Forbes Library

Strategic Plan 2025-2027

Our Mission

Forbes Library exists to provide a wide range of information and materials to all of the people of Northampton, and to encourage and support the civic, intellectual, and cultural pursuits of the community. Forbes Library encourages curiosity, free inquiry, and lifelong learning and provides a friendly physical environment as a community meeting place.

Our Vision

adapted from poem by Seth Gregory

a safe space
a community hub
a sanctuary for lifelong learning
we are here to welcome and meet your needs
believing that dignity is inherent
that knowledge is power
and that your library should be free

For All
NORTHAMPTON, MA

Forbes Library

Message from the Chair

We are pleased to share with you Forbes Library's Strategic Plan for FY2025 through FY2027 which provides a framework for the library to meet the needs of our community and deliver higher levels of service. The plan was developed based on input from the Northampton residents who came to our community forums and the 1,100+ community members who responded to our survey. We also spoke to thirty local stakeholders about the challenges their organizations, and our city, will face in the coming years and ways in which the library can help. The library staff, the board of trustees, the Friends of Forbes Library, our Racial & Social Justice Advisory Group, and the Coolidge Museum Advisory Committee all participated in visioning exercises that helped identify the library's strengths and create goals for the future.

We heard from our community that there is a need for the library to build and expand upon our partnerships with other organizations in the city. These connections and networks have become crucial in the wake of the pandemic where our community members are faced with challenges including social isolation, affordability, and the digital divide. We have set goals to help center the well-being of our community, create greater access to resources, support our city's climate goals, improve our spaces to make them healthier and more accessible, and support our staff. We'll also be enhancing the library by adding a stage on the lawn, building new teen space, and adding more fun and useful non-book items to the circulating collection. Our local history collection is a valuable asset to the community and we'll continue to expand its collections. We want to particularly focus on preserving resources around local cultural and political movements of the last 50 years including LGBTQIA+, music, arts, political activism, and journalism. This year is the 100th anniversary of Calvin Coolidge becoming president and the Coolidge Museum will be hosting a series of programs marking key events in his presidency. A lot of the data we collected and the conversations we had made us realize that the library needs to toot its own horn more. So, we'll be doing a lot more promotion to ensure our community knows what's new and what's already available for them at the library.

With the help of the Trustees and the Friends of Forbes, our committee employed the services of strategic brand consultant Seth Gregory who participated alongside us as we collected all of this data from our community. He helped us organize what we were hearing into the themes and goals that form the structure of this new Strategic Plan and ultimately informed the design of our new logo and tagline. The logo reflects the library's role in serving our community. It is inspired by the shape of the sandstone arch over the front doors and also suggests the open pages of a book. To me, it also looks like pathways leading us to the future.

I want to thank my fellow committee members who were willing to put in countless hours working towards this plan. We began this process as we emerged from the pandemic and were often feeling stretched in many directions. I'm grateful to you all for carving out time and headspace for crunching data, organizing Zoom meetings, putting together presentations, sharing your expertise, thinking strategically about the big picture, and creatively considering all of the tiny details. I would particularly like to thank Lisa Downing and Molly Moss, the Director and Assistant Director of Forbes Library, for all of the time and expertise they put into making this plan and keeping our wonderful public library running smoothly.

I also want to thank our community. Throughout this whole process, we heard over and over about your love for Forbes Library. We're lucky to have you!

Katy Wight
Vice President, Board of Trustees & Chair of Strategic Planning Committee

This Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document, providing a continuing touchstone for staff yet flexible enough to change as our city evolves. The library is here to serve our community. If you have any thoughts or ideas we'd love to hear them at any time!

You can email me at katywight@gmail.com, call or visit the library to speak to Lisa Downing or Molly Moss or email director@forbeslibrary.org.

Forbes Library

Strategic Plan 2025-2027

A strategic planning process gives the library an opportunity to listen deeply to the concerns, needs, and hopes of our community. We spoke to many different members of our community about the library. This helped us to identify areas in which the library is already strong as well as areas in which our services need to be expanded or improved. We draw on this plan to develop budgets, prioritize activities, and continue to plan for the future.

This plan provides a clear sense of purpose for the library staff, trustees, friends, and volunteers. Largely aspirational, we will work hard to achieve the goals set forth and provide annual updates to our community.

Goals & Objectives for 2025-2027

wellbeing

Center the wellbeing of our community through the library's services and spaces.

- **We will continue to protect the intellectual freedom and privacy of our patrons.**

  Sample activity: Publicly support legislation that protects intellectual freedom and library employees

- **We will take action to provide new pathways to library access.**

  Sample activity: Increase the number of kindergarteners with public library cards in Northampton Public Schools

  Sample activity: Actively collaborate with Northampton's new Resilience Hub

- **We will take action to support the City of Northampton's goal of carbon neutrality.**

  Sample activity: Advocate for improved links to existing and planned bike infrastructure in the city to the library

- **We will make improvements to our building for the safety and comfort of people using it.**

  Sample activity: Improve accessibility and ventilation of bathrooms

awareness

Empower our community by increasing awareness of local resources. By sharing information and building connections, we will drive growth and improve the quality of life in Northampton.

- **We will promote the library's services to an ever widening audience.**

  Sample activity: Conduct targeted marketing campaign to Latinx members of our community

  Sample activity: Seek grant funding to develop a communications strategic plan

- **We will improve wayfinding for increased access and discoverability.**

  Sample activity: Use bilingual (English/Spanish) signage wherever possible

- **We will be more visible in the community.**

  Sample activity: Increase cardholders living in Northampton Housing Authority properties

  Sample activity: Explore hosting a community information fair

forbes library's values

Welcoming:
We offer an inclusive space that builds community and belonging.

Inspiring:
We foster curiosity, creativity, fun, and lifelong learning.

Equitable:
We ensure that the library is accessible and free for all.

Forbes Library

Goals & objectives for 2025-2027

Forbes Library

Goals for 2025-2027

inspiration

Improve our physical spaces and resources so that we may continue to be a source of fun, wonder, and inspiration for the community

- **We will complete capital projects that support creativity, learning, and entertainment.**

  Sample activity: Add an accessible performance stage to west lawn

  Sample activity: Renovate the Young Adult Room

- **Our collection will support our community in new ways.**

  Sample activity: Expand our Library of Things collection with additional crafting and other recreational items, household items, and tools

- **We will foster a learning culture for staff and patrons.**

  Sample activity: Increase staff development funding

- **We will preserve and share our local history.**

  Sample activity: Continue to expand Local History Collections with emphasis on cultural and political movements of the last 50 years. Focus on LGBTQIA+, music, arts, political activism, and journalism.

  Sample activity: Develop a plan for renovating exhibits in Coolidge Museum

"I'm truly awed by the dedication of the Forbes Library staff, Trustees, Friends, and the advisory groups behind this beautiful and comprehensive FY2025-FY2027 Strategic Plan embracing a Forbes Library for all. I wholeheartedly support this well-crafted vision to enhance community well-being, boost awareness of our invaluable library and services, and inspire and welcome everyone in our community. Together, we can chart a course toward a stronger, healthier, and more vibrant community where knowledge freely circulates, support is readily available, and inspiration flourishes."

