



Manhattan Beach Library Community Needs Assessment Report

March 11, 2026



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Executive Summary

A Manhattan Beach Library (MBL) Community Needs Assessment was undertaken in 2025. On behalf of the Los Angeles County Library (Library), in partnership with the City of Manhattan Beach, we conducted stakeholder interviews, community focus groups, a community survey, a library trend analysis and benchmarking process, and spatial analysis of user and staff library spaces. Utilizing the research, we held two Design Workshops with the Library, the City, and community members to discuss the research findings, envision the future for the library community and develop strategic priorities to address the community's needs.

The Process

Interviews

We conducted 40 interviews with MBL stakeholders. They included MBL staff, Library Executives and Management, Manhattan Beach City Council members, City of Manhattan Beach staff who have regular contact with the library, City of Manhattan Beach Library Commissioners, Friends of the Library, Manhattan Beach Historical Society, and staff from Los Angeles County Supervisorial District 2.

Focus Groups

We conducted four focus groups in June 2025. One focus group was held in conjunction with a Senior group from the City's Park and Recreation Department, one was a teen group during a monthly meeting of MBL's Teen Advisory Council, and two other focus groups were composed of general community members invited via posted flyers at the library and word of mouth.

Community Survey

A survey was sent out to the City of Manhattan Beach community email list and the Library's MBL email lists. Flyers with a QR code were also posted in the library. The survey was open for the second half of August 2025. The survey was sent again to the Manhattan Beach Unified School District email list and opened for the first half of November 2025.

Benchmarks

We benchmarked MBL's operations and services data with eight libraries that were selected from California libraries based on location and demographic similarities. The benchmarked libraries included the following County libraries: Culver City Julian Dixon Library, Diamond Bar Library, Hermosa Beach Library, Malibu Library, and West Hollywood Library. Other benchmarked libraries included Calabasas Public Library, El Segundo Library, and Menlo Park Library.

Manhattan Beach Library Trends

We also examined the trends of MBL from FY 2014-15 through FY 2024-25, noting that all library services were shut down during the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020, with services gradually opening back up in FY 2020-21. It is recognized that library services have changed since then, with many more people relying on digital library services than prior to the pandemic.

Design Workshops

We held two in-person design workshops (one in October and another in December 2025) with Library staff and community stakeholders in the Community Meeting Room of MBL.

Spatial Analysis

The space analysis reviewed how space is allocated and used in the library. Throughout the project, we collected data from the community as well as made site observations on several visits to the library. We also assessed the current library space against County guidelines and other state library guidelines.

Key Themes

There were several common themes that emerged from the research.



Community's Vision for Manhattan Beach Library

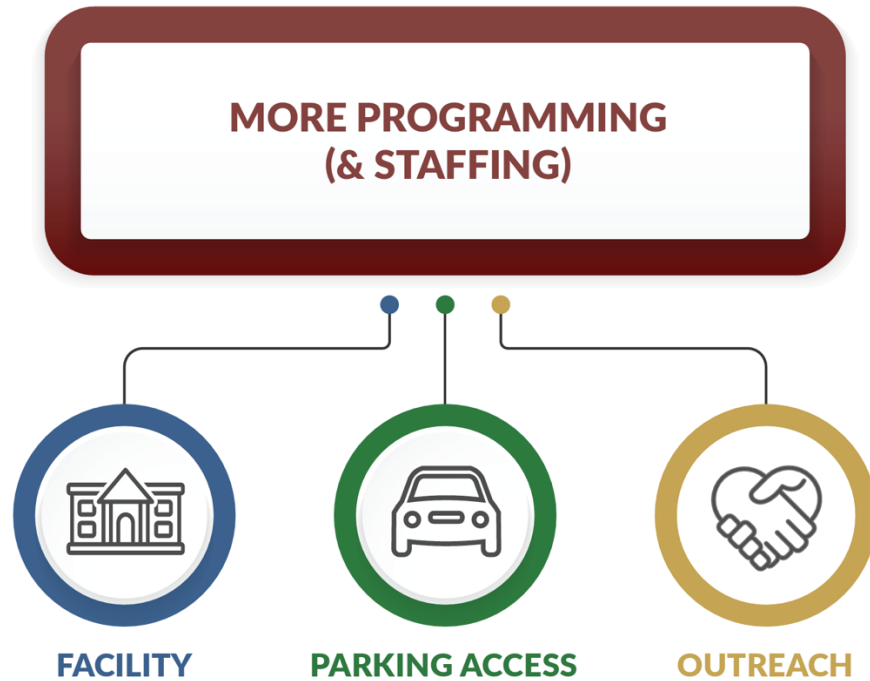
Following a presentation of "What We Heard" from the community research, a vision for the library was developed at the first design workshop session.

Manhattan Beach Library should seek to:

- Develop dynamic, innovative and enriching **programs** that recognize a diverse community.
- Provide flexible, functional and safe **spaces** for the community to connect and engage.
- Be an informational, technological, and cultural **resource** for the community.
- **Outreach** to the community to facilitate access to resources and conversations.

Strategic Priorities

There are four Strategic Priorities that emerged from the second design workshop session that will bring about a *Community's Vision* for MBL. The first strategic priority is to develop the library as a place where people in the community can come, gather, and share ideas. The other three strategic priorities serve to ensure that the first priority is a success.



Priority #1: More programming

Programs should be developed that address different interests among those in the community. Adequate staffing levels should ensure that the library can manage increased programming needs.

Priority #2: Maintain facility as a flagship library

The library should be maintained in top-notch condition to reflect its status as the County's flagship library.

Priority #3: Address Parking Limitations

The library has access issues due to limited parking availability in downtown Manhattan Beach and will need to partner with the City to develop improvements to parking availability for the library.

Priority #4: Increase community outreach

Community members should be made more aware of library offerings.

Spatial Analysis

We reviewed the space in order to determine if the current library space was adequate to develop the strategic priorities of the community. The following recommendations are being provided to improve the library space that meet community needs.

Recommendations

- *Develop the library's outdoor property for additional seating, programming, and community space.*
 - *Consider adding to Manhattan Beach Library collection.*
 - *Redesign main entry staff area to improve user experience and improve security.*
 - *Reduce the number of public computer workstations (not including the Early Learning Computers) to allow for more general seating.*
 - *Consider ways to brighten the children's area.*
 - *Consider adding additional areas for group study.*
 - *Redesign staff workspaces to create a better working environment in anticipation of additional staff to support strategic priorities.*
-

II. Benchmark Comparisons & Trends

Overview

This benchmark and trend analysis was produced from LA County Library Statistics, California State Library Statistics, United States Census, and Data-USA. Benchmark library data are from Fiscal Year 2023-24. Benchmark partners were chosen from California libraries based on location and demographics. Several LA County libraries were selected based on similar funding characteristics (budget surplus). Additional municipal libraries were selected based on similar demographics and location. Key benchmark measures are provided for population, finance, operations and services, staffing, and space.

Benchmark Libraries

LOS ANGELES COUNTY LIBRARIES

*Culver City Julian Dixon Library
Diamond Bar Library
Hermosa Beach Library
Malibu Library
West Hollywood Library*

OTHER MUNICIPAL LIBRARIES

*Calabasas Public Library
El Segundo Library
Menlo Park Library*

Communities served by peer libraries have a narrow range of education, income, and diversity. MBL's service population (34,390) is a little larger than the average benchmark partner populations, with a similar median age (43.4), and is at the high end of median household income (\$193,000) and residential property value (\$2M). MBL is less diverse in race/ethnicity (28% Non-white), similar to all but Culver City (54% Non-white) and Diamond Bar (87% Non-white).

Performance indicators such as overall collection size and use, expenditures, and programming show that MBL's operating costs (which include an annual \$803,250 for a bond payment for the building) are 73% more than the average of the other benchmarked libraries. None of the other libraries' operating costs include building payments. Among the other County libraries with a budget surplus, MBL provides more programming, and has the highest program attendance per capita. MBL has a markedly smaller collection size (28% below average), and the use of the collection is 18% below average. It should be noted that County Library users also have access to and make robust use of Library holdings through the County's shared catalog and reciprocal borrowing for all users regardless of home library.

Although the proportion of the community who are registered users exceeds the service population, MBL has a lower-than-average circulation per capita (29% less). Total operating expenditures per capita are 31% higher than average. Although MBL logs 11% fewer service transactions per capita, higher expenditures results in a cost per service transaction that is 56% higher than average. Although staffing and staff costs are below average, the relatively high transaction cost additionally reflects the annual bond payments for the building opened in 2015. The other libraries do not include building and capital costs in their operational expenditures.

MBL currently provides about the same reader space overall as peer libraries, but about 10% less square feet per capita.

MBL statistical trends are compiled for FY 2014-15 through FY 2024-25 for borrowers, building use, service transactions, and collection size; cost data is available up through FY 2023-24. The

trends show a movement toward pre-pandemic service levels but is not there yet. Service transactions actually declined slightly in FY 2024-25. Staffing has declined from a pre-pandemic high of 20 in FY 2020-21 to a current level of 12 at the present time. Collection size has remained steady. Operating expenses appear to be rising steadily.

Benchmark Comparisons

1. Demographics

Population size, median age, and median household income indicators are shown below for MBL and benchmark partner communities. The current population of Manhattan Beach is higher than average for benchmark partners (34,390 vs 30,556 average), with a median age very close to the benchmark average at 43.4. Manhattan Beach has higher than average median household income (\$193,000) and median property value (sources: US Census 2020, Data-USA).

	Population	Median age	% Non-White	Median HH income	Median property value	Poverty
Calabasas	22,869	42.9	29%	\$ 157,938	\$1.5M	9%
Culver City	41,617	41.2	54%	\$ 122,000	\$1.1M	6%
Diamond Bar	52,041	45.6	87%	\$ 107,000	\$.87M	9%
El Segundo	16,863	38.2	45%	\$ 149,149	\$1.5M	4%
Hermosa Beach	19,673	42.1	21%	\$ 152,019	\$1.6M	5%
Malibu	10,277	50.7	20%	\$ 192,000	\$2M	NA
Manhattan Beach	34,390	43.4	28%	\$ 193,000	\$2M	4%
Menlo Park	32,775	38.5	48%	\$ 206,588	\$2M	5%
West Hollywood	35,117	39.6	30%	\$ 94,800	\$.97M	13%
Average	30,556	42.9	40%	\$ 150,308	\$1.6M	7%

Table II-1
Demographics of Benchmark Cities

2. Collection

The size of a library’s collection is a measure of the information resources available to users at this location. The number of items owned is the sum of physical items including audio visual materials. Figure II-1 shows the number of items in each of the library collections (blue bars, MBL in red). MBL’s collection size is smaller in comparison to benchmark partners, at 28% below average, for a population that is 15% higher than average. It is noted that Menlo Park Library and El Segundo Library both manage the local public school library collections included in the collection totals for FY 23-24.

The ratio of the size of the collection to the population provides a comparison of the number of items that the library provides relative to the size of the population. Benchmark library ratios range from 5.75 items per capita (El Segundo) to 1.09 (Diamond Bar). MBL provides 1.54 items per capita, 55% below average.

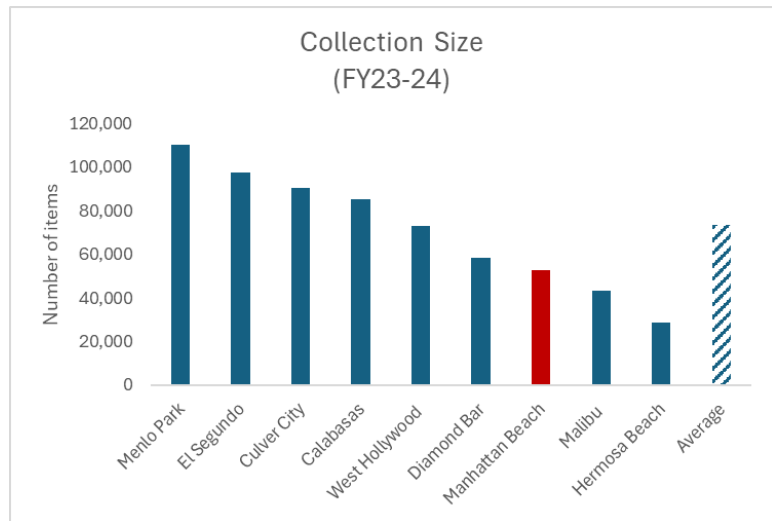


Figure II-1: Comparison of Collection Size

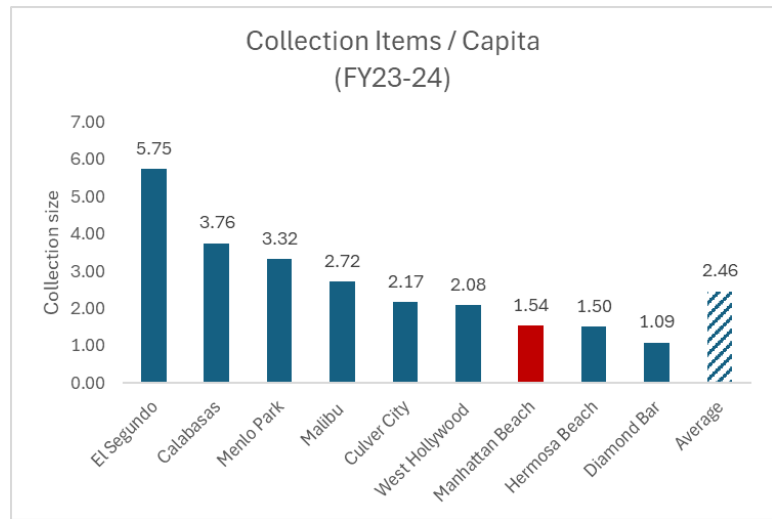


Figure II-2: Comparison of Collection Items per Capita

3. Circulation

The use of the collection, or circulation, is tracked in the library’s integrated computer system as users check out items. Annual circulation ranges from 685,054 (Menlo Park) to 36,780 (Malibu). MBL circulated 183,832 items in FY 2023-24, 18% below average. Menlo Park Library’s circulation was nearly three times the rate of the next highest circulation of the benchmarked libraries.

