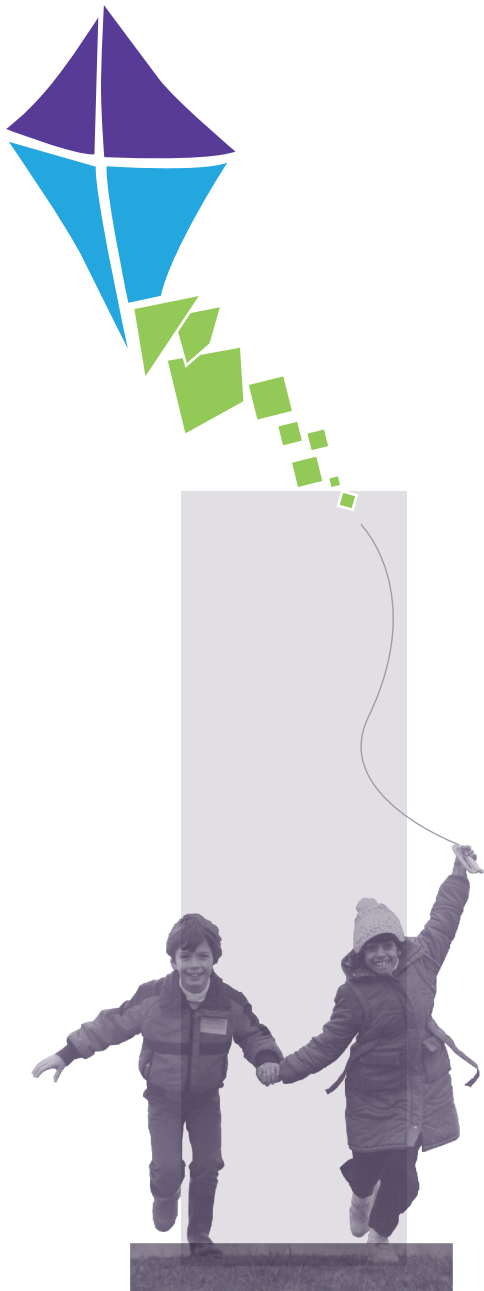
As settlers, we're grateful for the opportunity to meet here and we thank all the generations of people who have taken care of this land since time immemorial.

In particular, we acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee peoples. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties.

We recognize and deeply appreciate their historic connection to this place. We also recognize the contributions of Métis, Inuit, and other Indigenous peoples have made, both in shaping and strengthening this community in particular, and our province and country as a whole.

As settlers, this recognition of the contributions and historic importance of Indigenous peoples must also be clearly and overtly connected to our collective commitment to make the promise and the challenge of Truth and Reconciliation real in our communities.¹

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PEOPLE & CULTURE



SPACE



TECHNOLOGY

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Project Success Factors

People and Culture

- Collaboration between the board and staff, as well as communication or involvement of the community
- Staff will feel like they are heard. Measurable outcomes
- Representation of the community and mutual communication
- Appreciate your guidance and advice to the board. Want to do the best for the staff too
- Community and staff satisfaction
- Belonging
- Community satisfaction
- Looking forward to the future
- Results that tie in current operations with future vision and needs of the community

- It would be helpful if the project was clearly articulated on this survey. I'm guessing improving library services. More full time opportunities - PT employees can feel disconnected from the creation of new programming and services.
- Talk to everyone--EVERYONE--involved in library services and programming. Every little bit of information helps!
- The community would realize and support the Library moving from its downtown location
- Staff would feel as if they have been heard. So staff buy-in for whichever outcome would be high
- If met the needs of the public and staff.
- Staff not being excited about the changes
- Happier staff
- Better communication with all staff
- More consultation with patron-facing staff when making changes to how services are delivered and staff safety concerns when dealing with continually volatile patrons. Staff should not be made to feel they are wrong for wanting certain patrons barred.
- More supports for marginalized members of society that can be accessed in the library immediately. A dedicated telephone that goes to a 24-hour crisis services line (211) and is available near the washrooms would be great.
- A library presence in the neighbourhoods we don't currently reach
- I'm not sure what this question refers to. The strategic planning process? If so, it will be a success if as many segments of the community as possible are able to voice their ideas and concerns, and if the library can act on the ones most prevalent.
- Longer hours, open Fri, Sat, Sun, increased presence in schools and community centres to direct the public to us
- Not sure what the project IS so can't say completely. If gathering info: then listening to all voices is a success. If creating a map to move the library forward, then convincing the city to fund and support the library appropriately is success.
- If staff ideas were considered and some hopefully implemented. If some ideas were taken into consideration is a new facility is ever being built.

Legend

Board Results (left page)

Staff Results (right page)

Project Success Factors

Space

- Broad community and political support for SPL to expand its physical footprint
- Actionable strategy that leads to SPL growth in a sustainable and meaningful way

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| New building, larger budget, better communication between all departments. | The community and city council would realize the overall value of a public library in bringing new families and investment to Stratford; and would fund us (for space) accordingly | The building is being used in very creative ways. Success would be the building continuing to supply what we need for now and in the future. That is a high bar. |
| Make certain all books display a proper description for the public in BiblioCommons. | | |
| This project would be a success I think if a vision for the future of SPL can be achieved. | A new location that is one-floor for accessibility, greater staff communication, better work-flows, collection spaces (with sight-lines), visible but private meeting or study rooms and dedicated programming spaces | I know we are crying for space, but a dedicated area for a largish TV screen, video games, and a couple of beanbags might take some of the demand off the public Internet terminals. |
| I'm unclear as to what the project is, so it is difficult to pinpoint a factor that would equal success. If it's a sustainable library for the future, I would say that a successful outcome would be a new, bigger building with sufficient funding. | Using the feedback submitted to make positive changes. Being bold. Being brave. Being visionary. Build it and they will come. We've proven this in the past, and the community is happy with what we offer. | By finding ways to make more space available to both staff and patrons |
| Finding ways to make more workable spaces | By continuing to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment for all patrons of the library, Stratford, and surrounding areas. | Any convincing evidence to provide to the City re: the liability of potential injury to patrons due to the inaccessibility of the building, the need of more community space given a growing population. |
| Providing a convincing argument to municipal decision-makers that more space is needed for the library. But also, to make the space we have now as functional as possible. | That it would lead to funding for a new library building. | To grow and expand on the solid base we already have established improving in key locations |

Legend

Board Results (left page)

Staff Results (right page)

Project Success Factors

Other

Not sure at this point

Legend

- Board Results (left page)
- Staff Results (right page)

- What is the project exactly?
- I don't know what would make the project a success since I don't know what the project is.
- What is the project? I have not seen an outline of what this survey is about.
- Simplicity
- Simplicity is key!
- Simplicity and tangible results
- To have tangible outcomes. Not just another document that tells us what we already know.
- To grow and expand on the solid base we already have established improving in key locations
- I am not sure how to reply as, it has not been communicated to all staff about what projects this survey is asking about.

Project Success Factors: How will value be measured?

BOARD



STAFF



Understanding SPL: What are you proud of? People and Culture

Friendly staff

Addressing community need

Belonging

Community engagement

Staff. Community engagement. Leadership. Serving everyone across all groups and life stages.

Staff! Ability to "pivot"

Our standing in the community, positive comments from people I know

Our staff go above and beyond to help our clients

Our staff. The innovation in programs. Collaboration with front garden.

Accessible

Variety of programs

Innovation and engagement above our weight

Programming needs Staff

Legend

Board Results (left page)

Staff Results (right page)

I'm proud of the learning opportunities I've been presented with and have taken advantage of from my supervisor in order to better myself, not only as a public servant, but also as a human being.

Our many services and staff

Our reputation in the community, compassion, accessibility, innovation

Staff response to community needs while maintaining an honourable reputation within the city

Meeting the needs of the community & creating smiles

We do our jobs so well people haven't realized how limited we are

Staff are resilient. They creatively found ways to meet needs of community during pandemic. Programs reach a wide variety of attendees. Community called us a "lifeline" even before pandemic.

That we now focus more on the impacts we have than just numbers (ie numbers of card-holders or views or attendance in programs, and instead on how much value we give people)

Committed staff going above and beyond. Main floor staff bear the brunt of social problems in the community.

Continued adaptation

Our move towards programs (esp adult) that are environmentally friendly and promote sustainability

I'm very proud to be apart of the children's summer programming this year. We are doing so many great things for the community and families involved, and I really love that we ensure inclusivity for everyone.

We are progressive, inclusive and caring when it comes to dealing with the public.

What the staff is able to achieve in terms of programs and services.

Staff find creative solutions for overcoming obstacles and challenges.

I am proud that our patrons find genuine value in SPL. It is essential to make our patrons our ambassadors to the larger community, and to help generate support for our cut of the budget.

