



# G.A.R. Memorial Library Strategic Plan FY24 - FY28

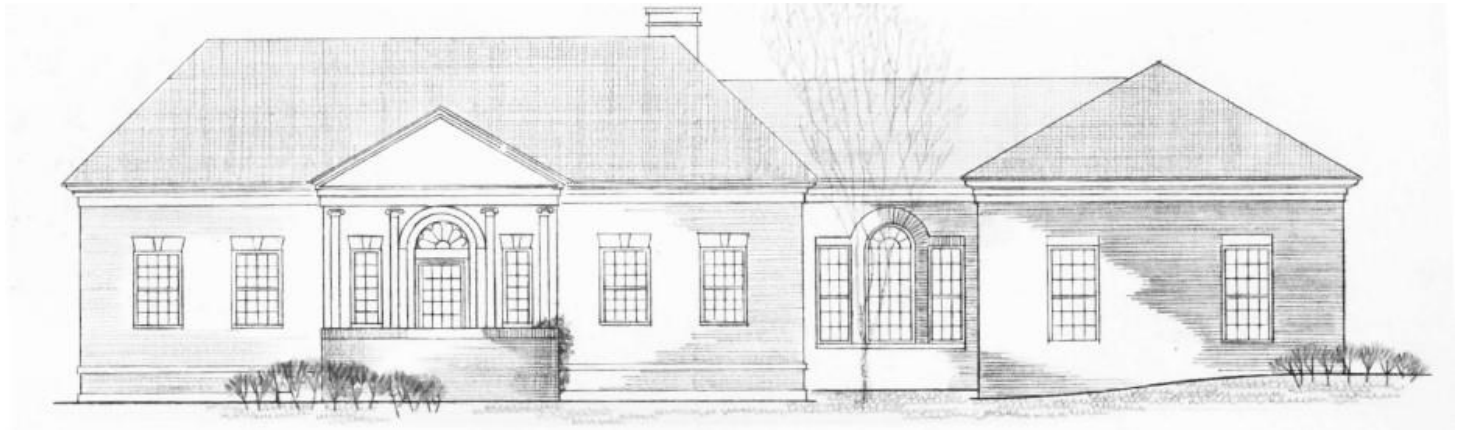


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## Community Description

West Newbury (also referred to as the “Town”) was first settled in 1635 as part of neighboring Newbury. On February 18, 1819, the General Court of Massachusetts passed an act “to incorporate the town of Parsons.” The initial proposals had been made in the late 18th century, but determined resistance from the neighboring town of Newbury, which had already lost Newburyport, blocked the measure for decades. On June 14, 1820, the legislature passed another act to change the name to West Newbury.

West Newbury is a part of Massachusetts’ North Shore and Merrimack Valley regions. Located in Essex County, West Newbury lies along the southern banks of the Merrimack River, 10 miles upstream from the Atlantic Ocean. The town is located approximately 13 miles northeast of Lawrence and 34 miles north of Boston. It is bordered by Merrimac and Amesbury to the north, Newburyport to the east, Newbury to the southeast, Groveland to the southwest, and Haverhill to the west. The Rocks Village Bridge across the Merrimack River is the only access to the northern banks of the river in town; there is no direct route into Merrimac and Amesbury. According to the United States Census Bureau, the town has a total area of 14.7 square miles, of which 13.4 square miles is land and 1.3 square miles, or 8.65%, is water.

Over the last forty years, West Newbury has developed from a rural farming town into an affluent, semi-rural community. Its picturesque location along the Merrimack and proximity to Boston have attracted new families from neighboring communities, creating a significant shift in demographics and an influx of development. Environmental sustainability and maintaining the Town’s semi-rural character are major priorities within the community, and the Town has invested significant resources into preservation and sustainability projects in recent years.



## Brief Library History and Governance

West Newbury's first library was formed in 1819, the year West Newbury became a town. Called the "First Social Library," it was a private institution that was housed in many different locations. In 1894, after the State of Massachusetts offered \$100 for books to any town that established a public library, the building and its contents were turned over to the Town, and the first free public library was founded.

As early as 1874, the Major Boyd Post, representing the veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic or G.A.R., conceived the idea of a town library as a Civil War Memorial and began raising funds. In 1917 Louisa and Georgiana Emery gave the town the land on which the library now stands, then containing the Albion Hotel.

By 1937 the G.A.R. fund had grown to \$13,344.17 and the original library building, designed by Russell Peirce, a Newburyport architect and a native of West Newbury, was erected. In 1975 the attic space was converted to a children's room and, in 1987, the town voted to override Proposition 2½ to spend \$1,200,000 in order to triple the size to the current library building.

Since 1894 there have been eight library directors:

Caroline Carr	1894–1914
Sadie Bailey	1914–1953
Esther D. Thurlow	1953–1957
Janet M. Smith	1957–1959
Harriet Campbell	1959–1967
Katharine M. Gove	1967–2013
Susan C. Babb	2013–2019
Corinn Flaherty	2019–present

### Staffing:

As of July 1, 2022, there are two FT (full-time) staff and 6 PT (part-time) employees, resulting in an FTE (full-time equivalency) of 4.90, which is well below the other 369 certified libraries in the state when considering circulation volume and hours open; West Newbury ranks in the bottom 18% (311 out of 369). Our hope is that over the next two fiscal years we will be able to add one additional 10-hour/week position and one additional 20-hour/week position, which will bring our FTE up to 5.65. The library director has an MLS (masters in library science). Both library director and children's librarian are full-time.

**Merrimac Valley Library Consortium:**

The G.A.R. Memorial Library (Library) is one of 36 libraries that belong to the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium (MVLC). MVLC membership provides the online catalog and access to the digital Overdrive Library, as well as many databases. If the Library does not have an item, it can be requested from another library and delivered to West Newbury for our patron.

**Library Governance:**

The Library is a department of the Town, governed by an elected board of nine library trustees (Board). The Board's authority is derived from Chapter 78, Sections 10 and 11 of the Massachusetts General Laws. Section 11 states in part that "the board shall have the custody and management of the library ... and of all property owned by the town relating thereto. All money raised or appropriated by the town for its support and maintenance shall be expended by the board, and all money or property that the town may receive by gift or bequest ... shall be administered by the board." Responsibility for Library management, collection development, and provision of library services to the public is delegated by the Board to the library director. The director is appointed by and directly responsible to the Board, and is an employee of the Town of West Newbury.

**Support:**

The Friends of the West Newbury Library provide critical support for all programming, especially for the summer reading programs, and purchase most of the museum passes. The Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners provides State Aid Awards to all certified libraries in Massachusetts. In FY 2022, the Library's State Aid Award totaled \$8,828.89.

## Library Overview

The G.A.R. Memorial Library is located in West Newbury's Historical District at 490 Main Street. The Library is a central gathering place in the West Newbury community. It is an inclusive and welcoming environment, staffed by friendly and knowledgeable professionals who are passionate about providing personalized, thoughtful service.

The building was last expanded in 1987, just before the ADA (American with Disabilities Act) took effect. Consequently, the second floor and outdoor courtyard are not handicap accessible and are not open to the public.

The Library is well-landscaped through the combined efforts of the Town, the Board, and the Garden Club. Any expansion beyond the footprint of the existent building is restricted due to the surrounding septic systems.

Children's programming is and always been one of the strengths of the Library. For over 45 years, the children's librarian, Kate Gove, has developed and provided excellent programs for children, with financial support from the Friends of the Library.

Local history is rich, and the Library holds a small collection of historical artifacts. In 2019 a digitizing initiative was established. The Library worked in coordination with the Historical Commission and the Town Clerk to digitize all Town Reports from 1838 to 2020, along with other items and collections. The future storage and care of these materials remains uncertain.

Broad community support for the Library in West Newbury is clear. Of 59 public libraries in the state with populations between 3,000 and 7,000, West Newbury ranks 5th in per capita library usage. West Newbury's children's department is also one of the busiest of the 59 libraries, coming in 5th in total circulation.

