Chetwynd Public Library Feasibility Assessment Study

Engagement Findings Report

July 2017

Introduction

The Peace River Regional District in partnership with the District of Chetwynd are sponsoring the development of a feasibility assessment study for the Chetwynd Public Library. The assessment will examine the requirements of the library for the current, midterm, and long term space needs. A critical research component of this study is to consult with the community.

Towards that end a program of consultation was designed to learn the perspectives of community members vis-à-vis the Chetwynd Public Library. A public survey was fielded to gather input from the broad community; in addition a series of meetings and interviews were convened to discuss the library and its future with community stakeholders. The findings from both of these engagement methodologies are presented below and on the following pages.

Public Engagement Results

Resident Survey

A resident survey was fielded with residents of the library service area beginning May 5th and running through to June 16th. The questionnaire was available online but hard copy versions of it were also available at the library and through study committee members. Completed hard copies could be dropped off at the Chetwynd and District Recreation Centre, the Chetwynd Public Library, and the District of Chetwynd Municipal Office.

Promotion of the survey was varied and included posters, email notification to users, as well as website promotion. Word of mouth promotion was a key mechanism that emanated from committee members through to library champions out to the broader community. The stakeholder meetings also served as a means to further promote the survey.

In total 410 full and partial responses were gathered through hard copy and online submissions. The findings—presented as follows—provide good information upon which study direction can be built.

Library Card Ownership

To begin, respondents were asked if they have a library card that allows them to borrow material from the Chetwynd Public Library. As illustrated in the adjacent graph, over three-quarters (81%) of respondents said they have a library card.

Do you have a library card?

Yes 81%

No 18%

Unsure 1%
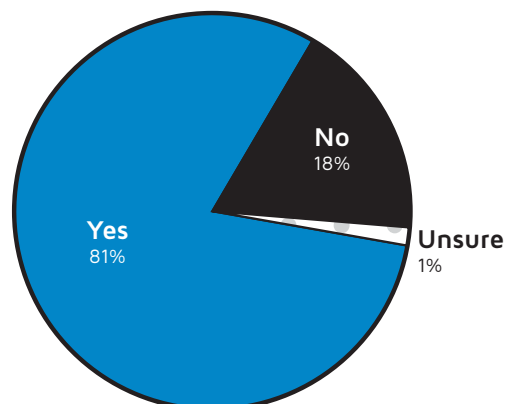
"I love it. I come in to Chetwynd at least once a week for errands and this is my favourite stop. I've also travelled to sample services offered. I'm always delighted with the flexibility of services offered here. This library is unique! It is the heart of the community. It allows people to communicate by all kinds of means in a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere. It familiarizes them with communication—verbal, written, and technological—and thus invites them to delve deeper in the written word.

Facility Visitation

Next, respondents were asked the frequency of which they had visited the Chetwynd Public Library facility in the previous twelve months. As shown in the accompanying graph, a sizeable majority (89%) had visited the library in the past year. Approximately one-quarter (27%) had visited the library 25 or more times.

How often have you visited the library in the past year?

	Not at all	1 – 12 times	13 – 24 times	25+ times
	11%	44%	19%	27%
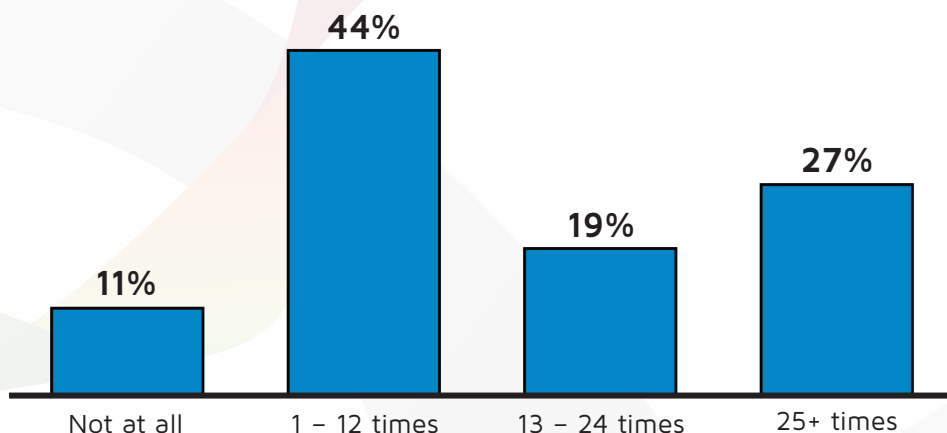
The respondents who had visited the library were then asked to specify the reason for their visits. Approximately two-thirds (65%) visited the library to borrow materials while over half visited Crazy Beanz Bistro (59%) or attended an event or program (57%). See the graph. Meetings (both formal and informal) were identified as a reason to visit the library by 5% of respondents as was visitation to the children's area.