Programs, people, community

I am proud of the variety of services that SPL offers to the community. The front line staff is very friendly, promotes all programs well and just helps with everyday questions.

Our team gets along with each other and communicates kindly and efficiently

Excellent customer service, supportive/friendly staff, expansion of program options

We are a safe welcoming place. And we mean that. Staff go above and beyond to welcome patrons and help them find what they need.

The work that the staff does with the space and time they are given

I think the team at SPL deliver great services at a phenomenal value to the community. I appreciate my coworkers' willingness to help each other out and their genuine care for their team mates and their patrons.

Programs, People, community relationship.

I am proud that almost everything there is free! You can come and just borrow free things and do free stuff. Also all the programs offered to people.

I appreciate that we have a forward-looking CEO who is willing to try new things and to fight for our support from the city.

Our vision and our capacity to make that vision a reality.

I'm proud of the many unique personalities, talents and views that make up the staff at SPL.

I'm also proud of how hard everyone works here at the Library. Everyone seems to really care about their jobs and the community that they serve and I think that really shows.

Having a strong community presence, a good "brand", and earning the trust of the community.

Our commitment to excellent service, materials, and programming despite setbacks like the pandemic. Our reciprocal borrowing relationship with PCIN. Our efforts to serve vulnerable members of the population with empathy. Our creative staff.

Staff, community connections, programs

So much! First, our friendly, approachable staff who are able to learn and grow with our community.

Customer support

Wide variety of services provided that the community needs

Excellent customer service, respectful work environment, value to the community and patrons.

How friendly and helpful we are to our patrons. How we work as a team. How we make the most out of a sometimes challenging situation - limited space, funds, supplies.

We are able to help most patrons and solve their questions or situations or direct them to a place that can.

Understanding SPL: What are you proud of?

Space



Legend

Board Results (left page)

Staff Results (right page)

- The diversity of books within the library as well as the inclusive and accessible programs the library offers.
- We can provide access to some pretty cutting edge gear and interesting opportunities through the makerspace.
- Making the best use of the building we have
- Pushing the boundaries of what libraries do.
- I'm proud of the services and programming we provide through the Children's, Tween and Teen channels, particularly through the makerspace. In continuing to build on my career here, I'm looking to steer myself in this direction of programming more.
- That we can still function even without adequate funding, staffing or space. That the customers don't suffer from these struggles.
- Staff work hard to create a safe/ inclusive environment which fosters creativity, curiosity and play.

Understanding SPL: What are you proud of?

Technology

* No answers were provided
specific to this topic

Legend

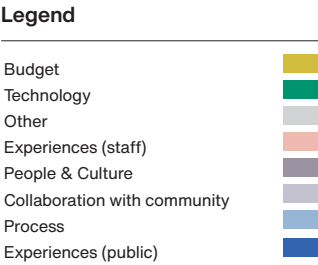
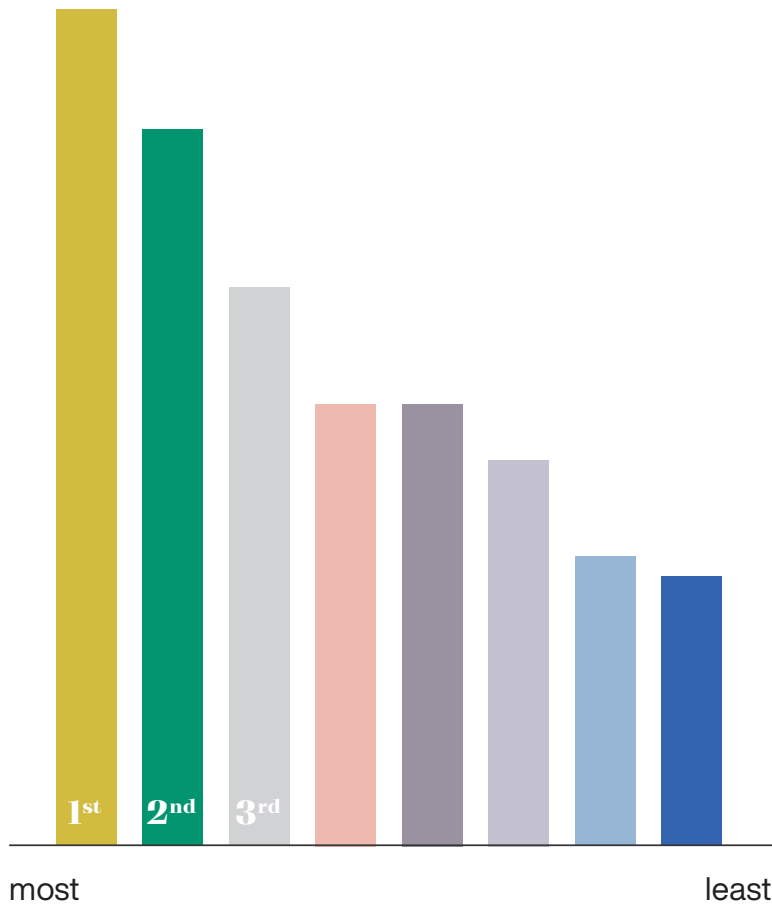
Board Results (left page)

Staff Results (right page)

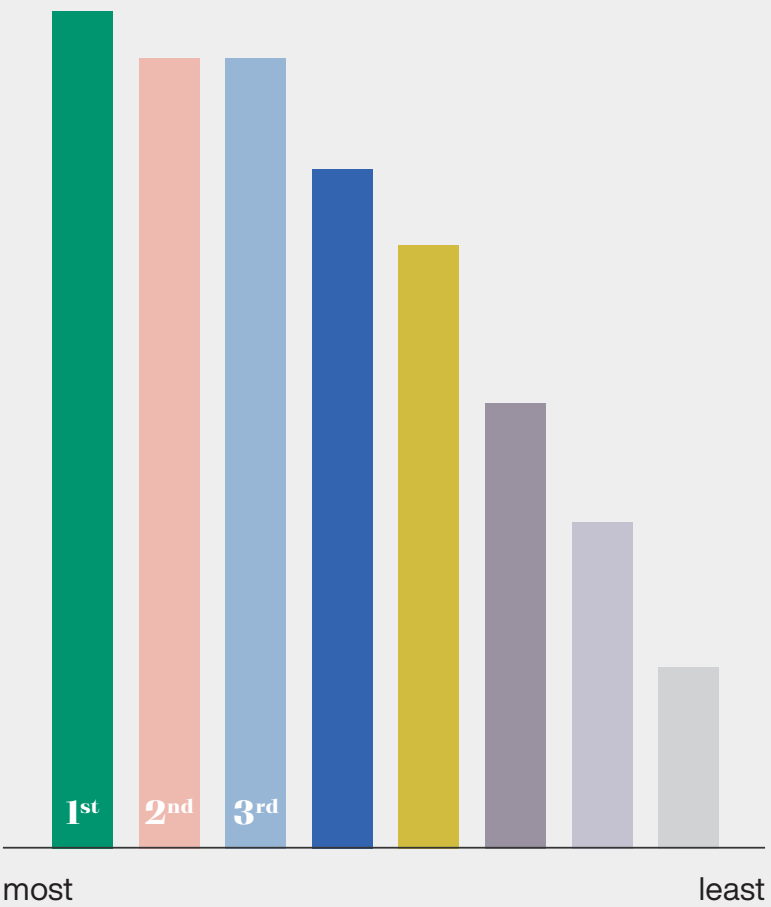
- Staying up to date with technology, equipment and learning
- Excellent tech services and staying relevant with technology and learning

Understanding SPL: What suffers more breakdowns?

BOARD



STAFF



Understanding SPL: How can we fix this?



Legend

People & Culture

Space

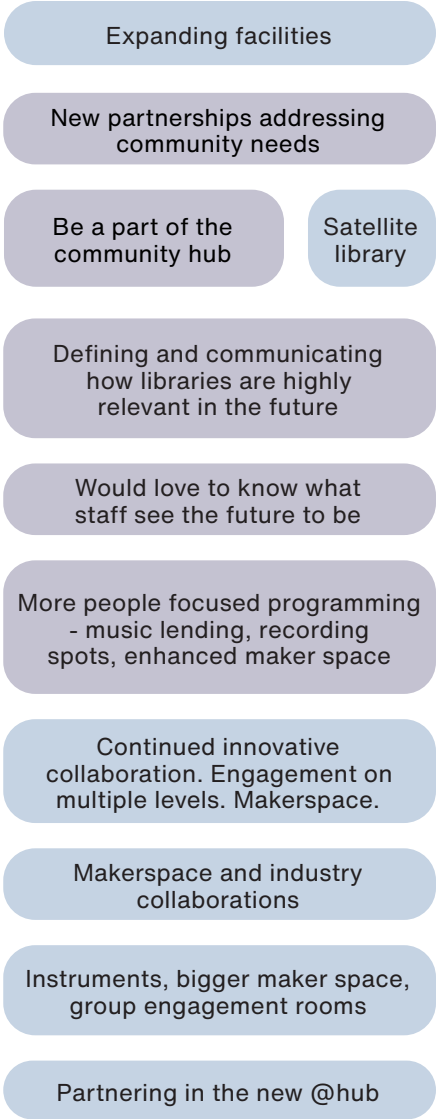
Technology

Board Results (left page)

Staff Results (right page)



Understanding SPL: What are SPL’s future focused objectives?



