

“
What We
Heard
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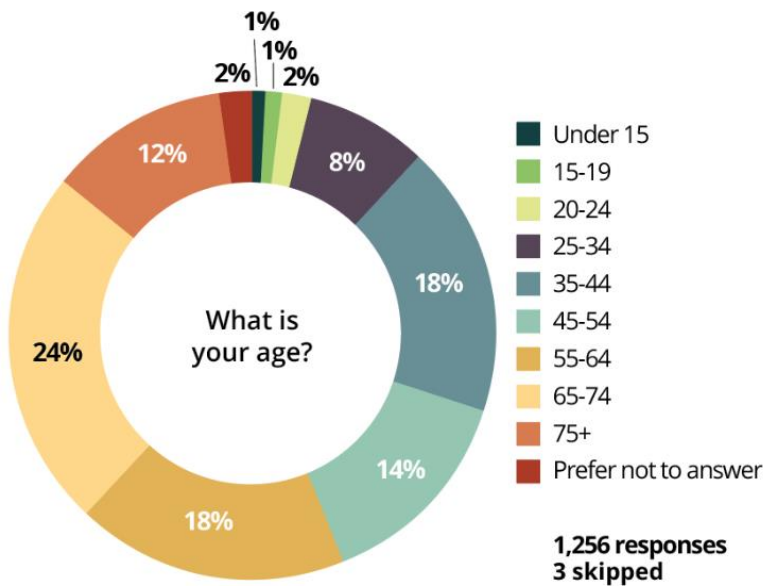


IDENTIFYING NEEDS

INTRODUCTION

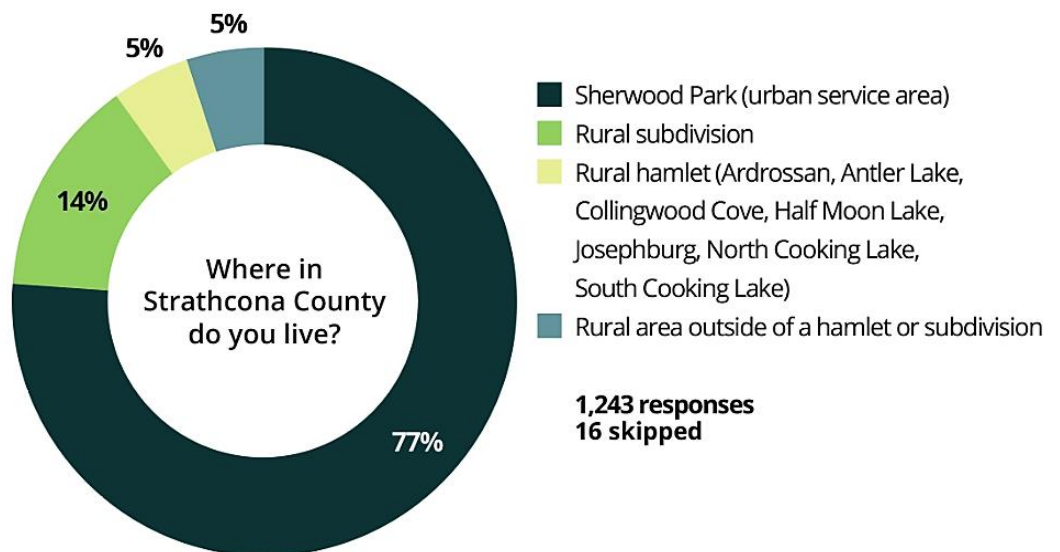
Between August and November of 2024, Strathcona County Library gathered community input through a survey on Strathcona County's online engagement platform, *County Voice* and through a series of in-person engagement opportunities. The following are some highlights from what we learned.

WHO ANSWERED OUR ONLINE SURVEY?



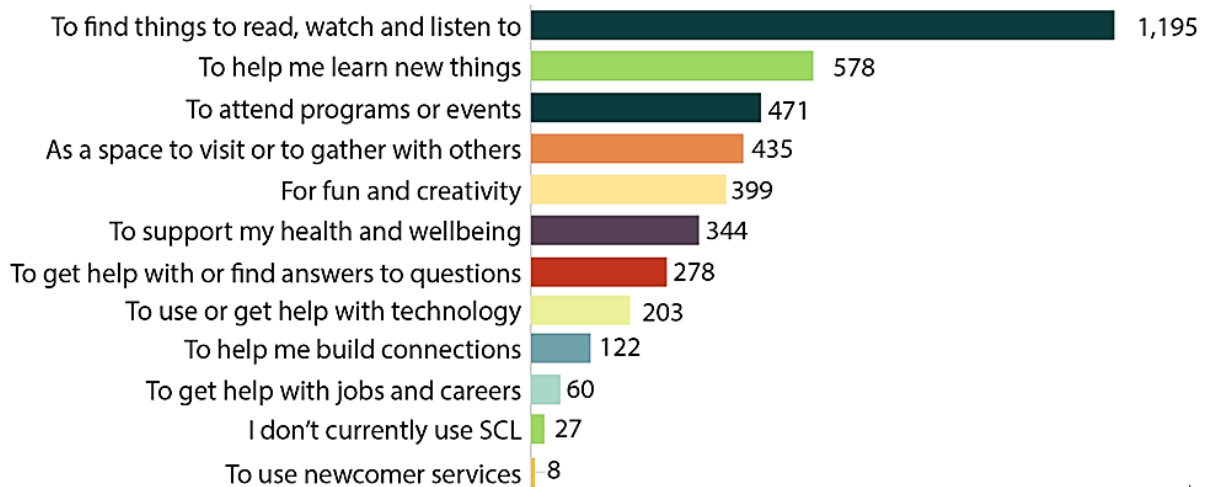
We anticipated this kind of age range among our online respondents and focused our in-person engagement on capturing input from seniors and youth.

