SAN BENITO COUNTY FREE LIBRARY STRATEGIC PLAN

2011	Imagine…Inform…Inspire

San Benito County Free Library Strategic Plan, 2011

Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are thankful to the members of the Library Task Force for their contributions and guidance in the development of the Library Strategic Plan, which has been a collaboration between community volunteers, including the Friends of the Library, and staff.

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SERVING BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE LIBRARY

OUR LIBRARY

The San Benito County Free Library has served residents for over 90 years. In a county of 55,269 residents it has over 30,000 registered borrowers and over 132,000 visits annually. While the County has more than 12,000 youth less than 14 years of age, over 9,700 youth are registered borrowers of the Library.

The Library, which has one location and mobile services, is located at 470 Fifth Street in Hollister. In 2011, the library had 7.0 FTE permanent employees and 1.15 temporary staff. The library's current budget is $763,603. Its diversified funding sources include:

- $662,628 from all local governments sources
- $45,910 state funds (CLSA, PLF)
- $43,445 Federal Funds (LSTA)
- All other operating income amounts to $53,100
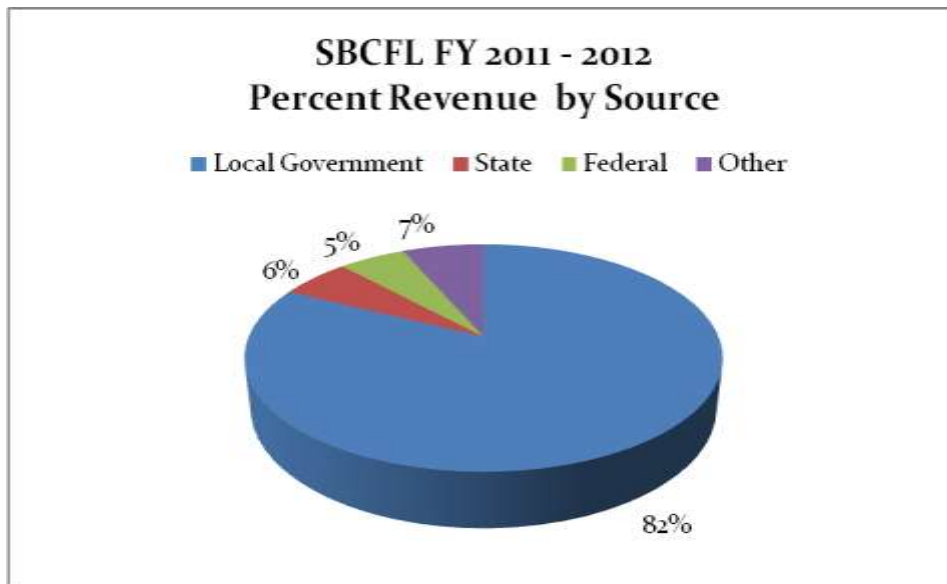
Library expenses include staff salaries and benefits ($670,933), print material expenditures ($18,366), and electronic and other materials ($21,176). With over 30,000 registered borrowers, the cost for materials per customer is approximately $1.31 annually.

In addition to materials, the Library offers 19 computers with Internet access and databases for use by the public, which includes children's computers and 6 specialized employment/literacy computers. The library averages approximately 50 daily computer users.

The only other library in the County is located in San Juan Bautista, which has limited operating hours and limited staffing. With the recent closures of some local school libraries, the public library has seen an increase in traffic, particularly from the school-aged residents.

OUR COMMUNITY

Located in Central California 50 miles southeast of Silicon Valley, San Benito County is fortunate to have a pleasant moderate climate, abundant water supplies, and fertile farmlands. In 2010 agriculture was the county's largest industry with a gross value of over $255 million for crop and livestock production.

As of 2010 the county population was 55,269 with the county seat located in Hollister, which has a population of 34,928. Demographics include a richly diverse community with a Hispanic population of 57%. The county has a total land area of 1,390.73 square miles and 893,400 acres. Adjacent to San Benito are the counties of Monterey, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, Merced, and Fresno.

The scenic county nestled between the Gabilan and Diablo ranges of the Santa Cruz Mountains is the home of the San Juan Bautista Mission, founded in 1797. San Juan Bautista is the county's second incorporated town with a population of 1,862. Unincorporated towns in the county include Aromas, Paicines, and Tres Piños.

San Benito County is often considered the bellwether of California, as its recent elections mirror official returns. The county is part of California's 17th congressional district; in the legislature San Benito is in the 28th Assembly district, and in the 12th Senate district. County government has oversight through an elected Board of Supervisors. There are over 144 non-profit organizations addressing community needs.

VISION

Our vision is for an information and culturally-rich, healthy, and economically vibrant San Benito County, where residents are inspired to imagine and prepare for the future together.

MISSION

The San Benito County Free Library provides the community lifelong learning opportunities.   The library delivers responsive informational, educational, recreational, and cultural library services within a welcoming environment.

VALUES

In carrying out our mission, making decisions and taking action, the Library embraces the following values:

LIFE-LONG LEARNING

The Library is committed to the pursuit of knowledge which enhances personal development and quality of life.   The Library aims to help residents become independent lifelong learners by selecting and offering materials and facilities that support the diverse needs of all community members.

EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Library strives to offer excellent customer service, and to deliver client-based library collections in a variety of formats and languages, in facilities that are welcoming, safe, and conducive to learning. We aim to provide the highest level of professional service to all, and to treat everyone with respect. The Library collaborates with schools and community organizations to expand its reach into the community.

PUBLIC TRUST

The Library provides careful stewardship of the public trust and ensures that it makes the most effective use of public funds. The Library is committed to listening, understanding, and responding to community needs.

INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

The Library supports and defends the right to seek and find information from diverse points of view. The Library respects the individual's need for privacy and confidentiality, and their right to access library services without bias.

PLANNING FOR A DYNAMIC FUTURE

Evolving from the mission is the obligation to continuously plan to keep the Library aligned with the needs of residents in the future. Toward this end, Library administration worked with a community library task force to develop a long term Library strategic plan, a road map for serving its customers, the residents of San Benito County.

