



TRAVERSE AREA
DISTRICT
LIBRARY

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Traverse Area District Library
Regular Board Meeting
scheduled for

April 15, 2021 at 4:00pm

will be held remotely
due to Coronavirus Outbreak and
in the Interest of the Public, Health Safety and Welfare.

Members of the public can remotely attend the meeting via the following:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5795909071>

Call-in: 1-312-626-6799 | Webinar Code: 579 590 9071

*Access code may change without notice, please verify updates by going to the Traverse Area District Library website at the following link: <https://www.tadl.org/online-board-meeting/> .

Due to the high number of users utilizing remote meeting platforms, you may experience delays or difficulties in calling in or accessing the online meeting platform. TADL will make reasonable efforts to ensure the platform is open and accessible before conducting a remote meeting. Please contact TADL by phone 231-932-8527 or email publiccomment@tadl.org if you experience any difficulty in accessing the conference call meeting.

Anyone wishing to give public comment will need to call in and wait in a "virtual waiting room" where their microphones will be muted until they are called upon.

Members of the TADL Board of Trustees may be contacted by members of the public by using the following dedicated email address: www.tadl.org/contact-the-board-of-trustees/ to provide input or ask questions on any business that will come before the TADL Board of Trustees at this meeting. To contact an individual board member use the following email addresses: Joseph Jones (President) jjones@tadl.org ; Susan Odgers (Vice President) sodgers@tadl.org ; Marylee Pakieser (Secretary) mpakieser@tadl.org ; Carol Sullivan (Treasurer) csullivan@tadl.org ; Michael Vickery (Trustee) mvickery@tadl.org ; Jeffery Wescott (Trustee) jwescott@tadl.org ; Mary Budzinski (Trustee) mbudzinski@tadl.org.

In addition, you may submit any comments that you have prior to the close of the public hearing and meetings to the following address: Traverse Area District Library, 610 Woodmere Ave., Traverse City, MI 49686; email ~ publiccomment@tadl.org.

Any written public comments received by mail or email prior to the close of the meeting will be read into the record. The AGENDA is available at tadl.org/governance and consists of the following items:

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Pledge of Allegiance**
3. **Approval of Agenda**
4. **Public Comment***
5. **Approval of Minutes**
 - a. [Regular Meeting of March 18, 2021](#)
6. **Reports and Communications**
 - a. [Director Report](#) | [Departmental Reports](#)
 - b. Financial Report – [Expenses](#) | [Revenues](#)
 - c. Member Library Reports – FLPL | [IPL](#) | [PCL](#)
 - d. Committee Reports
 - a. Finance & Facilities and Services Committee – April 13, 2021
 - b. Policy and Personnel Committee – did not meet
 - e. Other Reports and Communications
 1. Friends' Report – Doug Weaver, President Friends of TADL
7. **Old Business**
 - a. Lighting RFP
 - b. Roof Update ~ Spence
 - c. [Strategic Planning Discussion](#)
8. **Public Comment***
9. **Trustee Comment**
10. **Adjournment**

* If you wish to speak during the Public Comment section of the meeting, please (1) wait until you are recognized by name or last four digits of your phone number; (2) you will be unmuted by the moderator; (3) while not required, state your name and the county and township or city in which you reside; and (4) limit your comments to 5 minutes. Please keep all comments respectful. Pursuant to the bylaws of the TADL any person addressing the Board who becomes disruptive, unduly repetitive, or impedes the orderly progress of the meeting may be limited by the President.

The Traverse Area District Library will provide necessary reasonable auxiliary aids and services to individuals with disabilities at the meeting upon at least 3 days' notice to the Library. Individuals with disabilities requiring auxiliary aids or services should contact the Library Administrative Office by emailing publiccomment@tadl.org or calling 231-932-8500.



