

Welcoming

browse request hold nook art Technology Day windows Storytime programs cozy engaging outside magazines online Lucky view Books light Relax reserve events Studyrooms DVDs

Comfortable



Jefferson County
PUBLIC LIBRARY

"We're thrilled with the response we received from area residents. Their feedback is invaluable to us as we plan for the updating and expansion of South County library services."

— Pam Nissler, Executive Director, Jefferson County Public Library

South County Community Input Report

At Jefferson County Public Library (JCPL), we've known for some time that the residents of South Jefferson County are underserved. With the November 2015 passing of a voter-approved mill levy increase, we can now begin to restore and enhance library services in South County; in fact, two of our 2016 strategic priorities are related to this. The first is to plan for the refurbishment of the Columbine Library; the second is to investigate the future expansion of library services in South County.

Thanks to area residents, our South County strategic initiatives are off to a good start. In April, we held three community meetings asking residents for input, and 137 people attended. From April 20 to May 15, we posted an online survey and 243 people responded. In addition, we posted information on Nextdoor, and another 25 people responded to that. Library employees from the Columbine Library and Library 2 You (bookmobile) were also consulted and will be gathering more information in the next few months by visiting other libraries.

With input from more than 400 residents, we feel we have substantive feedback about what they would like to see in South County library services. While the questions and formats were slightly different between the community meetings and the online survey, several common themes emerged from all the groups.



Nearly 140 area residents attended community meetings to give us their input.

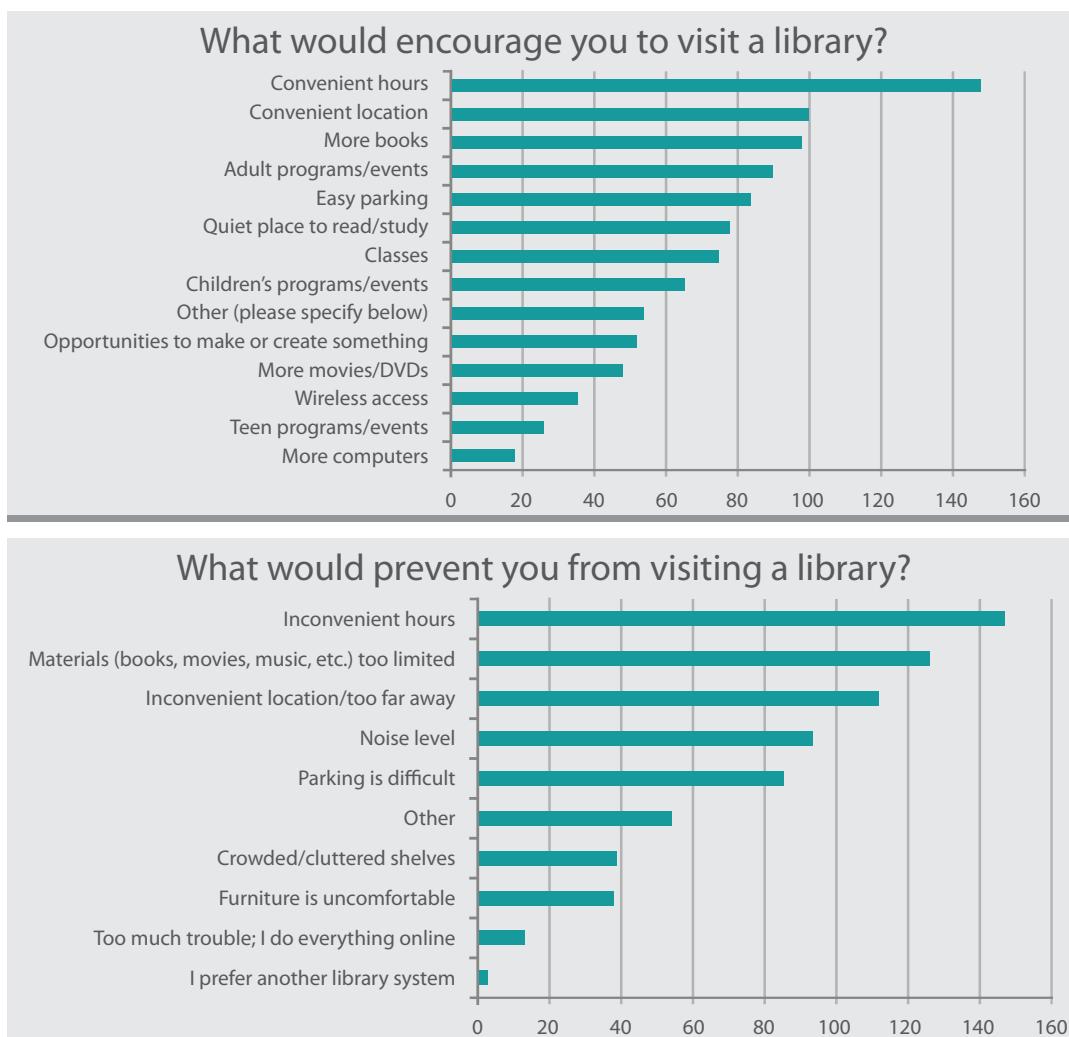
Value

People value the impact the library has on the community. We heard a lot about access, learning, technology, and materials. The comments listed below are representative of many of the responses:

