

Prince Edward County Public Library



Town Hall Report

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Prince Edward County Public Library



Library stakeholder feelings:

"I like the feel of coming to the library I came to as a kid. I have introduced it to my children, it's cozy, it's home."

"The library is a destination – keep that the goal".

"The library has moved from just books to being programming and services. It is the community hub."

"My family loves to "LIBRARY Hop". Each branch has uniqueness, different toys, programs, and smiles".

Background

- The library (Picton branch) is considering a capital expansion project. Approximately \$400,000.00 is in hand and the intention is to raise the additional funds necessary.
- A consultation process featured Town Hall meetings, On-Line surveys and Focus Groups to gather public ideas and feedback.
- There are deficits at the current facility to be addressed, and there are ideas for the Capital expansion being currently entertained. CEO Barbara Sweet provided these materials by way of introduction at each session.
- The need was for an independent entity to facilitate and engage honest discussion with the Town Hall and Focus Groups and disseminate the online surveys from respondents consisting of Stakeholders and Patrons.

Process. Three different phases with a total of 126 respondents

Phase 1

A 90 minute Town Hall Meeting June 6th, at Picton Library. 26 respondents.

Phase 2

An on-line survey. June 6th to Sept 18th. 72 respondents

Phase 3

Focus groups September 6th at Picton Library.

- A youth session. 7 respondents
- An Adult session. 21 respondents

Process.

Phases 1 & 2:

- Respondents were asked to rate the following points:
 - Customer service
 - Collection (Books, DVD's, Music, Newspapers etc.)
 - Programs (classes, Storytime's, etc.)
 - Online services (website, catalogue, research databases, etc.)
 - Computers and printers
 - Internet access
 - Facilities – overall appeal
 - Study space/reading area
 - Hours of operation
 - Overall rating of the branch
- Respondents were also asked to answer the following questions:
 - What do you value most about the Picton Branch library?
 - How could the Picton Branch Library or its services be improved?

Process.

Town Hall

- The 90 minute Town Hall Meeting June 6th, 3:30-5pm at Picton Library was moderated by Jim JJ Johnston President and CEO of JJIMS INC. 26 regular users of the Library system attended. 20 filled out surveys. Also in attendance were:
 - Several PEC Library Staff including CEO Barbara Sweet.
 - Library Board members John Ambrose, Devon A. Jones, Ursula Cattelan and Lenny Epstein (Also CPE Councilor).
 - Representatives of CPE included Neil Carbone, and James Bar.
 - SOLS was represented by Peggy Malcolm.
 - PEHAC was represented by Peter Lockyer
 - The Prince Edward Learning Centre was represented by Kathy Kennedy (ED) and Jane MacDonald (Secretary).
- Respondents were informed of and invited to participate in the ongoing On-Line survey and an additional focus group (Sept. 6th).

On-Line Survey

- There were 72 respondents in all
- 9 were under the age of 49
- The results were tabulated and disseminated by JJIMS Inc



Survey Results by Rank- Respondents

Combined July-Sept 2017 survey results- Picton Library

	July Town Hall Sample- 20	Aug/Sept on-line Sample- 72	Comments	Aug Sample- 20-49 Sample- 9	JJIMS Comments
	Excellent/Good	Excellent/Good		Excellent/Good	
Customer service	95%	94%	Very strong!	100%	Very strong!
Overall rating of the branch	95%	89%	Very strong!	89%	Strong!
Collection (Books, DVD's, Music, Newspapers etc.)- 94.7%	94.70%	75%	On-Line significantly less	66.70%	Lower than both surveys
Internet access	80%	69%	28.4% DK/NA in on-line survey	89%	Higher than both surveys
Facilities – overall appeal	80%	80%	Consistent survey to survey	67%	Lower than both surveys

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Computers and printers	76%	63%	34.3% DK/NA in on-line survey	78%	Higher awareness
Programs (classes, Storytime's, etc.)	75%	64%	23.9% DK/NA in on-line survey	67%	Consistent w on-line
Online services (website, catalogue, research databases, etc.)	75%	79%	Better results on-line. Better technical skills	78%	Consistent with all surveys
Study space/reading area	70%	44%	Great dissatisfaction with larger on-line sample	67%	Higher than on-line survey
Hours of operation	65%	65%	Consistent survey to survey	67%	Higher than both surveys

How could the Picton Branch Library or its services be improved?

