PLAN OF SERVICE

2024-2029

FORT SASKATCHEWAN Public Library

www.fspl.ca

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Land Acknowledgment

The Fort Saskatchewan Public Library resides on Treaty 6 territory; the ancestral and traditional territory of the Nehiyawak, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux, as well as the Métis. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples whose footsteps have marked these lands for generations. Our recognition of this land is an expression of our gratitude to those whose territory we reside on, or are visiting. We commit to providing services that enrich the lives of Indigenous peoples in our community and to ensure Indigenous peoples are not only welcomed but also well-represented at the Fort Saskatchewan Public Library.

2023 Board Members

Chair: Norma Leader
Vice Chair: Michelle Craig
Secretary: Nicole Starker Campbell
Lisa Mason
Margaret Booker
Judy Raaschou
Marianne Quimpere
Patrick Noyen
Renetta Peddle

TO OUR COMMUNITY

Message from the Board Chair

Empowering Literacy, Community and Connection is the mission that the Fort Saskatchewan Public Library Board of Trustees chose as the core goals of the Library for the next five years. These goals were consistent throughout surveys of residents, community organizations, Library staff, Library Trustees, and casual conversations. Literacy is at the heart of a Library, opening up a world of information, skills and entertainment for all ages. The strengthening of community through connections is enhanced by a welcoming safe meeting place for all. With our dedicated Library Staff and Director these goals will be achievable. During yearly Board reviews of the document, there will be adjustments. Suggestions are welcomed for consideration. This is Your Library. Thank you all for your encouragement through your patronage and financial support. On behalf of the Library Board. “Here’s to the next five years of service!”

Norma Leader

Message from the Director

As we start on this exciting journey, our heartfelt gratitude goes out to the amazing individuals and groups we collaborate with, including local organizations and businesses, local government, the province, and, most importantly, our cherished patrons. Serving you brings us immense pride. Communities are ever-evolving, and so are their needs. Through a thoughtful planning process, we actively embrace this evolution, continually assessing and adapting to meet your unique requirements. Together, we're crafting a future where our library remains a welcoming and vibrant hub, reflecting our unwavering dedication to our diverse and dynamic community.

Warmest regards,

Tricia Wall

MISSION

Empowering Literacy, Community, and Connection.

VISION

FSPL champions lifelong learning for all by making connections through resources and programming.

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VALUES

We are committed to:

Community and Partnerships
Innovation
Intellectual Freedom
Literacy and Lifelong Learning
Safe Space and Inclusion

Community and Partnerships: We engage in building connections within our community, actively seeking opportunities for collaboration and knowledge–sharing with our patrons, the local community, organizations, and government. We believe that these connections are the foundation for promoting well-being at both the individual and community levels.

Innovation: Encouraging creativity, experimentation and the generation of ideas.

Intellectual freedom: We are strong advocates of intellectual freedom, committed to providing an environment where individuals can explore diverse ideas and perspectives without censorship or judgement. We believe that intellectual freedom is essential for personal growth and the enrichment of our community's knowledge and understanding.

Literacy and Lifelong Learning: The library champions the transformative force of literacy and lifelong learning. We believe in equitable access to foundational learning and life skills, tailoring our approach to meet specific needs, enabling everyone to unlock their full potential. We promote personal development, inspire adaptation, and encourage our community to embark on a journey of exploration, embracing the possibilities of change. Whether taking the lead or providing support, our aim is to infuse joy, curiosity, motivation, and laughter into the learning.

Safe Space and Inclusion: We are advocates for creating a safe and inclusive environment where everyone is welcomed, respected, and valued. We believe that promoting safe spaces and inclusion is fundamental to nurturing a harmonious, supportive, and vibrant community.

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PLAN OF SERVICE PURPOSE

The Plan of Service is a vitally-important guiding document which sets and communicates the Library's vision and identifies important goals and objectives. This plan reflects the needs and wants of various stakeholders, including community groups and residents. It satisfies requirements set out by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and gives the Library Board, Director, and library staff direction in their efforts to serve the needs of the residents of Fort Saskatchewan.

The Library staff started a needs assessment in 2022, as outlined in Appendix A, What We Heard Report. The information gathered was compiled and the results gave the committee a clear vision for the future of the Fort Saskatchewan Public Library. From this information, the new Plan of Service has been developed with exciting goals and challenging objectives.

The Fort Saskatchewan Public Library Board looks forward to the opportunities this new Plan of Service will provide.

Community Demographics

The City of Fort Saskatchewan is situated northeast of Edmonton along the North Saskatchewan River. Fort Saskatchewan has been one of the fastest growing communities in Alberta, but it has been able to retain its small town feel and community spirit. The City is a leader in sustainable eco-industrial development with a flourishing local economy.