Respondents were then asked to identify what limits their visitation of the Chetwynd Public Library. The most commonly cited item is poor parking (18%). The next most commonly cited barriers included: inconvenient hours (7%); programs/events are not of interest (7%); not enough space (7%); and travel distance (6%).
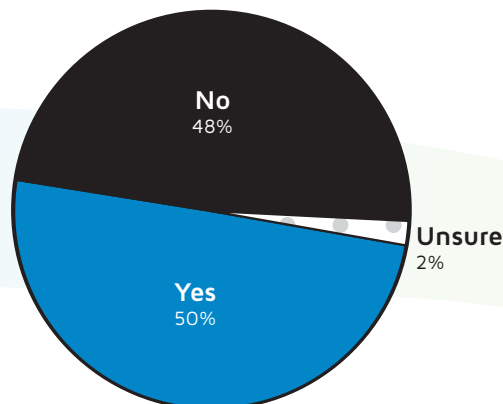
Why did you visit the library?

Borrow materials	65%
Crazy Beanz Bistro	59%
Attend event/program	57%
Use work/study space	28%
Research/find info	27%
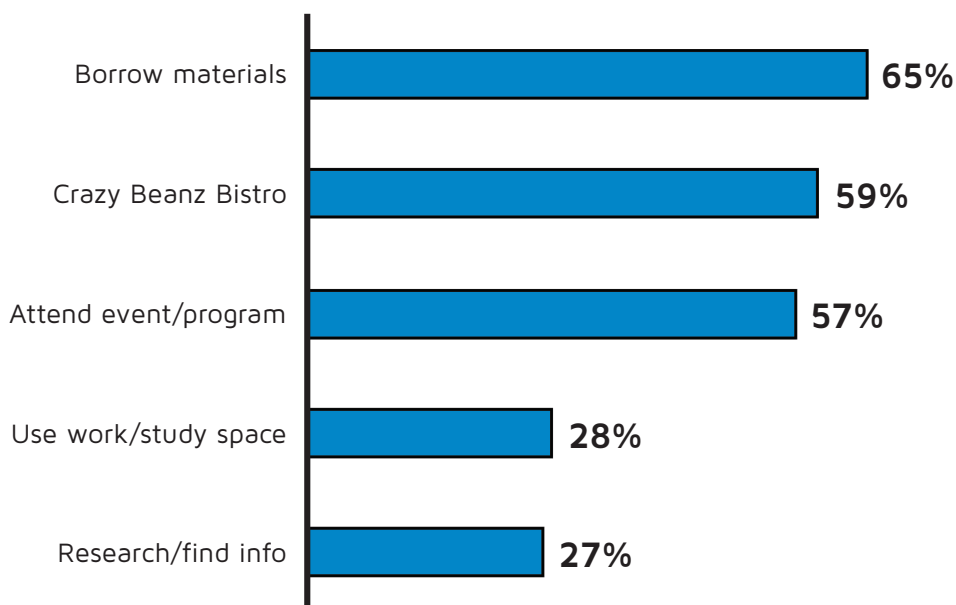
Library Website

Approximately half (49%) of respondents have ever visited the Library's website.

