STEVENS MEMORIAL LIBRARY
STRATEGIC PLAN INPUT FY23-25
FOCUS GROUPS SUMMARY REPORT

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS = 16

- **Teen Focus Group** (12/16/20 2:20-3:00pm) = 6
- **Facility and Technology Focus Group** (1/20/21 6:00-7:15pm) = 5
- **Programming Focus Group** (1/27/21 6:00-7:15pm) = 5

TEEN FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

1. What's the very first word you think of when you think about the Library's Teen Space?

- Small (x2)
- Creative
- Study
- Homework
- Fun

2. What could we do to make the Teen Space more welcoming?

- More comfortable furniture (softer, couches) (x3)
  - Relaxing space to de-stress (softer furniture)
- New style/theme (calming colors)
- Different sections/areas (study vs. read and "hang out" space; one for homework, one for fun)
- Ambient music (Google Home, Alexa)
- Different variations of lighting (lamps for ambience)
- Games

3. What types of resources should we offer in the Teen Space?

- Booklists on different topics/themes
- Info/resources on tough topics
- Things that would help them study for standardized tests
- Suggestions for books for projects (WWII, history, books by topic—essentially booklists)
- Section with books that are typically read in school (summer reading, for English, etc.)
- Area with study supplies (paper, pens, sticky notes, etc.)

4. Tell us how you feel about the Library's programs.
Most Liked Current Programs:

- Gingerbread Competition
- Holiday-themed stuff (e.g., gift wrapping)
- Exam Cram (finals studying with tutors, snacks, etc.)
- Intro to Tarot Card Reading
- Gift wrapping near holidays

Least Liked Current Programs: N/A; No one could think of a program they didn't enjoy
Ideas for Future Programs:

- Painting night and general art-related programs
- Free yoga (already done, but these teens couldn't attend at the time)

- Baking would be fun
- More astrology programs
- Easier if it's at the school due to timing/rides

5. How do you prefer to attend programs?
- Prefer attending programs in-person(x5)
  - Ideal, if possible (x3)
  - Like virtual programs with take-home kits, but once Covid is over, like the in-person programs (x2)
- Likes Zooming (virtual) with friends

6. Tell us how you feel about serving on the Teen Advisory Board (TAB).
Like Most about Serving on TAB:
- Have a lot of fun because my friends are in TAB too
- I like to know what fun stuff is going on/social aspect
- I like choosing future programs
- Like being a representative for other teens in the area.
- I like having a personal say in what's going on.
- In-person meetings were better, doing activities for the library was fun.
- I like coming up with different ideas for programming, and for decorating the library.
- Loved making the kindness cards for the library-positive quotes for patrons to take.

Like Least about Serving on TAB: N/A; No one could think of something they don't enjoy about serving on TAB

TAB Improvement Ideas:
- Increase/Enhance Marketing (x3)
  - If I wasn't on TAB, I wouldn't know what was going on—maybe marketing better...sending more info to schools
  - Better advertising would be great to reach more teens.
  - Need more advertising for the actual TAB—to attract potential new TAB members
- Timing sometimes doesn't work
- Could meet more often (maybe twice a month)
- Maybe more members representative of different groups (different grades)

7. What could the Library do to better serve local teens? What advice do you have for us?
- Increase promotion of teen space (x2)
  - Advertising the teen space more, because we don't really have places in town for teens to go and study, hang out etc.
  - ADVERTISE
- Hard to plan because of Covid, but offering tutoring services
- More volunteer opportunities/community service

8. What types of Library volunteer opportunities might interest you?
- Definitely helping with programming
- Social media posts
- Helping with children's programming

- Helping to put together kits (take home kits)
- Sign-up board for volunteering
- Social media posts (incorporate into TAB to promote to other teens)
- Leadership opportunities

9. What current issues are important to you?
Most Important Issues/Causes
- Mental health (x4)
  - Dealing with stress (x2)
- Personal health/fitness (x3)
- Environment (x2)
Related Program Ideas
- Mindfulness (x2)
- Active, hands-on activities (x2)
  - A little bit of learning, but mostly hands-on activities that support the issues/causes cited above
  - Fewer lectures, more doing things
- Meditation
- Coordinate community-focused cause-related programs (e.g., clean up days)

FACILITY AND TECHNOLOGY FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

1. What's the very first word you think of when you think about the Library facility—the building and its space?
- Access
- Dated
- Educational
- Evolving
- Historic
- Old