According to Statistics Canada, there are 27,090 residents in Fort Saskatchewan, with an average age of 37.2. Males make up 50.4% of the population, while females account for 49.6%. Locals under 14 years old represent the largest age group in Fort Saskatchewan, followed by those aged 35 to 44 .The median household income in Fort Saskatchewan is $113,000. There is a total of 10,420 households in Fort Saskatchewan, 75.7% of which are owner-occupied. The average household size in Fort Saskatchewan is 2.6 people. Families whose head of the household is under 34 years old represent the largest percentage of the total households, at 23.3%.The library, which is located in the City Hall building, plays a large part in the informational, educational and entertainment activities of the community.

Plan of Service Implementation

Through public engagement and community-directed conversations, the Library Board and staff created the 2024-2029 Plan of Service. (More information on this process can be found in Appendix A.).The Plan of Service includes three service priorities, eleven goals, and thirty-four objectives. In addition to the official plan as outlined in this document, each year Library staff will create a detailed action plan through which the Plan of Service will be implemented. The Plan of Service is a dynamic document flexible enough to respond to changing circumstances. This document will be reviewed each year to ensure it is still accurate and reflects the needs of the community.

Measurements of Success ensure that we're doing the right things, and that we're doing them well. In addition to measuring our outputs, such as the number of people attending our programs, we are measuring the outcomes and impacts of those activities. This will help us ensure that we're on the right path to delivering the value and results we're aiming for. Measuring our performance means we're able to:

- be accountable and transparent in how we do business
- adjust and adapt to the changing service environment
- improve the effectiveness of our programs and services
- make more data-informed decisions now and into the future
- stay focused on the things that matter most to the people of Fort Saskatchewan

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LIBRARY SERVICES PRIORITIES

Priority 1 Early Literacy

Children from birth to 5 and their families will have programs, services, and spaces designed for fun learning experiences.

Priority 2 Lifelong learning

Community members will have the resources they need to explore topics of personal interest and continue to learn throughout their lives.

Priority 3 Community Information Hub

Community members will have easy access to information on local programs, services, activities, and organizations. The library is open to all, where people can meet, learn and connect with each other.

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EARLY LITERACY

We commit to supporting families in Fort Saskatchewan, including parents and caregivers, as they help their children learn and grow.

Objectives:

Increase early literacy programs with flexible scheduling, including alternative dates and times.

Increase child and family-friendly events that actively promote literacy and a passion for reading.

Investigate adapting the library's physical space to meet the diverse and growing population's needs, fostering gathering and interaction.

Provide free, accessible, and inspiring opportunities for play, learning, and socialization for preschoolers and their families.

Parents and caregivers think of the library as a primary resource to support their children's development

Objectives:

Increase initiatives to empower and support families and caregivers, enabling them to nurture emergent literacy and social skills in their children, fostering confidence and capability.

Provide engaging, age-appropriate library collections that serve all the community family needs. Achieve an increase in preschool material circulation.

Enhance the library's website with information about the importance of early literacy and the library's offerings for early literacy development.

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EARLY LITERACY

The Library will take a holistic approach to building successful early literacy outcomes by applying best practices in research, spaces, collections, people and programs aimed at our youngest citizens.

Objectives:

Raise public awareness about the importance of early literacy skills in young children by creating new marketing strategies.

Cultivate partnerships with community organizations to establish ongoing program collaborations for children ages 0-5.

Create a fun and welcoming destination for families

Objectives:

Provide new programs, services, and spaces that support the whole child, integrating principles of play, inquiry-based learning, social connection, and practical experiences for more meaningful learning opportunities.

Research and initiate a strategy to enhance library spaces to encourage parents and caregivers to build social connections.

Develop programs and initiatives that promote learning through play and increase interactive play opportunities.

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EARLY LITERACY

Measures of Success

Positive growth in attendance at early literacy programs and events.

Positive growth in membership numbers, and annual library visitors.

Percentage of people who say they use the Library with their children (birth to age 5) increases by 2029.

Patron and staff evaluations show an increase in users ability to demonstrate improved social skills, language skills, including listening and rhyming, and develop a positive attitude towards reading.

LIFELONG LEARNING

We will be responsive to emerging trends and the needs of users in how we create and deliver services and spaces.

Objectives:

By the end of 2029, assess current outreach activities regarding technological devices and establish a clear plan for future implementation.

Ensure that collections align with community interest by doing a thorough collection assessment before 2029.

Deliver learning-focused programming for all ages that is responsive to community needs. Well defined, outcome-based programs designed for children, teens and adults that promote creativity, new skills and access to e-Resources

Objectives:

By the end of 2029, provide a minimum of three initiatives that support opportunities for lifelong learners.

Enhance information fluency skills and create school partnerships to offer in-school programming.

By 2029, develop and implement three strategies for providing STEM programming for all ages.

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LIFELONG LEARNING

Community will have library collections, programs, services, and spaces that celebrate and promote an appreciation and understanding of the heritage and diversity of its citizens.

Objectives:

Commit to listening to, learning from, and building relationships with local Indigenous communities in recognition of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Call to Action #69.

Diversify and expand the collection, ensuring all community members have the opportunity to see themselves and explore experiences different from their own.