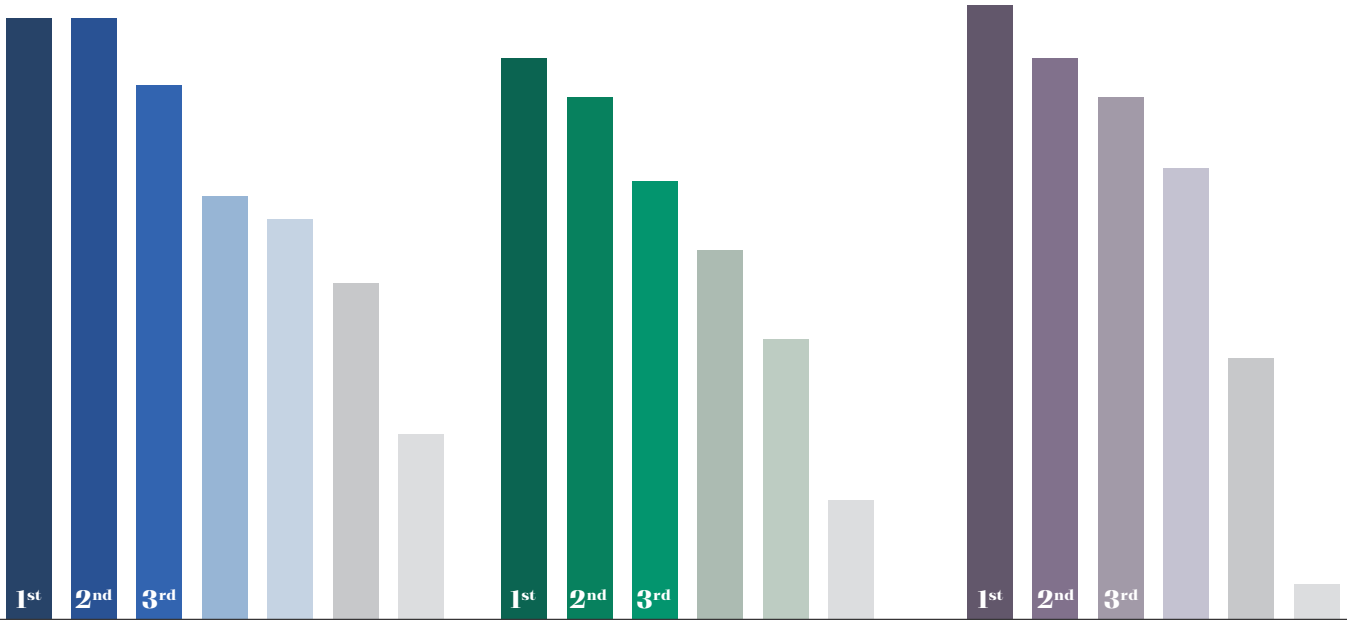
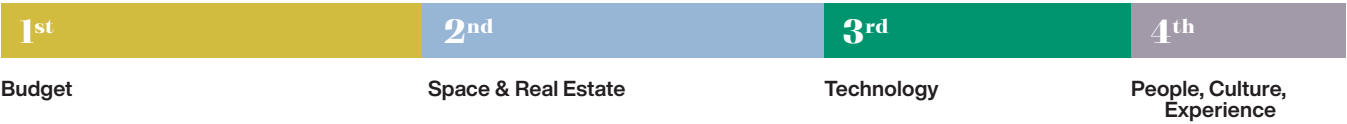
Legend

- People & Culture
- Space
- Technology
- Board Results (left page)
- Staff Results (right page)



Project Priorities

BOARD



Space & Real EstateTechnologyPeople, Culture, Experience

- Space allocation (for the public)

New Build

Integration with other spaces (community, gov't)

Space allocation (for staff)

Consolidated site (one building)

Distributed site(s)

Retrofit (remain in current building)
- New technologies

Public experience with technology

Staff experience with technology

Stack areas transformation (digital, retrieval, etc.)

Hybrid models for programs

Other
- Support services for the community

Equitable and inclusive experience

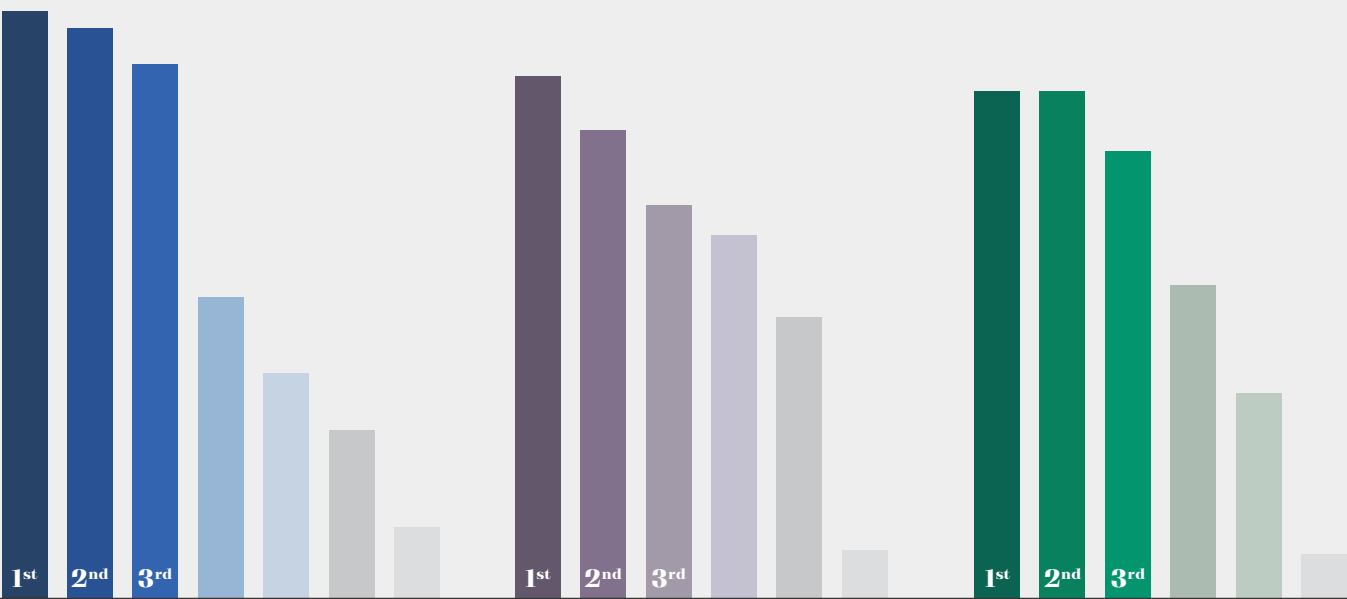
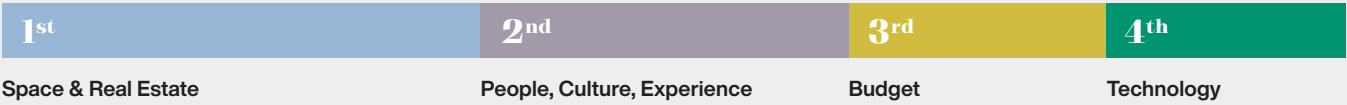
Public experience

Staff experience

Security and safety experience

Other

STAFF



Space & Real EstatePeople, Culture, ExperienceTechnology

- New Build

Space allocation (for staff)

Space allocation (for the public)

Integration with other spaces (community, gov't)

Consolidated site (one building)

Retrofit (remain in current building)

Distributed site(s)
- Equitable and inclusive experience

Security and safety experience

Public experience

Support services for the community

Staff experience

Other
- Public experience with technology

Staff experience with technology

New technologies

Hybrid models for programs

Stack areas transformation (digital, retrieval, etc.)

