



**Capital Area  
District Libraries**

# Community Engagement Report

Prepared for Capital Area  
District Libraries

By Midwest Collaborative  
for Library Services

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# Summary of Community Engagement

The Capital Area District Libraries embarked on a new strategic planning process in March 2025, which included engaging members of the community. This report summarizes the engagement process and resulting themes that were identified. “Community” has been defined as the Capital Area District Libraries service area. The Library used a combination of one-on-one interviews and Community Conversations with a wide variety of community residents and leaders to identify this information. The interviews and Conversations were based on The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation’s model of community engagement, which seeks to “Turn Outward” to the community to determine their aspirations and, in turn, prioritize services that are in alignment with the true needs of the community.

Members of the Capital Area District Libraries strategic planning committee conducted one-on-one interviews with various community residents and leaders in March 2025, and consultants from the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services facilitated five Community Conversations in March 2025. The interviews and conversations were opportunities for the residents of the Capital Area District Libraries service area to discuss their aspirations for the community and the concerns they have about reaching those aspirations, and to identify where the Library might help the community reach its aspirations. During the process, 49 community residents and leaders were interviewed by the CADL Strategic Planning Committee, and 54 people participated in the Community Conversations.

The notes from the interviews and Conversations have been summarized in a blended community narrative and public knowledge summary. The community aspirations and community concerns have also been organized in word cloud illustrations. In addition, information on how people believe the Library might help the community reach its aspirations has been organized and themed.

# Community Narrative

Community members shared their aspirations and concerns. The following is a narrative of the information, summarized in a blended form of The Harwood Institute’s models of the “Community Narrative” and “Public Knowledge Summary.”

It is important to recognize that this report was written in a specific time frame and context. Locally and nationally, there is incredible political polarization and division, and there are clearly frustrated people across the community and across the political spectrum. In addition, many people participating in the Conversations shared that they attended in part because they were concerned about possible cuts to federal funding for libraries. In both Lansing-based conversations, participants also expressed concern about the future of the Downtown library.

## Capital Area District Libraries Community Narrative/Public Knowledge Summary

**The Capital Area District Libraries community aspires to cultivate belonging and inclusion by celebrating the unique communities, groups, and individuals that make it up. People want to live in an educated, knowledgeable, and informed community that invests in a variety of economic, cultural, and social opportunities for the rural, suburban, and urban areas. The community also aspires to be connected, collaborative, and physically easy to navigate.**

### A community that cultivates belonging and inclusion by welcoming and celebrating unique groups and individuals

Members of the Capital Area District Libraries community want to live in a community that celebrates its unique groups and individuals in order to make everybody feel like they belong. They want their neighbors to be supported and connected, and to “feel like they’re part of a larger community” while living as a diverse group of individuals of different ages, races, classes, and abilities. People want to have “neighbors who care about one another, and act like it,” and to live in a community that welcomes children to be involved. The community is “only as strong as the most vulnerable in it,” and community members want to see people who are struggling, such as the homeless population, be uplifted and helped.

Community members also stressed the importance of being able “to be yourself and express yourself.” This includes not only “not being afraid that someone is going to accost you,” but also to feel respected, and, when going somewhere, to feel like “you can be in that space, and you’re wanted in that space.” They are looking for a community with “diversity,” where there are “people from all kinds of backgrounds who live here,” including immigrants and refugees, African Americans, members of the LGBTQ community, and people with disabilities, just to name a few specifically mentioned. People living in urban parts of the community in particular spoke at length about enjoying the food, activities, and “celebrations” with people from different countries and backgrounds, which “opens my heart and opens my mind to something that’s different,” making the community stronger and “nearly unstoppable.”

Community members see opportunities for bringing together people from “in-town and out-of-town,” from different generations, across racial and economic lines, and among people with different political views to visit and learn about each other. Community members feel that people are either “taught to fear” strangers and people who aren’t like them, or are “wired to be afraid of anything that’s new.” To counteract this fear, the community can cultivate spaces where people can talk and gather to “learn from one another and support one another” in civil conversations. Talking to each other also helps people counteract the assumption that “what we are experiencing is what everyone else is experiencing,” allowing for solutions to community issues that reflect a wider range of perspectives. Conversations also will help people gain empathy with each other, which will lead to a more caring society where people help each other.