Each year of the Plan of Service, increase the proportion of programs that incorporate cultural and other diversity.

Explore new opportunities to support local creators.

LIFELONG LEARNING

Measures of Success

Positive growth in membership numbers, and annual library visitors.

Positive growth in all program and event attendance.

Percentage of people who say they use the Library increases by 2029.

Patron and staff evaluations show an increase in user satisfaction with the Library.

Increased collection diversity, measured through a collections assessment.

Increased options for staff training and development opportunities so they are aware of current research, trends, and best practices.

Positive growth in community partnership programming.

Maintain percentage of patrons satisfied with the customer service at the Library.

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COMMUNITY INFORMATION HUB

Community members will have opportunities to connect with each other and with local resources, promoting a sense of inclusion and engagement within the community.

Objectives:

Initiate a project, before 2029, to re-envision and enhance existing physical spaces to better meet community needs, inspire learning, and provide spaces for community gatherings.

Highlight or introduce one new service annually to improve community access to local information.

Connect caregivers and families to community resources

Objectives:

Organize an event in 2024 aimed at providing support and resources for caregivers and families, assess the need for this program annually.

Create 2 new initiatives to increase the availability of support and services for childcare facilities by 2029.

Establish a "new parents network" to connect and support new parents by 2029.

Evolve FSPL's role as a community resource connector through beneficial partnerships and relationships.

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COMMUNITY INFORMATION HUB

We will implement an information communication strategy that will allow residents to access the wide variety of programs, services and activities provided by community agencies and organizations.

Objectives:

Provide accessible, current, and relevant information on our website and social media platforms, ensuring patrons can easily find the information.

Organize 10 outreach events in the community by December 2029 to promote community awareness of library resources and services.

Support the creation of an online directory of resources for community access.

Library staff will be expert sources of information about community agencies and organizations.

Objectives:

Cultivate library staff expertise in providing information about community agencies and organizations, making them reliable sources of knowledge.

Ensure that library staff have the necessary skills, support, and training to actively contribute to the success of the Plan of Service.

Maintain a welcoming, customer-driven service approach, making daily connections with patrons.

Create a partnership document outlining the library's roles and responsibilities concerning community partnerships.

COMMUNITY INFORMATION HUB

Measures of Success

Customer satisfaction results that demonstrate community members perceive the library as a valuable source of community information.

An increase in circulation, library card issuance, library usage, website usage, reference questions, and the number of inquiries.

Recognition by community agencies, as they see FSPL as a critical link to the community, reflecting the library's role as a valuable community resource as shown in evaluation results.

Increased options for staff training and development opportunities so they are aware of current research, trends, and best practices.

Positive growth in community partnership programming.

Increased percentage of patrons in the annual number of visitors attracted through partnered events and services.

APPENDIX

FORT SASKATCHEWAN Public Library

What We Heard Report

FSPL Public Engagement 2023

Overview

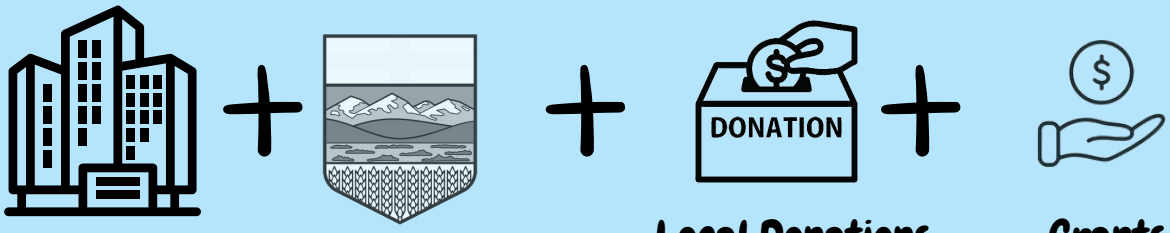
The results of the Community Survey, Community Conversations, Community Engagement Workshops, and Staff Workshop will help inform FSPL Board and Staff in their strategic planning for the 2024-2028 Plan of Service.

Community-based planning puts the community needs in the driver's seat by consulting the community on the core library services it sees as important. These core services become the base for the goals and objectives for the Library in the coming years. This living document ensures that the Library stays on track and continues to meet the needs of the community.

Consulting city staff, community members, agencies, and other stakeholders works towards building and enhancing relationships and partners. The Plan of Service will play a role in these relationships by providing a powerful advocacy tool to help us communicate the critical role of the library to the government, community, and funders.

This *What We Heard* Report summarizes the key themes captured in the Community Survey and Community Conversations conducted over the past year.

Funding - the Library is a non-profit organization that receives funding from:



City of Fort Sask

Province of Alberta

Local Donations and Sponsorship

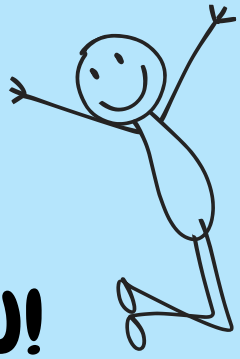
Grants

Community-led core services

The library provides services, programs, and resources that respond to our community needs.