In a recent community-wide survey, residents highlighted the following as the Library's most valuable assets:

- Easy access to a diverse array of information and materials via the Library's own collection and through the Merrimack Valley Library Consortium and the state's collaborative resource sharing system
- Personalized service provided by knowledgeable and friendly staff
- Welcoming and inclusive small-town atmosphere where "everyone knows your name"
- Thoughtful and dedicated service of our long-time children's librarian, Kate Gove
- Ability to access downloadable books and other digital resources
- Access to educational and enriching programming for all ages

The survey participants, and later the Strategic Planning Committee (Committee), identified the challenges facing West Newbury today: mounting economic and environmental concerns that strain Town resources; development and demographic shifts and their potential impact on community resources and the landscape; challenges in keeping up with advancing technology; budget cuts in the public school system as a result of the override failing in two of the three towns that make up the local regional school system; political and civic unrest and/or disengagement; a lack of easy access to Town records and local history items; and few establishments or places in Town to connect and meet with others. It was also observed that many people, including regular Library users, are unaware of the range of services offered by the Library.

The current Library building is inadequate in meeting the needs of modern Library users. Of all 369 certified public libraries in Massachusetts, the G.A.R. is one of only 61 libraries that does not have a large meeting room for events, and it ranks 333rd when considering the date the main library building was last renovated. Survey participants also expressed a desire for expanded hours, especially on weekends in the summer.

Finally, the pandemic's effect and ongoing influence on Library usage and trends must be taken into consideration when thinking about the future of the Library.

During the height of the pandemic, residents were working from home and not attending school in person. This caused a major shift in how and when patrons used the Library. As a result, the Library closed two nights per week to conserve its limited staff for times when demand for services was highest and focused on reaching patrons in a variety of new and creative ways. We increased our digital resources, initiated virtual programming, and created opportunities for the community to interact with us via social media, our Poet-Tree, and the many StoryWalks that Kate Gove created throughout the year for families to enjoy.

Many of these services remain in place to this day. Virtual programming opened up a world of opportunities for individual libraries to pool resources. This allowed libraries with limited resources to provide programs that would have otherwise been cost or space prohibitive.

The Library held 53 virtual adult programs in FY 2021 with 654 attendees, a 62% increase in attendance over FY 2020. Adult attendance increased another 63% in FY 2022, with 1,066 people attending 61 programs. Our StoryWalk is now a permanent fixture on the lawn, providing families with a monthly rotation of new stories to enjoy outdoors.

Since the start of the pandemic, the Library has also experienced an overwhelming increase in demand for electronic content, including ebooks and other digital services. Our ebook and streaming usage increased 38%

between FY 2020 and FY 2021. We saw the same trend in FY 2022, and we expect it to continue in future years as well.

After a year of being open for curbside service only due to the pandemic, the Library resumed in-person services in May 2021. Within the year, Library usage surpassed pre-pandemic circulation and programming attendance and has continued to increase steadily. In FY 2022 circulation was the highest since FY 2016. However, general foot traffic has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. As is also the case in neighboring libraries, foot traffic dropped most significantly in the evenings.

In spite of this, survey data and community feedback revealed a desire for more evening hours. In the spring of 2022, the Town approved the creation of a new 10-hour library assistant position, which allowed the Library to reopen an additional evening per week starting in FY 2023 and, for the first time in Library history, to remain open on Saturdays throughout the summer.

Though this staffing increase has helped to mitigate the Library's chronic understaffing, additional staffing is needed in order to achieve a sustainable model for our hours open and services provided.

The role of libraries everywhere is changing rapidly, and patrons are using libraries differently than in the past. Libraries are no longer simply repositories for books and information. They are places to meet, study, socialize, and attend programs. People come in to use our computers, print, scan, and use the Wi-Fi. Our physical collections are changing, too. Soon, items like DVDs and CDs will no longer circulate, and the spaces that house these collections will have to be repurposed. As we continue to migrate in a digital direction with digital collections slowly replacing the physical, people will continue to need community gathering places and shared workspaces. They will continue to need access to information and educational and recreational activities. We can accommodate these changing needs by rethinking how we use our public spaces and buildings. Creating flexible physical spaces with features such as mobile shelving and seating areas will allow us to adapt to the evolving needs and interests of the West Newbury community.



## Planning Process

This strategic plan, and its goals and objectives, are based on input from a broad range of stakeholders in the West Newbury community. The Library solicited community feedback in a number of ways in order to assess its performance and identify future needs. Information was gathered over a five-month period, from March to July 2022, via a community survey, interviews, and both in-person and remote meetings of the Strategic Planning Committee, the Board of Library Trustees, the Friends of the West Newbury Library, and Library staff.

A town-wide survey was conducted in April 2022. The survey was posted on the Library's website and Facebook page and was sent out via the Town-wide email distribution list. It was also published in the local paper, and paper copies were made available at the Library, Town Hall, and Council on Aging. More than 281 responses were received.

## Strategic Planning Committee

The members of the Strategic Planning Committee were personally invited to participate on the Committee because of their individual dedication and unique contributions to the Town of West Newbury and the Library. The Library Board of Trustees sincerely thanks the Strategic Planning Committee for their participation and commitment to helping shape the Library's future:

Jim Blatchfeld

Julia Bleichfeld

Allie Bleichfeld

Paula Breger

Laura Collins

Rachel Costello

Dianne Faulkner

Corinn Flaherty

Joanne Gay

Elisa Grammar

Bob Janes

Jane Martin

Mary Moody

Wendy Reed

Kelly Scott

Lydia Sisson

Dawn Watson

Charles Wegrzyn

## Needs Assessment & Results

Strategic planning consultants Abby Strauss and Greg Proventiz facilitated the first of two meetings of the Strategic Planning Committee. In the first meeting, held in May 2022, Abby asked comprehensive and open-ended questions that inspired the group to consider the Library in the context of global, national, regional, and local trends. Anything that might influence library usage and service needs now and in the future was considered.

Next, she asked the Committee to imagine how the community, technology, and region might be different in 2028, and to envision what services and opportunities their ideal future Library would provide to ensure that all members of the community find the Library to be a valuable Town resource that informs and enriches their lives.

Finally, Abby utilized an analysis technique (KAIR: Keep, Abandon, Invent or Reinvent) to assess what the Library is currently doing well and should continue doing, what isn't working and should be abandoned, and what the Library might invent or reinvent to improve services and collections.

In the second meeting, held in June 2022, the Committee discussed and analyzed the survey results. Corinn Flaherty, the library director, led the Committee in a community visioning exercise, the purpose of which was to determine areas where the Library can grow and improve services. When considering the Library's assets and challenges, numerous creative solutions and ideas were generated that addressed how the Library can meet future community needs.

Several key focus areas were identified:

- Community/Schools
- Information/Collections/Local History
- Building/Grounds
- Programming
- Services

The Committee then worked to broaden and simplify these focus areas to establish goals and objectives that support the Library's commitment to serving as a true community hub for learning, recreation, studying, working, and socializing for community members of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds.

## **Community**

Feedback revealed a desire for more opportunities to connect with others and to leverage individual local knowledge to benefit all. The Library is expected to be a uniting force in the community by enhancing relationships, supporting the schools, preserving and providing access to West Newbury's unique cultural legacy, and working in partnership with other Town departments, boards and committees.

## **Services**

The Committee decided that the Library should provide a diverse selection of physical and digital materials and easy access to information, along with a broad range of educational and entertainment opportunities for everyone in the community. It was noted that the Library should seek to remove any barriers to service and increase outreach and marketing while continuing to evolve as the community changes. Additionally, innovative solutions for fundraising should be pursued to promote more flexibility when budgeting for programs and materials.

## **Space**

The Committee deemed it essential that Library space expand to allow for adaptable and modern community meeting, work, study, and recreation needs. Creative solutions to achieve this included reconfiguring the first floor, adding an elevator to make the second floor ADA compliant and therefore accessible to the public, and conducting a feasibility study to determine if Old Town Hall might be used as supplemental Library space. Better use of all outdoor space was also suggested; creating reading gardens and making the courtyard an accessible space were offered as possibilities. The Committee also wanted to see the Library serve as role model/education hub for conservation and sustainability efforts.

At the conclusion of the strategic planning process, a thorough review of the survey data and meeting results provided insights regarding both community perceptions of the Library presently and its expectations for the Library's future. The Strategic Planning Committee established broad goals and objectives, designed to guide the work of the Library and prioritize the allocation of Library resources, while being flexible enough to accommodate unanticipated challenges. New mission and vision statements were created based on these goals and objectives. This strategic plan will serve as a community-driven, high-level road map that will guide Library programming and services over the next 5 years.

# Mission and Vision Statements

## Mission Statement

The mission of the G.A.R. Memorial Library, as a tax-supported public library, is to strengthen community connections and enrich civil society through programs, services, and collections designed to cultivate literacy, civic engagement, and cultural appreciation, as well as to preserve West Newbury's unique identity, history, and sense of place.