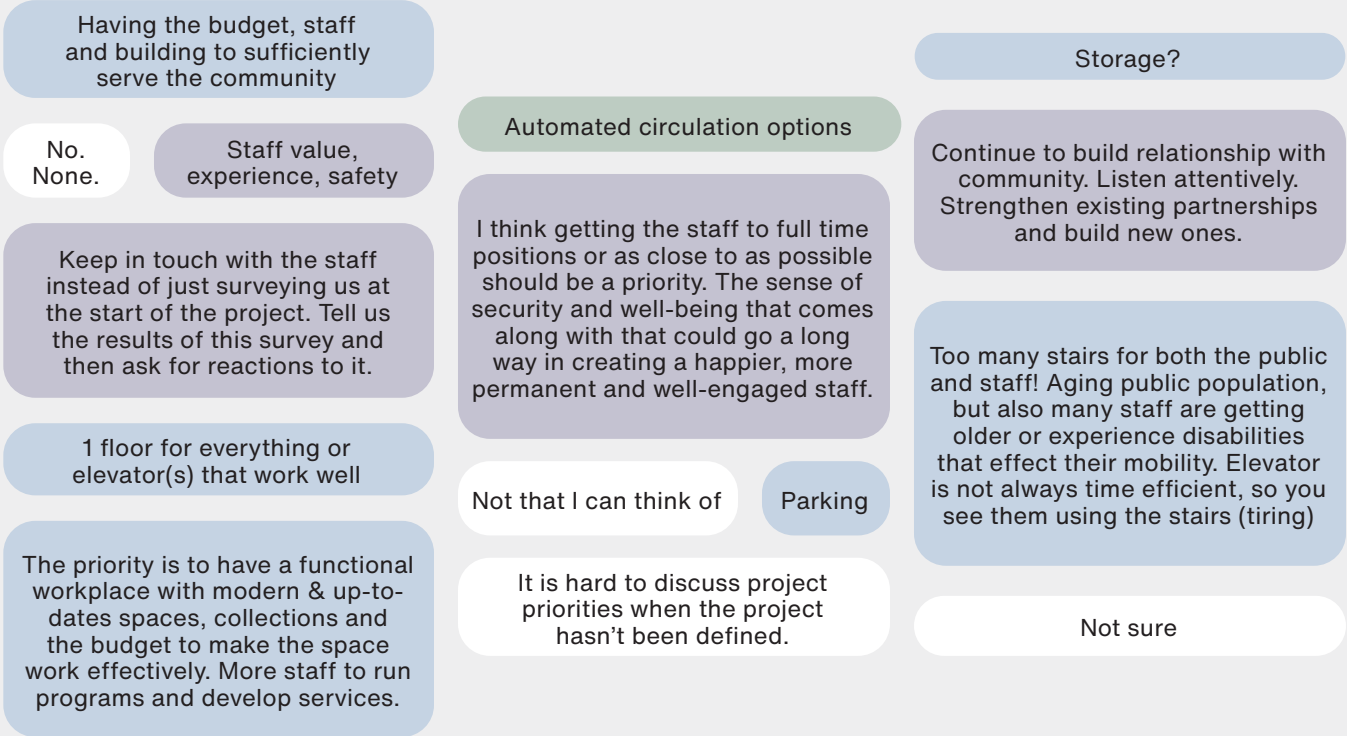
Other

Project Priorities: Any other priorities we want to discuss further?

- Being people focused
- Understanding community needs
- Advocacy for infrastructure needs
- Representing different cultures from community
- Stable long term funding model

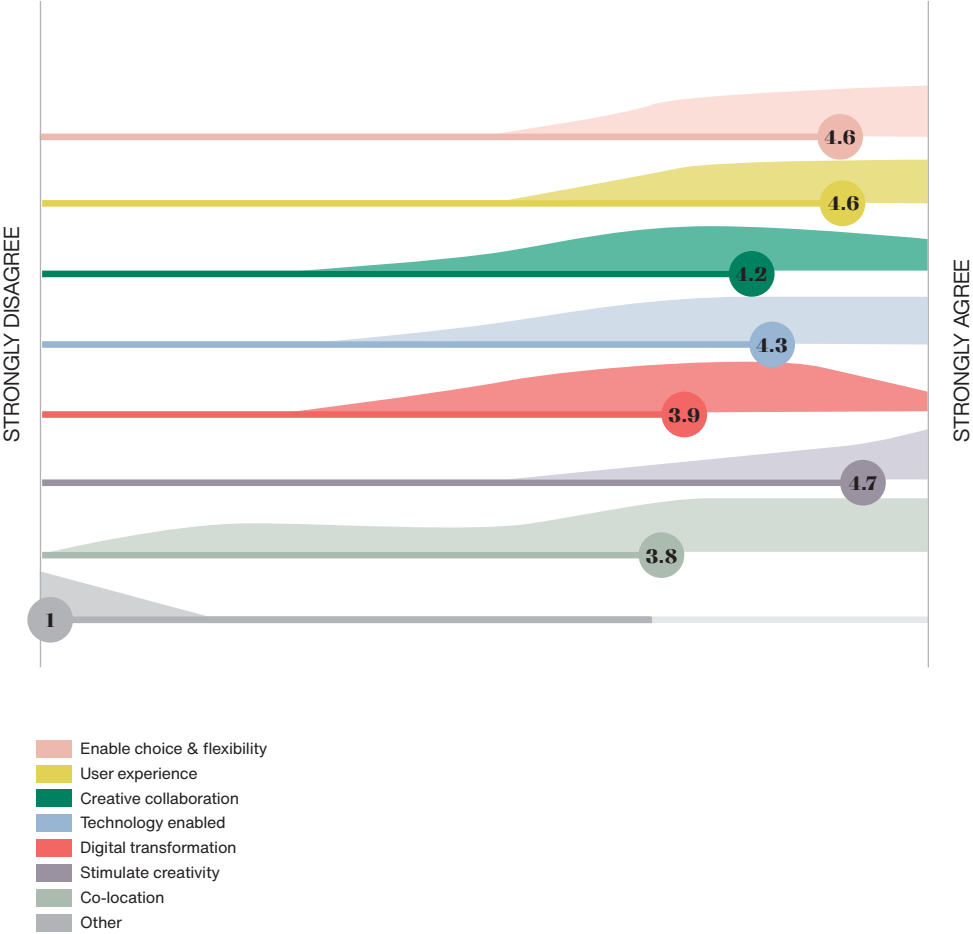
Legend

- People & Culture
- Space
- Technology
- Board Results (left page)
- Staff Results (right page)

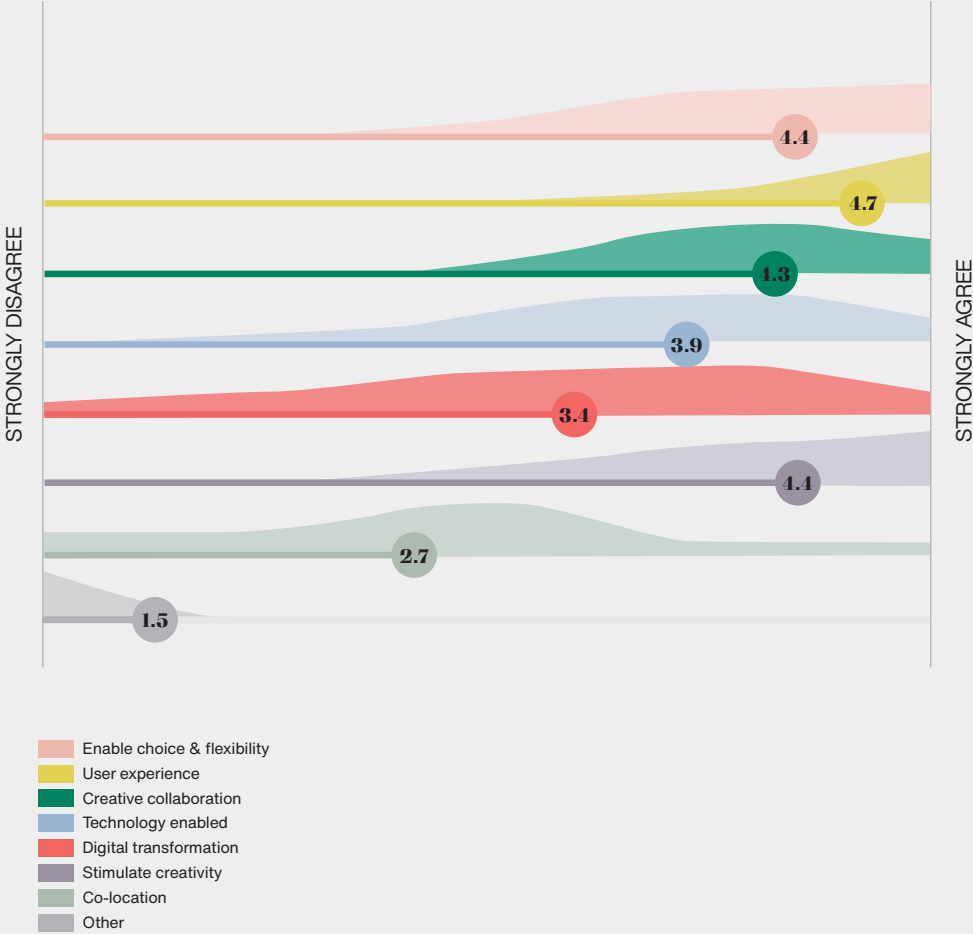


Project Strategies: Which strategies resonate with SPL?