- “A library is a collection of information and entertainment. Historically that meant books and newspapers. Now it includes other media and internet connection. It is also a refuge from the noise and chaos of the city.”
- “I feel a library is a reflection of the quality of the community it serves.”
- “I also love spaces where I can interact with people and make new friends.”

Convenience

Hours, convenient location and the collection are major factors that influence people most to visit the Library, or would prevent someone from wanting to visit. Sixty-five percent of respondents in the online survey said that the new open hours were meeting expectations. Ease of use was another prevalent comment. People wanted to have an easy in and out, and be able to return items 24 hours a day. We also heard about location; at the community meetings 82 percent said they would like to travel 15 minutes or less to a library. Forty-one responses in the online survey requested a second location in South County. Many of the responses talked about the collection, including enjoying placing requests for items and being able to easily return, pick up and check out requested items. Other basic expectations for library services included helpful staff, computers, a place to read or study, and activities for all ages.



Materials

More than 300 responses talked about materials, books, DVDs, magazines etc. Common themes were that respondents would like to have more copies available, shorter wait-times for requested materials, and more digital items. When we asked what works well for people, many mentioned requesting items, Lucky Day, and the ease of picking up items. Several mentioned our digital services, particularly ebooks and magazines. Residents also want to be able to browse while at the library and pick up something unexpected to take home. Many recognized that libraries' roles are changing. While they may come to the library for programs, computers, meeting people, and learning, they also want to ensure that materials stay a focus.

Services

Knowledgeable, helpful, smiling staff is the most valuable service noted by respondents. The online survey asked what would encourage you to visit the library, while the community meetings asked what you would wish for. Many responses talked about classes, children's programming, and author visits. People also asked for a more engaging experience, a place where clubs could meet, art displays by local artists, learning activities for children, classes or learning experiences about technology, STEM activities or a Makerspace, and a coffee shop. More study rooms and the ability to reserve them in advance were requested in several responses. There was also an expressed wish for a second location in South County.

What a Library should feel like.



Feel

The most common words to describe how a library should feel were: comfortable, warm, cozy, welcoming, friendly and inviting. The Tattered Cover was mentioned several times as an example of how the library should feel. The responses below reflect the sentiment of many of the comments.

- "full of books and materials ... The kids sections should be cheerful and playful"
- "a place for all citizens: from noisy children to adults who want some quiet reading time"
- "imagination run wild"
- "The hardest part is finding a balance of traditional values (quiet, informational) and being conscious of how things are changing (collaborative spaces, more children/family friendly, and more technology). It's a hard thing to do"
- "first and foremost a place to learn"
- "bringing in the beauty we have right outside the windows"
- "not silent, open but compartmentalized (places where people can work quietly, places where kids can play normally, etc.), modern, family friendly, welcoming."

Columbine Findings

We heard that while many love the staff, we can continue to improve on our customer service. Several respondents said they liked the current library, but also realized it was looking "worn and tired." People especially would like us to keep the view of the lake, and they would like to see us address noise levels. Respondents suggested that we create flexibility in the building in order to be able to adapt to changing needs and technology.

As we begin planning the remodel of the Columbine Library, we will utilize what we learned from our community about their priorities; including those things they would like to see changed, added or kept.

Key themes follow.

