

2019– 2023

# Hanson Public Library Strategic Plan



Approved by the  
Hanson Public Library  
Board of Trustees  
September 29, 2018

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## Consultant

Ruth Kowal

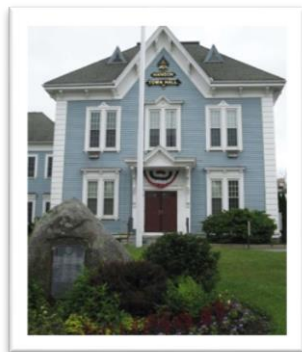
# COMMUNITY PROFILE

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Hanson is a suburban community with an area of 15 square miles located approximately 20 miles southeast of Boston. The town was originally part of Pembroke and was included in a tract of land that Major Josiah Winslow and 34 others purchased from Sachem Josias Wampatuck in 1662. These settlers and later inhabitants found the land suitable for farming and used the many ponds, brooks, and streams to erect saw mills for lumbering. These waterways were also helpful for those involved in growing cranberries, which was a prominent business in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century along with shingle and shoe making.

Incorporated in 1820, the town was named after Alexander Contee Hanson, publisher of the *Federal Republican* newspaper in Baltimore. His criticism of the Madison administration and the War of 1812 led to riots in which Hanson himself was attacked. However, feelings soon changed, and three months later Hanson was elected as a representative to Congress. He then served in the United States Senate until his death in 1819 at the age of 33.

Hanson's population from the 2010 U.S. Census is recorded at 10,209. The largest growth was seen in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, with an increase of 63.6% from 1960 to 1970. Census data from 2000 and 2010 shows the latest population increase at 7.5%. The town is mostly residential with a rural atmosphere, but lies within close proximity to business hubs. The arrival of the Old Colony Railroad made the commute north to Boston and south to Plymouth more convenient and has made Hanson a desirable place to settle.



# ***LIBRARY HISTORY***

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Library service in Hanson began with the formation of the Hanson Temperance Library Association on August 17, 1882. Through the generosity of Elijah C. Thomas and his sister Rachel C. Cushing, Thomas Hall was built in 1884 to house this privately endowed library. Five years later, residents from the southern part of town formed the Wampatuck Library Association and housed a second privately endowed library in Wampatuck Hall.

In 1896 two branches of a town-funded library were established. The library at Wampatuck Hall was given into the care of the town to create a South Branch, and a North Branch was located at the store of E.F. Witherell, later to move into the home of librarians Mary and Evie Drew. A new location for the North Branch was sought after the resignation of Evie Drew in 1921, and was found when the Hanson Library Association turned over Thomas Hall and all their property to the town. The North Branch remained in Thomas Hall until 1961 when it moved into an addition at the Indian Head School. As part of the relocation, the South Branch was closed, and its books were also moved to the new site.

By the 1980's, the Board of Library Trustees realized that further expansion was needed. Lacking space at Indian Head, they decided to work with the Council for Elder Affairs, whose space was also crowded, to begin the process of constructing a joint facility on land donated by the Hanson School Department. This building opened to the public in October 1991 and is the home of the Library and Senior Center today.

With the development of new technology in the early 1990's, the Library joined the ABLE (Automated Bristol Library Exchange) network and the automation process began on October 17, 1994. Subsequently, ABLE merged with another network, SEAL, to form the SAILS Library Network, which currently consists of over 70 libraries in southeastern Massachusetts. Today, technology is an essential part of library services, and libraries have evolved into important community centers, providing access to a wide variety of materials, offering entertaining and educational programs, and contributing to a better quality of life for all residents.



# ***USER NEEDS ASSESSMENT***

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In the fall of 2017 the Board of Trustees advertised for a consultant to assist them with library planning efforts, and in December engaged the services of library consultant Ruth Kowal. A seven member planning committee, with two members from the Board of Trustees, the Library Director, and four community representatives, was established by the Board. The planning efforts focused initially on the development of the Strategic Plan, which would serve as the foundation for a library building program plan.

During the winter and spring of 2018 the Planning Committee focused its efforts on the creation of the Strategic Plan. The committee assisted with outlining the approach for gathering community input, developing the community survey, and drafting the vision, mission, themes, and priorities for recommendation to the Board of Trustees. With the Board's adoption of the Strategic Plan, the Planning Committee will focus its attention, beginning in the fall of 2018, on the development of the library building program plan.