At the request of the task force, the Library conducted a community assessment to identify factors internal to the library, as well as factors in the community that impact the work and future services of the Library. The Library used a number of assessment strategies including a community survey, conversations with community groups and individuals, and a community summit. Hundreds of individuals participated in the process giving their input. The findings were presented at a Summit on December 1, 2010, at which additional input was given. A copy of the findings and assessment tools are included in appendices. The most significant theme to arise from the assessment was the need to expand access. Access to services. Access to programs. Access to technology. Access to the facility. Following is the statement of direction, which will guide the library over the next several years as it makes decisions to shape its future.

STATEMENT OF DIRECTION

PROVIDE CUSTOMER-FOCUSED SERVICE

Strive to offer excellent customer service using best practices, and to deliver client-based library collections in a variety of formats and languages, within facilities that are welcoming, safe, and conducive to learning.

    Train staff on newest customer service techniques and technologies.

    Centralize and streamline the main service desk, with standardized signage.

    Offer more community programs, including book clubs & Book Club in a Box, teen programs, and digital emergent/family literacy.

    Provide specialized equipment to the visually-impaired and elderly.

    Seek additional funding to address information and collection needs.

BUILD COMMUNITY TIES

Collaborate with local schools and community organizations in order to expand the Library's reach into the community.

    Participate in local events (i.e. Holiday Parade, County Fair, Farmers' Market).

    Develop new relationships with local organizations, such as Hazel Hawkins Memorial Hospital and the Law Library, and investigate in-house passport services.

    Develop new relationships with local for-profit businesses, including various book and electronic vendors.

 ☉ Continue to build and nurture existing community relationships, and explore additional avenues for partnering with Gavilan College, the YMCA, Friends of the Library, Probation and Sheriff's Department, Superior Court, First Five, etc.

ENHANCE TECHNOLOGY

Continue taking advantage of open-source library software (Koha), and updating current technologies as needed. Explore new trends and technologies, adding any that are financially feasible in the near future.

 ☉ Continue to use and update Koha/Open Source software.

 ☉ Increase number of eBooks offered through the website, with mobile (i.e. Nook, Kindle, iPad/iPhone) compatibility for all titles.

 ☉ Explore new technologies, such as QR (Quick Response) codes, self-check machines, remote rental kiosks, resource-sharing databases, and mobile-compatible website access.

 ☉ Offer computer/technology classes for the public and staff.

 ☉ Add additional computer work stations for both children and adults, and consider a separate teen computer lab.

OPTIMIZE SPACE

Work with professional architects and planners to maximize current space, while investigating financial resources for expansion in the next few years.

 ☉ Remodel existing space to accommodate 21st Century library needs.

 ☉ Integrate literacy and library services.

 ☉ Investigate possible expansion to neighboring Office of Education building.

 ☉ Seek funding for optimization of existing library space through grants.

 ☉ Update fixtures and equipment to meet modern standards.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT OF TRENDS, STRENGTHS AND AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

COMMUNITY CONCERNS

- Lack of economic fundamentals.
- Need for greater coordination among agencies. For instance, the library should have stronger partnerships with Hazel Hawkins Hospital, Gavilan College, and local nonprofit agencies.
- Hollister residents benefit the most from the presence of the library, but the City of Hollister does not invest financially in the library.
- There is a lack of jobs in the County, and many jobs are seasonal. (The 2011 rate of unemployment ranged from January 20.4% - October 11.5%, not adjusted seasonally).
- Low wages but high prices that are driven by Silicon Valley. The per capita income from 2005-2009 was only $25,840, and yet the median housing value is higher than state averages at $594,900.
- Financial instability of education, city, state, and county governments.
- Community has a variety of youth-related needs.
- Significant health issues, especially obesity and diabetes among youth.
- A large percentage of students in local schools are from families with low incomes. Many of these students experience difficulties and fall behind.
- Technology exists that can impact and benefit the library. For example it should have mobile-compatible online services, self-checkout machines, credit/debit card machines, an increased collection of eBooks, and tech savvy staff.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- Large percentage of residents work outside the County which affects education, families, and how children interact.
- Hispanics comprise a large percentage of the population and they underrepresented on nonprofit boards and in government.
- The San Benito High school had a dropout rate of 14% in 2010.
- Hispanics make up 65.1% of student enrollment in the county and 74% in the Hollister School District.
- District has low test scores, and many parents enroll their children in other schools.
- The schools are under stress.

Public School Enrollment, by Race/Ethnicity: 2011

(Race/Ethnicity: **All**)

San Benito County: Percent
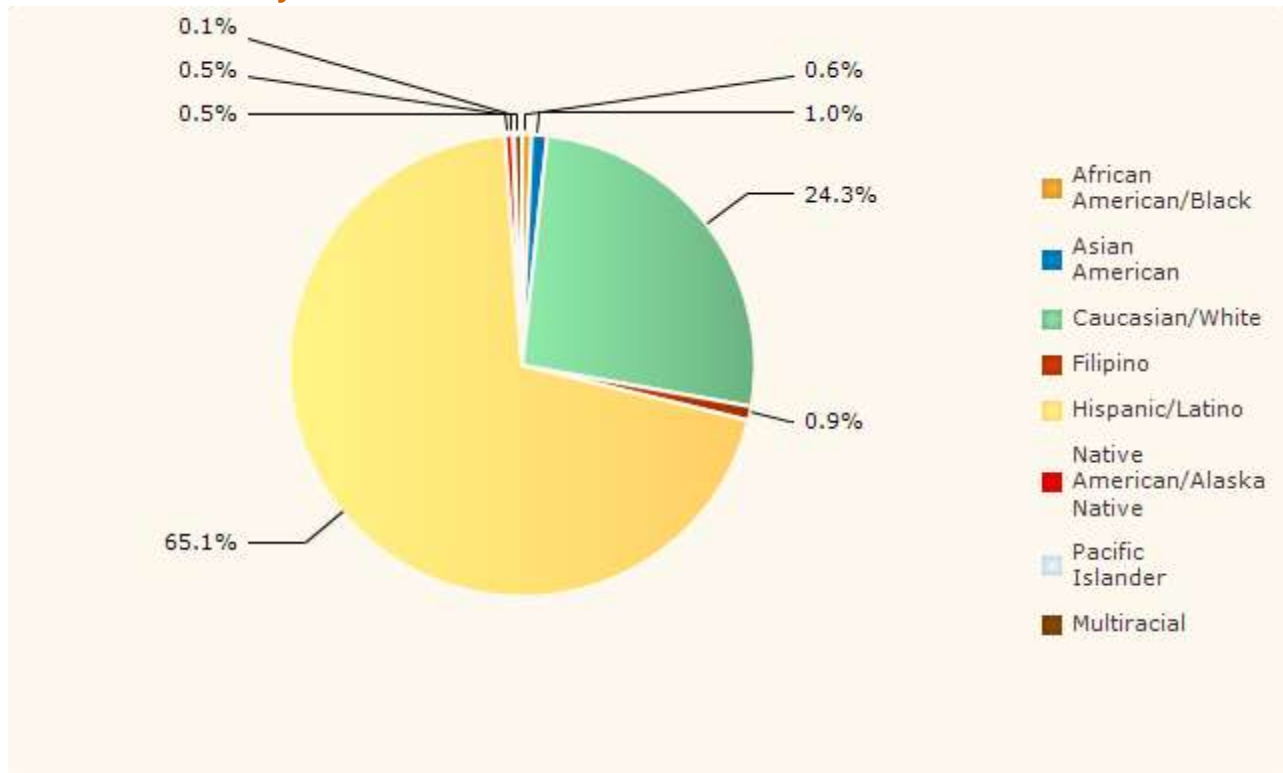
POLITICAL TRENDS