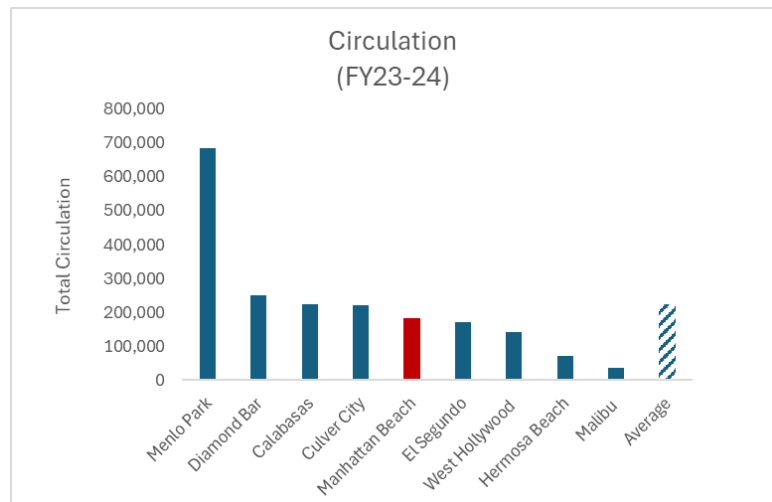


Figure II-3: Comparison of Collection Use

Circulation per capita is the ratio of the number of items checked out divided by the number of registered borrowers. With a slightly above average number of registered borrowers, MBL circulation-to-population ratio is 29% less than benchmark partner average with Menlo Park Library’s circulation per capita doubling that of the second highest for El Segundo Library.

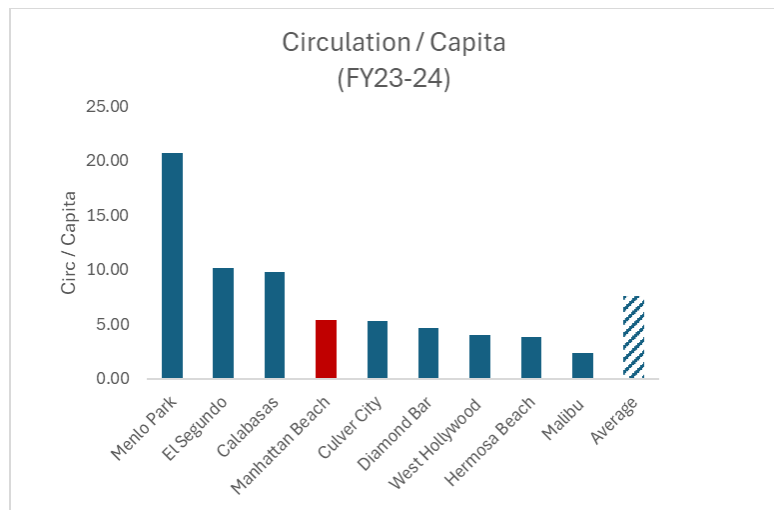


Figure II-4: Comparison of Circulation Per Capita

4. Service Transactions

Selected public service transactions (SPST) is an aggregate measure of library use, including library visits, reference questions, program attendance, print and electronic item checkouts, and interlibrary lending/borrowing. Figure II-5 shows libraries in order of the number of transactions (blue columns) from most to least. Overall, MBL logs close to the average number of service transactions.

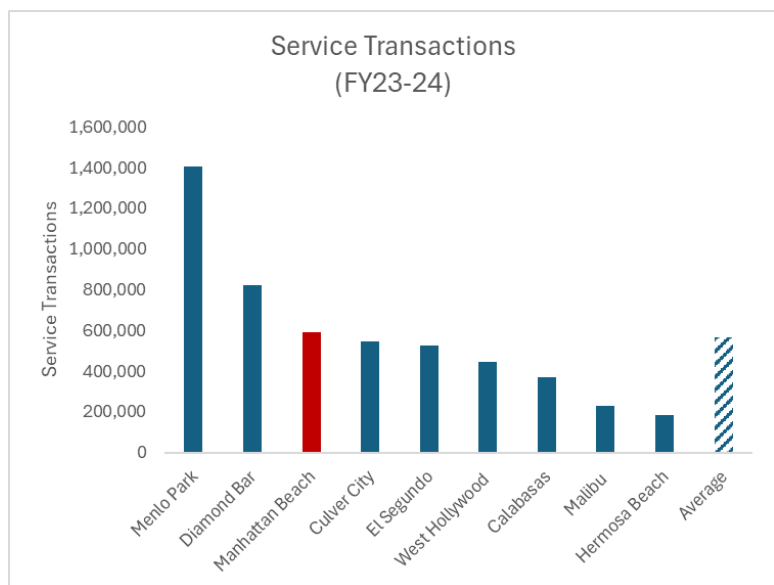


Figure II-5: Comparison of Service Transactions

The ratio of service transactions to the population provides a measure of transactions per capita. MBL logs a service transactions per capita ratio that is 11% below the average.

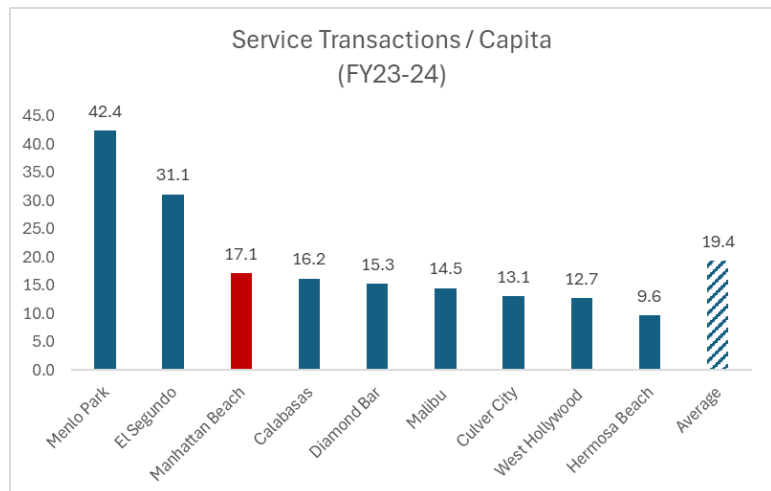


Figure II-6: Comparison of Service Transactions per Capita

5. Operating Expenditures

The library's total operating expenses include the cost of library materials, staff, and other expenses. Costs for benchmark libraries range from \$4,152,250 (MBL) to \$1,728,566 (Calabasas Library). MBL spends 62% more than average.

It is important to note that MBL's operating expenditures include an annual expenditure of \$803,250 for a bond payment for the library building that opened in 2015. None of the other libraries include a large building/lease payment in their operating expenses. Separating the costs of the bond payment would place MBL's overall operating cost second to Culver City Library's operating cost.

Cost per service transaction (Figure II-8) is calculated by dividing the total operating expenditures by total transactions. Cost per transaction for benchmark partners ranged from \$2.34 (Menlo Park Library) to \$11.67 (Malibu Library). MBL has a cost per transaction at \$7.04, 56% higher than average.

Cost per capita (Figure II-9) is calculated as a ratio of expenditures to the service population. Benchmark libraries range from \$46.37 (Diamond Bar Library) to \$169.15 (Malibu Library). MBL is 41% higher than average at \$120.74 per capita.

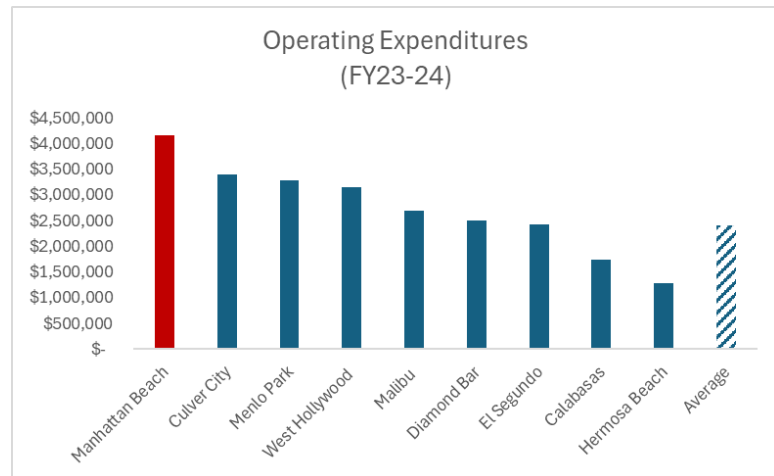


Figure II-7: Comparison of Operating Expenditures

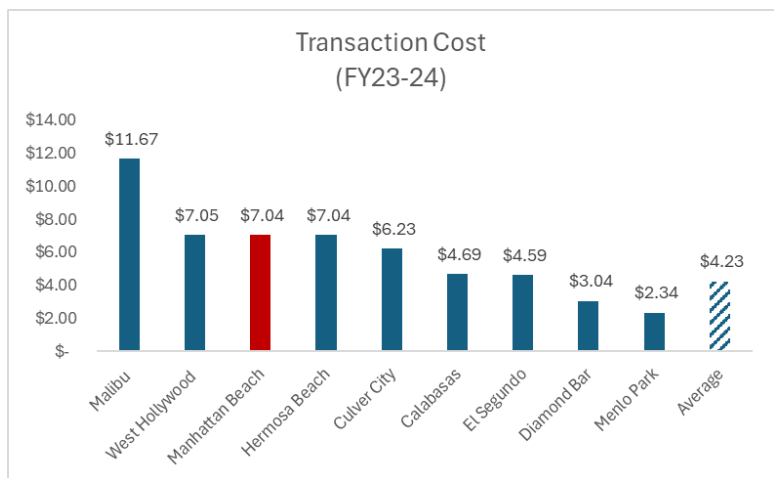


Figure II-8: Comparison of Transaction Cost

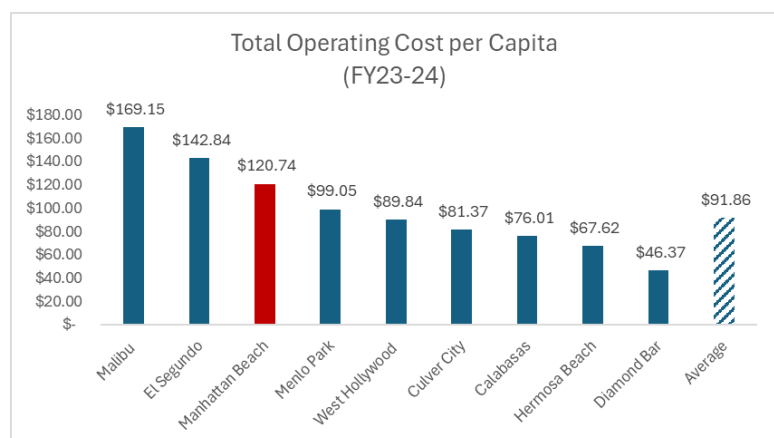


Figure II-9: Comparison of Cost per Capita

Staff cost per capita ranges from \$20.84 (Diamond Bar Library) to \$108.99 (El Segundo Library). MBL staff cost per capita is \$35.57, 25% less than average.

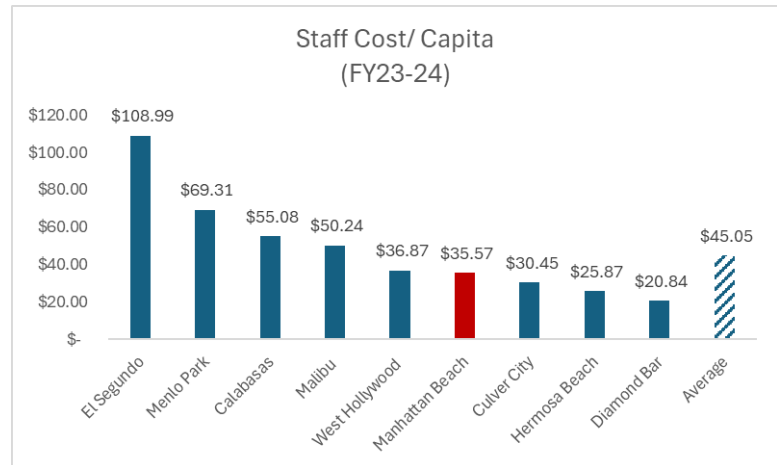


Figure II-10: Comparison of Staff Cost per Capita

6. Registered Users and Service Area Population

The number of registered users at a specific library location is calculated using the location selected by the user as their home library. The percent of the total service area population who have library cards provides an approximate measure of the proportion of the community who are library users, with limitations as noted below. MBL reported 40,418 active cardholders in FY 2023-24, which is 118% of the service area population. Many library locations are claimed as home libraries to users who live outside formal service area boundaries. In some cases, the number of registered users exceeds the service area population, which is true for four of the nine libraries measured here.