Have you ever visited the library's website?
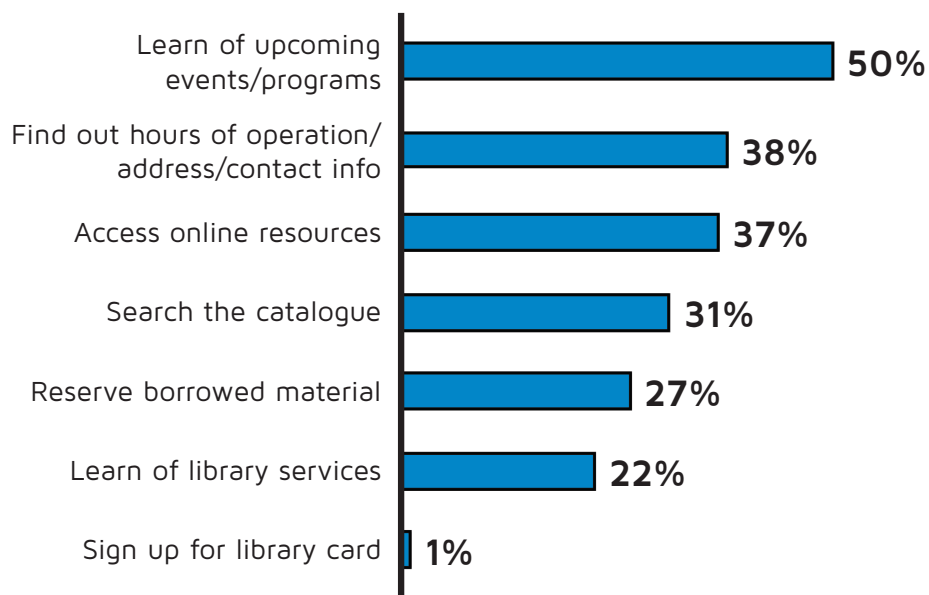
No
48%

Unsure
2%

Yes
50%

Of those who have visited the library's website, approximately one-third (31%) visited it at least 7 times in the previous year. See the graph.

How often have you visited the library's website in the past year?

Once	2 – 6 times	7 – 12 times	13 – 24 times	25+ times
18%	51%	13%	8%	10%
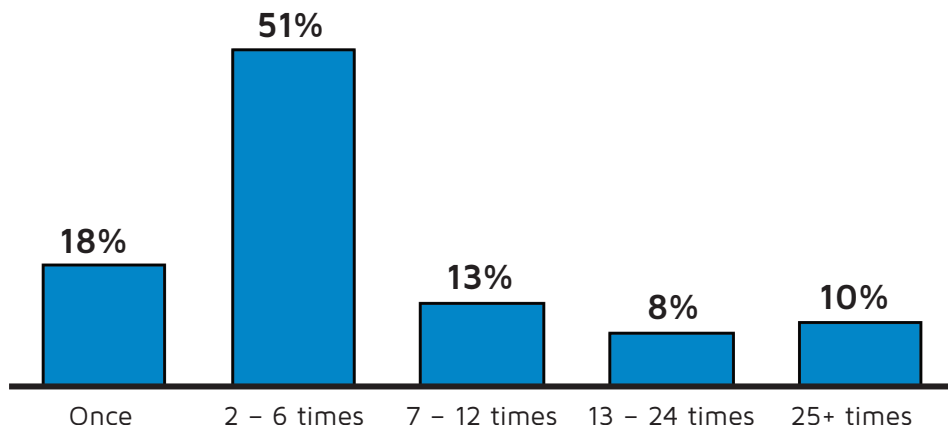
The two most common reasons for visiting the website were to learn of upcoming events and programs (50%) and to find out operational details (38%) such as hours, address, phone number or email address. See the graph for other reasons to visit the website.

Why did you visit the library's website?

Reason	Percent
Learn of upcoming events/programs	50%
Find out hours of operation/address/contact info	38%
Access online resources	37%
Search the catalogue	31%
Reserve borrowed material	27%
Learn of library services	22%
Sign up for library card	1%

