Hamilton Public Library's 2022 Community Survey Results

Understanding the Library's Value to Hamilton Residents

Truth and Reconciliation Land Acknowledgement

The City of Hamilton is situated upon the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. We further acknowledge that this land is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. Today, the City of Hamilton is home to many Indigenous peoples from across Turtle Island (North America) and we recognize that we must do more to learn about the rich history of this land, so that we can better understand our roles as residents, neighbours, partners and caretakers.

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Introduction

The City of Hamilton is a diverse, growing City of 584,000 people bordered by Lake Ontario between Toronto and Niagara Falls.

The Hamilton Public Library (HPL) is a vibrant hub for information and culture, providing our diverse community the Freedom to Discover. As one of the largest Library systems in Canada, Hamiltonians will discover something new at one of our 23 Branches, Library Bookmobile, and through our extensive digital collections.

HPL strives to work collectively with the community and our partner organizations to promote and contribute to the health, education, prosperity and social cohesion of the communities we serve. Setting direction through its Strategic Plan is a key priority for the HPL Board. This report highlights Community Survey results designed to engage with residents of Hamilton to help inform the Hamilton Public Library's 2023-2025 Strategic Plan.

Survey results assist HPL's planning and direction. The results are a valuable tool used to build on, strengthen and establish new commitments to support Hamilton and its communities. They inform us about where we are excelling, where we can improve and how we can better meet the needs of residents through Library services and programs.

In seeking the public's input, HPL's survey put into action our values of Intellectual Freedom, Inclusiveness, Innovation, Respect and Accountability. The intention of this survey was to learn from residents about the general importance of libraries in communities, the importance of current Library services, and specific HPL direction.

Methodology

The survey was translated from English into French, Arabic, Chinese, Punjabi, and Spanish. Respondents chose to answer the survey in any of the six languages on paper or electronically. The surveys were shared through all HPL Branches, the Bookmobiles, on HPL's social media accounts, through City of Hamilton channels and the newly elected City Councillors, through local newspapers both in print and digital formats, as well as by our partner organizations throughout the city.

To encourage participation, people were eligible to enter a draw for one of 10 iPads. HPL staff were not eligible to win. The iPad winners were randomly selected, and the iPads were awarded in December 2022.

All scaled questions (e.g., those that ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree) were summarized and analyzed using a weighted average to determine the percentage of respondents that "agree" with the statement. In weighted average each response is given a value (weight) based on the scale range. For example, 1 for Strongly Disagree, 2 for Disagree, 3 for Agree and 4 for Strongly Agree. These values are turned into a percentage of the responses by multiplying the number of responses to each weight value, adding the values up and then dividing by the total number of responses to the question.

Open ended questions "how has COVID-19 impacted your usage of the Library" and "how can HPL better serve you" were analyzed using a multi-step thematic approach. Themes were generated through the process of reading the responses; no themes were decided beforehand. Responses were read through and coded by two HPL staff members. The initial codes were then collated and sorted into distinct themes. The themes are detailed and described within this report. Quotes have been used throughout the report to emphasize the themes and support the importance of the work from the view of our respondents. Only a selection of responses is presented here.

Who Spoke Up

There was a total of 4,962 responses to HPL's Community Survey. The survey reached a variety of Hamiltonians from across the city, including representation from each Branch.

Figure 1 illustrates the proportion of responses that were collected from residents in the catchment area of each of HPL's 23 Branches. The fewest responses were received from residents around the Lynden Branch, and the largest proportion of responses were received from residents that live in the catchment area of the Central Library. Some survey respondents (2.4%) lived in communities and cities close to Hamilton but outside of HPL catchment areas. Nearly 2% of the surveys received were from individuals who did not have a fixed address or did not provide a valid postal code.

Branch Catchment Response Rate
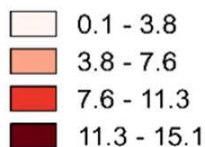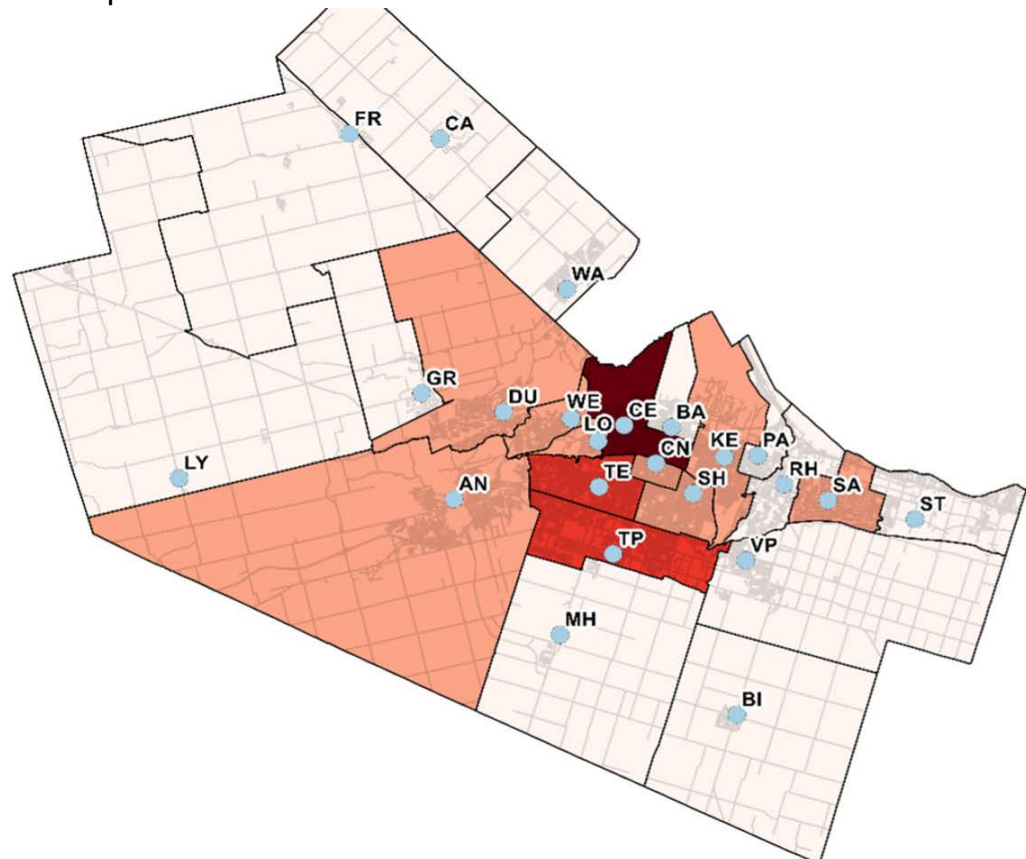
Figure 1: Percent of survey responses by Branch Catchment Area

Age

The age of survey respondents is similar in proportion (for a few groups) when compared to the City of Hamilton, based on the 2021 Canadian Census. There are

some important differences: in the City there is a greater proportion of young people (18-24 & 25-34) and much older people (75+) than responded to this survey. We received responses from a greater percentage of people aged 35 to 44 and 65 to 74 than reside in Hamilton.

Table 1: Percent of survey participants and City of Hamilton residents in each age group

Age Range	Survey	Census	Difference
18-24	5.2%	10.7%	-5.5%
25-34	14.9%	17.8%	-2.9%
35-44	21.8%	16.1%	5.7%
45-54	14.8%	15.4%	-0.6%
55-64	17.9%	17.2%	0.7%
65-74	17.8%	12.7%	5.1%
75+	7.5%	10.0%	-2.5%

Educational Attainment

The proportion of survey respondents with a post-University degree is over 2 times greater than the proportion living in the City of Hamilton. Survey participants were highly educated people with over 75% reporting their highest education attained as a College diploma, University Degree, or post-graduate University degree. The lower representation among survey respondents with less than high school was expected as the rate provided by the Census is for those individuals 15 and over.
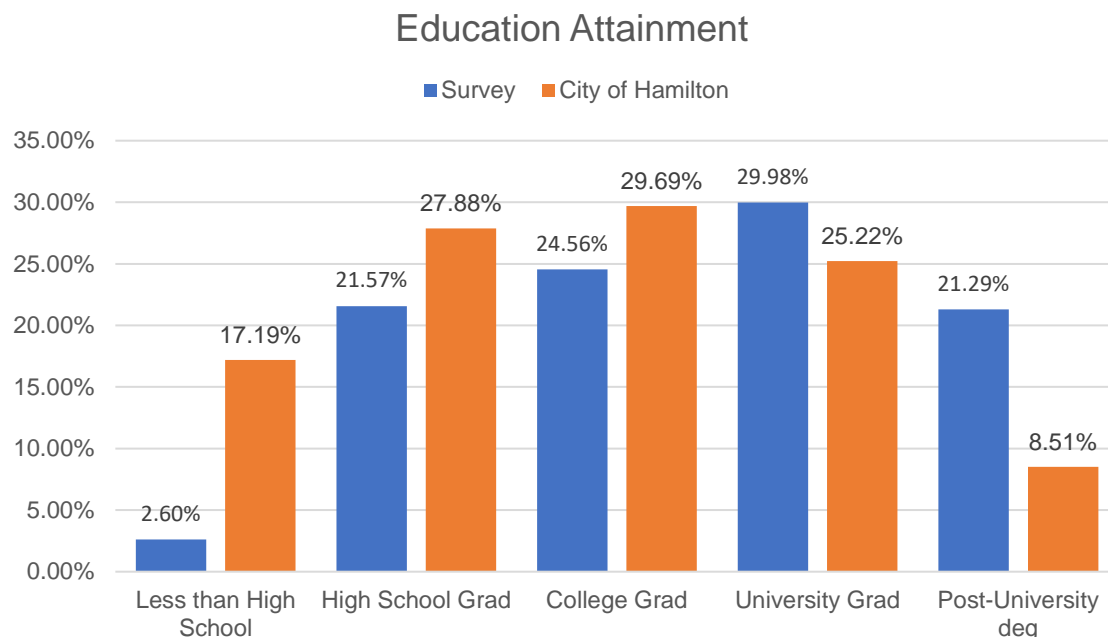
Figure 2: Percent of survey respondents and City of Hamilton residents' highest level of education attained

