Petoskey District Library
Learning Report

The Petoskey District Library (PDL) launched a strategic planning process in Spring of 2024 by first recruiting a Strategic Planning Team (SPT). The SPT is a balanced representation of staff, board, and Friends members.

- Mary Beauchamp, Library adult services
- Kim Block, Library Board
- Megan Goedge, Library children's services
- Amy Janssens, Library Board
- Nisa Kesseler, Library teen services
- Garrett Langen-Muir, Library card holder
- Val Meyerson, Library Director
- Jess Smith, Friends of the Petoskey District Library

As part of the process, the library devoted a significant amount of time listening to community needs and interests to inform and guide the process. This report represents a summary of the data gathered directly and indirectly using various tools and methods from the community and the library's Board of Directors and staff during this phase of the process. Sections in the report include:

- An introduction and context with library usage statistics and trends and community demographics,
- Summaries of an environmental scan exercise done by the committee,
- SOAR analysis (strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results) that Board and staff members participated in,
- Summary and analysis of findings from a community survey,
- Summary and analysis of findings from a non-user survey,
- Highlights from focus groups and interviews.

Attachments to this Learning Report include:
1. Spreadsheet of Demographics
2. Full community survey data and analysis
3. Full non-user survey data

Contents

Executive Summary

The Petoskey District Library (PDL) serves over 20,000 residents in the City of Petoskey and the Townships of Bear Creek, Little Traverse, Resort and Springvale. All in Emmet County's tip of the mitt. PDL operates two locations, the main library at 500 E. Mitchell St in downtown Petoskey and the other, the original Carnegie Building across the street at 451 E. Mitchell. The Carnegie location is used for programming and public room use. The main location is approximately 26,925 sq ft and the Carnegie is 8,255 sq ft for a total of 35,180 square feet.

Petoskey District Library offers patrons access to over 65,000 physical items and over 49,000 digital items. With more than 7,300 active registered cardholders, PDL provides a growing variety of programs, online resources, materials, and services. Physical item Interlibrary loan is provided through Michigan's eLibrary (MeL) and digital item interlibrary loan is provided through the statewide Reciprocal Lending Agreement (RLA) system.

PDL is supported by an active Friends of the Library organization that works to advance the mission and vision of the library as well as advocate for philanthropic funds that enable growth of services and facilities updates.

A mayoral appointed library Board of 5 trustees from the City of Petoskey serve to govern all aspects of library operation.

Library Data

Like other public libraries nationwide, total PDL usage saw a significant decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. All service barometers dropped, except for circulation of e-books. Total circulation and door counts have slowly been increasing, but we are not yet back at the pre-pandemic levels. Wifi use spiked after the pandemic, largely because we added outdoor hotspots for people to access our internet while outside.

Benchmarking shows the library as a leader in digital circulation and fall between the two comparison groups in all other services. This is not a surprise, as we are not active as larger communities, we are one of the largest communities in the northern Michigan area.

While our population actually grew since 2010, it is aging. The county median age in 2010 was 41.9 and in 2020 it was 45.8. The county age categories 55 and older all increase from 2010 to 2020 as well as the age category 20 - 34. The age categories 35 - 55 decreased along with all categories under 20. Our population saw a 4% overall increase.

Looking at our Library district population and the age percentages and comparing that to our library card holders shows an interesting discrepancy. Most of our percentages of card holders, come close to the percentage in the district population, except for the 55-64 year olds, who make up 19% of the district population, but are only 12% of our library card holders. Also, the youngest kids have a smaller percentage, most likely because their care givers are the library card holders and the kids do not receive their own card until they are older. Also, while the overall population of 35-44 year olds decreased, the percentage of those with library increased by 50%.

Our percent of residents who identify as another race than white (including all people with multiple racial identities) increased from 2010. In 2010 the county listed 7% of the population as non-white and our current 2020 library district population, 11% identify as non-white.

We also show a decrease in the number of veterans and an increase in the percentage of people with college degrees.

Community Information

We looked at our community through three different lenses: a community environmental scan, surveys and focus groups. Some overarching themes include:
- Lack of childcare
- Lack of adequate housing
- Polarization – more civil discourse needed
- Patron needs increasing
- Complex technology and forever changing.
- More ways for people to connect are desired by all age levels.
- Public Transit is needed in our community

Library Information

The staff and board each participated in an exercise to identify strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results (SOAR). PDL staff noted their aspirations to provide services to expanded populations, including new communities and new facilities as well as increasing and diversifying the staff training. The Board on the other hand looked at increasing the efficiency of the facility including better utilization of the Carnegie and the floor space in the Library.

Current strengths were similar between each group, with staff and the services they provide being the biggest asset of the library, as well as the collection, outreach and programs, and the facility itself. The opportunities identified in both groups included more partnerships and the staff feel there are opportunities out there for increasing the breadth of our services and outreach.

Both groups would love results that show higher utilization with increases in circulation, door counts, and overall service usage, showing that we are better at connecting patrons to their needs.

Surveys

Through a partnership with the University of Michigan, the library was able to survey cardholders and residents about the services we offer. The survey was conducted March 25-May 10, 2024, with 975 responses, primarily from active patrons, out of an estimated service population of 20,057, for an overall response rate of 4.86%.

Analysis was conducted by the Post-Pandemic Public Library Project at the University of Michigan School of Information. Overall, respondents indicate extremely strong support for the library, its location and building, its staff, its leadership, and its collection. To quote one respondent, "You're great, more of everything you do please."

Key findings include:
- An extremely positive response from respondents about library staff, its role for and in

the community, its programs and services, and the physical location.

- Repeated community concern for the area's economic inequities, the ability for local and year-round residents to find housing and stable employment, and for revitalization of downtown.
- When prompted to suggest one change the library could make, the top category of responses was people saying that they loved the library as is and had no suggestions.
- Another suggestion overwhelmingly pointed to desires for even more popular materials to shorten wait times in both hard copy and digital.
- People also seem to want more programs at varied hours.
- Parking seems to remain an issue, which leads to thinking better marketing efforts need to be made for that and other unique services.
- While a very small percentage (1.4%) of the 975 respondents have concerns about the library collections and displays, it may be beneficial to the library to try and address the concerns.