- We are in an economic squeeze in which the financially-strapped State of California squeezes local governments.
- The library consistently finds itself at the top of the list for cuts by the County because it is not a required or mandated service.
- Libraries are a long-term investment, a concept which is difficult to understand or visualize.
- Development of the YMCA may affect the library. Location in close proximity to each other should be considered.
- Bringing Gavilan College downtown would be positive. The library could partner with the college to build a larger library.

LIBRARY AREAS OF NEEDS

- Physical space: The library lacks space to accommodate a larger collection, expanded technology center, children's story times, or tutoring.

- Materials: The library needs a larger, updated collection of materials to address a wide array of information, educational, and entertainment needs. Teens would like to see more services specifically for teens and English-language learners would like to see more materials in their native language.

- Hours of Operation: The community wants the hours of operation to extend into the weekend, giving access to those unable to use the library during the week.

- Parking: The library lacks sufficient parking adjacent to or near the library.

- Technology: The library needs a wide array of technology throughout the library, such as an expanded computer lab, available downloadable materials, and technologies facilitating self-service.

- Community partnerships and programs.

LIBRARY STRENGTHS AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY'S QUALITY OF LIFE

- The library is the heart of the community. It is a gathering spot for the community and a first stop for new residents.
- The library is a fabulous resource to the community.

- The library is an adjunct to the schools. When schools are out, the library is in session.

- It is 'midnight basketball' for those who don't want to play basketball.

- It is early intervention and a safe space for youth.

- It is a place for peace and quiet in this very busy and loud world.

- It has strong leadership and its staff works well as team.

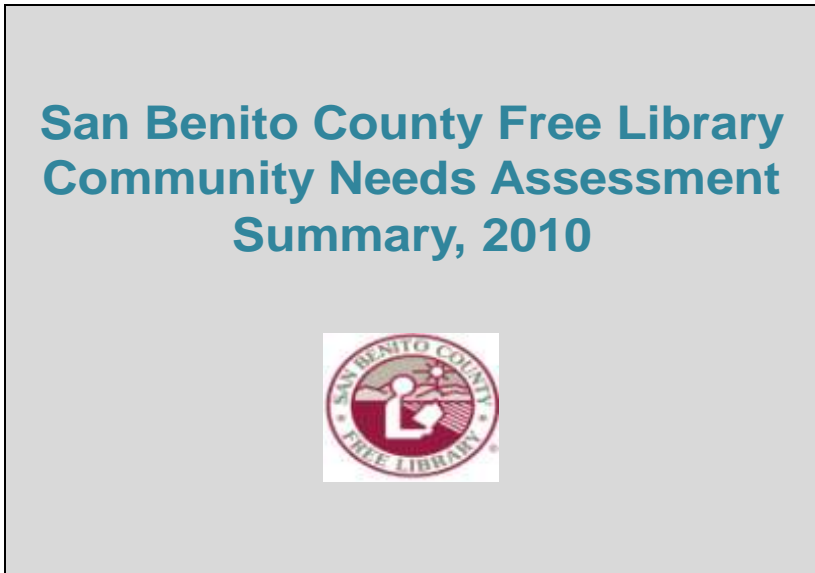- It offers quality customer service and programs.

- It offers free access to computers and information.

- It is increasingly important in hard economic times.

- Provides opportunities and new technologies in order to bridge the "digital divide."

- Promotes lifelong learning and emergent literacy.

APPENDIX B: SBCFL COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Following are the findings from both the survey and discussion groups. We are particularly indebted to **Lanty Mason**, community task force member, who provided the leadership, technical skills, and an inordinate number of hours to develop, implement and analyze the findings. Without him we would not have been able to accomplish this herculean feat.

In addition we are thankful to the Santa Cruz County Library for sharing their survey with us, which we then adapted to our needs.

San Benito County Free Library
Community Needs Assessment
Summary, 2010

Overview

Planning for a Dynamic Future

Evolving from the mission is the obligation for continuous planning to keep the Library aligned with the needs of County residents in the future. In support of this mandate, Library Management worked with the Future Library Planning 2010 Taskforce to develop a five-year strategic plan for Library Services. At the request of the Taskforce, the Library queried the community on how they use the library and what improvements they advocate for the future. This was conducted primarily through a survey and community discussion groups. The group also intended to conduct many individual interviews with key stakeholders but due to time constraints only a few were conducted. A copy of each instrument are attached. We thank the Santa Cruz Library for sharing its community survey which we adapted to our needs.

Library staff developed a survey of customers and the general community from which a profile of current usage, community demographic information, and unmet needs can be extracted. The assessment included a paper and online survey instrument.