Children in the Household

Many participants (66%) do not have any children under the age of 18 living in their home. Among those households with children, 22% report having children 12 and younger, and 6.9% report children 13 to 17. Five percent of respondents reported children in both age groups within their household. Respondents of every age group indicated having children in the household. The highest proportion of households with children is those age 35-44 (71.6%) and the lowest is those aged 65 and older (2.7%). Respondents aged 45-54 are slightly more likely to have children of both age groups (12.5%) than respondents of any other age group.

Children in the Household
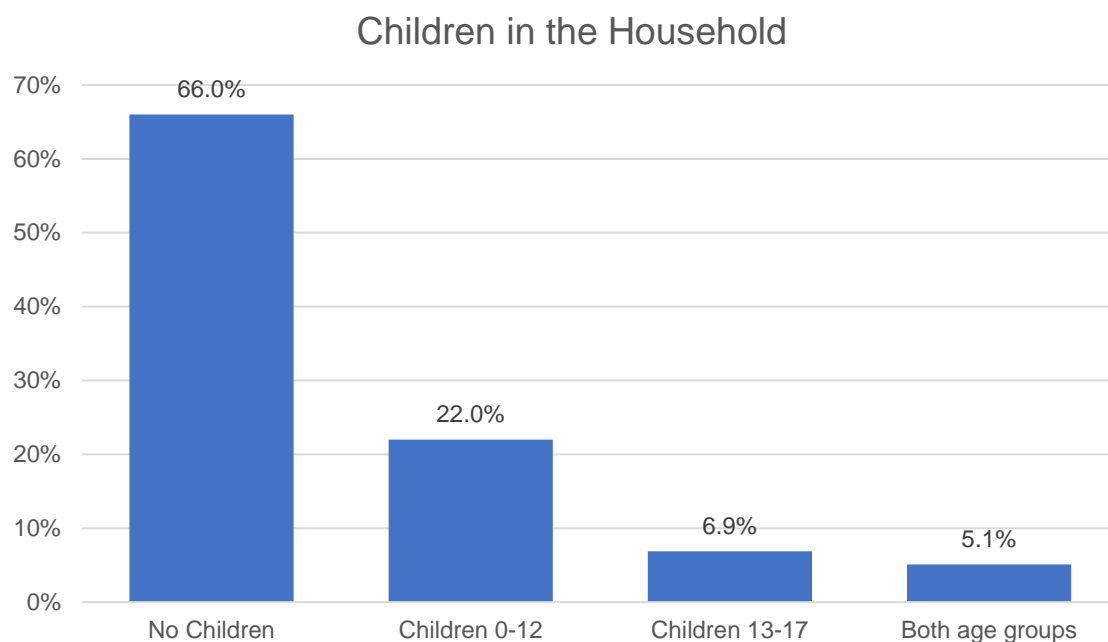
Figure 3: Percent of Survey respondents with or without children living in their household

Length of Residency

Survey participants were asked how long they have lived in Canada. This measure provides an indication of how many people were Newcomers (lived in Canada for 10 years or less). Six percent of participants indicated that they were Newcomers to Canada. Newcomers tend to be younger than residents who have lived in Canada more than 10 years, with 78% being under the age of 45. They are less likely to have a college degree (10.6%) and more likely to have high school diplomas (8.3%) or post-university degrees (29.4%).

Primary Language at Home

Ten percent of survey respondents reporting speaking a language other than English as their primary language at home. There were 77 different languages reported; some people suggested they spoke English and another language equally at home. The most frequent other language spoken primarily at home was French. Figure 2 shows the top 25 reported languages. Over 50% of Newcomers report speaking a language other than English at home, while only 7% of long-term residents.

Figure 4: Top 25 languages other than English spoken at home

What we Heard

Community Activity

When asked how frequently participants visited different types of community venues around the City, the public Library was the most likely place that people visited multiple times a month followed by community centres and shopping malls. Art galleries or museums and sporting events were the least frequently accessed venues by participants, with most saying they go once a year or less.

When asked specifically if they had visited a Hamilton Public Library Branch in the past year 86.9% said that they had.
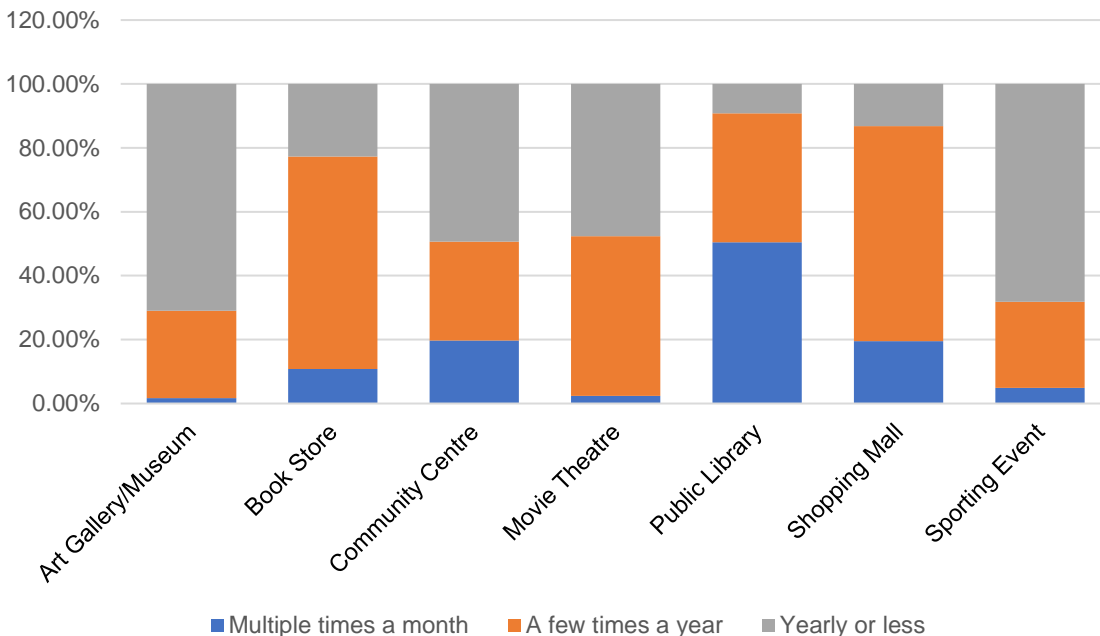
Figure 5: Number of times survey respondents visited specific community spaces in past year

COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic changed our lives and our workplaces. The Hamilton Public Library closed our doors for a period in 2020 like many other organizations. Despite this, HPL worked to adapt Library services to continue to provide support to the residents of Hamilton. We may be through some of the worst times of COVID-19 but HPL continues to work to support and respond to residents' needs as we move on.

We wanted to understand how our efforts may have supported the residents of Hamilton, and how COVID-19 may have impacted respondents' use of the Library. Participants were asked about their level of satisfaction with HPL's ability to support

them during COVID. HPL was highly successful at positively impacting residents' well-being (84.6%) and providing a positive connection to the community (82.5%). The Library was less successful at providing access to the Internet during the pandemic (74.4%).

Table 2: Satisfaction with HPL's support during COVID-19

Topic	% Satisfaction
Have a positive impact on your well-being	84.6%
Provide a positive connection to community	82.5%
Help support an interest or hobby	80.3%
Access information about COVID	79.1%
Help to reduce social isolation	77.7%
Provide access to the Internet	74.4%

The youngest respondents of the survey (age 18-24 years) were the least satisfied with HPL's support of access to information (75.8%), providing a positive connection to the community (79.7%), and having a positive impact on their well-being (82.6%). Respondents aged 25-34 felt the least satisfied with the support in reducing social isolation (76.6%).

When examining satisfaction with support during COVID by educational attainment, the only statement with a wide range in values was providing access to the Internet. There is a linear pattern based on educational attainment with the highest level of satisfaction being among individuals who have not graduated from high school (81.4%) and satisfaction decreasing as education increases, to a nearly 10 percent drop for those with post university degrees (70.8% satisfaction).