Community input for the Strategic Plan was solicited through an online and paper survey, focus groups, flip charts located in the library asking questions about library services and facilities, interviews with community leaders, and interviews at the commuter rail station in Hanson. There were 412 surveys completed, 31 people of various ages (the youngest was 8) participated in a focus group, and 141 comments were captured on the flip charts. The insight from the Town Administrator and a member of the Board of Selectmen were invaluable in understanding how the library fits into the overall Town planning.

Borrowing books and other library materials remains a top priority for Hanson residents. 81% of survey respondents ranked borrowing of materials as "very high" in importance. Public programming for all ages was also ranked highly, with programs and classes for children marked "very important" by 72% of respondents. Programs are frequently "standing-room-only" and sign-up is required to keep the number of participants within the legal limits of meeting rooms. When asked in the survey "what would make them use the library more", the option "More public programs on topics of interest" was ranked first.

To support the sequential planning efforts (strategic planning to be followed by the library building program planning), community input was sought on library services, as well as thoughts and ideas regarding current and future library space. The community clearly recognizes the limitations of the current facility to adequately support the delivery of desired library services. As an example, focus group and flip chart comments advocated for improvements to the Library's services and facilities for children. A separate area for programming, crafts, and creative learning is lacking and was the most requested feature to include in a redesigned library.

Throughout the planning process, an overwhelming number of respondents commented on the friendly and helpful staff. Although the quality of service is praised, the quantity of hours for library staff remains reduced from cuts instituted in 2008. Reduced staff hours negatively impact library services, inhibiting staff collaboration and the implementation of both programs and long-term projects. Requests for expanded hours were heard in all of the community planning sessions, and fulfilling those requests will greatly enhance the Library's ability to satisfy community needs.

The input from the community very clearly identifies the areas of focus for the Library in the future, and the themes and priorities support those priorities.



# STRATEGIC PLANNING TIMELINE

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The Hanson Public Library Board of Trustees began the planning process for FY2019-FY2023 in spring 2017. The Board's initial interest in beginning the process was to produce a building program for possible library expansion or new construction. With the Library's current strategic plan concluding in FY2018, it was decided to allow the information gathered for the building plan to aid in the creation of a new strategic plan.

October 25, 2017	RFQ for consulting services issued
December 16, 2017	Board of Trustees hire consultant Ruth Kowal
January 22, 2018	Conduct library staff interviews
January 23, 2018	Meeting with MBLC to review process
January 23, 2018	Board of Trustees vote to form Planning Committee
February 7, 2018	First meeting of Planning Committee
February 8, 2018	Meeting with Town Administrator
February 14, 2018 – March 24, 2018	Community input survey (posted on Library's website & social media; paper copies available at various locations around town)
February 14, 2018 – April 3, 2018	Community invited to respond to questions on flip charts available in three locations at Library
February 24, 2018	Town-wide mailing of postcard to advertise survey
February 27, 2018	Focus group with Board of Trustees
March 1, 2018	Article published in <i>Whitman-Hanson Express</i>
March 15, 2018	Focus group with Library Foundation members
April 9, 2018	VIP interview with Town Administrator
April 10, 2018	Focus group with members of the public
April 12, 2018	Second meeting of Planning Committee
April 19, 2018	Focus group with children
April 20, 2018	VIP interview with member of Board of Selectmen
May 9, 2018	Conduct "street interviews" at Hanson commuter rail station
May 10, 2018	Third meeting of Planning Committee
May 22, 2018	Board of Trustees vote to accept the Vision, Mission, Themes, and Priorities recommended by Planning Committee

## ***VISION STATEMENT***

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The Hanson Public Library strives to enrich and strengthen our community.

## ***MISSION STATEMENT***

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The Hanson Public Library inspires curiosity and fosters life-long learning by connecting people and ideas. The Library provides access to a wide variety of resources, technology, and experiences in a welcoming, supportive environment.