Governance and Structure

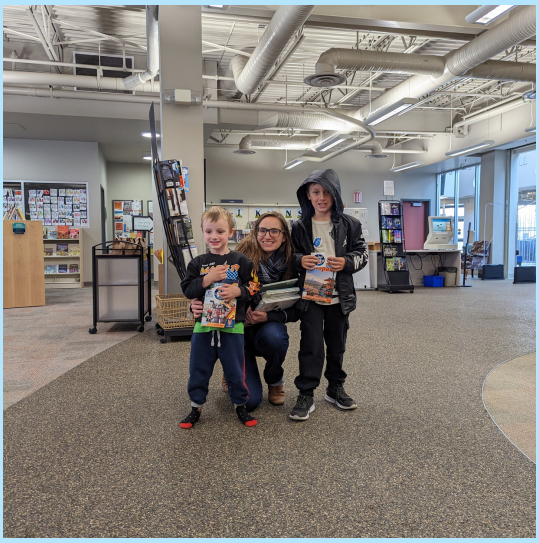
Municipal Council appoints → Library Board governs → Library and staff provide services to YOU!



By legislation, all Public Library Boards must report annually to the Government of Alberta (Public Library Services Branch)

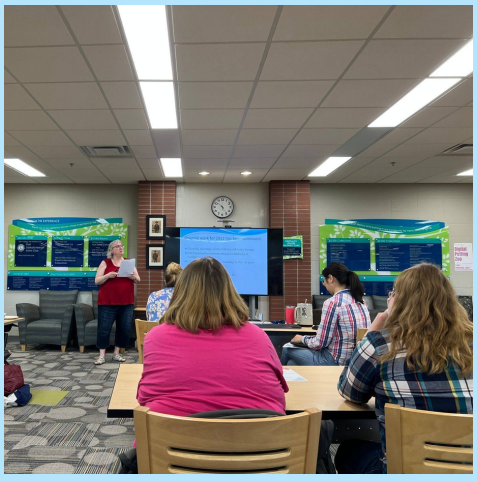
Here's why a Plan of Service is important

This vitally-important guiding document sets and communicates the Library's vision, and identifies important goals and objectives.



An effective Plan of Service reflects the needs and wants of various stakeholders, including community groups and residents.

It provides evaluation measures to evaluate Library services and determine how well the Library is meeting its plans, goals, and objectives.



The Plan of Service is a powerful advocacy tool that helps us communicate the critical role of the library to the community, funders, and government.

Community Context Map

Looking at where Fort Saskatchewan is now as a community will help guide our planning process.

A vibrant community with many assets:

- A wide range of existing services
- Positive partnerships between community agencies
- Good recreational facilities
- Industry support

Exciting things are happening:

- Growing population and a young demographic
- Industry growth
- Strong community development support
- Community is becoming more diverse
- Ranked in the top 100 Best Communities to live in

Our community has some challenges:

- Gaps in supports
- Diverse city layout makes it difficult for people to access services
- Lack of meeting spaces
- Lack of awareness of services
- Need for more indoor play spaces
- Newcomers are often isolated
- Difficult to recruit qualified staff
- More services and places for youth
- Need to continue to create indigenous awareness, and uphold Truth and Reconciliation.

Broader issues impact our residents:

- Inflation is impacting household budgets
- COVID-19 related school readiness delays
- Increased substance use disorders and accidental overdoses
- Mental health services are not sufficient to meet complex needs
- Government funding unreliable
- Politically charged groups
- Aging volunteer base
- Digital divide
- The spread of misinformation

Core Library Services

-what the library does or offers in an effort to meet a set of well-defined community needs.

Explore

Public libraries offer the opportunity for all ages to learn and improve their lives in countless ways.

- **information**
- **building your business,**
- **non-profit or job skills**
- **your history**
- **your creativity**
- **your hobbies and interests**
- **lifelong learning**
- **technology**

Literacies

Literacy means being competent at, or having reasonable knowledge of many aspects of our life.

Being literate means being able to make informed choices in all aspects of our lives. Being literate opens up opportunities for fulfillment and empowerment.

- **Early childhood literacy**
- **Digital literacy**
- **Fulfillment literacy**
- **Adult literacy**
- **Financial literacy**
- **Health literacy**
- **Physical literacy**
- **Cultural literacy**
- **Media literacy**

Space

The Library has flexible, multiuse spaces for people to:

- **create**
- **celebrate diversity**
- **connect to community**
- **grow and learn**
- **gain school readiness skills**

The Library space is:

- **a safe space for everyone**
- **welcoming for newcomers**
- **a central source of community information**
- **a virtual space with accessible resources**

How We Engaged

The Engagement Spectrum

The Library received input from community members to help guide the Plan of Service. We engaged in consultative practices like getting input and feedback from community members to inform the final decision-making process.