Impact of COVID on Library Usage

Participants were also asked to comment on how the COVID pandemic impacted their use of the Library. More than a quarter of respondents (27%) mentioned that the pandemic had little or no impact on their interactions with the Library or did not change their use of the Library. The remaining responses could be classified into five broad thematic categories each with several sub-themes. In some cases, respondents commented on a few topics across multiple themes. The other themes that emerged from the responses were: (i) Changes in Access to Library Services, (ii) Visits to Library Branches, (iii) Well-being, (iv) the Value of Libraries, and (v) comments around HPL and Government Policies.

i. Impact of COVID-19: Changes in Access to Library Services

Within this are comments about increasing or decreasing the usage of services "[i]f anything I used the Library more than ever". People report they changed how they used

the services, with some saying they have found other ways to access reading and viewing material than using HPL's resources.

> *"Stopped going because it was closed most of time. Bought books online."*

> *"Bought books at second hand stores"*

> *"Also used Netflix instead of getting blu-rays [sic] at the library."*

Some said that they reduced their usage at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic because of the pandemic but have returned to or are increasing their usage as COVID becomes less of an issue. COVID had a positive effect on many in that they found they had more time and therefore they started reading or significantly increased their reading and as a result they are accessing HPL's resources more.

> *"It has increased my use. It was one of the only places I could look forward to walking with my newborn and accessing a space for free and safely during COVID"*

> *"I started using the library because of the pandemic."*

> *"I found myself reading more than ever throughout the pandemic. I decided to get myself a library card during this time!"*

Several participants indicated that they started to use or now have a greater reliance on eBooks or audiobooks or other online resources that HPL offers.

> *"Started to use e-books. Now using them regularly."*

> *"I continued to use the services during COVID and especially during the lockdown it encouraged me to use the online programs such as Hoopla and Kanopy."*

> *"I have used more audiobooks since I'm getting my exercise by going for long walks"*

> *"I used online resources more. I loved that I could download more titles, for longer time periods and that you had partner libraries so I could have access to more ebooks and audiobooks."*

> *"I'm now hooked on audiobooks while working and driving."*

Respondents also indicated they placed more holds on physical books to pick them up rather than spending time browsing for books. Less physical browsing and more online

browsing was used; respondents then placed a hold and had the material delivered to their local Branch.

> *"We mainly reserve books online now, instead of browsing in person."*

> *"Lorsque nous avons pu avoir les livres physiques, j'utilisais souvent les services de "holds" pour aller chercher mes livres près de chez moi." [When we were able to have the physical books, I often used the "holds" services to pick up my books near my home.]*

Participants were appreciative of HPL's flexibility in attempting to transition and continue to provide services during COVID. They really appreciated the services that were developed because of COVID, including the Grab and Go bags, Friendly Calling, and curbside pickups. HPL's Grab and Go bags provide members a chance to try something different; staff members pick resources based on information provided by the Member, often providing the Member an opportunity to potentially discover new authors and movies in the genres they enjoy. HPL staff reached out to seniors 75 years of age and older through Friendly Calling at the start of the pandemic to combat feelings of isolation and keep them engaged. Interested Members received a weekly check-in call from Library Staff and volunteers.

> *"When we were in lockdown, I was contacted by a librarian to see if there was anything they could do to help me with the isolation."*

> *"New programs like the Grab and Go Bag have become favourites of mine!"*

> *"I used the program where librarians chose 10 books for my kids when I told them their interests and they would email when it was time to pick up. They nailed it every time! What an awesome service!"*

> *"During the pandemic, I started using the HPL Grab and Go bags, which was a fantastic experience for me, and for my elderly mother. We enjoyed seeing what the librarians would choose based on our input."*

Participants were generally disappointed with the closing of programs; many understood, and some used the online programs or flexible approaches that were developed.

> *"We missed all the fun programs while everything was shut down but the Concession library was able to accommodate special outdoor story time for some day cares and my kids loved getting to participate safely"*

> *"I started attending a book club online; very convenient with stimulating conversation and felt less isolated."*

"Zoom book club was not favourable but understood why we had it."

For some participants, the online programming was far better:

"I am immunocompromised… When the library had online programming it was amazing! It is accessible and so much better for inclusion."

Participants are happy that in-person programming is back, however, generally there was a frustration with the closing of programs, the lack of variety and the length of time it took to get back to in-person programming.

"Now that we are gearing up to "live with covid" [sic] some of the programs and supplies have still not returned."

"I take my grandkids to programs and they were not available..... it is somewhat difficult to re-engage with programming once it has been stopped"

"I really missed taking my…granddaughter to Waterdown's Storytime every week. This program was cancelled sadly due to covid [sic]."

"As a parent of a small child that would have benefitted from Library programming (ie [sic] storytime) during the pandemic, I am OVERJOYED [sic] that it is finally back!"

ii. Impact to COVID-19: Visits to Libraries

COVID has impacted how and why people visited HPL Branches. For many they suggested that the impact was temporary, that they reduced their visits during the closures or most significant parts of COVID and now they were increasing or have already returned to pre-COVID visiting patterns.

"I definitely started going to the library more during the pandemic."

"I avoided it for two years but have now returned and bring my young son who loves the play areas and getting new books"

"Initially I did not go to the library or borrow books. This was most unusual for me. It felt like my world had returned when I returned, to my local library in safety."

People report the lasting impact of the pandemic service changes thus far is they are less likely to visit a Branch in person, and if they visit, they spend less time inside. They come simply to pick up the books that they have on hold.

"I don't linger as much, to check out new CDs/DVDs, books."

"Reduced time spent in branches down to pickup/dropoff."

A few people reported that they have missed the Library, the Staff and the interaction with other Members, and that as a result they are now visiting more.

iii. Impact of COVID-19: Well-being

There are three components of how COVID and the Library have impacted wellness. Many people suggested that the Library has had a significant, positive impact on well-being. By providing safe spaces, increasing their mental well-being and reducing isolation, the Library was a "sanity saver" or "lifesaver" according to respondents. The Library took the right steps to provide a safe environment and support the health and wellness of the community. Respondents were pleased with HPL's decision to offer free lamination of COVID vaccination certificates.

"I loved that they copied and put plastic over vaccine proof for free"

"Extremely important that my library was able to adapt & continue services safely. Contributed greatly to my well-being during isolation!"

"…having the bookmobile was fantastic as it allowed my family to still access books and resources in a safe manner and staff were diligent about maintaining safety and distance while still ensuring we had what we needed. thanks to the bookmobile staff and hpl [sic] for allowing that to continue"

"I was extremely impressed that the Library stayed open during the pandemic and by the careful methods it used to protect clients and staff. The library was very important for reducing isolation and keeping me feeling a part of the community during COVID-19."

"The library honestly was a huge part on making life a bit easier during the pandemic. Still having access to new books for my children made such a difference. It gave us something to look forward to and time together reading. I was So thankful For [sic] the library."

"Liberar el estres [sic] y ayudo [sic] a reducir el aislamiento social" [Stress release and helped with reducing social isolation.]

The second component is that individuals are continuing to take their own measures to maintain their own well-being. They are deciding to reduce their interactions, or wear masks, or sanitize material to support their own health. Some participants have other health conditions therefore they take extra precautions when they come to or use

Library resources to ensure they remain safe. Individuals specifically plan their visits for less busy times to reduce their exposure.

> *"I still mask indoors and I'm still cautious. I feel reasonably safe at the library because there is enough space and it's kept clean."*

> *"I continue to wear a mask and I wipe down my working area each time I visit!"*

> *"I continue to wear a mask and maintain awareness of social distance, but visit my branch weekly, at the very least."*

The final component in the wellness section: COVID had a negative impact on mental well-being of respondents. The actions that individuals had to take, the decisions that the various levels of government made around COVID and in some instances the decisions of the Library (or inactions of the Library) meant that respondents felt more isolated and/or experienced discrimination and/or had detrimental impacts on their mental well-being. The Library helps many to feel less isolated, they enjoy speaking with HPL Staff and meeting other Library Members/new friends. Closures, mandates, social distancing and simply not being able to chat with Staff, however, reduced well-being among respondents.

> *"I know that many people are okay with the risks but many of us are vulnerable and would not survive a covid [sic] infection. Those of us vulnerable are already isolated and not being able to access a safe space increases the isolation."*

> *"When the libraries were closed due to COVID - 19 I felt cut off from a very good friend."*

> *"Quand la bibliothèque était fermée durant la pandémie ma famille était très triste." [When the Library was closed during the pandemic my family was very sad.]*

> *"The family felt isolated from the community"*

iv. Impact of COVID-19: The Value of Libraries

Libraries play an important role in the lives of our neighbours, and respondents realized just how relevant and supportive HPL was to them.

> *"It's made me aware of how essential the library is for people who don't have consistent access to the internet or places to go for remote learning or work. It's made me very thankful for the library system we have, and has made me want to fight like hell to make sure we don't lose it."*

"We began homeschooling as a result of COVID-19. When anyone asks me what is the one thing I could not live without (as a homeschool family), I always say my library card. We visit weekly and I could not homeschool without my library."

For some, COVID re-enforced or re-introduced the value that the Library can have on their life.

"I am inclined to appreciate the role of libraries more since the onset of the pandemic."

"COVID-19 made me appreciate the library more."

"We completely missed using the library when it was closed and now truly appreciate how much it enriches our lives."

Libraries look to play a key role in continuing education and development in their Members. Some survey respondents were able to use Library resources during COVID to acquire new knowledge and skills.

"I used it to borrow books and dvds to help occupy my time and work on new hobbies."

"I read more and have tried new things I learned from my readings"

"When closed for several months I didn't have to return the art books! So - I taught myself how to do water colour painting - with great success."