# THEMES AND PRIORITIES

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## Service Excellence

**The Library strives to be an inviting place that provides exemplary customer service.**

### Priorities

- Evaluate the needs of the community and ensure library services and the library facility are meeting those needs
- Enhance the community's use of the Library through helpful and friendly staff
- Establish hours of service that are responsive to the needs of the community, including weekdays, weekends, and evenings
- Conduct community outreach to encourage use of the Library and inform the public about library programs and services

## Books & Resources

**The Library offers a variety of print, audio, visual, and digital materials which respond to the recreational and informational needs of the community.**

### Priorities

- Maintain a diverse collection of resources which encourages life-long learning and the enjoyment of reading
- Promote literacy and reading by providing materials in a wide variety of formats
- Encourage and support the exchange of information among residents
- Be a resource for local history and materials of local interest

## Community Gathering

**The Library serves as a place for individuals and groups to foster existing connections and form new relationships with others.**

### Priorities

- Provide a welcoming and comfortable environment which enables people to pursue their interests
- Provide a venue for people to meet and interact with others
- Provide meeting room space for community use

## Programs & Activities

**The Library endeavors to entertain and inspire creativity by offering a variety of enriching experiences.**

### Priorities

- Offer programming that satisfies the educational and recreational needs of individuals and the community
- Provide opportunities for cultural and informational experiences
- Collaborate with local groups and organizations

## Technology & Innovation

**The Library is a resource for technology and digital content and assists people with incorporating technology into their lives.**

### Priorities

- Identify and make available technologies that support the Library's mission and are of interest to patrons
- Retain knowledgeable staff trained to use technology and convey that knowledge clearly and effectively to library users
- Provide opportunities for people to utilize new technologies

## Appendix A:

### FY 2020 Action Plan

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SERVICE EXCELLENCE  PRIORITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Evaluate the needs of the community and ensure library services and the library facility are meeting those needs</li><li>Enhance the community's use of the Library through helpful and friendly staff</li><li>Establish hours of service that are responsive to the needs of the community, including weekdays, weekends, and evenings</li><li>Conduct community outreach to encourage use of the Library and inform the public about library program and services</li></ul>		
	Action	Timeframe	Project Manager(s)
	Complete the library building program planning	FY 2020	Library Director
	Share the Library Building Program with the community, community leaders, and local state representatives	FY 2020	Library Director
	Participate in Hanson community events	FY 2020	Library Director
	Develop a delivery service to the homebound	Summer 2019	Library Director, Circulation Staff
	Request additional staff hours	Fall 2019	Library Director
	Update the Library website to optimize ease of use and publicity of library programs and services	Winter 2020	Library Director, Reference Librarian
	Create a “new patron” brochure describing services	Spring 2020	Reference Librarian
	Promote social media presence to increase number of followers	Ongoing	Reference Librarian
Promote e-Newsletter to increase number of subscribers	Ongoing	Reference Librarian	

<p><b>BOOKS &amp; RESOURCES</b></p> <p><b>PRIORITIES</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain a diverse collection of resources which encourages life-long learning and the enjoyment of reading</li> <li>• Promote literacy and reading by providing materials in a wide variety of formats</li> <li>• Encourage and support the exchange of information among residents</li> <li>• Be a resource for local history and materials of local interest</li> </ul>	
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Project Manager(s)</b>
Update the collection development plan	Ongoing	Library Director
Explore adding a “Library of Things” to the collection	Summer 2019	Library Director, Reference Librarian
Investigate the feasibility of increasing the hoopla borrowing allowance	Summer 2019	Library Director
Evaluate and organize materials in the Historical Room	Ongoing	Library Director, Reference Librarian
Digitize items in the Historical Room	Ongoing	Library Director, Reference Librarian
Conduct a survey to evaluate magazine usage	Spring 2020	Library Director, Tech Services Librarian

<b>COMMUNITY GATHERING</b>  <b>PRIORITIES</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a welcoming and comfortable environment which enables people to pursue their interests</li> <li>• Provide a venue for people to meet and interact with others</li> <li>• Provide meeting room space for community use</li> </ul>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Project Manager(s)</b>
Update the Code of Conduct Policy	Summer 2019	Library Director
Evaluate ways to update the Community Room to be more inviting	Fall 2019	Library Director
Explore configurations for the public computers to create more privacy and workspace for patrons	Winter 2020	Library Director, Tech Services Librarian

