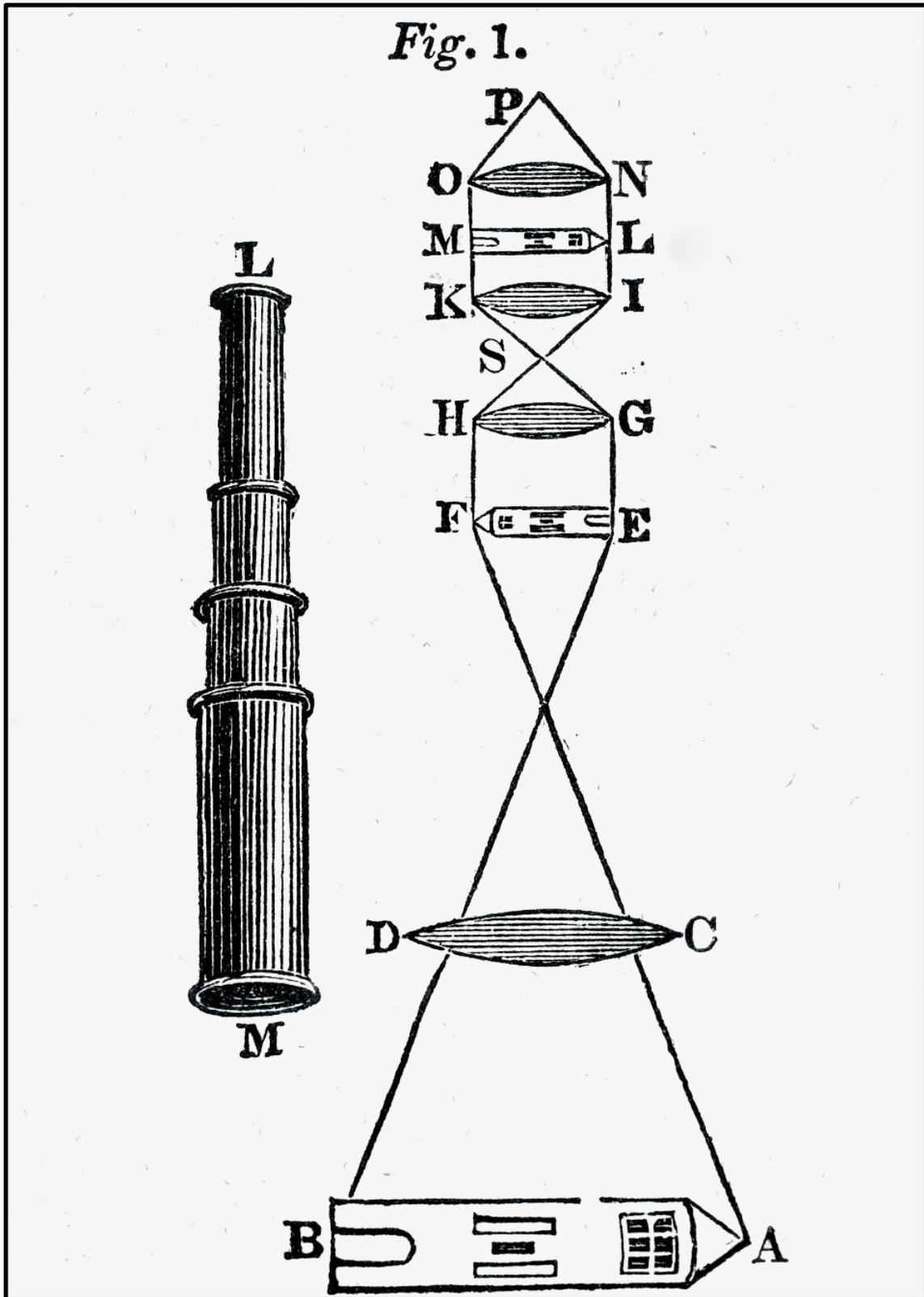


THAYER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Strategic Plan FY2024-2029



THAYER MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Strategic Plan FY2024-2029

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Catalogue of Books, belonging to Lancaster's circulating Library, viz.

4 Vols.	Macaulay's history of England	£ 4.16 ⁰⁰	
4 "	Robertson's hist. of Charles fifth	2 " 8 ⁰⁰	
3 "	Robertson's ditto of America	1 " 16 ⁰⁰	
2 "	Robertson's do. of Scotland	1 " 4 ⁰⁰	
2 "	Widans tour thro' Sicily & Malta	1 " 4 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Vicar of Wakefield	5 ⁰⁰	8 " 13 ⁰⁰
1 "	Conquest of Canaan	6 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Vision of Columbus	6 ⁰⁰	
2 "	Fordyce - Sermons	10 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Fordyce's - Addresses	7 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Hostages Letter	6 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Thompson's life of Gen. Putnam	4 ⁰⁰	
10 "	Rollin's ancient History	2 " 8 ⁰⁰	1 " 14 ⁰⁰
1 "	Peter the Great	6 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Baccaria on Crimes & Punishment	5 " 6 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Ferguson's ancient History	12 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Gregory's comparative view	9 ⁰⁰	
2 "	Anders Essays	13 ⁰⁰	
8 "	Spectator	1 " 10 ⁰⁰	6 " 3 ⁰⁰
7 "	Stearns's Works	1 " 13 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Mason on the Knowledge	4 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Anson's Voyage	6 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Milton's Paradise Lost	6 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Milton's ditto regained	6 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Young's Night Thoughts	5 " 6 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Shampson's Seasons	5 ⁰⁰	
1 "	Pope's Essays	3 " 6 ⁰⁰	3 " 13 ⁰⁰
1 "	Gay's Fables & Misc. Poems	4 ⁰⁰	£ 20 " 9 ⁰⁰

We the subscribers to the following Articles, being sensible that a general diffusion of knowledge has a tendency, not only to promote individual happiness, but to strengthen the bonds of society, making 'man mild and sociable with man ~ Regulations preamble'

¹ Catalogue of Books to Lancaster circulating Library 1790

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MISSION STATEMENT

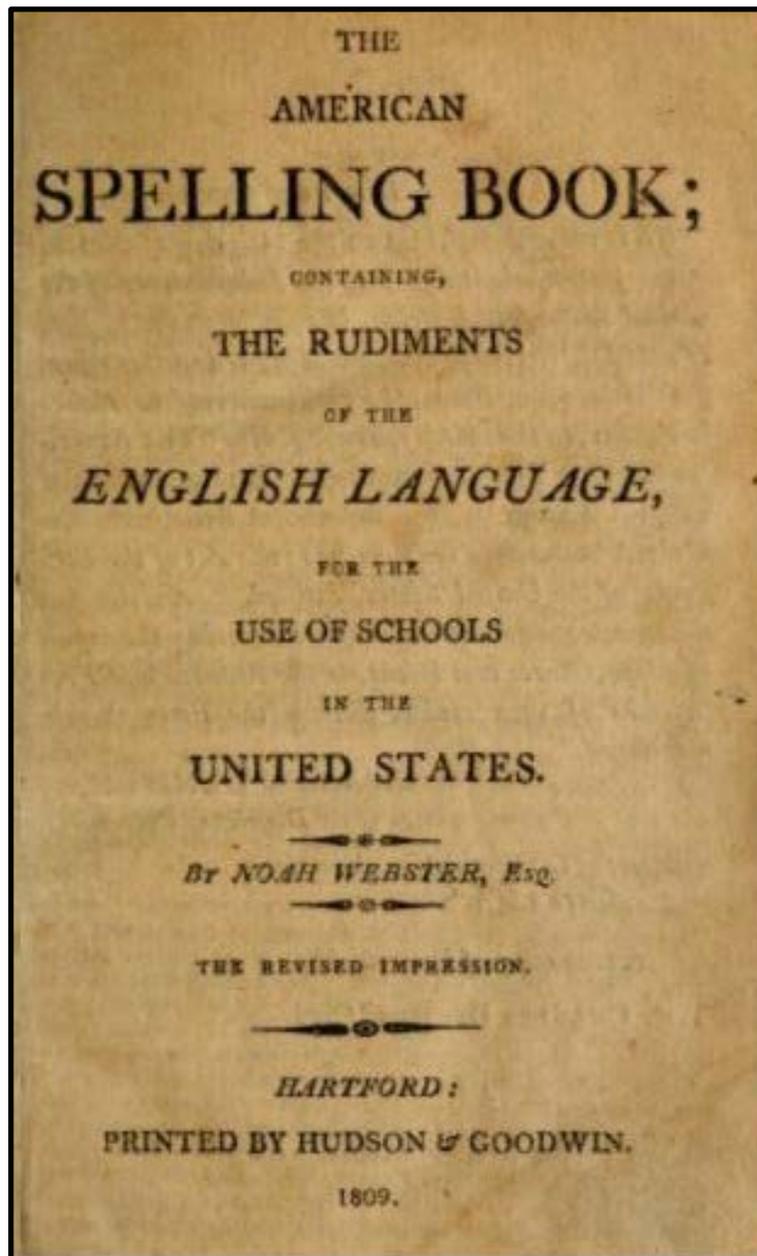
The Thayer Memorial Library brings people, information, and ideas together to enrich lives and the community.

OUR VALUES

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| PASSION | We love the Library, we love Lancaster, and we love what we do. |
| INDEPENDENCE | We champion intellectual liberty, personal choice, and privacy for all. |
| COMMUNITY | We create equitable services and spaces and remove barriers that limit participation and access. |
| INSPIRATION | We nurture learning, the free flow of ideas, and civic life. |
| ENGAGEMENT | We deliver personalized experiences led by compassionate and courteous staff. |
| LEGACY | We treasure Lancaster's history and foster a strong connection between Lancaster's past, its present, and its future. |

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School District Libraries (1844-1859)

The action of the third district may be taken as an example of what was done in other districts of the town. By this means an entertaining and useful kind of reading was supplied to families in all sections of Lancaster.ⁱ

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“A RICHER RETURN”

Lancaster's public library heritage dates to the late 18th century. The first tax-supported public Library in Lancaster was founded in 1862 and housed on the top floor of the Town Hall.

In 1866 Nathaniel Thayer, Esq., offered the Town \$5,000, which the Town matched for creating Memorial Hall. In 1868 Memorial Hall was dedicated as a monument to Lancaster's brethren killed during the Civil War.

In 1888 the Library expanded, adding a new façade that held offices on the first floor and a museum and reading room on the second floor. A two-story book stack wing was added in the rear. In 1929, the Library expanded again. As a memorial to her son Nathaniel Thayer II, Ruth Simkins Thayer had built a new Children's Room wing, nearly doubling the Library's size.

Almost seventy years later, in 1998, a renovation and expansion project designed by CBT Architects of Boston again doubled the existing building to nearly 20,000 square feet. Rare Books and Special Collections were relocated to a climate-controlled area – the Constance V. R. Dexter Special Collections Room – on the ground floor.

In January 2022, the Library began planning a building project to address preserving, rehabilitating, restoring, and reconstructing all areas considered in severe disrepair or obsolete. The 2023 feasibility study anticipates an FY2025 warrant article to cover the expected project cost of around two million dollars.

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PLANNING PROCESS

In May 2022, Director Mulé assembled a Strategic Plan ad hoc Committee (SPaC), a working group to initiate the planning process. SPaC consisted of Director Joe Mulé, Assistant Director Rachel Rosengard; Youth Services Librarian Maren Caulfield; Trustee Karen Silverthorn; and Friends of the Thayer Memorial Library President Melissa Carlson. The subcommittee began meeting bimonthly to focus its efforts on various strategic plan components.

SPaC's first order was to review the current mission and values statements and consider updating and refining their terms. Some of these statements were revised, and a new value has been added. However, members deemed revisions had little to no impact on understanding the Library's mission or importance. Indeed, it is clear to SPaC that these changes clarify what we do and how we do it.

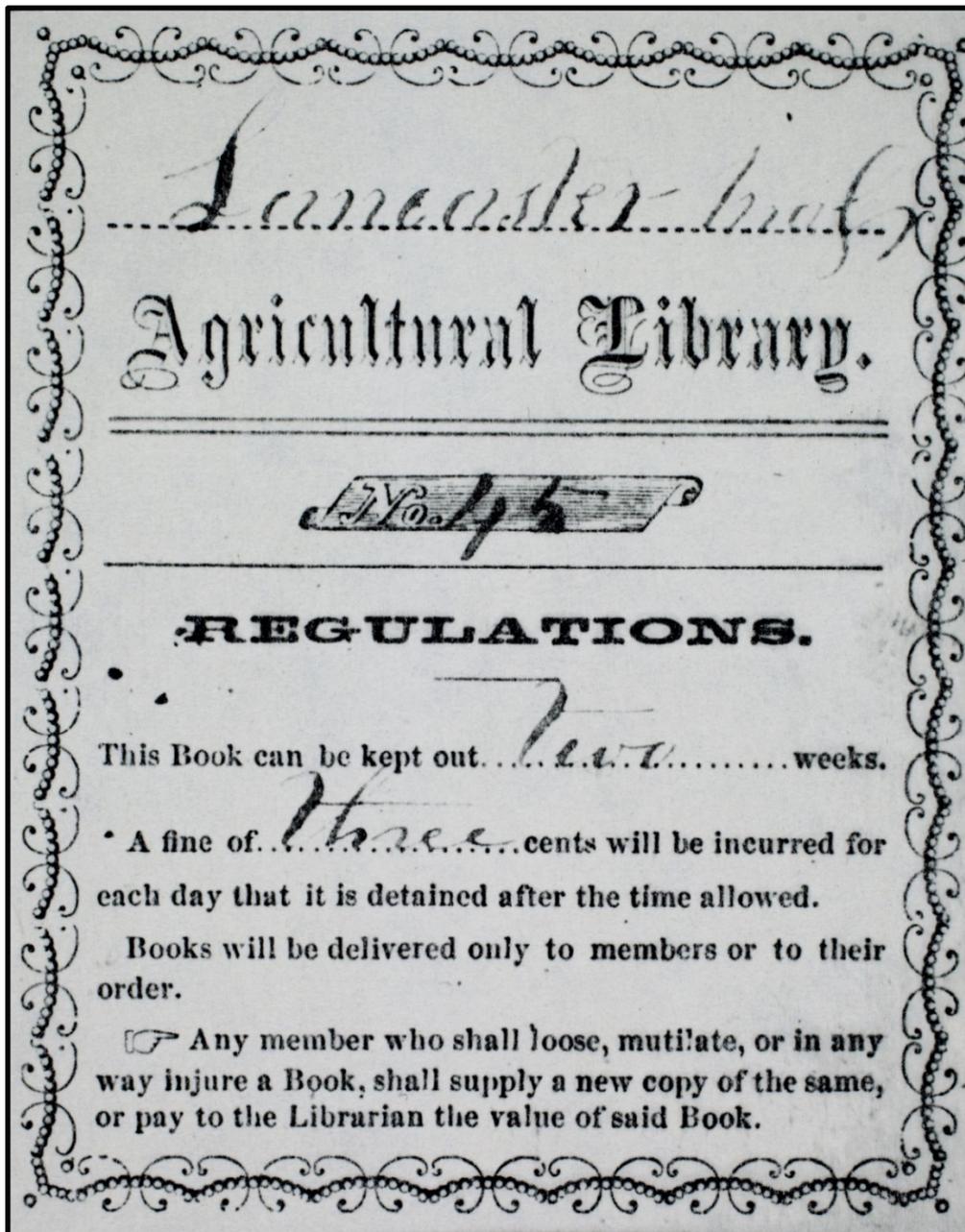
Data were sourced from an online survey and three focus groups, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and the United States Census Bureau.