Process

A survey questionnaire was available both in paper and on-line formats in English and Spanish between July and August 2010. A total of 640 surveys were completed. During the same period five community discussion groups, conducted by members of the task force, with senior, young adults, ESL classes, and library staff.
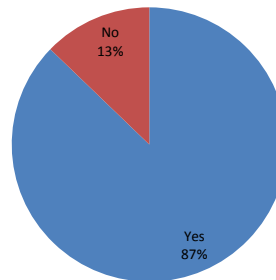
% of Respondents Visiting Library

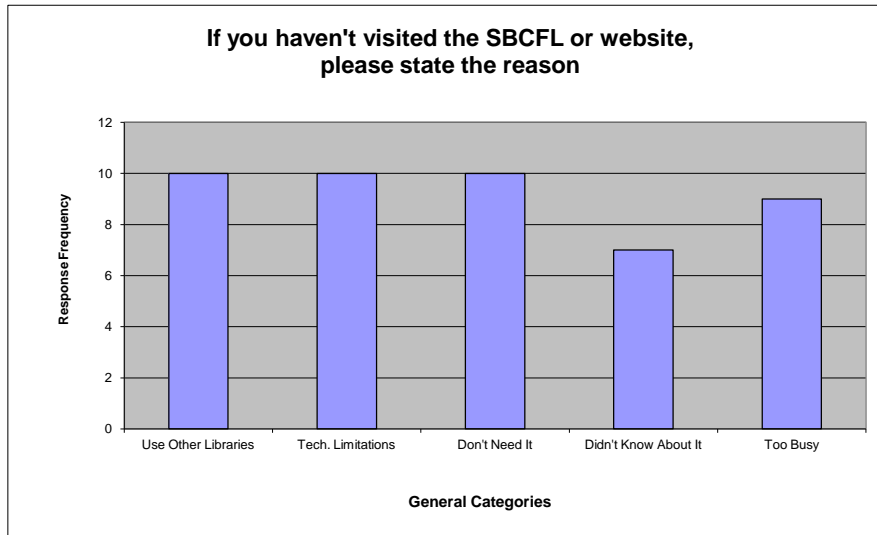**1. Have you visited the San Benito County Free Library or connected to the library website?**

Have You Visited the Library

Yes 539   84%

No 79   12%

Total 618   97%

Did Not Respond to Question 22 3%

Reasons for not using SBCFL

If you haven't visited the SBCFL or website, please state the reason

Frequency of using library

3. How often do you visit the library or connect to the website (Please check only one response below)?

1-2 times a week	213	33%
Monthly	143	22%
6 months or more	110	17%
3 or more times a week	68	11%
Never	33	5%
Total	**567**	**89%**
Did Not Respond to Question	73	11%

How Often Do You Visit the Library

Transportation to Library

4. How do you travel to the library?

|		
Car	441	69%
Walk	92	14%
Ride Bicycle	26	4%
Bus	12	2%
Total	**571**	**89%**
Did Not Respond to Question	69	11%

How Do you Travel to the Library
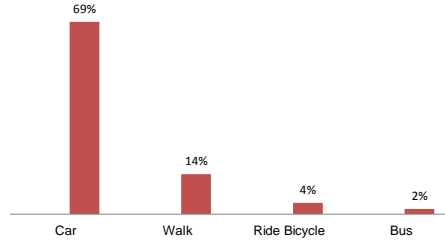
Library Materials and Resources Used

5. What library materials & resources have you used or checked out? (check all responses that apply):

DVDs/Videos	332	52%
Children's materials	288	45%
Adult materials	198	31%
Internet/Computers	179	28%
Reference Books	164	26%
Bestsellers/New Books	156	24%
Young Adults materials	135	21%
Magazine/Serials	106	17%
Audiobooks	98	15%
Spanish language materials	96	15%
Library Website	94	15%
Microsoft Office (Word,etc.)	58	9%
California History Collection	52	8%
Career/Job resources	52	8%
On-line databases (articles)	48	8%
Literacy Program resources	43	7%
Japanese language materials	23	4%

**What Materials/Resources Have You Used**
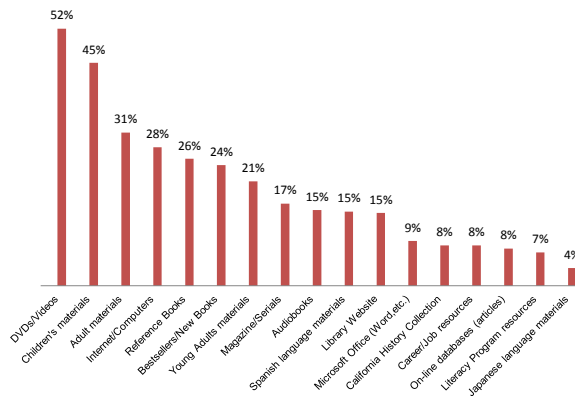
Top 5 Library Services Used by Respondents

6. What library services, programs or resources have you used or attended?(Please check the top five responses that apply):

Internet/computers	**165**	**26%**
Storytimes	**150**	**23%**
Newspapers/Magazines	**131**	**20%**
Studying	**127**	**20%**
Summer Reading Club	**122**	**19%**
Booksales	116	18%
Movies at the Library	99	15%
Photocopier	91	14%
Arts & Crafts	79	12%
Reading to children	75	12%
Library Website	66	10%

Top 5 Library Services Used

Internet/computers 26%, Storytimes 23%, Newspapers/Magazines 20%, Studying 20%, Summer Reading Club 19%
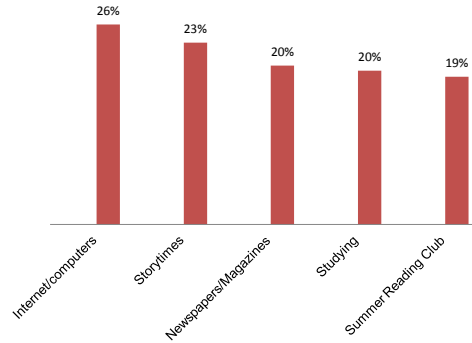
Most Important Hours of Service

7. Which days and hours are most important for you to visit the Library?

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10am - 6pm	206	32%
Tuesday or Thursday Noon - 8pm	203	32%
Saturday 9am - 5pm	185	29%
Did not respond	46	7%

Most Important Operating Days/Hours

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10am - 6pm 32%, Tuesday or Thursday Noon - 8pm 32%, Saturday 9am - 5pm 29%
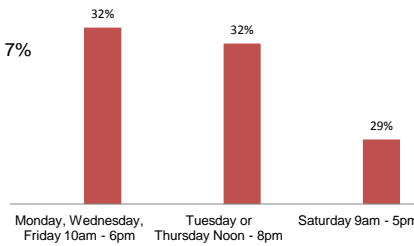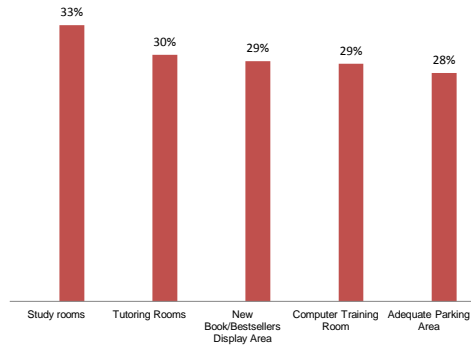
Important Enhancements to library