- Major themes consistent with all surveys: A great need for bigger and more effective space, quiet spaces, and more and better washrooms.

Also longer hours are desired.



- Other mentions included adult education seminars, more youth programming, more comfortable chairs, and more DVD's of music concerts.

Respondent Thoughts?



- What is your ideal library?
 - Welcoming, knowledgeable and helpful staff.
 - Accessible
 - Outreach program
 - Computers
 - Quiet
 - Windows
 - Lots of space. Meeting rooms, Staff rooms etc.
 - Clean accessible washrooms
 - Programs
 - Delivery
 - Internet
 - Community HUB



Town Hall Thoughts



Most of the 26 attendees were vocal at one time or another. There were many great questions, comments and suggestions tabled.

- Some of those suggestions are already in place, and this gave Barbara Sweet, PEC Library CEO an opportunity to elucidate and educate.
- There was positive support from most for the Library team and available programs. Some were unaware of some of the programs available. There was a question about Library literacy programs to which Kathy Kennedy, The Prince Edward Learning Centre's ED, responded re programs offered at PELC.
- Facility. There were many comments about the state of washrooms, accessibility, noise issues and lack of space. People are very happy with this historic building ("keep the historical façade") in the heart of downtown Picton. They love the marketing impressions that come with the location. Most also felt the revamped patio/coffee shop was a great idea. We asked the question of the importance of parking: "Would you rather have a location that may be off the beaten path but has a lot more parking?" The answer was a resounding...



Town Hall Thoughts



- Currently there is not enough meeting room space to accommodate requests from stakeholders and community organizations. The thought of a capital expansion room on the back of the current location was introduced. This flexible Multipurpose room – small lecture theater – AV room could be used for a variety of learning sessions, functions and Collection. “Perhaps the walls could be used as a Public Art Gallery like the Belleville Library?” This room would also be a revenue generator. “Do you have the expansion data back-up?”. Answer was YES. Other suggestions included partnering with the Armouries, The Regent Theatre and the Town Hall for more space. Someone mentioned closing the Bloomfield Library which had little support.
- “Timeline for expansion?” Start the dig in Spring 2018 and aim for completion in 6 months. “Would the library close for renovations?” The hope is business as usual.
- “Where is the funding coming from?” PEC Library CEO Barbara Sweet explained that the organization has \$400,000 in hand (grants and bequeaths) for all the other capital updates, and estimated that at least \$100,000 more would be needed to make the full expansion happen. “Where would that money come from?” Barbara said in the form of grants and tax receipted donations.
- Virtually everyone was supportive of the PEC Library Capital expansion.

Town Hall Thoughts



- “With more space, do we foresee offering more services?” More services are already requested and space is not available. For example, services for French learning and Programming engaging seniors. The new space would help to facilitate the hearing and visually impaired through the use of headphones etc.
- “What would the long term planning look like?” This gave SOLS representative Peggy Malcolm an opportunity to express her insights including past planning experiences in the Library field. She indicated that it is hard to be exact and gave the example of the Toronto Public Library who had planned to do more programming, less print. In fact, to their surprise, borrowing in print is higher than it has ever been! They have also seen an increase in use of paperbacks and graphic novels with teenagers.
- “The Younger generation is not represented in this meeting.” Respondents were told of an ongoing “On-Line” survey that should capture their thoughts. “How do we keep them coming to the library?” One of the thoughts was transportation. This has been tried in the past and the staff is working on possible programs with retirement homes with the hope they could provide with their own transportation etc. Delivery is a popular option that is open to all ages.

Adults Focus Group Thoughts



What do you value about the Library?

- Workshop, computer, Free information.
- Tech support.
- Workshops.
- Maker club amazing – very current.
- Get the building to match the programming.
- Children’s programming – grown significantly – opportunity for our kids is incredible – fantastic
- Service is terrific:
 - Personnel is great. Courteous and professional.
 - Accommodating.
 - Friendly. They smile when you walk in.
 - You ask for it, they will find it.