"I took out books related to a new interest of mine and have since launched into a new career so it helped me keep learning during COVID."

They also found – and were very appreciative of – how supportive and knowledgeable Library Staff can be during a crisis like COVID.

"The HPL staff are so knowledgeable and willing to "go above and beyond " to help. One just needs to ask for assistance. Great staff!"

"I also want to express tremendous gratitude to many library staff who were redeployed to support COVID-19 and particularly vaccination efforts. Kudos. Extremely professional staff with a willingness to help the community in any way possible."

*"They were kind, flexible and eager to serve. Wonderful work, everyone!
Thank you."*

One important value the Library provides is the free services they offer to residents. Several respondents noted that there was a key financial advantage to them in the services that the Library offers.

> *"During lockdowns I couldn't really afford to buy new books but had free time to start reading again so the ebook and audiobook system was amazing."*
>
> *"I started reading during the lockdown and it was getting expensive to buy books, so i started using ebooks to save money"*
>
> *"Since I don't have a printer, HPL saved me time & money in being able to quickly get to a branch and print."*
>
> *"Life without access to free books would be horrible as I'm on ODSP and could never purchase books."*
>
> *"The library… provided a catalog of music to listen to without having to pay for a subscription service."*
>
> *"The library has also been my favourite place to go to study or simply meet up with friends, since it's one of the few places in the city that allows entrance without being forced to pay for anything!"*
>
> *"Like to use the wifi [sic] since I don't have at home and cannot afford it."*

HPL and the Library Staff were key in keeping many people informed and engaged during COVID. The Library was a hub for connection and support for many, and HPL helps to socialize, engage, and "enriches" the lives of Hamilton residents.

> *"The HPL is a fantastic community resource even through COVID."*
>
> *"I don't think I can overstate how important the HPL was during the pandemic….It seemed to me that the HPL gave great comfort during a time when it seemed we didn't have many choices. So many places closed or couldn't offer any services for good reason to keep the community safe but the HPL was still there for us."*

v. Impact of COVID-19: HPL and Government Policies

Some participants provided feedback specific to policy/practical decisions that HPL made in relation to the COVID pandemic. HPL's decision to remove Late Fines was generally positively received as they are inequitable as they create a greater barrier.

However, some participants did indicate that it made them lax in returning materials and others felt that this hindered them when requesting specific books as the hold times were quite long.

"I like not having late fees, but it does create long wait times"

"Unfortunately, more delinquency on returning books on time, as no more late fees."

"Your removal of late fees has drastically helped me to use the Library while also having flexibility to protect my health. I am very grateful to HPL as late fees impact the disabled and those in poverty in a way that often bars us from access entirely."

Generally, HPL was applauded for considering the greater safety of residents and Library Staff by closing our doors and reducing open hours during required lockdowns. However, there is concern that we have not increased our hours enough and that we are not open every day of the week. Respondents also felt that we should continue to require or request that visitors wear masks when they visit Library Branches.

"I completely understood why they closed and I admire their decision to keep everyone safe."

"You did an excellent job HPL and don't think any other less of your abilities. Rules and Regulations were set into place not just for yourself, but for everyone. Keep up the fantastic work that you do."

"Respected when there were mandatory closures but sure am glad you've reopened!"

Statement of Library Values

Libraries are important to the communities they serve, and survey respondents agreed highly with most of the statements about the value of Libraries in general (Table 3). They were less positive about the important role Libraries play in Truth and Reconciliation (81.8%). When asking about the value of statements specific to HPL agreement was strong (Table 4). Most people did agree that they really like using Libraries in Hamilton (93.4%), that HPL should be a resource to support diverse opinions (89.1%) and a source for educating Hamiltonians about Indigenous cultures and histories (85.9%).

Table 3: Agreement with statements about libraries…

Topic	% Agreement
Important for the community	97.9%
Support early literacy	96.7%
Support lifelong learning	96.0%
Important for elementary and high school students	95.0%
Are a trustworthy source of information	94.6%
Provide critical access to technology	93.8%
Should embrace innovation	92.7%
Preserve local history	91.7%
Support access to diverse opinions and perspectives in the community	89.5%
Support social cohesion in the community	88.6%
Play an important role in Truth and Reconciliation	81.8%

Table 4: Agreement with statements about HPL…

Topic	% Agreement
I really like using public libraries in Hamilton	93.4%
Should be a community resource that supports diverse opinions and perspectives	89.1%
Should be a source for educating Hamiltonians about Indigenous cultures and histories	85.9%
Should be a leader in environmental sustainability	83.9%
I almost never think about going to an HPL Branch	27.8%

Newcomers (33.5%) and respondents who speak another language (31.1%) at home are more likely to suggest they almost never think about going to an HPL Branch than long-term residents or those who primarily speak English at home. When we look at the age of respondents, our youngest respondents are more likely to agree that they never think about going to an HPL Branch (32.1%).

Importance of Services

Participants were asked to rate how important HPL services were to themselves. Participants felt that the most important HPL service is the ability to reserve or renew books online (89.9%). The least important services to respondents were public computer access, Makerspaces and lending of CDs, DVDs and Blu-rays. The results likely reflect that the question specifically asks about the importance to the individual. Some participants provided comments (on paper surveys and via AskHPL email) that while some services were not necessarily important to their personal use, they think they are important for the community.

Table 5: Importance of HPL services to the respondents

Topic	% Agreement
Reserve or renew books online	89.9%
Best-selling books, eBooks & audiobooks	82.6%
Free Wi-Fi	74.9%
Programs and performances for all ages	69.9%
Two bookmobiles & 23 Branches across city	69.7%
Digital Local History & Archives collection	67.0%
Access to newspapers & magazine articles online	66.1%
Storytime and other programs for children	66.0%
Book clubs for all ages	65.1%
Homework help for children & teens	62.5%
Space to study/work	60.4%
Music, movies & television streaming & downloads	58.2%
Public computer use with MSOffice & photo/video editing software	56.8%
CDs, DVDs & Blu-Ray lending	56.9%
Makerspaces with 3D printers, large format printing, media recording & more	55.6%

The order of importance of the services for Newcomers does not differ dramatically from this list. However, they do rate most of the services higher in importance than long-term residents. For example, 80% of Newcomers agree that a space to study/work is important, and 72.5% agree that homework help is important. The only service they have lower agreement compared to long-term residents is CDs, DVDs & Blu-ray lending (53%).

When we examine responses by primary language spoken at home. English speakers agree more with the top three services than non-English speakers, but English speakers agree less with all other services. For example, more than two-thirds (67.4%) of non-English speakers agree that public computers are important while 55% of English speakers agree.

Among respondents who have children living in their households, there is no difference in the order of the top four more important services. The rankings change with the fifth, sixth, eighth and ninth top important services for people with children: Storytime (77.8% agreement), book clubs (75.3% agreement), homework help (73% agreement) and space to study/work (68.3% agreement).

The order of service importance does differ slightly by educational attainment but not significantly; there are some interesting exceptions. The most important service, for everyone except those with less than high school, is the ability to reserve or renew books online. For those with less than high school, the most important service is access to free Wi-Fi (79.8% agreement) which is nearly 10 percentage points higher than those with post university degrees who report the lowest agreement for this service (70.2%). Public computer usage usually ranks low regardless of educational attainment.

Individuals with post university degrees have the lowest agreement (53.6%) and rank this as the least important service. For individuals with less than a high school degree, public computer use is more important to them (63.7% agreement) than another group but is only ranked 10th among the services.

HPL services are generally ranked the same across the age groups. Though the level of agreement does differ, there are a few interesting patterns among the service importance. The percentage of agreement of the importance of four services peak with the survey's youngest respondents (18-24 years old) and decreases with each age group so that the lowest level of agreement is among those age 65 and older. These services are Makerspaces, public computers, spaces to study, and free Wi-Fi (see graph below). The level of agreement of importance for programs and performances for all ages, and Storytime services increases with age peaking at 35 to 44 and then decreasing in importance with each older age group. (see graph below).
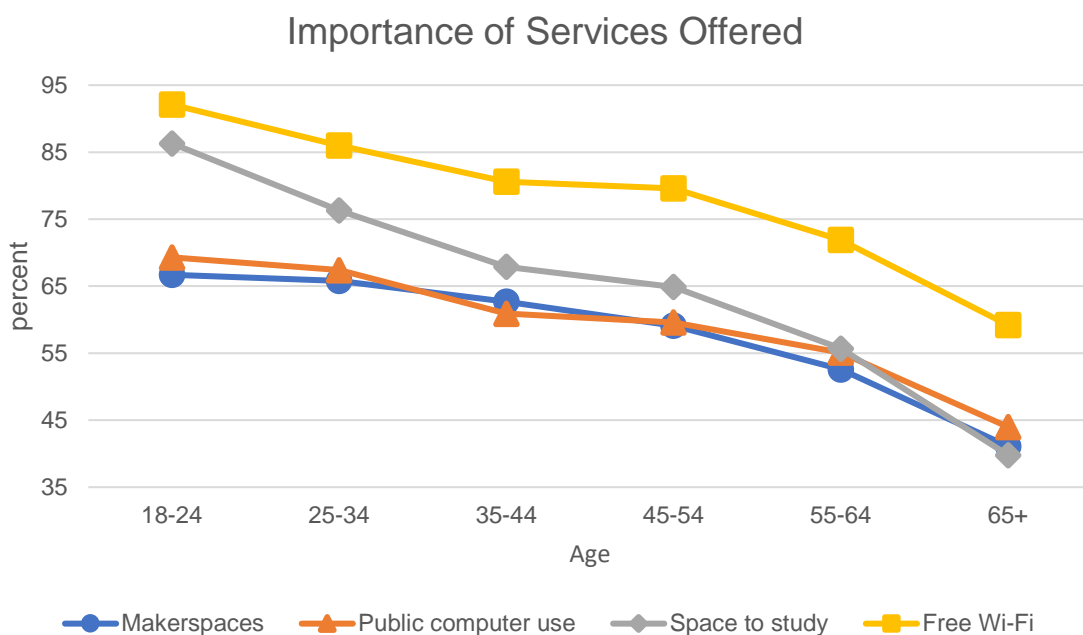
Figure 6: Percent agreement with importance of specific services (Makerspaces, Public computer use, Space to study, Free Wi-Fi) to respondents by age group