Library Services

Several services that are offered by the Chetwynd Public Library were listed and respondents were asked if they were aware each was offered (prior to participating in the survey). As illustrated in the accompanying graph, over three-quarters of respondents were aware of the printing/photocopying/faxing/scanning services (81%) and the multipurpose room for rent (78%). Less than one-quarter of respondents were aware of videoconferencing services (20%); Instaflix (19%); and Rocket Language (16%).
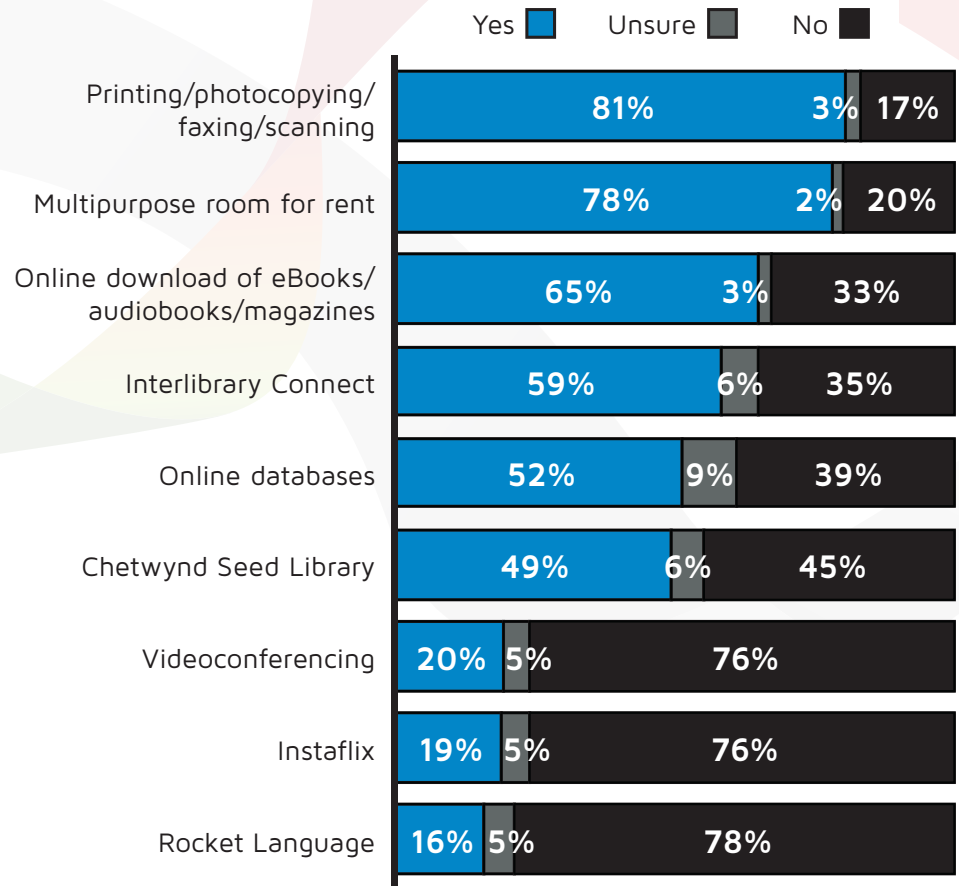
Respondents identified some other services/programs that they would like to see offered at the Chetwynd Public Library. Responses provided by at least 3 people included the following.

- Programming for adults (6 mentions)
- Kids programming including science and technology topics (4)
- Programming for children 4 years and younger (3)
- Teen events and programs including separate girls groups & activities (3)
- Supervised childcare for parents when participating in adult programming (3)
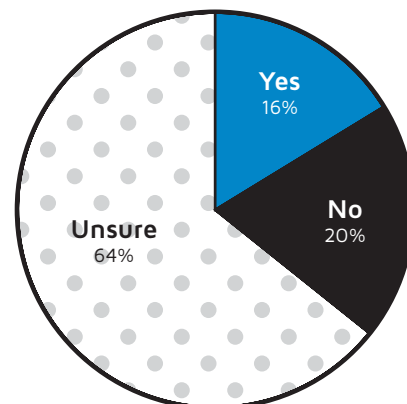
Considering the collection of resources at the Chetwynd Public Library (including periodicals, children's fiction, DVDs, and so on), sixteen percent (16%) of respondents felt that certain aspects need to be enhanced. Approximately two-thirds (64%) were unsure (as illustrated in the graph).

Some suggestions were offered as to parts of the library collection that needs enhancement. The most commonly cited improvement is to enhance the collection of DVDs (10 comments). Other areas to enhance as suggested by at least three people included: audiobook collection (3); French language collection (3); magazine collection (3); and Christian resources (3).

Were you aware the Cheteynd Public Library offers each of these services?

Yes ▮ Unsure ▮ No ▮

Service	Yes	Unsure	No
Printing/photocopying/faxing/scanning	81%	3%	17%
Multipurpose room for rent	78%	2%	20%
Online download of eBooks/audiobooks/magazines	65%	3%	33%
Interlibrary Connect	59%	6%	35%
Online databases	52%	9%	39%
Chetwynd Seed Library	49%	6%	45%
Videoconferencing	20%	5%	76%
Instaflix	19%	5%	76%
Rocket Language	16%	5%	78%

Are there certain parts of the library collection that need to be enhanced?

