

William K Sanford Town Library Strategic Plan 2026-2028

The Director of the William K Sanford Town Library along with the Library Board of Trustees is responsible for the development and coordination of strategic planning. The William K Sanford Town Library currently serves a population of 85,590 in an area covering 56 square miles with multiple school districts and one building. The Library opened its doors in 1963 in the basement of a firehouse, and moved into its current location at 629 Albany Shaker Rd. in 1976. In 2026 the Library will be celebrating 50 years at its current location.



In 2024 the Library had approximately 200,978 visits, which has increased from 165,000 as noted in the last Strategic Plan, an increase of about 20% in three years. In the past two Strategic Plans the Library has addressed capital improvements, technology, meeting spaces, communication, programming, outreach, and services. Throughout this time the Library underwent an addition, a full renovation of the interior of the building, improved heating systems, and added a fire sprinkler system. The number of programs and attendance at those programs has risen by more than 30% and meeting room policies have been adjusted. Partnerships have been developed and services have been added such as Books by Mail and a Lucky Day Collection.

While working toward strategic planning, the Library's Mission is at the forefront:

"The Colonie Library welcomes and empowers people of all ages and abilities to connect, learn, and grow."

In order to plan for the next three years, multiple surveys were administered. The staff, Library Board, and Friends of the Library participated in a SWOT analysis to assess current strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. From this data, themes were identified and evaluated at a planning retreat composed of both staff members and the Library Board. The retreat revealed trends related to collections, technology, safety, community building, space, and marketing. A public survey was created based on these trends and 1040 patrons provided responses.

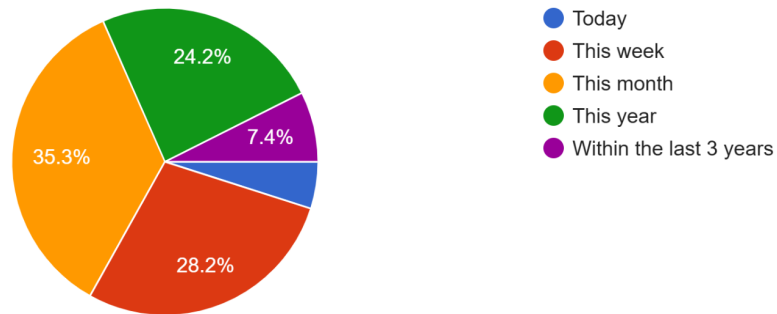
A summary of the results of the Public Survey are as follows:

The survey demonstrated that the Library continues to be a hub of activity and a beloved institution in the community. The frequency of use and ages responding to the survey are shown in the following charts:

Used the Library in the past 3 years (933)

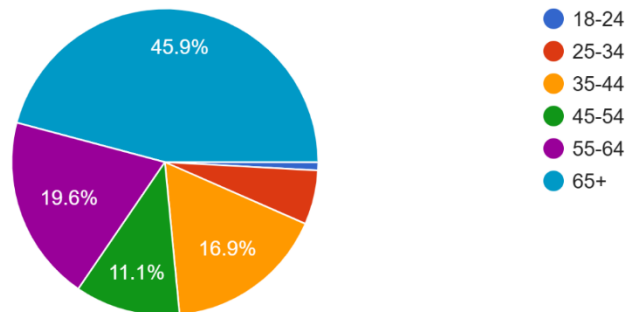
When was the last time you were in the library?

933 responses



Select your age range.

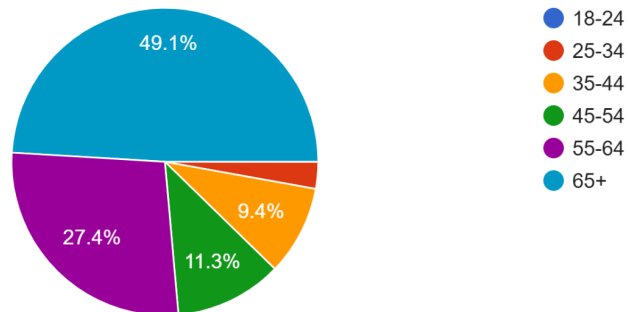
929 responses



Not used the Library in the past 3 years (106):

Select your age range.