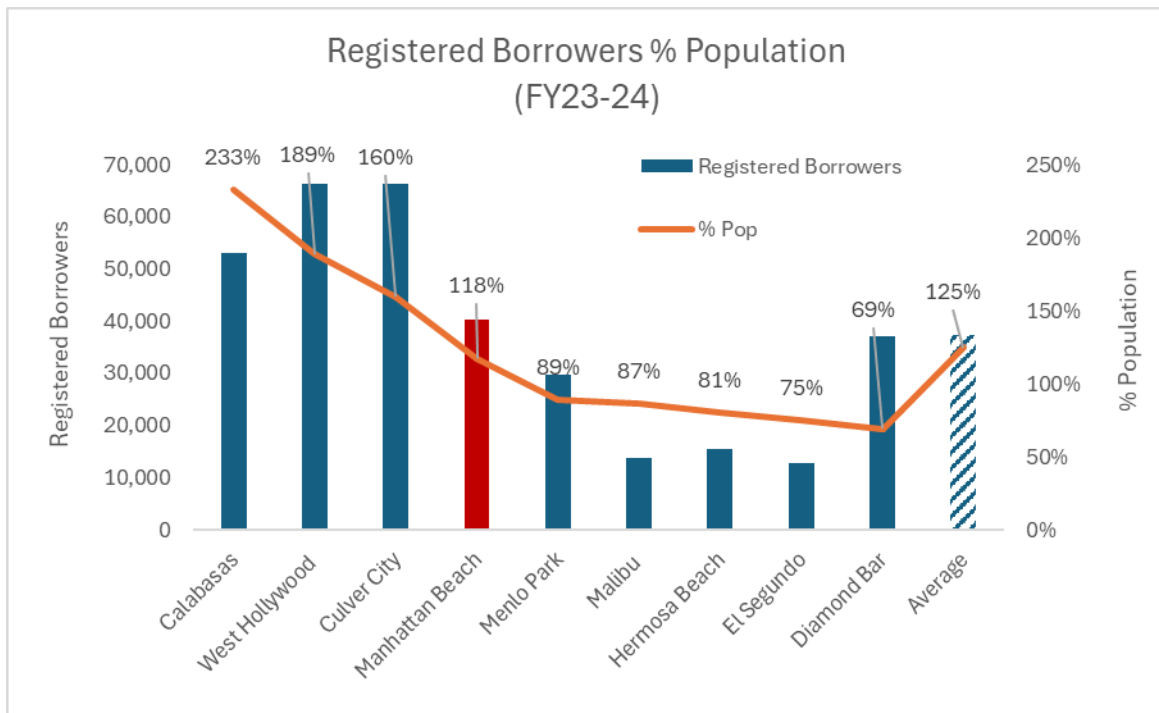


Figure II-11: Comparison of Registered Borrowers as Percentage of Population

7. Program Attendance

Programming is one of the most important functions the library provides. Overall attendance divided by population provides a measure of per capita program attendance. Overall program attendance is shown below by the blue bars. Benchmark libraries' attendance ranged from 2,210 (Malibu Library) to 14,023 (Menlo Park Library), with per capita attendance from 0.07 (Diamond Bar Library) to 0.42 (Menlo Park Library). MBL overall attendance (7,837) and per capita attendance (0.23) were among the highest of County benchmark libraries: 51% above average in overall attendance and 31% above average in attendance per capita.

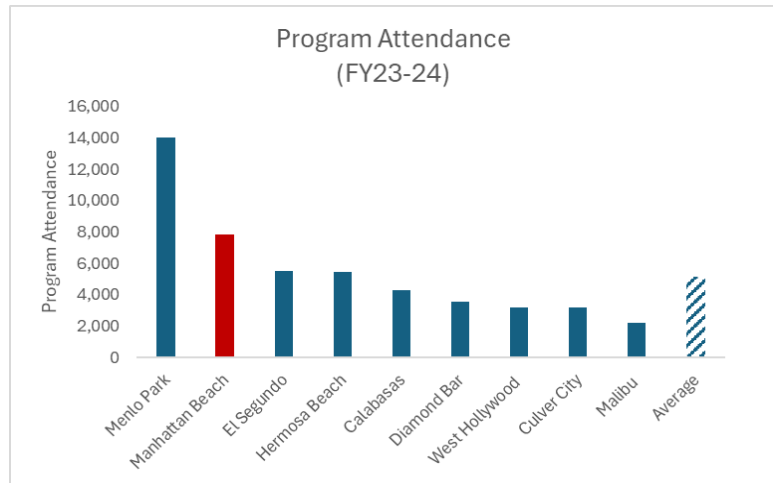


Figure II-12: Comparison of Program Attendance

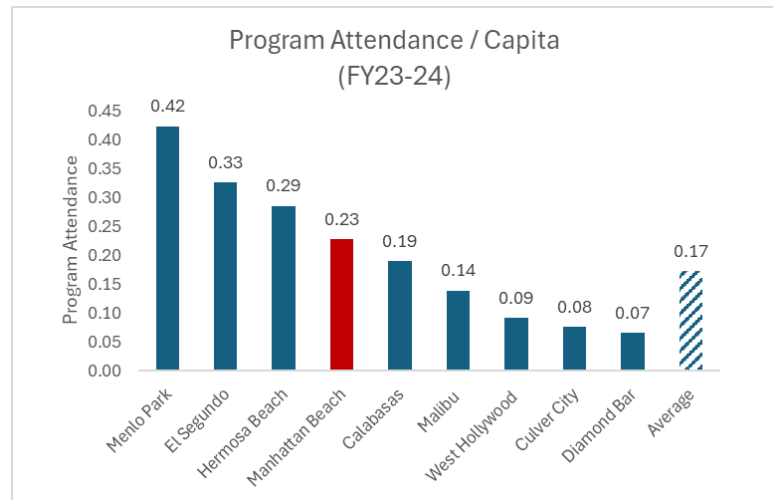


Figure II-13: Comparison of Program Attendance Per Capita

8. Reader Space

The amount of assignable space available for library users divided by the population provides a measure of space per capita. The blue bars in Figure II-14 show per capita space in benchmark libraries, ranging from 0.34 square feet per person (Hermosa Beach Library) to 1.29 square feet per capita (El Segundo Library). MBL provides 10% less than average amount of space per user, at 0.63 square feet per capita.

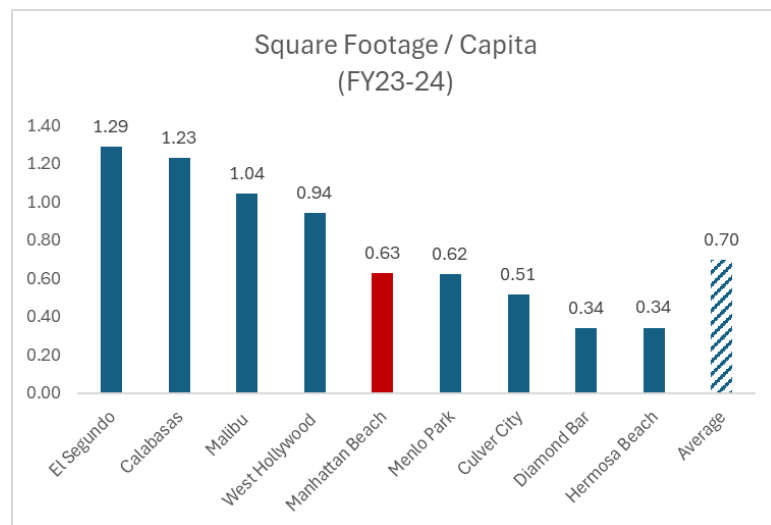


Figure II-14: Comparison of Space Per Capita

9. Staffing

Staffing ranges from 11 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff members (Culver City Library) to 16 FTE (El Segundo Library). MBL employs 12 FTE. The ratio of staff to population served provides a comparable picture of relative staffing strength. FTE per 1,000 library population ranges from 2.64 FTE (Culver City Library) to 9.43 (El Segundo Library). MBL staffing rate is 3.49, 25% below the benchmark average.

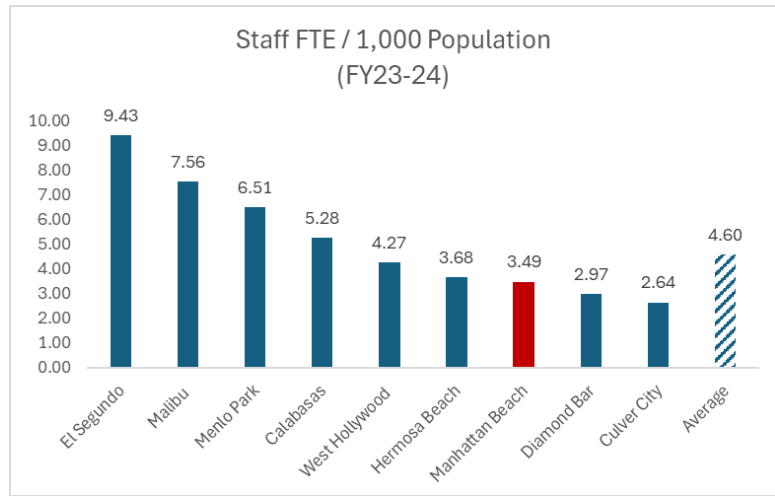


Figure II-15: Comparison of Staff FTE per 1,000 Population

Manhattan Beach Library Trends from FY 2014-15 through FY 2024-25

The following sections provide trend data for total operating expenditures, hours, staff FTE, collection size and expenditures, and staff expenditures. It is important here to note two significant events which affected the numbers during this ten-year period, one being the opening of MBL in FY 2014-15, which meant that the library was closed for a period of time in preparation for the library opening in May 2015. Also, in FY 2020-21, the COVID-19 pandemic caused the closure of the library abruptly mid-March 2020. The library slowly re-opened in several phases, allowing for sidewalk services and eventually opening its doors to limited in-person services in mid-April 2021.

1. Gate Count & Borrowers

The number of people who consider MBL as their home library was 40,250 for FY 2024-25 and has remained fairly stable throughout the pandemic. The number of people coming to the library (gate count) began to rebound quickly in post-pandemic years and increased 6% from last year. The number of visitors has declined 7% since FY 2015-16; the number of borrowers has increased 1% since FY 2015-16.

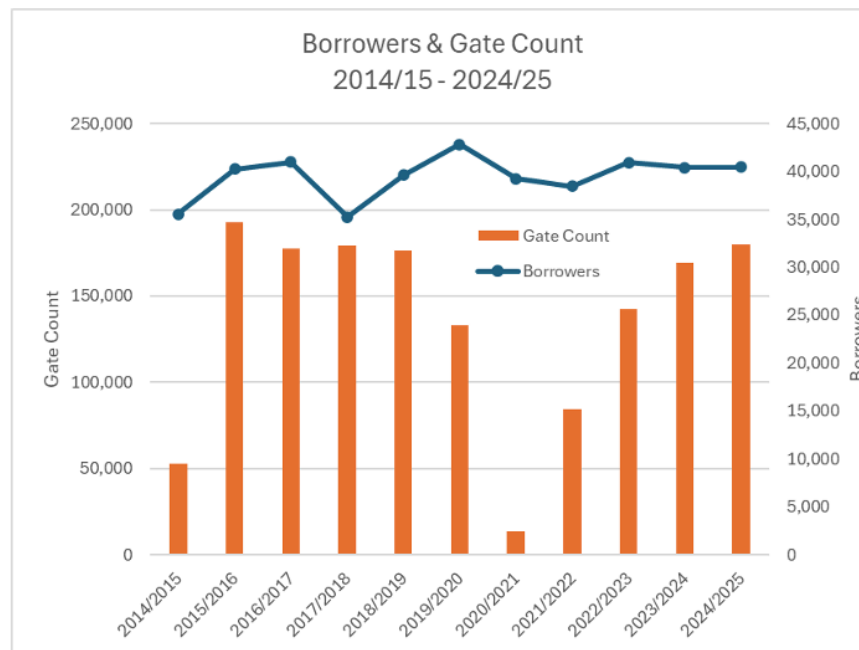


Figure II-16: Gate Counts and Borrowers from FY 2014-15 to FY 2024-25

2. Operating Hours

Operating hours are the total number of service hours the library is open to the public on a weekly basis. Operating hours for MBL have been stable at 58 hours per week and went down to 40 hours per week during FY 2020-21. MBL is one of the few libraries in the County system that is open 7 days a week. (The overall benchmark libraries are open an average of 57 hours per week).