## Vision Statement

To be a haven for community connection, knowledge, and recreation.



# Goals and Objectives

**Goal 1: Community:** The Library is a uniting force in the community.

## Objectives

### a. Enrich relationships

- The Library will reimagine and grow programs that connect local residents with each other across generations.
- The Library will utilize local expertise and knowledge to broaden both understanding of specific subjects and fellowship among local residents.
- The Library will provide opportunities for social engagement and cultural diversity.

### b. Support the schools

- Library staff will “bring the Library” to the local schools by being a presence in both the Page and Pentucket Schools.
- The Library will work to enhance the curriculum at the local schools.
- The Library will provide volunteer and learning opportunities for all school-age children in the community.

### c. Preserve and provide access to West Newbury’s unique cultural legacy

- The Library will explore projects that will preserve the cultural heritage of the Town by conserving, digitizing, and making accessible existing historical collections.
- The Library will pursue new initiatives and projects that will illuminate West Newbury’s past and present.
- The Library will train all staff on local town resources.

### d. Increase presence in the community

- The Library will expand partnerships with organizations that can help promote library offerings.
- The Library will improve awareness about services, programs, and collections.
- The Library will deepen its commitment to teaching patrons how to use library resources.
- The Library will encourage patrons to become library promoters in their community.

**e. Work in partnership with other Town departments, boards, and committees**

- The Library will collaborate with other Town departments, committees, and groups in a way that mutually benefits everyone in the community.
- The Library will seek to develop volunteer opportunities that cross-pollinate among Town departments.
- The Library will work with the Historical Commission and Town Clerk in the ongoing maintenance and storage of all three local history collections.

**Goal 2: Services:** Collections, programs, and services reflect the needs and interests of the community.

**Objectives**

**a. Educate all ages with an array of resources and materials**

- The Library will offer access to a wide range of new/emerging technologies and instruction on how to use them.
- The Library will continue to expand its growing Library of Things to reflect new and emerging needs and interests in the community.
- The Library will provide a diverse collection of up-to-date information in physical and digital formats and provide instruction on how to access the information.
- The Library will promote democracy and political literacy and provide opportunities for civic engagement.

**b. Entertain residents of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds**

- The Library will expand and diversify in-person and virtual programming with the aim to provide “something for everyone.”
- The Library will prioritize growing the Library’s collection of ebooks and other digital collections based on local demand.
- The Library will highlight cultures from around the nation and the world.

**c. Evolve to address changing needs and interests of community**

- The Library will solicit feedback from the community regularly to inform services and to ensure there are no avoidable gaps in service.

- The Library will look to local, national, and international trends when planning programming and curating collections.
- The Library will hire and train staff to meet the needs of a growing community.
- The Library will develop and expand public and private funding sources.

**Goal 3: Space:** The Library provides a nurturing, inclusive, and modern space to work, study, and socialize.

### **Objectives**

#### **a. Serve as a hub regarding climate change and sustainability**

- The Library will provide education and information about local, regional, and national issues and initiatives related to climate change and sustainability.
- The Library will prioritize and pursue sustainable practices, utilities, and clean energy.
- The Library building will be integrated into the Town’s emergency infrastructure.

#### **b. Seek innovative design solutions**

- The Library will seek to meet numerous needs based on innovative design and furnishings, using creative solutions to address space and construction limitations.
- The Library grounds and courtyard will be accessible and well-designed for patron enjoyment and enrichment.
- The Library will seek to explore, develop, and implement pioneering technological solutions whenever possible.
- The Library will seek to create dedicated space for private study, large events and meetings, and proper storage of local history collections.

#### **c. Endeavor always to be inclusive to all groups and individuals**

- The Library will maintain its intimate feel as a place “where everyone knows your name.”
- Collections will be developed with the purpose of educating and enriching all members of the community.
- The Library will provide space for anyone in the community to gather, work, study, and socialize.

# Governing Board Approval

The G.A.R. Memorial Library Board of Library Trustees approved and adopted this Strategic Plan at their meeting on September 13, 2022.

Fred Chanania, Chairperson

Marcia Sellos-Moura, Vice-Chairperson

Tom Salvo, Treasurer

Laura Collins, Recording Secretary

Sandy Nawrocki, Corresponding Secretary

Amy Custance

Heather Conner

Paula Breger

Ashley Adams

# Appendices



## Appendix A

### History of the G.A.R. Memorial Library

West Newbury's first library was formed in 1819, the year West Newbury became a town. Called the "First Social Library," it was a private institution that was housed in many different places including the #1 school house, barber shop, and First Parish Meeting House.

Several other libraries existed during the 19th century, including one formed around 1870 by Leonard Woodman Smith, a local historian and journalist, in his home on Maple Street. A card cost seventy-five cents per year.

In 1874 the Merrimac Lodge of Good Templars, assisted by the Debating Club, made an effort to start a town library. This was first located in the Good Templars' Hall over Whittier's Store, where Brunault's Auto Repair now stands. In 1875 the Ladies' Library Association was formed to help the library "in all needful ways." The Ladies raised \$114, and Hayden Brown, a local businessman in the comb industry, offered the library a room in a building that he owned on the site of the present-day Food Mart. That same year the salary for the librarian was \$1 per week.

During the 1880s, the local newspaper, *The West Newbury Era*, campaigned for a public library, suggesting that the building should be "something substantial, but nothing fancy. ... An artistic edifice (in a town like this) in which to house a library, is as needless as a ten dollar hat to keep the cold from a feminine head!"

But in 1883 the Ladies' Library Association voted against giving the library to the town and, in 1886, bought Martin W. Wood's blacksmith shop at the corner of Main and Mechanic Streets, converting it to a library building. In 1891 this building was moved to land near Post Office Square. In 1894, after the State of Massachusetts offered \$100 for books to any town that established a public library, the building and its contents were turned over to the town, and the first free public library was founded.

As early as 1874, the Major Boyd Post (representing the veterans of the Grand Army of the Republic, or G.A.R.) conceived the idea of a town library as a Civil War Memorial and began raising funds with such events as "The Great and Thrilling Military, a Five Act Drama entitled SURROUNDED BY FIRE" with tickets at twenty-five cents

and reserved seats at thirty-five cents. From 1894 until 1914, the librarian was Caroline Carr.

In 1902 the Major Boyd Post gave the town \$2,400 for a Memorial Hall with a room for a library, and in 1917 Louisa and Georgiana Emery gave the town the land on which the library now stands, then containing the Albion Hotel.

Operation of the library continued in the old blacksmith shop until the 1920s, when the deteriorating condition of the building forced it to move. With an offer of free rent from the Charles L. Carr Post 240 of the American Legion and with money raised by the town for renovation, the town citizens moved all the books in January of 1927 to the ground floor of the Legion Hall where they remained until 1939.

By 1937 the G.A.R. fund had grown to \$13,344.17 and the original library building, designed by Russell Peirce, a Newburyport architect and a native of West Newbury, was erected. The new building was dedicated in 1939. Sarah Bailey, who had been appointed director in 1914, remained in her position until retiring in 1953, when she was replaced by Esther Thurlow. Janet Smith served briefly from 1957 to 1958, followed by Harriet Campbell, who was director until 1967. Katharine M. “Kay” Gove guided the library from 1967 until her retirement in 2013, ushering us into the modern era with the addition of computers, online cataloging, books on CD, Playaways, CDs, DVDs, and Wi-Fi.

With ever-expanding use of the library, in 1975 the attic space was converted to a children’s room; however, much of this space is not able to be used as it is not ADA compliant. In 1987 the town voted to override Proposition 2½ to spend \$1,200,000 to triple the size of the library building.

The library was under the leadership of Susan Babb from July 2013 until June 2019. Corinn Flaherty became the eighth library director in June 2019.