This is a critical part of the planning stage. Listening to stakeholder feedback can be helpful in identifying local contexts that may not be obvious. This community-based planning helps shape the goals and objectives of the Plan of Service.

The public was invited to **Consult.**

INFORM	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunites and/or solutions.
CONSULT	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives, and/or decisions.
INVOLVE	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.
COLLABORATE	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.
EMPOWER	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.

Community members are consulted about how the Library is used by residents, this determines the core library services the Library should focus on.

Going Forward

1. The Library Board and the staff review the findings and recommendations of the public engagement.
2. The Library Board acts on the community recommendations and approves the final list of core library services.
3. Based on the priority core services, Goals and Objectives are created by the staff.
4. Action planning and implementation.
5. Annual review of the Plan of Service by the Board and staff.

Engagement Opportunities

Community Survey – ran from July – October 2022. Survey was available on the FSPL website and in house. Community posters and media were used to promote the survey. A $100 prize was used as incentive.

The survey is available in Appendix A.

Community Conversations

Community members were polled at the Legacy Park Family Festival and one Fort Saskatchewan Farmers' Market.

Engagement Participation

Community Survey

363 people responded to the survey, **24** were not Library members.

Community Conversations

We spoke with **45** community members, **6** were not Library members.

What We Heard

Community Survey

Community Survey Questions

High Level Key Themes

1. **Community survey – Key Takeaways**
    - We learned that there is a strong alignment of the values of the public library and the community.
    - People think that programming staff are knowledgeable and competent, and the programs are of high quality.
    - People think that the Library is a place for connections, especially for young children and parents.

- We see that more work needs to happen around improving awareness of library services and breaking down barriers to using FSPL.
- Work needs to be done on making the website more user-friendly and accessible.
- There is a strong demand for both physical and digital collections, the Library must access sufficient funding to maintain both.
- The community would like to see more programming for all ages, especially on evenings and weekends, and as outreach.

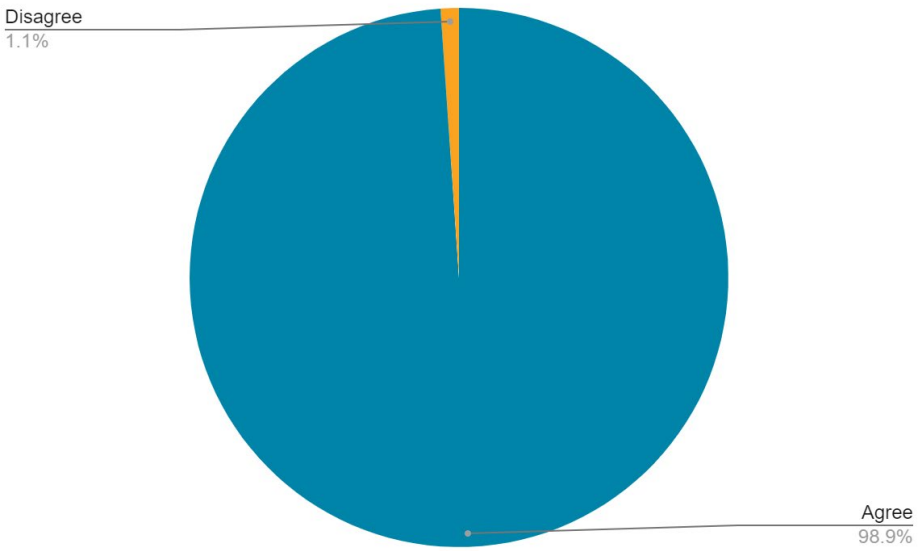
2. Value and Role in the Community

The English conversation circle in library helped me a lot to adapt to new life after immigration. The children programs helped my kids to build great reading habit.

It's given me resources to feel more at home in fort sask

As a young mom, it was a place where I could first connect to other moms in the community. It is a place to gather that does not require money.

Public Libraries are essential to the quality of life in my community**.**



3. Your Opinion about FSPL

Respondents indicated ways the Fort Saskatchewan Public Library benefits them and the community:

> *The librarian staff are unbelievable, always are so helpful, knowledgeable, professional and friendly. I always feel so comfortable coming known that if I require any sort of assistance the staff will be able help me get what I need. The librarian staff are unbelievable, always are so helpful, knowledgeable, professional and friendly. I always feel so comfortable coming known that if I require any sort of assistance the staff will be able help me get what I need. They all deserve so much praise for what they do at the Fort Saskatchewan library.*

- **95.7%** thought the Library offered above average service, and 81.2% thought service was excellent.
- **Fort Saskatchewan loves their library!**