The Strategic Planning Team implemented a non-user survey by attending a football game and asking people to take the survey. We had 21 responses.

Key findings include:

- The majority of people state lack of time for reasons why they didn't use the library
- Parking was mentioned as a barrier to using the library
- Almost half the respondents stated more community/social events would entice them to visit.
- 62% of respondents stated that the role of the library is essential. 33% stated the library is valuable but not essential.

Focus Groups

The Library recruited five focus groups to give specific feedback. The focus groups included: caregivers of small children, teens, 25-40 year olds, no kids, two general population group. The focus groups were held the week of November 11, 2024. They were facilitated by either Randy Evans, Brian Wagner or Val Meyerson. Each group was recorded via a Zoom connection and then transcribed by Otter.ai. Mary, Garret, and Val cleaned up the transcription and provided a summary. The full transcriptions can be provided upon request.

Summary of combined focus groups:

Community Aspirations - based on focus group responses
    Achieve high quality of life
- Understanding and involved community
- Focus on civil civic discourse.

    Provide for basic needs
- More affordable housing

- Public transit solution
- Child Care

Community connections
- More ways for people to connect with each other
- Centralized marketing of community events
- Forums for civil discussion

Library Aspirations - based on focus group responses

Continue to provide stellar traditional library services
- Continue providing print reading materials, study spaces, literacy services people of all ages, and access to community resources
- Keep up on maintenance of facilities
- Remain a high-quality technology center
- More morning hours - more evening hours
- Better tech in meeting rooms
- Increase academic support for HS students

Become THE community hub for all
- More targeted and unique programming - littles and Young Adultings
- Pop up libraries - or mobile library

Provide better community communication and connection
- Increase library marketing efforts
- More collaborations

Carnegie Building

The Carnegie Building is used for many different purposes. Crooked Tree Arts center leases the lower level meeting room for their use, for programming and other meetings. The Upper Level of the Carnegie is used by the library for programs with a larger attendance, our weekly movie series, and for the public to reserve meetings, events and programs. The rental pricing for the Carnegie is kept very low. The decision to keep the rates affordable ($25 for three hours) is that this is the same rate for all the rooms at the library so it is easy for staff and easy for the patrons. It also makes it very accessible for all groups and residents. Currently we project $8,500 per year in revenue from the Carnegie building.

Usage of the Carnegie: 478 Bookings in 2023 (booking = one meeting day)

- 28 organizations: 175 Bookings
- 10 individual Bookings
- Friends of the Petoskey Public Library: 12 Bookings
- Petoskey District Library: 55 Bookings
- Crooked Tree Arts Center: 226 Bookings

Library and Community Data

Like other public libraries nationwide, total PDL circulation saw a significant decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic which started in 2020. Circulation of e-books, which was already increasing prior to the pandemic, continued to increase with double digit percentages. Total circulation improved in 2023, but did not yet reach pre-pandemic levels. Door counts have followed that same projectile, a big dip due to the pandemic and slow rise to not quite pre-pandemic levels.

Library Statistics

Most library usage statistics are slowly rising towards pre-pandemic numbers. Total circulation dipped approximately 26% in 2020, from 175,363 in 2019 to 129,096 in 2020. The slow increase in circulation puts us closer to pre-pandemic levels, but we have yet to surpass the pinnacle. The 2023 circulation of 163,206 is still 7% below the apex. Digital/e-book circulation saw a huge spike, 30%, during the pandemic year 2020, since we were closed for a portion of that year and many people were still not visiting. 2021 saw a drop in use of digital resources of 18% but has been increasing at a faster pace than in house materials. We surpassed our apex year of digital circulation in 2022 with a 24% increase and then saw 17% increase in 2023 to end that year with a new apex of digital circulation at 44,008.

Door counts suffered during the pandemic as well and have been slow to catch up. With a total decrease of 50% from 2019 to 2020. While the increase in visitors has been substantial, we have seen a big slowdown in 2023 (11% increase to 86,833 visits) and we still have a few years to surpass the apex. This trend is typical of most library usage.
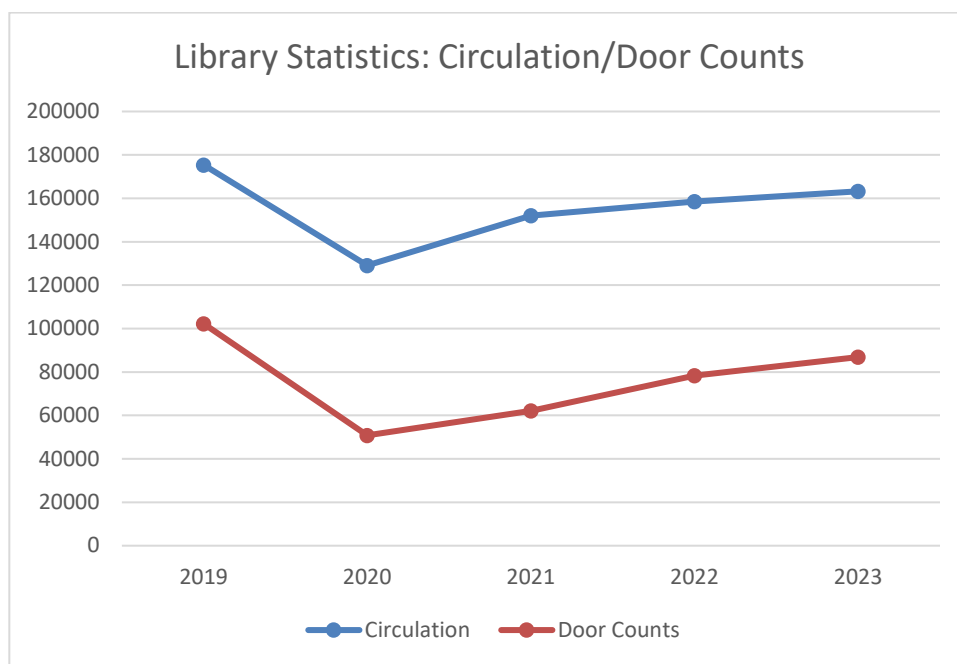

In-house computer usage dropped as a result of COVID restrictions and has been slowly increasing since. This remains substantially below pre-pandemic numbers I believe due to more electronic equipment in homes. Use of library wi-fi decreased during 2020 and saw dramatic increases due to added wifi hotspots for outdoor connectivity and boosted bandwidths.