*(Based on the work of Elizabeth Thompson (1903 to 1995) for many years our prolific historian.)*

Retrieved 5/2/22: <https://www.westnewburylibrary.org/Pages/Index/131601/history>

# Appendix B

## Community and Library Scan

### Facts about the G.A.R. Memorial Library:

- 1819 the “First Social Library”
- 1874 West Newbury’s Grand Army of the Republic conceived the idea of a town library as a Civil War memorial
- 1894 first free library established
- 1917 land was given on which the library currently stands
- 1937 original building erected, designed by Russell Peirce
- 1975 expanded building to include second floor for children’s services, currently not being used because the second floor is not accessible and is therefore not ADA compliant
- 1987 expanded to current building size (7,785 square feet)

### Library Data (from MBLC 2021 Public Library Data):

- 59 libraries in Massachusetts with populations between 3,000 and 7,000
- G.A.R. circulation: 80,843, making it the 10th busiest library of the 59 libraries
- Circulation per capita: G.A.R. ranks 5th of the 59 libraries
- Total children’s circulation: G.A.R. ranks 5th of the 59 libraries
- Of all 369 certified public libraries in Massachusetts, G.A.R. ranks 333rd for when the main library building was last renovated
- G.A.R. is one of only 61 libraries out of 369 that does not have a large meeting room space. Of those 61, 46 have populations under 4,000

### Facts about West Newbury (2020 census):

#### Population and Households

- Population 4,688
- Households: 1,720, a 13% increase since 2015
- Households with individuals under 18: 464, a 19% decrease since 2015
- Households with individuals over 60: 881, a 10% increase since 2015

#### Demographics

- 95.6% white
- 4.4 % Black, American Indian, Asian, two or more races, and other

- Unemployment: 10.5%
- Median family income: \$161,071, a 16% increase since 2015
- Median tax bill: \$7,815, a 23% increase since 2015
- Registered voters (2022 West Newbury Town Clerk): 3,719, a 79% increase since 2015

## Education

- Population of K–12 in public school system: 79%
- Population of K–12 in private school: 21%
- Pentucket Regional High School ranks 108 of 378 in Massachusetts
- Age 25 or older with bachelor's degree or higher: 63%

## Local considerations:

- Lack of event space
- Lack of meeting rooms for community groups
- Lack of private work/study space
- No centralized, climate-controlled archive for local history collections
- Soldiers and Sailors/Old Town Hall both either unused or underutilized
- New Pentucket Regional Middle School/High School
- New residential developments and a growing population

**Page Elementary School** currently has no librarian and no budget to buy new materials. Volunteers have been working to create a functioning library for FY 2023, but they have extremely limited funding and time and no formal training working in libraries. There is no formal plan for a future library.

**The Pentucket High School library** is operating and has one full-time certified librarian. Teachers can sign up to bring classes to the library to collaborate with the librarian. The librarian has a budget of \$750/year for new books and \$3500/year for contracted services to purchase databases and ebook collections. When the new high school and middle school construction is complete, the library will serve all students from 7th to 12th grade.

## Library Trends

The role of libraries everywhere is changing rapidly, and patrons are using libraries differently than in the past. Libraries are no longer simply repositories for books and information. They are places to meet, study, socialize, and attend programs. People come in to use computers, print, scan, and use the Wi-Fi. Our

physical collections are changing, too. Soon, items like DVDs and CDs will no longer circulate, and the spaces that house these collections will have to be repurposed. Libraries will continue to migrate in a digital direction with digital collections slowly replacing the physical, but people will continue to need community gathering places and shared workspaces. They will continue to need access to information and to educational and recreational activities. We can accommodate these changing needs by rethinking how we use our public spaces and buildings. Creating flexible physical spaces with features such as mobile shelving and seating areas will help libraries adapt to the evolving needs and interests of their communities.

**National/International considerations:**

- War in Ukraine
- Ongoing pandemic
- Political climate in US
- Prevalence of “fake news”
- Rapidly changing social media landscapes
- Recent surge of book banning/challenges
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion movements
- Work from home trend

**Sources:**

2020 Public Library Survey Statistics from FY2021 ARIS and Financial Reports:

<https://mblc.state.ma.us/programs-and-support/library-statistics/index.php>

U.S. Census data:

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=West%20Newbury%20town,%20Essex%20County,%20Massachusetts>



# Appendix C

## Strategic Planning Committee Meeting 1

**Current Challenges:** What is happening in the world (globally, nationally, regionally, locally) that's having/will have a big effect on the community, the region, and our library? Please think about opportunities as well as challenges.

**Our Best Future Scenario:** It's 2028. We've successfully addressed the opportunities and challenges identified in 2022. How have the community and region changed; how has the library changed? How has our thinking changed? What are we able to do we couldn't do before? How does this positively affect the people who use the library to work, study, and enrich their lives?

Current Challenges Locally, Nationally, Globally	Our Best Future Scenario For the Library in 2028
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Climate change</li><li>• Not all have equal access to technology</li><li>• New school at Pentucket, failed override, cut budgets, no library budget for new books</li><li>• No librarian/classes/budget for books at the Page School</li><li>• Limited access to Town records</li><li>• Local news is becoming a thing of the past</li><li>• Loneliness epidemic</li><li>• Lack of interest/knowledge of local politics</li><li>• Lack of interest/knowledge of history</li><li>• Limited opportunities for intergenerational engagement</li><li>• Misinformation/fake news</li><li>• Censorship/First Amendment rights issues</li><li>• Covid and national politics have obscured community</li><li>• Lack of opportunities to build community back</li><li>• Development is bringing buyers for investment, not community</li><li>• Lack of cultural diversity locally</li><li>• Old Town Hall is unused and will decay and cost town more</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Library has preserved the cozy and welcoming aspects of the current space and has expanded to include modern meeting, presentation, and study space</li><li>• Library provides a safe and nurturing space where all feel welcome</li><li>• Library maintains its intimate feel, remains a place "where everyone knows your name"</li><li>• Library is outfitted to serve as cooling center/charging location</li><li>• Library utilizes solar and other sustainable utilities/clean energy</li><li>• Library serves as role model/education hub for conservation efforts</li><li>• Library has an organized and sound collection of old and ongoing town records available digitally</li><li>• Library provides access to a wide range of new/emerging technologies and provides instruction on how to use them</li><li>• Library continues to offer a wide selection of physical materials from its collection and through MVLC and the Mass Library System ILL program</li><li>• Library has an expanded and growing Library of Things</li><li>• Library offers continuing education to promote democracy and political literacy</li><li>• Library has a large and always growing collection of ebooks and other online/downloadable material</li><li>• Library provides opportunities for the community to meet and connect</li><li>• Library promotes cultural and social diversity and acceptance</li><li>• Library grounds are better utilized for patron enjoyment</li><li>• Library collaborates with other Town committees and groups in a way that mutually benefits everyone in the community</li><li>• Collaboration between/among Town departments is strong and all working toward common goal(s)</li><li>• Library markets all its many resources well</li></ul>

<p>money if no purpose (like Carr Post)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recession/inflation creates need for more free resources and forms of entertainment</li> <li>• Mounting economic and environmental concerns put new pressures on our Town</li> <li>• Rapid rate of change in technology/information storage makes it challenging to keep up with</li> <li>• Lack of easy access to Town records and local history items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library hours meet needs of everyone in the community</li> </ul>
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**The Future Is Now (KAIR = KEEP, ABANDON, INVENT, or REINVENT):** Thinking about the future we imagine, what are we doing at the G.A.R. Memorial Library that we should KEEP? What no longer serves us that we should ABANDON? What might we INVENT or REINVENT that will help us create the best future for our library and our community?