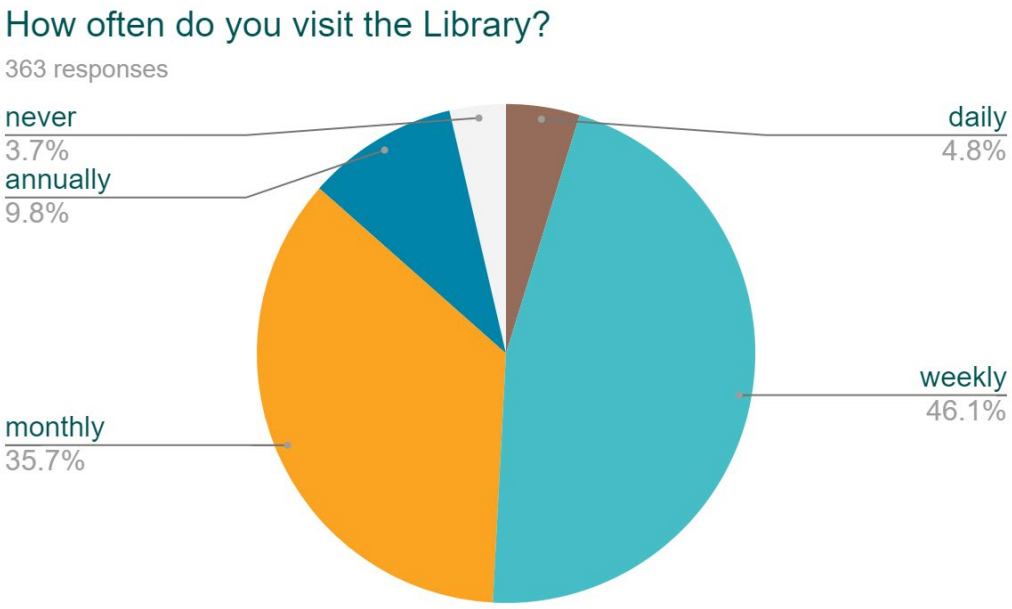
Challenges

Additionally, respondents provided suggestions for library improvement:

- more hands on, sensory and interactive materials for children
- a bigger children's area
- more STEM based activities
- an area to read with children
- expanded collection

> *… we do not need more computer games or touch tables, we actually come to the library to escape screens and tech-games…our family does not attend the local library due to touch screen games and the computer games that monopolize the attention of our children when we visit - We hope to find a comfy corner to read with our children, or a puppet theatre for them to create a performance in, or an interactive hands on educational environment that does not involve a screen.)*

4. Library Use



- **86%** of respondents use the Library website regularly.

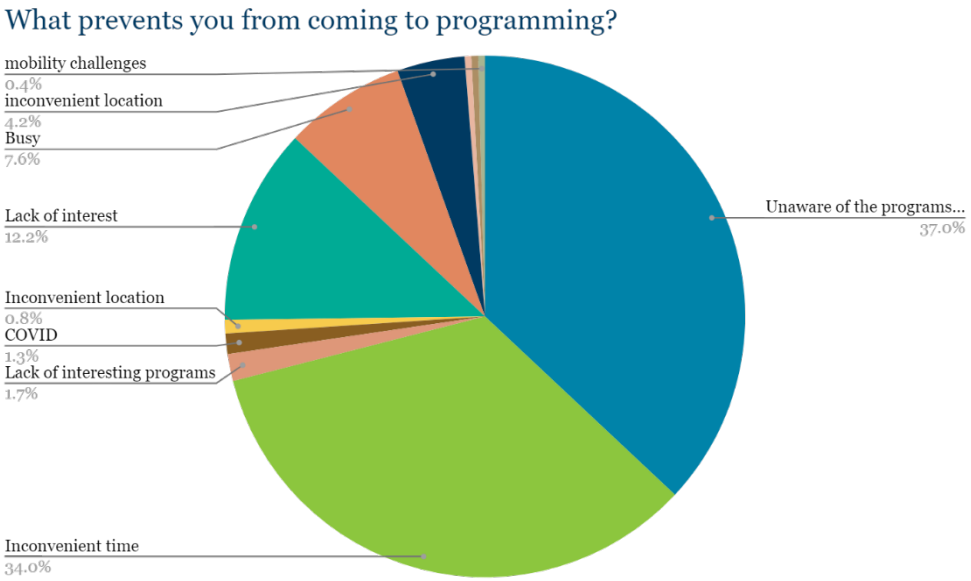
Challenges

Library Hours

- We learned many respondents wanted the Library to open earlier on weekdays. We heard the community and changed the hours in January of 2023.
- Community members would like the Library open later, and on Sundays in the summer.

Programming

We learned that if people aren't coming to programming it is likely because they did not know about the programs, or they were at an inconvenient time.