Yes 16%
No 20%
Unsure 64%

"I like the separation of the noisy areas (eating and children's areas) from the desk and quieter reading areas."

Satisfaction

Approximately two-thirds (62%) of respondents expressed satisfaction with the size of the current library. Approximately one-fifth (17%) expressed dissatisfaction while 21% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied as illustrated in the graph.

How satisfied are you with the **size** of the library?

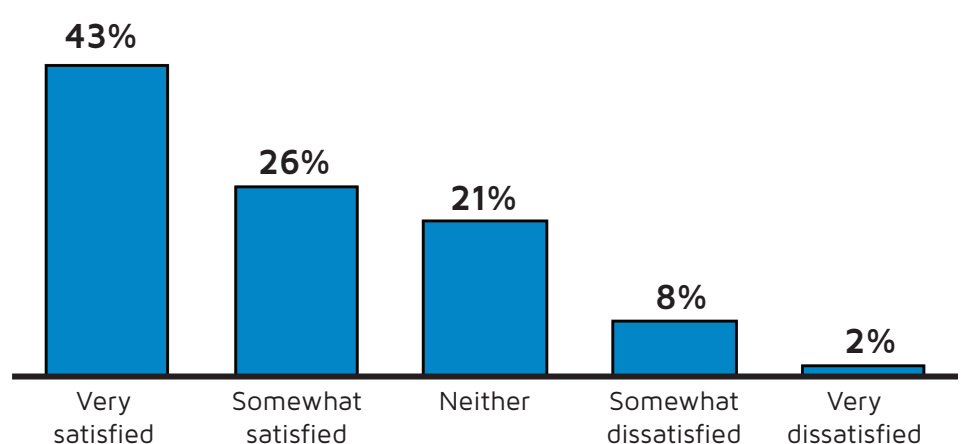|				
32%	30%	21%	13%	4%
Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
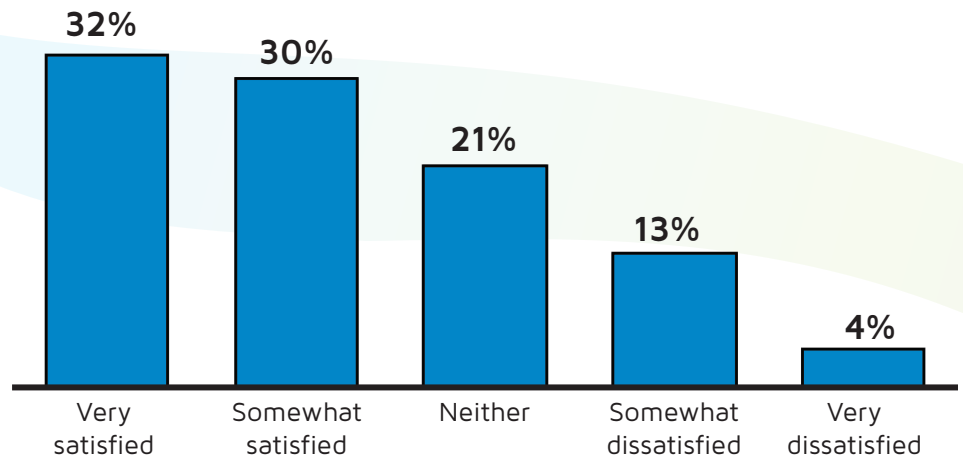
Over three-quarters (80%) of respondents are very or somewhat satisfied with the current location of the library. Refer to the graph.

How satisfied are you with the **location** of the library?