Focus group sessions were held in person at the Library and included a variety of stakeholders, including residents, Trustees, Municipal officials, Friends of the Thayer Memorial Library, and staff. Any combination of stakeholder types was featured in each session. Common focus group themes included questions regarding the community, programming, learning, content, service, collections, Lancaster's history, and other uncategorized topics and miscellaneous thoughts.

An online and print survey was conceived by Caulfield and distributed to Library constituents and community members. This survey was conducted online between July 25 and August 2, 2022, with physical copies available throughout the Town. Lancaster residents and employees were encouraged to participate through the newspaper, social media announcements, on the Library website, email, and in person. At the survey's close, 253 responses were recorded.

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Agricultural Library Association (est. circa 1850)

It appears that the Agricultural Library Association . . . "favor the proposition to grant to the town the use and care of the two libraries, on proper and suitable conditions, to be made the basis for a future town Library."ⁱⁱⁱ

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COMMUNITY PROFILE

Landed in 1643 and incorporated in 1653, Lancaster is the earliest European settlement in Worcester County. Lancaster is 23 miles northeast of Worcester and 48 miles northwest of Boston. The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)^{iv} categorizes Lancaster as a Maturing New England Town.

Lancaster has a total land area of about 28 square miles. This includes agricultural areas; forested regions with rivers and streams, some of them protected; and concentrations of residential housing, including the historic center village where the Library is located. A significant percentage of Lancaster's land is owned by Federal, state, or non-profit institutions and is not subject to property tax. Development of residential and business areas continues to occur in locales that are sometimes widely separated due to highways, land use, or geographic features.

Population Projections

In FY2023, Lancaster's population is estimated at 8,441. MAPC² projects a decrease in the population of ages under 15 and an increase in the population over 65, as shown in Table 1 and Chart 1.

SPaC could not anticipate such an unexpected and dramatic shift in age demographics forecast for the future. Could such a shift impact budgeting, staffing, or programming plans? SPaC could only speculate.

For example, senior populations require collections and services catering to their interests, information demands, and programmatic interests. On the other hand, resources for youth of all ages are a core service regardless of the size of the age group. While more resources are required for the former, reducing resources devoted to youth populations is unjustifiable for an age group requiring much attention.

Other opportunities will be presented to address our interests in the coming years. It is expected that while developing the next strategic plan, our understanding of what is expected to happen would be sharper, and the Library's actions on the alert.

² The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is the regional planning agency serving the people who live and work in the 101 cities and towns of Metropolitan Boston.

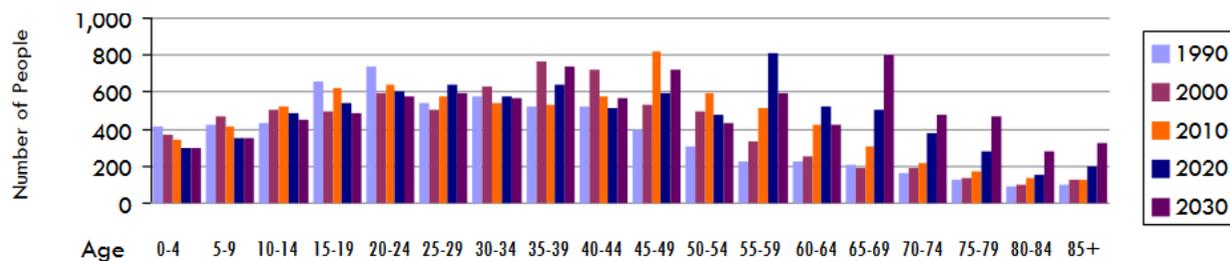
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Table 1. Population History and Projections for populations under 15 and over 65.

	1990	2000	2010	2020	2030
Total Population	6,661	7,380	8,055	8,593	9,151
Population under 15	1,267	1,340	1,277	1,136	1,101
Population over 65	686	733	945	1,519	2,343

Chart 1. Population Summary, 1990-2030



American Community Survey

The American Community Survey (ACS)^v is an ongoing assessment providing vital annual information about our nation and its people. Through the ACS, we know more about jobs and occupations, educational attainment, veterans, and whether people own or rent their homes. Public officials, planners, and entrepreneurs use this information to assess the past and plan for the future.

Lancaster's data was collected and compared with Commonwealth's data. Lancaster distinguishes itself among the categories in meaningful ways. These differences make the Library's planning considerations noteworthy from other communities. Headings determined by the Census Bureau arrange data below.

Demographics

- The median age in Lancaster is 40.1 or 10% higher than in Massachusetts (39.6).
- Most Lancaster residents are white (87%) compared to 81% in Massachusetts.

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Economics

- Lancaster residents have higher salaries. In the past 12 Months (In 2021 Inflation-adjusted Dollars), 53% of Lancaster households made at least \$100,000. Compared to Massachusetts, only 45% of households earned more than \$100,000.
- Lancaster's median household income (\$109,651) was 25% higher than Massachusetts's (\$89,026).
- Lancaster's persons living below the poverty is 3.8%, about two-fifths of the rate in Massachusetts: 9.9%
- Lancaster residents' commutes to work (32.2 minutes) are about 10 percent higher than the figure in Massachusetts: 29.6.

Families

- Households in Lancaster are occupied by 2.5 persons per household, which is about the same as the figure in Massachusetts.
- Less than 50% of Lancaster residents are married (48%), which is about the same as the figure in Massachusetts.
- 8.5% of Lancaster residents are divorced, which is 11% lower than in Massachusetts (9.42%).
- 6.5% of Lancaster women gave birth in the past year, about 1.4 times the rate in Massachusetts: 4.5%.

Housing

- 84.5% of household structures are single units, about 1/3 higher than in Massachusetts (58%).
- The median value of owner-occupied housing units in Lancaster is \$373,600, about 90 percent of the amount in Massachusetts: \$424,700.

Social

- 50% of Lancaster residents have earned a bachelor's degree or higher, about 10 percent higher than the rate in Massachusetts: 45.2%.
- More Lancaster residents speak English at home (85%), which is about 11% higher than in Massachusetts (75.5%).

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- 6.8% of the Lancaster population was foreign-born, about two-fifths of the rate in Massachusetts: 17.3%.
- 6% of Lancaster residents have veteran status, about 25 percent higher than the rate in Massachusetts: 5%.

Lancaster is slightly older, demonstrably wealthier, more educated, and whiter relative to the Commonwealth by wide margins. What can be concluded from such general statistical data? Perhaps more questions than answers. Although unknowable from the census data alone, it perhaps would be useful for example knowing what individuals studied at colleges and universities.

- Is Lancaster a town of engineers, lawyers, teachers, or philosophers?
- Why are residents' commutes to work longer?
- Were more residents traveling east towards Boston or south towards Worcester?
- Is there anything to be said of a relatively homogenous population and its use and support of the Library?

[Pew Research Center](#)³

According to the Pew Research Center's study *Libraries at the Crossroads*⁴ Americans' use of public libraries and generally positive attitudes about them cut broadly across all demographics surveyed. However, for lower-income Americans and those who are members of communities of color, libraries have a unique role as places to learn new job skills, explore new digital technologies and provide services to them or their community.^{vi}

The Pew Research Center shed light in the article "Who Uses Libraries..." and raised concerns about libraries closing. It was noted that this worry was not evenly felt across different segments of Americans.^{vii}

- 78% of Hispanics say closing the library would have a major impact on their community.
- 72% of women say this, compared with 58% of men.

³ Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder. This report was made possible by The Pew Charitable Trusts, which received support for the project from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

⁴ The results reported here come from a nationally representative telephone survey of 2,004 Americans ages 16 and older, conducted from March 17-April 12, 2015

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- 70% of parents of minors assert that a library closure would have a major impact.
- 70% of those ages 50 and older say closing the library would have a major impact.

Other than the observation that more than three-quarters of Hispanics value the Library, the most salient conclusion for Lancaster is the realization that persons 50 and older stated that closing the Library would have a significant impact. This data could imply more local support for the Library as the 65+ population is projected to be growing through 2030.

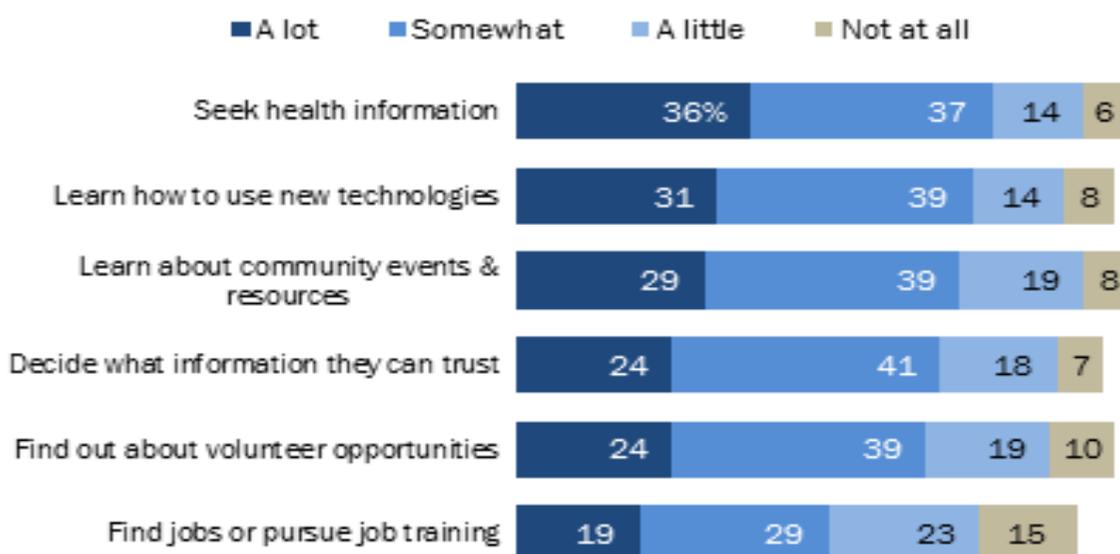
On the other hand, persons that use libraries come from various segments of the US population. The Pew survey indicated that majorities of women, younger Americans, college graduates, and lower- to middle-income Americans had visited a library in the past year.

- 56% of college graduates paid an in-person visit to a library or bookmobile.
- 52% of those between the ages of 16 and 29 did this.
- 52% of those whose annual household income is between \$30,000 and \$50,000 went to a library in-person or visited a bookmobile.

What surprised SPaC was how helpful people aged at least 16 years old found the Library. Young Adults are notoriously difficult to attract. Nevertheless, in four of the six questions, more than 92% of those individuals found in some measure that libraries are helpful.

Notably, this may be a shrinking demographic through 2030.

Chart 2. % of those 16 years or older on how helpful the library can be in different roles



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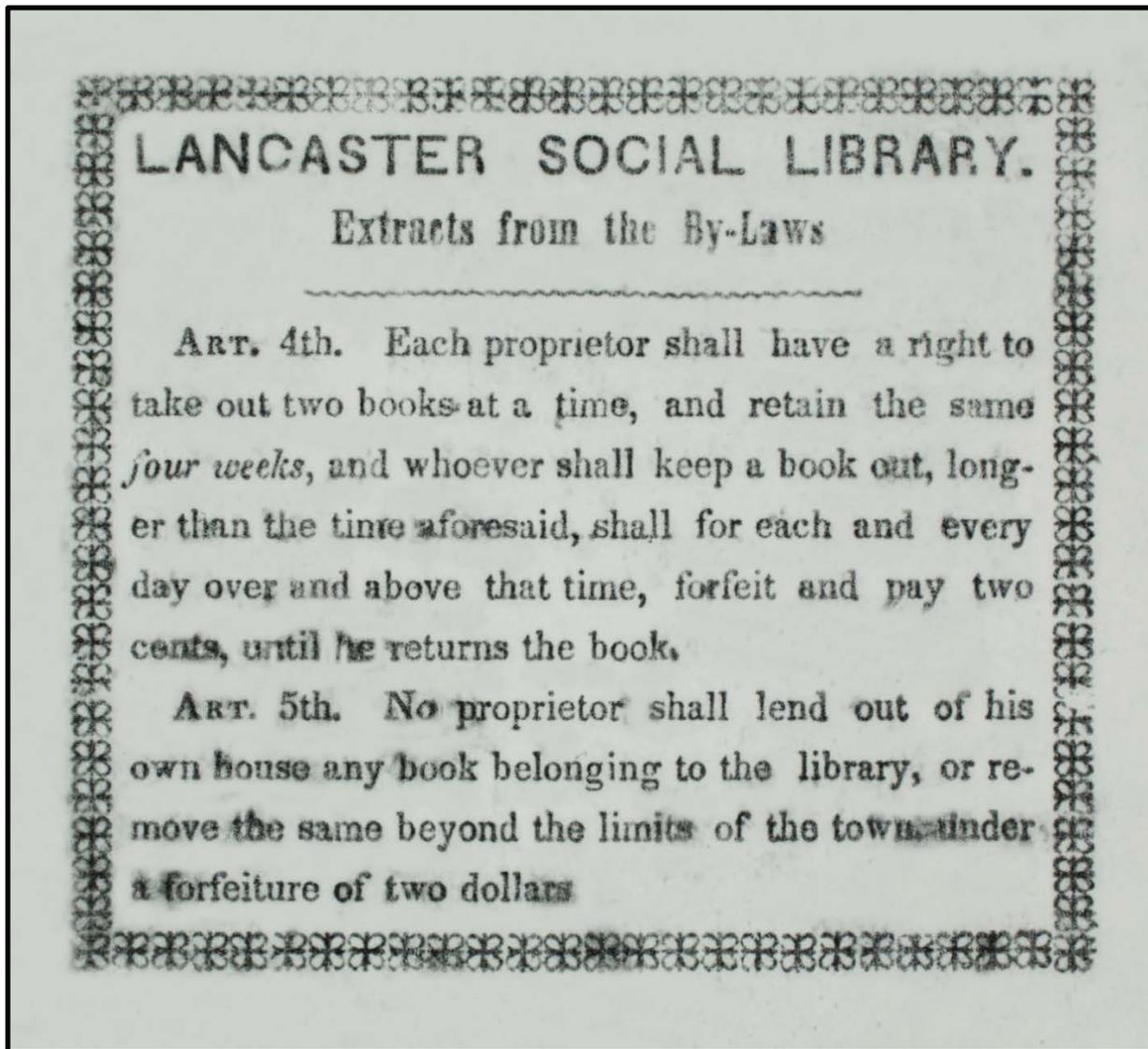
Correlating the Pew report with Census demographic data seems to suggest Lancaster residents, who are more affluent and demonstrably white, would be less likely to support and use the Library. This is not the case in Lancaster, evidenced by the Library's performance data associated with comparable communities and a vibrant Friend for the Thayer Memorial Library organization's ability to raise funds.

Additionally, 70% of individuals responding to the PEW national survey who were at least 50 years old supported and used public libraries. We know that this is projected to be a growing demographic in Lancaster.

Nevertheless, it is challenging to interpret national demographic data with local use patterns. For instance, Lancaster residents use the Library more than their cohorts in peer towns. However, despite how wealthy the Lancaster population is, municipal financial support for the Library is low.