PROGRAMS & ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer programming that satisfies the educational and recreational needs of individuals and the community</li><li>• Provide opportunities for cultural and informational experiences</li><li>• Collaborate with local groups and organizations</li></ul>	
PRIORITIES		
Action	Timeframe	Project Manager(s)
Develop a social media based activity to attract teens	Summer 2019	Reference Librarian
Explore new museum passes	Ongoing	Library Director, Reference Librarian
Reach out to local school librarians to determine ways to further collaborate	Winter 2020	Children’s Librarian
Explore ideas for creating a joint program with the Senior Center	Spring 2020	Library Director
Offer a monthly STEM-themed program	Ongoing	Children’s Librarian
Offer a quarterly movie night	Ongoing	Reference Librarian
Offer a monthly program for teens	Ongoing	Children’s Librarian
Continue to work with the Library Foundation to provide programming	Ongoing	Library Director
Continue a partnership with the Historical Commission and High School on the Hanson Oral History Project	Ongoing	Library Director

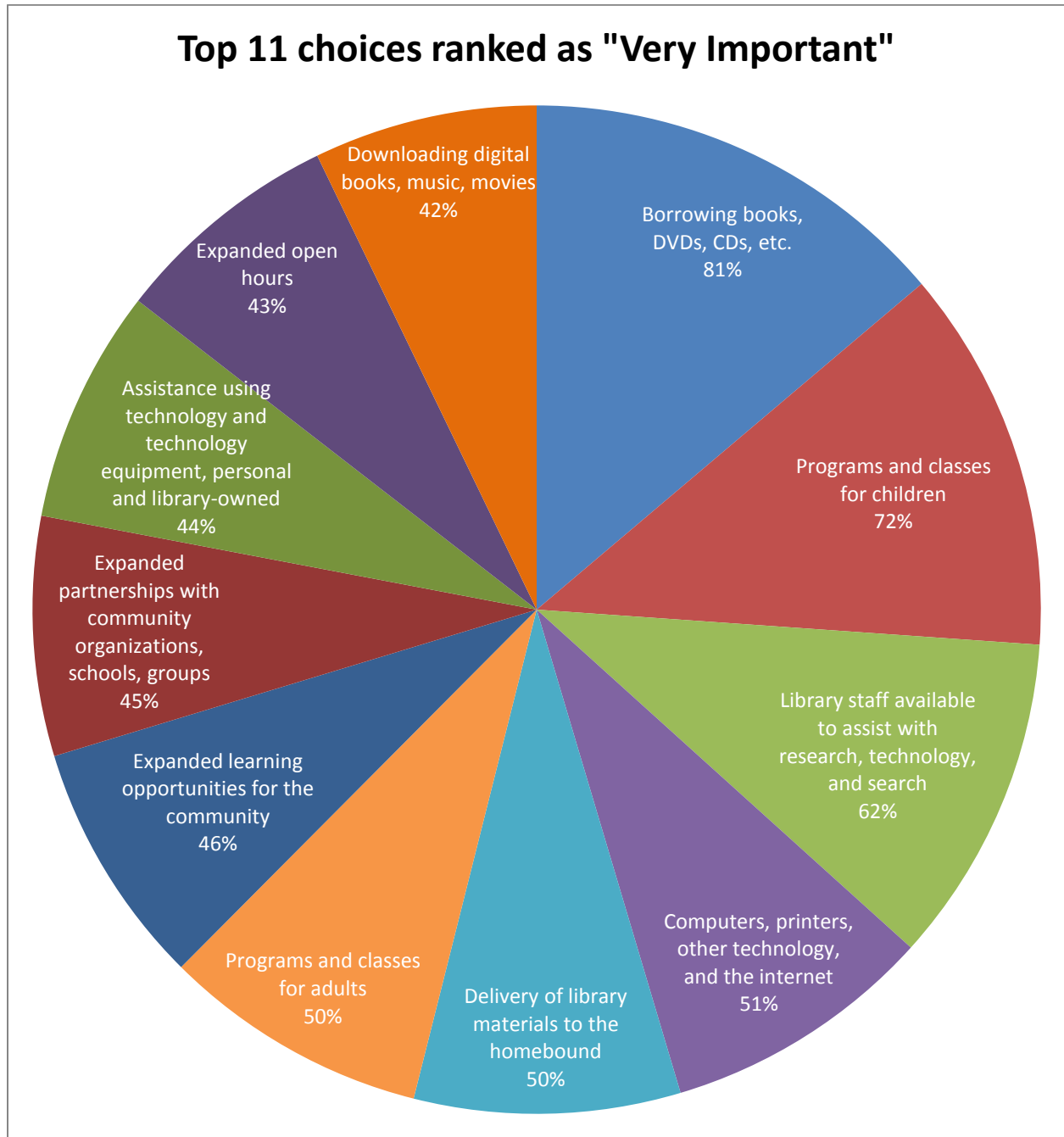
<b>TECHNOLOGY &amp; INNOVATION</b>  <b>PRIORITIES</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and make available technologies that support the Library's mission and are of interest to patrons</li> <li>• Retain knowledgeable staff trained to use technology and convey that knowledge clearly and effectively to library users</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for people to utilize new technologies</li> </ul>		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>	<b>Project Manager(s)</b>
Purchase three new computers according to the technology replacement plan	Summer 2019	Library Director
Have all staff participate in Overdrive training	Fall 2019	All staff
Explore public interest in hot spots, charging stations, virtual reality devices, and a 3D printer	Winter 2020	Library Director, Reference Librarian
Update the Internet Access Policy and Computer Use Agreement	Spring 2020	Library Director