8. If funding were available, which enhancements to the library facility are most important to you? (Please check your five top choices):

Study rooms	**214**	**33%**
Tutoring Rooms	**191**	**30%**
New Books	**186**	**29%**
Computer Training Room	**184**	**29%**
Adequate Parking Area	**177**	**28%**
Second Tier		
Storytelling Area	147	23%
Coffee cafe	135	21%
Adequate Computer Lab	123	19%
Teen Room	116	18%
Job search computers	115	18%

Top 5 Enhancements You Would Like

Technology Additions

9. What kind of technology would you like to add to the Library? (Check all that apply)

|		
Self-Check Machines (Check out items by yourself)	288	45%
Downloadable Audiobooks/other media	205	32%
E-Books	165	26%
Media Bank (Outside Video/ DVD Dispenser when library is closed)	154	24%
Credit Card Payments	129	20%
Automatic Reserve System (Reserving computer use)	124	19%
Mobile Compatible site (download media to portable device)	97	15%
Did not respond	31	5%

What kind of technology would you like to add to the Library?
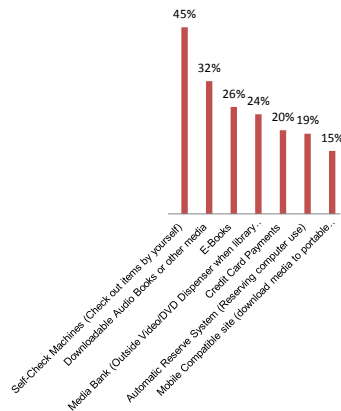
Top 5 Reasons for not Using Library

10. What are the reasons you don't use the Library more often? (Check the top five that apply)

Library does not have enough parking	**197**	**31%**
Library does not have new books/movies	**170**	**27%**
Library is not open on weekends	**170**	**27%**
Access to computer/Internet at home or work	**141**	**22%**
Library does not have enough computers	**129**	**20%**
I get required information elsewhere	116	18%
Open hours are not convenient for me	109	17%
Library is too small or crowded	105	16%
Library is too far from my home	100	16%

Top 5 Reasons You Do Not Use the Library
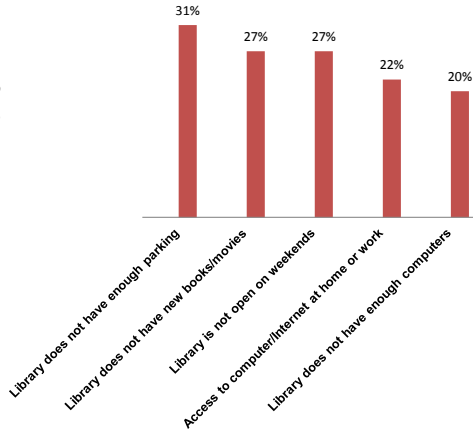
How to Improve the Library

Response Categories
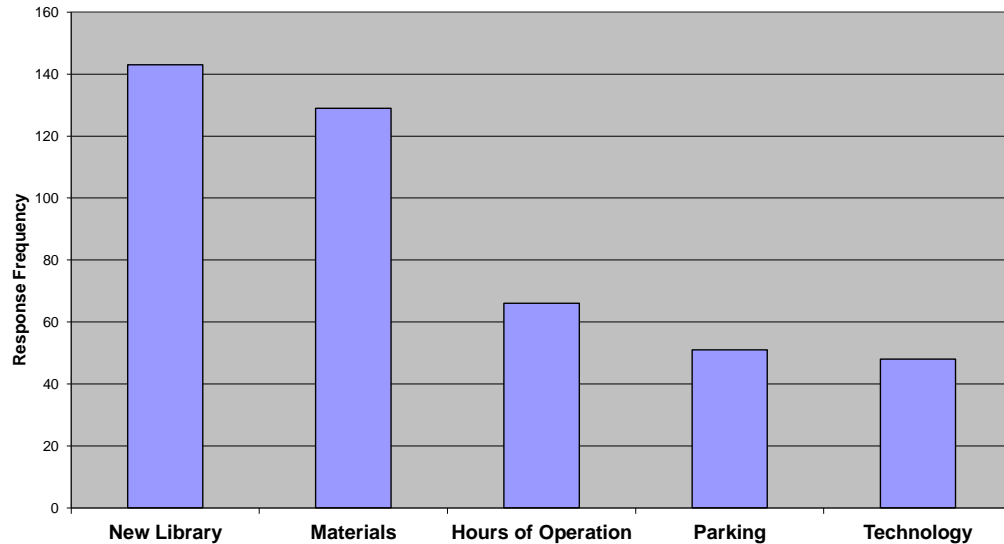
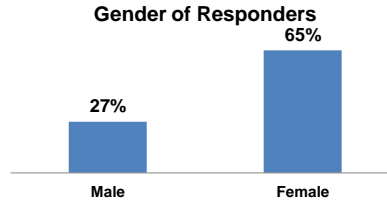## Gender and Age of Respondents

13. Please only check one response (demographics) in each question .

Male	174	27%
Female	417	65%
Total	**591**	**92%**
Did Not Respond to Question	49	8%

Gender of Responders

14. Please only check one response (demographics) in each question.

Under the age of 18	42	7%
Ages 18-30	130	20%
Ages 31-49	224	35%
Ages 50-75	161	25%
Over the age of 75	35	5%
Total	**592**	**93%**
Did Not Respond to Question	48	8%
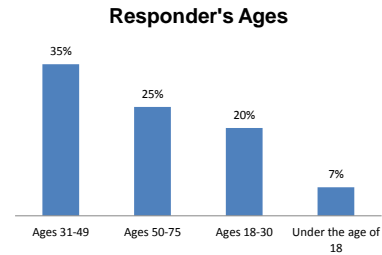
Responder's Ages