65%	15%	13%	5%	2%
Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
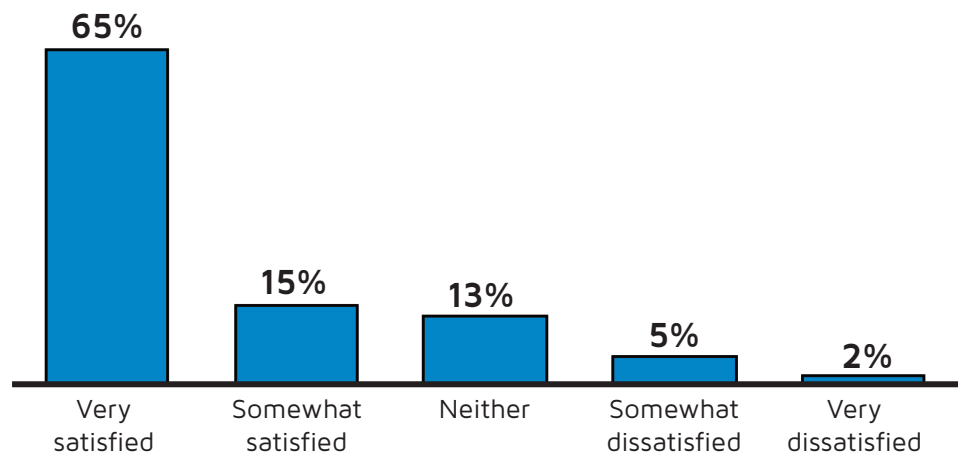
Approximately two thirds of respondents (69%) are satisfied with the library's layout. Some respondents provided comment when asked to identify the best aspects of the library's layout. The most commonly mentioned aspect is the separate children's area (42 comments). Other comments made by at least five people included: the open floor plan (36); the ease of being able to find things (17); the bistro space (14); the division of the library into sections (13); the central check out and help desk (12); the flexible nature of the space to accommodate different events (11); the accessibility of the space (6); and the seating areas in the library and centrally (5).

How satisfied are you with the **layout** of the library?

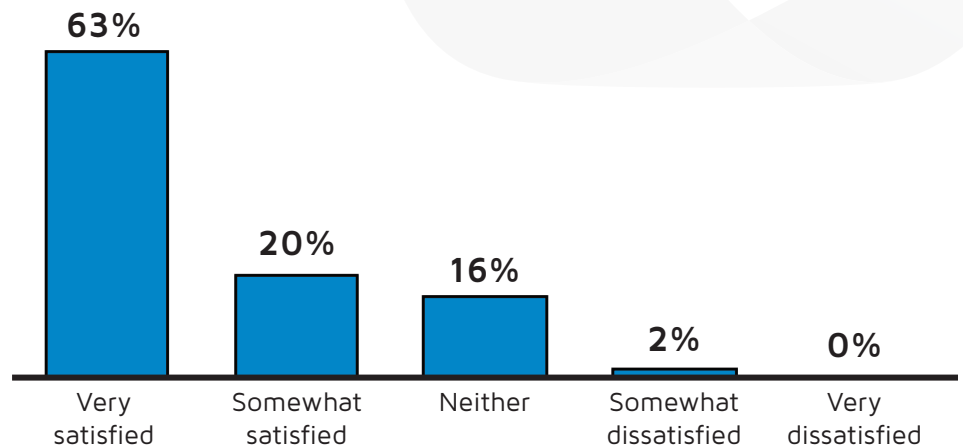|				
43%	26%	21%	8%	2%
Very satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neither	Somewhat dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied

Respondents were asked to identify aspects of the library facility that need to be addressed in an enhanced/revised or new facility. The most commonly cited aspects are as follows.

- The library simply needs to be **bigger**—more space is required. (34 mentions)
- In the current space finding a quiet area to read or study is almost impossible. The library should have **dedicated quiet space.** (23)
- The **children's area should be larger** (19). Separating the program area from the collections would allow children to make use of the library when a children's program is on. There were some comments that suggested the children's area should be closed off from the rest of the library to contain the sound and energy.
- A **teen/youth area** should be created that would be separated from the other areas. (13)
- The library and café space is very dark. There is a need to bring **more natural light** into the space, perhaps through the addition of windows. (13)
- The **bathrooms** need attention. (12) Larger bathroom area and space that is more physically accessible for people with mobility issues is necessary. Some thought should be given to having bathrooms that better accommodate young children.
- **Bistro/café space** is considered desirable. (12) Improved access to the space through an external entrance and enhanced hours was suggested. Some felt the café space should be larger than currently exists.
- **Parking** was considered an area of focus. (12) A need for additional parking was identified as was parking that better accommodated people with mobility issues.
- Providing additional **space for reading and work** (more tables and chairs) was suggested. (7)
- The **computer area should be separated** from other spaces. (5) It would provide more privacy and a quieter experience.

Over three-quarters (83%) are satisfied with the library's programs and services. Only 2% expressed dissatisfaction. See the graph.

How satisfied are you with the library's <u>programs and services</u>?