The Future Is Now (KAIR = KEEP, ABANDON, INVENT, or REINVENT)	
KEEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small town welcoming environment</li> <li>• Charm and comfort of hometown library where all staff know you</li> <li>• Access to community resources and information</li> <li>• Being able to get wide variety of material from library network (MVLC) and through the state network</li> <li>• Friendly, helpful staff</li> <li>• In person advice and guidance/recommendations</li> <li>• Miss Kate!</li> <li>• In-person programs for all ages, especially kids</li> <li>• Virtual programs for adults</li> <li>• Discounted museum passes</li> <li>• Ebooks and other downloadable resources</li> <li>• Community partnerships</li> <li>• Keep relevant in face of change</li> <li>• Kids' to-go activity packet</li> <li>• Summer reading program</li> <li>• Book sale</li> <li>• Collaborating with other libraries for virtual programming</li> </ul>
ABANDON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No meeting room</li> <li>• No study rooms</li> <li>• Outdated carpet</li> <li>• No second floor or courtyard access</li> <li>• Not enough parking</li> <li>• Limited space for collections</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too small for community's needs</li> <li>• Teen room</li> <li>• DVD collection</li> </ul>
INVENT/REINVENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a video game area</li> <li>• Program for meeting new residents</li> <li>• Delivery for disabled people or those who have no transportation</li> <li>• Better marketing to promote its assets—especially online resources—to the public</li> <li>• Role of the community library being enlarged to include the “culture” of this community</li> <li>• Better access to local history items</li> <li>• Better storage of local history items</li> <li>• Better utilization of outdoor space</li> <li>• Add a café</li> <li>• Add a meeting room</li> <li>• Add quiet study space / work rooms / remote workstations</li> <li>• Be a charging/cooling station</li> <li>• Use Old Town Hall as library space</li> <li>• Maker space/art space</li> <li>• STEM programming</li> <li>• New book clubs (nonfiction, literary, short stories, graphic novels, etc.)</li> <li>• More art classes</li> <li>• Comic book artist demos</li> <li>• Podcast workshops</li> <li>• Weekend hours year round</li> <li>• More evening hours</li> <li>• Have seniors read to kids</li> <li>• More opportunities for people to connect</li> <li>• Expand Library of Things</li> <li>• Multigenerational events: teens can help the grandparents with technology, games where everyone can participate</li> <li>• Have local historians come in and talk about things like the Salem witch trials, pilgrims, etc.</li> <li>• Intergenerational events like game nights or discussions on local politics/civics</li> <li>• Use people in the community and have them tell their diverse stories/share their special knowledge; use these people as community resources building a “human library”</li> <li>• A collection of oral histories of West Newbury to create audible record of what the past was like</li> <li>• Popup library to visit Page School and other locations regularly</li> <li>• Work to enhance the curriculum at the local schools</li> <li>• Educate/inform residents about household/local ways to make a difference (rooftop solar, energy efficiency improvements, alternatives to commuting, and minimizing auto emissions at the household level through electric/hybrid vehicles and other choices)</li> <li>• Continued/enhanced partnership with Historical Society for programming</li> <li>• Add local books to Overdrive</li> <li>• Library grounds as rental for events</li> <li>• Expand parking</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore Old Town Hall</li> <li>• Murals</li> <li>• Add elevator</li> <li>• Books organized by subject</li> <li>• Redesigned circulation area to include self-checkout</li> <li>• Library on wheels</li> <li>• Food trucks visiting the library</li> <li>• Musical events</li> <li>• Discussion groups</li> <li>• Coordinate with the local cable access</li> <li>• Teen Room revamp</li> <li>• Expand teen programming</li> <li>• Popcorn and ice cream in the courtyard</li> <li>• Teach students about local elections and how to get involved or prepare for public service</li> <li>• More quiet space</li> <li>• Expand way library is used to increase use and purpose</li> </ul>
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## Strategic Planning Committee Meeting 2

Based on the results of the survey and first meeting, we defined five focus areas that continually came up as priorities and then developed strategies for meeting these concerns. Following this, we developed corresponding goals and objectives for the Library to focus on in the next five years.

Focus Areas	Strategies
Community/Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program for meeting new residents</li> <li>• Delivery for disabled people or those who have no transportation</li> <li>• Role of the community library being enlarged to include the “culture” of this community</li> <li>• More opportunities for people to connect</li> <li>• Use people in the community and have them tell their diverse stories/share their special knowledge; use these people as community resources building a “human library”</li> <li>• Oral history project to create audible record of what the past was like</li> <li>• Popup library to visit Page School and other locations regularly</li> <li>• Work to enhance the curriculum at the local schools</li> <li>• Educate/inform residents about household/local ways to make a difference (rooftop solar, energy efficiency improvements, alternatives to commuting, and minimizing auto emissions at the household level through electric/hybrid vehicles and other choices).</li> <li>• Collaborate with Historical Society for programming</li> <li>• Coordinate with the local cable access to offer workshops for kids</li> <li>• Teach students about local elections and how to get involved or prepare for public service</li> </ul>

Information/Collections/Local History	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better marketing to promote its assets—especially online resources—to the public</li> <li>• Better storage and access to local history items</li> <li>• Books organized by subject</li> <li>• Expanded Overdrive/ebook collection</li> <li>• Expanded new book collection</li> <li>• Add local history books to Overdrive</li> </ul>
Building/Grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better utilization of outdoor space</li> <li>• Add a café</li> <li>• Add a meeting room</li> <li>• Add quiet study spaces / work rooms / remote workstations</li> <li>• Be a charging/cooling station</li> <li>• Use Old Town Hall as additional library space</li> <li>• Library grounds as rental for events</li> <li>• Expand parking</li> <li>• Murals</li> <li>• Add elevator</li> <li>• Redesigned circulation area</li> <li>• Teen Room revamp</li> <li>• More quiet space</li> <li>• Add a reading garden</li> </ul>
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a video game area</li> <li>• STEM programming</li> <li>• New book clubs (nonfiction, literary, short stories, graphic novels, etc.)</li> <li>• More art classes</li> <li>• Comic book artist demos</li> <li>• Podcast workshops</li> <li>• Have seniors read to kids</li> <li>• Multigenerational events: teens can help the grandparents with technology, games where everyone can participate.</li> <li>• Have local historians come in and talk about things like the Salem witch trials, pilgrims, etc.</li> <li>• Intergenerational events like game nights or discussions on local politics/civics</li> <li>• Food trucks visiting the library</li> <li>• Musical events</li> <li>• Discussion groups</li> <li>• Expand teen programming</li> <li>• Popcorn and ice cream in the courtyard</li> </ul>
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekend hours year round</li> <li>• More evening hours</li> <li>• Library on wheels</li> <li>• Staff recommendations</li> <li>• Expand Library of Things to include farming/gardening tools</li> <li>• Self-checkout</li> <li>• Create a maker space/art space</li> </ul>

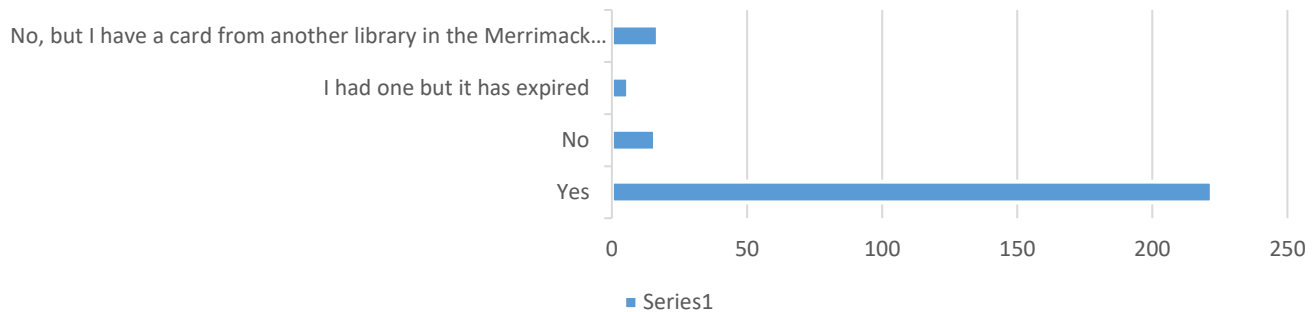


# Survey Results

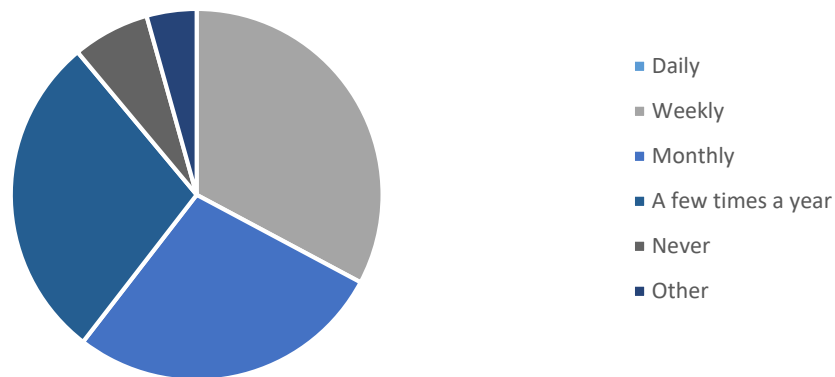
## G.A.R. Memorial Library Strategic Planning Survey Results