In the smaller towns and rural areas, some said they “feel like there’s this separation – the old guard and the new people.” However, many community members said they had found their “little niche” within their communities, allowing them to connect with people who have similar interests. People said that the entire community needs to “keep continuously inviting people in,” making sure people know they are welcome and breaking down barriers that separate people, because “it takes people from all walks of life to make a community work” and connecting with people from different backgrounds improves quality of life.

### A community with a variety of economic, cultural, and social opportunities

Community members want to live somewhere that has lots of opportunities – economic, cultural, and social – and options for everyone to get things that they want and need in order to “have the ability to access their dreams.” People have many places that they enjoy visiting throughout the community, but they are looking to fill gaps that they see in the area, in hopes that people will want to move to and stay in the community.

People from rural and urban areas of the community expressed concern about a lack of places to eat and shop. Rural areas have fewer options overall, while urban areas have seen many businesses “become casualties” during the COVID-19 pandemic; it is hard to keep anything open “unless it’s a dollar store or a pizza shop.” There is fast food, but few places to “actually sit down and have a real meal.” Within the downtown area, many people believe that there is a lack of businesses because of “the city is not as concerned with people who live here and are a lot more concerned with the people who come in to work Monday through Friday.” Meanwhile, suburban areas have more amenities, but they lack a connected, walkable, and “thriving downtown” that they would like to see.

Michigan State University offers many cultural opportunities, with community members happy that they can travel somewhere close to “hear first-class music and be home in bed at 10:30.” Places throughout the community also have theaters, music venues, museums, and art galleries that people can visit; they are looking for more “lively” districts that invite people to visit. Community members would also like to have parks, golf courses, and other recreational spaces throughout the community that are safe and accessible, and that offer structured activities, social opportunities, and gathering places for people of various ages and backgrounds. People are concerned about the loss of “third spaces” like coffee shops, bookstores, parks, and community centers, and the shuttering of clubs and fraternal orders that were once a major component of social life in communities. These disappearances have resulted in the loss of relationships and community care. Many of the spaces that do exist, such as Potter Park Zoo and Impression 5 Science Center, are open limited hours, making it difficult to visit and for parents to take young children there, particularly when contending with naptime schedules. There are few things to do in downtown Lansing, which becomes a “ghost town” after 5 p.m. when State of Michigan workers leave, and people would like to see the area revitalized.

People also expressed concern about the “deterioration” of urban spaces, particularly the removal of trees within the city of Lansing and the environmental and health impacts of deforestation in the city. Community members are concerned about the impact of greenhouse gases that come from driving rather than walking or biking and the need for more green space. Community members would like to figure out how to make Lansing “a greener community” because “studies have shown that in communities that have trees, public health is better.” People have seen improvements in the last decade but are looking for additional work in this area.

## A community that values and invests in thriving rural, suburban, and urban areas

People value the rural, suburban, and urban areas that make up the Capital Area District Libraries community and want them to thrive. Community members expressed concern about the economy in the area, particularly because of the state of automotive manufacturing and a lack of job opportunities. The perception is that the area's population is "basically flat," and there are lots of economic factors "pushing down on the ... region," and people are concerned about making sure their areas have "a solid and stable tax base," good infrastructure, and thoughtful, intentional plans for growth and change. This impacts areas in different ways, because every community that makes up the Capital Area District Libraries community "has vastly different needs." Community members want to see people's core needs being met, and for people and organizations to connect to ensure this, without bureaucracy slowing down the process and with adequate funding.

Quality housing is a concern in the community, particularly in suburban and urban areas. People want different types of housing available "so people can live in thriving communities." Suburban areas don't want apartment buildings, but are looking for more of a "village atmosphere" in building projects. Meanwhile, in more landlocked urban areas, compact housing is being put into places "where housing doesn't fit." Participants noted a tension between wanting to help get people off the streets and into housing, yet not wanting ignored, "unmaintained ugliness" packed into certain parts of town. Community members also want to live in a place where they can access necessary healthcare. Suburban areas said they have good access and may even be able to walk to doctors and dentists, but many rural and urban areas are lacking accessible, quality healthcare. Internet access is a concern, particularly in rural areas and in impoverished areas; cell phone service is also spotty in rural parts of the community.