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Library Club of Lancaster (1850-1861)

The proprietors of Lancaster Library believing that a public Library in the town, to which all can have access, would greatly aid the cause of education and good morals, by affording to the young, innocent and profitable reading, and to all the means of knowledge and mental improvement, desire to aid in the establishment of such an institution.^{viii}

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PERCEPTIONS OF THE LIBRARY

Focus Group⁵

In June 2022, SpaC engaged with Barbara Friedman, Library Consultant, to facilitate a series of focus groups with questions developed by Mulé and Rosengard. The findings in the focus groups largely affirmed survey data later collected in August.

Focus group sessions were held in person at the Library and included a variety of stakeholders, including residents, Trustees, Municipal officials, Friends of the Thayer Memorial Library, and staff; any combination of stakeholder types was featured in each session. Common focus group themes included questions regarding the community, programming, learning, content, service, collections, Lancaster's history, and other uncategorized topics and miscellaneous thoughts (See Appendix A.)

It is worth noting that the Focus groups were composed entirely of adults. At the same time, survey respondents included young adults and children. Focus groups began with a "warm up" question regarding earliest memories of public libraries. Overwhelmingly, respondents recalled visiting a public library in childhood as a positive experience that fostered intellectual curiosity and interactions with others. Attendees wanted more non-media circulating items, such as metal detectors and telescopes, to be made available.

Focus groups were asked if they knew about the Library's inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Center Village District and if they knew that the Library is listed on Massachusetts' Historical Registry. Most respondents indicated they are familiar with at least one of these designations and are curious to learn more about the building's history. Unsurprisingly, the same results emerged when discussing the Library's Museum and Rare Book Room.

Online and Print Survey

An online and print survey was conceived by Caulfield and distributed to Library constituents and community members. This survey was conducted online between July 25 and August 2, 2022, with physical copies available throughout the Town. Lancaster residents and employees were encouraged to participate through the newspaper, social media posts, the Library website, email, and in person. At the survey's close, 253 responses were recorded. Analysis of the data follows (See Appendices B. and C.).

⁵ See Appendix A. Focus Group Questions and Responses

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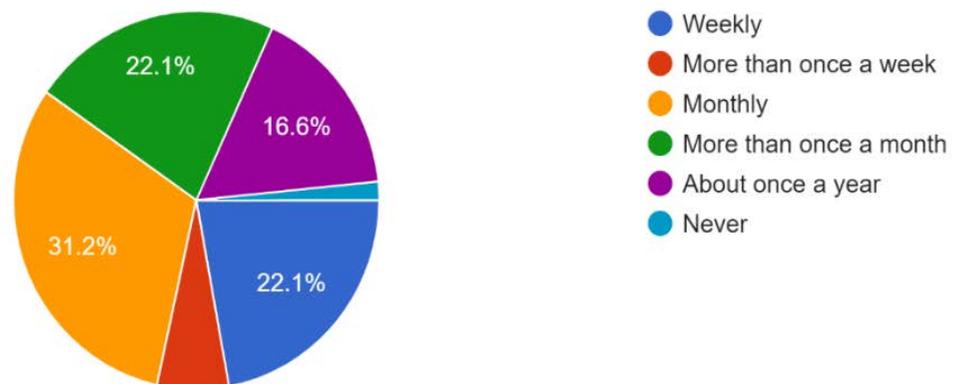
The survey's only mandatory question was: "On average, how frequently do you visit public libraries?" The chart below shows that survey respondents can be considered library users (see Chart 3).

Only four respondents (1.6%) said they had never visited public libraries, and 16.6% of respondents visited only once a year.

Most respondents (31.2%) visit libraries monthly. Weekly and More than once-month visits comprised more than 22% of responses. Six respondents (6.3%) said they visit public libraries more than once weekly.

The survey results suggest that most respondents are familiar with public libraries. More than 98% have visited a library at least once a year. However, more than 81% of respondents see it at least once a month. Most respondents (31.2%) visit libraries monthly. Weekly and More than once-month visits comprised more than 22% of responses. Six respondents (6.3%) said they visit public libraries more than once weekly.

Chart 3. On average, how frequently do you visit public libraries?



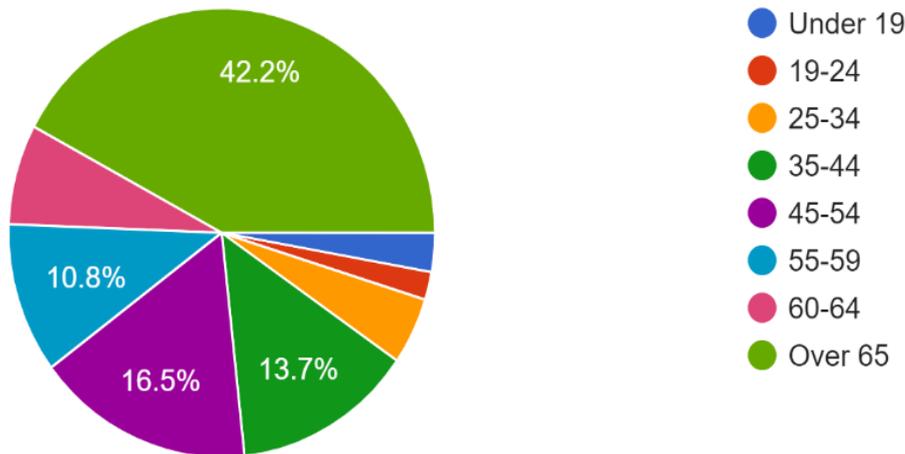
Other interesting findings were the ages of respondents. The survey asked respondents to provide the age group under which they fall. See Chart 4.

Nearly 50% of respondents were at least 60 or older. More than 42% were older than 65. This tracks population estimates in the next ten years, which project that older populations will grow and the people of those 15 or younger will shrink.

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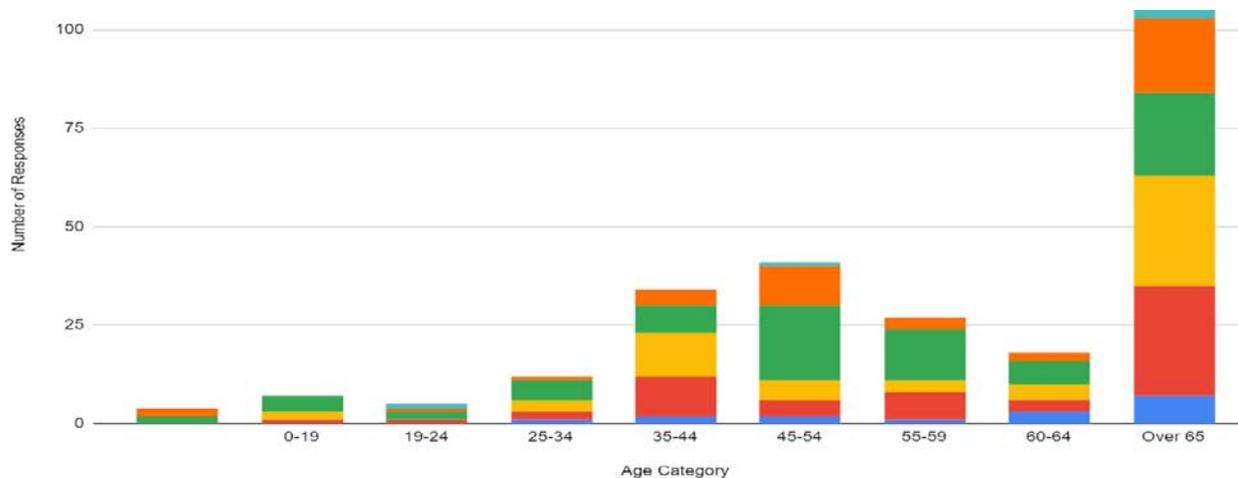
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Chart 4. Please select your age category.



When measuring visits by age group, there needs to be a clear pattern that emerges. SPaC observed that visitors over the age of 65 and visitors in the 35-44 age range tend to be the most active library users. However, visits are generally evenly distributed among each age range. See chart 5.

Chart 5. Visits by age groups.

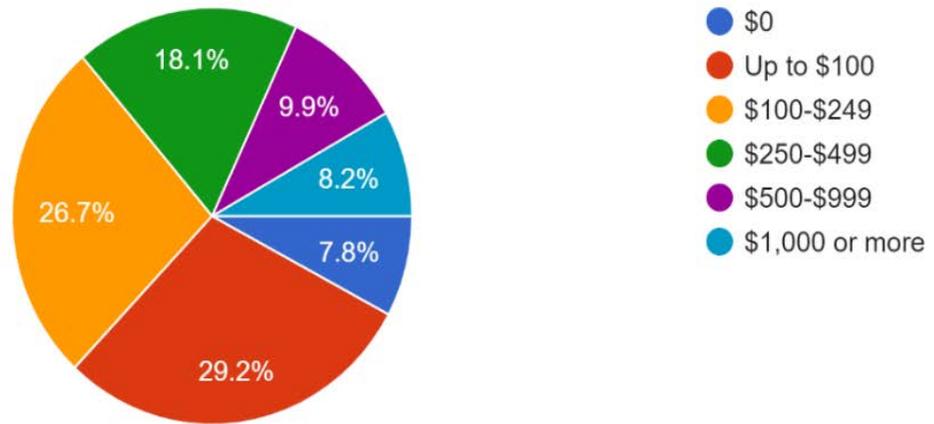


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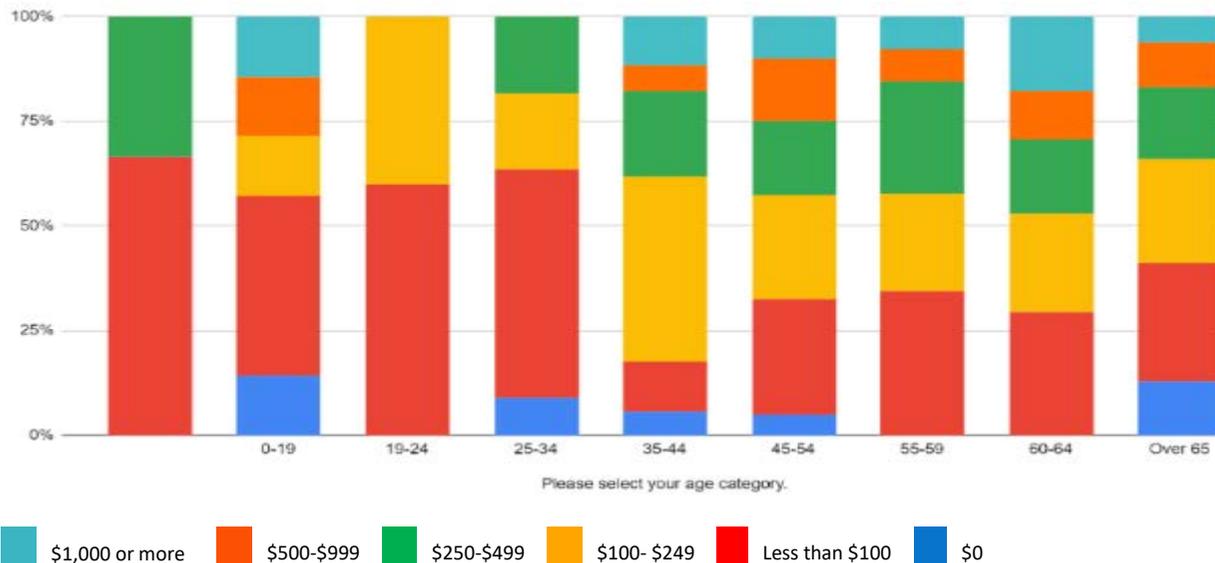
Respondents were asked to estimate how much they spend annually on media, defined in the survey as streaming services, print books, audiobooks, CDs, DVDs, and periodicals. That data is broken down into percentages shown on the chart below. See Chart 6.

Pie Chart 6. How much do you spend on media every year?



Significantly few respondents spend nothing, while the majority spend up to 249 dollars annually. Some information can be inferred from this data. We know the survey respondents are consumers of media available at the Library and to purchase. This question also suggests the respondents have some disposable income to devote to media. Chart 7. shows spending habits across age groups.

Chart 7. Media spending by age.



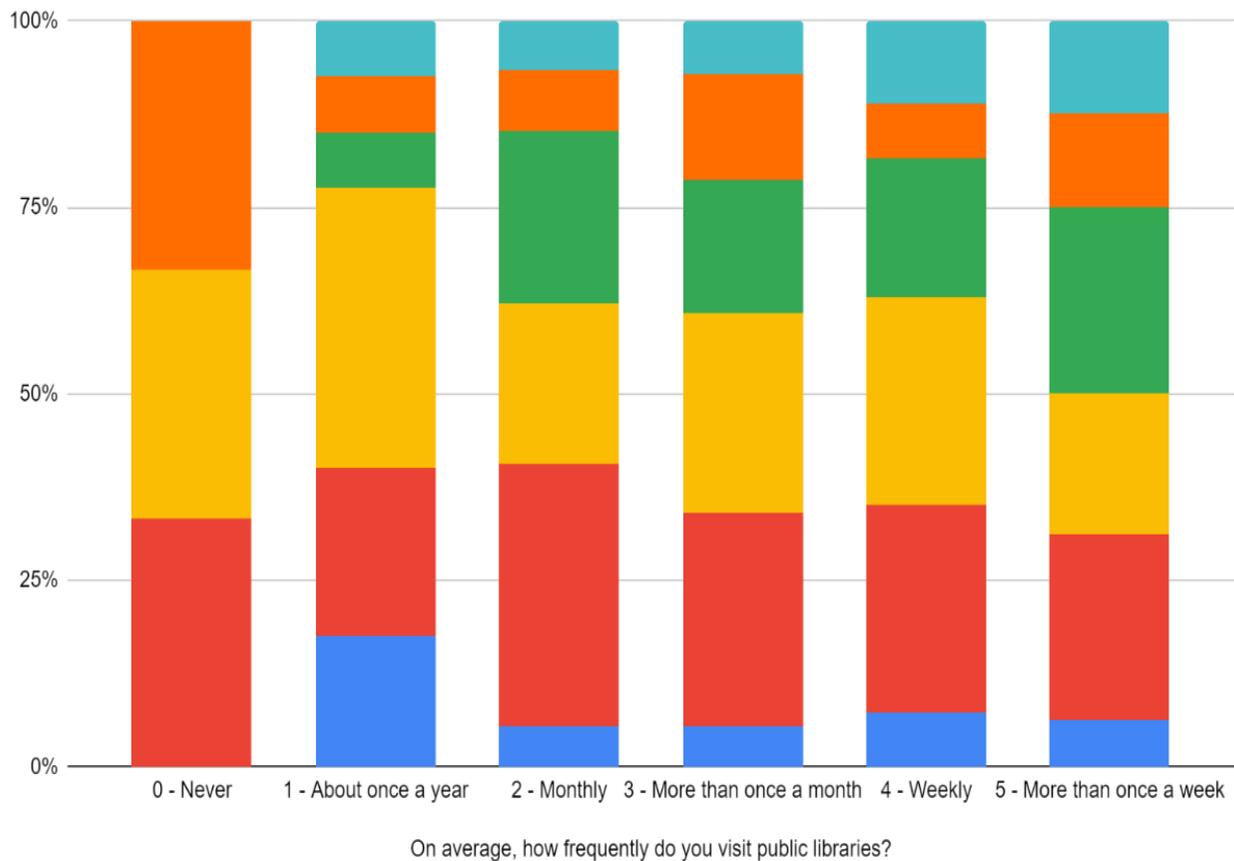
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Again, there needs to be a discernible spending pattern by age group. SPaC observed that the only age groups that did not select \$0 were 19-24, 55-59, and 60-64.