281 Total Responses

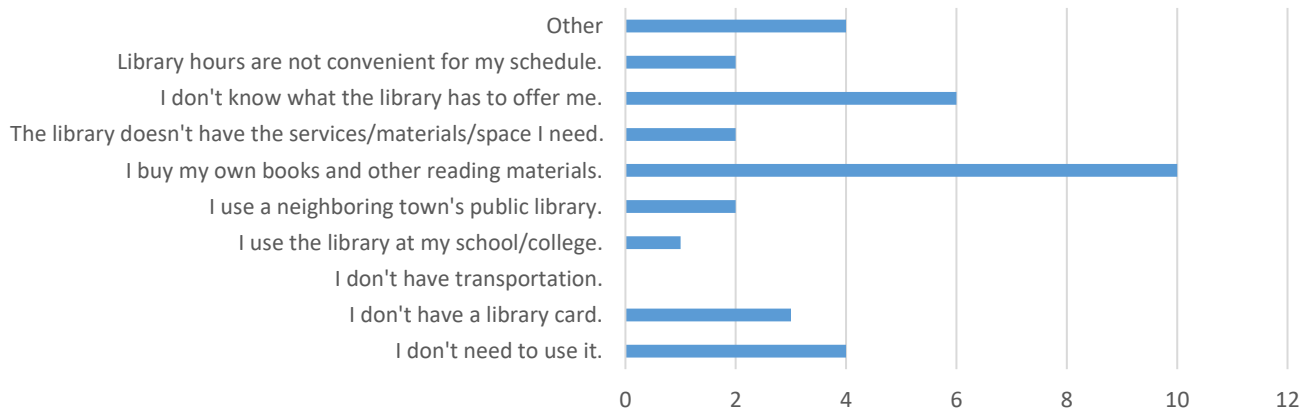
### Do you have a GAR Library card?



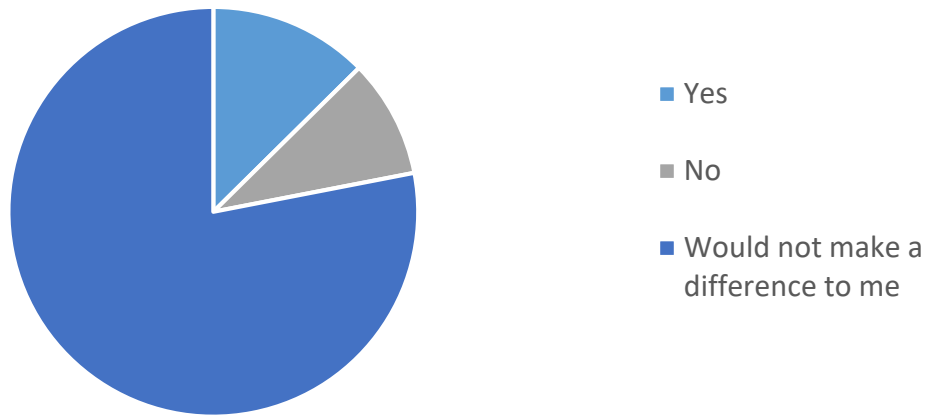
### How Often Do you Visit the Library?



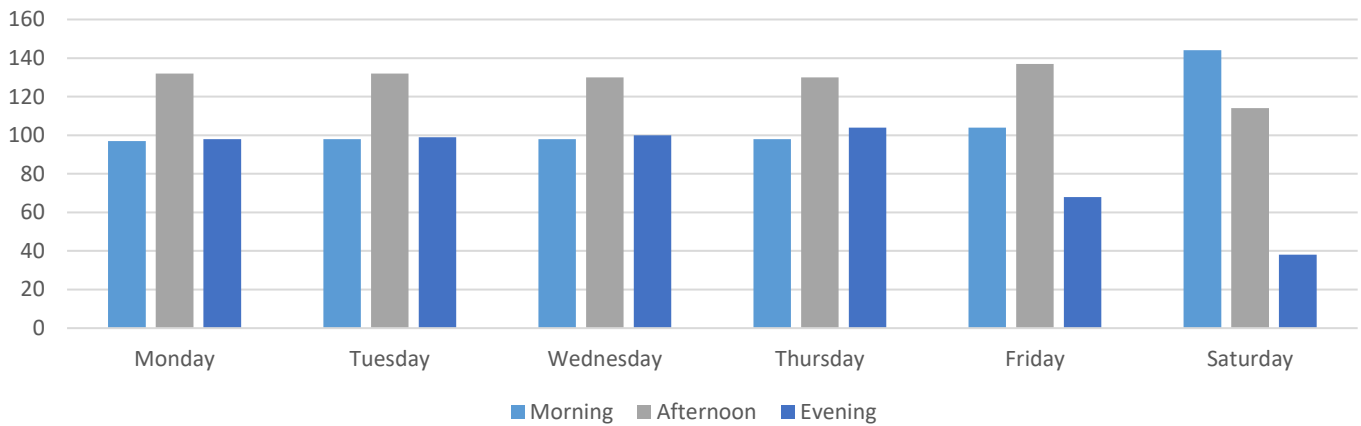
### If you don't use the Library, why not?



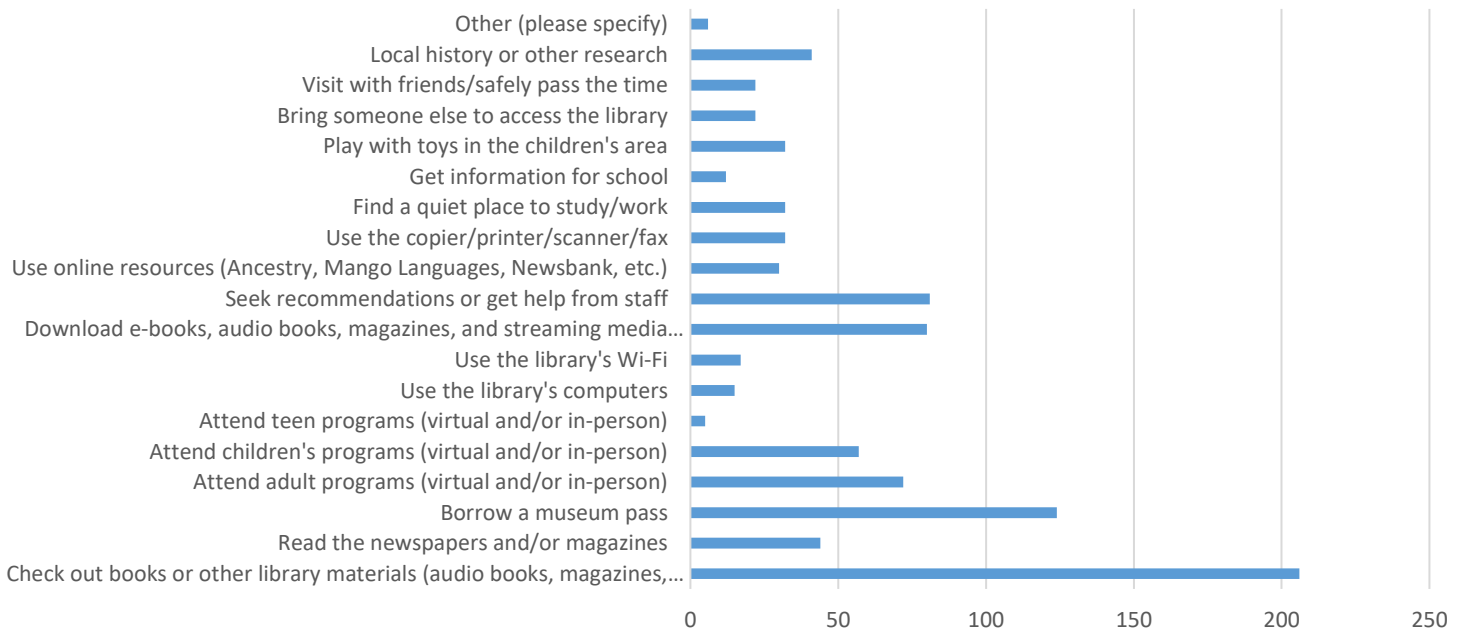
### Prefer the Library open at 9am?