Community members in urban areas expressed concern that wealth and opportunities are being taken out of Lansing and into the suburbs, and that "Lansing has become the hole in the donut." People would like to see more of an "exchange" between Lansing and the surrounding areas, and work to reduce "urban sprawl," where people are building housing developments on what was once farmland and commuting to work in the city.

## An educated, knowledgeable, and informed community

Members of the Capital Area District Libraries community aspire to live in a community where residents are educated, knowledgeable, and informed about where they live and the wider world. They want a community that is curious and acts on what they learn.

Community members value education and want excellent, “world-class” schools in their area. In addition to the importance of investing in the future by educating youth, good schools bring people into neighborhoods and boost property values. With Schools of Choice programs in the area, some suburban schools are seeing “more people interested in our schools than the capacity allows.” A good education and job training are also important because this “can help breed an environment of success and prosperity for our community members,” and can “help people overcome a change in circumstances and give them opportunities for continued success.” Having a *variety* of educational and job training options also gives people “the ability to take the paths they want.” Some areas of the community need access to quality education, and others need to maintain and grow the educational infrastructure they already have. Parents also need support to help them educate their children, both at school and in extracurricular and community activities.

Community members lamented the loss of adult and community education programs that offered exercise classes, arts programming, and other opportunities to learn new things, socialize, and meet new people. Being close to Michigan State University and Lansing Community College helps offer some avenues for education to those nearby, and some areas have community centers, parks departments, and other organizations that do a “decent job” promoting events. However, this district is very wide geographically, and people all through it are looking for more ways to engage in “lifelong learning” and “see the world through different perspectives.” This can help “form a community that’s willing to step outside its comfort zone and see what we are missing,” build empathy and lessen judgement of others, and lead to the stronger, kinder, and more welcoming community that people want to see.

People also want ways to find out what is happening in their communities and throughout the region, and individual communities want ways to highlight what makes them unique and what they have to offer. The loss of weekly newspapers, particularly in the rural parts of the community, has made it difficult for people to keep up with hyper-local news. Many get their news from social media such as Facebook and Instagram, but not everybody has access to – or the desire to use – these platforms. People also want “fact-based” information and are concerned about the spread of misinformation, particularly online. People are looking for ways to learn about events in their communities, and organizations are looking to educate the community about the work that they do and the issues they see to keep the population safe and knowledgeable.

Suburban areas in particular praised their officials for holding meetings, listening to their constituents, and even opening their minds on some issues, but many in all parts of the community would like to see more “transparency,” information, and ability to make their



voices heard on issues that impact them. There are opportunities to watch meetings and receive emails with community information, but people would like to see more two-way communication from “the powers that be.” They feel that it is important to “make our voices heard,” and to listen to the “unheard voices,” not “just the loudest,” or to just politicians and business leaders. Community members also acknowledged that not everybody feels welcome in these conversations, and that it’s important to “keep continuously inviting people in” and finding a variety of ways to solicit information from people, especially where barriers exist.

### A connected community that collaborates and shares resources

Community members want to live in a community where people and organizations are connected to one another, collaborate, and share resources, rather than “turning inward” and working in silos. There are many governmental organizations, nonprofits, and grassroots groups that serve parts of the community, but there are no central hubs or people taking the lead on initiatives. People want organizations and initiatives to unite and work across township and municipal lines, “seeing everyone here as part of the community, not just somebody you live by,” rather than duplicating efforts because of “tribalism,” because they want “acknowledgments for themselves,” or because they aren’t aware of other organizations doing the same work. Connecting across the broader community would help increase resident “buy-in” for plans and initiatives, and helps the community reach its full potential.

People are also looking for organizations to pool their resources to make a bigger impact, particularly in light of potential funding cuts, and to let people know what resources they can offer to help the community. Even simple things, like multiple spaces in a municipality being on the same reservation system, could help. Instead, community members see a lack of communication and coordination between organizations. Many organizations “don’t talk to each other,” and “it doesn’t feel like they connect together,” even when they are doing the same or similar activities. Many also don’t do a good job communicating what they do to people who might need their services, so people don’t know that there is even help available when they need it. Sometimes those services and programs are also difficult to access, such as when information is only in English or programs are in places that aren’t near public transportation.