– Gina-Louise Sciarra, Mayor of Northampton

The 2025-2027 Strategic Plan was unanimously accepted by the Forbes Library Board of Trustees on September 21, 2023.

Forbes Library

User Needs Assessment

Community Description

Introduction

Northampton is a small city, with about 29,500 residents, on the western bank of the Connecticut River. The city was founded in 1654 and has a long history of small farms, factories, and mills. Today it is an academic and culture center, one of the northernmost cities in the Knowledge Corridor. Northampton includes the villages of Florence, Leeds, and the Bay State neighborhood.

The city of Northampton is situated in the heart of the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts, which in 2007 The New York Times called "arguably the most author-saturated, book-cherishing, literature-celebrating place in the nation." The region is especially known for children's literature, as demonstrated by The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in nearby Amherst. In 2017, the Boston Globe highlighted Northampton in an article: "How Western Mass. became kids' lit central." The article said, "Few regions are as familiar with this resurgence as the Pioneer Valley of Western Massachusetts, which, for a variety of reasons, positively teems with children's book authors. 'We think, per capita, we have the largest population of children's writers in the country,' says Jane Yolen, prolific author of 350 books."

The city's downtown is located just a couple of blocks from Forbes Library. Northampton's downtown is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and designated as a cultural district by the state. Walkscore.com gives Northampton's downtown a Walk Score of 95 ("Walker's Paradise") and a bike score of 97 ("Biker's Paradise"). Public transport is provided by two regional transit authorities, Amtrak, and Peter Pan Bus Lines. Public transport is scarce, however, in terms of frequency of trips and locations served.

Northampton is 20 miles north of Springfield, 100 miles west of Boston, and is situated in close proximity to Interstates 91 and 90. As the county seat of Hampshire County, it hosts the county jail and courthouse, several homeless shelters, a domestic violence service organization, transitional housing, halfway houses, a center for immigrants, and a variety of subsidized housing complexes.

Smith College, a member of the valley's Five College Consortium, is located across West Street from Forbes. Northampton is home to more than 2,100 Smith College undergraduates.

Northampton is known for its large LGBTQ community that is celebrated each year with a parade and festival during "NoHo Pride" on the first Saturday in May.

Demographics

While Northampton closely follows the norms of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, it is poorer and whiter, according to the 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates:

	Median income	Household median income	White	Black	Latinx	Asian
Northampton	$38,950	$71,866	90.5%	1.4%	7.8%	2.0%
Commonwealth of Massachusetts	$45,555	$84,385	80.8%	6.5%	9.7%	5.8%

According to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's 2019 Unlocking Opportunity: An Assessment of Barriers to Fair Housing In Northampton Northampton is more racially diverse (18.9% identify as people of color) than Hampshire County (15.8% identify as people of color), but less racially diverse than the Pioneer Valley region (30.2% people of color).

Northampton's current median age is 40.0 and there are 12,000 households in the city. 21% of the population is under the age of 20 and 19% is over the age of 65.

Northampton has about 15,000 working residents. About 80% are employed in management, business, science, and arts occupations. 17% are employed in service occupations, 14% in sales and office occupations. Less than 10% are employed in construction, maintenance, production, transportation, and other industries.

Northampton is home to about 900 veterans, about 400 of them Vietnam era veterans. Northampton is a regional hub for veterans' services. This is due in part to the V.A. Central Western Massachusetts Healthcare System, and the nonprofit Soldier On, both located in Leeds.

93% of Northampton residents aged 25 or higher have graduated from high school, 60% have completed a bachelor's degree or higher degree, and 33% have a graduate or professional degree.

While several private and charter school options exist in and around Northampton, most residents send their children to public school. The total enrollment in the public schools is 2,618, although some of these are school-choice students from other municipalities. Four elementary schools feed into the middle school, and most of those students continue to Northampton High School in the ninth grade. English is not the first language for 10.2% of enrolled students, and 3.8% of the population aged 5 years or over have limited English proficiency. 43% of students are considered high needs. 31.4% are considered low-income. The high school graduation rate is 94.4%.

In the city overall, about 8% of the population are foreign-born, and 14.3% speak a language other than English at home. According to the Center for New Americans, a local agency that serves the area's immigrants, the greater Northampton area is home to people from more than 50 different countries and 35 different languages.

According to the American Community Survey Five Year Estimates, nearly 11% of Northampton residents are in poverty.

Housing

According to the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission's 2019 Unlocking Opportunity: An Assessment of Barriers to Fair Housing In Northampton:

> *Northampton is currently facing a rental affordability problem. According to the ACS 2013-2017, 52% of households are currently paying 30% or more of their income on housing. Those who spend over 30% of their income on housing are considered "housing cost burdened" by HUD. A surprising 38.7% of households are spending over 50% of their incomes on rent. These households are considered "severely housing cost burdened".*

and

> *A person making minimum wage working full time would spend 50.7% of their income on rent if they were to pay the gross median rent in Northampton.*

An increasingly competitive real estate and rental market since the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic have only made finding affordable housing harder.

Green Northampton

The city's residents have long shown great interest in the environment:

Northampton's Community Preservation Act imposes a 3% surcharge on city property tax (for residential properties this applies only after the first $100,000 of value) to be used for open space protection, historic preservation and the provision of affordable housing.

The city has achieved "Tree City U.S.A." status from the National Arbor Day Foundation, for 15 years, with a Growth Award for 6 years.

The city's sustainability movement is very strong. For instance, Northampton has been acquiring land for preservation in excess of its goals and, in 2015, a City Council ordinance banned the distribution of single use plastic bags.

Grow Food Northampton was established as a local non-profit whose mission is to promote food security by advancing sustainable agriculture in the Northampton, Massachusetts area.

The city hosts two vibrant weekly farmers' markets, one of which runs year round.

Northampton is on the list of LEED for Cities and Communities list of certified cities and communities in the U.S. from the U.S. Green Building Council.

All of this points to a community that values quality of life and is willing to support those values fiscally and to organize around them socially. Forbes Library fits well in this context and, as such, benefits from broad community support.

Library Description

Northampton is home to two independent public libraries: Forbes Library and Lilly Library. Each has its own board of trustees, endowments, and charter. The combined hours of Forbes and Lilly fulfill the state requirement for certification and both libraries share city and state library support. Both are members of the resource sharing network CW MARS and the Massachusetts Library System. They coordinate some programming and support each other's initiatives. In addition to the resource sharing through the regional networks, they also share selected databases and help fund Forbes Library's delivery program which brings library materials to residents of Northampton, Florence, and Leeds.

Forbes Library depends upon the city for its operating budget. The materials budget is supplied by endowment funds and fundraising. The library's Development Committee coordinates the library's fundraising and the Friends of Forbes Library provides additional support through an annual membership drive and a variety of fundraising events. Grants further supplement the materials budget and pay for special initiatives.