BOARD



STAFF



Project Strategies: Any strategies we want to discuss further?

- Communications, advocacy, promotion in order to deliver services
- Strategies must be innovative but realistic with the concept that SPL can and has delivered services well above our weight
- That the world would live in perfect harmony!!
- How to balance providing needed social services in our community vs core library services.
- Pushing the city to the services they should be delivering
- How do we get non library users interested in the library

- Helping areas of the community that are under-served find value in using the library
- Any building we create or move into should have great ventilation, lots of open space for social distancing and the ability to be easily reconfigured. There will be more pandemics in the future.
- Make the building as green as possible. Make certain to generate as much of our own power as possible, have windows that reduce thermal load from the sun, make certain birds won't crash into the glass.

- Make the building as accessible as possible. No narrow stacks. Keep all service areas at a level accessible to those in wheelchairs, and drop the floor behind them so staff are comfortable. Ensure the library doesn't amplify ambient sounds.
- Future-proof the new building. Make it capable of handling new technologies that may be developed in 50 years time. Run connection boxes in the walls and floors for future connectivity even if we don't have the actual cabling yet.
- No. None.
- Focus on library as an information centre, not a social services centre. Co-location only reasonable if not tied to social services needs.

- If possible, keep the entire library on a single floor. Have doors that automatically open and close for patrons, which staff can close automatically at the end of the day. Have a separate entrance and exit to help with the flow of traffic.
- Have sidewalks and walkways through the parking lot that use waste heat from the building to prevent snow and ice buildup.

Legend

- People & Culture
- Space
- Technology
- Board Results (left page)
- Staff Results (right page)

Project Opportunities

- Make use of all sources of media for outreach. Involve schools.
- People/Intergenerational connection
- Community hub partner would be a future opportunity that may need working on now
- Satellite library closer to schools (with no libraries)
- Incorporating industry, tourism, and the wide assortment of potential user groups that might not have the library top of mind.
- 1.7 million visitors to the city per year. Consider including visitors as part of the community who engage with the library.

Legend

- People & Culture
- Space
- Technology
- Board Results (left page)
- Staff Results (right page)

- I have always wondered why Program Librarians don't have at least one shift on desk so that they can actually mix with the public they are serving.
- I don't think everything will fit in 250 characters but we have planning documents with this information
- Not sure what you mean by project opportunities
- I think we will get much input on grand ideas but what we need is ideas that are based in reality.
- I don't believe these subject lie within my particular wheelhouse.
- Bring SPL to the forefront for this community. Stratford NEEDS a library that will serve them appropriately. This community gets behind things that matter. A library that is free and accessible for all matters. Get that message out there
- More resources (space, staff time) allocated to the makerspace
- Long term goals are important too. While we can't get a new library now, perhaps down the road 15-20 years. Stratford and Perth County is expanding population-wise rapidly. We must keep up with service demands to stay competitive with private sector.
- The scope of this question won't fit in 250 characters
- This will take time. Set goals, and milestones. Dream big and get the community excited.
- There is a separation of Service Librarians (desk staff), and Program Librarians (not desk staff), depending on which role you have, there may be no project opportunities.
- 9-5, IT. Responsible for keeping 3 Libraries up and functional

Wish List

- Accredited self-paced education degrees via the library
- Expanded service, space and program
- Engaging children' space for caregivers to meet up and share their love of books
- Better sustainable budget, more space, larger and more encompassing collection, all members of the public being members & making use of the library ABUNDANTLY HAPPY STAFF
- Collaborating with other social and cultural organizations to develop and share resources and space
- The beer garden out front for book clubs :)
- Community hub built around a library
- A cafe in the library
- That the world would live in perfect harmony!
- Fully rationalized strategy and communication for SPL to grow beyond capacity limits due to space and budget restrictions.

Legend

- People & Culture
- Space
- Technology
- Board Results (left page)
- Staff Results (right page)

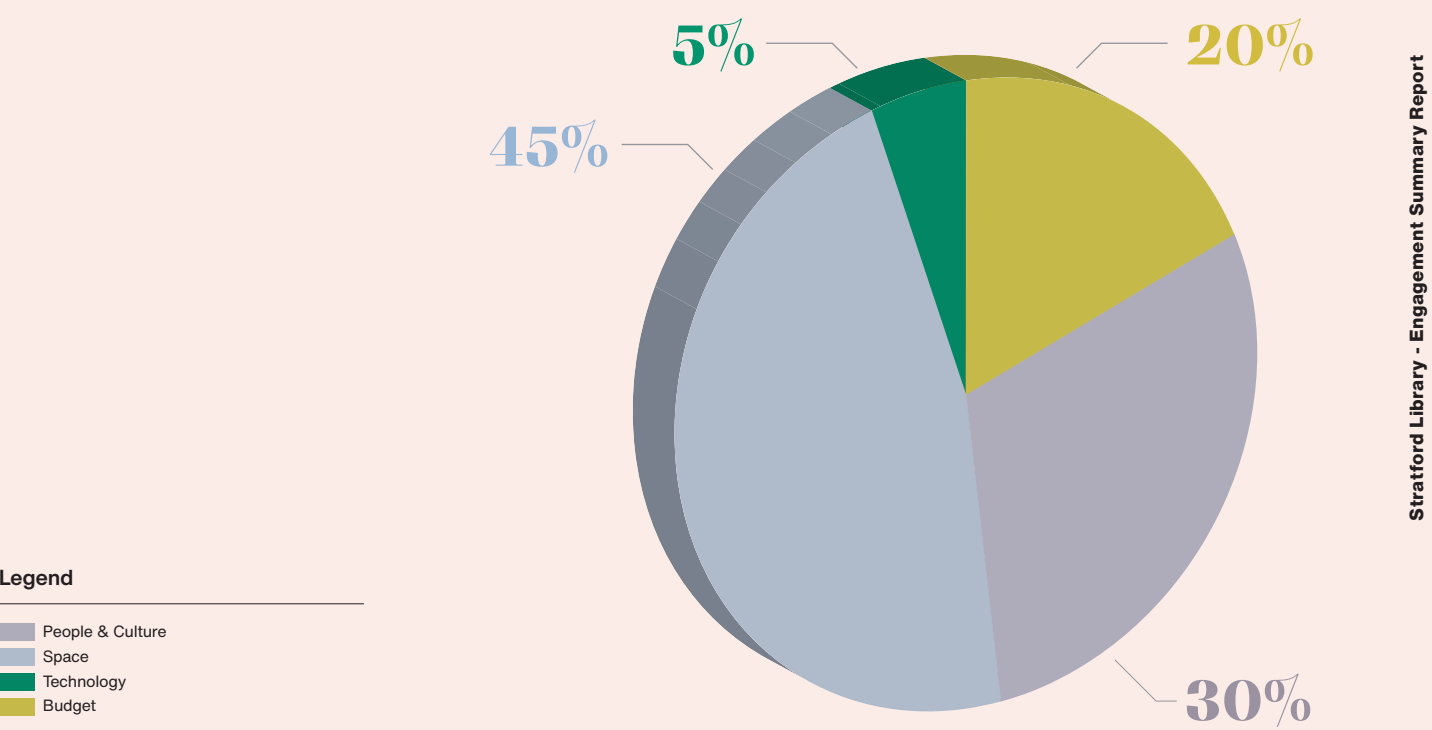
- An upgrade to the elevator.
- More self-serve technology that is user friendly/encourages self-direction (instructions on screen that give clear instructions), more natural light, more space for patrons to take meetings (Zoom and in-person)
- Larger space for the library in general, including parking
- Mobile wifi units for programming staff
- Bike and stroller parking that is not up a hill but visible via security camera
- Way to within the realms of science fiction than could be provided!
- Dedicated programming spaces (small, med and large) PLUS larger maker space
- A larger area for children to gather, read and play.
- Enough room for a deep collection but with shelving units that can be accessible (not too high, sight-lines over and around, books not on floor-level shelves and wide enough to allow wheelchairs/ walkers/ single-kid-strollers) 000 Stroller parking
- All staff office areas on the same floor
- Book drop that goes to a check-in room
- More public washrooms.
- A larger building with ample space for staff to work and provide programs for the community, good circulation work-flow, lots of storage, significantly increasing our collections, increase parking, providing quiet space and semi-quiet (small meetings)
- More kid friendly OPACs (stools we use can present a safety hazard). This would facilitate their browsing experience and digital literacy skills
- Sufficient parking for the public, safe parking for staff
- Larger space allocation for children's programming
- A completely separate lounge area for patrons to truly feel at home comforts.
- New building, increased budget, increased schedule flexibility for staff, more programming for all ages, staff to work shifts for staff who are unable to manage evenings and/or weekends
- New building, desk and bathroom locations that allow for staff surveillance and allow staff to check in with patrons before they use bathroom/get into funny business
- New Building, better parking options for staff and patrons, with better/more physical support for technology, better staff washroom, opportunities to assist with programs rather than having separation of librarians
- New modern building with appropriate space for larger collections, community space (ie: study rooms, public meeting rooms, auditorium), programming spaces, safe and comfortable staff spaces.
- Parking lot (old Legion) is purchased by the City for SPL use. Free parking for patrons and staff
- A window in my office. better ventilation and closed cupboards so my office doesn't look like a computer room blew up in it. Possibly change the layout of my office.