In-library computer use was at the apex in 2019 with 11,499 logins, and in 2023 there were 7,457 a 79%

increase over logins in 2020. Wi-fi usage saw a smaller dip in 2020 since we were able to increase our bandwidth to include the library grounds. Wifi usage saw increases with the apex year in 2022 with 37,257 connections and 2023 ended with 31,180 connections.

Library Statistics: Computer/Wifi
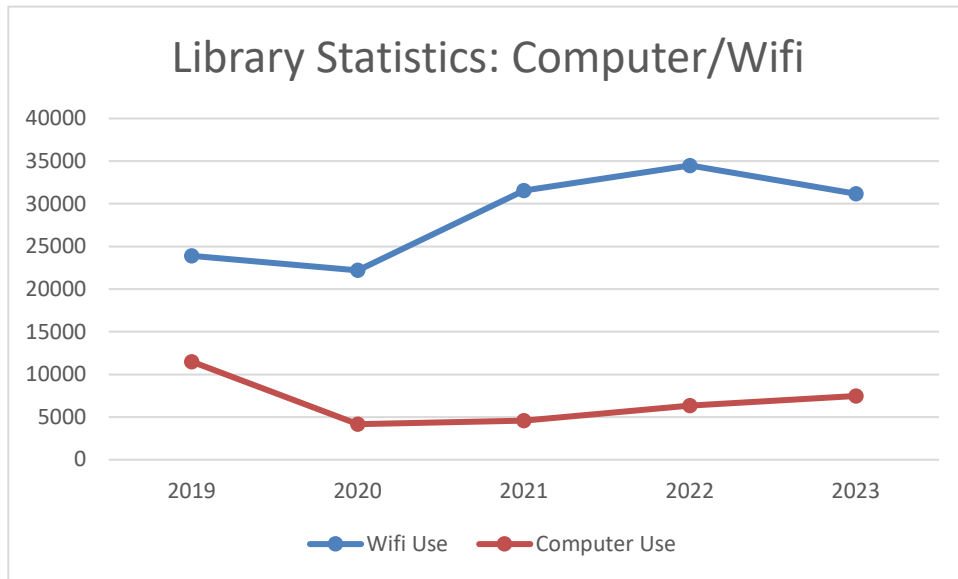
Like other library usage, total events and attendance at events decreased during the height of the pandemic. Both total events and attendance at events began to increase after 2021 when most restrictions were removed. Numbers show large increases in 2023 although some remain below pre-pandemic levels.

Library Events

Library Event Attendance
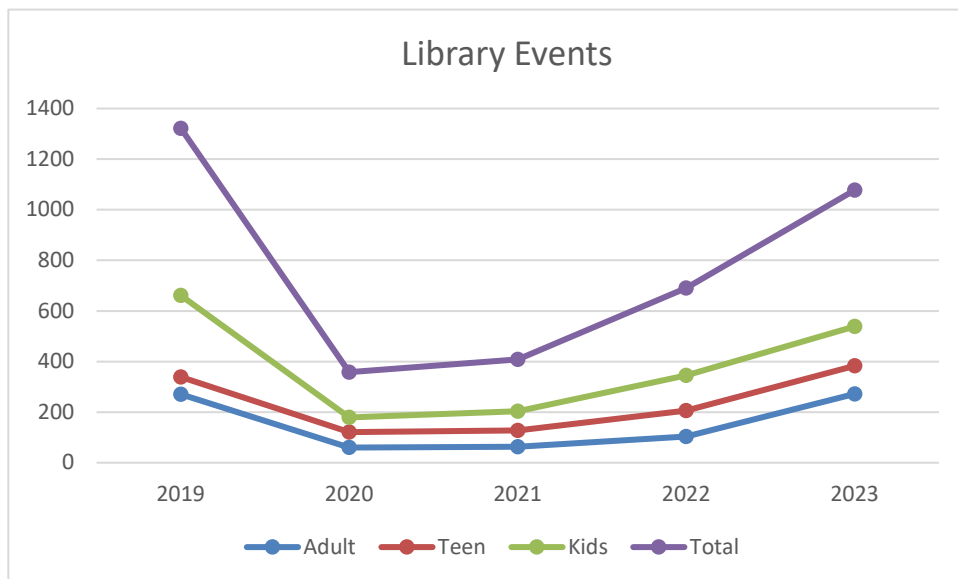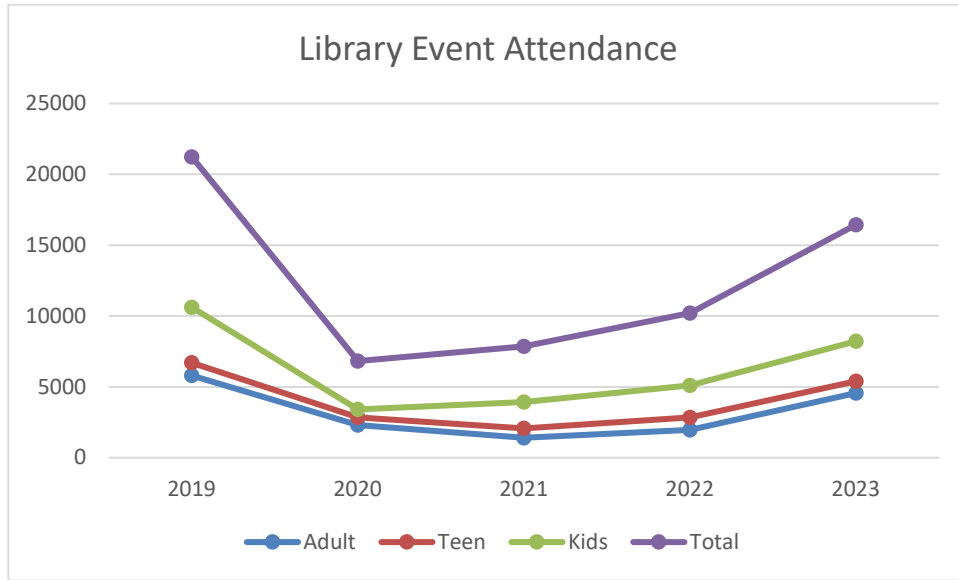
The Petoskey District Library is one of the largest libraries in the Tip of the Mitt area. Benchmarking some statistics, as compared to other northern Michigan libraries, as well as libraries within the state that fall into our budget range ($1M - $3M). We typically fall in between the two categories with our numbers. Our digital circulation is quite a bit higher than both categories, i think in part because we are good at marketing, and it can be more difficult to get to the library in the rural areas, as compared to the more metropolitan libraries.