Description of Existing Services

The library's collections are large and varied. They include magazines, books, music on CD, films on DVD, and audiobooks in a variety of formats. Non-traditional collections include museum passes, board games, puzzles, and musical instruments; as well as a growing array of other borrowable items in our "Library of Things" including a telescope, induction cooking kit, and video projector. These collections are divided among departments, including Arts & Music, the Children's & Young Adult Services, the Hampshire Room for Local History, and the Calvin Coolidge Presidential Library and Museum. The library's membership in CW MARS gives patrons access to a growing collection of eBooks and eAudiobooks.

Programs available at the library include author readings, music and dance demonstrations, dramatic readings and performances, writing workshops, discussion groups, garden tours, and film series. Many programs are offered online, including hybrid programs which can be attended onsite or remotely. The library highlights works by local artists in an impressive art gallery, with a new show each month. There is a meeting room, study room, and community room available for public use. In the last five years community conversations on topics such as social justice, climate change, elections, and incarceration have increasingly been part of the library's programming.

The library offers research help, ready reference, computer help, notary services, and reader's advisory. For community members who cannot visit the library themselves, Forbes offers a wide variety of online resources and services, and an outreach delivery program which brings library materials to residents of Northampton, Florence, and Leeds.

Forbes Library

Planning Methodology

Planning Methodology

In 2022, Forbes Library embarked on a highly collaborative and community-focused strategic planning process. The Trustees appointed fellow trustee Katy Wight as the chair of the Strategic Planning Committee. Forbes Library's current plan had expired, and with the pandemic it was noted that, "With so much change, the plan will help to focus and set the direction for the library." Seth Gregory was selected as consultant for this endeavor, and was tasked with defining, developing, and launching a new brand identity. Brand identity is how people think about Forbes Library. Through brand identity work, current perceptions can be understood and then used to shape a stronger brand that is aligned with Forbes' mission, vision, values, and strategic goals. The Strategic Planning Committee first met in April 2022 and was a working group comprised of staff and a Friends member. This group facilitated many SOAR exercises (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results), which allowed us to learn what we are doing well, what we could be doing better, and what people would like to see the library concentrating on. Library staff and trustees conducted over 30 interviews with community stakeholders. A community survey was conducted, with 1285 responses. We made an effort to reach out to people who were not current library patrons or used the library infrequently. The Planning Committee conducted research and analysis of:

"My experiences at Forbes have consistently been positive ones. Each and every staff person that I have interacted with over the years has been cordial, friendly, knowledgeable and very helpful (and patient ;-)) to me whether with technology, helping me to locate books and resources, and just generally welcoming. All of this make Forbes Library a delightful place for me to visit and spend time. Their love for their work shows in their interactions with me and others. Kudos!"

– Survey Respondent

- Northampton demographics and community analysis
- Forbes Library statistics, existing programs, collections, staffing, and available technology
- Trends and key issues impacting Northampton and the surrounding region
- Nationwide trends relevant to library use.

We involved patrons, stakeholders, and staff through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. The resulting Strategic Plan articulates a clear set of principles and priorities for leaders, staff, partners, and supporters, capitalizing on the needs of the community and the library's unique strengths. The Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document, providing a continuing touchstone for staff and flexible enough to change as our city evolves. There will be another public meeting to introduce the plan at which the library will be soliciting feedback and seeking ongoing communication.

Survey Results

Quantitative Analysis

- The largest demographics responding to our survey were frequent library visitors. The respondents skewed female, white, and older (i.e. more than half were 60+).
- Frequent library visitors made up a larger percentage of people strongly agreeing or disagreeing, indicating that people who visit the library more frequently are more engaged and have a greater strength of opinion.
- Generally speaking, people strongly agreed (i.e. has a positive view) of the library, based on the modified likert scale questions.
- The questions comparing Forbes to other libraries generally resulted in people saying Forbes was similar. The library stood out as being more involved in the local community and inviting to families with children.
- The library is vastly used by patrons for borrowing materials. After that, people used the library for reading, indicating that the library's most iconic purpose, i.e. books, remains highly relevant.

"A really special place. I really believe in Forbes' commitment to being "for all", and the knowledgeable, kind, and creative staff make it the place that is it. Keep drawing on their skills, experience, and interests!"

– Survey Respondent

Free Text Analysis

Our analysis of the over 2000 free-text answers to open ended questions on survey revealed that:

- The library could do considerably better at self promotion.
- Many in our community would value additional library events.
- Non-traditional (i.e. a Library of Things) and traditional library collections are both of significant interest to the community.
- The library's current hours do not meet everyone's needs: Sunday hours in particular would be very popular.
- The cost and inconvenience of parking at the library is a source of frustration.
- The spread of disease in the library concerns many.
- Despite improvements to accessibility at the library, barriers remain for some patrons.
- Getting to the library can be difficult for some in our community.
- Some in the community are concerned about library staffing: first and foremost a concern that the library is understaffed, followed by concerns about the staff's well being, with a few answers calling for more diversity amongst the staff.

An appendix explains our methodology and provides more detail about our survey design and results.

Quotes from survey respondents

"Forbes has been a comfort and a joy to me for my whole life, and will continue to be so!"

"Having fun isn't hard when you have a Forbes library card! :-)"

"Love the graphic novel section for adults and for middle school kids! My daughter brings a big shopping bag and fills it with books and loves it. She also loves the anime group that meets once a month and we both love the little art project bags. I would like to make zines and would like to do it at the library."

"Forbes does an excellent job welcoming all local residents. I am impressed with the tact and sensitivity with which problems--and problem patrons--are handled."

"I've been in Northampton about 2 years, and I love Forbes! It's the best public library I've ever had the privilege to be a member of."

"Staff members went out of their way during the Pandemic to gather books for my classroom to borrow. I was so grateful 🙏"

*"Forbes Library consistently blows me away with the comprehensive range of services that it offers and the thoughtfulness of its staff. As somebody using the library on a weekly basis, I am *still* discovering new services and opportunities that the library offers that I hadn't even thought of! It is just incredible to me that all of it is free, easy to access, and aided by very polite and helpful staff. Thanks for doing an excellent job!"*

"Thank you, the Forbes Library is one of the reasons I choose to live in Northampton ❤️"

"I love Forbes! I haven't been in as much since the pandemic began, but in 2019 Forbes made it possible for me to get a job. The staff are incredible and your computer resources are an essential service to our community. Thank you for everything you do!"

SOAR Summary

Four SOAR exercises were facilitated with different groups of stakeholders: Kristi Chadwick, Consultant, Massachusetts Library System, moderated a public forum in May of 2022. Katya Schapiro, Director of the Emily Williston Memorial Library, Easthampton, MA, moderated a Forbes Library staff forum. This was part of an exchange, as the Emily Williston Memorial Library, Easthampton, MA, was also conducting a strategic planning process. We also conducted the SOAR exercise with the library trustees and an invited group of community stakeholders.

Among all groups, people want us to focus more on strategic partnerships (including with Lilly), continue to diversify the people who are associated with the library and our offerings, and improve our marketing.