- More full-time positions. A library hosted community day. A monthly Draw for all card-holders. Video Gaming/E-sport potential hosting. Highlight our ability to host local artists and their work and expand this to having shows/openings + recordings
- New building. One story. Lots of community spaces and program spaces.
- Improve staff hrs & roles. There are many elements of library services we could increase & improve with current staff expertise if skilled staff weren't being used as clerks. New positions could cover gaps & allow prof. staff more time for prof. work
- Enough room for everyone, public and staff, so everyone is not piled on each other as visits start to increase
- New city council embraces SPL and recognizes the possibilities and potential.
- I'd wish for us to continue engaging the community with programs and get them around Stratford, not just in the library itself!
- Larger more private space for teens
- A number of separate private meeting rooms for public use.
- Storage space
- Secure bike parking
- Cafe
- Space for strollers
- Staff showers for those using active transportation methods
- More space that can facilitate outreach programs that don't disrupt regular "flow" for patrons who are browsing collection

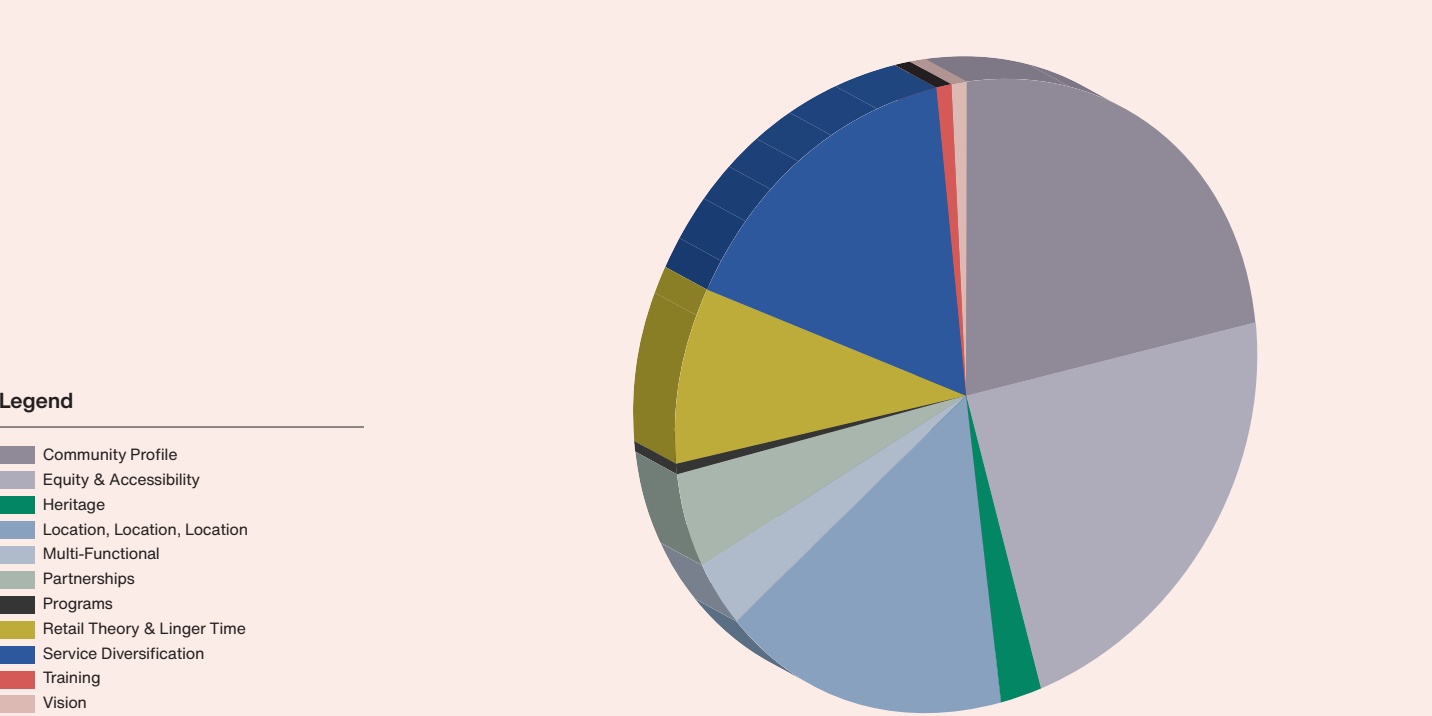
Summary

Engagement Details
3 Focus Groups
Community stakeholders
Staff (programs team)
Political representatives
3 Group Interviews
Executives
People and physical assets
Public service librarians
6 Individual Interviews
Mayor
Deputy Mayor
Councillor
Former board members
Author and Stakeholder
Volunteer coordinator
4 Building and Site Observation Tours
Programs
In-charge staff
Facilities
Library assistants

Priorities Summary



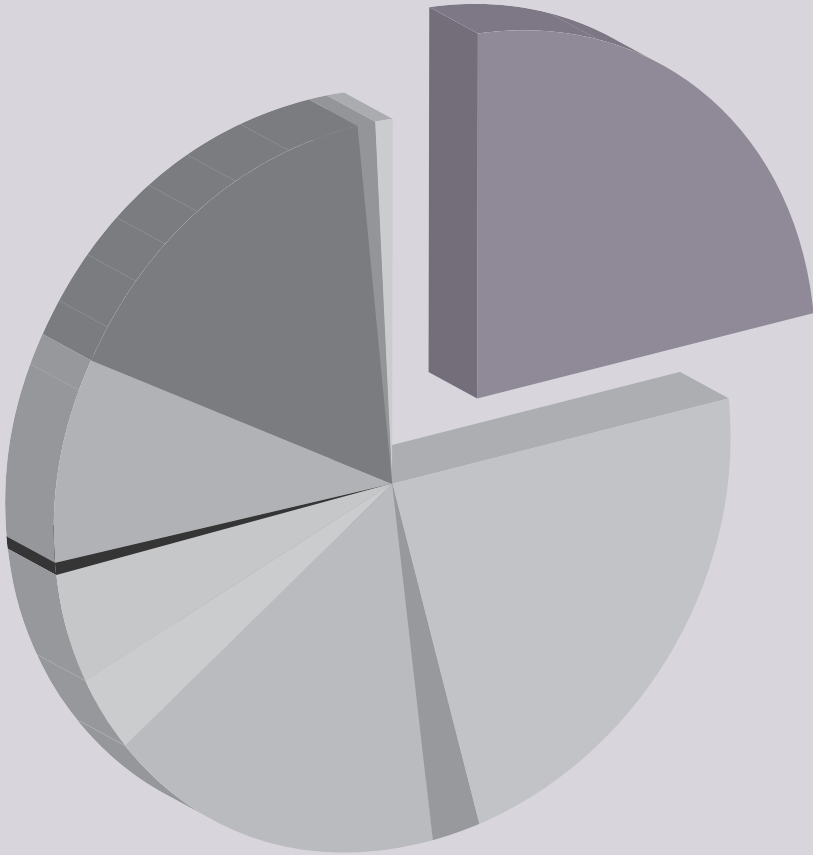
Sub-Themes



Themes

Summary Statements
Positive
How adaptive the library team has been, how the library was able to pivot
It's showing the community that the library is more than just books
The library is valuable because it is accessible for all people, all abilities, independent groups, etc.
Negative
The library board needs to set out a compelling 15 year vision, look at the 2010 & beyond example
Is there a library Foundation? The library should actively cultivate it and donations
The community needs to do more to ensure safety and access / accessibility
Recommendation
The library is doing great, but they could do so much more if they could expand
Engage the 500K theaters goers and the 1.5M visitors Stratford gets per year, gateway to international recognition and support
Tech is great, but COVID proved that people need people