Chart 8. compares spending habits with the frequency of visits. The chart illustrates those respondents who never visit public libraries, unsurprisingly, tend to be more active media purchasers. Respondents who are monthly or more frequent users of libraries have similar spending habits, lending support to the idea that visitors may view the Library as a resource to supplement their access to media.

Chart 8. Spending habit by frequency of visits.



Legend: \$1,000 or more (light blue), \$500-\$999 (orange), \$250-\$499 (green), \$100-\$249 (yellow), Less than \$100 (red), \$0 (dark blue)

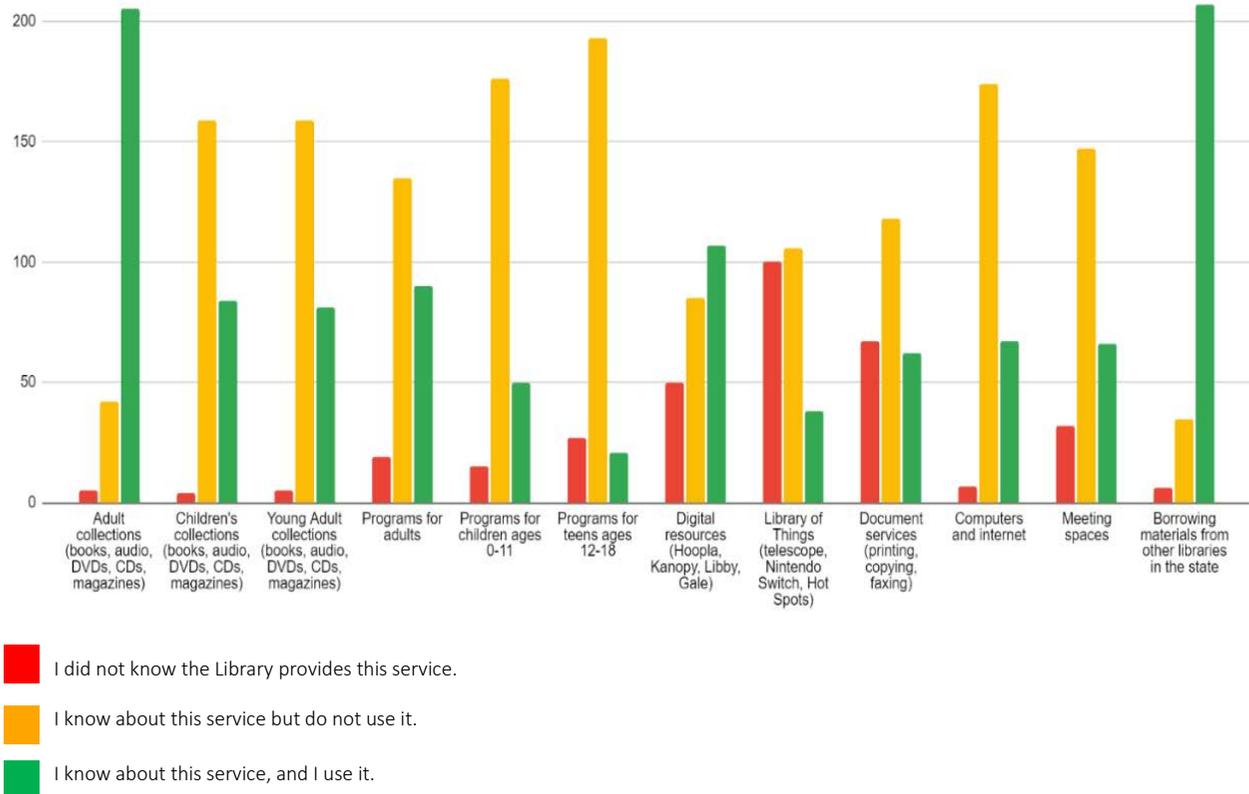
Regarding library services, respondents were given a list of services provided by Thayer Memorial Library. They were asked to indicate their knowledge and use level of each service.

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Chart 9 responses fall broadly in line with age group data. The data suggests that there are very few services that respondents need to learn about, but this is not surprising, as we have already established that the respondents are frequent library users. For example, interlibrary loans are the most frequently used service, followed closely by adult collections. However, it is important to note that there are three services that more than 25% of respondents indicated they did not know about: the Library of Things, Document Services, and Digital Resources.

Chart 9. Services Awareness

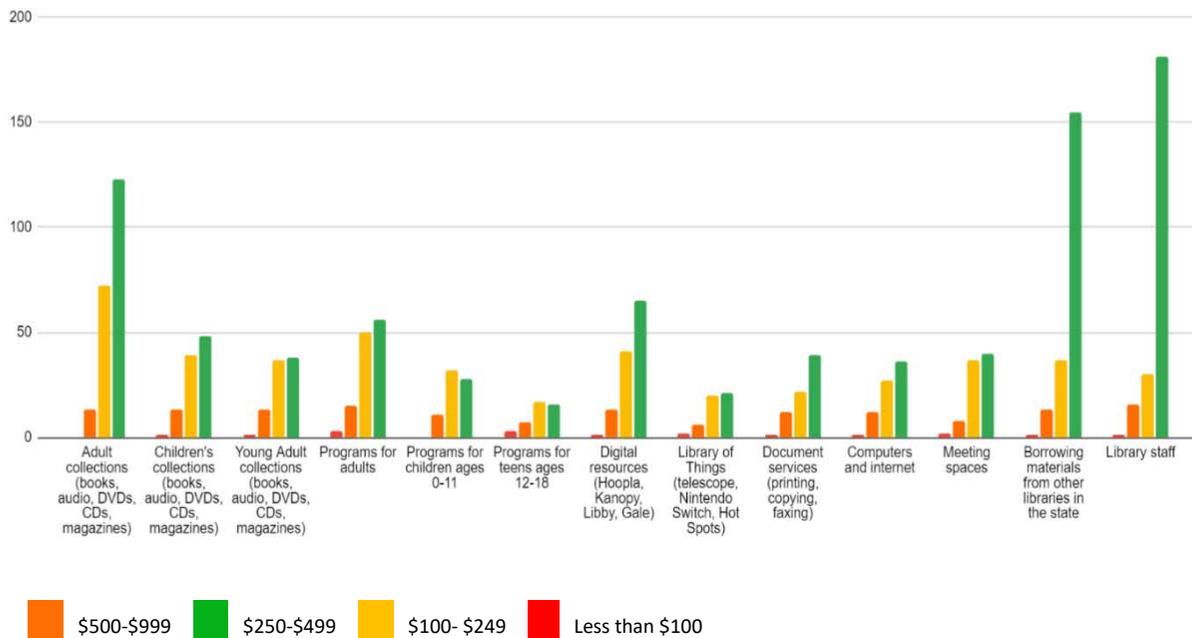


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Similarly, Chart 10 shows respondents rating the services they do use on a scale of poor to excellent.

Chart 10. Service Rating



Not every respondent rated a service they likely do not use. Therefore, a service below 50 indicates responses from those who identified utilizing the service. However, most services generally have a relatively even distribution between good and excellent, but there are three standouts. Library staff is the most highly regarded service, followed by interlibrary loans and adult collections.

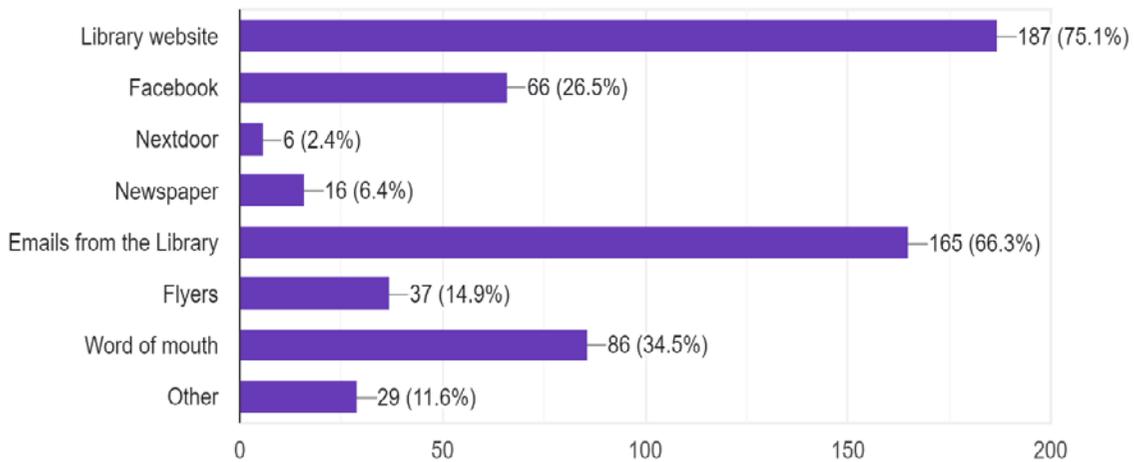
It can be inferred from this data and supported by the age group demographics that most respondents do not use programs or collections intended for children and Young Adults. Similarly, technical and unconventional services (Library of Things) were not used as frequently as the three leading services.

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Respondents were asked how they found out about services. Chart 11 below indicates that online presence is greatest, but face-to-face encounters are also meaningful.

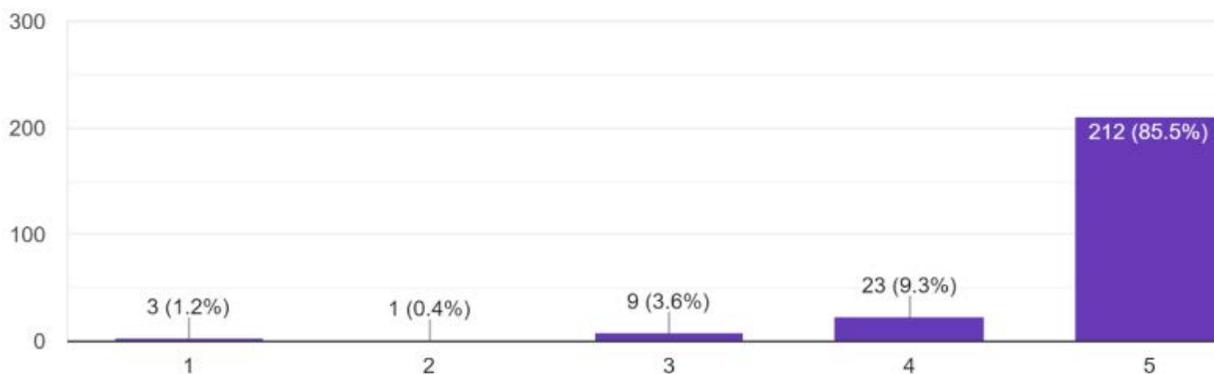
Chart 11. How do you find out about library services? (Select all that apply)



While Facebook is frequently listed, word of mouth was the third most mentioned information source. The website is the most relied-upon resource for information about services, followed by emails from the Library. This includes direct interactions between staff and visitors at the point of Library transactions. This information can be valuable in helping the Library prioritize its outreach efforts.

Chart 12 illustrates responses indicating respondents' likelihood of recommending Thayer Memorial Library to people they know on a scale of 1 (very unlikely) to 5 (very likely).

Chart 12. Based on your experience with Thayer Memorial Library, how likely are to recommend it to family and friends.



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Most respondents indicated they would be very likely to recommend the Library, and nearly 95% were at least likely.

Two open-ended questions on the survey allowed respondents to express what they believe are benefits the Library provides to the community and to offer suggestions on ways the Library could improve its services. These responses are included in appendix A.

[Focus Group and Online Survey Combined Effect Analysis.](#)

There was considerable overlap in themes from the focus groups and the survey. As with the focus group responses, common themes emerged from the survey questions. Survey responses indicated that the Library needs to improve communication and promotion efforts to generate awareness of programs and resources offered. Patrons commonly referenced a desire for more programs for all ages and more places within the Library for quiet study or to sit and read. Some responses strongly express interest in communal reading and working in the Reference Room. Additionally, several respondents requested more training on accessing the Library's digital services, like Hoopla, Kanopy, Libby, and the online catalog.

Focus groups and survey respondents who were aware of and attended programming regularly were pleased with the diversity of programming offered. Participants in the focus groups and survey respondents often cited their desire for more diverse and frequent programming. The survey and the focus groups affirmed the Library's role in the community as a beautiful and welcoming gathering space where visitors are ensured outstanding and friendly service by staff.

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The Lancaster Town Library. (1862)

Dear Sir: You have often spoken of the great good you considered the town library was doing, and the pleasure which its very general influence gave you. I do not see any way in which any one can more certainly promote the well being of the town, than by helping to increase its means of usefulness. ~ Rev. George Bartol^{ix}

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FY2021 PERFORMANCE DATA

The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) administers the Annual Report Information Survey (ARIS) in compliance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 78⁶. Each fiscal year, public libraries must submit ARIS data to receive State Aid to Public Libraries and meet the Minimum Standards of Public Library Service. SPaC analyzed FY2021 ARIS data, the most recent available.

The amount of ARIS data collected from as many as 365 public libraries is striking. The Library was evaluated with eight comparable town public libraries. These towns include Berlin, Bolton, Boylston, Groton, Harvard, Lunenburg, Sterling, and Stow. SPaC analyzed investment and service data to answer a simple question:

Does the Thayer Memorial Library provide good value to Lancaster citizens?

Investment

- As measured by its appropriation, Lancaster's investment in the Library was \$365,659 below the average of comparable communities, which invested an average of \$444,703.
- Lancaster invested \$45.25 per resident to operate the Library. The average investment per resident among comparable communities was \$60.44.
- For every staff hour, Lancaster invested \$1,677 to operate the Library. The average investment per staff hour among comparable communities was \$2,766.

Services

- The Library has a service area of 19,147 square feet, and its largest meeting room sits at 68 people. The average square footage for comparable communities was 12,224, and the largest meeting room sat at 65 people.
- The Friends of the Thayer Memorial Library recorded 232 members. The average registered "Friends" members from comparable communities were 172 members.
- The Library holdings included 232,000 titles. The average holdings in comparable communities were 198,000 titles.

⁶ Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners is the state government agency with the statutory authority and responsibility to organize, coordinate, and improve library services throughout the Commonwealth.

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- The Library circulated 71,000 titles to residents. In comparable communities' libraries circulated, on average, 69,500 titles.
- The Library processed 30,000 interlibrary loans. In comparable communities' libraries processed, on average, 23,000 interlibrary loans.
- The Library attracted residents from other communities accounting for 9,000 checkouts. In comparable communities' libraries, on average, circulated 6,400 to non-residents.

Analysis of the MBLC data helped SPaC consider whether *the Thayer Memorial Library provided good value to Lancaster citizens*. SPaC could only conclude that it does.

In general, SPaC concluded from the data that Lancaster trails comparable towns in important ways. The indicators show that Lancaster's investment in the Library is lower than its peers, as seen in per capita and staff hour data.