3. Collection Size

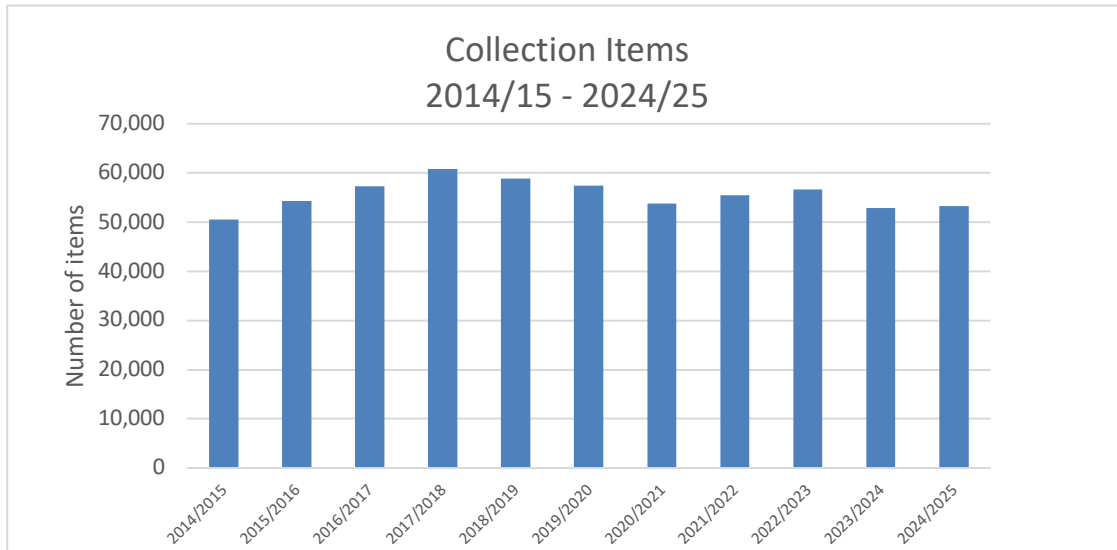


Figure II-17: Collection Size from FY 2014-15 to FY 2024-25

Figure II-17 shows the number of physical items in the library’s collections, including print and audio-visual materials. The number of items in the collection has expanded and contracted only slightly over the past decade and is roughly 5% larger now than a decade ago.

4. Programming

The graph in Figure II-18, shows the number of programs by type. Programming was increasing fairly steadily pre-pandemic. Post-pandemic, it has been increasing and is moving towards pre-pandemic levels. There was a 31% increase in the overall number of programs from FY 2023-24 to FY 2024-25.

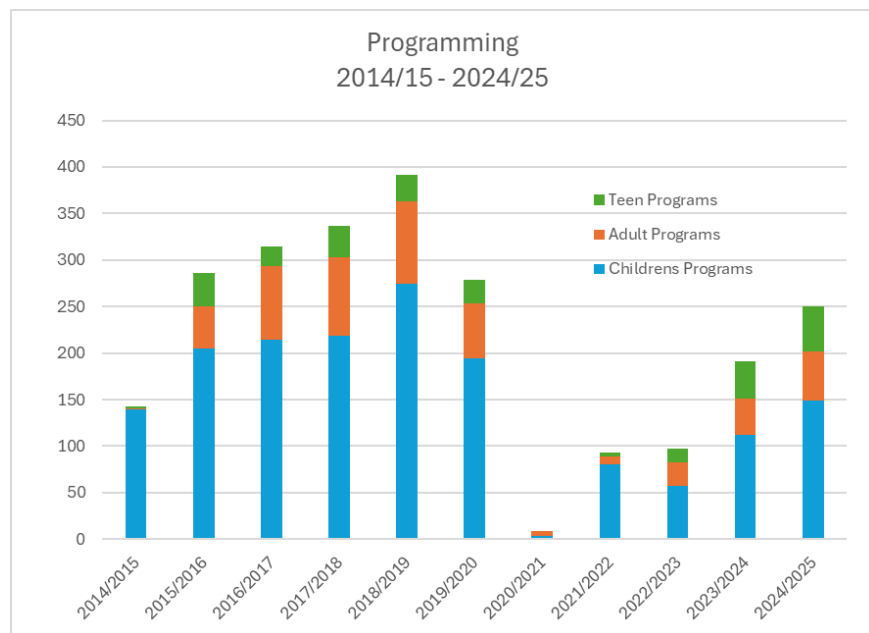


Figure II-18: Number of Programs from FY 2014-15 to FY 2024-25

5. Program Attendance

Program attendance has increased post-pandemic. All age groups showed increased attendance, with the current year's teen attendance increasing by 90%, and adult attendance increasing by 171% over last year. Children's program attendance was often limited by capacity for many of the popular children's programming.

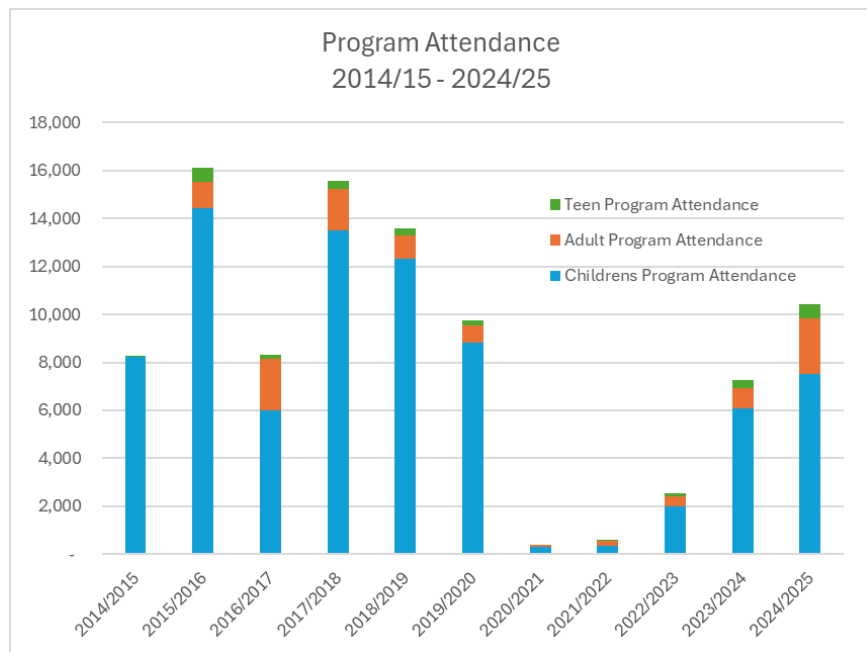


Figure II-19: Program Attendance from FY 2014-15 to FY 2024-25

6. Reference and Informational Questions

The number of questions that staff answered either in person or by telephone correlates strongly with the number of library users who come to the library. The number of questions grew steadily after the new building opened, and also rebounded strongly post-pandemic, but declined in FY 2022-23. The number has remained between roughly 70,000 and 84,000 since that time, down from a high of 337,170 in FY 2019-20. The library currently fields about 31% fewer questions than in FY 2015-16.

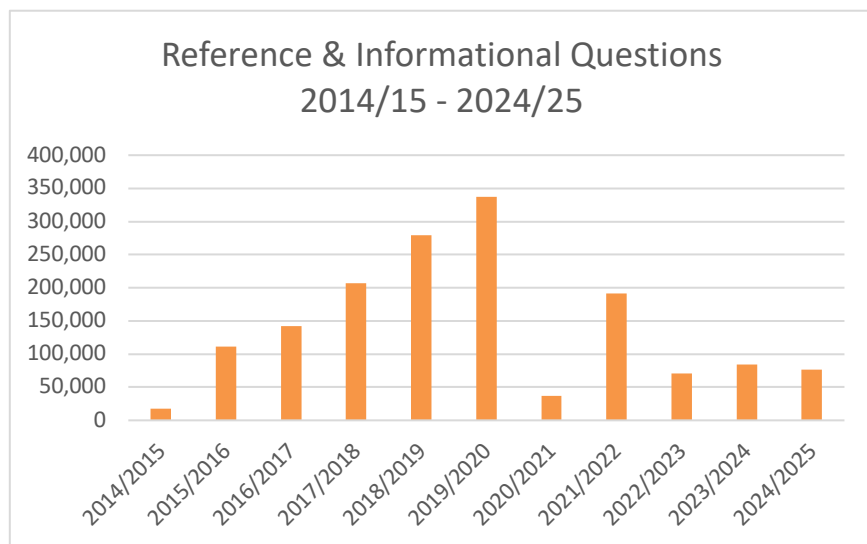


Figure II-20: Reference and Informational Questions from FY 2014-15 to FY 2024-25

7. Computer & Wi-Fi Sessions

Computer and Wi-Fi sessions include the number of logins from library computers as well as use of the library's internet by people using their own devices in the library. The number of Wi-Fi sessions is growing very rapidly, from about 20,000 logins during the pandemic to over 170,000 last year. Use of the library's public computers had been declining pre-pandemic, and although it

rebounded somewhat post-pandemic, use of the library computers declined 6% last year with most Wi-Fi sessions being utilized via personal devices.

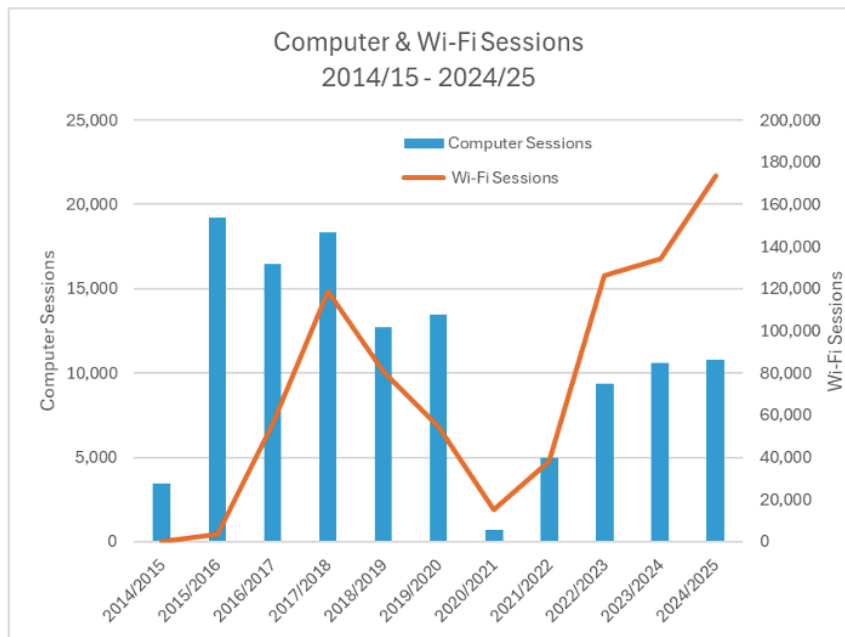


Figure II-21: Computer and Wi-Fi Sessions from FY 2014-15 to FY 2024-25

8. Operating Expenditures

Total operating expenses have returned to and now exceed pre-pandemic levels. Staff costs have remained somewhat flat for the past two years despite staffing levels having dropped. Support costs for LA County Library services have remained flat.

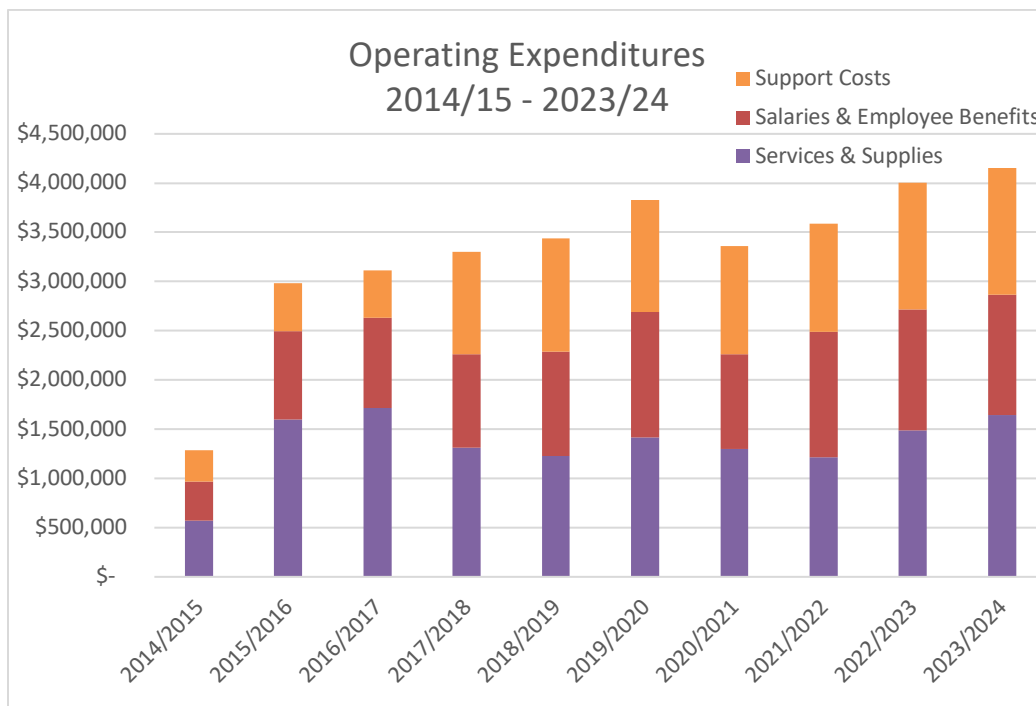


Figure II-22: Operating Expenditures from FY 2014-15 to FY 2023-24

III.

