

Walker Branch Library Building Survey

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IN SUMMARY:

In February and March 2011, we offered a paper and an electronic survey to get feedback on the Walker Branch Library. 65 surveys were submitted. Of these, 54% came from Walker residents and 15% from Grand Rapids. 31% came from "other" locales, such as Alpine Township, Georgetown, Cedar Springs and Sparta. Most of the respondents are in the age category of 30-54. 69% visit the library on a weekly basis with 25% visiting monthly. The average length of visits are usually less than 1 hour; however, a solid percentage (28) stay 1 to 3 hours. The majority of visitors to the library come to use and/or check out material from the library collection, use the library computers, bring a child to the library, and attend a program. Around 40% of users stated that it is very easy to use the computers and to attend programs at the library. 85% of respondents indicated that the library currently is in a convenient location, although a few stated that the library could use some sort of distinction from the other city buildings to more easily identify it. While the majority of people come to the library by car (94%), many manually submitted surveys indicated the use of bikes as well (people could only select one mode of transportation on the electronic survey).

Overall, our ratings for service points, collections, and amenities ranked excellent or good. Some exceptions include shelving space for materials, café/vending area, the book store, children's program space, and places available for general reading and study areas, which were rated on the lower end.

ISSUES:

- **Shelving Space**
There were many comments which reflected that limited space equals a limited collection. Shelves filled to the brim makes the library look crowded and cluttered.
- **Café/Vending Area**
Having a café or vending area had the second highest number of responses we received. One person commented that sometimes she forgets to bring water or a snack with her so if she is doing a lot of studying she has to leave to get food and then come back and hope that her study space still is open.
- **Book Store**
Staff and Friends members indicated that the Book Store space is small for the amount of donations received. There is a lack of space to store donated materials, so a storage area for them would be beneficial.

- Children's Program Space

Additional spaces for programs and storytimes would be a wonderful improvement. If the room is too crowded, some people choose not to come to programs. There are times throughout the year that we need to use the city chambers for larger, popular programs.

- General Reading and Study Areas


With one open space, there is a lack of quiet areas. We could use more table space for studying and writing. Many of the available spaces are in high traffic zones. Small private study areas would be popular (one person mentioned the study rooms setup at the Plainfield branch).

Favorite Aspects of the Library:

- Children's programs
- The Staff...the people who work at the library make it a special place
- The sky light
- Access to books, movies, CDs, and magazines
- Displays of new books and special topics
- Proximity to my home
- Corner "reading room" area
- It is a place I enjoy being at
- The ability to check out books and bring my kids to get books

Least Favorite Aspects of the Library:

- Larger library would have space for more things for people to borrow
- Space in front of the CD collection is tight/crowded—hard to browse
- It is very cramped and the hours are odd
- Small room for holds items
- Chaos caused by the loud talking and unruly kids, use of cell phones should be outlawed
- Book drop location, lack of quiet area/room
- Slow computers
- Computer station setup
- Crowded children's area



In conjunction with the multi-question survey, staff created a display in the library titled “Dream A Little Dream.” We asked customers to jot down one thing they would like to see in their library. The responses were plentiful! Here are the most popular answers :

BUILDING-INTERIOR:

- Fireplace
- Aquarium
- Café
- Comfortable Seating

BUILDING-EXTERIOR:

- Outdoor reading spot
- Drive thru drop off
- Fix roof so we don’t get snow, ice or rain drops on our heads

MATERIALS:


- More Wii games
- More books
- More children’s movies

EQUIPMENT:

- DVD cleaner
- More computers
- Laptop checkouts
- Fax machine

MISCELLANEOUS:

- More snacks to buy
- Pizza
- Less loud people
- 1-2 day grace period for checkins



We found most people visit the Walker Branch Library on a weekly basis. They bring their children, use and/or check out materials, attend programs, and use library computers. Our customers multi-task at this library and are looking for the conveniences to make this possible. While we offer a wonderful selection of materials, 9 public internet computers, and hundreds of library programs, comments from the surveys reflect the need for more materials and shelving, as well as more program and study space. I was thrilled that the majority think the library is located in an easily accessible location. There are sidewalks and trails that are being used for people to come to the library, and new residents to the city come to the City Offices and are delighted to find the library right close by. However, since the exterior of the library looks the same as the other buildings in the City Complex and is set back from the road, it tends to get lost in the crowd. By implementing something to make the library more of a flagship building, many possibilities can be incorporated to make it easier for future customers to find the library and for the building to stand out without sacrificing the cohesive look of the complex.

The people who come to this library are proud of it, the staff, and the services KDL provides. They recognize that we use the space to maximum capacity, but see areas we could do more to meet their needs.

WHAT CAN WE DO NOW?

- Incorporate more plants inside the library
- Purchase updated end tables and chairs
- Create an outdoor reading spot
- The possibility of providing checkouts of laptops