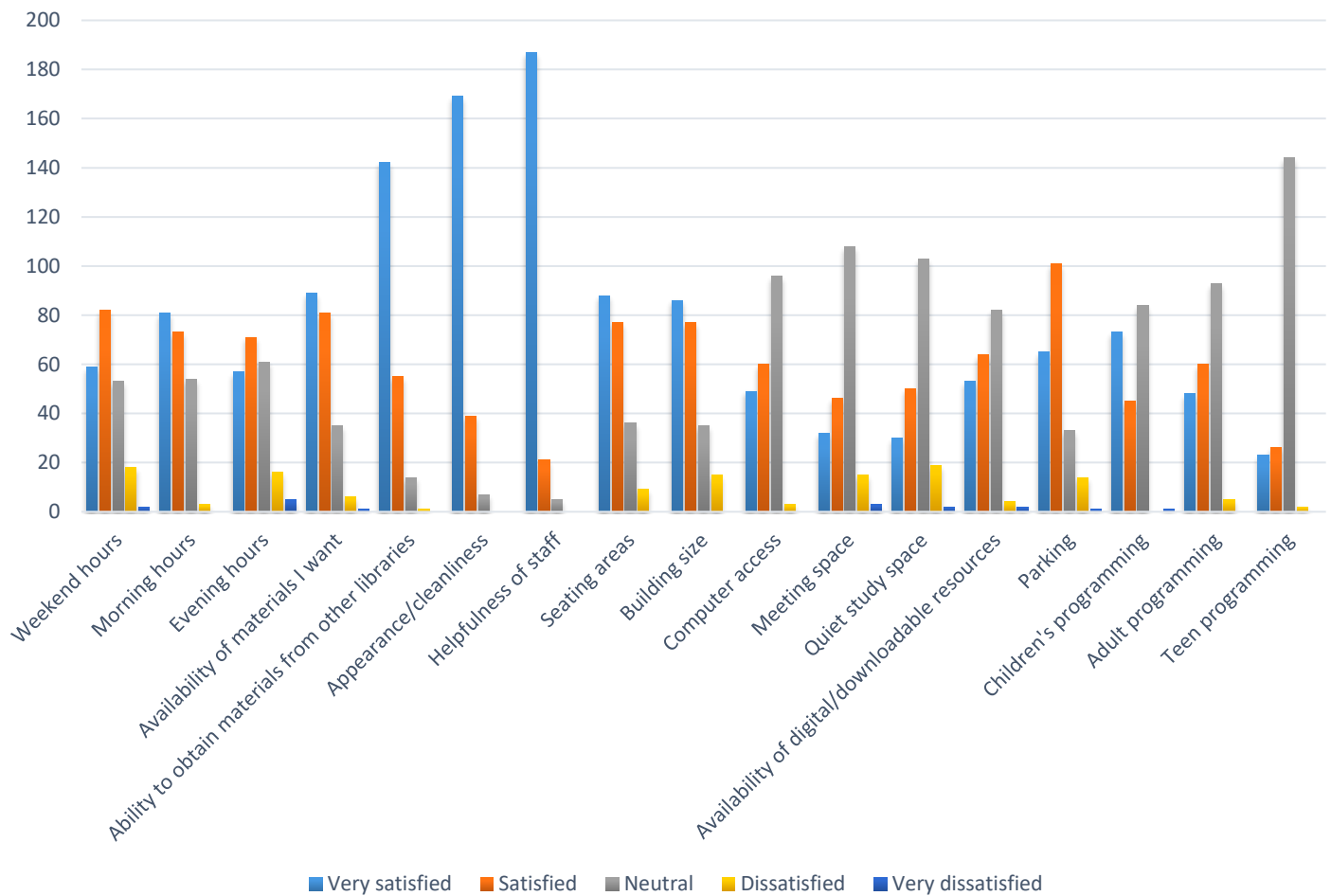
### Which open hours would be the most valuable to you?



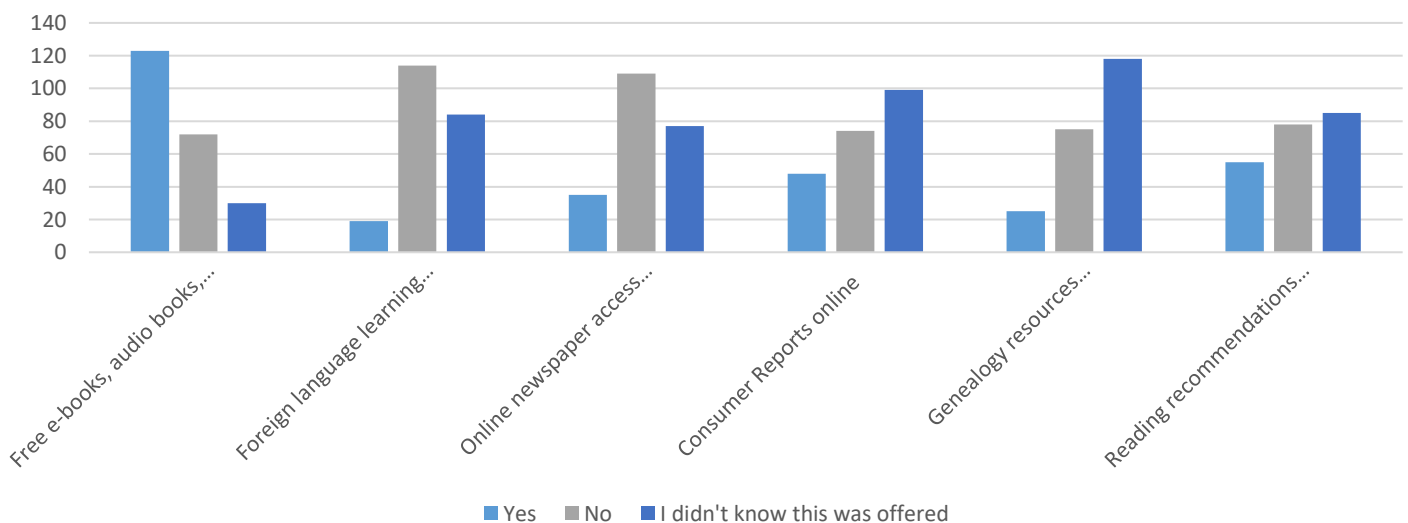
### Main Reasons For Using Library



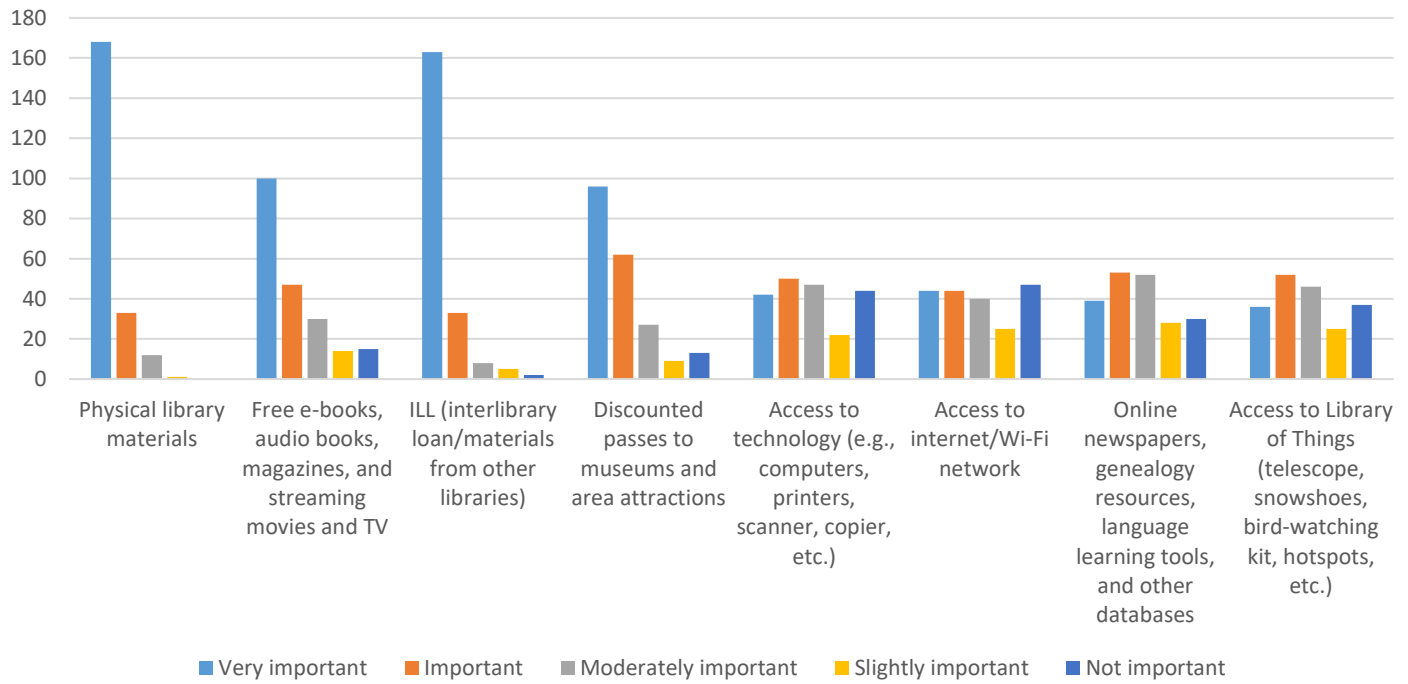
## How would you evaluate the library's services in the following areas?