106 responses

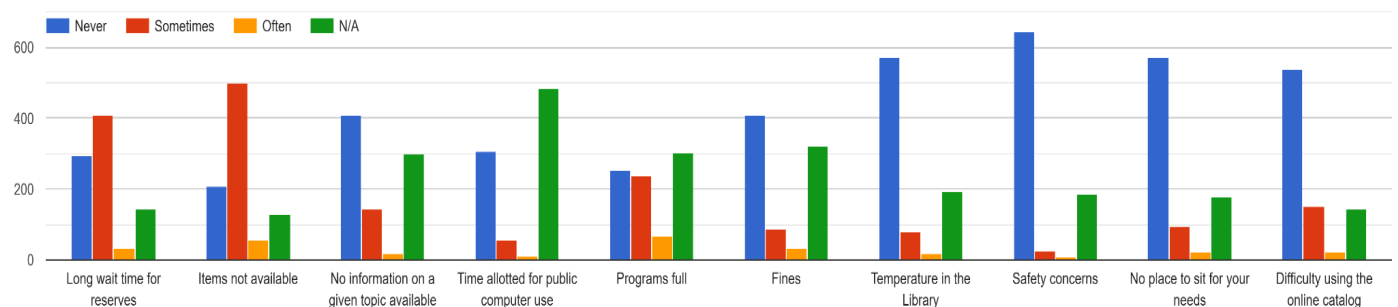


Of the respondents who did not use the Library in the past 3 years, it was most often attributed to personal reasons, limited time, or using paid subscriptions/purchasing their own materials.

The majority of active usage was categorized as personal, followed by family and educational.

Active members were asked what obstacles hinder usage, and the following graph highlights the results:

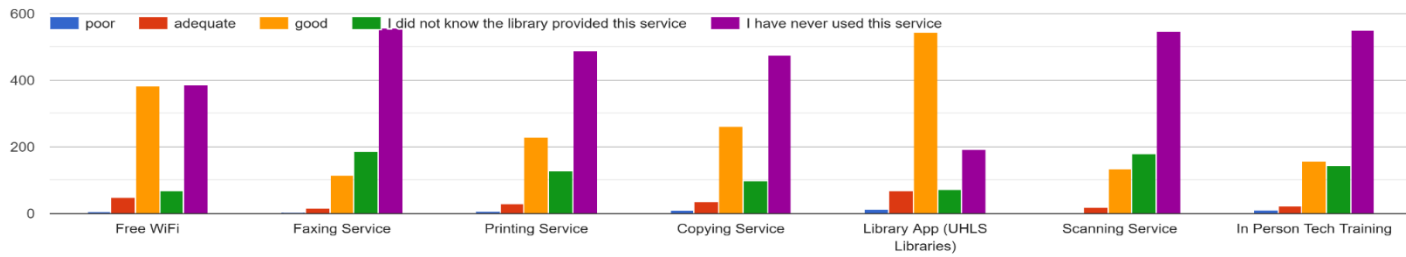
What obstacles, if any, have made it more difficult or less enjoyable for you to use the library?



Of the questions posed at the retreat, the areas of concern for the public continue to be mission driven and focused on material availability and wait times.

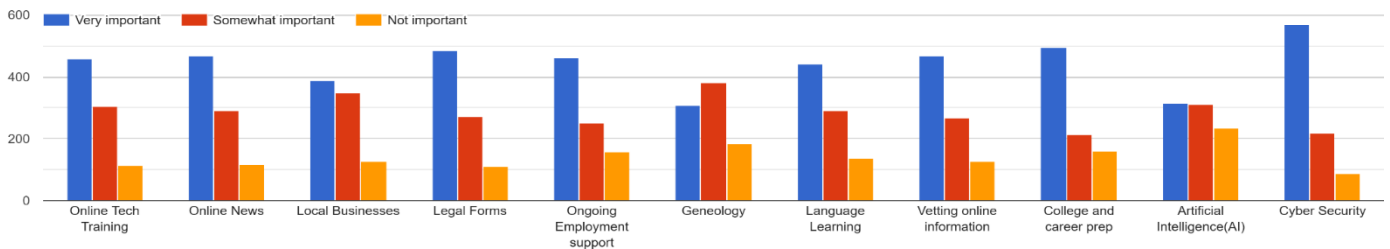
The retreat also questioned if Technology needs were being met by the Library, and therefore collected the following data:

Rate the following Tech Services offered by the Library.



This data informs the Library moving forward to provide support to the community as technology trends develop. Cybersecurity and safety online stood out as being very important as well as educational resources and legal forms.

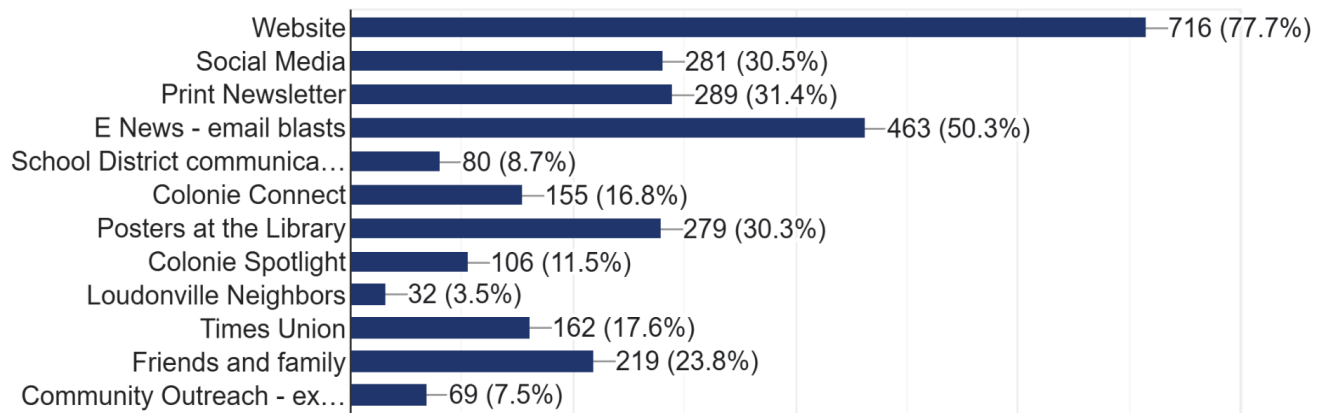
Rate the importance of having research tools, databases and information at the Library regarding the following topics.