"I came to Northampton to be closer to family during Covid. I split my time between here and NYC. Forbes has been a critical piece of my feeling comfortable in my new home. The range of the collection, and the welcoming attitude of the library staff has been extraordinary. I am particularly grateful to Madison, in the children's section, who, during lockdown, kept me well stocked with great books for my grandchildren, and continues, with her colleagues, to offer us such warm help when we visit the library in person."

"The staff is amazing! Each visit is better than the last. They care, educate and go out of their way to leave you with a smile. Thank you."

"It was wonderful as a single and then married person, amazing when we had young children and continues to be great now that we are seniors."

"A staff member once went above and beyond when I needed kindness, and I've never forgotten it."

Stakeholder Interviews

METHODOLOGY

We conducted 30 interviews with community members affiliated with a wide range of organizations. Most interviews were conducted over the phone by members of the strategic planning committee. We asked the following set of questions.

- What are your short-term priorities and long-term goals?
- Are there ways in which Forbes could better support these priorities/goals? This could include collections, services, hours, or community outreach
- Are there ways the library can better support the people that you serve?
- Are there initiatives or organizations in our community that you think we should be aware of?
- Is there anything else that you would like us to know?

During the time period that it made sense, we also asked the interviewee if they would be willing to help us distribute our community survey and/or participate in our focus group. Responses were recorded using a Google form that fed a shared spreadsheet.

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

While each conversation took its own path, there were a few overarching themes that emerged. Many stakeholders talked about their appreciation for existing partnerships with the library; others shared the desire to strengthen our partnership. We were also asked to improve our marketing so that their constituents would have a better understanding and awareness of what the library offered. This was asked for directly as well as indirectly when we were asked for things we already offered. Lastly, there was a clear request to focus on responding to changes and challenges in our community. This is directly related to the pandemic in areas like social isolation and the digital divide as well as community challenges like housing and affordability.

Forbes Library

Acknowledgements

Strategic Planning Committee
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Forbes Library Staff
Forbes Library Trustees
Coolidge Committee
Racial & Social Justice Advisory Group
Friends of Forbes Library

Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra
Northampton City Council

Stakeholder Interview Participants
Survey Participants
Community Forum Attendees

Consultants
Seth Gregory
Kristi Chadwick, Massachusetts Library System

Forbes Library Staff Forum Moderator
Katya Schapiro, Director of the Emily Williston Memorial Library, Easthampton, MA

Additional Contributors
Marjorie Hess
Margaret Groesbeck
Jonathan Wynn

Forbes Library

Appendix

Appendix: Survey Results and Methodology

Survey Questions

How often did you use Forbes Library in the last year (in person and/or remotely)?

- More than once a month
- Once a month
- A few times
- Did not use Forbes Library in the past 12 months

Did you use the library last year for any of the following for yourself?

- Learn about local or family history
- Study, education, or tutoring
- Leisure, fun, or socal interaction
- Coolidge museum
- Meetiongs or group work
- Reading
- Borrow library materials
- Research
- Programs such as story times, book discussions, film screenings, or concerts
- Visiting Paco
- Outdoor space
- Comforatable space
- Use computers or other library equipment
- Hosmer Art Gallery
- Other...

Did you use the library in the last year for any of the following on behalf of a member of household other than yourself, like a child or elder?

- Learn about local or family history
- Study, education, or tutoring
- Leisure, fun, or socal interaction
- Coolidge museum

- o Meetiongs or group work
- o Reading
- o Borrow library materials
- o Research
- o Programs such as story times, book discussions, film screenings, or concerts
- o Visiting Paco
- o Outdoor space
- o Comforatable space
- o Use computers or other library equipment
- o Hosmer Art Gallery
- o Other...

Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

(Select from: Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Stronly agree)

- o I can find valuable information and materials at Forbes
- o I feel comfortable coming to Forbes
- o Forbes makes Northampton a better community
- o Forbes has something to offer everyone
- o I am treated well by the staff at Forbes
- o Forbes treats everyone fairly
- o Forbes is a great place to get new ideas

What would make Forbes Library a greater resource to you?

What would make Forbes Library more valuable to our Community

Please characterize how you perceive Forbes, when compared to other libraries you are familiar with.

(Select from: Less | Similarly | More)

- o Forbes is ____ welcoming to all people
- o Forbes is ____ able to inspire curiosity and creativity
- o Forbes is ____ involved in the local community
- o At Forbes, visitors are ____ likely to connect with other people
- o Forbes is ____ engaged in a critical look at history
- o Forbes is ____ an appealing place to use and learn about current technologies
- o Forbes is ____ inviting to teens
- o Forbes is ____ inviting to families with young children
- o Forbes is ____ inviting to seniors

How, if ever, has Forbes Library not lived up to your expectations?

Would you like to see any of the following added to the library building and grounds? Select your top 4.

- o Playground
- o Outdoor stage
- o Social worker on site
- o Bookmobile or bikemobile
- o Charging station for phones and tablets
- o Expanded teen space
- o Soundproof cell phone booth
- o Computers where two or more people can work together
- o Library presence at community events: farmer's market, street festivals, etc.
- o Community garden
- o Community fridge/pantry
- o Maker space with 3D printer
- o Other...

Would you be interested in borrowing any of the following from the library? Select your top 3.

- o Tools (perhaps for gardening, bike repair, or carpentry)
- o Crafting supplies (sewing machine, learn to knit kits, etc.)
- o Audiovisual equipment (dvd player, projector, etc.)
- o Outdoor recreational equipment (sleds, snowshoes, birding kit, telescope, camping equipment, etc.)
- o Laptops or tablets
- o Computer accessories (drawing tablets, game controller, trackball, etc.)
- o Outdoor games (hula hoops, soccer balls, bocce, badminton, pickleball, etc.)
- o Other...

Are you Hispanic or Latino?

- o Yes
- o No

What is your race?

- o Black or African American
- o American Indian or Alaska Native
- o Asian
- o Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- o White
- o Prefer not to say
- o Other...

How would you describe yourself? (Please use “other” if you prefer to self-describe.)

- o Male
- o Non-binary
- o Female
- o Prefer not to say
- o Other...

What age are you?

- o Under 18
- o 18-29
- o 30-39
- o 40-49
- o 50-59
- o 60-69
- o 70 and older
- o Prefer not to say

If there is anything else you would like to tell us about your experiences at Forbes Library, please let us know here!

Distribution

The survey was available online via Google Forms. We promoted the online survey on our website, via our email newsletters, and on social media. In addition, print copies of the survey were available in the library and mailed out upon request. Several community partners shared the link with their distribution lists.

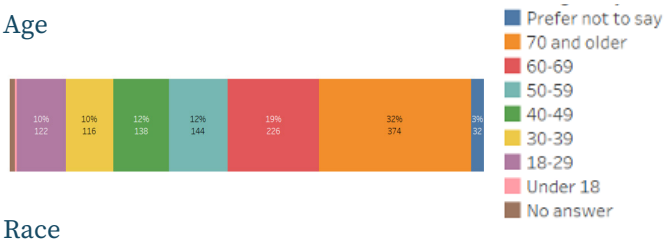
Analysis

The Community Survey received 1285 responses. Due to technical glitches that led to duplication and a few submissions sent in bad faith we were not able to use every response we received–after data clean up we were left with 1165 responses including over 2000 free-text answers to open response questions.