- **Lighting:** Good lighting throughout the building, especially in the rows of materials. Bring in as much natural light as possible.
- **Noise:** Create buffers or contain the noise of the children's area. Create quiet spaces for reading or contemplation. Plan the building in zones or compartments to create engaging noisier areas, and quieter research areas.
- **View:** Keep the view of Johnson Reservoir and the mountains. Make the area by the windows less institutional.
- **Outdoor area:** Creating an outdoor space was suggested by many in both the community meetings and in the online survey.
- **Parking:** People both love and hate the roundabout and the quick drop-off parking; and some respondents requested closer handicapped parking and a drive-up book return. "The entrance is a bottleneck."
- **Bathrooms:** Respondents asked us to update the bathrooms, make the bathroom by the children's area easier to use, and change the drinking fountain.
- **Study spaces:** Residents expressed a need for more study rooms that are smaller, can be reserved and have better sound insulation. Other requests included comfortable chairs and tables, with outlets to plug in devices; "cozy nooks"; and to keep the library computers.
- **Materials:** Residents want to be able to browse, "a feeling of abundance", "easy to find sections such as New Arrivals... gardening, lifestyle, cooking, etc. Similar to a book store", and they want to be able to make "spontaneous decisions."
- **Children's:** Many suggested we create an engaging space where families can spend time, and be able to play and learn: "really get to use their imagination and explore new things", "have a Story Time space in the children's area."
- **Community:** Respondents asked for a "community gathering place", cultural center, and local art displays. In addition, several wished for a place for STEM/Makerspace/tech lab activities such as music recording, photo editing, 3d printing, Bitsbox, and computer programming.



Thanks to area residents, we feel we have substantial feedback to help us plan South County services.

Expanded Services in South County

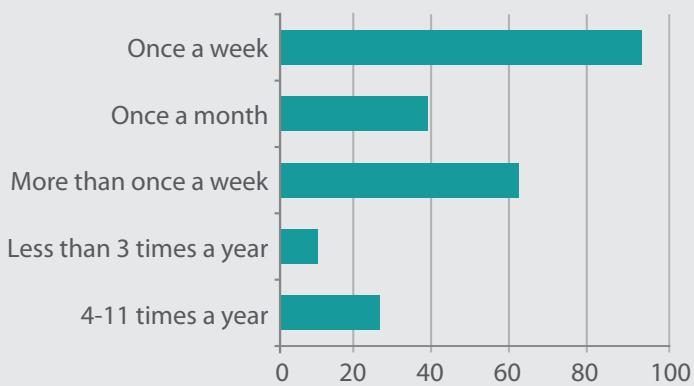
At community meetings 82 percent said they would like to travel 15 minutes or less to a library. In the online survey 41 responses requested a second location in South County. A second strategic priority for JCPL in 2016 is to conduct a county-wide demographic study. Planning for the study began in April, and it will be completed by the end of the year. The results from the demographic study will assist JCPL in planning for these expanded services in the context of a county-wide facilities plan.

Who took the survey?*

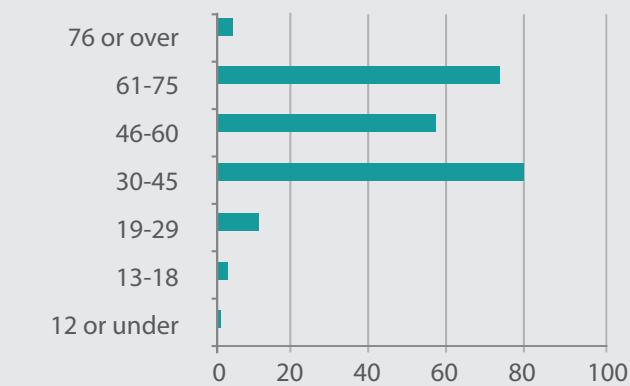
*demographic information was optional for participants

	Percent of total	Participants
Total surveys received		243
Total demographic response number (average)		228
Most responses were from Library card users	99%	231
Most responses were from female patrons	75%	171
Majority of participants use the library:		
Once a week	41%	93
More than once a week	27%	61
Age range for majority of participants:		
30-45	35%	80
61-75	32%	74

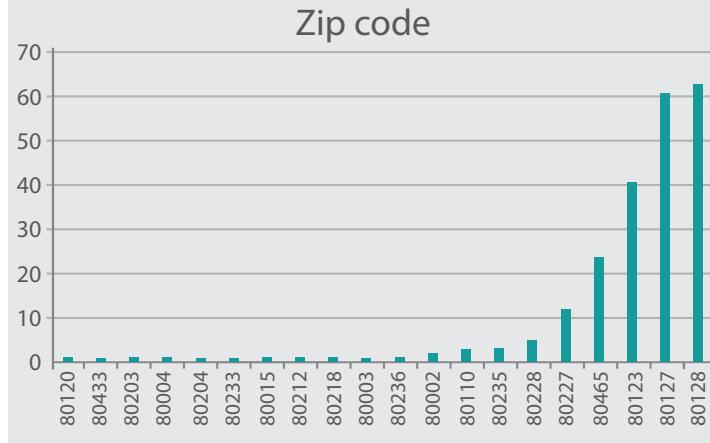
Frequency of visits?



Age range



Zip code



For more information, visit:
jeffcolibrary.org

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