15. Are you the parent/guardian of a child or children under the age of 6?   **Yes 189 30% No 392 61%**

16. Are you the parent/guardian of a child or children between the ages of 6 and 17? **Yes 176 28% No 400 63%**

Education Level of Respondents

17. Level of education you have completed (Please only check one)?

Student K-12	66	10%
High School graduate	95	15%
GED	12	2%
Some college	102	16%
College Student	57	9%
College Degree	123	19%
Graduate Degree	47	7%
Postgraduate	29	5%
Other, please specify	29	5%
Total	**560**	**88%**
Did Not Respond to Question	80	13%

Education Level
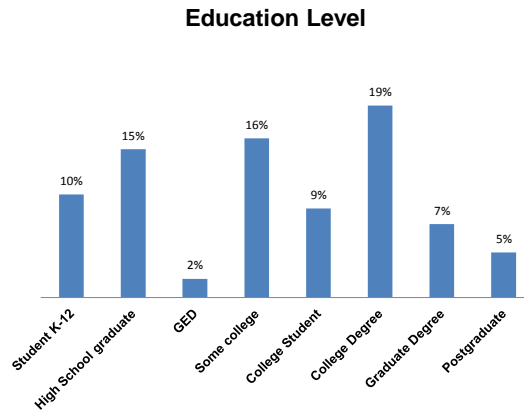
Ethnicity of Questionnaire Respondents

18. What is your ethnicity (Please check only one)?

Hispanic/Latino/Mexican	259	40%
White/Anglo-American	209	33%
Asian	29	5%
Multi-racial	23	4%
Other, please specify	23	4%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	9	1%
Black/African-American	8	1%
Pacific Islander	3	0%
Total	**563**	**88%**
Did Not Respond to Question	77	12%

Ethnicity
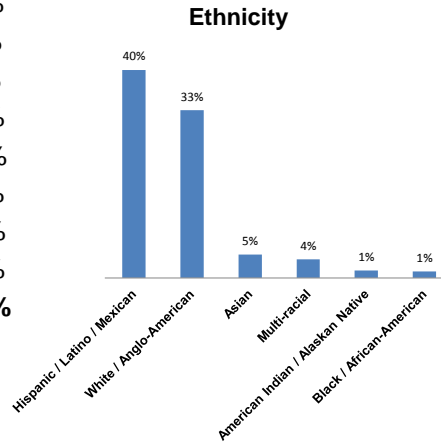
Community Discussion Groups Summary

In the following set of slides we have summarized the responses by community members who participated in community discussions that were facilitated by volunteer task force members.

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What can the Library do for this Community?

- Although most participants immediately shared opinions about how they use the library, what they like about it, and what improvements need to be made, some participants had strong opinions about the library's impact on the community.
  - The consensus is that "the library creates a unique learning environment and gathering place for families."
  - The library is a safe, friendly, family-oriented place for people to enjoy.
  - The library educates the community; people can come to the library to learn, relax, feel peace-of-mind, or socialize.
  - Libraries help preserve literary classics.
  - Some participants said that a community without a library would be unthinkable.

- Nora Conte, County Librarian, summed it up by saying*, "The library is a safe and non-threatening place to connect, socialize, learn and gather information. [The library] welcomes all to come in through the doors of knowledge if they elect to."*

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How do you/would you use the library?

- There were numerous and varied responses to this question. It is obvious that the community uses the library for more than "just books."

- Most use library services such as Conversation Club and ESL classes for language-learners, tax preparation assistance, the "55 Alive" safe-driving program for seniors, Homework Club, story times, and Summer Reading Program.

- The Teens do not believe the library has enough programs for teens. Their suggestions included SAT/ACT preparation classes, resume workshops, college-essay workshops, and monthly reading groups or writing groups.

- Technology is a big draw for the community. They use the computers and would like to see more computer stations. Many check-out movies for themselves/their children. Seniors and parents both use the audio-book collections frequently.

- Reference and non-fiction collections are also widely used. Participants specified their use of Consumer's Digest magazines, self-help and how-to books, art books, biographies, classics, the American-Indian collection, and inter-library loan. Participants, both English-speaking and non-English speaking, commented on their use of the Spanish and Japanese materials.

- Of course, many also use the library in a more traditional capacity. They come to the library for a quiet place to learn and study. They bring their children to do school projects and to read for pleasure.

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How do you feel about your experiences using this library?

- Each community discussion group was unanimous in their agreement that the staff at SBCFL is friendly and helpful. One woman shared her personal experience with getting a library card and how pleased she was with the quality of customer service at the library.

- The consensus in each group was that they have good experiences using this library. The staff, materials, and services are good. One participant said "the library here in Hollister is small, but it has everything you need and you know where to find everything."

- Negative experiences related mostly to lack of parking and lack of space/out-dated space in the library itself.

- Of major concern for the ESL students from Gavilan College was the reduction in library hours causing lack of access on weekends. This issue sparked an intense discussion about the importance of access to the library and how their children are impacted by the reduction in hours.

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How is SBCFL viewed in the community?
What is its reputation or image?

- One library staff member feels there are three main perceptions of the library: 1) the library is not a necessity; 2) the library is a necessity, but does not compete well with bigger city libraries; and 3) SBCFL does a good job considering its size and resources. Others commented that staff and programs are well-perceived, but the materials and technology are viewed as lacking. And yet another staff member offered that non-users may think this library is outdated. ***"If people haven't checked on us recently, they may be writing us off."***

- Participants in other groups feel the library is well-perceived in the community.

- Some pointed out that many people don't even know there is a library or what it offers. Some feel the library needs to raise community awareness and do more advertising. The teens suggested a Facebook page to appeal to teens at their level and for staff to do outreach on the high school campus to raise awareness of the public library and its services.

- An ESL student from Gavilan College pointed out the cultural differences in how libraries are viewed. ***In the United States, people view the library as a place for both children and adults, but in Mexico the library is viewed primarily as a place for children.***

- A senior participant commented that in the previous library administration there were an awful lot of complaints and people were not happy with their library experiences. But since the new leadership in the library everybody has a good experience.