There are some examples of collaboration in the community, however, such as a partnership between the Ingham County Animal Control and Shelter and the Greater Lansing Food Bank to add pet food to the food bank. Organizations that connect communities can also offer a bridge in difficult and divisive times; for example, the

Interfaith Clergy Association of Greater Lansing had tough conversations between Muslim and Jewish members after the October 7 attacks in Israel, but ultimately “decided to prioritize relationships with each other over choosing sides.”

### A community that is physically easy to navigate

Physical connectivity and navigability are also important to members of the Capital Area District Libraries community. People in rural areas appreciate that they live close enough to Lansing and its suburbs to easily access the amenities of a city, such as an airport, a university, and museums, while being able to live in a small town or rural area. However, road construction often blocks access, particularly in suburbs where “there aren’t that many ways to get into” certain areas, causing delays and backups, and some rural areas like Stockbridge are less connected because they aren’t near major roads. Community members also complained about the state of the roads, particularly neighborhood side streets. Parking is also an issue when people travel downtown during the week, and some, particularly older people and those without mobile devices, struggle with Lansing’s parking meters. The CATA bus system was praised by some, while others were concerned about safety when riding buses.

While there are trails and walkable and bikeable neighborhoods scattered throughout the community, people, especially those in suburban and urban areas, want more areas to be accessible by pedestrians and bikers. People talked about having to “take your life in your hands” to walk or bike on busy roads, and want safe routes to schools, libraries, grocery stores, and other places that people want to spend time. Currently many routes feel “disjointed” and dangerous because of traffic, potholes, and a lack of crosswalks and lighting. There have been more bike lanes added to roads, but community members want to see more “urgency” around this issue.



## Concerns



# How the Library Might Help

Interviewees and Conversation participants were asked how Capital Area District Library might help achieve community aspirations and address community concerns. The responses were compiled and loosely themed and are listed below. Some suggestions could fall under more than one category. It is important to note that these suggestions could be activities or services the library already offers or ideas for new activities or services.

## Reflecting the communities where branches are located

The branches that serve the Capital Area District Libraries community are located in a variety of places with different strengths and amenities. Community members would like to see the branches more strongly reflect the needs and wants of each community, and for the branches to celebrate what makes each area special. Every corner of the community has “a lot of skilled people” who could “show their stuff off” at the library, as well as local organizations that can get involved and bring their own feel to their branches. Local branches could showcase businesses, entrepreneurs, and artists who live nearby, either by bringing them in for programming or by highlighting them in other ways. Community members believe that each branch can have its own “vibe” while still building an identity for Capital Area District Libraries that unites the diverse rural, suburban, and urban areas CADL serves.

Participants feel that programs and services need to look different at different branches; what works in a rural branch “won’t necessarily work in Lansing.” Some from the more rural branches expressed frustration at feeling “misunderstood by those people in Lansing,” sharing concerns that a big system administered in a city environment may not understand their uniqueness. Even when there are initiatives across the entire CADL system, there could be more focus on certain services depending on the branch; for example, a branch in a rural, farming community might have a larger seed library and more programs about planting gardens. Nearby branches in similar parts of the community could also partner on programs that would interest people from a larger area, like the Polar Express program at Aurelius Library in the winter. Urban community members stressed the importance of continuing to have a large branch in downtown Lansing that reflects that community, and that offers services for, and builds relationships with, homeless and under-resourced people who find “refuge” at the library. All branches can also reflect their communities with robust local history services, including oral histories from people who have lived in the area

for a long time, because “everyone has a story to tell.” While some branches are tight on space, making browsing and programming difficult, the community thinks CADL has “read the room” and set up spaces that serve each area.

Generally, patrons like that they have access to “the whole collection” at CADL, including robust digital resources, regardless of what branch they frequent. However, people in smaller and more rural communities are concerned that some people may feel “intimidated” by the idea of coming into a library branch that is part of a large system and could be seen as a “large government appendage” rather than a local library. They don’t want people to think that their local library reflects “big city values” that aren’t in line with their community’s values. However, many rural community members said they see strong support for the local library branches “regardless of political affiliation” and even among people they wouldn’t expect. They envision a balanced approach of really highlighting each branch as a local library with a unique identity *while* acknowledging the benefits of being part of a larger system and finding ways to promote both well.