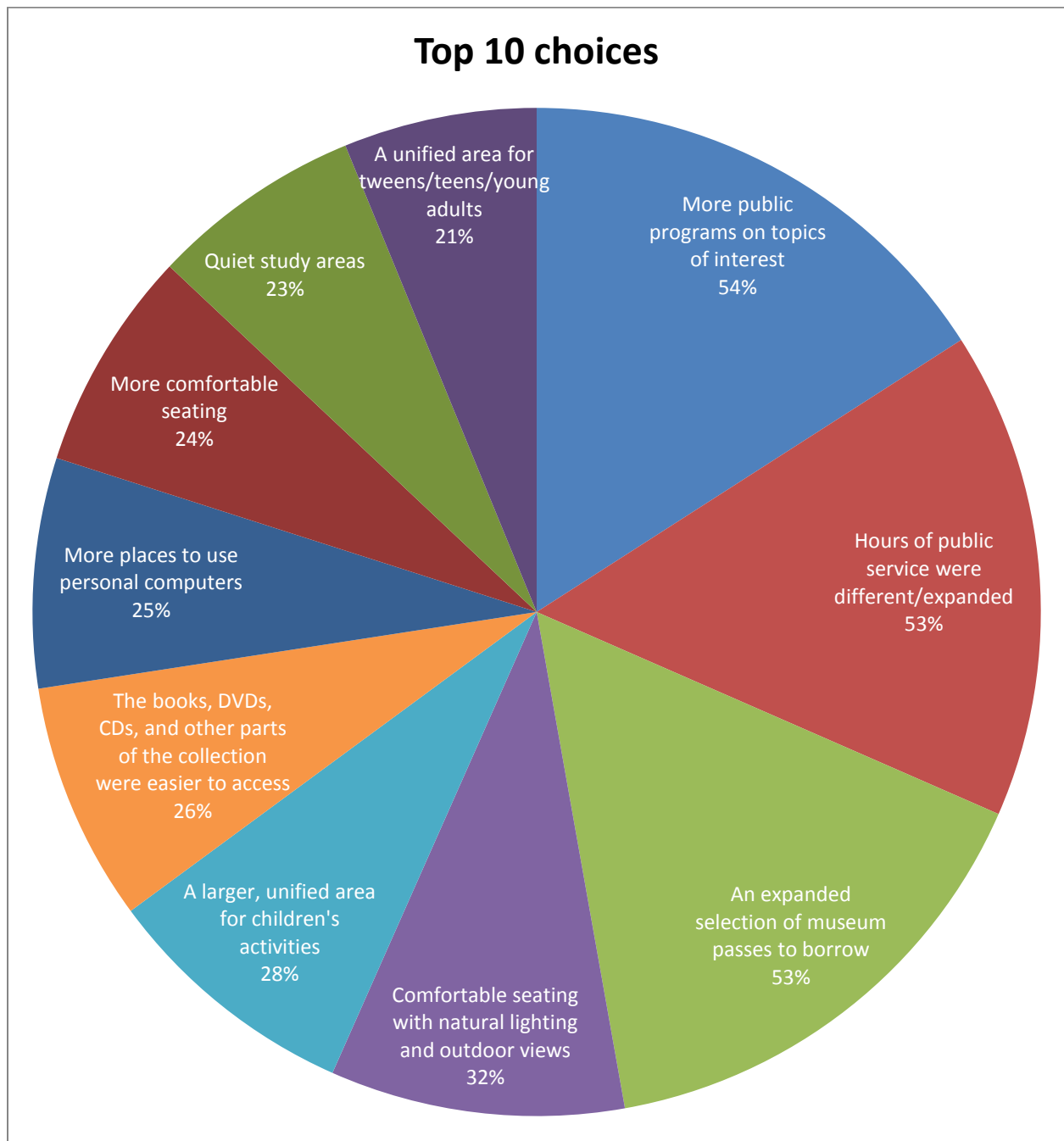
## Appendix B: Survey Results

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