Lancaster's Library's reputation is noticed beyond its borders. Additionally, all service indicators were higher than comparable communities. Even so, with more activities intended for residents outside of Lancaster, the Library offers qualities and services they may not be gaining from their home community Library.

In short, the Library provides the Lancaster resident more with less. Staff is efficient in deploying resources and proficient in delivering captivating collections and services.

Significantly, however, the Library needs more staff. Although the Library has similar staffing levels in comparable communities' libraries it still inadequate. Unlike libraries in comparable communities, in addition to its general collections and services, the Thayer Memorial Library staff oversees a museum with hundreds of objects, a rare book collection, and a Lancaster collection which includes archives and manuscripts.

Three additional librarians with requisite expertise are required to manage such important and fragile collections. Nevertheless, as a matter of safety, more staff is needed to cover a large building on three floors.

Demographic shifts also provide an important indicator of staffing levels. Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) projects Lancaster's population growing through 2030 with a sizable demographic change. While the population under 15 years of age could decrease, the population over 65 will likely get larger, requiring dedicated attention.

With budgetary constraints, it's challenging to conceive staff doing more with lagging investment. However, the Library never ceases to innovate all phases of operations without the

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intensive need for staff to oversee so much. With grants providing no capacity to hire more staff, there’s little the Library can do but wait for an opportunity to grow staff.

One final note. The Massachusetts Department of Revenue keeps track of municipal investment in local public libraries. Only a year after the data collected from the MBLC in FY2021, the DOR released data from FY2022. Table 2 shows comparable communities invest more in their libraries.

Table 2 Massachusetts Department of Revenue expenditure comparison of 9 municipalities.

Municipality	Population	Total Library Expenditures	Total GF Expenditures	Library Exp % of Tot GF Exp	Library Exp/Capita
Berlin	3,158	151,891	13,796,546	1.10%	48
Bolton	5,665	472,769	26,000,994	1.82%	83
Boylston	4,849	252,110	18,047,403	1.40%	52
Groton	11,315	901,697	42,804,371	2.11%	80
Harvard	6,851	619,479	30,037,850	2.06%	90
Lancaster	8,441	366,291	24,665,895	1.49%	43
Lunenburg	11,782	435,802	41,760,743	1.04%	37
Sterling	7,985	476,521	24,568,887	1.94%	60
Stow	7,174	281,883	31,777,870	0.89%	39
Mean	7,469	439,827	28,162,284	1.54%	59
Median	7,174	435,802	26,000,994	1.49%	52

DOR exhibits in Table 3 and Chart 13 the Library’s “Piece of The Pie” accounted for in FY2022 municipal expenditures. Only Human services trailed the Library in municipal spending.

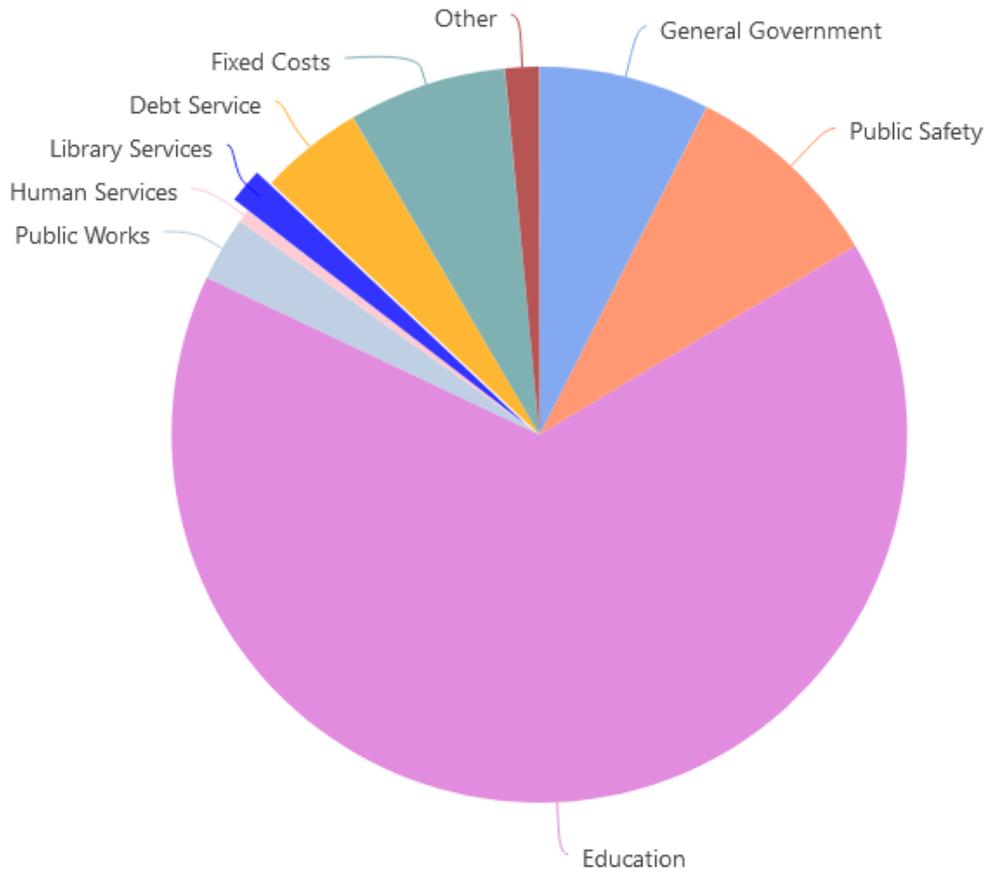
Table 3: Municipal Expenditures by department

Expenditures by Type	Expenditure	GF Expenditure	% of GF
General Government	\$ 1,786,353	\$ 23,735,899	7.53%
Public Safety	\$ 2,115,139	\$ 23,735,899	8.91%
Education	\$ 15,569,804	\$ 23,735,899	65.60%
Public Works	\$ 670,144	\$ 23,735,899	2.82%
Human Services	\$ 141,544	\$ 23,735,899	0.60%
Library Services	\$ 366,681	\$ 23,735,899	1.54%
Debt Services	\$ 1,080,075	\$ 23,735,899	4.55%
Fixed Costs	\$ 1,649,925	\$ 23,735,899	6.95%
Other	\$ 356,234	\$ 23,735,899	1.50%

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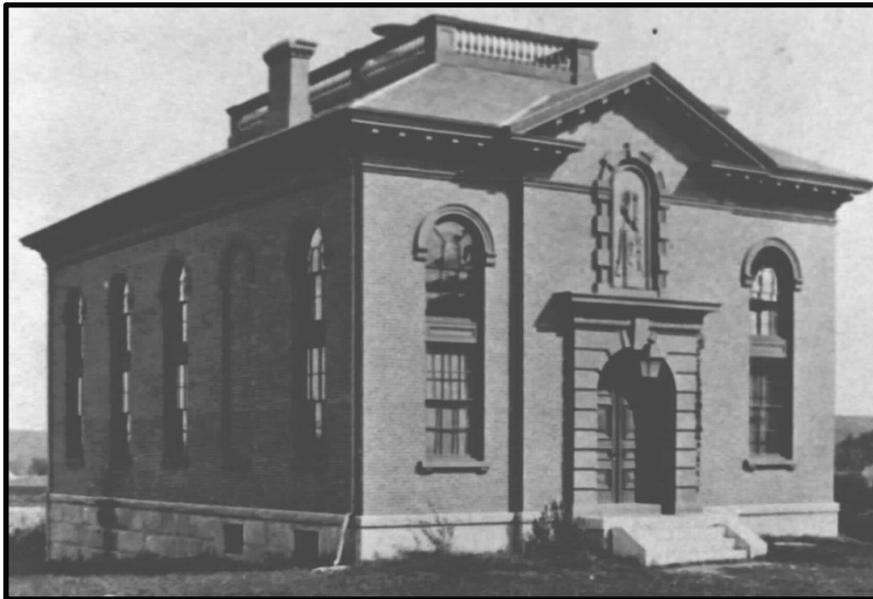
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Chart 13 Library's piece of the pie



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Memorial Hall (1868)

The second object of the building was to “enlighten, enlarge, fructify and imbue with just, generous and elevated sentiments and aspirations our own and others' minds.”^{ix}



Thayer Memorial Library (2000)

The Lancaster Town Library renovation is a project of the entire Town. It was approved at a Special Town Meeting by a vote of 163 to 3.^{xi}

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GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

SPaC considered the data and the subjective experience of operating the Library in 2023. Goals and Objectives were focused and run in combination with other innovation and developments that will occur over the life of the plan. Every effort was made to craft goals that were manageable and objectives that were attainable.

The focus of stated Goals is to make the Library a welcoming space for Young Adults and provide services that included diverse cultural experiences and viewpoints to address limitations in the use of public spaces and interest in local history. SpaC wished as well to develop practical administrative workflows and responsive governance and to bind all efforts and provide effective communications of progress to all stakeholders.

SPaC avoided listing the activities necessary to address objectives in meeting stated goals. Staff members assigned specific objectives will implement them using their experience, skills, and knowledge of the public served to determine actions required to achieve progress sensibly.

Furthermore, assigning when staff will achieve goals and objectives is complicated by many unresolved matters in the Town that make committing soon entirely aspirational at best. Of note, as of February 2023, when the Thayer Memorial Library Board of Trustees approved this plan, Lancaster is facing an override vote of over 1.2 million dollars.

Each year an action plan will be written, heavily influenced by the plan's intent and the sign of the times. This critical step will keep staff responsible to this plan while remaining flexible with the ever-changing landscape of local politics, budgetary constraints, evolving demographic trends, and innovation.

Goal: Make the Library a destination for Young Adults.

Objective: Establish baselines for program attendance, programs offered, and memberships for Young Adults.

Objective: Conduct four focus groups per year consisting of YA patrons.

Goal: Celebrate diversity through the understanding of personal heritage and the heritage of others.

Objective: At least once every year, Staff will install a public display highlighting various cultural experiences and viewpoints.

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Objective: At least three times every year, Staff will provide public programs highlighting various cultural experiences and viewpoints.

Objective: Programs highlighting a variety of cultural backgrounds and viewpoints will record attendance of at least twenty-five attendees.

Objective: Staff will provide at least four wayfinders per year highlighting a variety of cultural backgrounds and viewpoints.

Goal: Improve the public spaces and collections and ensure the safety of people

Objective: Conduct feasibility analysis to, among other things, respond to updated codes regarding the Americans with Disability Act and prepare disaster and space reuse plans.

Objective: In the first year, record baselines for scheduled meeting rooms per year. Record 10% more scheduled meetings over the baseline for each consecutive year.

Goal: Engender an interest in Lancaster's history.

Objective: At least four times every year, Staff will provide public programs highlighting Lancaster's history.

Objective: In the first year, record baselines for Museum visits. Record 20% more Museum visits over the baseline for each consecutive year.

Objective: In the first year, record baselines for Special Collections visits. Record 20% more visits over the baseline for each consecutive year.

Objective: At least once every year, Staff will document one oral history.

Objective: Each year staff will provide at least four wayfinders featuring Lancaster's history.

Goal: Ensure governance and administrative awareness.

Objective: Each year the Board of Trustees of the Thayer Memorial Library will evaluate its bylaws.

Objective: Each year the Board of Trustees of the Thayer Memorial Library will evaluate its performance for the prior fiscal year.

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Objective: Each year each member of the Board of Trustees of the Thayer Memorial Library will attend (virtually or otherwise) at least one seminar regarding Trustee-related matters.

Objective: Each year each member of the Board of Trustees of the Thayer Memorial Library will participate in a subcommittee or be a participant in other Town committees that affect the Library.

Objective: Before the plan ends all administrative and personnel records are current and easily accessible by authorized staff.

Goal: Review and improve the library's communication strategy

Objective: Staff will administer at least one form of data collection measuring the Library's effectiveness in improving its communication networks.

Objective: Staff will reach out to at least one partner with Town departments and local agencies to promote programs and services.

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APPENDIX A. FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

What are your earliest memories of visiting public libraries?

My earliest memory is walking over with my 2nd grade class in 1987 for a tour. During the tour we got to see the whole library, listen to a story read by Mrs. Ogborn, and we all received our library cards (which I still have!)

The green leather chairs in the children's room will always bring a smile to my face.

I grew up in Medford, MA and lived within walking distance to the library. It seemed enormous to me when I was little, and I loved spending time in the children's section, especially the biographies and encyclopedias. It felt like a safe, magical place to me.

Going to the local library with my grandfather in Savannah during summer visits when I was around 8 onward. Seeing the joy, he had in reading and the schedule of visiting weekly or more. Picking up books for myself was a bonus.

I went to a local NYC library as an 8-year-old child with my mother. I was amazed by the wide selection of books.

My older cousin David took me along when I reached the age of 7 to get my own library card. The first book I withdrew on it was his recommendation of a Robert Louis Stevenson adventure story. I took out Kidnapped.

Reading published magazines

Getting books as a child in our town. Participating in summer reading program to achieve pass to a movie or play. Browsing for favorite books or to find new ones, and trading books with sisters

As a child on a bicycle with sisters. Two series: Nancy Drew, Little Maid (Revolutionary War)...gave interest in history. Loved programs.

Back at that time there were no other media, just books and reference.

I discovered early on that the highest numbered non-fiction books (900s) contained travel and geography topics. Since I loved maps, I thought I could devour the entire library by gradually working my way counting down through those books about exciting far-away places!

In my childhood in Canandaigua NY, the library had browsable stacks where books were stored on iron shelving that extended through several floors. I was fascinated that I could be looking at books on the bottom shelf and see through the floor to the top shelf of the next floor down's books.

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Coming to the Lancaster, walking into the children's room and reading in the big leather chair - Having a luxurious quiet space to read in was absolutely magical coming from a family of 10!!

I was 8 years old and just moved to a new home. I rode my bike to the library and asked the librarian for a book. She issued me a library card. I said I needed her to help me find a book I would like to read. She gave me the biography of Helen Keller. This was my first book I ever read and the being of many wonderful book experiences. My parents and I immigrated to the US and The English language was difficult.

Endless possibilities, fun, lots to explore: animals, cooking, diverse viewpoints. Mainly in Alaska on base and off base.

I was in kindergarten and my mother brought me and my sibs to the local library. I dove in with the aid of the librarian and began my reading adventures.

I visited a nearby small-town public library when I was young and I felt rather lost. There were so many books, and the atmosphere was rather dark and dreary.

I remember going on a field trip from school in early elementary school. I think we walked from the catholic school i was going to at the time. I remember it seeming really big, and fun to see all of the books etc....

getting my first library card

As an elementary school child, I remember walking to my small town library in the summer. It was a small house that functioned as our town library. I was an avid reader and read the entire Nancy Drew collection during the summer of my 5th or 6th grade year.

Going to the library after school.

What is the Library known for in the Community?

It is known as a place of opportunity for all ages to explore, make new friends and be available all the time.

Provides things for all ages. Community based, not just for one age group.

building needs some TLC, but it is a community treasure.

It's known for its ever-expanding collection; a huge CD collection; caring and knowledgeable Director and Staff; wide variety of programming; beautiful and historical ambiance.

A variety of media. Programs offered on a variety of topics. Book sale. Coordinate

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Outstanding in how its expanded for different media, computers, etc. Now known for programming. To get to people through the door, programming has done a great job.

A variety of media available. Book sale. Programs offered on a variety of topics. Discount tickets available for area attractions. CWMARS participant. Coordination with town committees/schools.