2. Let's pretend we're designing our own library—what we think is the perfect library. What do you see when you imagine it?
Ideal Library Interior:
- Large, open spaces with lots of light
- Cozy reading nooks (e.g., fireplace)
- Artwork
- Flexible, modular spaces for different purposes (study, programs/presentations)
- Areas for playgroups, to take classes, etc.
- Configuration accommodates collections-based priorities
  - Provides more space/shelving/displays for expanded collections
  - Offers easy access to materials
  - Value of collection
Ideal Library Exterior (grounds):
- Covered seating area
- Flexible multipurpose exterior space (program/performance area, sitting, reading)
Ideal Library - Misc.:
- Easily accessible space for all ages and physical abilities
  - Easy access for families (e.g., ample children's room space/furniture/seating for kids and adults watching them)

- o Easy-to-use space (e.g., minimal set-up/breakdown, accommodates formal and informal group gatherings)
- Maintain highly visible, attractive signage throughout the facility (e.g., floorplans/maps to key areas, directions to public Online Public Access Catalogs (OPACs))

Related Idea: We need the OPACs

3. How can the Library's physical space be improved? What can we do to make the facility more <u>relevant</u>, <u>useful</u>, and <u>user-friendly</u>?

Most Critical Potential Improvements:
- At the entrance, the stairs are a problem (e.g., dangerous, challenging for those with mobility issues)
- In children's room, create more inviting story time and playgroup areas
- Add artwork/photos to walls
- Add more comfortable, cozy seating. Upgrade furniture and add more soft seating
- In children's room, offer more seating for all family members (adults and children)
- Community room is uncomfortable and "blah"
  - o Replace current hard, uncomfortable furniture with soft, comfortable seating
  - o Improve HVAC to avoid current temperature inconsistencies (too hot/cold)
  - o Add artwork
- Need better fixtures for displaying new materials. Displays are important for piquing people's interest.
- Increase Light in Teen Area
  - o Reduce amount of dark wood
  - o Increase natural lighting
  - o Use light colors on walls

Improve Accessibility:
- Facility and grounds aren't very accessible (x3)
  - o Handicap entrance isn't ADA compliant. It's a "work-around" that barely meets basic requirements, but it's in appropriate for a town (public) building.
- Parking is insufficient and unsafe (x3)
  - o Cars are moving too close to the building, poses a safety problem, especially for children
- Roadways are confusing. Drivers don't know which way they're supposed to go to get to the Library. (x2)
  - o Need more signs around town to promote the Library's location
- Need to add more green space around the Library
  - o Too much pavement. Not enough green space.

4. The Library is thinking a lot about how to make space more welcoming, comfortable, and functional to <u>students and teachers</u>. What could the Library do to the building to better accommodate their studying and meeting needs?

- Offer multiple sized meeting spaces with multi-functional furniture (x4)
  - o Offer small and large meeting spaces/rooms
  - o Add furniture that accommodates collaborating groups (e.g., more tables and chairs for small groups to use)
- Add quiet study spaces and complementary furniture (e.g., individual desks/study carrels)

- Create a dedicated tween space that accommodates diverse functions/interests (programming, makerspace, gaming)
- Improve task lighting. Current is ok but could be better.

5. The Library also wants to make its space more conducive to people working and meeting in the building. What could the Library do to better to accommodate <u>workers</u>, <u>businesses</u>, and <u>local</u> <u>organizations</u>?

- Improve Wi-Fi accessibility around the Library (x3)
  - Currently, exterior signal is strongest in front of building. Everyone parks there to get Wi-Fi.
  - Boost signal—extend range beyond the front of the building
- In the building, add outlets/charging stations
- Offer seating with charging stations (desks, tables and chairs with plugs)
- Create functional exterior space that accommodates programming, seating for reading/studying, etc. Enables Library to expand physical footprint beyond the building's interior and may free up space inside.
- Add more bathrooms
- Café (or coffee/beverage area)

6. Let's talk about the Library's online presence. Do you and your family access Library information and resources online?