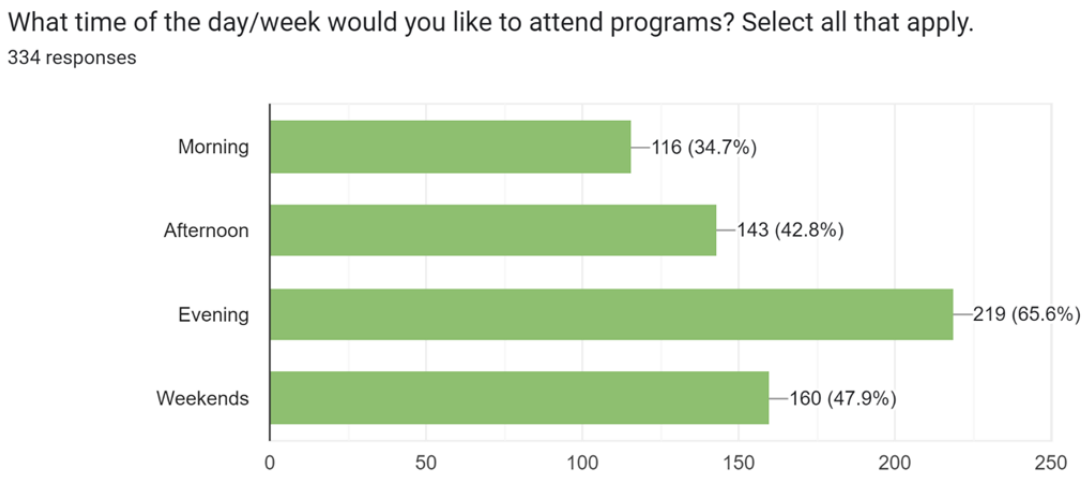
5. Library Access

- Most people find out about programs:
    1. On the library website (68.6%)
    2. The library newsletter (58.7%)
    3. Facebook (34%)

- Over 60% of respondents would be interested in having services outside of the downtown area.

> *With so much on-line access now, and the way the city has spread out, I think there may be a number of people who might appreciate a delivery service more than a branch location (but that is just a guess on my part.)*

> *I don't know about another branch but living in West Park, the library is quite far away and I often don't bother going unless I'm already heading that way. The location, combined with the fact that I can rarely find a book there without having previously requested it from the Strathcona County library, doesn't make it worth my time to go there.*



6. Demographics

Age		Downtown	Other	Pineview	Sherridon	Southfort	Westpark	Grand Total
0-15 years old		2				2	1	5
15-30 years old		8	12	16	3	14	8	61
30-45 years old		12	14	29	7	31	49	142
45-60 years old		5	11	13	5	14	19	67
60+		7	15	27	6	9	16	80
Prefer not to answer		1	3	2		2		8
Grand Total	**0**	**31**	**60**	**88**	**21**	**69**	**94**	**363**

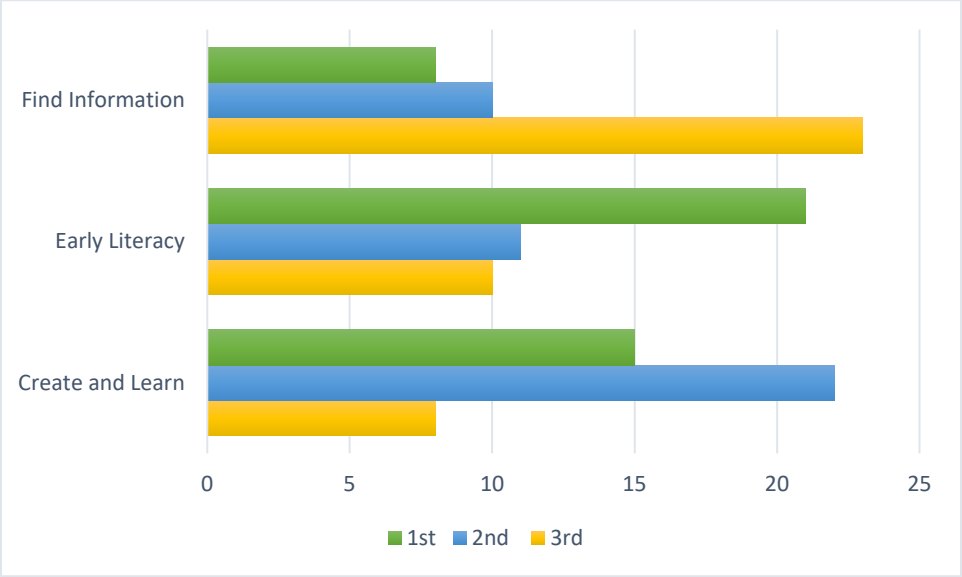
Community Conversations

We asked community members:

Which of the following is the most important for the Library to focus on? Rank from 1-3, with 1 being the most important.

1. **Create and Learn** the Library is the place to get creative, explore new technologies, and experience something new. We support lifelong learning and enjoyment.
2. **Early Childhood Literacy** the Library provides expert programs and services to develop early childhood literacies from birth to age five.

3. **Find Information** the Library connects people with what they need by helping them find, evaluate, and use information.



47% of people thought Early Literacy was most important.

49% of people thought Create and Learn was 2nd.

51% of people thought Find Information was 3rd.

Next Steps

The Library Board and the Project Team will consider all comments received as the project moves forward with the 2024-2028 Plan of Service. The final Plan of Service will be shared with the public in early 2024.