Children's programming

Children's Programming

This is a hard one, I don't think the library does not have a real identity. I believe Covid has made TML have to rethink its audience and find new and exciting ways to share information and bring people in, which can be highly challenging in the age of doing everything online. The recent summer programs at least gave a wide range of programs for people to explore, and I hope it continues throughout the upcoming year.

Programs on environmental justice and advocacy; programs on New England history; local writers' group

Programs for the community

The building itself is an attraction and focal point. It's known as an information resource in different types of media including lectures and programs. Basically, a learning center.

a beautiful historic building on the Town Common

Meeting gathering space.

The museum and the special collections, both of which contain some unique and other extremely rare items of significance to our local history and natural environment.

A welcoming place with helpful librarians. Programs for kids and families. Cheerful, friendly people. Music and book groups. Concern about nature and the environment.

Outstanding staff, services, collection, and programming. It serves as a central meeting place and way to connect with fellow residents - and expand one's knowledge.

Our library is such a special place! It's not just about the books. It's about the passion of the people that work there, the historical building, the knowledge held within the walls, the diversity of programs for all ages. It's a safe space!

Welcoming place to find information or reading, movies, interesting programs, meeting space. Friendly Help and guidance finding what is wanted.

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Innovative staff. Reached out to people. Repository for historic documents and ephemera.

Joe Mule is such a responsive director and looks to needs of community. Open door policy, especially to Lancaster residents. If there is something that people want, he will find a way to get it to you.

Thinking about Programming Services: How many programs have you attended since January? Do you find programs at the Library appealing? What subject matter would entice you to attend events more often?

I am a snowbird so have mostly been attending online speakers or concerts.

Maybe not any programs during 2022

I have not attended any since January.

Programs that mobilize the community to better appreciate and protect our natural environment.

1 program

I would love to hear/see programming about our town's history - I am sure it exists; I just need to make the effort to go see it.

My estimate is around 75 as a facilitator! I love programs offered by the Library. The value offered to the community is tremendous. I'm drawn to performance-based programs or skill-building opportunities, either for myself or my children.

7 ish

Zero. Since covid there has been few programs I wanted to attend.

Yes, I find programs appealing. Unfortunately, I haven't attended in quite some time due to a lack of free time. When my kids were younger and I worked less, we attended many programs about wildlife.

Any programming about/by local authors

I've attended quite a few programs as a staff member, but not as a patron. I find programs at the library to be very appealing. The topics are typically very interesting and varied, and I like that the library brings in outside music groups, speakers, experts, performers and others to provide programming. More programs, especially for children, on the weekend or in the evening when I am not working would make me more likely to attend.

Sadly, not any. I would like to see programming that cultivates imagination, creates opportunity, and promotes knowledge with town wide concerns.

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I have only attended a couple of programs partly due to Covid. Prior to that I attended many more especially book club discussions. I love programs involving sciences, history and nature. The programs are appealing but I often miss them because of lack of awareness. A weekly email update would be great.

I haven't attended any, though I do think the programs offered are interesting and fun for people of all ages. I know several people who come to the story time and have enjoyed it.

I attended several of the excellent Zoom programs that were offered in 2020 and 2021, but none within the past 6 months.

I have attended 4 events.

I haven't attended any programs since January. Most programs offered, usually through grants, are restricted to subject.

Pre-COVID, the library had a specialist to discuss the library's efforts to download Nurses history into digital format. Leslie Wilson also came to discuss her book in addition to a very well-attended talk by Jill Lepore.

4 programs

1 on Zoom and during history month.

Presented history month.

Annual event (May)

Women's History (March)

Other Historical programs

I have taken advantage of many programs offered by the library for my children. From science experiments, frisbee shows, magic shows, Legos, and reading incentives to many more options. We have used several of the Library passes over the years for Mystic Aquarium, Davis Farmland, etc.

1 event attended since January - the hundred years of birds of Lancaster with Peter Christoph.

I'd be interested in local history, and programs that could bridge differences in the community.

The Rosemary Davis-funded programs have been the most valuable category of programming at TML over the years in my opinion, though there are lots of other programs that have also been quite entertaining and/or worthwhile as well.

I would be interested in more programs covering the arts preferably classes that teach

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techniques i.e., painting all types.

One.

Since reopening, I feel like the programming has been a bit slow to come back to previous levels. Though, it's been wonderful to see the children's creative drama offerings!

I would love to see more children's offerings that aren't story times.

Sadly, zero, but my kids have many: YA book group (ongoing) and gaming. They are appealing, but I wish there were more programs geared to the middle grade/high schoolers. More how-to classes, like get to know your cat, drawing, and painting, basically pull from the summer program line-up and integrate them into our yearly programming.

I have not attended as many programs as I would have liked to. On-site programs for me have been avoided because of COVID. Now that the concerts are held outside, I am more inclined to attend those events. I do love the wide variety of programs that TML offers. I have no issue with subject matter because you can find so many topics of interest here.

More zoom events and events that can be viewed at alternative times would be helpful for those who worry about COVID. The book group could be on zoom.

O attend.

I haven't attended many programs lately. I have been interested in many of them, but they just haven't worked out with my families' schedules. I do like the diversity of programs for adults, book clubs. The library is working hard to pull in the teenage age group. I am hoping to get my own 2 to some of these events.

I have attended about 4 or 5 programs. Many were via Zoom. Some were in person. I usually wish I had time to do more.

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**Thinking about Technology: Do you use any technology that would be useful for the Library?
What devices could the Library lend to patrons [i.e., hotspots, projectors, metal detectors,
etc.]?**

Moderator mentioned soil tester. I would be interested in borrowing this. Along those lines
What about a water quality tester? I saw in the slide, TML is lending laptops? I was not aware
of this.

I used a 3D at Fitchburg library that was very educational. I would love to get access to
microscopes and telescopes, but they are very prone to damage. I want to have a scanner for
converting 35 mm slides to files.

Telescopes

The use of a memory stick would a better source for e-books that are on-line. Once loaded on
your device you must have a Wi-Fi signal in order to use it

GIS software

In the past I borrowed a device that measured electric usage of items at home. That would still
be useful as more devices are plugged in at homes.

I borrowed the Library's telescope for a full moon walk on the Drumlin a few months ago. It
worked out perfectly.

I know many children who take advantage of the Nintendo Switch that is available to borrow.

I've leant out my metal detector to several friends so that would be a fun thing to have on hand
at the library.

I've often thought about doing an outdoor movie so having a projector and screen would be
fun options!

PowerPoint Projectors

Smaller

Computer Classes

Photoshop

Excel

Word

Class for new software

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I can imagine some people might find a document or photo scanner to be a useful thing to borrow, especially as they prepare to downsize their living spaces.

Hotspots, projectors

Tech to convert old video formats to digital. Definitely hotspots.

Classes on using technology.

I don't really use any innovative technology, so I have no suggestions about that. However, I would love to borrow a metal detector from the library so that I could try it out before investing in one of my own. I've always been a promoter of test-driving before investing big bucks into books, CDs, devices, etc. The library is the perfect place to do that.

Library of Things could include tools that people might only need once or twice - thinking home repair, upkeep or gardening related.

I have borrowed a telescope, bread maker and ukulele from the library in Clinton. I also borrow a Roomba from a library in Millis - and they have a very popular carpet cleaner on offer.

I have only used a hotspot, which was amazing and gaming consoles a few times (i.e., try before you buy). I think having a few laptops to check out would be ideal, and e-readers and iPads.

We are fortunate that our library has tried to change with the times. Currently you can take out a telescope, hot spots, gaming systems and games, i think a projector is also available too. I know the library and its boards are working on ways to help purchase for the patrons to use on a rare occasion.

soil tester

I am not tech savvy and have no suggestions at this time.

What other town departments, organizations, and groups should the Library collaborate with?

Historical Commission, Town Clerk

Historical Society, Historic Commission, REC,

All of them, as repository for public to access plans or documents, working on facilities, for programming or meetings.

Recreation ;)

Schools for curriculum support

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Most town departments

shared interests in preservation and enhanced accessibility of local history materials and old town records

The schools, the community center, rec department

Recreation Dept.

Historical Commission

Community Center

Senior Center

Board of Health

Recreation. Schools. Diversity groups in town. When safe to do so, town officials could have office hours at the library

The Lancaster Cultural Council.

Environmental Groups.

Garden club

Regional art museums

I know that TML coordinates with historical society, commission on disability, schools. The library should coordinate with any local organization that is interested in promoting engaging material

Historical Commission

the local schools, especially the high school. the recreation dept.

community center

Parks and Rec for SURE! Close collaboration with the school system so that what is being taught there is fluid for younger patrons. Senior Center/Community. There could be a lot of cross-pollination.

I participated as a leader in a STEM program at the Leominster Y and felt it was very interesting and engaging for the children.

The town geographical maps

No idea!

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How frequently do you visit the library? Does anything prevent you from visiting more often?
I generally pick up reading material each week at some point. Also, now that we are having some in-library meetings, I sometimes find myself here once or twice each week for those. The Concerts on the Green that are sponsored by the Friends of TML gets us here each week as well.

I usually try to stop in once or twice a week, often to pick up books ordered online, read magazines, or look for new books. I would like to stop in on Sundays too.

I can't renew books when overdue and prevents me and my kids from reserving.

Not as often as I should or would like.

My busy schedule keeps me from visiting. The Library has great hours though, that allow for people to have a lot of opportunity to come in.

Frankly, although TML has a lot of hours during which it is open, I DO find that I cannot visit during Tuesday mornings or past the mid-afternoon on Saturdays when it would be more convenient for me to drop by.

I visit the library a minimum of once a week.

I am here at least once a week. Covid prevents more frequent and longer visits.

2 - 3 times a week.

About twice a month. Nothing prevents me from visiting as often as I want or need to.

Every two weeks or so, depending on programs or meetings.

When you collect fines, do you really need the money?

Food for fines is awesome.

Donating books, etc. is great.

Only visit the library when I can't get anything online.

1-2 times per week. The pandemic as limited visits and stays at the library.

Embarrassing to say, all the time, a few times a week and sadly, if I don't want to show my face, I visit other local libraries to mix it up a bit.

Typically, twice a month.

Been here for meetings.

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I work from home and having a dedicated study room would be a nice alternative.

several times every month

Visiting TML: 1 - 2 times a week

Unfortunately, I'm one of those people who keep books long past their due date (guilty as charged!). I think my kids have been unable to take out books at time because I have overdue books.

I visit once or twice a week. Leominster library has longer weekend hours, so we're there generally on Saturdays. If Thayer expanded their weekend hours, we'd likely come more.

I probably visit here about 6 times a year for general purposes.

Once a month? My lack of free time

Did you know the Library is on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Center Village District and registered in Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System Mass Historical Registry? How can we ensure the present and future integrity of the building?

There should be a presentation made on its history.

Joe Mule has always wanted TML to be a destination rather than merely a place people visit when they are in need of media and materials. He has always encouraged us to focus on the building's history and significance. Keeping our historical significance in the public's minds through programs, tours, publications, etc. can help the public see the importance of keeping the building the best it can be.

Civic Historic District explored...another layer of protection. This would include the public buildings, church (Town green campus)

Yes, I knew historical status.

A fund for building projects and contributed to for capital projects as they arise.

Not sure that people are aware of the importance of the building of the library operations. Also, the fact that it's historical is a much more demanding goal to meet when rehab or renovation is required.

More general visibility to the attractions of the building is needed, publicity to the town beyond town meeting. A program? Incorporation into any town publication especially digitally.

Independent 501_3 C

Preservation Fund for the Town Green

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Lancaster passed the CPA, so library can apply for the funds through this program.

Yes, I know. Preventive maintenance would help preserve this treasure.

Yes! Provide good funding for maintaining it!

Create fundraising opportunities for improvements like new windows!

Fundraising, and clear explanation to the town on the essential role the building and services play in the community.

Yes, I knew that. Engaging every resident of Lancaster's awareness that our library building is a tremendous but also perishable asset - only a significant reinvestment of public support for the building in the near future will ensure that TML continues to serve our community's needs to its full potential (as we have all grown accustomed to expecting) for decades to come.

I understand that the library is in need of renovations. Presumably, this will come with a sizable price tag. The Nashoba School District is also planning to come to the town to ask for a big budget approval to build a new high school. I worry that Lancaster citizens will not be willing to fund both. I wonder if the library can coordinate with the superintendent to ensure that they're not going to the town to request funding at the same time?

Yes, Joe mentioned when I moved into town, did not retain that until you mentioned it. This information should be shared more widely: a brochure about it, a space on the website about it, a display about it, promote more of items in the museum so people and understand fully what it means.

I don't think I was aware of this designation. Do you have a preservation fund?

Are there monetary concerns? Do we need to create fund raising opportunities?

Articles in the Globe, Worcester Telegram, etc. Significance beyond Lancaster. Other people who might have an interest in supporting Lancaster for its unique resources.

Getting more information out into the community about amazing resource. Broader Community promotion. Get information out beyond the Lancaster Community.

When you think of the Library's collections: Which collections do you most frequently use? Do you often find what you are looking for? How often do you ask staff to assist you in finding what you are looking for?

If it's not here I'll go to the cwmars catalog

Fiction, nonfiction, DVDs

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Ask staff member if a question or need help with catalog. Sometimes work with special collections staff.

I'm a traditional borrower and use mostly the book and DVD (including educational) collections. I find what I'm looking for, especially since I also request through CWMARS. I only ask the librarian for assistance when a book shows in at the library, but I can't locate it. (Sometimes it's on the cart to be shelved, etc.)

Children's books (fiction/non-fiction), adult fiction.

My children often ask for help in finding books. Miss Maren is always wonderful in assisting them!

I savor the hunt, as well as the bonus of finding something else while browsing I did not know that I was seeking, so I almost never ask staff for help in finding what I am looking for.

TML has been a great resource for summer reading for my children.

I read mostly e-books from the CWMARS system.

On the occasion that I read a physical book the library employees have been amazing at getting the book for me to check out when I can get to the library.

Over COVID being able to take out books and have them left out on the table was a great service for my family.

I like exploring the CD box sets - great way to get a range of music from an artist.

I have taken recommendations from Joe on music many times.

Inter Library Loan has worked perfectly for any book I couldn't get immediately.

Wall Street Journal

I don't ask for help. I explore the rotunda for what is new. I gravitate to non-fiction and let my eye catch something out of my comfort zone, which I highly recommend. About 90% of the time use the interlibrary loan as our collection is small and other is so much new content out there and all media!

Digital Commonwealth

books, CDs, DVDs

I use the books all the time and once in a while a DVD or CD. Fortunately, I pretty much know the library inside and out since I worked here for 8 1/2 years. Therefore, I never really need assistance finding anything. However, I know that the Staff goes above and beyond the call of

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duty when assisting patrons and library visitors. We are very blessed to have such a caring and professional group serving the public.

New books videos

I mostly use the fiction and magazine collections. I usually find my books using CWMARS or the internet and then pick them up in the library. I do not usually need help finding them.

Adult fiction / nonfiction. Children's and young adult. Usually search on CMARS website for particular books. Have asked Joe about the library acquiring a newly published book.

If not using online resources, I would approach the reference librarian for assistance in either finding or leading me to the historical collection (locked research collection)

I generally don't have a need beyond basic services. I will ask if i can't find a book i am looking for and they always know how to locate it or request it from another library.