What We Heard: Community Needs Assessment Report

This section presents the reflections of our research phase of the Community Needs Assessment and the material presented at Design Workshop #1.

Interviews with Key Stakeholders

We conducted in person and online interviews with 40 key stakeholders from the County, the City, and the community.

Manhattan Beach Library Staff

We spoke with all of the full and part-time librarians and staff members to gain their perspective about MBL's role in the community.

- **Provides services to all segments of the community.** Some patrons access the library's traditional services (books and literature) and others enjoy the community activities.
- **More programming. More staff.** Suggestions for service improvements included more programming, both in variety and volume, more community outreach and more staff to handle the additional work.
- **Need for improved building maintenance.** Staff received constant complaints from customers about the air conditioning, broken doors, and dirty windows.
- **Need for better spaces.** Staff would like to see more creative uses of the community room, use of the outdoor space, and the addition of functional furniture. The design and layout of some of the spaces in the library do not serve its function well. They desired more space, e.g. study rooms, meeting areas, staff work areas and storage space. They also sought entryway improvements, including modifying the less than functional front desk and alleviating the confusion from two entries.
- **Parking challenges.** Both patrons and staff experience parking difficulties.

County Library Administration

Library administrators are tasked with providing library services to vastly different communities throughout LA County. MBL is one of the busiest in the County systems and faces unique issues.

- **Flagship Library.** It is a high regional-use library with scenic ocean views and is one of the newer library facilities in the County system.
- **Surplus funds and County budget.** Property owners throughout the County pay the same property tax percentage into the County system for library services. There are five "surplus cities" in the County system that have excess property tax revenue, compared to their library operating expenses. Overall, LA County Library faces significant budget challenges.
- **Staffing.** It is difficult to maintain adequate staffing levels for a two floor library. Scheduling for staffing can also be a challenge since MBL has longer hours than most of the other County libraries.
- **Building maintenance.** There is recognition that the building was not built for a beach climate. E.g. air conditioning is not sufficient for a glass building and there is a constant need to clean the "dirty" glass from the salt and sand.

- **ALT (Arts, Literature, and Technology) library.** The Library currently lends tools and other items at other locations and has been considering various ALT library proposals.

Manhattan Beach City Council

We spoke with all five City Council members to gain their perspectives on MBL and its role in the community.

- **Community gathering space.** Spaces for people to meet are currently limited. They viewed the MBL as a place that should be accessible to all.
- **East side access.** They discussed a desire to ensure that services are provided to the City's east side residents. They described a non-traditional, alternative and additional library space that could provide more community spaces including a makerspace, shared workspaces and/or enhanced technology.
- **Suggestions for some improvements:**
 - A facilities "refresh"
 - A more intensive and frequent use of the outdoor space
 - Additional programming, using both increased staff hours and partnerships with the schools and community organizations
 - Using library resources to benefit the community and beyond

Manhattan Beach City Staff

The City of Manhattan Beach is invested in MBL and partners with the library through the City's Parks and Recreation Department. We spoke with the City Manager and four Parks and Recreation Department staff members.

- **City's aging facilities.** Many city facilities are in need of significant modernization. There is a high demand for space and a desire to develop multi-use facilities. However, new buildings in new spaces have the potential to cause conflict in the community.
- **Library programming.** City staff expressed an interest in additional programs, at least to the level prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, including in partnership with the City's Cultural Arts programs.
- **East side access.** The City staff is interested in increased services for the City's east side businesses and residents since downtown Manhattan Beach is often not accessible due to limited parking.
- **Historical material.** Surplus funds have been spent on digitizing the City's historical documents and it would be nice to be able to make them accessible to the public along with an historical collection display that reflects the community, citing a potential collaboration with the Manhattan Beach Historical Society.

City Library Commissioners

The City of Manhattan Beach has its own seven-member library commission appointed by the City Council to advise on library-related matters. We spoke with three commissioners.

- **More seating and study areas.** Commission members appreciated that desks and study rooms are constantly utilized. There is a need for *more* space.
- **More books.** They perceived that there are fewer books in the library than previously, although they recognized that both the hold system and the use of the library for purposes other than checking out books possibly obviates the need for additional books.
- **More programming.** They would like to have more programs such as talks that involve topics of local interest, children's authors, life stories, etc.
- **More space.** They would like additional, non-traditional library space potentially on the City's east side -- e.g. a makerspace for innovation, lab or think tank where people can

innovate and exchange expertise, and/or a learning/community space that provides cultural benefits and allows for community gatherings.

Other Community Stakeholders

We interviewed the Friends of the Manhattan Beach Library (Friends) and the Manhattan Beach Historical Society.

- **Support structure.** They want to support programming to create lifelong learners.
- **Physical and digital resources.** The library houses a Friends book sale section. Given the increased use of digital books, donations of physical books have declined. Archived Manhattan Beach City newspapers are housed at the Library and have also been recently digitized using surplus funds. Currently, there is no public access to the digital collection.
- **Meet and connect.** The library is a place to meet and connect, a place where people make inquiries and find answers. It can also be a place where people can stay current with technology and learn about their past.
- **Space.** It would be nice to have more meeting rooms, study rooms, and a place to display historical artifacts.

Focus Groups

We hosted a series of four focus groups in order to engage community members in an interactive discussion about library programs, services and resources, as well as the library facility. Participants highlighted library positives, discussed gaps in services and resources, and considered what they would like to see in the future.

General Community Focus Groups

Community focus groups were advertised with flyers at the library and also on the library website. The two in-person community focus groups expressed overall satisfaction with library services and resources.

- **Library apps and book holds.** These were some of the more popular library uses by the general community focus group members.
- **Programming ideas.** Desired programs included local speakers, subject matter experts, STEM for adults, music performances, together with additions to programming such as intergenerational classes, meditation, and book clubs.
- **Strong support for alternative library uses.** There was expressed enthusiasm for ideas such as a makerspace, including a demo kitchen, tool rental, sewing machines, an AI lab and
 - 3-D printers.
- **Outreach and communication.** There was a desire for enhanced outreach and communication, as well as collaboration with schools and local businesses.
- **Suggestions for improvements.** Indoor suggestions included more study rooms, more community room use, and more access to the ocean view. Exterior suggestions included better use of the outdoor space and more locations with shade.

Older Adult Focus Group

A large focus group of over 30 older adults expressed satisfaction with traditional library services and a desire to more effectively utilize digital resources.

- **Favorable view of MBL.** They liked borrowing books and movies (both hard copies and digital) and attending programs. They also enjoy the large-print collection, the library's ocean view, and the friendly library staff.

- **Additional programming.** Suggestions included lectures, panels, cooking demonstrations and music or other types of performances including better use of the library's outdoor space.
- **Utilization.** There was a high use of the library from older adults. They said that the lack of seating was NOT an issue for them but parking unavailability was an issue.
- **Coordination between the library and the City.** Participants expressed an interest in more coordination between the library and other community services by Parks and Recreation; some were concerned about services overlapping.
- **Mixed preferences on an east side library.** There was an interest in discussing an east side library with various opinions for and against. The primary concern was parking access.

Teen Focus Group

A focus group composed of high school students was held in conjunction with the Teen Advisory Board meeting.

- **Studying for exams and finals.** They use the library primarily for studying and working on projects, especially during AP exams and finals. They like using the Teen Room and the Study Rooms.
- **Particular programs.** They showed interest in cooking-related programs, as well those focused on mental health, sewing/crocheting, investing, and podcasting/recording.
- **Communication.** They tend to learn about MBL events through friends rather than advertising. Communication through their schools could help them learn about programs, although school and activities, such as extracurriculars, sports, etc. compete for their time, and attention.
- **More space for studying during exams.** They would appreciate more seating and more study rooms, especially during exam time. It has been noted that the library occasionally opens the meeting room for additional study session space for high school final exams.

Community Survey

We conducted an online survey for MBL that was open for three weeks during August 2025. Survey links were sent out to Library users who indicated MBL as their home library and to the City of Manhattan Beach community. The survey was also advertised with flyers at the library. We received 547 survey responses.

In response to feedback from the Design Workshop #1, we reopened the survey to the Manhattan Beach Unified School District community for the first two weeks in November in hopes of gathering more responses from the younger demographic of the community. We received an additional 50 responses.

The information herein includes all responses. It was observed that the new data primarily functioned to confirm the results received from the original survey.

Visitor Frequency

- 74% of the respondents use MBL every couple of months or more frequently.
- With digital library access one can be a library user and not visit MBL. In this survey, 10% of the respondents have not visited MBL in the past year.

How often have you visited Manhattan Beach Library in the last 12 months?

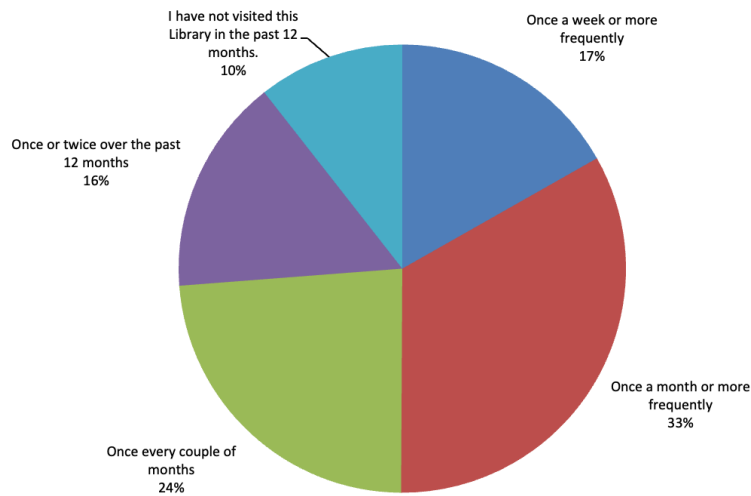


Figure III-1: Frequency of Visits

Typical Library Visit

- 74% of visitors go to MBL to borrow books or materials.
- Nearly 40% of visitors go to MBL to study, read, and browse.
- Over a quarter of the respondents attend programs or browse the Friends of the Library Book Area while they are in the library.

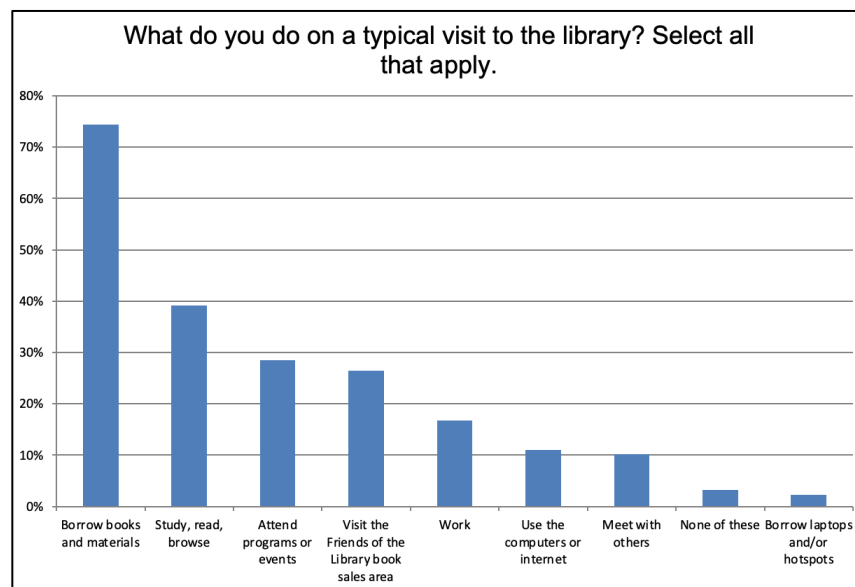


Figure III-2: Purpose of Typical Visit

Length of Visit

- Most visitors stay under the two hour parking time limit for public parking spots.

When you visit the library, how long do you typically stay?

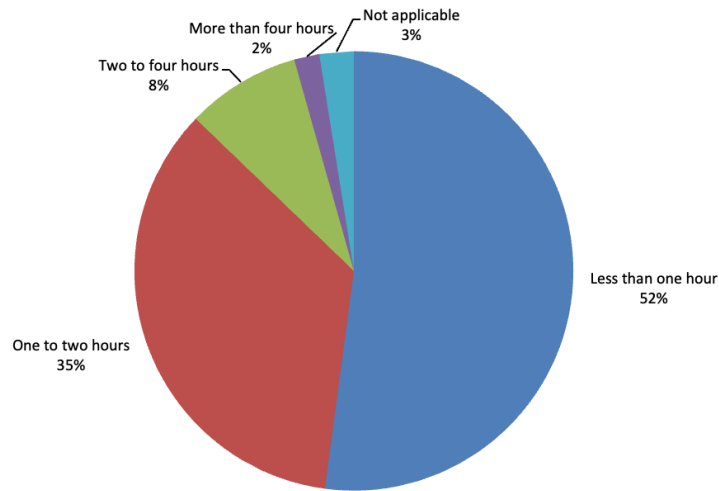


Figure III-3: Typical Length of Visit

Use of Other Libraries

- Approximately half the respondents only use MBL.
- The other half of respondents use other libraries, primarily Redondo Beach Library and Hermosa Beach Library. Written responses for “Other” libraries included many of the libraries in the LA South Bay area within the boundaries of the nearby freeways (I-105, I-405, and I-110).