### Providing access to services, resources, and spaces for the wide range of people in the community

One of the most important roles that the Capital Area District Libraries can fill for their community is to provide access to services, resources, and spaces that the community needs, and the library does it “in ways no one else can” – without having to pay and regardless of background. In an ideal world, the library should be “a steward of community space, and isn’t telling us how to do community.” The library should be a “hub” of community activity, and branch out into services that attract a wide variety of people, not just those who want to read books. People can come into the library to take classes, listen to speakers, and have conversations in an environment “that you couldn’t find in a coffee shop, that you couldn’t find in someone’s home.” They can also find a wide range of materials that reflect various interests, including the popular Library of Things. The library’s digital space is another way that library services are accessible and is a “godsend” for many. The recently updated app was praised as “a great step in the right direction,” and connects the libraries throughout CADL, though some were concerned about people with limited tech skills or access being left behind.

People are interested in programming across the spectrum of the community. Patrons love programs like storytime and would like to see more connection with school-aged students, including homeschool students. They are also interested in intergenerational programming, with one person sharing about a library that had an American Girl-themed program where



young people interviewed nursing home residents who had lived through the Great Depression and connecting that to a story. They are also looking for skill-building services, including technology and computer classes; literacy and ESL programs; programs about how to use items available in the Library of Things; and information literacy that helps people “read information as factual information, versus false information” in “a way that isn’t inherently political, that isn’t partisan.” Some mentioned that programs of interest to them aren’t available at times they can participate, since they are at work. Adult programming has become less accessible to working adults as adult programming in the evening “trickled away,” and in general people would like additional hours at their branches.

Community members expressed some concern with the physical accessibility of library branches, both getting to the library and getting around the space once they got there. They want branches to be walkable, including for youth after school, but branches “vary very widely in how accessible they are.” People also discussed the importance of library services being accessible “for all populations,” including disabled people, those who are hearing impaired and visually impaired, and people who are aging. Some of the branches have items that are too low or too high for people to comfortably access, and some branches are difficult to navigate in a wheelchair or with a stroller. The Downtown library is seen as particularly important for the community; people said it would be a “huge mistake” and a “huge step backward” to move the library too far from the bus depot or to downsize the building, and some would like to see it stay in the current building because of the architectural features. It was clear from discussion and people’s reactions to each other’s comments in the Conversations that there is still a lot of confusion, misunderstanding, and tension over the “right” approach to the downtown building itself. A large new or renovated library downtown could even become a “magnet” for people to come downtown and an attraction for younger professionals considering moving downtown. However, parking downtown is difficult and makes the Downtown library difficult to access during the week; people would like to see better parking options, and possibly free parking while visiting the library. An idea was offered to investigate a partnership with the City of Lansing to offer validated or lower-cost parking when accessing the Library.

## Working together within the library system and with the communities the Library serves

Members of the Capital Area District Libraries community want to see individual branches working together within the CADL system, and working with the communities that the Library serves. Patrons appreciate that being part of CADL means that they can access

nearly any book that they want, no matter which branch they frequent. However, some community members expressed concern about the size of some of the branches, the money that is available for each branch, and the varying capacities of the Friends groups. People would like to see a “balance” of resources at each branch, but recognized that library spaces and budgets can’t continue to grow. Rather than trying to have something at every branch, the library could create “magnet libraries” where certain branches specialize in certain resources and put those resources “as a focal point at different places.” Patrons also discussed the possibility of multiple branches working together for large events, and the possibility of reciprocal cards and programming/event partnerships with other local libraries outside of CADL such as East Lansing Public Library and Delta Township District Library.

Community members would like to see the library move beyond its walls and work in the community. Branches should connect with clubs, nonprofits, and organizations to serve people. Participants suggested hiring a “person to be a satellite,” whose job would be to go out in the community to make relationships and find local people who can offer programming and resources, and to let people know what the library has to offer. They can also offer library services to people who can’t come to the branches, such as nursing homes, and even bookmobile services to underserved parts of the district, as well as putting free books around the community in places that people visit. Particularly at the Downtown branch, patrons feel it is important to build a relationship with the homeless people who spend time in the library, and to ensure that their voices are heard when decisions are made by intentionally seeking those voices out rather than just making things open.