63% Very satisfied
20% Somewhat satisfied
16% Neither
2% Somewhat dissatisfied
0% Very dissatisfied

Bistro Service

Approximately three-quarters (74%) of respondents indicated that a service like the Crazy Beanz Bistro is important to have in the library. See the accompanying graph.

How important is a service like the Crazy Beans Bistro?

47% Very important
27% Somewhat important
19% Neither
2% Somewhat unimportant
5% Very unimportant
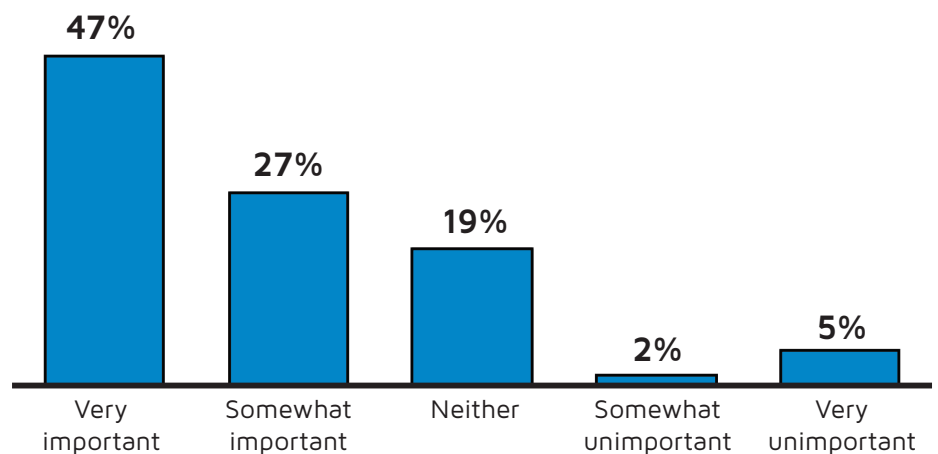
Other Comments

Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to provide any other comments about the Chetwynd Public Library. While some simply reiterated their responses from other questions, some other comments were provided—most positive affirmations for the library. The most frequently mentioned points include the following.

- The Chetwynd Public Library is a **great community facility** that is viewed in a highly positive light. (38 mentions)
- The **staff are welcoming,** open, and helpful. (32)
- The **programs** offered **are wonderful**—there is a good variety. (12)

Respondent Profile

Household Composition	Survey Respondents	2011 Census (Chetwynd)
0 – 9 years	20%	14%
10 – 14 years	8%	7%
15 – 19 years	7%	7%
20 – 29 years	9%	17%
30 – 39 years	16%	15%
40 – 49 years	13%	14%
50 – 59 years	14%	14%
60 – 69 years	9%	7%
70 years and older	4%	5%

Educational Attainment	Survey Respondents
Less than high school diploma	10%
High school diploma or equivalent	24%
Apprenticeship or trades certificate/diploma	10%
College certificate/diploma or some university	32%
University degree	24%

Residency: Tenure	Survey Respondents
Up to 3 years	6%
3 – 5 years	9%
6 – 10 years	13%
More than 10 years	73%

Residency	Survey Respondents
Chetwynd	64%
Saulteau First Nation	1%
West Moberly First Nation	1%
Moberly Lake	8%
Jackfish	6%
Dokie/Wildmare/Stone Creek area	2%
Hasler	5%
Lone Prairie	2%
Willow Flats	–
• Other: • Dawson Creek (8) • Wabi Estates (7) • Fort St. John (3)	12%

Stakeholder Meetings

A series of meetings was convened with stakeholders to gather the perspectives of a variety of interests in the community. Discussions were held with a broad array of groups including: library users; business interests; youth; schools; Indigenous communities; and seniors. In total 17 meetings were held with a total of 59 individuals. See the Appendix for the list of meetings. Synthesized findings are presented below with no comments attributed to any single person or group. Rather "major takeaways" are presented. Discussions were wide ranging but have been synthesized into three main areas: the library's position in the community; space needs in the future; and comments on location.

Chetwynd Public Library in the Community

Meeting participants spoke about the **welcoming nature** of the library both in terms of staff and the set-up. A broad array of groups, interests, and activities are hosted in the library that caters to many different segments in the community. This ranges from business meetings to school tutoring, children's programs to social meetings, health care initiatives to musical performances, and a variety of other activities. These activities take advantage of all the spaces in the library including the Fae Asleson Community Room.