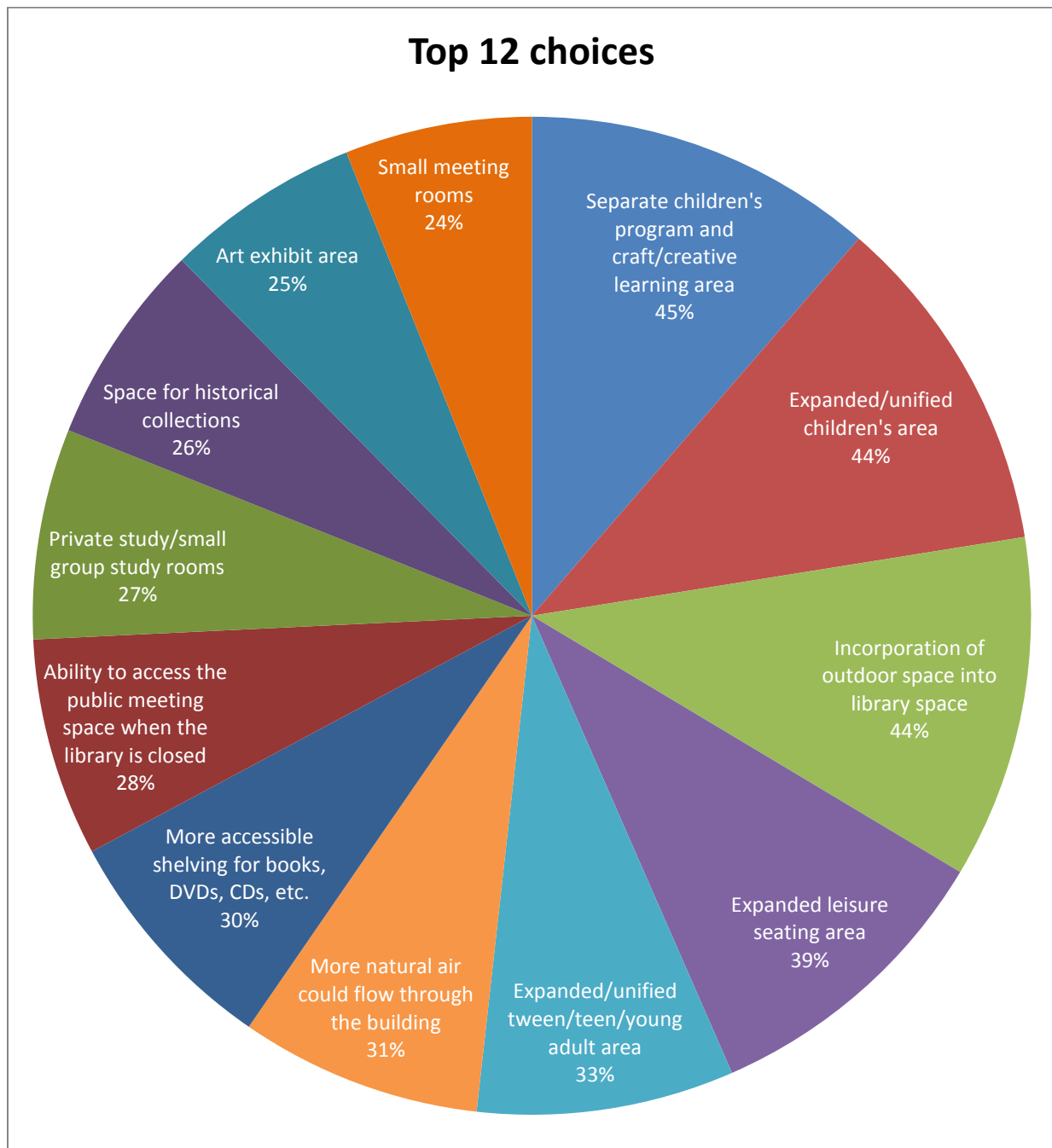
**Question 1: Thinking about the library and the community it serves, how important is each of the following?**