Importance of Services Offered
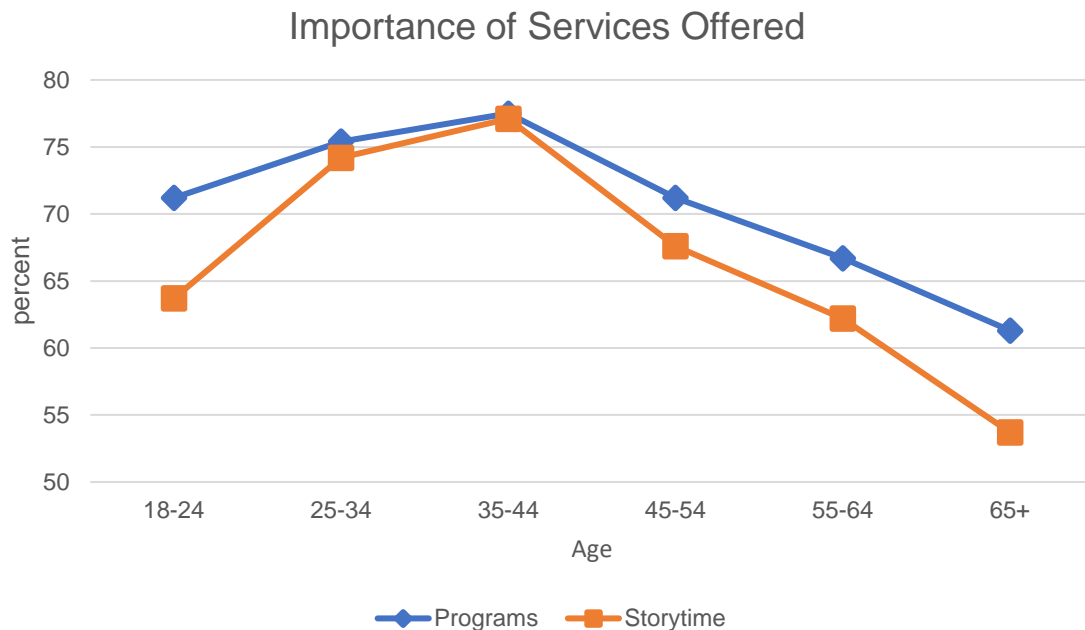
Figure 7: Percent agreement with importance of specific services (Programs, Storytime) to respondents by age group

Use of Services

Nearly everyone who responded to the survey accessed HPL services over the past year (95.7%). The most frequent reasons people accessed the Library's website: search the catalogue (86.1%) and place an item on hold (84.7%). The least likely reason participants access HPL's website was to look at details about the Book Club Kits (table 6).

Table 6: Reasons respondents accessed HPL.ca

Reason	Percent
Searched the catalogue	86.1%
Placed an item on hold	84.7%
Found Branch hours	76.6%
Renewed an item	71.9%
Downloaded an eBook	47.6%
Reviewed your customer record	42.6%
Reviewed programs/events	41.0%
Newspaper and magazine articles	21.9%
Historical images from the LH&A collection	13.1%
Which book next?	11.5%
Grab and Go Bags	9.9%
Book Club Kits	3.7%

Picking up holds (83.0%) and browsing for books (78.3%) were similarly the main reasons for visiting a Library Branch (table 7). The main reason people visit the Branch they choose is because it is closest to their house.

Table 7: Reasons for going to an HPL Branch

Reason	Percent
Pick up items that are on hold	83.0%
Browse for books	78.3%
Take a child to the Library	35.6%
Browse for CDs/DVDs/Blu-Rays to borrow	31.8%
Find a quiet place to study or read	25.8%
Get information about personal interest topics	25.2%
Use the public computers	22.3%
Attend a lecture, meeting, or program	18.0%
Space to work	17.4%
Read newspapers or magazines	17.0%
Other reasons	11.2%
Find information for school or work projects	9.5%

Almost half of respondents (43.9%) went to a Branch more than 20 times in the past year, while only 10% went only once or twice. The number of visits is associated with age with only 28.7% of those aged 18-24 visiting a Branch more than 20 times and the percentage increasing with each older age group. 55.1% of those 65 and older visited a Branch over 20 times in the past year (see graph below).

Number of times visited a Branch

1 or 2 times	9.88%
3 to 5 times	13.32%
6 to 10 times	15.60%
11 to 20 times	17.31%
>20 times	43.87%

Legend: 1 or 2 times · 3 to 5 times · 6 to 10 times · 11 to 20 times · >20 times
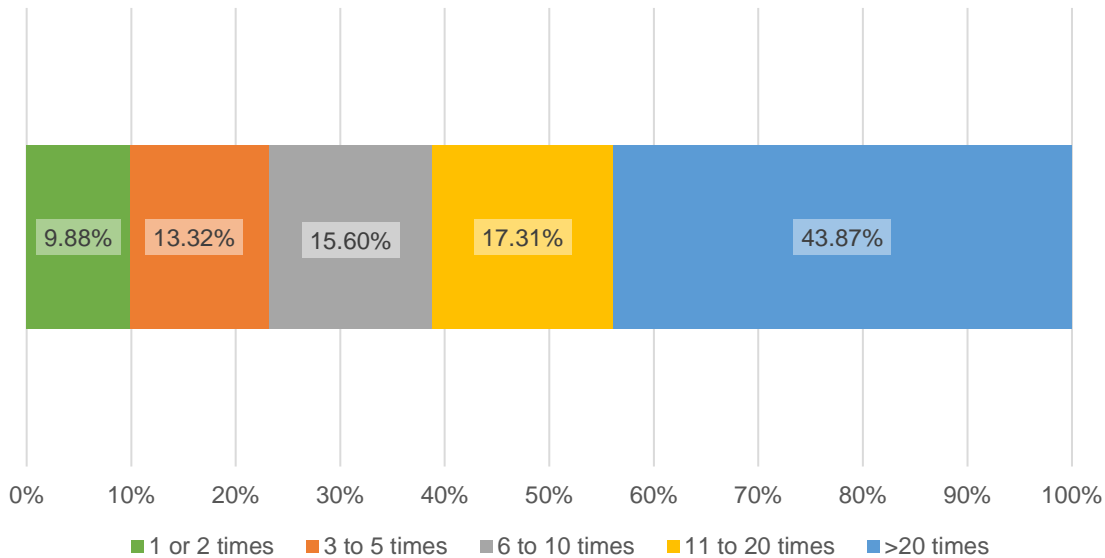
Figure 8: Percent of respondents who visited an HPL Library Branch a specific number of times in the past year

Number of times visited a Branch by Age Group

Age Group	1 or 2 times	3 to 5 times	6 to 10 times	11 to 20 times	>20 times
65+	6.99%	7.81%	12.96%	17.19%	55.06%
55-64	9.31%	13.63%	12.28%	15.92%	48.85%
45-54	12.38%	14.36%	14.19%	17.99%	41.09%
35-44	9.42%	14.55%	19.16%	18.43%	38.43%
25-34	12.79%	15.37%	18.26%	17.66%	35.92%
18-24	12.17%	24.35%	19.57%	15.22%	28.70%

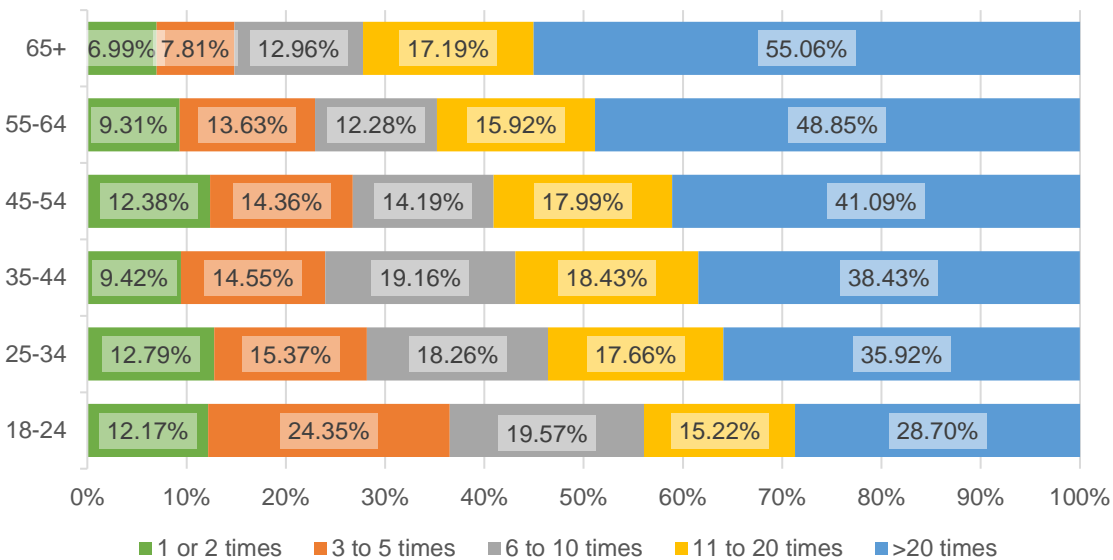Legend: 1 or 2 times · 3 to 5 times · 6 to 10 times · 11 to 20 times · >20 times