The community was also asked about library communications. The majority of respondents use the Library's website for information followed by the e news and posters at the facility. A trend from open ended questions revealed that patrons would like more communication from the Library about programs and events.

How do you find out about what's happening at the Library? Check all that apply.

921 responses



Lastly, respondents were asked open ended questions which, when compiled with the above data, resulted in a focus to address the following three areas.

1. Collections
2. Marketing
3. Facilities

Objectives and Action Items

The Director and Library Board of Trustees has identified Objectives and Action Items that provide a framework to address these concerns over the next three years. Progress will be assessed and discussed at future Library Board meetings.

Each theme is evaluated below and Objectives are identified with corresponding Action Items.

Collections

In 2024, the Library housed just shy of 113,000 cataloged books and approximately 18,000 audio, visual and other media type materials. The library circulated physical items 411,622 times during the course of that year. Additionally, the Library circulated 181,345 digital items, totaling 592,967 circs for 2024.

A Lucky Day Service was added during the last strategic plan to address this issue, and that service will continue. On the Public Survey the top two items that concerned patrons were long wait times and the availability of items they'd like to checkout.

1. Objective: Address long wait times
 - a. Action Item: The Director and collection staff will evaluate the procedure for the number of popular titles purchased.
 - b. Action Item: The Director and collection staff will evaluate resources used to identify popular titles and pull in new resources aligning with trends.
 - c. Action Item: Collections staff will expand the lucky day collection.
 - d. Action Item: Collections staff will increase the frequency of running the High Demands Holds report to cross reference on-order titles and release dates.
 - e. Action Item: Digital Librarian will assess balance of holds versus number of copies for the digital collection.
2. Objective: Availability of items
 - a. Action Item: The Director and collections staff will work to increase the length of time a new book is available in the "new status" for 2 weeks.
 - b. Action Item: Collections staff will run reports on the most popular items checked out by age and collection.
 - c. Action Item: The Director will create a survey to poll the community about what they are looking for in the Library collection.

Marketing

The Library's last Marketing plan was created during the 2019-2022 Strategic Planning process. During that period a staff member was assigned to maintain the website, an internal intranet was created, weekly staff meetings were implemented, and branding was created for the Library.

1. Objective: Update and develop a new Marketing Plan.
 - a. Action Item: The Director will work with the Head of User Experience and our marketing liaison to create and implement a new marketing plan with goals and objectives to be shared with the Library Board.
2. Objective: Improve communication via Newsletter (31% of respondents use)
 - a. Action Item: Complete a comparative study of library newsletters as far as content, design, and size.
 - b. Action Item: Assess changes that can be made to improve how/what information is shared.
 - c. Action Item: Evaluate the tools available to modernize the publication.
3. Objective: Utilize most popular forms of communication more effectively
 - a. Action Item: Develop a plan to use the website for more news related items/marketing. The survey demonstrated that our website is used heavily for information with 77% of the respondents reporting this being their main source of information for the Library.
 - b. Action Item: Increase e-News mailings (50% of respondents use).
 - c. Action Item: Focus on best practices for Facebook/Instagram (30% of respondents use).

Facilities

The Library underwent a \$3,000,000 renovation from 2017-2020. Since that time, the Library has struggled with air conditioning and at times the heating of the building. This could be in part due to the expansion and new entrance creating increased airflow from the outside. Additionally, the windows in the building were not replaced as part of the renovation, they are original to the building, and are not energy efficient.

Many respondents requested expanding the Library. While that is not being evaluated at this time, other options could accommodate the growing usage, such as increased seating. An additional concern raised in the survey had to do with the Children's room renovation. In the new design, the space is open and not closed off from the rest of the Library. As the noise level in the Library was mentioned by several respondents, looking into altering that space will be addressed.

1. Objective: Create more seating space for public use.
 - a. Action Item: As non-fiction books are weeded, make room for more seating areas up on the mezzanine level.
2. Objective: Balance the Heating/Cooling issues throughout the building.

- a. Action Item: Consider an engineering evaluation including possible solutions and address as appropriate.
 - b. Action Item: Evaluate the efficiency of windows and possible energy saving solutions.
- 3. Objective: Minimize the noise and concern for safety in the Children's Space.
 - a. Action Item: Evaluate the Children's space and consider options for closing in or minimizing the egresses out of the space.