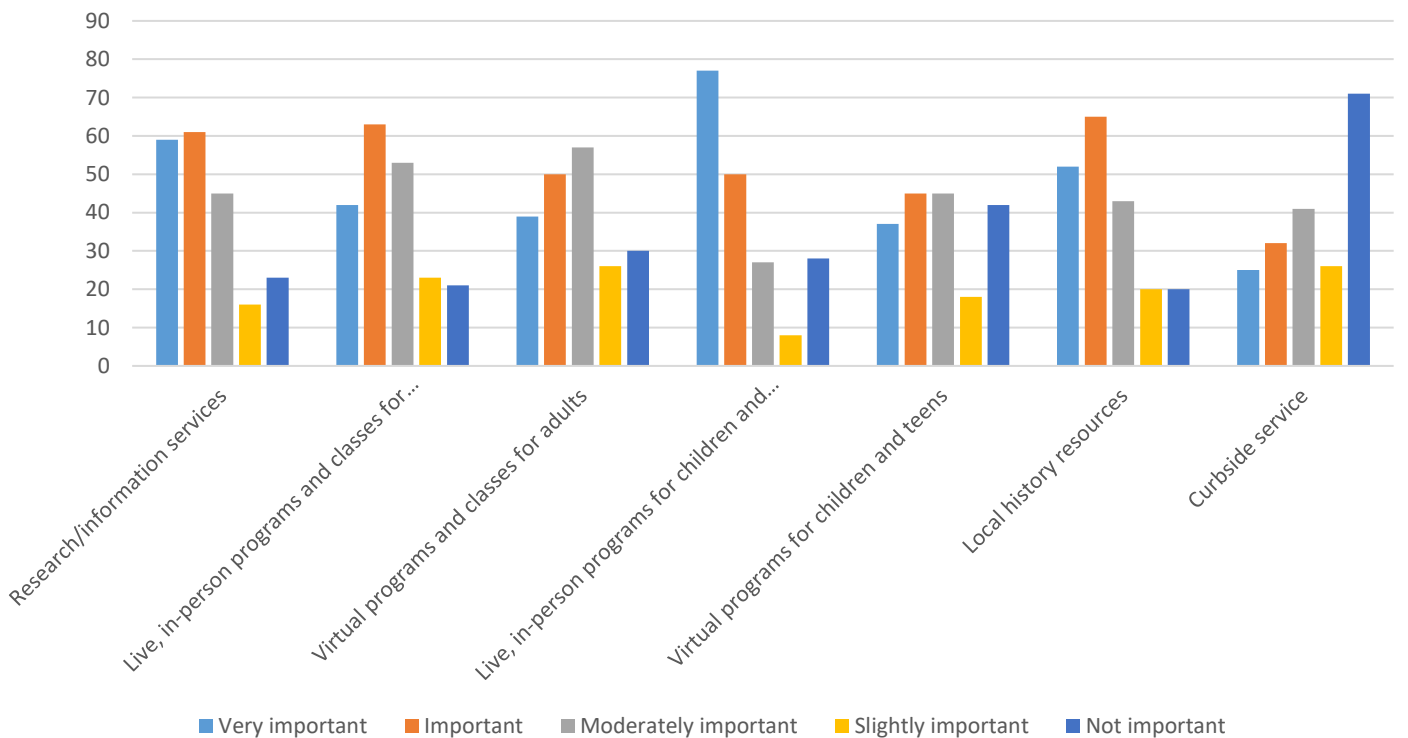
## Do you use the following digital library resources?



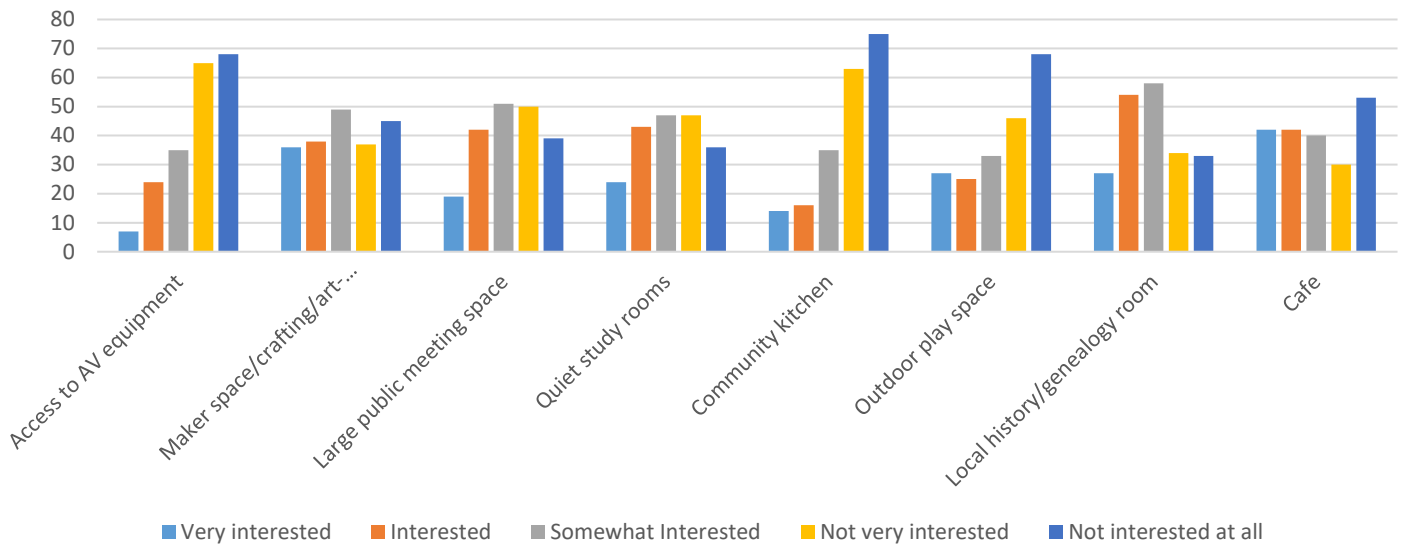
How important are these library services to you?



How important are these library services to you?

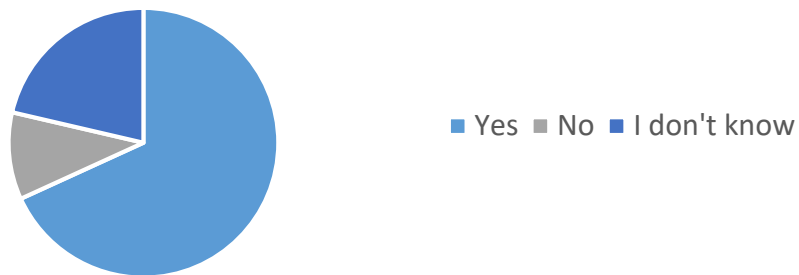


The library currently does not offer the following services. Please indicate your interest in the following:

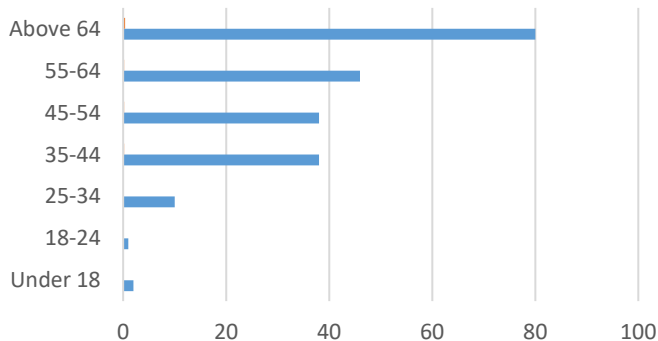


Do you support having the Town investigate the feasibility of renovating a portion of the Old Town Hall (491 Main Street) to create a large library meeting space, small study rooms, and a local history archive?

Do You Support a Feasibility Study of Old Town Hall?



Age?



What Is Your Zip Code?