Figure 9: Percent of respondents (by specific age groups) who visited an HPL Library Branch a specific number of times in the past year

Satisfaction with HPL Services

Overall participants are very satisfied with the quality of the services that HPL provides (91% satisfaction), the helpfulness of Library Staff (91.9%) and the attractiveness and cleanliness of Library Branches (91.2%). Survey respondents were much less satisfied with the selection of recently released DVDs and CDs (69.3%) and the variety of HPL's programs and classes (68.9%).

Table 8: Satisfaction with Library Services

Topic	% Satisfaction
Helpfulness of Library staff	91.9%
Attractiveness and cleanliness of the Library I use	91.2%
Overall quality of public Library service	91.0%
Knowledge of Library staff	90.7%
Library's self-checkout system	89.2%
Hamilton Public Library website (hpl.ca)	86.9%
Variety of books and other material available	84.6%
Hours of operation at my local Branch	83.4%
Number of best sellers available	78.2%
Library's free Wi-Fi service	77.8%
Ease of use of the eBook site	75.1%
Library's Print on the Go service	71.5%
Selection of eBooks for download	71.0%
Recently released DVDs and CDs available	69.3%
Variety of programs and classes offered	68.9%

The ranking and level of satisfaction of services differs by age. The helpfulness of Library Staff is the top ranked service for those aged 35-44. 45-54, 55-64 and 65+. However, among the two younger age groups they are most satisfied with the Library's self-checkout system. The three youngest age groups are least satisfied with the availability of recently released DVDs and CDs. Individuals aged 45-54 and 55-64 are least satisfied with the variety of programs, and for those aged 65+ it is our Print on the Go service (see table 9).

Table 9: Services age groups are most and least satisfied with

Age Group	Most Satisfied	2nd most Satisfied	2nd least Satisfied	Least Satisfied
18-24	Self-checkout system (91.7%)	Overall quality of service (90.5%)	Variety of programs (72%)	Recently released DVDs & CDs (71.1%)
25-34	Self-checkout system (90.6%)	Helpfulness of staff (90.3%)	Variety of programs (70.1%)	Recently released DVDs & CDs (69.2%)
35-44	Helpfulness of staff (91.2%)	Self-checkout system (89.9%)	Variety of programs (68.8%)	Recently released DVDs & CDs (68%)
45-54	Helpfulness of staff (91.1%)	Attractiveness & cleanliness (90.6%)	Selection of eBooks (70.4%)	Variety of programs (68.1%)
55-64	Helpfulness of staff (92.7%)	Overall quality of service (92.3%)	Print on the Go service (69.6%)	Variety of programs (68.5%)
65+	Helpfulness of staff (93.9%)	Knowledge of staff (93.3%)	Recently released DVDs & CDs (68.3%)	Print on the Go service (67.4%)

Drivers for Increased Use of Library

Participants were asked to report how much impact certain statements would have on encouraging them to visit HPL Branches more frequently. Having more of the recently published books (83.5%) and programs or specials events that are of interest to them (82%) would have the most impact on residents. Reserving space for business use (52.3%) is the least likely statement that would encourage participants to increase use of the Library.

Table 10: Impact of statements in encouraging more visits to HPL

Topic	% Impact
Library's availability of the most recently published books	83.5%
Library had programs or special events that interested me	82.0%
Library has removed Late Fines	75.9%
Library had good spaces that could be used for work or study with up-to-date technology for individuals or groups	71.3%
Library had a wider range of eBook titles	70.7%
Library had better wireless Wi-Fi access	69.6%
Library showed me how to setup and download eBooks	60.4%
I could reserve a room for business use	52.3%

The Library's availability of the most recently published books (while important) is less impactful for Newcomer and non-English speaking respondents. Programs and special events of interest is the top service that would encourage both groups (85.3%, and 85.1% respectively) to increase Library use. The second most likely impact for both Newcomer and non-English speaking respondents was Branches with good spaces with up-to-date technology for study and work (84.9%, and 83.4% respectively).

Individuals with children in their homes rank programs as the most impactful statement (85%) about 5% higher than those without children living in their homes. They also feel that if the Library had good spaces to work or study (75.6%) and better Wi-Fi (74.1%) these would have a bigger impact on them than individuals without children (69.1% and 67.2% respectively).

Age has little impact on the order of what would encourage more visits to HPL. Programs and the availability of the most recently published books are the top two priorities for almost every age group. The only difference is among 18-24 and 35-44. While programs rank number one for those aged 35-44 (84.3%), the Library's removal of Late Fines (81.7%) is second most impactful for them. Among those age 18-24, the top two impactful statements are good space for study (87.6%) and better Wi-Fi (85.6%).

Where can we Improve

We asked survey respondents to comment on how the Hamilton Public Library could better serve them. Analyses of the responses produced several different themes where we could improve Library services. For nearly one-third of respondents (31.6%) their full comment was that they were pleased with the services we provide as they are or that they were unsure or had no suggestion how we could improve.

"Very well darn happy about it! Good library best one I've been to."

"You have excelled at everything. I wish our other institutions were as efficient."

"No suggestions as I believe they are doing a great job already"

From the other comments what is apparent is that there is **no one size fits all** approach for the Library to improve current services. The comments indicate that HPL will need to consider a few different approaches to ensure that it is better serving the residents and Library Members. While there may be comments that are similar in thread and theme, there are occasionally contradictory needs for different groups. HPL serves a variety of people with a variety of needs, available time and commitments and some of the comments clearly indicate this.

The remaining comments were classified into seven broad thematic categories, most with several sub-themes. In some cases, respondents' comments touched on several topics across multiple themes. Some of the major themes are closely associated and there is some overlap between comments that are contained within the themes. The major themes are: (i) Library Collection(s), (ii) Facilities, (iii) Programming, (iv) Services, (v) Staffing, (vi) Communication and Promotion, and (vii) Equitable Library System. Some sub-themes are discussed only a handful of times, while others are mentioned by hundreds of survey respondents.

i. Improve: Library Collection(s)

Library collection topics are considered in whole or as a part of their response to how we can do better for nearly one quarter of survey respondents. The top topics within this theme are (1) general comments about increasing the number of materials or popular (books, ebooks or audiobooks); (2) increasing the number of specific collection items; and (3) wait times. Other comments talk about the need to complete series, the floating Library collection, non-English Library collection, Local History and Archives, and adding new types of material to the Library collection.

Respondents suggested that we need to continue to carry our current collection and think about our weeding process "keep the older books even though they're old". They do want to see HPL purchase newer resources and over ten percent said that in general we need to "expand our collections" and provide "greater access to audiobooks" or "acquire more eBooks" or get "more copies of hot books".

Some participants were specific about the types of material that we need to get more of within our collection. Some of the areas that they are asking we increase the numbers of in our collection are: Canadian content; 2SLGBTQ+ content; BIPOC authors and content; our Children's collection; classics and literature; comics, graphic novels and manga; hobby, cookbook and lifestyle resources; indie authors and from small publishers; Indigenous authors and content; our large print collection; movies, music and television; newspapers and magazines; non-fiction; and video game collection.

Wait lists were a concern for approximately five percent of survey participants. They felt it was unreasonable that there were so many people waiting on hold.

> *"Make sure ebooks are available to download without having to wait for weeks to access them"*

> *"With high usage rates for the city (which I appreciate actually) there is often a long wait for new books. This is my only complaint really."*

> *"Lessen wait times for popular books and media"*

To reduce the wait, people felt the best way to do this was to buy more copies of the popular books. There are a few more suggestions such as re-instating Late Fines or contacting people and asking them to consider how long they have had the book. More copies is the way most people feel we can reduce the time they have to wait for resources.

> *"Ordering more copies of books/ebooks that have huge wait lists (6+ months)"*

> *"Provide access to a greater number of audiobooks. Sometimes wait times are several weeks."*

Within the collection theme the next most discussed topic was about missing books in series or sets of books. Survey participants have a difficult time understanding why we have some but not all the books in a series. They find it frustrating when they are unable to finish a series once they have started.

> *"Have all the books in a series. Not just the first or third please."*

> *"Having all of a series even if only e-book format, instead of only three out of five"*

> *"If you buy some books in a series, you need to buy them all because it's really frustrating if you've read books 1 - 4, the library doesn't have 5 and then you're supposed to pick up after that with a big hole in the story."*

The distribution of resources, or floating collection, is something that survey participants also have difficulty with. They feel like there is an unequal distribution of resources across the Branches. They voiced that they consistently see the same books at various Branches and that there is no diversity in the options there. They are uncertain why the same resources cannot be available easily at every Library Branch.