Website:
- Everyone has visited the Library's website
- Site Appearance/Navigation
  - All criticized the website design ("not wild about the design," "forgettable," "Functional but not aspirational," "Website is not the most attractive!")
  - If site is unattractive, then perhaps it's not attracting people. So. there are people who don't know what the Library's doing/offering.
  - Easy to navigate
  - Challenging to find Library's website because there's another Stevens Memorial library "confusing")
- Content
  - Uses website to check hours, programming, and to access online catalog
  - Calendar feature is useful
  - Should add more photos of activities and the facility to the website
  - Doesn't remember seeing links to the Library's Facebook page and Instagram account

Social Media (Facebook and Instagram):
- Don't see a lot of Library events posted on Facebook or Instagram
- Need to promote Instagram more
- Liked the crafts and story time videos
- Would like to see more posts about new collections items on Facebook
- Add some staff and community book reviews
- On Facebook, wants to receive books-on-hold notifications and message the Library via Facebook to get new books

7. Which Library technology resources or services do you and you use, either on-site or via the Library's website?

Comments:
- Use Overdrive and Libby
- Use audiobooks and streaming
- Really just use the Library for programs and kid materials
- Didn't know some of these resources are available

Improvement Ideas:
- Need instructions regarding how to use Overdrive
- Provide information regarding Overdrive vs. Libby vs. Sora (which are easier to use?)
- Advertise Library's online resources/services
- Kanopy subscription would be nice
- Lend out hotspots
- Add computer stations, including in teen and children's areas
- Please add laptops
- Improve the user interface on public PCs (isn't user friendly)
- Seniors are uncomfortable with tech. They don't know how to use devices/applications or forget how. Promote the Library's technology resources to this population.

8. **The Library wants to better meet the <u>schools' (students and teachers)</u> and <u>remote workers'</u> technology needs. What new and improved technology should the Library offer them?**
- Offer games on tablets
- Provide access to tutoring online (e.g., via Zoom). Community members could serve as tutors
- Lend technology devices (tablets, etc.)
- Staff should help people download and use Library's technology resources
- Add makerspace and tinker lab space
- Offer technology instruction programs (e.g., coding)
- Add technology development resources to collections (Raspberry Pi, Makey Makey STEM invention kits, etc.)

9. **Looking forward, what additional technology do you think the Library should focus on over the next five years?**
- Offer more virtual programs (x3)
  - After COVID, continue offering some online programming, including maybe more for adults and teens (not just children's programs)
  - Going forward, offer more virtual programs
  - Stream and record virtual programs (e.g., Zoom) for real-time and on-demand community access
- Enhance website functions
  - Offer online program calendar that processes reservations
  - Enable people to book museum passes on website
- Offer tutorials and programs to help people keep up with evolution of technology
- Ensure community has access to newer technologies
- Library should collaborate with the high school for offering technology-related sessions!

10. **Before we wrap up, is there anything else you'd like to share with the Library's regarding its facility or technology?**

- On Instagram, post more Library stuff (staff appearances!)

PROGRAMMING FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

1. **What's the very first word you think of when you think about the Library programs—the activities/events the Library offers?**
   - Books
   - Children
   - Reading
   - Resources
   - Value

2. **How can we make attending and participating in programs as convenient as possible for you and your family?**
   Most Convenient Days and Times:
   - Weekday afternoons and early evenings (x3)
     - Now that I'm older, probably weekday afternoons or early evenings are most convenient
     - Afternoon or early evenings because I try to see my family on weekends
     - For adults, late afternoons or early evenings work best
   - Depends on what stage in life you're in (x2)
   - Nights and weekends: Currently, both of us (parents) are working, so nights and weekends are best times. When kids were younger, days were more convenient.
   - Weekday daytime for very young children, but school-aged children aren't available during day
   In-Person or Virtual Program Preference:
   - In-Person (x6)
     - In-person!! Got distracted with virtual
     - Enjoy interaction with other patrons with in-person
   Post-Pandemic: In-Person or Virtual Program Preference:
   - Mix of in-person and virtual is good (x5)
     - Variety is nice. Some people can't make it to the Library
   Ideas:
   - Offer virtual, synchronized live streaming programs
   - Record live programs and share/post recordings for those who attend them in-person

3. **Let's talk about the Library's current array of programs. What do you and your family like the most/least about the programs the Library has offered (before and during the pandemic)?**
   Most Enjoyable Programs:
   - Arts and crafts (x3)
     - Hands-on crafting programs (wreath-making, felting). Might do them on my own, but I enjoy being guided through activity.
     - Group arts and crafts programs because I like seeing what other people make.
     - Paint night
   - Lectures and storytellers (x2)
     - Westminster programs
     - In-person talks with people sharing their experiences and experiential learnings
   - Music programs (x2)
     - Open mic night for musicians

- o Karaoke
- I like informational and useful programs (e.g., beekeeping, Alzheimer's/dementia, Halloween trick or treat book handout)
- Children's summer reading program
- Programs for seniors

Least Enjoyable Programs:
- Before pandemic, attended a very dry virtual program.
- Seniors' programs scheduled after dark. Seniors don't want to go out or don't have nighttime rides.