The library doesn’t have to “start from zero” or “reinvent the wheel.” Instead of only creating new programs and services, they can also “tap into what’s already going on” in the area to support the “marvelous events we already have” and to act as a “community organizer” to assist people in asking for help and getting the resources they need. Capital Area District Libraries can also work with cities and towns, townships, school districts, social services agencies, and other local entities to ensure that they are all moving toward the same goals, because the library is seen as a politically neutral organization “with no axe to grind.” Representatives from organizations that the library works with said that the library is a “great” partner; the library can build on those relationships. Community members would also like to see the library advertise what is already going on in various ways that reach outside of the library, and in different languages, including on TV, via social media, and even on a billboard, rather than just hanging flyers at the library.



Community members expressed a lot of love and appreciation for staff and want to be sure that they are being treated well and given enough hours to make this a career, and that they won't be "dumped on" by adding more responsibilities around community partnerships. Some expressed concern about high turnover rates and losing "tremendous infrastructure" and knowledge when staff members leave.

## Creating spaces where people feel safe to be themselves and interact with others

Another way Capital Area District Libraries can help the community reach its aspirations is by creating and providing safe, comfortable spaces for people to spend time and to interact with others. Community members talked about the loss of many community "third spaces" where people can spend time and meet people and see the library as an important example of this. In a time of political divisiveness, the library also offers non-politicized services and spaces to people of "all political viewpoints." The library provides a space that "is not transactional" where people can "sit and chat," use the computer or Wi-Fi, or serve as a "safe refuge" for people who don't have somewhere else to go. It's also an important place for organizations to meet. However, many of the branches are "strapped for space" and need more meeting spaces. Community members would like to see more spaces for organizational meetings, people studying, job interviews, virtual meetings, and other uses. This is particularly important in rural areas with few other places where people can meet.

Library branches are also places where people can engage in dialogue with each other and "build bridges," attend community meetings and forums, and learn about people who aren't like them. Most patrons said they are comfortable at the library and feel like they can be themselves and engage authentically there, but some expressed concern about disinterested or "authoritarian" behavior from librarians and security personnel. They also wanted to be sure that the homeless population feels like they are important residents of the community too.

The Capital Area District Libraries community also sees the library as a place to share and provide "mutual aid" for one another, where people could give away some of their "3,000 zucchini" from their garden, drop off items that other people need, or hold a flea market or swap meet in a library parking lot. Several of the branches, particularly rural branches, have adequate outdoor space for activities that could be capitalized on to connect the community.

## Connecting people to the resources available in the community

In addition to connecting at the library, community members also look to the library to connect people to the resources available locally. This includes social services, nonprofits, and other forms of help for people who need it, as well as serving as the “connective tissue” that connects the community to the many cultures that make up the Capital Area District Libraries community “in an artful way.” The library can support the celebrations and events that groups already hold, and connect people with museums, community centers, and other organizations that offer historical, social, and cultural programs.

People also see Capital Area District Libraries as a place that can connect them to community amenities and information. For example, a rural branch could create a printed and/or online “trail of farmstands” to let the public know where they can get local vegetables, fruit, honey, maple syrup, and baked goods. Branches can connect their patrons with tutoring programs. The library can help “start the ball rolling” as students prepare for college and work with employment services like MichiganWorks! The library could even partner with other places to offer expanded meeting space without renovating. The library can be a safe space to help people “find the words” to ask for the help that they need when they “don’t know what’s out there. They don’t know, in the middle of a crisis, the words to use, so they can’t ask for help.”

# Appendix A: Specific Suggestions

This section lists specific suggestions made in Community Conversations and Community Interviews when discussing the role the library might play in reaching the community's aspirations and addressing their concerns. The general themes of the suggestions are reflected in the themed narrative section "How the Library Might Help." These are more specific ideas and opinions that individuals shared. It is important to note that these suggestions could be support for keeping and enhancing activities or services the library already offers *or* ideas for new activities or services.