"The actual books in the branch library are not that extensive. There is something weird about the loan system…. The resources (books) don't seem to be fairly distributed, ie [sic] the best sellers."

"Have more copies of items available at a wide variety of locations. Often what we're looking for isn't available or offered at our location and we have to have it sent over."

"At my branch there seems to be very little circulation (between branches?) of magazines. The same issues of the different titles I prefer always seem to be there, so once I've read them all, I have to keep checking, checking, checking, until something new comes along. Rarely do I see the latest issues."

A few respondents feel that our collection of non-English resources is extremely limited; that we should have more resource offerings in a variety of languages. Some respondents have asked for more in specific languages including Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, and Ukrainian. Respondents are particularly concerned about the quality and diversity of children's books in other languages.

"have more kids books in foreign languages other than French"

"By having French and Spanish adult books at either of the two Branches close to me: Dundas and Westdale."

"J'aimerais bien avoir plus de choix de livres en français, surtout pour enfants. La sélection est très limitée, surtout comparativement à la sélection en anglais." [I would like to have more choices of books in French, especially for children. The selection is very limited, especially compared to the English selection.]

Concerns around HPL Library's Local History and Archives focused on digitization or more access to resources electronically from their homes. Survey participants also ask that we introduce new material for loan including tools, board games and other technology.

ii. Improve: Facilities

Comments about Library Branch facilities cover a variety of topics and were made by approximately ten percent of respondents. The foremost topic for respondents is Branch open hours. Within this sub-theme there are two issues about which people are the most concerned with. First people wish that HPL Branches were open seven days a week, that more if not all Branches were open on Sunday. The second concern is the

hours that our Branches are open. Participants want to see us open earlier, and longer. Some participants even feel we should be open all day and night.

> *"Better hours on weekends, I work full time and Sundays alot [sic] of libraries are closed"*

> *"Sunday hours would be so helpful. Sometimes life is too busy to get there during the week"*

> *"More hours outside of typical business days (weekend morning, evening)"*

> *"Sometimes the hours are only convenient for people who have time during the work day to visit."*

There are also a few requests to increase Bookmobile services. People request that we bring back certain Bookmobile stops and to increase the amount of time that our Bookmobiles are at specific spots. There are also a few requests for HPL to build new Branches in specific communities and to locate them to help reduce driving and travel to HPL Branches.

Participants feel that improving certain features of our facilities would help to meet their needs. These comments are arranged in the following sub-themes: the design and layout of facilities, the atmosphere and noise at HPL Branches, cleanliness, parking and adding refreshment options at Branches.

Participants would like to see larger Branches and have several suggestions to improve the design and layouts of the Branches. The suggestions include improving the furniture, the look and feel of the Branches, and areas that are designated for specific use or people.

They would like to see changes to how much space and how spaces look – for different use within the Branches. There is a feeling that children's spaces can have more diverse activities within them, that they should be separate from other areas of the Library so that kids can be kids and the layout can be better designed for kids.

> *"Having kids [sic] areas that are more separate from the rest of the library so parents don't need to stress as much about their kids making noise"*

> *"More carpeted spaces in children [sic] areas. Feels very sterile. More interactive children [sic] spaces."*

> *"I wish branches had soft play areas for babies and toddlers. My older child loves the Library but it's hard wrangling a one year old and trying to keep them quiet. A room with bean bags and some toys would be a wonderful place to hang out and read books with the kids"*

Survey participants want to see more space designated for the community to meet, space designated as quiet areas, and rooms or individual carousels for study and work.

There are a few comments about the atmosphere of HPL Branches, being too noisy as well as concerns over cleanliness. Participants feel that HPL can do a better job in managing the level of noise and providing information on how clean Branches are.

> *"I would appreciate it if the library would once again become a quieter environment to be in."*
>
> *"Enforce quietness while in the library like they used to do."*
>
> *"Evidence of cleaning, cleanliness standards."*
>
> *"Every library building should have a large-screen real-time readout of the current air quality…"*

The last two topics within Facilities are concerns around Branch parking and adding in-Branch refreshment services. Parking appears to be a concern at more than just Central Library. Adding a café or an opportunity for individuals to find snacks and drinks may support social situations.

> *"Parking space is limited in Dundas and the new Greensville library."*
>
> *"Waterdown has lately had a full parking lot when I've arrived."*
>
> *"…coffee shop, a space where we can gather!"*
>
> *"All libraries should provide clients with access to filter water fountains."*

iii. Improve: Programming

Comments about HPL's programs are the second most mentioned after collections, with more than fifteen percent of respondents writing about programs. Examining these comments clearly show the potential error of attempting to create programs for one population and forgetting that one size does not fit all Members. There are some general patterns in the material discussed, regardless if comments are generally about programming or specific to an age group. Respondents consistently request a greater diversity of programs, they want HPL to offer more programs at all Branches and would like the programs offered at different times than they are currently being offered.

There tends to be agreement that programs need to also be offered in the evenings and on weekends. This does not mean that everyone wants us to stop offering programs throughout the day. We have different people using our services and to take advantage

of programming they want it available when it best fits their schedules. They see the need for programming all days and all nights that we are open.

> *"More events on evenings and weekends. Many events are timed so that people who work during the day cannot attend"*

> *"Make childrens [sic] storytime available at different times across the city. Between 9am and 11 am doesn't work for everyone!! We miss out all the time because all the kids storytimes are basically at 10 am."*

> *"Programs for adults especially during the day (my kids [sic] activities are in the evening) it would really help with my lack of social life."*

Survey participants also want to see a much greater diversity of the type of programs that we offer. They are asking for more social events where they can meet with other people, they would like to hear more from authors or having a series of different speakers, and more concert-style programs. There are requests for more arts-based, educational events, and for HPL to continue to provide opportunities for safe space for diverse populations and for conversations to educate people about diversity.

> *"By arranging more programs that promote diversity"*

> *"More opportunities to engage with indigenous community."*

They believe we can do better in the type of programming that we are offering for different age groups, especially older children, and non-senior adults. While older adults may still want arts programs, the survey respondents ask us to remember that technology has changed our world and there is a significant need for more technology-based education.

> *"Please think about updating programs for older people...you are dealing with a different generation now and we don't want boring stuff ...we are the iPad/iPhone generation ie. [sic] no boring classes ...we don't want to sit around knitting"*

> *"Offering unique programs for adults (woodworking, ceramics, knitting, sewing)"*

> *"Appeal to a younger audience of people- teens, and university students."*

> *"Activities for kids 8-12 year olds could be improved"*

The need for technology includes the chance for the Library to evolve our programming. There are requests for us to examine more hybrid online and in-person programming, and perhaps streaming all programs, or recording them for later viewing.

> *"Offering programs virtually breaks down barriers and builds community."*

> *"All events posted should have virtual access as well."*

iv. Improve: Services

There are several different sub-themes within Services that respondents would like to see changed or updated. The most discussed of these topics is our technical equipment as it contains many different discussion points, including improvements to equipment, more Makerspace equipment, and technical "how to's" in general and "how to's" about our Makerspace equipment. There are requests for better wireless Internet, better computers and computer access, and a more friendly website.

> *"Faster computers with a more current operating system"*

> *"Please improve internet speed."*

> *"I find navigating the website confusing. It is not visually appealing. Making it more user friendly would be great."*

> *"Sometimes information is duplicated and confusing and sends you jumping around on the website. The simpler, the better."*

Participants feel that we should expand the Makerspace program to all Branches and that we should have similar equipment at the various Branches. They are asking for help as well in understanding the equipment we have and how to use it.

> *"Expand maker spaces to other library's in Hamilton."*

> *"Makerspace and digital labs at all Library locations"*

> *"Get a heat press, and/or a direct to garment printer in the makerspace."*

> *"Provide illustration sessions on how to use the resources in Makers Space"*

> *"Please make digital (video) + text tutorials on how to use the makerspace machinery so that people who are unable to attend the in-person workshops due to timing issues can still learn how to use the tools on their own time…. best of all would be if a video could be recorded showing how to properly use the machine."*

There are also requests to change the loan periods for material, primarily with regards to our digital collection. They want to see longer loan periods. People also ask if we can increase the number of items that they can check out. Again, the focus for this tends to be on the number of eBooks and audiobooks that they can borrow through Libby, and the number of items that can be checked out of Hoopla.

"Longer ebook/audio book loans (3 weeks)"

"increase ebook download limit to 20, rather than 10"

"I'd love to put more than 10 ebooks on hold at a time."

"Allow more than 5 books a month on Hoopla"

Participants feel that we can simplify the inter-Library loans (ILLO) process as well as the process for recommending items for the collection. A few people commented that we need clearer processes for these. They would also like us to consider extending the reciprocal borrowing Library systems for our digital collection, perhaps even having provincial or national sharing rights.

"I would love to see further partnerships with more libraries for e-book/audiobook. I'm not sure of what would be involved, however, realistically could it not be possible to partner with all branches country wide? Or at least provincial?"

v. Improve: Staffing

The primary concern within staffing is that we need to hire more people. There is a concern that our current staff are "looking flustered and overworked" and that if we hire more employees and continue to hire a diverse workforce we can help to support the staff that we currently have.