Quantitative Analysis

Demographics for Survey Respondents

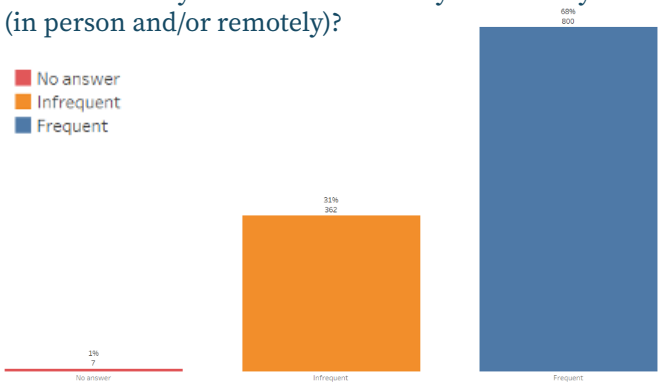
Age



Race

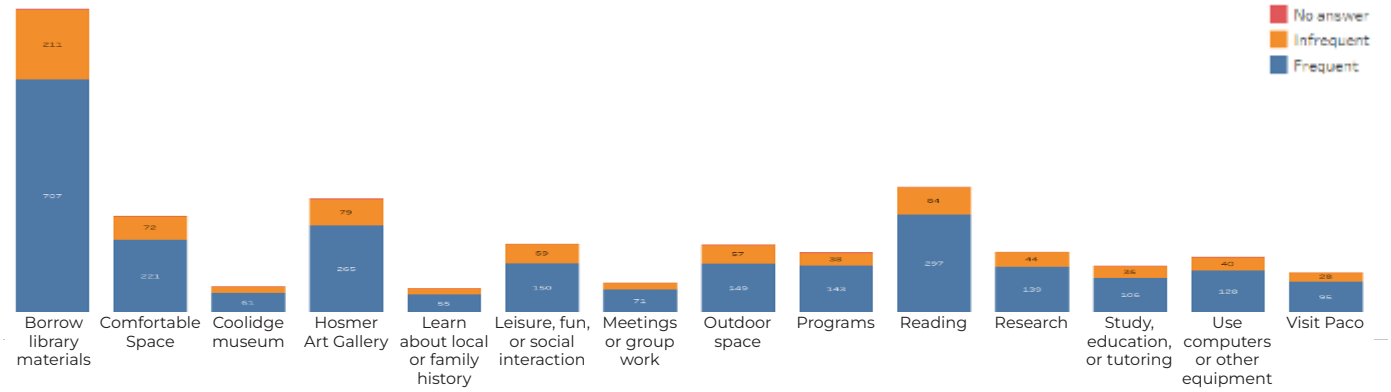
Gender

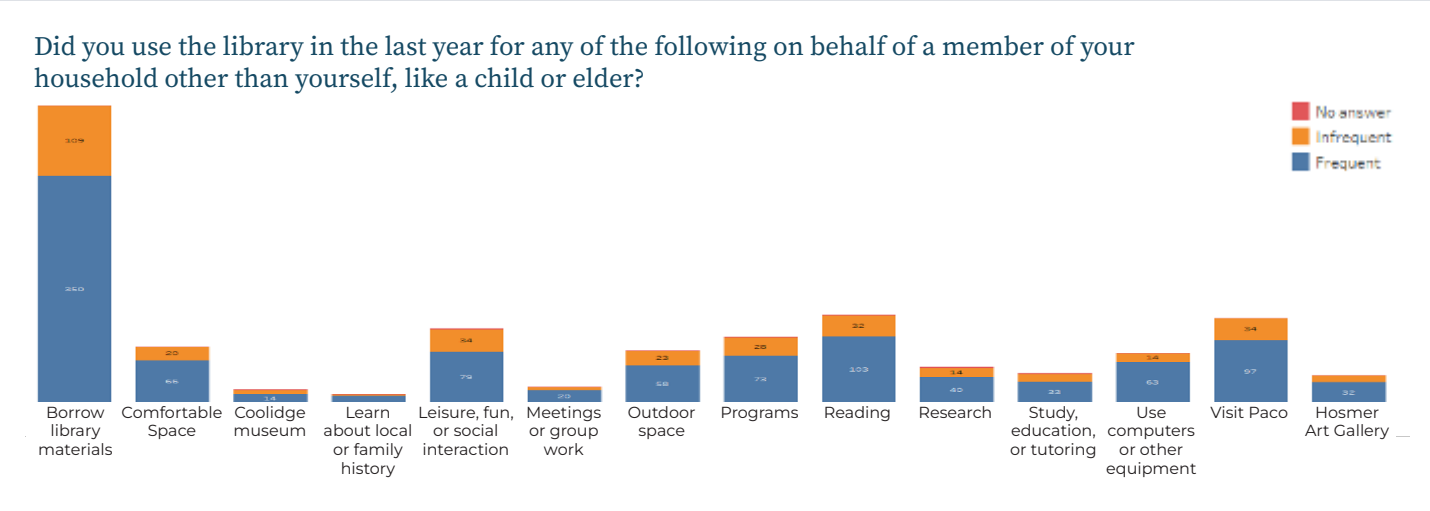
How often did you use Forbes Library in the last year (in person and/or remotely)?



Library Usage

Did you use the library last year for any of the following for yourself?





Textual Analysis

Staff and volunteers conducted an analysis of the free-text answers to summarize them and identify responses of particular use to library staff.

Textual Analysis Methodology

We tagged free-text answers using a vocabulary that emerged organically as we made our way through the responses. To make it easy to search for these tags later we made sure that:

- each tag consisted only of lowercase letters and a minimum of punctuation: the hash mark, colon, and underscore
- each tag began with either #_ (for internal tags, see below) or # followed by a letter–strings that otherwise occur nowhere within all the collected answers
- the underscore is used in place of the space within tag names
- the colon was used exclusively to indicate the hierarchical structure of the tags, so that, for example, the tag `#praise:collection:library_of_things:instruments` can be seen as indicating, praise, praise of the collection, praise of the library of things, and praise of the library's musical instrument collection. This allowed us to use a very granular vocabulary while still being able to report on overall trends that would have been lost had we chosen a flat structure of equal granularity.

It should be emphasized that all tags were applied to answers and when counting tags we always did so on the level of the answer. So, since there were four free-text questions on the survey a single respondent could potentially be counted four times, once per answer. As we see it, the repetition of a theme shows that the respondent considered it especially important, and that is worth recording. As a consequence, however, it is important to note that some tags may express the sentiment of considerably fewer respondents than one might at first think. (It would be easy enough to count per respondent instead of per answer were that desired.)

It should also be noted that when counting tags we were careful not to double count answers. This is relevant when we were counting tags with subcategories, for example if a single answer was tagged

with #praise:staff and #praise:collection we would only consider it a single instance of #praise.