Per Capita Benchmarks			
2022 Data From Star Libraries	**Petoskey District Library**	**MI Libraries w/ similar Budgets**	**Northern MI Libraries (Chx, Presque Isle, Boyne, Gaylord)**
Circulation - Physical	5.94	6.34	5.77
Circulation - Digital	2.19	1.41	1.88
Total Program Attendance	.52	.47	.58
Annual Door Count	4.33	3.91	5.67
Website Visits	6.02	5.95	6.56
Expenditures	$53.58	$48.41	$57.23
Other Benchmarks			
Collection Expenditures	$102,240	$235,000	$62,727
Physical Item Count	66,636	112,731	51,367

Community Demographics

The full sheet of demographics can be found at the end of this report. A few items to note:

Our population is aging. The county median age in 2010 was 41.9 and in 2020 it was 45.8. The county age categories 55 and older all increase from 2010 to 2020 as well as the age category 20 - 34. The age categories 35 - 55 decreased along with all categories under 20.

Looking at our Library district population and the age percentages and comparing that to our library card holders shows an interesting discrepancy. Most of our percentages of card holders, come close to the percentage in the district population, except for the 55-64 year olds who make up 19% of the district population, but are only 12% of our library card holders. This could be attributed to that age is most likely still working, and more stable in their home life, so may purchase their entertainment. Also, the youngest kids have a smaller percentage, most likely because their care givers are the library card holders and the kids do not get their own card until they are holder. Also, while the overall population of 35-44 year olds decreased, the percentage of those with library cards increased by 50%. Our percent of residents who identify as another race than white (including all people with multiple racial identities) increased from 2010. In 2010 the county listed 7% of the population as non-white and our current, 2020, library district population 11% identify as non-white. We also show a decrease in the number of veterans and an increase in the percentage of people with college degrees.

Community Environmental Scan

An environmental scan considers the broader context in which an organization exists and identifies key issues that potentially impact the future of the organization. To kick off the library's strategic planning process, elements of the environmental scan were identified by the Strategic Planning Team July 23, 2024. The scan was done to get a feel for what is happening around our community that may affect the library. There are six representative areas that we scanned. The trends for each area are included here. Full scan is below.

Political:
- Anti-library issues
- Low tolerance for differences - polarization
- Elections and uncertainty of support

Economic:
- Lack of childcare and the cost
- Lack of housing and the cost
- Brain Drain
- Cost of construction and renovations
- Climate change
- High prices for food / restaurants

Social:
- Patron needs are increasing
- Homeschoolers lack of trust
- Working from home
- Loss of civility in discourse
- We serve the two ends of the age spectrum

Technological:
- Complex infrastructures and echo chambers
- AI
- Information overload
- Internet safety and security

Legal:
- 1st amendment and privacy issues - remaining supportive of community and not breaking the law
- Supreme court changing the landscape

Library Sector:
- How the facility is being used is changing
- Book challenges and attacks on staff seem to be increasing
- Hard to create the awareness of all the services provided, especially in rural area
- Library can be intimidating

Full responses to the Environmental scan:

What **Political** factors should we consider?	What **Economic** factors should we consider?	What **Social** factors should we consider?
● Anti-library issues: Violence, threats, disruptions, book bans ● rural vs. city ● Political environment devisive and volatile ● low tolerance for differences ● Project 2025 ● polarization ● media literacy - trust ● local millages ● negative ads ● uncertainty ● elections ● threat to democracy ● Supreme Court decisions ● wars ● Accountability ● young people cannot represent - uneven distribution of representation	● aging workforce ● collaboration difficult ● small business islands ● stubborn prices - groceries, ● childcare shortage and high cost ● housing shortage and high costs ● rising wages - but not keeping up with living expenses ● climate change - impact on small businesses ● vibrant/deserted town sectors ● losing student populations ● inflation ● publishing industry ● free parking after 6pm ● Brain drain ● education opportunities or lack of ● cost of construction ● cost comparison on types of books (do a study?) ● increased demands from certain segments of society/costs	● patron needs increasing ● pandemic changed social climate - anxiety ● homeschool - trust ● tourism heavy - ● social media and changing learning environment - time suck ● short attention spans ● social issues turning political ● work from home ● civility in discourse, bridging divides ● religion-interfaith-polarized ● not much to do here for families ● increased substance abuse ● loneliness and isolation ● Disconnected ● COVID gaps in education ● child care needs ● xeno and homo phobias ● lack of public transportation ● two ends of age spectrum ● hidden poverty