"More in library help. Hire more great employees."

The second concern is that some staff are not very hospitable. There are comments that indicate Staff are not interacting with visitors and therefore the environment is not very welcoming. Respondents ask that we remember to smile and offer to help rather than sit at a desk waiting for someone to approach us.

"Be friendly and welcoming, many workers don't even smile. They should engage in conversations with patrons."

"Most of the staff are very welcoming and readily able to assist you when the need arises. I have noticed in the branches that some of the personnel could be more welcoming instead of ignoring or staring you down when entering the library. A small gesture of a smile or greeting goes a long way in making one feel welcome."

"The service is great but I miss talking to the staff as they are usually in front of a computer screen. Covid has intensified the need to not have much contact with anyone in the library."

vi. Improve: Communication and Promotion

There are three main considerations within the communication and promotion theme. The first is that participants believe we could do a better job connecting with the community (outreach), especially with schools and partnering with community groups to promote better equity for First Nations and other groups of diversity. People feel that if we can connect directly with schools and teachers we can promote lifelong reading and learning with students.

"I know that they have very good programs that they should promote through the schools, so that the students would have more variety of books and activities to share."

"Connect with local school learning commons and create a community connection for learning and building literacy."

The second consideration is that we need to promote our services and resources more broadly and loudly. Participants would like to see more advertising of our services so that we are more visible in the community. Some commented that they were not even aware of services we offered until after the fact. They feel we can do more.

"Be more visible in the community with what is being offered."

"Better communication of services. I was unaware until after of some of what the library offered during COVID. Also the services you provide are not always well reported."

"I am unsure of all the services available, some of the questions I just answered implied the library already has some of the services available. I did not know that. Sharing what's available near me would be helpful in me utilizing the Library services more."

Following this thread, the last section within Communication and Promotion is that we can do better. There are a few comments from survey participants that suggest that

they are not aware that we have certain services, or are not sure what to look for, or that we are just not doing enough to promote the fact that we have the services or resources. Some people specifically asked us to remove Late Fines, to bring back services that are available (such as inter-Library loans), to implement processes to recommend collection material, or that they could borrow material that we already have (e.g. conservation passes, digital newspapers) or a newsletter to inform them of our programs. All of these we already have in place, which suggests that we need to make it easier to find the information on our website or do a better job of promoting our resources and services.

> *"Maybe passes to Conservation areas - the library in Burlington makes them available."*

> *"Ensure interlibrary loans are allowed."*

> *"A monthly newsletter email informing us of upcoming programs"*

> *"A way to recommend new books (especially for kids) that Id [sic] like to see at the Library."*

> *"I would like to recommend some book titles to see if the library would get them in; however, I am unsure how to do this."*

vii. Improve: Equitable Library System

The Hamilton Public Library works to ensure that everyone regardless of background or personal belief can enjoy our services safely and in pursuit of mutual respect, inclusion, and celebration of diversity. There are comments that suggest we can do better to live up to our priority for equity, diversity, and inclusion. Within this theme there are three types of comments, the first that we have some work to do to ensure that we are implementing our policies equitably and educating Library Staff.

> *"I'd like to see the entire staff including administration address the racism that has been exhibited towards BIPOC adults and youth. I've witnessed multiple times when staff will come down hard on Black youth… kicking them out, etc. but when white youth behave similarly nothing is said to them. I've seen this happen more than once."*

> *"Practice standard, sensible, training of their service staff (i.e. not picking and choosing who gets to eat or sleep at tables)"*

There are also positive comments from respondents that they would like to see HPL take a broader role in promoting equity, supporting marginalized groups and in being a leader in the City. They appreciate our dedication to working with diverse groups rather

than speaking for them. Some participants would like us to provide more opportunities for support and education around equity topics.

> *"Keep doing all the great things you are doing. Be a leader in social inclusion."*

> *"[The library should], also work against disinformation and hate speech."*

> *"HPL should be educating about minorities/black/brown etc. Educating about LGBTQ+ communities."*

> *"The library should serve as the buffer for greater learning and understanding across many topics, including once's I don't necessarily agree with or would read about. It should ALL be there."*

There are also comments that raise concern as they indicate that the Library should discriminate or exclude some Members or provide inequitable services to some groups. Considering these types of comments, this suggests that HPL can do more to educate our visitors and Members about what it means to be an inclusive and safe environment for everyone. That is, there is no place for any form of discrimination within the Hamilton Public Library and we have an obligation to educate visitors and provide safe places to discuss the historical and current impacts of White Supremacy, Racism, Colonialism and all other forms of discrimination.

Infrequent Users

Infrequent users of the Library were determined based on respondents' answers to the question "I almost never think about going to an HPL Branch". Anyone who provided a Neutral, Somewhat Agree, Agree, or Strongly Agree answer are considered an infrequent user of HPL services.

Based on the above questions, 16% of survey participants can be considered infrequent users of HPL Branches. They do not differ considerably in their demographic profile to the full survey respondent demographics. They are slightly younger, with a lower proportion of infrequent users 65 years of age or older (20%) and a lower proportion have a post university degree (14.6%).

Infrequent users tend to agree slightly less with the value of Libraries, but the order is similar to the full survey population. The only statement where they significantly diverge in agreement is how much they agree that they really like using public Libraries in Hamilton (80.8% agreement).

The important services are similar, with one exception: infrequent users report higher agreement (64.7%) that homework help for children and teens is important to them. Infrequent users are overall less satisfied with HPL services. When asked about

accessing HPL services, 17% of infrequent users did not use any HPL service and only 57% physically visited a Library Branch in the last year.

Non-HPL Members

Respondents were determined to be a non-member of HPL if they indicated they did not have any Library cards, **OR** they had a Library card from another Library system and did not also have one for HPL when they answered the question "Do you have a Library card?".

Four percent of respondents are considered non-HPL Members. A higher proportion of non-members are Newcomers to Canada (13.2%), speak a language other than English primarily at home (17.8%). They tend to be younger in age, with nearly half under the age of 45 (47.2%).

Age of Non-HPL members

| 8.12% | 15.74% | 23.35% | 19.80% | 18.27% | 10.66% | 4.06% |

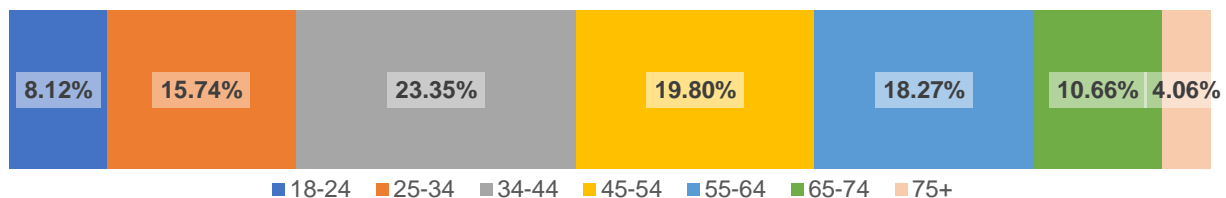■ 18-24 ■ 25-34 ■ 34-44 ■ 45-54 ■ 55-64 ■ 65-74 ■ 75+

Figure 10: Percent of non-HPL members who visited an HPL Library Branch a specific number of times in the past year

Non-members are overall less satisfied with HPL's support during the COVID pandemic, with a lower satisfaction rate for all the COVID statements. Non-members also agree far less with the value statements in general about public libraries and HPL-specific statements. For example, only 93.9% agree that libraries are important for the community as compared to the full population (97.9% agreement) and there is 90.9% agreement among non-members that libraries are a trustworthy source of information as compared to 94.6% among all respondents. Non-members are more likely to never think about going to an HPL Branch (54% agreement). In fact, only 65% accessed any HPL service in the last year, and 45% visited an HPL Branch in person.

The levels of satisfaction with HPL services are also generally lower; there are a few exceptions. The most noteworthy is satisfaction with HPLs free Wi-Fi service at 82.4%, which is 4.6% higher than satisfaction among all respondents. There are several

services that non-members feel is more important to them than Members. The statements where non-member agreement is 5% or higher than Member agreement: Public computer use (61.9% agreement), Makerspaces (62%), space to study/work (68%), homework help (70.4%), and free Wi-Fi (80.5%). Programs and events that are of interest is likely to have the most impact on encouraging non-members to visit HPL Branches more (80% impact).

In Summary

Generally, people are very happy with the support HPL provided during the COVID-19 pandemic and with the services that the Library provides. They recognize the value of the Library in their lives and its importance in the City. They are pleased with the Library Staff and resources.

However, there are improvements that can be made to the website, programming, the Library's facilities, and the collection. People are concerned about the length of time they must wait for collection items and the variety of programs that are offered. They see the Library as a community hub and would like to see an environment that is more engaging and welcoming. Respondents want the opportunity to gather and socialize with other people while also engaging in self-reflection and private reading time.

Survey results make it clear that any approach to implement changes that focus on one group over other groups will not be enough to meet the needs of Hamilton residents. Clear communication around Library decision-making and the Library's processes may help to reduce confusion and improve understanding.

A one size fits all approach will be insufficient, and HPL will need to consider a multi-faceted approach when implementing changes to the services and resources that it currently provides.