We were pleased to see that the urban to rural ratio of our respondents is similar to the geographical spread of County residents in general.



HOW SURVEY RESPONDENTS USE THE LIBRARY NOW

Online survey respondents were asked to choose from a pull-down menu of current library activities. They were able to choose more than one answer, and had an option to write in “other” ways in which they used the library. Activities from the “other” category and those chosen by in-person engagement respondents are not represented in this chart.



WHAT SURVEY RESPONDENTS LOVE ABOUT THE LIBRARY

Respondents provided an overwhelming amount of positive feedback throughout our engagement process. Online survey responses included over 300 comments about how much residents appreciate the library’s staff, programs, spaces and materials. This was by far the largest set of comments we received on a single topic!



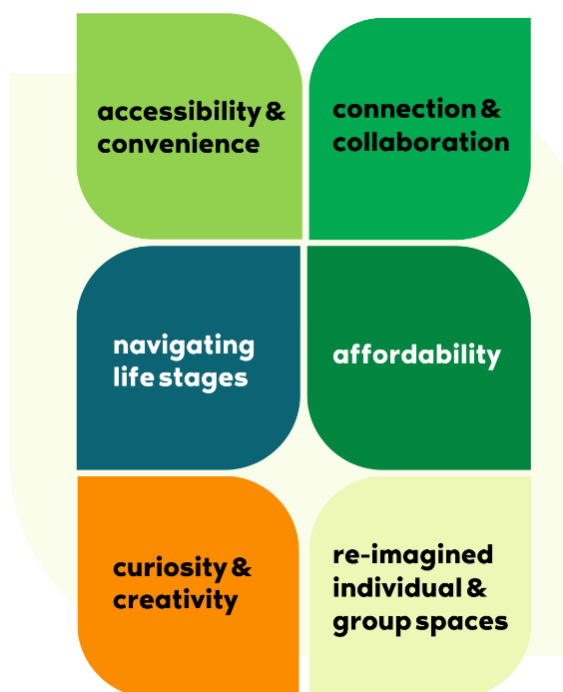
AREAS OF NEED

To prepare for our community engagement, we had analyzed results from similar projects recently completed by other organizations. We identified themes and made a list of community needs categories that we also applied to our library data. The categories helped us to see where the library was being asked to support needs also being addressed by other community organizations – like providing affordable services. They also showed where respondents felt the library offered unique value, such as supporting residents to satisfy their curiosity and express their creativity. We identified **six key areas** where community members saw potential for the library to have a role in addressing their needs.

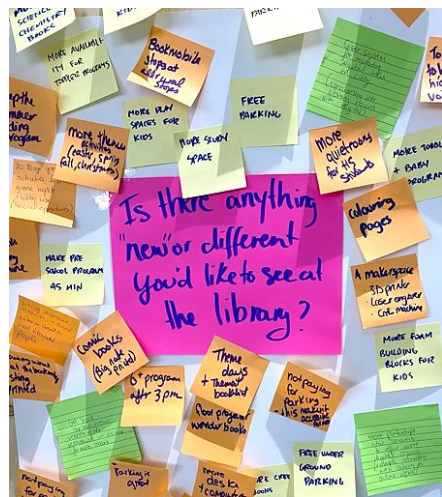
Residents saw the library as a...

- Place for access to wide-ranging and convenient services;
- Hub for affordable programs and resources;
- Destination for welcoming individual and group spaces;
- Resource for supporting life transitions;
- Connector between people, services and information; and
- Space to create, learn, reflect, explore and escape.

AREAS OF NEED



WHAT WAS SAID



One of the goals for our engagement process was to gather feedback from many voices and perspectives, which is why the questions we asked were open-ended.

Respondents provided us with comments about what library services they would like to see continue, where they would like changes to be considered, and where they felt the library might try something new or different. We appreciate the time everyone took to share their thoughts and opinions with us!

On the following pages are some highlights from what we heard.

services

The library and Bookmobile are vital hubs connecting residents to community information and resources.

Try different times for programs and library hours.

Keep collaborating with community partners!

Love free library cards – can renewals be easier?

Add more ways to pick up or return items.

collections

Great variety of authors, titles, genres, borrowing options and formats– more of everything, please!

Expand access to popular print and digital materials.

Consider lending more non-book “things”.

Reduce hold lists and wait times.

spaces

The library is a welcoming place to play, study, work, create, meet, relax, etc.

Help us to plan visits and navigate library spaces.

Try some different ways to organize spaces.

Find ways to balance different space-related needs:

active vs. calm, individual vs. group, bright vs. low-stimulus

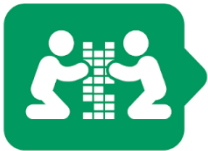
programs

The range of online and in-person programs for all ages is wonderful!

Keep tapping into local expertise!

Try popular programs more than once and at different times.

Offer programs that help to grow life skills and build social connections across interests, stages and generations.



LITTLE LEARNERS (0-6)

Needs: programs at a variety of times and in different formats, hands-on activities for kids in programs and library spaces.

YOUTH (6-17)

Needs: access to learning supports, activities that encourage reading and STEM learning, spaces for social activities.



PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

Needs: parenting support, family-friendly respite spaces, resources to help prepare for the joys and challenges of life and learning transitions.

ADULTS (18-54)

Needs: evening and weekend programs, services and resources that match life stages, opportunities to connect with peers who share interests.



ADULTS (55+)

Needs: senior-focused services and information, spaces for spending time, programs on wellbeing and technology, opportunities to socialize.



Look for new ways to promote library services and resources so that more community members can benefit!