It is important to remember that this process of tagging free-text responses is highly subjective. The choice of vocabulary, the hierarchy imposed upon it, and the accuracy with which it is applied all have profound implications for the trend revealed within the text. That doesn't diminish the value of this analysis, but it is important to remember that this isn't the only possible analysis and many other interpretations may be valid.

Technology

The technology used for this analysis was "old school": text files and shell scripts. The shell scripts used for analysis make use of classic command-line utilities such as `grep, sort, uniq, sed`, and `awk`.

Results

Top Level Content Tags

Four top level tags were used to identify types of feedback received from the survey. Each free-text answer could receive any number of tags in these categories.

`#suggestions_and_concerns` (989)

989 answers included specific suggestions or concerns.

`#praise` (692)

692 answers praised the library.

`#promotion_needed` (111)

111 answers suggested that the library could do a better job promoting its services or values. Among these 67 answers were tagged because the respondent specifically called for more promotion of one or more library services or values. In addition, 48 answers were tagged because they revealed the respondents' ignorance of a service the library already offers.

`#values` (79)

79 answers were tagged with `#values` to indicate a particular value expressed in an answer. It should be noted that none of the questions on the survey explicitly asked what respondents valued and answers rarely were explicit about values. Tags in this category were created only to record sentiments that were expressed that could not be captured well in the other top level categories. As a result the distribution of tags in this category should definitely _not_ be considered to be representative of the overall values of respondents.

Top Level Internal Tags

Five top level tags were used to keep track of particular answers. Where an answer eloquently told a story illustrating the library's value we tagged it `#_great_quote`. Where an answer was ambiguous or unclear we tagged it with `#_meaning_unclear`. If an answer contained no relevant content we

tagged it `#_no_tags_required`. (The latter was mostly applied to answers such as “n/a” or “no” or answers which commented on the survey itself.) Where an answer had pertinent information for library staff we tagged it `#_message:{recipient}`, for example `#_message:reference` or `#_message:childrens`. Finally, despite efforts to clean up the data before the analysis began, a few answers were identified as coming from duplicate responses during the text analysis. We tagged these with `#_duplicate_ignore`.

Digging Deeper

Suggestions and Concerns

Nearly half of the answers we analyzed expressed some kind of suggestion or concern. This isn’t surprising, since this is exactly what we asked for in three of the four open response questions! (“What would make Forbes Library a greater resource to you?”, “What would make Forbes Library more valuable to our community?”, and “How, if ever, has Forbes Library not lived up to your expectations?”)

The most popular suggestions by far were all respondents asking for the library to host more events. 297 answers called for more events. Some of these answers suggested the library host particular types of events; among these the most popular were: classes, book related events, outdoor events, and social events. It is worth noting that calls appeared for both virtual events (22 answers) and in person events (13 answers). It’s also interesting to look at calls for more events for particular audiences: although calls for children’s programs were highest amongst these, the call for more adult programs was not insignificant. The number of answers that called for programs for adults, seniors, or teens nearly reaches the number calling for programs for children and tweens. If we lump tweens in with the teens and adults then we find more responses calling for programs for older ages.

Next by popularity come suggestions and concerns regarding the library’s collection. We tagged 161 answers as calling for more physical materials in the library’s collection–65 of these expressed a desire for an expanded Library of Things, 60 called for more books, 15 called for more periodicals, and 12 called for more variety in the collection. We would like to note that the vast majority of these responses were more specific. For example, although some respondents simply expressed a desire for the library to have more books, most were interested in the addition of particular types of books such as books in a foreign language, newly published books, or more academic books. With regards to a Library of Things, tools and museum passes were the most common suggestions.

Trends we observed with the remaining suggestions and concerns include:

- a significant interest in the physical space of the library, indoor and outdoor
- a great interest in increasing the number of hours the library is open, with the most popular suggestion being to have open hours on Sundays
- a concern about the spread of infectious disease at the library
- concerns about parking at the library, with most such answers focusing on the cost of parking
- concerns about accessibility (often paired with suggestions for improvements to address these concerns)
- transportation concerns, i.e answer that remarked on difficulty that some experience

physically getting to the library

- concerns about library staffing: first and foremost a concern that the library is understaffed, followed by concerns about the staff's well being, with a few answer calling for more diversity among the staff

Praise

We think it significant that 692 answers expressed praise for or gratitude to the library, though none of the questions were designed to solicit such responses. At the same time, we think it is important to remember that the vast majority of respondents were frequent users of the library, so the fact that the respondents value the library and the work it does is hardly a surprise! The praise received, while very gratifying, is perhaps most valuable in identifying what our respondents like best about the library.

Many respondents who praised the library expressed a general gratitude or praise for the library without calling out any particular positive quality. Amongst the answers that did praise a particular aspect of the library, the most common themes were praise for library staff (110 answers), praise for library services (56 answers), praise for the library collection (54 answers), and praise for the physical space (43 answers).

As the above categories are very general it is worth breaking them down further. At a more granular level some of the most popular themes were:

- praise for the beauty of the library
- praise for interlibrary loan
- praise for the library's response to the Covid-19 epidemic
- praise for the library's art exhibits, including the permanent art collection
- praise for the library's events, particularly outdoor events

Promotion Needed

A large number of answers clearly called for the library to put more effort into promoting its service. These answers, which included requests for "more aggressive marketing", "a weekly events column [in the local newspaper]", or "More advertising" could easily have been classified as suggestions. Others expressed concerns such as "I think only the people who regularly use the library know what all you offer." These could have easily fallen under the top level category of Suggestions and Concerns, but we chose to classify them under a top-level category of Promotion Needed instead for two reasons: first, it allowed us to emphasize what we saw as a very important theme in the responses, and second, it allowed us to include the many responses that illustrated the need for promotion through what the respondent did not know. The subcategory `patron_doesnt_know_about` includes all those suggestions where patrons suggested the library added a service it already offers, from email lists to meeting rooms. We believe that these answers, though they are not explicit suggestions or concerns regarding promotion, provide a strong argument for increased promotion of library services.

Values

As explained in the introduction, the distribution of tags in this category should definitely _not_ be considered to be representative of the overall values of respondents as none of the questions asked in the survey were designed to elicit responses about values. Still, they do provide some light on

issues that are important to our community, and the fact that community and education come out on top are hardly a surprise. It should be noted that a not insignificant number of answers expressed an enthusiasm for the traditional library while also indicating some trepidation regarding the consequences of the library making too many changes or taking on too much beyond its traditional role. Interestingly, there was not a significant overlap between these responses and those that indicated that the respondent valued quiet in the library, which was another recurring theme.

Tag Frequency

Below are all the tags used, counted at each depth of the hierarchy. Notes that the counts for a single tag may be different depending on the depth of the count: at a depth of 0 the count of the tag `#praise` includes the tag itself and all its subtags (indicating praise for a particular thing), but at a depth of 1 the count represents only those answers that expressed general praise or gratitude.

Internal tags are not included in the below lists. The number in parentheses is the count of the tag at the specified depth.

Depth 0

At a depth of 0 we just have our 4 top-level tags.