## Compliments

- "Doing a fantastic job."
- "Great community partner – already know how to work together."
- "Helpful and willing community partners"
- "Huge fan of the library!"
- "I love the library!"
- "This (the library) is vital to the community, and this is vital to the mental health of the community."
- "We have to thank our libraries!"
- Downtown branch is a "star ... for their willingness to go above and beyond to support the community of people using that branch."
- Kudos for handling of Intellectual Freedom
- Leslie branch exceeded expectations for school partnership.
- A library "should be an 'automatic stop' in a downtown district and be centered at the heart of communities."
- Library is "best example for people in our community to follow because of how open and accessible you are."
- Library is the "most important institution in Stockbridge."
- The Library of Things is "the greatest thing ever." Specific items mentioned include zoo passes, theremin, ghost-hunting kit

## Facilities

- Ability to scan library card for free parking downtown near the library
- Coffee shop at Haslett branch
- Easier access to items on the top and bottom shelves (Aurelius, South Lansing)
- Expansion at Aurelius

- Fewer computers at Okemos and space for study rooms
- Keep a lot of computers at South Lansing
- Important to have a presence that serves community at South and Downtown branches
- Keep a branch downtown – gut the current building and renovate, or build a new building that is larger and close to the bus depot
- Longer hours (open earlier, closed later)
- Makerspace
- More community meeting space at Haslett
- Reuse historic buildings for library branches, like library in Charlevoix
- Space for Friends storage at Aurelius

### **Programming**

- Adult programming in the evenings
- Programs seen as of interest to “older people” are also desired by young adults, but need to be evenings or weekends for them to attend
- BBQ class
- Beekeeping class
- Build off successes like the summer reading program, movie afternoons
- Community cabinet
- Computer workshops
- Computers and computer help for seniors
- Connect populations, such as seniors and young kids
- Cultural festival like Celebrate Nashville Cultural Festival
- ESL classes
- Event where local vendors showcase their wares
- Expand early literacy workshops
- Flea market or swap meet in the parking lot at Williamston, possibly the week of the Red Cedar Jubilee
- Gaming group
- Guest speakers on educational, historical topics
- Historical focus, including oral histories
- Host community conversations
- How-to programming
- Magician shows
- Meetups

- Movies at the downtown branch in the movie theater
- Music programs
- Mutual aid/freecycle site for dropoff and pickup
- Outdoor activities at Aurelius
- Outreach to nursing homes and senior citizen centers
- Presentations on how to use the Library of Things items
- Programs and outreach for homeschool families
- Project programs on screens at branches
- Renaissance Faire
- Seed library
- Small business programs on grants, marketing
- Small engine repair class
- Teach research skills
- Trail of farmstands in the area
- Vegetable exchange

### **Partnerships & Outreach**

- Attend school staff meetings to share information about library
- Bookmobile
- Clubs and sports in schools and universities
- Collect information from the community on wants & needs, and share it with municipalities
- Communication across lines for school locations outside of the service area like Eaton Rapids
- Community health workers focused on street medicine
- Connect current cultural programming to ethnic and community groups that already exist
- Constant contact with school systems
- Employment services
- Have festivals in Mason at the Aurelius branch
- Ingham County Animal Control and Shelter interested in partnering, including rotating display about ICACS services, help share information about drive-through and clinics
- Interaction with the faith community
- Lansing City Rescue Mission is interested in partnering
- LEAP is willing to partner with CADL

- Advent House loves their partnership with the library
- Mason Area Chamber of Commerce interested in partnering
- Mason is open to partnering with the library and Friends of Mason Library
- Mobile library
- More meeting spaces for local clubs and organizations
- MSU partnership
- Municipalities partner with library
- Organizations that help homeless
- Outreach at summer events
- Outreach with local police and fire departments
- Programs at local businesses
- School system partnerships for ongoing adult education
- Support events like Celebrate Meridian, Pride
- Teens leading programs or getting involved in some way
- Township relationships
- Tutoring
- Use space at Schuler Books
- Welcome newcomers to the Lansing area

## **Marketing**

- Advertising in multiple languages
- Better advertising of Library of Things
- Campaign of “finding the words” to ask for help people need
- Promote the scope of services that public libraries provide
- Promote the value to people who don’t use the library but pay for it
- Put the mission statement on refrigerator magnets
- Reach people where they are instead of waiting for people to “find” the library
- Share Community Engagement Report and Strategic Plan with the community through hard copies, website, email newsletter
- Share information about library funding and property taxes
- Share information on NextDoor
- Talking points for the community when contacting legislators about library funding
- Welcome packets for realtors
- Intentional invitations of voices to conversations who won’t just show up to an open offer (for example, these Community Conversations)