Community Profile



Theme Overview

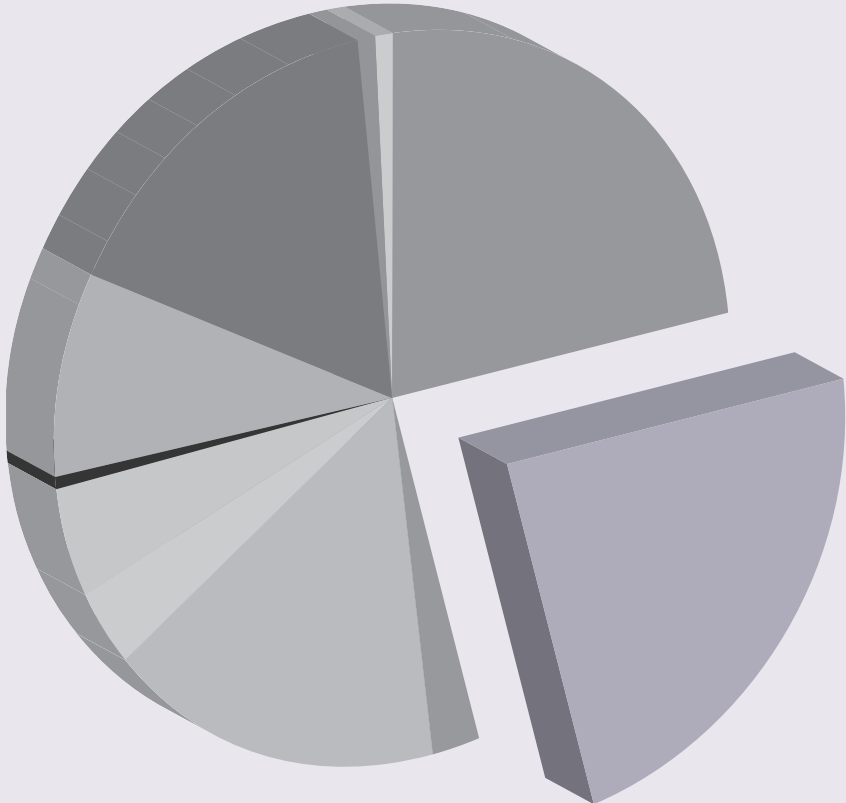
Across all of our engagement sessions the most consistent theme was that the library has an incredibly high profile with the broader Community, the library is seen as being very community focused and the people that we interviewed were impressed and thankful for how the library has leaned into serving all levels of the community and the services that the library continued to provide during COVID. This was common with political representatives, not for profit groups and community members at large. On a practical level multiple stakeholders encouraged the library to activate its fundraising capabilities in order to derive value from this heightened profile to enable its programs and building strategy.

Community Profile

Themes

Equity & Accessibility

Summary Statements
Positive
The library means accessibility and equity for all
We're much more part of the community in the last decade
The Library is a public space
Negative
The placement of services and elements translates to people making assumptions about our priorities, but the space constrains us
The layout of the building makes it hard for us to keep eyes on so that we can pro-actively defuse situations
We need a location that is much more accessible
Recommendation
The library should be able to support local musicians, artists, independent publishers, they are not often given the platform they should
The library needs showers, a space for people to clean up vs. trying to use the sink, includes kids changing between classes
There's an older population in the core, how do we service them? Reflect what they are used too, coming from bigger centres



Theme Overview

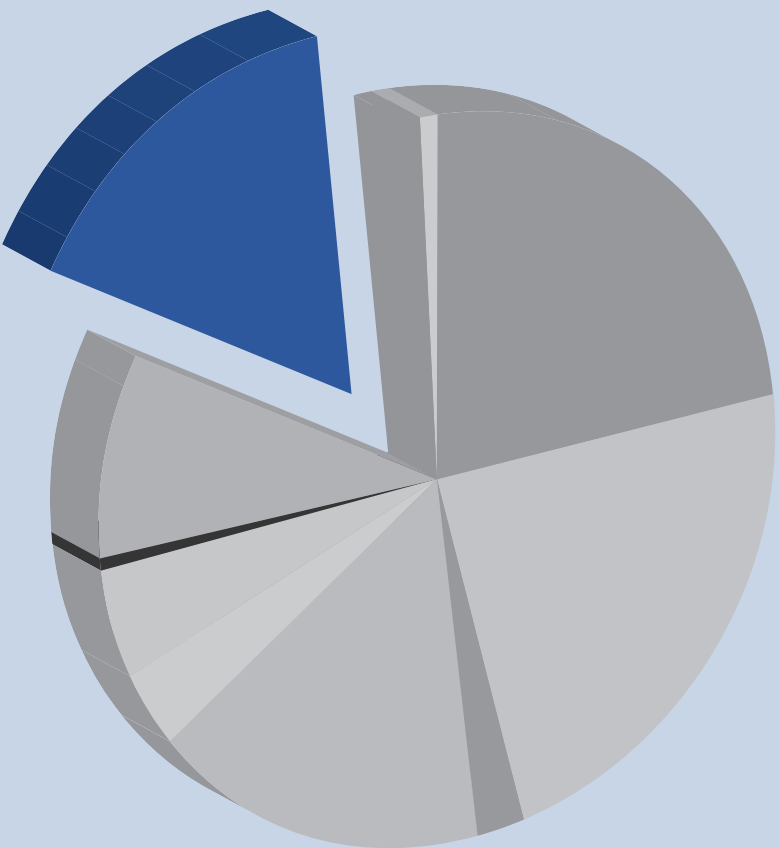
There were two key themes for equity and accessibility, one positive; in that the library is very highly regarded for being a space that is open and accessible to all groups, the staff's support and sensitive handling of under-privileged communities is highly regarded and there was encouragement for the library to continue to engage with and provide space where possible for other groups that are focused on serving these communities and providing access and equity. The other theme was a negative; the current space is viewed by many to have significant issues with accessibility and access from stairs that are too steep, an elevator that is too small, and multiple circulation paths that hinder movement for people that are differently abled. Year over year the current building creates an increasing level of risk as the Ontario Human Rights tribunal in particular is increasingly deciding against buildings and properties that are not accessible and stating that code or current conditions are not enough, the expectation is that organizations be proactive in addressing accessibility issues.

Equity & Accessibility

Themes

Service Diversification

Summary Statements
Positive
The Makerspace location is good as it's visible so people investigate
I love the idea of the library as a space to support creation
Monday Night Story Time; when virtual families missed being able to brows afterwards
Negative
We have to choose between books and programs (db: opportunity with more space for both)
We can't offer anything new, without sacrificing something that already works
The logistics require us to run all over the place, which is time and energy and takes us away from serving clients at the desk
Recommendation
The library could service a need for flexible conference, meeting, and event spaces
The Library should lean into the growing sharing economy
Don't make it all digital and tech based, human contact and interaction is still key

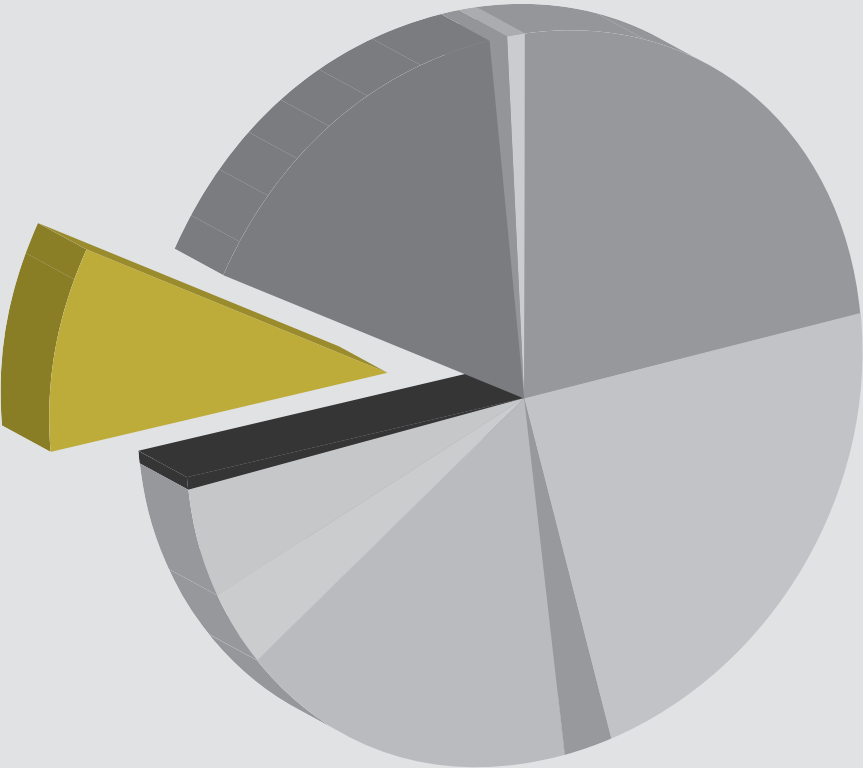


Theme Overview

A key message was the support from the majority of our engagement group that the library has and should continue to lean into providing a variety of services and programs beyond books. While the collection remains a core component the decision to lean into providing equitable and accessible services for the under-privileged, entrepreneurs, wellness and community were supported by 99% of people that we spoke with. Respondents also encouraged the library to pursue a space strategy that allows it to provide even more services and public spaces like, music & recording places, a more diverse lending library for tools, technology, and instruments, as well as public meeting spaces and a theatre and music venue that is assessable to the community for individuals that can't afford the market rates in other spaces.