- #praise (692)
- #promotion_needed (111)
- #suggestions_and_concerns (989)
- #values (79)

Depth 1

There are 41 tags if we enumerate them to a depth of 1.

- #praise (514)
- #praise:accessibility (3)
- #praise:childrens (9)
- #praise:collection (54)
- #praise:events (30)
- #praise:hours (10)
- #praise:paco (5)
- #praise:physical_space (43)
- #praise:policies (24)
- #praise:response_to_homeless (1)
- #praise:services (56)
- #praise:staff (110)
- #praise:trustees (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about (48)
- #promotion_needed:patron_suggests_more_promotion (67)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:accessibility (30)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:animal_cruelty (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections (194)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:discoverability (21)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:funding (9)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:infectious_disease (42)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:noise (10)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:partnerships (19)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:patrons_and_behavior (16)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space (168)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies (51)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services (154)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:staffing (25)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:transportation (17)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_innovation (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events (297)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_hours (142)
- #values:community (21)
- #values:diversity (9)
- #values:education (16)
- #values:information_literacy (2)
- #values:intellectual_freedom (2)
- #values:library_as_it_is (8)
- #values:quiet (13)
- #values:reading (9)
- #values:social_justice (6)

Further Expansions

There are 223 tags if we enumerate them to a depth of 2, 334 if we enumerate them to a depth of 3, 406 if we enumerate them to a depth of 4, and 414 if we enumerate them to a depth of five. There is little value in listing those all here, but readers are encouraged to examine the data further. For that purpose, here is the full list of all the tags:

- #praise (514)
- #praise:accessibility (1)
- #praise:accessibility:elevator (1)
- #praise:accessibility:magnifiers (1)
- #praise:childrens (9)
- #praise:collection (17)
- #praise:collection:audiobooks (3)
- #praise:collection:books (8)
- #praise:collection:books:crafts (1)
- #praise:collection:books:large_print (2)
- #praise:collection:childrens (1)
- #praise:collection:comics (2)
- #praise:collection:contemporary (1)
- #praise:collection:dvds (8)
- #praise:collection:e-collections (14)
- #praise:collection:fiction (1)
- #praise:collection:library_of_things:games (2)
- #praise:collection:library_of_things:instruments (1)
- #praise:collection:library_of_things:museum_passes (4)
- #praise:collection:library_of_things:seed_share (1)
- #praise:collection:library_of_things:wifi_hotspots (1)
- #praise:collection:music (2)
- #praise:collection:newspapers (1)
- #praise:collection:periodicals (1)
- #praise:collection:romance (1)
- #praise:events (8)
- #praise:events:art (2)
- #praise:events:artisans_fair (5)
- #praise:events:community_reads (2)
- #praise:events:films (3)
- #praise:events:for_children (1)
- #praise:events:lectures (1)
- #praise:events:local_history (1)
- #praise:events:music_performances (3)
- #praise:events:outdoor (10)
- #praise:events:storytime_for_grownups (1)
- #praise:events:virtual (1)
- #praise:hours (10)
- #praise:paco (5)
- #praise:physical_space:architecture (39)
- #praise:physical_space:bike_facilities (1)
- #praise:physical_space:outdoor_furniture (2)
- #praise:physical_space:parking (1)
- #praise:policies:covid_response (22)
- #praise:policies:no_late_fees (3)
- #praise:response_to_homeless (1)
- #praise:services:art_exhibits (17)
- #praise:services:curbside (3)
- #praise:services:displays (4)
- #praise:services:email_announcement_of_events (1)
- #praise:services:genealogy (1)
- #praise:services:home_delivery (3)
- #praise:services:interlibrary_loan (25)
- #praise:services:meeting_rooms (2)
- #praise:services:public_computers (2)
- #praise:services:self-check (2)
- #praise:services:teacher_card (1)
- #praise:staff (106)
- #praise:staff:administration (6)
- #praise:staff:childrens (3)
- #praise:staff:reference (1)
- #praise:staff:volunteers (1)
- #praise:trustees (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:book_discussions (3)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:childrens_department (2)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:childrens_events (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:commonwealth_catalog (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:email_announcement_of_events (3)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:forms_on_website (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:home_delivery (3)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:interlibrary_loan (2)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:killa-a-watt (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:library_maps (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:library_of_things (2)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:library_open_to_everyone (2)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:meeting_rooms (11)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:newsletters (2)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:no_late_fees (4)

- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:purchase_suggestions (2)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:quiet_areas (2)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:staff_picks (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:tech_help (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:toddler_time (2)
- #promotion_needed:patron_doesnt_know_about:tours (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_suggests_more_promotion (44)
- #promotion_needed:patron_suggests_more_promotion:accessibility (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_suggests_more_promotion:coolidge (2)
- #promotion_needed:patron_suggests_more_promotion:e-collections (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_suggests_more_promotion:events (16)
- #promotion_needed:patron_suggests_more_promotion:events:book:discussions (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_suggests_more_promotion:library_of_things (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_suggests_more_promotion:reading (3)
- #promotion_needed:patron_suggests_more_promotion:services_for_seniors (1)
- #promotion_needed:patron_suggests_more_promotion:via_gazette (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:accessibility (30)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:animal_cruelty (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:concerns:condition_of_collection:cds (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:concerns:dated_collection:childrens (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:concerns:dated_collection:dvds (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:concerns:dated_collection:non-fiction (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:concerns:dated_collection:periodicals (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:concerns:dated_collection:spirituality (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:audiobooks (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:audiobooks:fiction (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:audiobooks:playaways (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books (18)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:LGBTQ (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:academic (6)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:art (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:by_africans (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:by_latin_americans (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:childrens_chapter_books (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:childrens_comics (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:crafts (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:foreign_language (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:foreign_language:french (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:foreign_language:spanish (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:large_print (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:literacy_collection (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:manga (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:mysteries (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:newly_published (7)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:non-fiction (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:non-fiction:computers (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:non-fiction:science (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:science-fiction (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:sheet_music (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:specific_titles (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:spirituality (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:books:sports (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:cds (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:dvds (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:dvds:contemporary (3)

- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:dvds:foreign_language:spanish (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:for_children (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:for_homeschooling (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:for_yound_adults (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:foreign_language (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:foreign_language:spanish (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things (22)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:analog_to_digital (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:av_equipment (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:boating (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:cleaning (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:cooking (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:crafts (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:emf_meter (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:framed_art (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:games (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:instruments (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:kitchen_tools (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:kits (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:museum_passes (7)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:puzzles (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:sports (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:tents (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:tools (28)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:library_of_things:wifi_hotspots (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:periodicals (6)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:periodicals:BIPOC (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:periodicals:academic (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:periodicals:art (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:periodicals:boston_herald (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:periodicals:cooking (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:periodicals:newspaper_archives (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:variety (12)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_materials:vinyl (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_online_resources (12)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_online_resources:academic (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_online_resources:e-collections (10)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_online_resources:e-collections:audiobooks (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_online_resources:genealogy (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_online_resources:newspapers (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_online_resources:newspapers:improved_access_to_gazette (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:collections:wm_online_resources:remote_access_to_special_collections (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:discoverability (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:discoverability:OPAC (7)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:discoverability:Overdrive (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:discoverability:cutter_classifiction (9)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:discoverability:new_books (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:discoverability:wants_arrangement_by_genre (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:discoverability:wants_inventory (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:funding (9)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:infectious_disease (42)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:noise (9)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:noise:in_meeting_rooms (1)