What **Technology** factors should we consider?	What **Legal** factors should we consider?	What **Library Sector** factors should we consider?
● complex infrastructure ● Global connectivity ● A.I. ● Broadband needs ● cellphone addiction ● transportation safety and reliability ● information overload ● internet safety ● accessibility ● VR/AR ● Social media addiction ● Hacking threats ● Unknown future ● fast changes ● Echo chambers ● technological dependency ● intergenerational conflicts	● Lack of clear guidelines on society challenges to freedom of information ● calls for book removals and legal repercussions ● 1st Amendment ● Library Privacy ● Parental Rights ● Supreme Court changing the landscape ● FOIA ● Complex local systems	● Hard to reach rural areas ● lack of program knowledge ● can be intimidating ● local collaborations ● book challenges ● finances - high costs ● infrastructure ● living wages ● political influences ● greater social needs ● more offerings online ● book bannings ● attacks of library staff ● libraries can't be all things to all people - so what is the lane ● Intellectual freedom and INformation literacy ● media vs. actual books ● Budets ● rooms - facility use changing ● programming ● streaming services and costs ● what are current barriers and how to remove? ● Increasing awareness of services ● what is the role of library today and in the future?

SOAR Analysis

The staff and board each participated in an exercise to identify strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results (SOAR). A SOAR analysis narrows the focus from an environmental scan to consider the organization specifically. This exercise helps identify potential directions to explore during the strategic planning process. PDL staff noted their aspirations to provide services to expanded populations, including new communities and new facilities as well as increasing and diversifying the staff training. The Board on the other hand looked at increasing the efficiency of the facility including better utilization of the Carnegie and the floor space in the Library.

Staff SOAR Analysis

SOAR elements were identified during a staff meeting August 7, 2024 and are summarized below.

Strengths – What are we good at? What are we known for?	OPPORTUNITIES
Staff: (24) ● Prompt / excellent customer service - 4 ● "Yes" library - 3 ● Employees - 2 ● Helpful answering staff to staff and staff to patrons – professional and courteous - 2 ● Patron Care ● Creativity of staff ● Welcoming ● Longevity of staff ● Dedicated teen staff ● Director ● Willingness to try ● No departmental silos ● Positive work environment ● Staff unity ● Staff integrity ● Staff knowledge ● Staff empathy **Collection: (6)** ● Very good collection – diverse materials - 2 ● Library of Things ● Breadth of collection ● PAC2 & MeL ● Video Games **Outreach: (6)** ● Targeted outreach - 2 ● Commujnity and patrons ● Community engagement ● BiblioBag ● Book Buddies **Programs: (9)** ● Programs - 3 ● Clubs for kids and teens ● GRT ● SRP ● PAWS to read ● Diversity of programs ● New and Innovative programs **Service: (12)** ● Newsletter - 2 ● 3-D printing ● Displays ● Welcoming Atmosphere ● Teen Services: 2 ● Manna food bags ● Notary ● Period Supplies	**Partnerships: (19)** ● NCMC – 4 ● Michigan Works ● Hispanic community ● Shoulder season outdoor music ● Big box stores who require online job apps ● Art groups – quilting, knitting ● Other local libraries ● Humane society – adopt a dog day @ labyrinth ● Collection of goods for pets ● Add fresh produce to manna food bags – partner w/ local farm ● Friendship center ● Festivals and art fair ● Program about other assistance in community ● County Fair ● Music groups ● Summertime concerts **Services: (15)** ● Social worker - 2 ● Meeting pods - 2 ● Tech help for the clueless ● Partner with comm mental health to bring in social worker ● Just do it for me tech help ● Reader's theater ● Housing information and resources ● Register more PAC2 libraries here ● Child care ● Playgroup ● Ref staff tech skills ● Cubicles ● Meeting space w/ kid friendly area ● Keurig machine for patrons **Outreach: (7)** ● Library lockers at Walmart ● Pop Up Library ● Book mobile w/ portable programs ● Expand delivery services ● Off-site book club (partner w/ restaurant or bar) ● Book trade w/ donations ● More little free libraries **Programs: (3)** ● Tuition reimbursement ● 250 years in 2026 – history program, year ● Other game activities

- Technology and help: 2
- Curbside pickup
- Covid-19 tests
- Diversity of programs for all

Building: (9)
- Safe and clean - 3
- Safe haven for those in need
- Inviting space
- Location
- Tween space
- Open 7 days/week
- Restrooms - clean

FOPL / Board: (7)
- Used Booksale – 2
- FOPL - 2
- Puzzle swap
- Library Board
- Healthy budget

Collection: (5)
- Provide new technology
- Expand Lib of Things
- Coffee shop atmosphere
- Exhibits
- More tech resources to check out

Aspirations – What do we aspire to do as a library? What could we do that would make our community stronger? What are our hopes for our community members? What do we want them to aspire to?	**Results** – What do we hope to achieve? How will we know we've achieved it?
● Branch library to expand services ● County or No MI Library card ● All staff trained on technology to better help patrons ● Combat loneliness ● Known for good service ● The source of information, action, caring for the community ● More staff cross trained so they can cover all desks-2 ● Glowforge ● Zoom for Board meetings ● Year-round consistent patronage ● Foundation of connection in community ● More diversity on staff ● Ability to have difficult community conversations without blowback/ vilification ● Transportation system (free for kids and over 65), w/ a permanent stop at the library ● Welcoming HS and Alanson into our "family" - 2 ● More restrooms ● Expand to more townships - 2 ● Encourage fellowship w/ more space ● Renewable energy for the building ● Increase our cardholder percentage via outreach ● Combined childrens/teen services to eliminate a service desk ● Rearrange building to maximize quiet study space ● Be involved in legislation ● Add tech person to ref to assist/teach patrons	● Increased awareness of services offered ● Better feedback / less questions ● Higher % of card holder ● Patrons connected to needed services ● More patron traffic - 2 ● Higher circulation ● Patron / Program numbers higher ● More business so need for more staff ● Increased service hours

Board SOAR Analysis

SOAR elements were identified during the September 26, 2024 Library Board meeting.