Wowbrary, Boston Globe arts section, public radio author interviews and reviews for books and films, recommendations from others.

Goodreads

I rarely ask for help except to locate books from the CMARS system.

JSTOR

BPL

Internet Archive

HATHI-Trust org

Reviews from a variety of sources, including the newspaper or magazines like The Atlantic. I usually hear about a book I want to know more about rather than going to a source to find something to read or view. I'd most likely use the NYT Book review when making a decision.

Print current NYT booklist.

Boston Globe and check the ones TML has.

When thinking about what you read, listen to, or view, what other sources do you use to find what you're looking for?

Friends, family. Podcasts, NPR, TV show guests (Trevor Noah), social media posts.

Book reviews, friends, the head butler, everyone I know, NPR, Newspapers (big city)

Put on all of these resources on a list of other places you can go beyond TML.

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It pays to broaden your search to include distinct (if overlapping) listings of library holdings throughout the region.

CW Mars

Amazon

Audible

Spotify

Pandora

Good Reads

Facebook

Library catalogue, internet, recommendations from TV and radio programs, etc., word-of-mouth

I most appreciate borrowing a book especially if I decide it wasn't worth reading even if everyone else was. Same with a movie. I appreciate the ambiance of the library, exhibitions on display which introduce us to features of the building like the rotunda. The building is fun to enter, so I appreciate the ambiance. I have no desire to linger in Clinton, say, or Sterling.

C/W MARS and going to the library is a different experience. More utilitarian to use C/W MARS. Build on the positive experience of entering building. See people you don't see, comfortable, etc. Ambiance.

kanopy, Libby, Hoopla.

Google and then CWMARS, then any other libraries within Mass. I have library cards for most of the systems: Cape Cod, Minuteman, etc. Pinterest for book recommendations, blogs, blogs, and online articles! Literary Hub.

Libby for audio books. I think I get the best search results when set to Boston Public Library rather than CWMARS or Minuteman, but good to have options.

Most appreciate book collection, CW Mars, children's programming

Enrich: more diverse children's programming

The collections of books CDs, DVDs, eBooks.

Closer connection to university library systems

Book collection

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Digital resources

Programs

Curbside Pickup

CW/MARS, Worldcat, local College/University libraries

There should be a how to use tab on the library web page for using various services.

Staff

Website

CW Mars and the young adult section of the library for my kids.

I use good reads for suggestions! i will use word of mouth, ask a friend too

Oan

I get recommendations from book reviews (NPR, New York Times, New Yorker), Publishers Weekly, Goodreads

I often google what I am looking for and look into what comes up, universities, reviews etc.

Google

Atlantic magazine

Online reading includes New York Times. Listen to NPR for news and podcasts. Use audible to listen to books occasionally.

What library services do you most appreciate? What else can the Library offer to enrich the services already provided?

I feel that I can almost always get the book I'm looking for.

Newspapers...but the microfilm machine is broken.

What does Lancaster have that is already digitized by others that could be pointed to on website.

Just the fact that our Director and every person employed by TML puts the needs of our community and its residents foremost. They are here for us, (even when nobody could be here in person during the worst phases of the pandemic). The love, ingenuity, and commitment shine through every day.

I appreciate all of the services!

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keep expanding teen outreach and YA collections.

Acquiring just about any material I am looking for.

A caring and fully present staff.

The staff

I like having access to good quality printers that can print larger paper sizes. Book club discussions. Plus, books, books, and more books!

Interlibrary loan

How frequently have you visited the Library or accessed its Special Collections?

I visit the library weekly. I have never accessed a special collection.

I visit the library 6 to 8 times a month but have not used the special collections, as far as I know.

I know nothing about the special collections. I have not visited for this purpose.

Maybe once a year I'll need something from the special collection.

Only seen the museum and special collections once during a tour. Would be nice to have a promotion for those rooms near the entrance or reference desk - and when they are open.

I have accessed Special Collections for work on displays or to work with staff.

IN the 12 years I have lived here I have seen the special collections twice. And the museum twice.

How would I know about the special collection?

I've only visited the Library for special collections if there was a special exhibit or the Rare Book room was open for a special occasion.

A lot, because I work here, but I have checked out items for myself and it is like going to the teacher's lounge, you feel you shouldn't be there, but once you have been you want to visit all the time.

I have never visited the special collections, other than the museum upstairs

I visit a few times a year but have never accessed a special collection

I have never accessed the library's special collections.

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I visit the library regularly. Currently, I seldom use Special Collections. However, because I'm involved with the Lancaster Historical Commission, it's reassuring to know that it's available to me should I need it.

Outside of my role as Trustee (working to understand and promote the excellence of our Library), I have never used the Special Collections for my own research (though I certainly could and should do so)!

2 times a week.

4 or 5 times a year.

Possible to transfer it to the internet?

Exhibits are not ongoing.

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APPENDIX B. ONLINE SURVEY RESPONSES

How does the library benefit your community?

It's a place people can go that doesn't require any money and everyone there is helpful.

Access to information, entertainment, meetings, adult programming, DVD borrowing, research assistance, archives

It provides a safe space for learning and enrichment as well as a place to hold community events.

It was a wonderful resource to take my young child to before he started school. And now that he's reading, they're saving me money and keeping us stocked with his favorite series.

Everyone should have access to a library.

It is a tremendous resource for our family as we homeschool our children.

Reading is critical in our society. TML makes every resource available to all ages.

In so many ways. The staff is exceptionally helpful and friendly. The interlibrary loan provides so many resources. Meeting space is clean and very comfortable. Library passes make many venues more easily accessible.

By providing A safe space, kind, helpful, knowledgeable staff!

Fun space to introduce kids to reading.

In every way possible.

It's a great library for all ages.

It provides books to people who love to read and could not necessarily afford to purchase every new book that they would like to read. Thank you for being there. Thank you to all the wonderful staff members who are always kind and helpful.

Books of course! The building is a landmark on the town green and together with the church and community center I feel like the residents have many options for events.

I am not aware of the services provided.

As a homeschooling family, the library allows us access to many more books than we would ever purchase on our own and allows our kids to learn about accessing information from a resource-rich place like this.

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I love the events and services theater puts on.

Never have used the library.

"In addition to the books and magazines for adults, Young Adults and children, they run excellent programs, including the summer evenings music series. TML is always looking for new and interesting ways to serve the community."

Free books and resources

Museum passes

It offers wholesome and varied activities for kids from which they learn and grow and get to know others. It operates as a central town resource for families, and I think of it as such.

We appreciate you all SO much! Thank you for your assistance over the years in finding books from other libraries for us, kindly talking to my children, helping us with faxes, giving my kids a tour of the library and answering all their questions, the opening up of book delivery and curbside pickup during covid so we could continue reading books.....You all are the best!

A community resource for those who come in to explore, welcoming, non-judgmental assistance with whatever a person needs (media, programs, info)

Source of valuable materials and guidance regarding available resources. Caring representatives of our public library elevate confidence in local government.

Listening and changing with what parents need

We love you! Also, study/workspaces.

Very helpful for multiple adult and children's programs

Best thing we have going in Lancaster.

The staff are always helpful, library reaches out to be helpful.

Knowledge. Community.

It has brought education, pleasure & comfort, in times of chaos, these past 2 1/2 yrs

Public library is highlight of Lancaster.

Great staff willing to help in most ways! Youth book clubs to discuss interesting titles, who can meet new friends with like interests.... Video game clubs/events are fun for my son. And librarians who find whatever it is I am looking for to read, or even a director buying new titles / material for patron use.

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Every community should have a library they are essential to the well-being of our communities.

Facilitating reading material flow from other libraries in the state

It provides a resource for me to look into town records and see what the town looked like back in the day.

Provides valuable resources and programs to all age groups. Hours allow easy access to the physical library for those with day employment.

Provides access to many resources to everyone.

It services all people.

Friendly, come one - come all demeanor.

Collective information and education, convenience, stimulation, resource, introduction to new experiences, child development, senior entertainment and health and brain well-being. general sense of community and shared interests.

We have been patrons of the library for many years. We contribute to the Friends of Thayer Library and believe that access to knowledge in a community space is very important to the health and educational wellbeing of our children and our community.

It is a community service center.

cultural enrichment

It provides resources people either couldn't get or couldn't get without great expense.

I love all of the updates Joe sends out via email about events, happenings, etc. it feels very welcoming and a great space to be.

I've always believed in libraries as an important community institution. TML, if not the best, must be in the top of small-town libraries. I've used services at other local libraries and the staff at TML can't be beat.

Provides resources that some people may not have other ways to access.

A wide and varied selection of books, as well as some old games such as DS titles

The library primary caters to families with children which only represents 1/3 of Lancaster residents. It can do better meeting a broader swath of residents.

Another resource for families with children.

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It provides us with free entertainment, i.e., books, movies, games, magazines, music. It has good craft classes for adults and children.

Valuable resource for enriching our lives

provides books & information, public computers, programs for children.

Source of information, learning and entertainment in many forms accessible to all. Fosters a sense of community and interaction.

The library is a go to for answers to any question. It provides information and entertainment.

learning repository

Programming

Encourages kids to learn how to read.

I don't know how to answer this. It's an essential resource.

TML has a variety of material that appeal to many in the community. Being able to download books, automatic renewals and interlibrary loans are great services that people can take advantage of.

Both by providing standard library services and being a community center where members of the community can come together for non-library functions such as talks.

It makes information available in many different ways.

I will use once pandemic is over! I love library services. I got my card this spring. I used the Leominster library since it was closer but now, I'm a proud member of our Lancaster library.

provides books and book sales

Provides quality information resources.

They provide varied services and have a great staff.

Education, research and free of cost

Meeting spaces, educational programs, lectures etc. Excellent support from the library staff. Who wants to live in a place without books?

Helpful resources

Community programming, supports readers.

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I DO NOT LIVE IN LANCASTER, but based on what I hear and see, this library (Thayer) is an excellent benefit for this community as well as others.

Services and media to meet changing needs and population.

It provides books my kids read, digital content, and library passes.

During the pandemic Thayer Library brought a ray of normalcy to the community. A big thank you!

By helping me and others read anything we want.

Thayer library was giving me programs during Covid lockdown. Thanks!

It offers an abundance of services all free for our community.

The library is a place to exist without being expected to spend money. It is a community focal point, and an invaluable resource for learning.

a great resource for learning, entertainment, and communication

Great for any avid reader, summer music is nice, librarians always friendly, access to fax and internet if needed...And mailing books early during COVID was fantastic.

The library was my saving grace during COVID. Thank you for everything you did for the community during that difficult time!

A lot of resources for entertainment such as books, videos, etc., and community programs.

By offering items on loan.

It's great to have the library for books and events.

information

Art events & LCC coordinated events on the common

By providing these free services to support and encourage creativity.

It provides opportunities for growth for all ages. It encourages our community to gather and enjoy all kinds of interesting activities, music, lectures, and crafts.

Connections to community events

Free access to all books and media. A place to meet others of same interests. Love the yearly book sale.

serves the community very well no need to buy everything.

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Access to a good library is very important to every community. It provides an opportunity for all citizens to have information, education, and enrichment. It is especially important for children to have equal exposure to the resources of a library to foster their love for reading and learning.

Provides media (books, CD, DVD, pc, interactive programs) that serve the community. I feel the Library is an Excellent source for all types of non-printed media.

In so many ways especially for kids and seniors

Community buildings organization

Great place to get info and attend programs.

Provides access to info for those who cannot access from home.

:)

There are a multitude of ways TML benefits Lancaster. I think the staff is key in this area, always helpful going above the call of duty. Many thanks.

It is a vital part of the community. Because of the services you provide.

How much time do you have:) ? The library is priceless in terms of service, interlibrary loans, museum passes that have saved me serious \$\$ over the years, programs for my teens (even though I can't get them to the book club, sorry Maren!) amazing staff who bend over backwards to help you and some of whom I consider friends. I also really love the fact that you are open Mondays. I'm a library hopper and I consider Thayer in the top 3 with Bolton and Harvard.

It has everything a person could want for education, research & leisure.

Libraries are very important. The library is a beautiful space with a good collection for its size.

Music special, Children, teen and adult events, educational resources

The library is a regular stop during our week. We love to come there as a family and return and take out books. The library is a calm and beautiful place to spend time, filled with wonderful resources. The access provided by Libby, Hoopla, and the CW Mars network and interlibrary loan is fantastic.

They make resources available in many formats. Always willing to help patrons. Very creative during COVID

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It enriches Lancaster with a variety of archives for learning and provides helpful, fun resources that are free of charge.

Services offered. Friendly and helpful staff.

Perfectly located, air-conditioned facility. A great place to take a break, bring the kids and find some new things to borrow.

It is source for information with many tools to obtain those who seek it.

- Activities/programs for fun and learning
- Place to be (peaceful)
- Provides free access to so many resources.

Provides needed resources, educational, social, and cultural.

It helps us read books for free.

Amazing resource. Provide programs, online access to materials, informational resource.

Every town should have a library for information and education, and community meeting space.

The Library is a valuable source of information of all kinds. I enjoy attending the many programs offered to the public.

It's a great free resource for learning and building community through programming. It allows us access to many books, programs, devices, and services we otherwise would not have access to. As well as a great spot to gather with friends.

Important and valuable source of information and entertainment, and at no cost to boot!

Fun programs for kids and families, good access to lots of books!

The library is a resource that people in town rely on. Although it is a small percentage of my tax dollar--my return is BIG!

all the time

Convenient and cost-effective access to books and the other resources referred to in earlier questions.

Our library sponsors a lot of events.

It's always been a gathering place. A place that brings people together.

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Super friendly and helpful staff!!! Always very helpful to get you the right material!!!

The library is an invaluable resource, especially for young families and older residents.

Instead of buying books I can access the books I want to read for free.

I like your concerts on the green.

TML is a safe and friendly place where we feel comfortable. The ambience is wonderful, and the staff are all helpful, welcoming, and friendly. We love it.

TML is a valuable, dynamic, and relevant resource for Lancaster Residents and Visitors of all ages and backgrounds. It provides friendly, safe and competent assistance for research, recreational reading, entertainment, education, personal edification, family activities, local quality programs, copy assistance, internet access, local historical preservation, social interaction, public awareness, Town issues, meeting space, etc. Keep up the great work please!

It is one of the few community spaces in town.

Programs and eBooks.

All libraries are the hub of a community. I would not live in a town or city that does not have an active library system.

A basic requirement for the social, intellectual needs of the community.

Providing material to broaden our awareness and understanding.

Books etc. for all ages, programs, and services for all ages.

Gathering place for the community (online and in-person); helps promote shared knowledge and entertainment, local history.

Community, knowledge, and good times start here, continued through history, art and timely information for all ages.

Provides many resources.

Though no longer in the community, I found TML to be the gold standard of Libraries.

Provides all kinds of information, assistance, fun programs, and things that bring the community together - which is even more important today.

The Library provides access for the community and that might not be available at home because of economics or other reasons. The library also provides a physical meeting place for community members to socialize and discuss ideas.

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It's a great centralized place to meet and find information and find out about local services.

I personally love the activities for my young daughters. They have so much fun

Great selection of books/other materials, great meeting spaces and MOST IMPORTANTLY, a VERY helpful and knowledgeable staff.