- #suggestions_and_concerns:partnerships (10)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:partnerships:career_center (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:partnerships:hampshire_county_jail (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:partnerships:historic_northampton (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:partnerships:lilly_library (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:partnerships:outreach_to_schools (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:patrons_and_behavior:people_in_need_of_social_services (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:patrons_and_behavior:people_in_need_of_social_services:dominate_library (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:patrons_and_behavior:people_in_need_of_social_services:inappropriate_behavior (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:patrons_and_behavior:people_in_need_of_social_services:safety (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:patrons_and_behavior:people_in_need_of_social_services:should_not_be_focus_of_library (6)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:patrons_and_behavior:safety (6)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:patrons_and_behavior:safety:child (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:patrons_and_behavior:smoking (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:confusing_space (9)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:flickering_lights (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:hard_to_navigate_with_mobility_issues (12)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:accessible_entrance_to_kids (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:computers_in_more_areas (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:designated_social_space (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:designated_teen_space (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:fish_tanks_in_arts_and_music (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:improved_air_circulation (12)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:improved_climate_control (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:improved_lighting (8)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:improved_lighting:childrens (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:improved_lighting:gallery (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:improved_signs (6)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:improved_signs:multilingual (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:more_changing_tables (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:more_comfortable:seating (10)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:more_comfortable:seating:leather (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:more_comfortable:spaces (6)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:more_houseplants (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:more_meeting_rooms (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:more_space (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:more_space_for_children_to_play (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:more_space_for_childrens_events (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:more_space_for_new_books (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:more_space_for_periodicals (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:place_to_buy_coffee (5)

- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:place_to_eat_and_drink (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:rear_entrance (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:soundproofed_recording_studio (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:study_space (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:study_space:individual (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:indoor_improvements:study_space:secluded (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:maintenance (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:maintenance:cleaning (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:maintenance:clocks (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:maintenance:grounds (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:outdoor_improvements (7)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:outdoor_improvements:art (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:outdoor_improvements:better_sound_for_outdoor_events (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:outdoor_improvements:connection_to_bike_path (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:outdoor_improvements:electric_vehicle_charger (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:outdoor_improvements:garden (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:outdoor_improvements:playground (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:outdoor_improvements:seating (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:outdoor_improvements:shelter (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:parking (6)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:parking:coins_required (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:parking:cost (24)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:parking:distance_from_entrance (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:parking:time_limits (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:unwelcoming_space (7)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:wants_less_art (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:wants_less_computers (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:wants_more_art (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:physical_space:wants_more_computers (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:allow_shared_library_acounts (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:closes_too_readily (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:closes_too_readily:covid (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:closes_too_readily:for_covid (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:closes_too_readily:for_weather (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:due_dates (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:events_in_museum (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:public_hold_shelf (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:remove_geographic_restriction (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:replacement_fees (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:short_notice_of_gallery_deadlines (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:stop_hygiene_theater (6)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:wants_coolidge_museum_repurposed (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:wants_dogs_allowed (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:wants_late_fees (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:wants_mask_mandate (8)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:wants_name_change (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:wants_noise_policy (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:policies:wants_pets_prohibited (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:av_equipment_for_use_on_site (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:bookmobile (12)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:branches (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:childcare (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:confusing_online_resources (5)

- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:confusing_website (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:confusing_website:events (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:customer_service (12)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:customer_service:lack_of_follow_up (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:customer_service:lack_of_follow_up:volunteering (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:customer_service:purchase_suggestions_not_followed (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:customer_service:staff_quality (6)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:customer_service:unwelcoming_staff (15)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:customer_service:volunteers (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:displays:ideology (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:displays:sexual_content (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:displays:stagnant (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:events:quality:boring_or_repetitive (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:events:quality:for_teens (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:events:timing (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:events:timing:for_children (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:events:trouble_hearing (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:interlibrary_loan (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:materials_missing_from_bookdrop (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:newsletters_hard_to_read (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:newspapers_not_delivered_consistently (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:political_corectness (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:printing_cost (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:public_computers_inadequate (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:concerns:slow_aquisitions (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:easier_account_renewal (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:library_store:more_products (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:library_store:more_products:paco_swag (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:makerspace (10)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:photoshop (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:printshop (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:resources_for_businesses (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:shorter_wait_times_for_popular_titles (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_ethnic_representation:irish (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_ethnic_representation:italian (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_community_resources_on_website (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_genealogy (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_genealogy:instruction (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_home_delivery (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_readers_advisory (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_readers_advisory:displays:non-fiction (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_readers_advisory:staff_picks_with_reviews (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_social_services (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_social_services:communal_facilities (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_social_services:for_homeless (6)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_social_services:social_worker (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_social_services:support_groups (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_social_services:warming_station (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wants_more_volunteer_oppurtunities (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:services:wireless_printing (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:staffing:concerned_about_small_staff (16)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:staffing:

concerned_about_staff_well-being (7)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:staffing:volunteer_coordinator (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:staffing:wants_more_diverse_staff (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:staffing:wants_more_diverse_staff:bilingual (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:transportation (16)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:transportation:biking (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_innovation (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_innovation:reference_department (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events (45)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:LGBTQ (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:art (10)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:arts_night_out (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:away_from_library (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:book (13)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:book:discussions (11)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:book:local_authors (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:book:readings (7)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:book:signings (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:careers (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:celebrating_diversity (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:civics (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:classes (40)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:community (20)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:cooking (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:coolidge (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:crafts (12)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:environment (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:evenings (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:films (17)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:for_adults (15)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:for_children (19)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:for_children:for_homeschooling (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:for_children:young_children (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:for_seniors (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:for_teens (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:for_tweens (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:for_writers (10)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:foreign_language (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:foreign_language:spanish (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:games (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:health (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:history (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:in_person (13)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:information_literacy (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:language_learning (8)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:lectures (11)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:legislative_office_hours (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:literacy (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:medical (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:music (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:music:classes (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:music:performances (11)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:music_performances (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:nature (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:nighttime (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:open_mic (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:outdoor (28)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:parties (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:poetry (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:social (27)

- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:technology (11)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:theater (4)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:tours (5)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:trips (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:tweens (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:virtual (22)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_events:writer_in_residence (3)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_hours (61)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_hours:local_history (2)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_hours:morning (13)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_hours:nighttime (10)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_hours:regular (1)
- #suggestions_and_concerns:wants_more_hours:sunday (69)
- #values:community (21)
- #values:diversity (9)
- #values:education (16)
- #values:information_literacy (2)
- #values:intellectual_freedom (2)
- #values:library_as_it_is (8)
- #values:quiet (13)
- #values:reading (9)
- #values:social_justice (6)