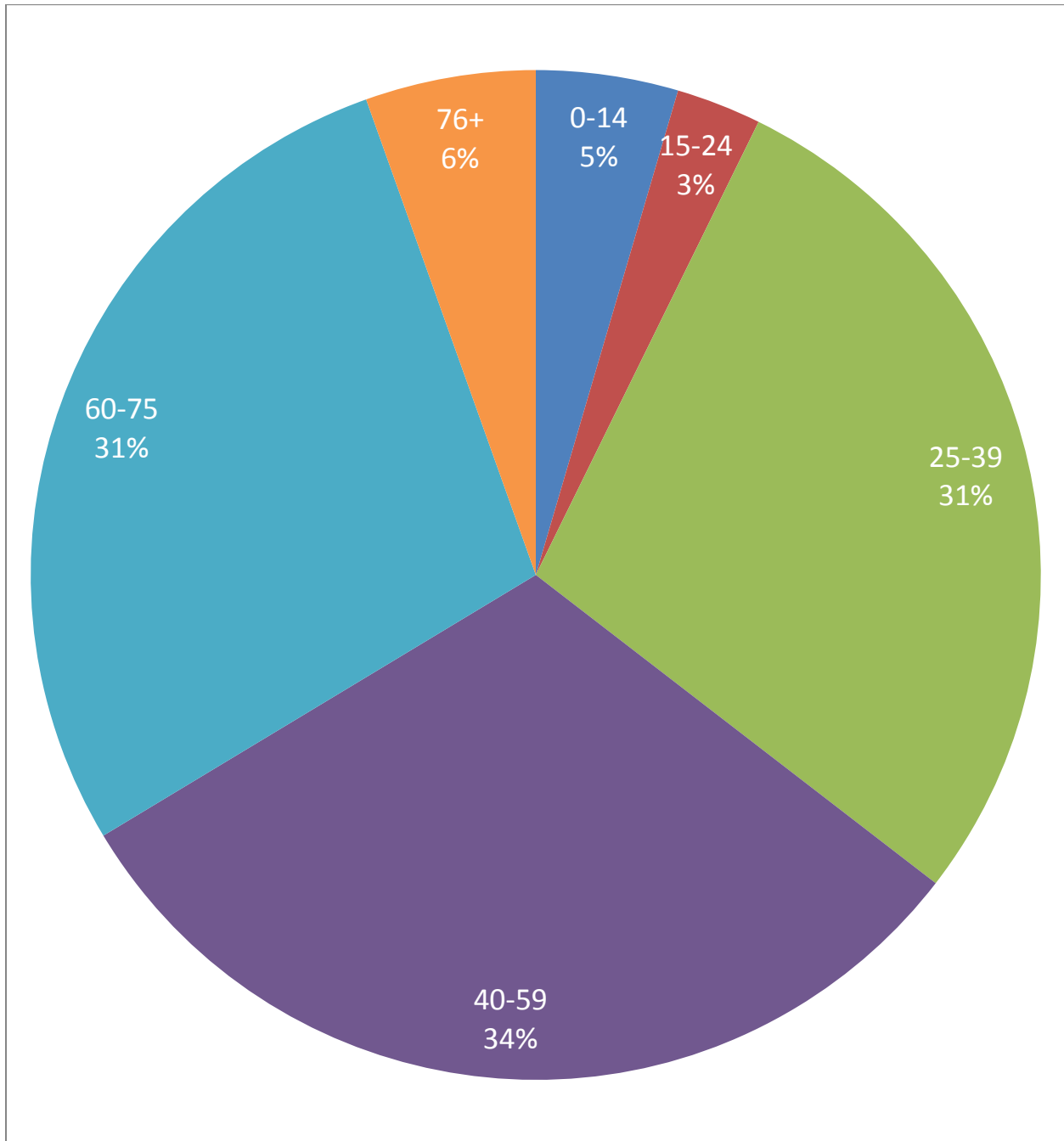
**Question 2: Members of my household would use the library more if there were...?**



**Question 3: If the library redesigned its space, which of the following would you like to see?**



**Question 4: What is your age group?**



# Appendix C:

## Survey Postcard

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### Front View



A Minute of Your Time!