Strengths	Opportunities
● Staff - 5 ● Director – 4 (involvement in community) ● Community Partnerships - 4 ● Outreach Programs - 4 ● Programming – 3 ● Grants - 2 ● Collection (book and nonbook)- 2 ● Multiple ways to meet patron needs ● Supportive Board who model sharing ideas in respectful ways ● Integrating New ideas and Tech to respond to community needs ● Location ● Keeping up with media forms ● Township partners ● Reaching into the margins of the community ● Inviting space for teens ● Inclusivity ● Building ● Unique services – Lib Things and Hum Lib ● Data Collection	● More programming with the schools ● Tool or Toy lending library ● Childcare needs – play group, etc… ● Repair Cafes ● Expand Adult clubs: exercise, cooking, interest groups ● Relationship with the city ● Opportunities with restaurants & coffee shops ● Bring state and national ideas to Petoskey ● Event for our seasonal Hispanic population in August ● More pronounced connection w/ NCMC ● Grant monies ● Stronger partnership with PHS for research projects ● Welcome Wagon for community ● Resources for parents RE: Online safety – maybe with Great Start ● Teen games/groups – meeting spaces ● Partner with the School service groups
Aspirations	**Results**
● Move a department or service to the Carnegie so that it becomes a more active part of the library ● More services to the townships ● Study Pods ● Study spaces for kids, college bound: 3 ● Meeting rooms with windows ● New furniture, carpet, paint ● Help those overcoming addiction ● Improve adult technology ● Literacy apps ● Coffee shop ● More volunteers and employees for projects ● Voter registration and resources ● All staff attending professional development ● Really beautiful, welcoming reading room ● New roof ● More windows ● Fighting misinformation ● Labyrinth coffee kiosk ● More seating 2nd floor, along walls w/ plugs ● Lower shelves upstairs / remodel ● Open play room/area for toddlers & parents	● Hip Teen space ● Measure demographics of meeting room reservations ● All building needs met ● Offer trainings ● Post program surveys to assess need - 2 ● Offer Trainings ● New ideas in library ● Happy and motivated staff ● Track inquiries that people make ● Track people served ● Enlived adult space ● Greater connection with young families ● Well informed and critical thinking – rejecting the manipulating people ● Lots of people using space – use of outdoor space for public – outside of library hours ● More kids at NCMC – more degrees

Community Survey

As part of their strategic planning process, the Petoskey District Library (PDL) participated in the Post Pandemic Cohort with the University of Michigan and the Library of Michigan. Through the cohort, a survey was conducted to learn more about patrons' experience with library services, programs, staff, and facilities. A total of 975 individuals completed a community survey, representing approximately 4.8% of the PDL service area population of 20,057 residents and 12.3% of the 2024 Library cardholders. Survey results are attached as a separate document.

The majority of respondents have a library card from PDL (94.6%) and are very satisfied or satisfied with the library overall (88.94%). Respondents reported being most satisfied with the library's customer service, atmosphere, and facilities. They reported finding the most value in checking out physical materials and getting help from library staff. They also find great value in children's programming, play areas, and collections.

Survey respondents reported feeling very welcome in the library and find the staff to be very helpful and friendly. They shared many ideas about ways the library can update facilities and provided ideas for new program and event topics. Respondents who frequently use other libraries shared reasons they like those libraries, and many respondents shared positive comments about PDL libraries, as well. Several respondents indicated they would like an easier-to-search catalog and easier-to-navigate library website. They would also like a broader selection of e-books and more study/quiet rooms. A large number of respondents (79.34%) reported getting information about the library from the library's email newsletter.

Survey of Non Library Card Holders

A total of 21 people who do not have library cards were surveyed. A few Strategic Planning Team members attended a football game to find these non-users. Also, our student board member sent the survey to the Key Club at the high school to gather input there. While most of the respondents never visit the library, several of them do visit but do not borrow materials. A few of the reasons highlighted on why people do not visit is lack of time, parking, and not really knowing what our offerings are.

While these 21 people certainly do not make for validated findings, it is nice to see that 62% of these respondents stated that the library is an essential resource and 33% stated we are valuable, but not essential the other 5% did not respond.

Focus Groups

Summaries and highlights of each Focus Group:

1. **Petoskey District Library Focus Group: Teens**
Tuesday, Nov 11, 2024 4:00 – 5:00 pm, Library Classroom; Val Meyerson facilitator

Keywords:
strategic planning, library services, community engagement, NHS volunteer, outdoor activities, summer work, study groups, social media, academic support, sports schedule, library card, teen programs, community feedback, library space, unique services

Summary:
The meeting focused on the Petoskey Library's strategic planning for services over the next three to five years. Key points included the need for better communication with teens, particularly through social media like Instagram and school announcements. Participants highlighted the importance of outdoor activities, such as golf and hiking, and identified barriers like sports schedules. They suggested initiatives like Roblox football tournaments, scavenger hunts, and movie nights to engage teens. The library's current offerings, such as study spaces and book checkouts, were discussed, along with potential improvements like ping pong and pool tables. The library was described as diverse, welcoming, and unique.