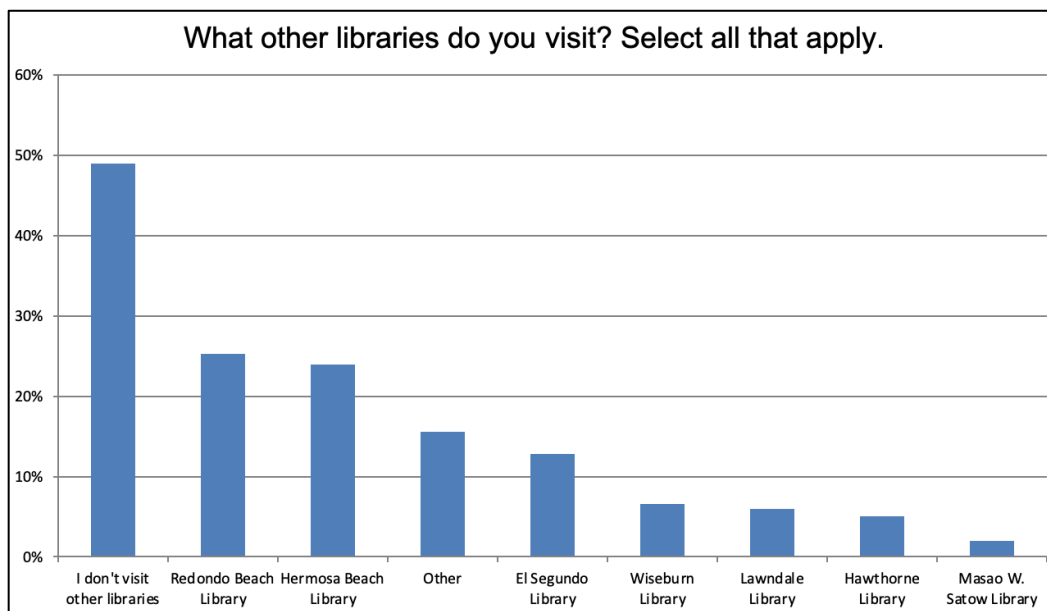


Figure III-4: Other Libraries Visited

Library Functions

- Many respondents noted the importance of MBL’s function as a quiet and safe space.
- Others noted MBL’s function as a learning environment.

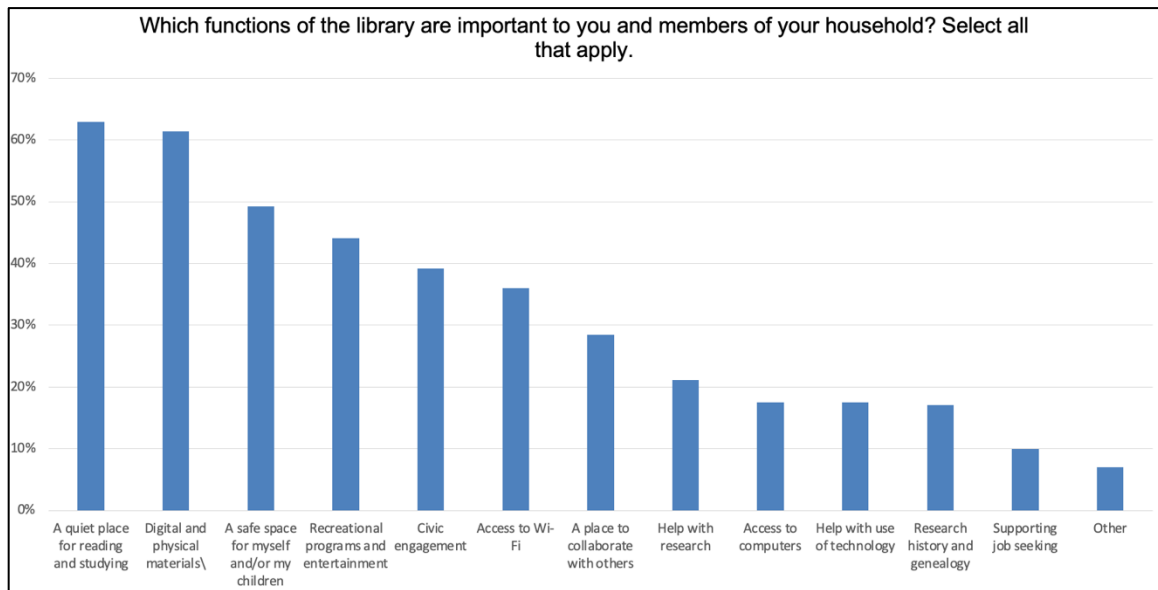


Figure III-5: Important Library Functions

Library Services

- MBL services most important to 75% of respondents were the ability to put books and materials on hold.
- The digital library apps were notably important to over half of the respondents.

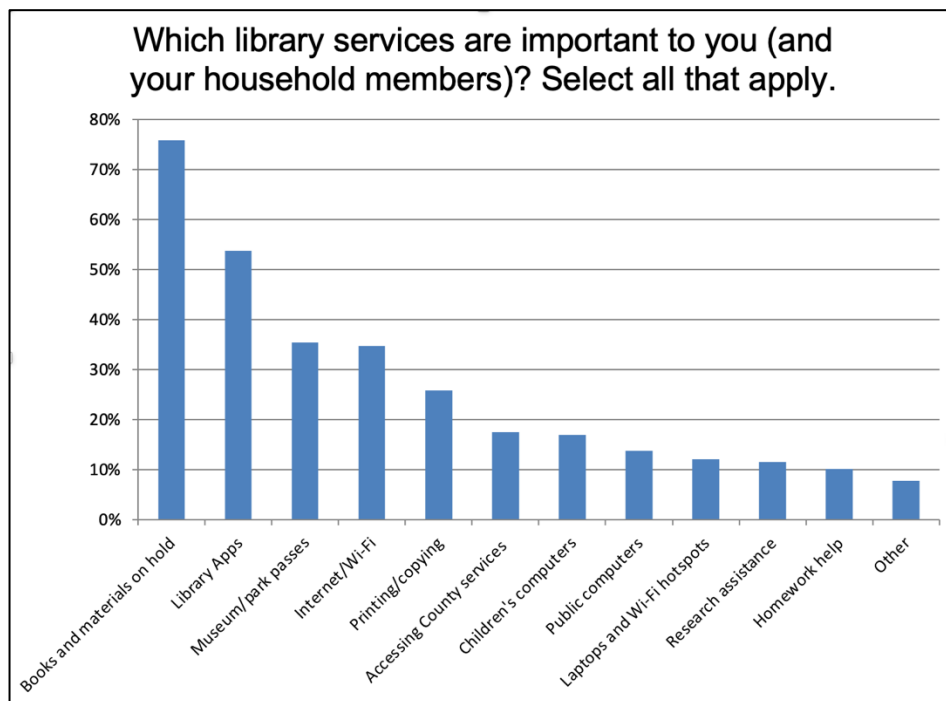


Figure III-6: Important Library Services

Information Resources Utilized

- Printed books are the most utilized information resource of respondents, accessed by over 80% of respondents.
- Digital resources were also utilized by over 60% of respondents.

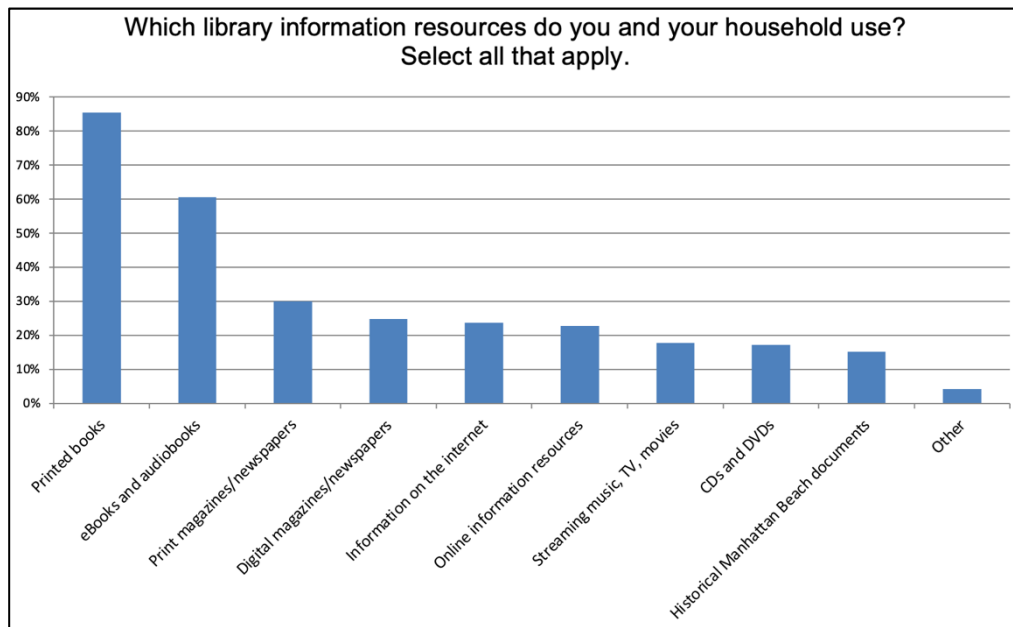


Figure III-7: Information Resources Utilized

Programs and Events Attended

- Friends of the Library book sales were the most popular events for MBL, more popular than other programs.
- Speaker’s series and author talks were attended by over 40% of respondents.

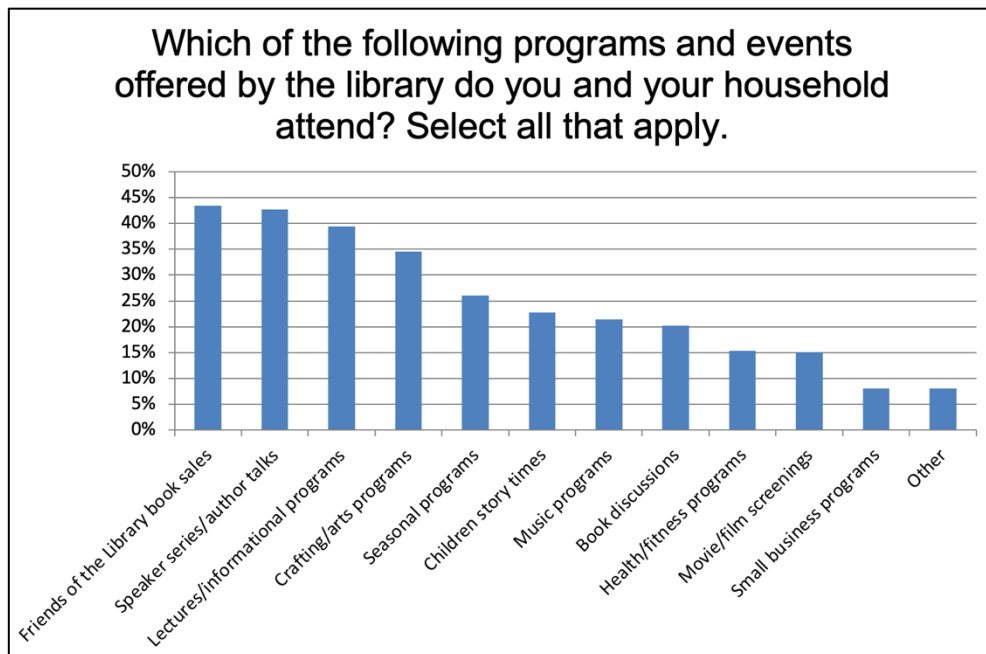


Figure III-8: Programs and Events Attended

First Floor Spaces that Need Improvement

- The outdoor patio space is currently underutilized and was noted by over a third of respondents as a place for improvement on the first floor.
- The children’s area was also identified as a space that could use improvement.

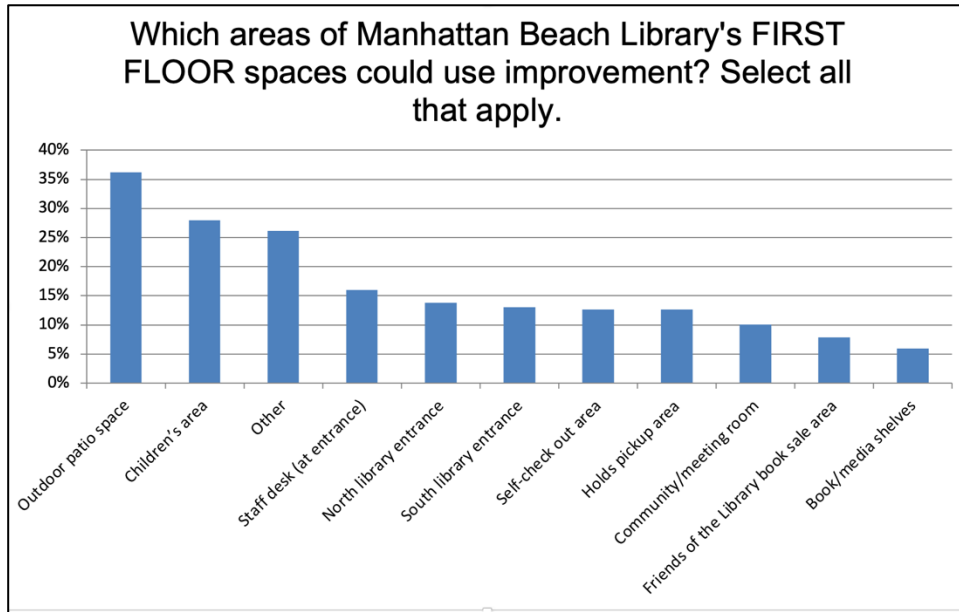


Figure III-9: First Floor Areas for Improvement

Second Floor Spaces that Need Improvement

- Lounge chairs were identified by over a third of the respondents, however the lounge chairs have been replaced since the survey closed.
- Many comments for “Other” category often related to the temperature being uncomfortably warm, dirty windows, noise from children’s area or a lack of seating, study rooms, and tables.