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Library major strengths and ways to improve

- Library staff: the strengths of the library are its leadership, teamwork/customer service, programs/services, and partnerships/collaborations. Its weaknesses are in lack of staffing and funding and in the facility itself. Areas in need of improvement are in fundraising, services for teens, and in raising awareness of programs and services offered.
- In other groups there were several positive comments about the quality of customer service and programs at the library. Many feel the materials are good. Almost every group commented that they use the computers and feel up-to-date technology is a vital component of a relevant library.
- Many participants commented on the lack of parking and the lack of space in the library. Lack of parking was especially important to the senior group. Several participants commented that there are not enough computer stations.
- Teens: Reiterated that there are not enough services specifically for teens at the library and that we need to do more to appeal to teens in ways meaningful to them.
- English-language learners would like to see an increase in materials in their native languages. Also, they would like to have computer programs to help them learn English.
- One participant felt very strongly about the importance of computers and technology in the library. Though not necessarily representative of the whole group, his comments were certainly thought provoking. *"If I were the librarian for the county, what I would do is focus on computer access. I would stop spending money on trying to get more books into the system because people just aren't using them anymore. And then just set up as many computer stations as you possibly can and advertise that you're going to be doing computer training for the community – Excel training or worksheets or word processing or how to set up files. I think you could get quite a draw from the community because it's one thing to have the technology at your fingertips … but it doesn't do you any good if you don't know how to use it."*

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What will you need from the library in the next five years?

- Staff needs for the next five years include an increase in funding and materials improvements. **What we spend per capita today puts us in the bottom 5% of libraries according to statistics for** 1999**.** (paraphrased)

- Other participants talked about the facility and materials. Many suggested more parking or a designated parking lot for library users. Participants also discussed needing a larger facility with more designated spaces such as a children's area and isolated study rooms.

- Many participants said they needed more up-to-date science materials for their children. Other specific material needs included art books, biographies, and a good reference area.

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Do you use other libraries? If so, why do you choose to go there?

- Most participants said they did not use other libraries mostly because of the inconvenience of traveling to a library outside of Hollister.

- For teens, the high school library is their primary library and many of their peers may not even be aware of the public library. A college student in the teen group does use the library at DeAnza College and has also used the library at CSUMB. Another teen says she uses the Gilroy library when SBCFL doesn't have what she needs.

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Describe your vision of a perfect or amazing public library.

- According to group consensus, the perfect public library for San Benito County would
  - **Be a larger facility**
  - **Have more with more parking.**
  - **Have more computer stations and designated spaces for children and teens, as well as designated areas for studying and lounging.**
  - **In a perfect library, materials and technology would be up-to-date or advanced and there would be more foreign-language collections.**
  - **Have a coffee-house or bookstore-type environment which includes a café and comfortable lounge space.**

- For **Nora Conte, County Librarian**, the perfect library for San Benito County would actually be a library system with one large main branch and two smaller branches, and *"The library of the future, for me, is the creation of a system for San Benito County where children will walk into their library and will not have to be denied a book that they need to complete their homework assignment. That is my vision for San Benito County."*

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Other Comments

- We need to look ahead at the necessity of technology for future/younger generations

- We need capabilities for electronic payments and online payments/donation

- Library needs to be open 7 days a week

- Staff would like to have the time to help and teach older people how to use computers/technology

- *"I want to see this library become all that we want it to be because maybe I won't be here to utilize it myself, but I'll have another generation coming, which is my grandchildren. I want [the Library] to be someplace they want to go and feel welcome and enjoy it as much as I do."*

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APPENDIX C: SBCFL COMMUNITY SURVEY INSTRUMENT

San Benito County Free Library Community Survey

470 Fifth Street, Hollister, CA 95023 * 831-636-4107 * Fax 831-636-4099

Please help us plan for the future by completing the San Benito County Free Library strategic planning survey below. Or go to the library homepage at www.sanbenitofl.org to connect and complete this survey online. Please mail or return the survey to the Library by Friday, August 27, 2010. Thank you.

1. Have you visited the San Benito County Free Library or connected to the library website?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No If no, why? _____

   If yes, how often have you visited the downtown library facility (check only one response)?

   ☐ Never ☐ 1-2 times a week ☐ 3 or more times a week

   ☐ Monthly ☐ 6 months or more ☐_____Infrequently

   If you answered "No" to question 1, please skip to question 6.

2. (Transportation) How do you travel to the library (Check only one response)?

   ☐ Bus ☐ Car ☐ Ride Bicycle ☐ Walk ☐_____Other

3. What library materials & resources have you used or checked out? (check all responses that apply):

   ☐ DVDs/Videos   ☐ Children's materials   ☐ Young Adults materials
   ☐ Adult materials   ☐ Reference Books   ☐ Internet/Computers
   ☐ Spanish language materials ☐ Audiobooks   ☐ California History Collection
   ☐ Japanese language materials ☐ Career/Job resources   ☐ Literacy Program resources
   ☐ Magazines/Serials   ☐ Microsoft Office (Word, etc.) ☐ Bestsellers/ New Books
   ☐ On-line databases (articles) ☐ Library Website   ☐_____Other

4. What library services, programs or resources have you used or attended? (Check your top **five** choices):

   ☐ Summer Reading Club   ☐ Storytimes   ☐ Movies at the Library
   ☐ Homework Club   ☐ Arts & Crafts   ☐ Other Children Programs
   ☐ National Library Week ☐ Community Room   ☐ Adult Literacy Program/Lab
   ☐ Homework Computer Lab ☐ Conversation Club   ☐ Gavilan ESL Classes
   ☐ Test Proctored/Tax Help ☐ Photocopier   ☐ Newspapers/Magazines
   ☐ Studying   ☐ Reading to children   ☐ Bookmobile/Learning Center

☐ Internet/Computers   ☐ Wireless access   ☐ Microsoft Office (Word, etc.)