<u>**Highlights**</u>
- *Kids pay attention to local issues*
- *Contact them via - school announcements more than one day; Remind?*
- *Social media is Instagram*
- *Kids want to be around their friends – have to entice the group*

Academic help:
- *Study sessions to help prep for PSAT/SAT*
- *May – study sessions for AP Exams: Gov, Econ, PreCal, Comp*
- *How to write a college essay class – provide readers*
- *NHS Hours, right after school in June, deadline is now in July – for the procrastinators*

Enticing Ideas:
- *Roblox Football tournaments (love all Roblox games)*
- *Bead Guy Club – maybe passive program – put out a different pattern each week*
- *Special movie night at the Carnegie*
- *Pizza is always good snack*
- *Super Bowl watch party*
- *Dress for success? Fashion Show*
- *Photography Club (Nick Andersen?)*

Descriptors of the library: Variety, expansive, welcoming, diverse, serene and unique, beautiful, friendly/inclusive, unique

2. Petoskey District Library Focus Group: 25-40 Year Olds
November 11, 2024; 5:30-6:30pm, Carnegie Bldg; Randy Evans facilitator

Summary
The meeting focused on community needs and library improvements. Participants highlighted the importance of a cross-generational community, public transit, and affordable housing. They suggested more inclusive events, such as intergenerational activities, life skills classes, and art programs. The library's role in fostering community was emphasized, with ideas like hosting board game nights, offering more diverse classes, and creating a welcoming space for all ages. The need for better advertising of events and flexible volunteer opportunities was also discussed. The library was praised for its current offerings but suggested expanding resources and engaging more with the community.

What kind of community do you want and why is it important?
- *All basic plus needs met in a cross-generational community*
- *Understanding and involved community, with a lighthearted feel (less seriousness)*

How is this kind of ideal community different from the what you experience?
- *Barriers to participation (timing, public transit)*
- *Our demographics skew old*

What are the top 2-3 community issues that you are aware of?
- *Cost of housing*
- *Climate change issues*
- *Losing Third Space of no children/no alcohol*
- *brain drain, young people leave for better paying jobs*

What are some ways the library can help address these issues?
- *Don't make assumptions about people*
- *Find community – provide programming specifically for people 25-40*
  - *Consistent / regular – and give people time to find it and become regulars*
  - *Same day, same time, varied programming*
    - *Movies, games, cards, speed friending, discussions, etc….*
    - *Maybe have one of them facilitate*
    - *Partner with other organizations – ie: Audubon for birding program*
    - *Volunteer info – speed dating with organizations?*

What are some things the library can do to reach more people in the community?
- *Create an events calendar for greater community events*
- *Work with NCMC – (maybe register all their students for library cards?)*
- *Learn and then do – ie: euchre classes then play times*

- *Classes with the equipment in the Library of Things – short and sweet*

Describe your experience with the library meeting rooms and how can library, enhance this service.
- *Changing the booking time for the Carnegie is really great*
- *Have a reading time – with space that people are interested in chatting about what they are reading, and a space for people that just want to read (partner with EPBC?)*

Can you think of any other ways you might use the library?
- *Life skills classes – how to change a tire, change your oil, basic cooking, baking finances and retirement,*
- *home improvement classes – how to paint a room, hang wall paper, unlug a sink, add a ceiling fan, how to take care of your furnace; how to maintain appliances (cleaning w/d, dishw, refrige, furnace, etc…)*
- *Repair café – (resource to ask for help too)*
- *Lounge chairs for the movie series*
- *Dance and art classes that are affordable*
- *Book club – read same book and then have trivia game about that book and have enough books available for everyone to check out*
- *Have age targeted programs – to help create community*

What 3 words, would you use to describe the library to someone visiting from another community?
- *Involved, Varied resources, Helpful*
- *Beautiful, Curious, Relevant*
- *Investing in community, progressive*

Any other suggestions you would like the library to know?
- *more language clubs, Spanish, latin, etc…*

3. Petoskey District Library Focus Group: Caregivers
Wed, Nov 13, 2024 10:00am-11:00am, Brian Wagner Facilitator

Keywords:
library services, community needs, story time, maker space, parenting classes, sensory play, technology use, book access, childcare options, community events, inclusive space, resource provision, early learning, adult literacy, social media outreach

Summary
The meeting focused on community needs and library services. Participants highlighted the importance of the library's role in providing books, story times, and community activities. They suggested more adult social events, playgroups, and sensory activities for children. Concerns about technology use among children and the need for parenting classes were discussed. Ideas for improving the children's area included non-conventional seating, more sensory play, and rotating toys. The library's role in addressing local issues like housing and daycare was emphasized, with suggestions for better outreach

and collaboration with schools, daycares, and community groups.

Highlights

- Makerspace is good way to get people in here.
- Don't highlight banned books as some parents might not like that.
- "My kids have school 8-3, so sometime outside of those hours? I don't really even look to see what's available between 8-3PM"
- Too much an emphasis on technology and not on books. Move the computers out of the front, so kids won't just run to them.
- I just said this, but I want to reiterate it, because it would be really great if there was every Wednesday at 315 because I feel so often when I pick up my kids, I'm like, "What do you guys want to do? You know?"

Ideas

- Meeting other adults/caregivers, as in classes and programs.
- Library hours and school hours- open earlier.
- Organized play dates at the library (caregivers and kids so they can all interact.
- Kids book clubs
- More weekend activities (kids section)
- Winter activities, even if it's outside in snow gear.
- Great Start Readiness Programs, or similar
- Childcare/daycare – have older kids watch the younger ones. Teach older ones babysitting skills and practice at the library. Caregivers could be present, while also getting a tiny free time from their 18-month old.
- More sensory play groups, or music class, or gross motor skill games
- Winter – do something like summer reading program and just something for more locals and to get the community together
- Do something with the programming room- big space and very dull. Make it into the place for very littles, with soft edges, safe furniture, bright bean bags, stuff that is exciting to look at. (Everyone assumed that the room is used for storage).
- More programming for the "Littles" (under 3 years old). More toys, be okay with them wandering.
- Consistent tutoring hour after school
- A craft a week. And/or take home kits so the caregivers spend time at home creating with child.
- Calendars given to the schools so they can advertise us. More advertisement, especially Instagram.
- Have residents from the Friendship Center come in and read to the kids and vice versa.
- Don't break up parents from the kids in the Youth Department.
- Parenting classes (you need a driver's license to drive, but you don't need anything to parent, so a lot of people don't know what they are doing).
- Making sure it's safe for ADHD kids, that they feel comfortable
- Make it easier for groups to meet here.