Ideas:
- Offer more cooking programs (e.g., Liz Barbour)
- Send program information via e-newsletter
- Don't offer senior programs at night

4. **What about the kinds of programs should the Library focus on? What topics should they pursue? Not looking for specific ideas here (yet)—just general areas of focus.**

General Programming Focus Areas/Topics
- Gardening
- Movies
- Book with related activities (field trip, make/do something based on book's topic)
- Life skills

Ideas:
- Gardening: FOL could help with a plant/seed swap and programs with local growers/farmers
- Movie nights
- Book with movie tie-ins: Read book, watch movie, and follow with a group discussion
- Book and a field trip: Consider what's happening/happened in the area. Read book about the topic and then visit location.
- Book and activity: Read book and sponsor interactive activity based on book's topic
- Life skills: Vocational, resume building, job searching, etc.
- Collaborate—develop and offer programs—with other local groups (e.g., Making Opportunity Count (MOC) and Senior Center) (x2)

5. **Now, let's brainstorm some new program ideas for specific age groups. What new programs do you think would interest children, tweens, teens, or adults?**

Ideas by Age Group:
- Kids
  - o Pet and pet care
  - o Afterschool programs
- Teens/Tweens
  - o Gaming attracts kids and families. Sponsor a gaming competition
  - o Trivia night
  - o Programs with snacks (BYO or provided)
- College/New Adults (20's)
  - o Social and literary activities (e.g., Pints and pages book club that meets at local restaurants/pubs)

- Programs that engage and support this age group's focus on activism. For example, programs that teach people what activism is, how to be part of an organization that seeks to improve the world, and informational programs about specific kinds of activism.
    - Civics programs
    - Trivia night
- Adults (new parents, working adults, families)
    - Yoga (x2)
        - Family yoga (with kids)
    - Cooking and painting
    - Offer kids' programs at the same time as an adult program, so parents can attend something while their kid(s) do, too
    - Programs that provide opportunities for adults to socialize and making friends
- Seniors
    - Information regarding grandparents raising children
    - Any intergenerational activity that brings diverse age groups together

6. What about ideas for other community organizations or target groups? What programs do you think would appeal to them?

- Small business owner speaker programs
- Collaborate with different organizations to identify interesting programs and speakers and to cross-promote (x2)
    - Collaborating with local non-profits (e.g., senior center) to strengthen both organizations' PR
- Host an Open House that welcomes new residents to town. Local organizations (businesses, town departments, non-profits) present information about their resources and services.

7. The Library wants to serve as many community members as possible. What do you think about the Library offering focusing on outreach and delivery services?

- Offer a materials delivery service (previously offered via volunteers)
- Library valet service
- Curbside printing: Someone emails or brings a file/document to be printed. Patron picks up printed materials curbside.
- Provide clear, concise instructions regarding how to use CWMAR's catalog, online resources, etc.
- Ensure Library is a safe space for all; Library is a neutral, trustworthy resource

8. The Library wants to ensure the community's aware of its offerings. What's the best way to promote our programs?

Ways They Currently Learn about Library Programs:
- Facebook (x2)
- Website (x2)
- Newsletters (emails)

Additional Ways to Promote Library Programs:
- Seniors don't have computers, so use traditional promotional methods to inform people (e.g., posters)
- Senior Center (Jan) could share e-newsletters and non-computer resources with seniors
- Use sandwich boards and sidewalk signs

- Flyers would be nice. Could insert Library flyer in other local mail (e.g., town mailing)

9. **Looking forward, what programs do you think the community will need and value the <u>most</u> over the next 5 years?**
   - Offer more opportunities to socialize (x2)
     - "Coffee and chat" activities (regular, specific hours to grab coffee and meet people)
     - Quarterly, seasonal tea "socials" (informal "drop-in" times)
   - Keeping options open. Be flexible and resourceful. Adapt to community's evolving needs.
   - Offer technology training
   - Post-pandemic, continue offering successful programs. People will be comforted by the ability to resume "familiar" programs.
   - Utilize other available community spaces for programs. Conduct programs off-site.
   - Develop functional, friendly outdoor spaces for people of all ages to use