☐ Booksales   ☐ On-line Databases   ☐ Reference Services

☐ Library Website   ☐ Friends Fundraiser   ☐ _____Other

5. Which days and hours are most important for you to visit the Library?

☐ Monday, 10am-6pm   ☐ Tuesday, Noon-8pm   ☐ Wednesday, 10am-6pm

☐ Thursday, Noon-8pm   ☐ Friday, 10am-6pm   ☐ Saturday, 9am-5pm

☐_____Other

6. If funding were available, which enhancements to the library facility are most important to you?
    (Please check your **five** top choices):

☐ Study Rooms   ☐ Computer Training Room   ☐ Adequate Community Room

☐ Literacy Program Room   ☐ Storytelling Area   ☐ Media/Digital Lab

☐ Coffee Cafe   ☐ Adequate Family Place Center ☐ Genealogy Study Area

☐ Teen Room   ☐ Adequate Parking Area   ☐ Automatic Entrance/Disabled

☐ New Book/Bestsellers   ☐ Library Friends Area   ☐ Public Fax Machine

☐ Tutoring Rooms   ☐ Adequate Computer Lab   ☐ Adequate Wireless Area

☐ Job search computers   ☐ Reference/Research Area   ☐ _____Other

7. What kind of technology would you like to add to the Library? (Check all that apply):

☐ Self-Check Machines   ☐ E-Books

   (Check out items by yourself)

☐ Media Bank (Outside Video/DVD   ☐ Credit Card Payments

   Dispenser when library is closed)

☐ Mobile Compatible site (download   ☐ Downloadable Audio books
   media to portable Device)   or other media

☐ Automatic Reserve System   ☐ _____Other

   (Reserving computer use)

8. What are the reasons you don't use the Library more often? (Check the top **5** that apply)

☐ Library is too far from my home   ☐ Library does not have enough parking

☐ Access to computer/Internet at home or work ☐ I get required information elsewhere

☐ Library is too noisy and loud   ☐ Library is too small or crowded

☐ Library has limited resources for the disabled ☐ Library has limited access for the elderly

☐ Library does not have the information I need   ☐ Library does not have new books/movies

☐ Library does not have enough computers   ☐ Library does not have latest Office software

☐ Library does not have a public fax machine   ☐ Open hours are not convenient for me

☐ Library does not have study rooms   ☐ Library is not open on weekends

☐ Library does not have Teen areas   ☐ I use another public or academic library

☐ Library is not inviting/friendly   ☐ _____Other

9. If you could change one thing about the Library, what would that be?

_____

_____

10. The library welcomes comments and suggestions for improving library services, technology, programs, customer service, materials and facilities at your library. (Write additional comments below)

_____

(Demographics) Please only check one response in each question below:

11. I am:
    ☐ Male   ☐ Female

12. I am:
    ☐ Under the age of 18   ☐ Ages18-30

    ☐ Ages 31-49   ☐ Ages 50-75

    ☐ Over the age of 75

13. Are you the parent/guardian of a child or children under the age of 6?

    ☐ Yes   ☐ No

14. Are you the parent/guardian of a child or children between the ages of 6 and 17?

☐ Yes ☐ No

15. Level of education you have completed (Please only check one)?

☐ Student K-12 ☐ High School graduate ☐ GED

☐ Some College ☐ College Student ☐ College Degree

☐ Graduate Degree ☐ Postgraduate ☐ Other

16. What is your ethnicity (Please check only one)?

☐ American Indian/Alaskan Native ☐ Black/African-American ☐ Asian

☐ Hispanic/Latino/Mexican ☐ White/Anglo-American ☐ Pacific Islander

☐ Multi-racial ☐ Other

This strategic planning survey is an essential component of the library strategic planning process. The Library Strategic Planning Taskforce thanks you for taking the time to complete and return the survey.

APPENDIX D: DISCUSSION GROUP GUIDE

COMMUNITY GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sample Introduction:

Welcome to San Benito County Library. Thank you so much for being here and participating in this discussion. My name is ___ and this is my co-facilitator, ___. We are community volunteers on the Strategic Planning Committee.

The purpose of this conversation group is to have a discussion about our library as it is today and how we can grow it and improve it in the future to meet the needs of San Benito County. We want as much community input as possible, so we value your presence and your comments.

We want to assure you that your comments are confidential and will be used only for the purposes of creating a relevant Strategic Plan for the library. Lydia and I will be analyzing the comments from this group and others like it and we will be compiling the data to present to the Strategic Planning Committee. Because we value your opinions and want to represent the discussion as accurately as possible, we will be tape-recording the discussion. Please be assured that the recording will only be heard by Lydia and myself for the purposes of taking accurate notes; the recordings will not be used for any other purpose and will be destroyed once our notes and data have been compiled and analyzed.

This discussion should last an hour and a half. We are here to gather opinions. Everything said and done is confidential and will not be used outside this room except for the express purposes of developing a strategic plan; there are no right or wrong answers; do not hesitate to disagree with someone else, but do not all talk at once. Because we value your time and wish to respect it, we will limit discussion time for each question to ten minutes.

Are there any questions before we begin?

If there are no (more) questions, let's go around the room and quickly introduce ourselves. Please tell us your first name and something about yourself. (One of us can start to break the ice.)

Discussion Group Questions

1. Let's start by talking about what the Library can do for this community. Think about the people who live and work here and how San Benito County has changed in the last few years. As you think about the community, what roles should the library assume in supporting community needs? How does the library contribute to the community's quality of life? (this question gets people thinking about the ways in which libraries enhance the quality of life in a community)

2. How do you/would you use the library? (provides a context for the following questions)

3. How do you feel about your experiences using this library? Were they positive or negative? What things contribute to your ability to have a positive library experience?
4. How do you think SBCFL is viewed in the community? What is its reputation or image? (If negative, what can be done to improve its image and reputation?)

5. How satisfied are you with current library services? What do you see as major strengths? In what ways do we need to improve? (Although this question is similar to #3, this question addresses more concrete ways in which the library is serving the community in general)

6. What will you need from the library in the next five years? (to get people thinking about moving forward and growing the library)

7. Do you use other libraries? If so, which libraries do you visit and why do you choose to go there? (this prepares participants for the next question … to envision a perfect/fantasy library that you love to visit)

8. Describe your vision of a perfect or amazing public library. What would this library look like? What kinds of services would it provide?

Sample Wrap up

We have had a wonderful discussion today. Before we wrap up, are there any other topics or concerns we haven't touched upon? Is there anything else about your own library experience you would like to share with the group or any comments you would like to add?

If there are no other comments, I would just like to quickly summarize the main points of our discussion today. (**Summary here**) Again, your opinions and input will be used to guide the Strategic Planning Committee as we develop a relevant 3-5 year plan to move our library forward and make sure we are meeting the needs of our community.

Thank you so much for coming, sharing, and being an important part of the planning process.

APPENDIX E: REFERENCES

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I shall always think of the San Benito County Free Library as *The Library*. It is, after all, the first library from which I ever borrowed books and was introduced to so many exciting worlds and possibilities. Susan Echaore-McDavid. (http://www.take25tohollister.com/)