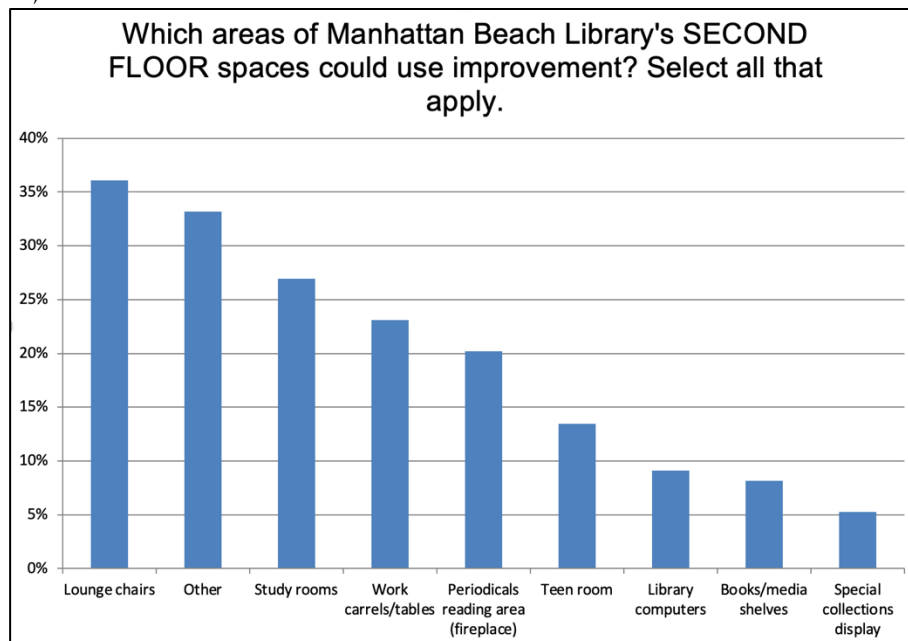


Figure III-10: Second Floor Areas for Improvement

Other Things We Learned from the Survey

- While the survey primarily went out to the City of Manhattan Beach community, a significant portion of the respondents (27%) are people who utilize MBL but do not live in the City of Manhattan Beach.

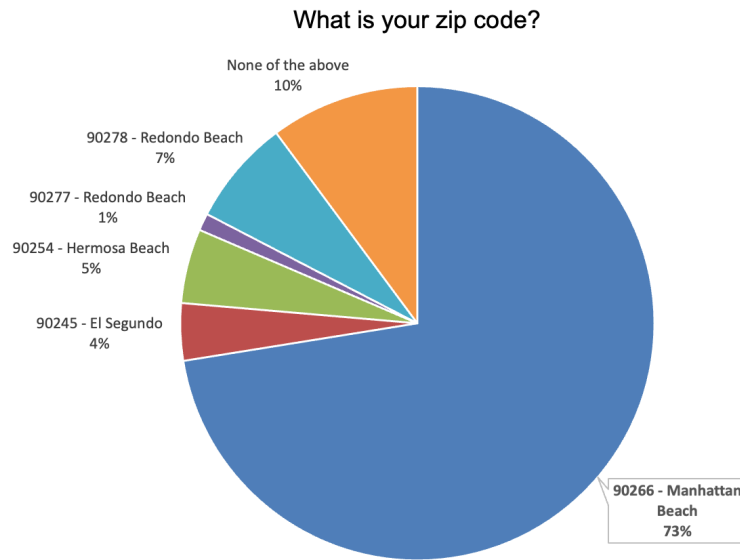


Figure III-11: Survey Respondents Zip Codes

- Despite initial discussions of a second library with library stakeholders, 42% of the survey respondents were not interested or see no need for another full-service library in or near the City of Manhattan Beach. For Manhattan Beach residents, the percentage of people not interested in another library increased to 49%.

Do you think there is a need for an additional library location in or near the City of Manhattan Beach?

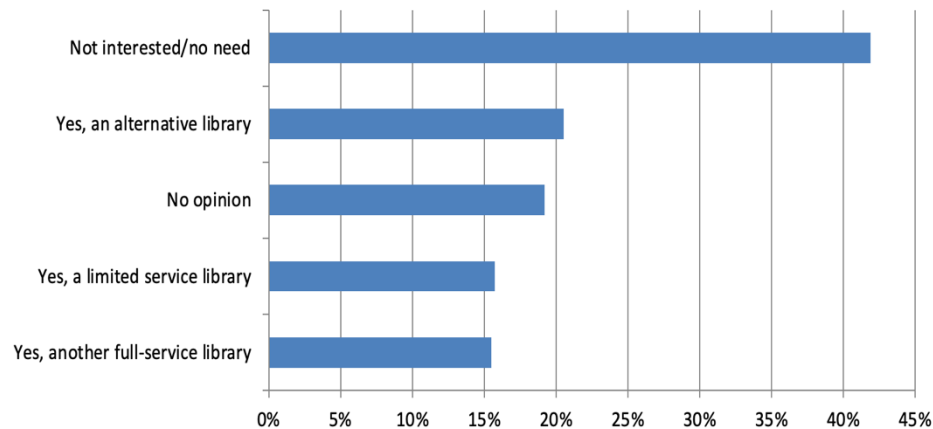


Figure III-12: Interest in An Additional Library Location

- There is some interest in alternative learning spaces for the library including a potential for a creative/makerspace, learning kitchen, or learning garden.

Top 3 “Very interested” in following new library spaces	Top 3 “Not interested” in following new library spaces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36.5% Creative/fabrication lab space/makerspace • 30.0% Demo/Learning kitchen • 29.0% Demo/Learning garden 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28.4% Audio/video/podcasting • 25.2% Cafe • 24.0% Bookmobile

Figure III-13: Interest in possible library elements

IV. Strategic Priorities & Next Steps

Key Themes

There were several common themes that emerged from the research.



These key themes included:

- ***The library is well liked and utilized***
There was a lot of support for MBL with people praising its location near the beach with ocean views and people enjoying coming to and utilizing the library. The library has one of the highest numbers of service transactions of the benchmarked libraries and was second to Diamond Bar Library on the opposite end of the County. Many of the interviews, focus groups, and surveys noted the popularity of the library.
- ***“More...” Books, Programs, Events, Seating, Study Rooms***
The research found that people wanted more books, more programs and events, more seating, and more study rooms. The readers in the survey noted that they would like more books to be available in the library’s physical collection. People wanted more diverse programs and events for the library and noted that the children’s programs were often closed due to capacity. People requested more seating on the second floor and more study room availability, since the four study rooms were often booked.

- ***Building Maintenance Challenges***

The building itself was an issue especially during the summer months when the inadequacy of the air conditioning becoming apparent with the glass building quickly heating up particularly on the second floor. Patrons also noted that the glass often looked dirty from sand and salt and the doors often required repairs.

- ***More Community Meeting Space is Needed***

People would like more space to be available for public use including library programs and community events. The one meeting room in the library was often utilized with library programs as well as with other community meetings. There was noted to be limited space in City facilities for large meetings and gatherings.

- ***Limited Parking Affects Access***

Parking was a common issue noted at the library by many of the stakeholders. Parking was particularly difficult to manage during the weekends and much of the summer when those visiting downtown Manhattan Beach compete with library patrons for parking.

- ***An Increasing Interest in Alternative Spaces***

While not necessarily an issue that was at the forefront of people's minds, when asked about the possibility of an alternative library space, such as a makerspace with technology or sewing machines, learning kitchens, and learning gardens, there was expressed enthusiasm about the possibility of a learning space for non-traditional library uses.

Community's Vision

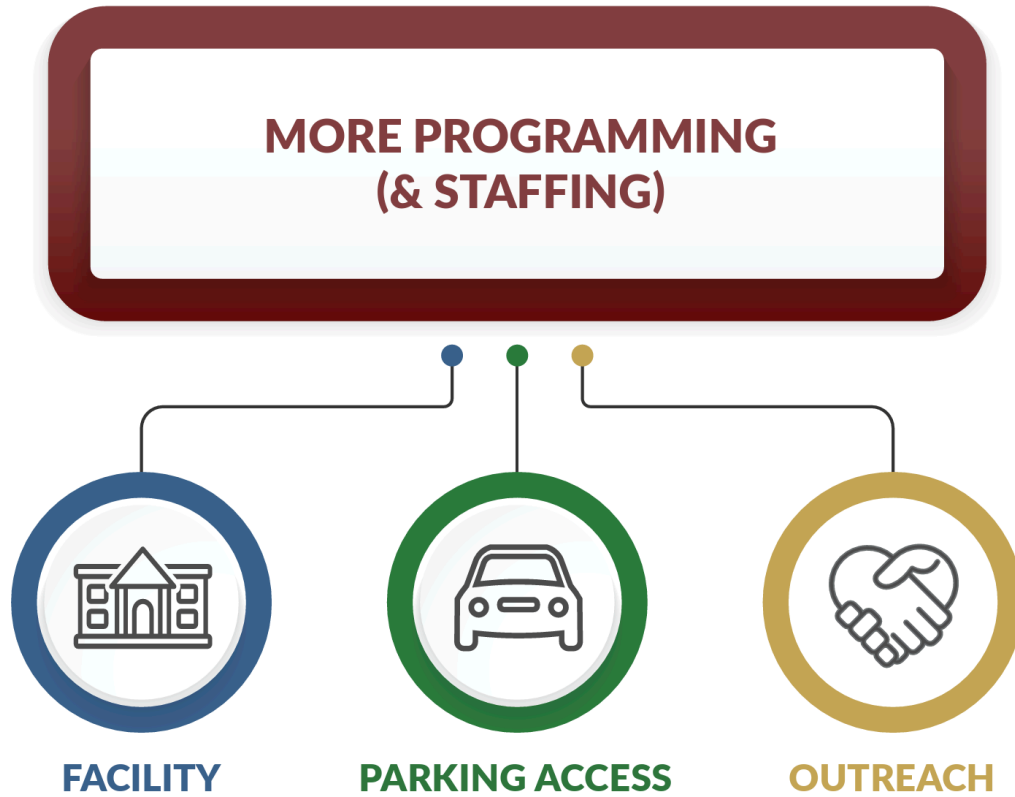
We shared the research and key themes and discussed ideas in two Design Workshop Sessions with Library and City of Manhattan Beach stakeholders. The first session focused on a developing a clear vision for MBL while the second session focused on developing priorities for MBL. The vision that emerged was as follows:

Manhattan Beach Library should seek to

- *Develop dynamic, innovative and enriching **programs** that recognize a diverse community.*
- *Provide flexible, functional and safe **spaces** for the community to connect and engage.*
- *Be an informational, technological, and cultural **resource** for the community.*
- ***Outreach** to the community to facilitate access to resources and conversations.*

Strategic Priorities

There are four Strategic Priorities to bring about a *Community's Vision* for MBL. The first strategic priority is to develop the library as a place where people in the community can come, gather, and share ideas. The other three strategic priorities serve to ensure that the first priority is a success.



PRIORITY 1

More programming

Programs should be developed that address different interests among those in the community. Adequate staffing levels should ensure that the library can manage increased programming needs.

STEPS WE CAN TAKE:

- Add more diverse programming, perhaps by partnering with other civic and community groups.
- Ensure that staffing can support the additional programming levels.
- Enhance staffing space in the library to accommodate additional staffing e.g., upgrade staff office space by utilizing personal lockers with shared desks.

PRIORITY 2

Maintain facility as a flagship library

The library should be maintained in top-notch condition to reflect its status as the County's flagship library.

STEPS WE CAN TAKE:

- Continue to work on replacement of furniture and upgrading HVAC system to make a comfortable space for library users.
- Develop a multi-functional outdoor space for additional study space, programming, and gatherings (including enhanced seating, audio visual capabilities, and ADA accessible).
- Investigate feasibility of utilizing existing space more effectively.
- Discuss the development of a future joint South Bay alternative library/community space with surplus funding and development of partnerships.

PRIORITY 3

Address Parking Limitations

The library has access issues due to limited parking availability in downtown Manhattan Beach and will need to partner with the City to develop improvements to parking availability for the library.

STEPS WE CAN TAKE:

- Partnership with the City and the Library over a possible development of joint-use parking structure available to library patrons in Manhattan Beach.
- The City should consider pursuing development of parking shuttle/community circular for Manhattan Beach downtown during peak times (with possible partnership with the Library).

PRIORITY 4

Increase community outreach

Community members should be made more aware of library offerings.