### Back View

#### Hanson Public Library Planning Survey 2018

The Board of Trustees of the Hanson Public Library is seeking your help as they explore options for improvements in library services to the community and the library facility. Please assist with this effort by responding to our survey by March 9, 2018. Thank you.

The survey is available to complete online at:  
[hansonlibrary.org](http://hansonlibrary.org)

If you prefer to complete a paper copy, you may pick one up at the Library or Town Hall. You may also call the library at 781-293-2151 to have a copy of the survey mailed to you. Please return paper copies to:  
Hanson Public Library, 132 Maquan Street,  
Hanson, MA 02341

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# Appendix D:

## Whitman-Hanson Express Article

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**Whitman-Hanson Express Article from March 1, 2018**

From page 1:

### Hanson Library looks ahead

Surveys, focus groups provide data on community views

BY TRACY F. SEELYE, EXPRESS EDITOR  
EDITOR@WHITMANHANSONEXPRESS.COM

HANSON — Job applicants are frequently asked, “Where do you see yourself in five years?” The Hanson Public Library is asking patrons some similar questions about its next 20 years, and is en-

couraged by the public’s feedback so far.

A survey, now being circulated on the town website and via email to regular patrons as well as on paper at the circulation desk, will soon be mailed out to gather data through March 9 on the library’s future

program offerings and expansion needs.

One need not be a Hanson resident, as library patrons from other communities are encouraged to take part in the study.

continued on page 9

From page 9:

### Hanson Library looking ahead through surveys

continued from page one

So far, the online survey has garnered more than 200 responses, according to Library Director Karen Stolfer of the project being conducted concurrently with the state-required strategic plan, which helps the library apply for grants. The aim is to finish both planning efforts by the fall.

“It’s kind of the first step toward expansion,” Stolfer said last week. “Before you can apply for a construction grant, the state requires you to have a building program on file with them.”

The library has contracted with Boston-based independent consultant Ruth Kowal to conduct the online and mailed survey.

“She’s helping us with

this first stage in the process,” Stolfer said. “She is [also] looking at our collection, what our statistics show, measurements of the building. ... You have to project out for 20 years growth.”

Kowal would be available to help make a presentation to a town meeting either this fall or next spring.

“We’re going to use input I get from the building program to help me write the strategic plan,” said Stolfer, who was aware of a state planning and design grant approved several years ago — as well as the Trustee’s wish to move forward with it — when she came on board as director. “I’ve worked here for 13 years, so I know what some of the deficits of the current facility are. ... I just want to compare it to what people say.”

Patrons have also been taking Sharpie in hand to provide some off-the-cuff feedback to a series of four questions on flip charts in the library.

The first question asked patrons to share their favorite things about the library — with responses including kids’ programs, painting classes, story times, the helpful staff and being able to borrow from other libraries through the SAILS network. Follow-up questions involve what the library does for the community; what new services, programs or equipment would prompt greater use of the library; and are there physical changes that would enhance the library’s mission.

Demographic data will be part of the study, and focus groups will also be a part of that research with the Library

Trustees slated to take part in one with Kowal on Tuesday, Feb. 27, with later focus groups to include the Library Foundation as well as members of the public to follow in early March. Discussions will also be conducted with town leaders, including Town Administrator Michael McCue — who has already begun doing that — and the Board of Selectmen as well as the School Committee.

“We’re trying to get input from different groups in the community,” she said.

The next steps would include a feasibility study, focusing on possible forms of expansion — adding on to the existing building, new construction and, if the latter, the proper location.

“This first documents helps you with that,” said Stolfer,

adding the state requires that three potential locations be submitted for consideration in the case of new construction. She said, if that is the direction sought, the current location, Maquan School or the Plymouth County Hospital site are among the possibilities.

The survey also asks residents and patrons from outside Hanson for their feedback on some possible new directions for the library, such as making workspace available to start-up or home-based businesses as well as small meeting rooms for community groups to use.

“We’re trying to see what people want from the library, compared to what we have currently,” Stolfer said.