Adult Focus Group Thoughts



- There was a concern about dollars. Don't overdue the library, or services won't be free because the hydro and other bills may be too high. Barbara Sweet informed all of the funding and stated that at least \$500,000 will be needed to cover the additional 2,000 square feet. \$400,000 is in hand now.
- Expansion. How do you plan to do this? Was more public consultation needed?
- What are the Immediate Needs?
 - Railings (perhaps two: one for adults and one for children?)
 - HVAC
 - Washrooms on both floors are in dire need of an overhaul
- Money – there is money in this community, you have to ask for it.
- Is the library taking on too many roles?
- Build what we need or plan for expansion. Perhaps in phases? We need more quiet spaces. More room is definitely needed.
- The library is in a great central spot. Stay where it is. Parking is not a major issue as there are many parking lots surrounding the area.

Adult Focus Group Thoughts



Best ways of promoting the library and it's programs

- Tools on line.
- Best way to convey – use all types of media
- Email blasts, paper, posters, website, Facebook, etc.
- Class visits, disappointment in principals of schools not informing parents about programming.
- Library needs reps at schools to transmit information.
- Parent advisory advocate?
- Offer busing, transportation?

Usage ideas for additional room

- Children's area for programming and for books.
- Larger selection.
- Quiet spaces, meeting/programming rooms, private internet use stations.
- More washrooms (upstairs).
- Multi-purpose Meeting Rooms for kids, adults.
- Sound proof room? Practice room, performance room?

Youth Focus Group Thoughts

What do you value about the Library?

- I borrow DVD's.
- Internet – homework is all online.
- Tutoring.
- The library is a safe place for me.

Suggestions

- Books, reading, need wider selection. How to find more genre – how to book 10 of the same books at the same time, everyone wants to read the same book at the same time. Book club? Once a month?
- Programs in the teen room.
- More rooms for programming. More places to hang and chill out. Bigger study, quiet space. Soundproof room – definitely.
- Music lessons, for kids wanting to learn music.
- Gaming at the library? Board games maybe, not video games.
- More light, more windows, Definitely paint nice bright fun colors, Comfy sitting (bean bag chairs?).

Conclusions

- Virtually every phase conveyed a passionate and engaged group. They overwhelmingly felt that the PEC Picton Library branch is in good shape giving an overall rating of +90% average.
- Customer service is also outstanding at 97% average. Positive comments such as cheerful, helpful, knowledgeable, well mannered, willing, relaxed, appreciation of the computer interns, and assistance with tech issues.
- Collection was very high with the first group at just less than 95% and while still a good mark at 74% with the on-line survey.
- Internet access, computers and printers are strong draws despite high DK/NA.
- DK/NA is highest in Programs, On-Line services and Computers and Printers. In the case of Programs, this could be a lack of awareness. Same with On-Line services but it's also possible usage is lower in the 50+ demo.
- Large Print, and delivery were mentioned often as positives.
- They cherish the location and façade of the Heritage building. They want it to stay put and urge the Architectural drawings do not disturb the heritage of the building.
- Space is a major issue for library users and community users. Virtually everyone was in favour of Capital expansion.
- They would like extended hours, particularly hoping for Sunday openings.

Recommendations

With the results from all feedback platforms being very similar, we recommend the following:

- Visit the possibility of Sunday and/or extended hours.
- Programs had a decent score, but with a high DK/NA. Suggest to evaluate the programs in place and re-examine how to best market and communicate available programs.
- Continue to partner with local Orgs like the ROC – partner with what they have, build relationship – kids want to learn to play, library has instruments to borrow and talent to teach.
- Lowest score by far was in the Study Space category, especially with the on-line survey respondents. There was a great deal of discussion about existing facilities and the need to update. We recommend to continue fundraising and preparation and proceed with the Capital expansion project. The feedback from the combined survey/focus groups confirmed expansion is a good idea and is well supported.
- We also recommend to share the plans with the public and continue transparency throughout the project..

Thank you!



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