STEPS WE CAN TAKE:

- Partner with the City, MBUSD Public Information Officer, and other community and business members to disseminate information about the library.
- Continue to develop social media marketing presence.

Spatial Analysis of Manhattan Beach Library

Summary

This analysis presents a summary of how space is allocated and used in MBL. Overall space is appropriate for the community size and characteristics, with some exceptions. The data indicate a need for additional public seating and group study space, review of staff work space and public entry areas, and development of outdoor space for reader, program and community use.

Methods

Square footage of specific library areas, shelf space, and seating were drawn from MBL's architectural floor plans as well as consultant observations. Stakeholder input from the library survey and staff interviews were used to focus attention on specific areas. Square footage does not include elevators, mechanical, public hallways, restrooms, or vestibules. Space planning guidelines were drawn from the Library and *Library Buildings and Construction: Library Space Planning* (Connecticut State Library, 2021) (CT), and *Wisconsin Public Library Standards* (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2018) (WI).

What We Learned

MBL provides approximately 21,500 gross square footage of space overall for a population of 34,390, with 22 public computer workstations, 7 laptop computers available to borrow, two online public access catalog stations, 127 table and lounge seats, 12 staff workstations, and occupancy of 96 auditorium style seats in the community meeting room (standing room capacity is 188).

Space for physical collections includes print and media materials for adults; teen, juvenile, and children's collection; periodicals; Friends of the Library sales; new arrivals and displays; and the Bruce's Beach special collection area. Reading, working, group study, and activity areas are provided for adults, teens, and children. The large community room provides meeting space and is also used for regular children's and adult/teen/general programming.

The assignable space for these areas totals approximately 12,800 square feet. Square footage of each area is provided in Appendix A. Available shelf space is summarized in Appendix B. Overall, the space allocations are sufficient and within or near guidelines in most areas, with exceptions as noted. Space use efficiency (percentage of assignable square feet) for the entire building is 60%, slightly lower than the suggested public library guideline range of 65% to 75%. Library floor plans are in Appendix C.

Findings

- *The collection size of MBL is approximately 35% below Library guidelines.*
 - *Public computers are 18% below Library guidelines.*
 - *Public seating is below the CT library guidelines, but it meets the minimum of the WI library guidelines.*
-

The spatial needs of MBL were discussed with participants of the Community Needs Assessment (i.e. site visits, interviews, focus groups, survey, and workshops), during which the following areas were identified:

- **Collections (shelf) space.** The current physical collection size is 35% below Library guidelines (2.75 items per capita). Post-pandemic increased use of electronic materials such as eBooks and increased Wi-Fi use at the library should be considered in interpreting this metric. The Library also has a robust materials hold system for people to easily access materials from across the County. Physical collections are mostly shelved below capacity, with empty bottom shelves. This enhances user access and provides needed flexibility for a branch library in a large County system with floating collections. Approximately 5,200 linear feet of shelf space is provided, about 15% less than the CT guideline (10 items per foot). There were a few comments from the public on the lack of materials available, but there were no comments regarding the size or space taken up by the physical collection in the survey.
- **Seating.** The need for more seating was often noted in the community research, especially on the library's second floor with its ocean views. Recent furniture replacements have added seating for the ocean views and in the teen room.
- **Computer workstations.** The number of computer workstations available at MBL are slightly below the Library guidelines and there are also public laptops that can be borrowed in two-hour increments. However, in our observations of MBL, most of the computer workstations for public use were underutilized. The four computer stations (Early Learning Computers) provided for younger children adjacent to the children's librarian's office were often well utilized.
- **Staff workspace.** The first floor staff work area adjacent to the Automated Material Handling System (AMHS) provides sufficient task and individual workspaces. The second floor staff work area is undersized for the staff to comfortably work in that space, as indicated by the square footage and staff comments. There are guidelines for the amount of space per staff workstation, which the library currently meets.

The design of the staff workstation at the south entry presents challenges for library visitors and staff. The desk space in the greeting area is angled so materials cannot be put down. Public interaction with staff is impeded by awkward desk orientation. The north entry is not easily viewed from the main staff location at the south entry, which is a security concern raised by staff.

- **Aesthetics.** The library is located in a vibrant beach community, featuring ocean views and artful design, and is a flagship location for the Library system. However, its design and location present maintenance challenges. Inadequate ventilation inside presents a

challenge to user comfort inside the building. The harsh seaside environment outside makes it difficult to keep the glass exterior from looking dirty from salt and sand despite regular cleaning. The children's area on the first floor feels dark especially in the afternoon, in contrast to the sunny open upper floor. Ways to brighten the children's area on the first floor should be investigated as well as ways to maintain the current building structure that addresses its outdoor coastal environment.

- **Outdoor space.** The outdoor "patio" space provides approximately 8,100 square feet of under-developed space that could be developed for patron seating, programming, and/or other community needs. Interest in developing the outdoor area was frequently noted in community comments.

Recommendations

- *Develop outdoor patio space for additional seating, programming, and community space.*
 - *Consider adding to MBL's collection.*
 - *Redesign main entry staff area to improve user experience and improve security.*
 - *Reduce the number of public computer workstations in the children's area on the first floor (not including the Early Learning Computers) and also in the adult area on the second floor to allow for more general seating.*
 - *Consider ways to brighten the children's area.*
 - *Consider ways to address the outdoor environment's impact on building maintenance.*
 - *Consider adding additional space for group study.*
 - *Redesign staff workspace on the second floor to create a better working environment.*
-

Exhibit A. Assignable Square Footage and Seating

FIRST FLOOR ASSIGNABLE SPACE	Sq ft	No. seats/ workstations		
		Public	Staff	Meeting
103. "Popular library" - incl N/S entries, staff info desk, holds pick up, CDs, DVDs, display	840		1	
102. Juv Fic/NF collection	748			
102. Children's picture books, play area, table seating, read aloud seating	900	22		
102. Children's computers1	300	8		
102. Children's computers2	150	4		
102. OPAC	20			
102. Children's info desk	180		1	
106. Children's librarian office	120		1	
114. Meeting room	1,200			188 ¹
114-D. Storage	48			
114-C. Food prep	80			
114-B. Storage	80			
111. FOL work area	120		1	
109. Staff work room	500		3	
116. FOL browsing	120			
107. CLM office	150		1	
<i>Outdoor space (undeveloped)</i>	<i>8,100</i>			
First floor subtotal	5,556	34	8	188
SECOND FLOOR ASSIGNABLE SPACE				
204. Adult Fic/NF	2,250	4		
204. Special collections, display	200			
205. Teen area	570	20		
205. Teen area adjacent seating	500	4		
206. Teen group study	120	4		
207, 208, 209. Group study (3)	300	12		
210. Storage	60			
213. Staff workroom	300		3	
211. Staff lounge	300			
211-A. Storage	20			
204. Periodicals seating	300	6		
204. Reader space (west)	850	18		
204. Reader space (north)	750	15		
204. Computers	540	10		
204. Information desk	225		1	
204. OPAC	20			
Second floor subtotal	7,305	93	4	
TOTAL ASSIGNABLE SPACE/SEATING	12,861	127	12	NA

¹ 188 standing room; 96 auditorium-style seats

Exhibit B. Shelf Space

			Total available shelf space²
FIRST FLOOR	Linear feet	No. shelves	
104. Popular Library	120	17	483
102. Juvenile Fiction/Non-Fiction	258	15	1,005
102. Children's picture books	114	10	354
116. FOL browsing	30	4	120
TOTAL FIRST FLOOR	492	42	1,842
SECOND FLOOR			-
204. Adult Fiction/Non-Fiction	555	20	3,087
205. Teen Area	33	9	135
204. Special Collections	30	3	90
TOTAL SECOND FLOOR	618	32	3,312
TOTAL BUILDING	1,110	74	5,154

² Shelf space estimated based on architect's floor plans and consultant observation.

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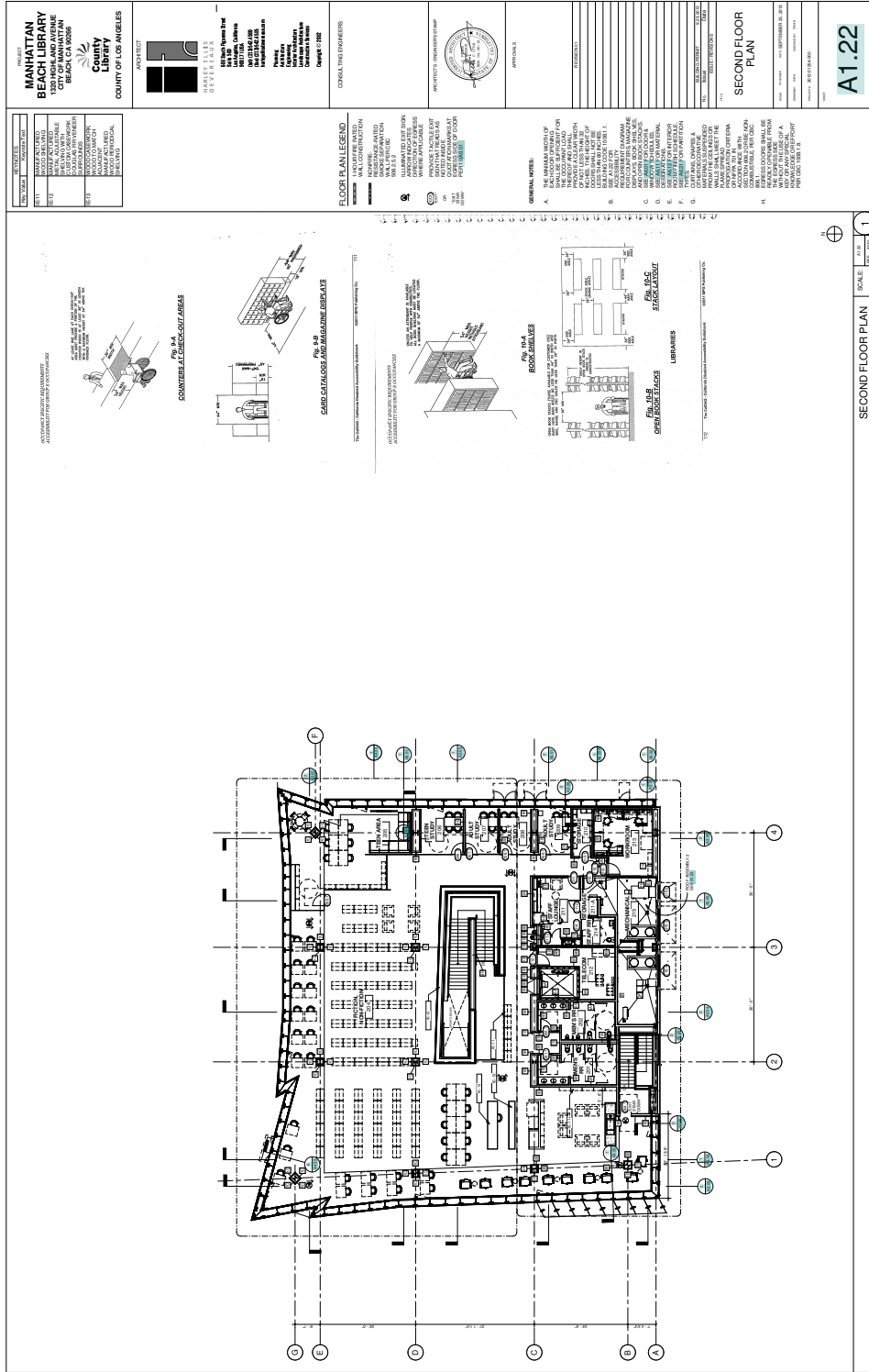
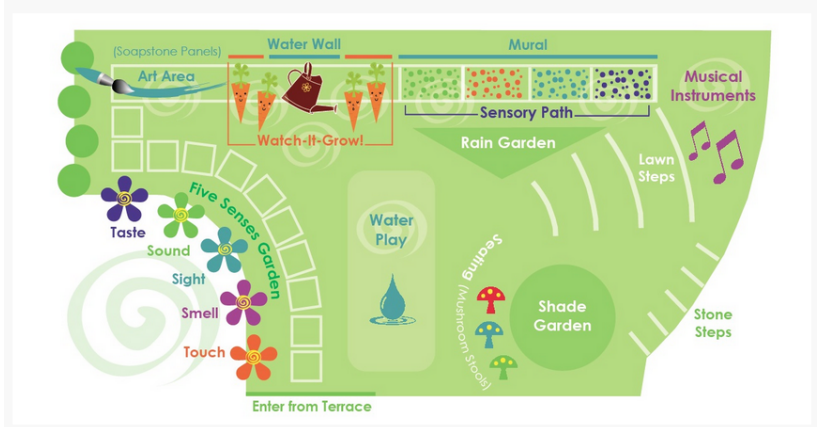


Exhibit D. Examples of Outdoor Library Spaces



LEARN & PLAY MAP



Sources:

<https://www.pinterest.com/ideas/library-outdoor-space/939778824352/>

Olathe KS roof garden

<https://shp.com/2020/10/16/the-outdoors-belong-to-everyone-designing-three-different-spaces-for-three-different-users/>

Learn & Play Map: <https://www.longwoodlibrary.org/childrengarden>