I used it more when my kids were younger. We loved spending time there at least once a week. Now I used Interlibrary loans and hoopla. I love the book sale. The library also supports the summer concert series.

Entertainment, explore other places, get away from stress.

It is a great resource for books, information, and a nice place to browse books.

Libraries supply knowledge. A community without one is detrimental to its people.

For me it is the anti-internet. I trust books for learning more than the ww web.

For me personally, I really appreciate the hours the library is open. When I need to accomplish something beyond the ability of my smartphone, the library is here for me. Also, I love that I can bring my visiting grandkids and check out books, movies and CDs. Pre-Covid, I borrowed The Greatest Showman CD to listen to in the car on a longish trip, and they still talk about it!

A LOT

It provides space for students to do homework and research, a yearly used book sale which is always a great time for everyone, and fun programs for families with children.

The Library offers resources of all kinds to all agree groups for little to no cost.

I use the digital eBooks and digital audiobooks constantly. It's hard to make it to the library often, so having the option to find books on demand when I need them is amazing. The youth programs seem to be picking up and while we haven't made use of them yet, I'm keeping an eye on any that my kids might like.

It's a wonderful resource.

Provides access to media we would not otherwise have access to.

It's a good resource for entertaining reading and movies and audio books.

A great resource for young and old.

"Public spaces are important. Having a space with AC/heating that people can just be with no expectations is important.

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Accessibility is important. Giving people access to printing/internet/computers/other "luxury" tech essential in today's world is essential to the library.

Making people feel welcome is important. The library, with the Town Green out front, is quintessentially Lancaster. This historic building is not only a service to the public, but a place where they can feel the spirit of Lancaster, the spirit of community. How many other places in Lancaster can boast that?"

The library has a hometown feel to it and the staff is very helpful and friendly. It is one of the endearing features of the town. To me, those somewhat perhaps intangible qualities - since they can produce more of a 'sense' or 'feeling' than an actual measurable result, are actually the things that can lead to more tangible qualities like folks being able to work well together for the common good. And, that is something that is sorely needed in Lancaster right now. I think of the library of a place that helps to provide a sense of stability and solace, whether folks are aware of that or not.

It is warm and inviting and has a wonderful collection of literature for children. My three boys absolutely love the playroom and I think all the toys inspire creativity and are educational.

Affordable education and entertainment, open to all

Provides books!!! Without free public libraries, democracy is not possible!

It provides free materials and programs for patrons of all ages.

"Very helpful staff.

Up-to-date materials that I use: DVDs, Books, Local History Materials, Bulletin Board in foyer."

"Provides a meeting place, programs.

Libraries are magic!"

The library provides a very special service that NO profit-making business could ever replace! The "service" is actually a place for the public, to gather, learn and ponder the world, cosmos and universe in which we live, and when appropriate, to become one with it.

Provides resources that may otherwise be inaccessible.

excellent education resources for children, parents of children, young & older adults

You offer programs of interest to the community and continue to keep us literate! Just being in a town library makes me feel like I am experiencing that community.

Excellent resource for every topic under the sun, and always a friendly, helpful place.

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Keeps us sane; especially during covid.

Programs and services as well as books!

We borrow stuff.

In what ways could the library improve its services?

I would love for the library to have a larger space and to offer more children's programs but that's all an issue of money, isn't it?

Online website is hard for me to navigate.

I just got my library card, so I don't know how much my responses contribute to your decisions.

More programming for homeschoolers would be awesome.

I do find that I use interlibrary loan more often than I like. Especially when reading multiple books in a particular series. TML pulls books which breaks the series and I have to withdraw from another library.

The service is wonderful. I cannot think of anything that could be improved.

Unsure

More public kids' programs

More adult programming.

N/A

I'm not really sure unless you could double the number of popular adult fiction books you have on your shelves. Although with the fantastic CW/Mars system it's not a necessity. Thank you again for all you do.

Possibly offering more activities to partake or borrow from the library. Utilizing recreation neighboring areas to use borrowed items, or canoes, or learning kits that could be borrowed by children and families. Self-serve computer to aid in finding books in the children's area using a search feature. Leominster public is a great library, I'm sure there are ideas there that could be duplicated.

Improve communications to reach nonusers. I never hear about library services.

I would love to see some programs where older kids could come in and read to younger ones or teach them a skill that they'd like to share!

I have no comment in that regard.

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More marketing about what is going on and unique services offered at the library.

More museum passes (free entrance)

most you child activities take place during day while son is at daycare. would be nice to add more 4pm or weekend activities.

Continue to expand/update its collection of materials. Maren has made phenomenal improvements to the children's/middle grades collection and our family appreciates that so much. I'd love to see the same happen with the YA and adult collections.

Would love more "classics" in the children's and adult departments. There are only one or two titles by Louisa May Alcott in the whole library. 11 years ago, when I first came to the library, they had the book *The Long Fatal Love Chase* by Alcott. It was so much fun to find such an obscure work by such a well-known author and I am sad the book is no longer there. We recently checked out a biography on Nathan Hale written as a children's chapter book from 1959 and it had such an impact on my son! Would love more older books and a range of books from different eras vs the cycling out of what is not read as often. We're here for the books! :) Would you ever consider getting in music scores? Or easy beginner music books?

Find a way to help townspeople "get" that they are part of what the library offers and can provide for them.

More music with Firelight KIDS!

Bigger selection, but I realize this is hard.

Not sure, Joe is excellent with his regular communications, staff is awesome, always super helpful, tough to improve on something that's already working at a high level...

They are constantly improving services, so I can't think of anything at this time.

help make hoopla and Libby work better offline and outside of Lancaster.

I cannot stand long, maybe have a way for someone to sit and not lose their place in line.

I am completely satisfied with the library services in this day & age of declining budgets & constant cutbacks.

Not sure

I'm happy with your services.

Have a wider array of adult books; both sides of the political spectrum - often only one side is shown in the new materials section and is very off putting.

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I do not really think that there are many ways that the library could improve its services, I like them just the way they are.

Continue to improve online access to resources, such as more current movies.

I think the library is doing an excellent job.

I don't know.

I'm unsure about access for the disabled (e.g., access to the building)

To me, non, however I look forward to your new programs, if any, when instituted.

There have been new staff hired that we just haven't gotten to know well yet. It would be great if there was a series of Facebook posts about who the staff are, what they bring their role, interests, etc.

Not sure

More borrows available per month on Hoopla!

Unknown

The only thing I wish there was more of (besides books, which must comply with physical limitations) was lecture-type programs for adults.

Some of the staff at the circulation desk are extremely loud. That's why I never stay. I wish they would talk in whispery voices so you can use the library in peace. Also, no privacy using the computers. Is the central area the only place for them? Sterling and Holden libraries are much better.

More programs and services for adults. The library is not quite so I go to other libraries to read or work.

nothing

It's great already!

additional computers

Wider range of adult programs; author visits, historical presentations beyond Lancaster; introduction and visits to the Rare Book room

Library already does a fantastic job of serving the community.

Add YA books.

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Better promotion of activities

I understand there is a limitation of space. I find that I utilize the interlibrary services frequently because, a book in a particular series I may be reading, is not available. A suggestion would be to evaluate the upper level and see if the books available are being circulated. Maybe some of this space could be utilized for books more frequently requested.

Two things come to mind. First, the library staff is great, but it would be nice if they had name tags to add a personal touch. This is a minor, but in these Covid times, psychologically helpful way to reduce our loneliness. The second was to update your website but I just went to check on it and I thought it was quite good. Keep up the great work!

help train older folks on using the technology available at the library.

NA

There could be more librarians and support people to expand the hours and access.

New books

I used to be bothered by the limited stacks but since I learned about accessing books and materials from other libraries and online services, all is good. I really like the Great Courses and similar material. It would be good if they were downloadable.

There is one lady working in Lancaster who must have had a miserable life. She never ever smiled and made it very hard to come through the doors. I have not been there in half a decade or more because of the spotty service provided.

Not sure

Not sure.

I cannot think of any at the moment. I really think the personnel and resources at Thayer are excellent.

Continue to provide and grow the digital content, advertise more about the Library of Things (I will have to look this up!).

Teaching older adults how to download digital resources.

I wish digital media wasn't limited.

I think it's great already.

LARGER SPACE FOR YA!

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"Bring back the big tables and chairs for reading and working on your own laptop. Bring back the programs in the lower-level meeting rooms. Get more comfortable chairs for the meeting rooms. You made no mention of museum passes. Do you still offer those?"

There has been some turnover at the community center; perhaps you could do more in conjunction with them. Co-sponsor events, perhaps.

The bands on the common are a great idea and we need to get more people in the door. The ice cream truck is good. Bring back the becue table. Make the band season a little longer. Maybe we should have more fundraisers to make more money so we can have more or better events.

Outrageous Fortune band was a real sleeper. They attracted a crowd of less than 30 people. Last night, the band Crossroads played in Clinton, and they also had a dog show and a food truck, and it attracted about 150-200 people. They created excitement there. What do we want to create when people come here?!

Now about having programs with the historical society? These people need to be more visible. Or even the Thayer music school."

None

Self-check out

A wider variety of programming--adult programming seems to have a narrow focus and there could be a wider variety of programming for Young Adults and kids.

None!

More coordinated events on common with community groups and cultural council

I use the library as my primary source for reading. I used to purchase all my reading material and it was costly. I love being able to select a book online and be alerted when it becomes available. I rarely enter a bookstore anymore. I am an avid reader.

More involvement in public schools and maybe senior center.

I can't think of any.

perfect the way it is.

I am 100% appreciative of all of our library services and the wonderful staff.

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non-Lancaster historical/culture informational programs. I remember the Library brought in a speaker(s) to talk about other religions and the history of other region (in this I believe it was about the Mediterranean culture's) which I found very informative.

More Programming, More Crafts

More programs for adults. Senior programs during weekdays. Offer forums on important town perhaps in partnership with town officials, COA, fire, police, DPW, transfer station, animal control, ag commission.

Given no complaints I'm at a loss to advise.

Keep doing what you're doing!

Open an hour earlier.

For the elders or disable that cannot go to the library have materials delivery to their home.

I found the layout disorienting at first because the upstairs Non-Fiction seems so separated from the rest: maybe more signage? A separate YA area would be amazing.

I think it is great the way it is!

"Remove masks entirely. People need to see each other's faces and masks (and the plexiglass) do nothing other than impede communication and interaction. Librarians are trusted community members and children are negatively affected if they can't see their faces."

I think our library does an excellent job in all collections and programs. It's a beloved community resource.

Can't think of any

Advertising them more

The library could expand its collection of museum and park passes.

Keep providing new audiobooks.

Children's movies - one of our favorites, could use more popular movies.

It should offer a "how to" tab on its web site, it should also offer "on-line" and live group sessions for "how to" information.

I don't know how much it would be or if it would be used by many, but I would love access to an academic database.

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Please extend week-end hours, maybe until 4:00 on Saturday? For working folks with a commute challenging.

I'm not sure.

?

I am very satisfied with the level of service the Library provides.

I would love to see more programming for Homeschoolers and/or the 8-12 age group.

Email receipt when items are returned, same as when they are first borrowed.

"- Provide more programs for adults with disabilities.

- Provide more programs focused on health literacy (especially during COVID!)

- Become a member of NNLM, apply for grants, take free classes!"

none

The on-line software to reserve/hold a book is not particularly user friendly. I struggle to use it and expect other have given up trying.

More museum passes.

More teen activities

Nothing comes to mind.

Have in our library the first book in any series where we already have later books from the series; distinguish between new to the library books and newly published books; more newly published books, especially nonfiction.

By opening more hours per week.

Continue what you're doing and explore areas to expand. Perhaps a craft night once a month could be fun. Maybe try loaning out unusual things for patrons who may wish to learn a new skill but don't want to personally invest yet in needed equipment, such as textile looms, photography equipment, a shampoo carpet cleaner, high pressure water washer, sewing machine, sports equipment, musical instruments, etc. ? Network more with Homeschool families to develop curriculum resources and support materials. Have local art exhibits. Resurrect the annual Quilt Show. Develop art contests for school age patrons, seniors, general public. Return Big Truck and Classic Car night.

More internet resources and more easily searchable

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None that I can think of. Staff is great.

I love many of the in-person programs so always interested in that.

Offer workshops on how to use money saving services like Kanopy; offer a lending library for more "things" like home & garden tools, sewing machines, other crafts.

Advertise the items that are not well known, historical, fun, and artistic. We all know how to get a book!

The ONLY thing I can think of is sometimes if a program is popular your space limits attendance. Perhaps you could collaborate with the other buildings on the town green to provide a larger venue.

No improvement necessary!

The concerts are mediocre. I have been to Sterling more on Wednesdays than Lancaster because they are at the same time and Sterling has better concerts. The concerts are not that well attended which stinks for the musicians. Perhaps you could pass a bucket to supplement funding for the concerts. I would also like better communication about services. I used to get updates from Joe Mule weekly, but these have dropped off. I now only get them occasionally. I would also like to see more adult programs.

not sure

I tried to reserve a hot spot for my vacation but that was not permitted. Reservations would be very helpful and more than one week borrowing would be an improvement. My vacation is for 2 weeks...it would be nice if accommodations can be made for vacations of more than a week.

Hard to beat what you already offer. I happen to be a local history nut, so anything that brings local authors talking about local history is my idea of a good time.

You're already great, but I'd like more visiting historians.

Better kids' programs, friendlier staff

Better advertise little known and new services.

I understand that space is an issue, but you are missing many classics that use to be there and are not there now because of low check out rate.

Fine as is.

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Upping the game when it comes to technology. The computers do not offer much beyond basic internet access. The library is historic, sure. But the services in the building can't also feel historic.

The services are pretty amazing. It is a small library, so there are relatively few books, but the fact that we can order from other libraries and obtain just about anything from the CWMARS system is awesome.

I think if the library offered more programs for the younger children, ages 3-6, I would attend with my boys. I find that many events are after dinner time which is difficult for young ones. In addition, I am hoping there will be more programs for preschool aged children offered during the weekday mornings, in addition to storytime.

I love the library just as it is.

"The new copy machine is not user friendly.

More computers are needed in quiet areas.

Too many specialties displays. Makes it harder to find items."

TML is a beautiful, active, welcoming library. It is a pleasure to come here. Keep doing what you are doing.

More programs, magazines for over 65 yr. old group.

"Re-introduce LIVE lectures in the meeting rooms post-COVID.

Bring back the research tables that used to be in the main room! (ADA be damned!) Resolve the issue and bring back the central tables that we used to use to read/research/and use our laptops!!! (The cubby-holes are NOT a worthy substitute. If I want to grab a magazine and read at a table, the cubby-holes do not offer sufficient natural light--they feel claustrophobic! There's no better experience than to read/research at an open table in the middle of the room, with natural light. This library has lost something very special when it removed the tables from the center of the main room!!!"

Provide meeting space with conference call/screen capability, sell postage stamps, more educational lectures or author talks, audio/visual editing, instruction in photo editing, storage, film making

possibly more programs to attract residents who normally do not attend. For example, the recent seminar by Peter Christoph was exceptional but not everyone is a bird lover like us...

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I am not very tech savvy and was not successful with digital resources online during Covid. A workshop in this would be helpful (during evening or weekends for people who work).

I don't have any complaints.

More passes to museums.

Having more new releases, more fun activities for kids between 5 and 10.

Having ALL the books in a series

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