Engagement Opportunity

Community Engagement Workshops – rans were held on July 19th and August 17th, 2023. Fort Saskatchewan stakeholders and agencies were invited to participate.

Staff Poll- conducted in August 2023.Staff were asked to choose the three core library services they felt should be priorities in the Plan of Service.

Engagement Participation

What We Heard

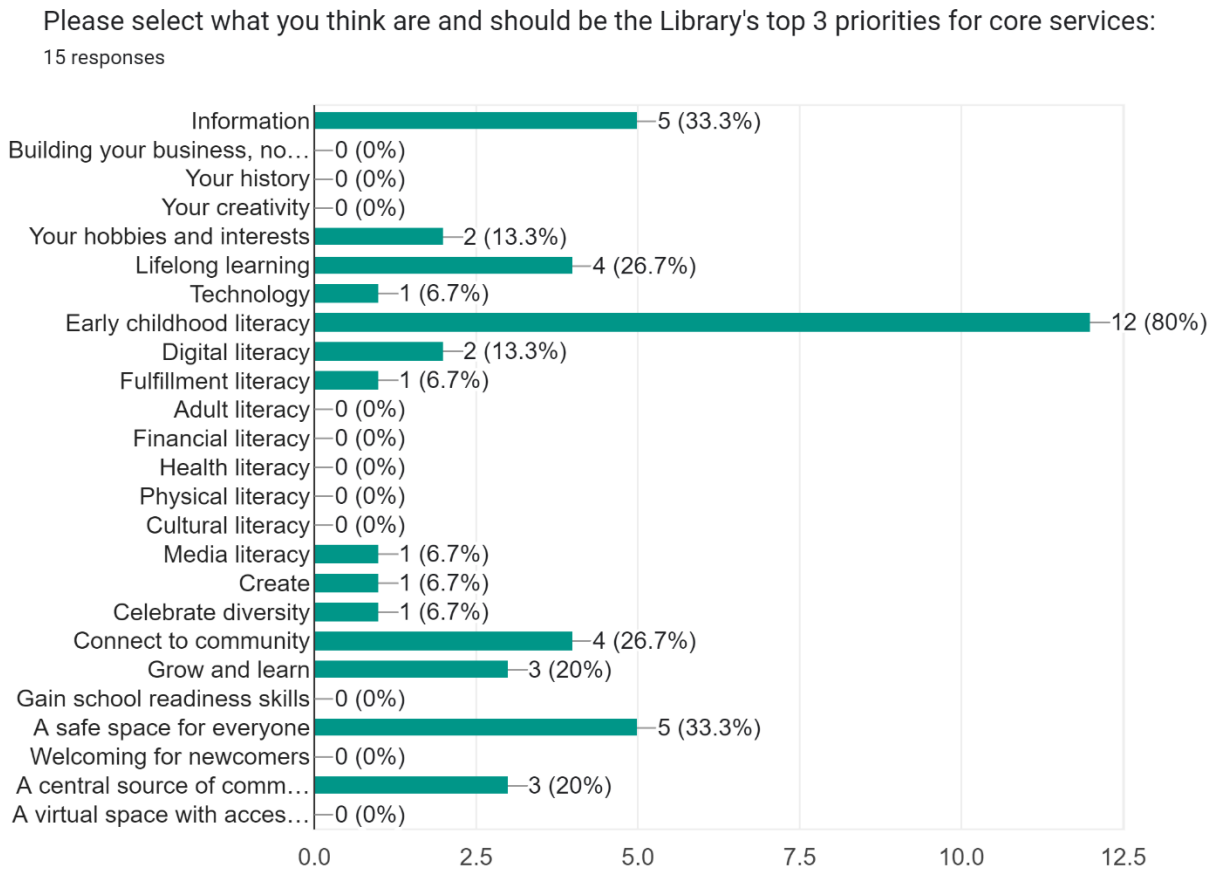
High Level Key Themes

Community workshops – Key Takeaways

- We learned that communities see us as a source of information and a place for lifelong learning.
  "Literacy as a core purpose. Helping people navigate and find information."
- People think that the Library is a place for connections and must be a safe space for everyone.
  "Celebrate diversity, and expand knowledge of different ways to experience life"
- Marketing and library services awareness came up often. We need to do a better job of telling our story and promoting what the library offers.
- Attendees confirmed that supporting early literacy remains a core purpose for the library.
- Outreach and reaching people where they are (physically, virtually, and culturally) was seen as very important.
- Attendees thought that creating program options for working caregivers should be considered.

- Continuing to work with community groups to create Indigenous awareness and allyship with the LGBTQ2+ community. This includes educating and upholding Truth and Reconciliation.
- Attendees thought that increasing awareness and education around misinformation is an important role for the Library.

Staff Poll results



The result showed strong support for:

M Early Literacy (80%)

H a. Information

b. a safe space for everyone (both 33.3%)

3 a. Connect to community

Ō Lifelong learning (both 26.7%)