Service Diversification

Summary Statements
Positive
My daughters school was very crowded, she used to come to the library to get quiet space
I love the way that the auditorium is more flexible
Daughter even used the library to change between dance class and other activities
Negative
We have to toss / cull books that still have value because we have no room on the shelves
Think of the 14 year old who loves 'airplane' and will discover and read every airplane book on the shelf, because we have to cull so much they end up discovering everything very quickly and then their done
Teenagers when they come the noisy outnumberers that quiet
Recommendation
Find ways to leverage the visitor revenue to feed your local services
Increase linger times with target demographics
The Normal School site would provide opportunities to link into the speaker series + knowledge series (forum series)



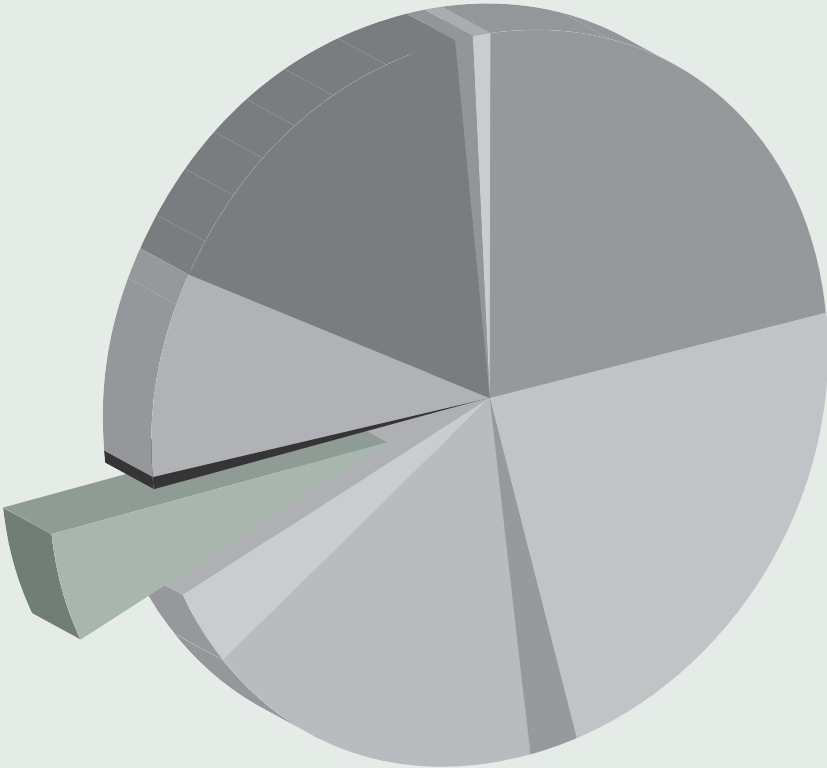
Theme Overview

There was a general understanding that the library is doing the best it can with the space that it has, however many respondents encouraged the library to pursue a space strategy that will allow it to provide more retail and service options. This included more space for the stacks to increase the size of the collection and allow more browsing and discovery, as well as to encourage a more diverse users to come to the library and capitalize on opportunities to derive revenue from retail, and food service from the 1M+ tourists that visit Stratford every year. Ideas that were discussed positively were a café + book store, a speakeasy, space would highlight local authors and art, as well as more program and meeting spaces for external users to book.

Themes

Summary Statements
Positive
Library has done well to bring council along - lots of credibility
Negative
There is an inability to work collaboratively as an external partner in this building, there's no space
Room to grow is a necessity not to die
Recommendation
Partner should be very aligned with the values of the library, not a brand-wash
Private interests can't dictate what is going to happen, they need to be willing to benefit from the library's great stature and community support
Free little libraries, could the library partner with that group as an option to deploy books that get weeded?

Partnerships

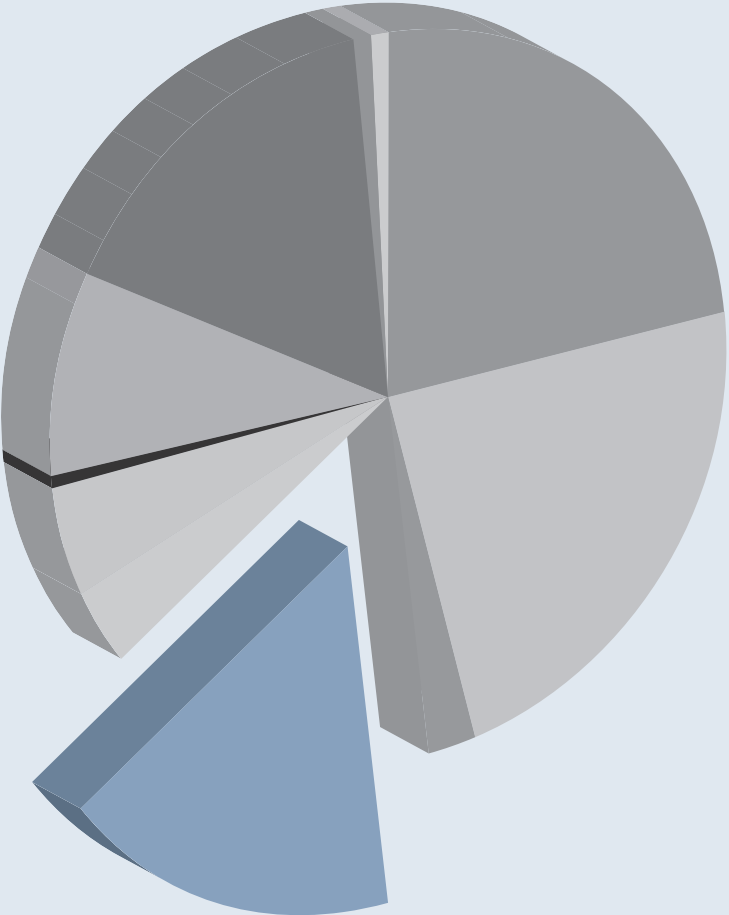


Theme Overview

The library was recognized for and encouraged to continue to lean into more partnerships, this was encouraged in particular by the political representatives and not for profit stakeholders, in arts, culture, and community. On a political level it was stated that a “Come to the Council table with other partners and support, makes getting what you need more likely.” The ability to house these groups within the library was also seen as a way to increase both profile and provide more support for funding. It was also highlighted that partnerships and programs that support Wellness and Mental health are a large focus right now. Commercial partnerships were seen as something that could be considered, but the partner would need to be acceptable on a political level. There was also an encouragement to find a more permanent or tangible way to recognize fundraisers or donors, perhaps paving stones, or bricks etc. however there was a consistent view that naming rights were not encouraged.

Partnerships

Summary Statements
Positive
I love the location of this library, its an anchor of downtown
The Art program is nice in that it livens up what would be empty walls
I love the location being downtown and part of the downtown community
Negative
The projected population growth, and that we're the feeder / hub for the surrounding communities makes this critical
We have no room to grow, the building is limiting everything
There is no way to expand the physical building, the site is too constrained
Recommendation
The library needs to have access to outdoor space
We need room for Indigenous communities within these community spaces
The downtown site can continue to exist as a satellite but the Normal School has room to grow



Theme Overview

In our engagement sessions there were many discussions around the location of the library, many stakeholders expressed that the downtown location and heritage quality of the existing library was desirable, however there was also a consistent recognition of the constraints presented by the small site and lack of parking. The mayor suggested that there could be counter effects in public opinion and community profile if the library were to leave the existing location at a primary activity anchor of downtown. While many stakeholders suggested the Cooper Site as an option, further investigation and interviews outlined multiple constraints with this site, including the ongoing legal issues from the expropriation, and a need to re-do the masterplan as the current 'civic centre' programming doesn't include enough residential density. In addition, the costs and optics of a net new library build and pre-existing first rights to the site from other stakeholders all make the site problematic.

There were consistent themes across all interviews that the Stratford Public Library needs more space, better parking, direct access to park spaces, space for indigenous programing, and co-location with other social services. Many stakeholders suggested that the library consider a second, or new primary location that could service many of these additional needs in another part of town with the current site remaining as a branch. Suggestions were made around co-shared sites with the sportsplex, the high schools, or a mall location were all presented, and will be explored. The Normal School building in Upper Queen's Park, was presented as a prime option to explore that would allow SPL the space to grow and become a 'central library' for the PCIN because it is a city owned asset located at a primary activity anchor, providing access to parking, parkland, and an opportunity to harness fundraising and retail traffic from the theatre traffic. The building is also in need of a new tenant after the departure of the Museum and the theater festival's temporary occupant status.

Citations

1 “Ever. Wonder.: Stratford Public Library,” Ever. Wonder. | Stratford Public Library, accessed July 13, 2022, <https://splibrary.ca/>.

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