- Rotate toys/taco stand in the kid's section. Make it more like Charlevoix.

4. Petoskey District Library Focus Group: General
Wed, Nov 13, 2024 5:15-6:15pm, Brian Wagner facilitator

Summary
The meeting focused on the importance of the Petoskey Public Library to the community. Participants shared their positive experiences with the library's services, including electronic books, meeting rooms, and children's programs. They emphasized the library's role as a welcoming, safe, and inclusive space. Suggestions for improvement included better advertising, expanding digital presence, and offering more diverse programs. The need for transportation to library events and increased collaboration with local organizations was highlighted. The library's role in fostering community engagement, supporting literacy, and providing a safe space for all was widely appreciated.

Why do you think this library is important to the community?
- *A way for kids to get involved*
- *Access to electronic and physical media*
- *Access to meeting rooms*
- *Partnerships with other organizations in the area*
- *Lots of kids activities*
- *It is a great, safe space*
- *A place for kids to explore independence in a controlled environment*
- *Access to the Maker Space*

What kind of community do you want, and why is it important?
- *This community is already pretty amazing*
- *A community that has community organization jumping for the chance to make a difference*
- *An open and inclusive community that does not separate groups*
- *An accepting community, especially during a time with this much tension between people*
- *A community filled with philanthropic organizations*
- *A high value placed on arts*
- *A safe community without a background of anxiety*
- *A place where everyone looks out for one another*
- *A place where the underserved, our served*

What are our top issues in the community and why aren't we solving them? What could the library do? What role could a library play?
- *Transportation*
- *People that are uncomfortable coming downtown*
- *Could the Library partner with organizations and college to do events that draw people in*
- *Scavenger Hunts*
- *Mentorship programs for people unfamiliar with the area, similar to Big Brother/Sister*

- *Childcare is a big issue*
- *Downtown disconnect with the rest of the community*
- *Resorters vs Full Timers*

What are some of those good things, and how might the library help amplify?
- *The library is non-religious and non-alcoholic gathering place*
- *The library is a great spot to meet up*
- *The library does provide non social ways to get out of the house*
- *The maker space is great*
- *Utilizing a bulletin board to create awareness for events*
- *The newsletter is great*
- *The arts and crafts*
- *The library needs to do more marketing*

When you go to the library, how easy or difficult is it to find assistance if you are looking for someone to answer a question?
- *Easy x5*
- *Less easy upstairs*

What individuals or groups can we collaborate and work with to kind of get the word out?
- *Crooked Tree*
- *Great Lakes Center for the Arts*
- *Festival of the Book*
- *Increase digital presence via social media, google page, yelp, trip advisor etc.*
- *Set up at art fairs*
- *Push the sphere of influence the library has, increase the boundaries*
- *One comment mentioned figuring out what it means to be a library in this day and age. Is the library becoming more than just a place for books? How do we change the traditional way of perceiving the Library to better encompass everything it does.*
- *Do an awareness campaign*

Tell us about your experience with the meeting space?
- *They are perfect*
- *Free or not*
- *Possibly buying additional meeting space from ATT building*
- *Unfortunately, the rooms cannot be accessed when the library is closed, which makes evening programming hard*

Okay, top three words from everybody top three words you would use to describe our library, to someone who's visiting from another community?
- *Resourceful, Reflective , Refined*
- *Accessible, Welcoming, Intentional,*

- *Friendly, Knowledgeable*
- *Reliable, Community, Safe*

5. Petoskey District Library Focus Group: General 2
Thurs, Nov 14, 2024 7:00 - 8:00pm, Val Meyerson facilitator

Keywords:
library services, community engagement, local organizations, youth activities, special needs resources, library outreach, mobile library, social media strategy, community events, library staff, meeting room availability, library resources, community needs, library programs, library accessibility

Summary:
The meeting focused on community needs and the role of the library in addressing them. Participants shared their backgrounds and library usage, highlighting the library's importance as a community hub. Key suggestions included expanding services for children, promoting local news, and enhancing accessibility through extended hours and mobile libraries. The need for more resources on autism and special needs was emphasized. The library's current offerings, such as the Great Decisions series and the diverse programming, were praised. Participants also suggested leveraging social media and the library's newsletter for better outreach. The library's staff and facilities were highly regarded, with suggestions for improving meeting room availability and technology.

What missing in the community?
- *Engaged, informed citizenry*
- *Mobile library*
- *Pop-up library around the community*
- *More activities on a regular basis for ages 3-6 – like arts and crafts, promote social emotional learning*
- *Programs for parents dealing with difficult issues (like the great start program)*
- *Services for families with autistic kids – list of services available*
- *A way to see all the activities going around the greater community*
- *Media literacy*

Great things in community that we could capitalize on?
- *Good diversity of local organizations for partnerships*
- *Solar – library could be a good example*
- *Great local music, community dances (utilize hardwood floor under Carnegie carpet)*

Meeting Room Space
- *Technology glitches*
- *Love the spaces*

Getting the word out about all our services?
- *Tell our story little bits at a time, and repeat (FB scheduled posts)*

- *More video content*
- *Ambassador program*
- *Partner w/ groups like Thrive 45 and LLT and the schools and the college*

Other Ideas for the library?
- *Host sessions on conversations (a bit like great decision format)*
- *Maybe stay open late one day a week to accommodate people*
- *Have an ideas fest (like Madison public library)*

Words to describe the library to visitors
- *Great Meeting place*
- *Magical, Iconic, Wondrous*
- *Warm and friendly, Historic*
- *Welcoming, well resourced, surprising*
- *Beautiful, welcoming, well resourced*
- *Expansive, Juicy*
- *Welcoming, diverse*
- *Wonderfully caring place*
- *Welcoming, diverse, accommodating, intriguing*