The main message emanating from the stakeholer meetings is that the library serves as a **significant community hub** in Chetwynd. The library serves the community and is interested in responding to community needs. It aims to fill gaps and works with many different constituencies (including the schools) to serve as a community gathering space—one that brings many people to the library.

Space Needs

The spaces in the library are very well used. Through discussions there were several items that were identified as being important.

- There is a need for **more quiet areas.** Currently activities in the library impact all users of the space.
- The library should include **art display spaces** and sculptures.
- An **amphitheatre** space would allow performances and events to be held.
- **Additional multi-purpose** space would allow more meetings and programming to be held.
- Generally, the library needs to be **larger.** While the library currently functions well, it is crowded and more space is needed.
- The **entry and foyer needs to be larger.** It can become quite crowded with several people entering and exiting at one time. As well there is little space for school groups to remove and put on their boots. Having additional room for strollers etc would be beneficial.

- A separate space for a **"children's library"** was suggested. It would include the collection as well as space for programming. A separate space would allow the activities to go unfettered regardless of what else is happening in the rest of the library. There was some suggestion that an indoor child playground would be a complementary amenity.
- There were some calls for a **defined teen/youth area** as well.
- The inclusion of **outdoor space** that is accessible by library patrons would be a good addition. It could be used on a drop-in basis or for programming and events.
- A separate **maker space** area would be good. It would enable the inclusion of additional technology items (such as 3D printer) and would further strengthen the library's position as a centre of knowledge.
- The library should have **natural light** and windows. This would be healthier for people and would make the space more inviting.
- While some separate spaces were identified, it was suggested that the library have an **open type of layout** as much as possible.
- While not specific to space, the design of the library could be leveraged to more obviously reflect its **welcoming nature to the area's Indigenous community.** This could refer to colours or the inclusion of shapes and symbols.

Location Considerations

- The **current location was considered ideal** from many perspectives. Its proximity to the schools was seen as a real asset, enabling students to visit the facility during the day and after school. The proximity to residential areas was considered important.
- If the library had to change locations there was some suggestion that being situated **downtown would work.** It would be in the middle of the community and would allow some pedestrian traffic. Parking would be better than the current location as well.
- There were some calls to conjoin the library to the **recreation centre,** helping to solidify it has a large community hub.
- Others simply felt that consideration for **pedestrian access** to the library should be a main driver when identifying a site for the library.

"It would be nice to have a sofa in the kids' reading area for story time. In another area, have study cubicles for older students with more privacy. Maybe a quiet area for studying."

"The library needs modernization, a better layout. It's a bit low-ceilinged and claustrophobic in there and there is no quiet area. Love all the programs; love the community spirit; love the can-do attitude and the fresh approach. It's a community hub and the building should reflect the dignity and honour of that position."

Conclusions

From the resident survey and the community stakeholder meetings several overall conclusions can be drawn.

- The Chetwynd Public Library is a **highly valued** institution in the community. It supports community initiatives, partners well with others, and reflects and reacts to the needs of the community.
- Library staff are very much appreciated. **Staff are an integral aspect** of the library and are responsible for the welcoming, patron centric culture.
- The inclusion of a **bistro/café type of space** is complementary to the library's function.
- There are generally **high levels of satisfaction** with all aspects of the library, particularly the location. A number of **improvements** to the facility itself are suggested.
  - » A larger space for all aspects.
  - » A larger and separate children's area.
  - » A separate teen/youth area.
  - » Additional quiet study and work space.
  - » A larger more functional entryway and foyer.
  - » A need for more natural light and windows.

Appendix: Stakeholder Meetings

1. Library Users (15 in attendance)
2. Family Session—light to non user (3 in attendance)
3. Family Session—former to light user (4 in attendance)
4. Family 4—former to light user (4 in attendance)
5. Reading Recovery Program (1)
6. West Moberly First Nations (1)
7. Seniors Group (8)
8. Friends of the Library (1)
9. Saulteau First Nations (1)
10. Youth Group (3)
11. School Principals (4)
12. Northern Lights College (1)
13. School District—Superintendent (1)
14. School District—Trustee (1)
15. Early Childhood Education (2)
16. Business Community (5)
17. Not-For-Profit/Community Groups (4)

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