AGENDA

Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
Thursday, April 15, 2021 at 4:00pm
Virtual Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5795909071>

Call-in: 1-312-626-6799 | Webinar Code: 579 590 9071

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Board of Trustees Regular Meeting
MINUTES (approved)
Thursday, March 18, 2021 at 4:00pm
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Vice President Odgers at 4:00pm. By voice roll call, present were: Odgers (Vice President) attended from home in Traverse City; Sullivan (Treasurer) attended from home in Traverse City; Pakieser (Secretary) attended from home in Traverse City; Vickery (Trustee) attended from Tucson, Arizona (left at 5:23pm); Wescott (Trustee) attended from home in Traverse City; and Budzinski (Trustee) attended from home in Traverse City. Jones (President) was absent. Also present were: Zeits (Counsel), Howard (Director), Radjenovich (Business Manager), Olson (Zoom Moderator), and Carpenter (Staff).

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Because an American flag was not present and available to all members participating in the virtual meeting President Jones eliminated the Pledge of Allegiance from the March 18, 2021 agenda.

3. Approval of the Agenda

It was **MOVED** by Westcott, **SUPPORTED** by Budzinski to approve the agenda as presented. Vice President Odgers indicated that a couple trustees had time constraints for attending the meeting and posed the question of adjusting the agenda to ensure there was a quorum for discussion of item 9 Strategic Planning Discussion. Following trustee input and consensus, Westcott amended his motion, supported by Budzinski, to approve the agenda, tabling item 9 Strategic Planning Discussion until the April meeting or to hold a special meeting when all trustees could be present. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Wescott – aye	Pakieser – aye	Vickery – aye	Jones – absent
Sullivan – aye	Odgers – aye	Budzinski – aye	

Motion **CARRIED** with 6 ayes.

4. Public Comment

Vice President Odgers opened the floor for public comment. There was none by attendees, or submitted via email or chat.

5. Approval of Minutes

a. *Regular Meeting of February 18, 2021*

It was **MOVED** by Budzinski, **SUPPORTED** by Sullivan, to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 18, 2021 as presented. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Wescott – aye	Pakieser – aye	Vickery – aye	Jones – absent
Sullivan – aye	Odgers – aye	Budzinski – aye	

Motion **CARRIED** with 6 ayes.

6. Reports and Communications

a. *Director Report | Departmental Reports*

Howard confirmed her written report and added the following:

- Howard and staff are super happy to be open again and patrons are overjoyed to be able to come back into the building to use the library.
- With the passage of the ARPA Act, the Institute of Museums and Library Services received an unprecedented 200 million dollars with that stimulus, for which the Library of Michigan received 4 million dollars of that money resulting in a good number of grants that will be offered which TADL will apply for as appropriate.
- Another 7 billion dollars for an Emergency Connectivity Fund was sent to the FCC, which is e-rate. E-rate funds help pay for TADL's internet service and Wi-Fi hotspots. If TADL received grant money from that fund it would benefit the budget since hotspots alone are about \$16,000 per year.
- There is also a potential act to fund library infrastructure going through the House and Senate right now. More information is available on the ALA webpage.

Vice President Odgers highlighted the wonderful collaboration between TADL and The Old Town Playhouse's presentation of *The Importance of Being Ernest* and she thanked TADL for the collaborative work with *Battle of the Books*.

Budzinski commented on the amazing amount of work that staff is doing under trying circumstances, as is shown in the administrative reports and the staff enthusiasm is great. Howard added that TADL has a great team of people working together and they all love what they do.

b. *Financial Reports*

Radjenovich confirmed her written report and made the following highlights:

- The amount recorded under miscellaneous revenue is from the closure of an FSA bank account (Flexible Spending Account). There have been no employees enrolled in that plan for the past 3 years and if the money in the account is not used it rolls back into the general fund, therefore Radjenovich felt it was prudent to close the account at this time.
- Most all property tax money has been received. The remaining tax receivables will come from the county and minimal amounts will dribble in from the townships.
- At just two months into the year, there have been no unexpected expenses.

c. *Member Library Reports*

- Vicki Shurly, Director of Peninsula Community Library (PCL), noted that PCL patrons are also grateful to be back in the library, with 70 visitors on re-opening day. Laptops and the AWE computer stations are now available again. Craft bags that have become so popular during the pandemic are probably here to stay. The annual Books at the Boathouse fundraiser will be modified this year with take-out meals rather than dine-in. Tickets for this popular event were almost sold out in a week. There will also be a virtual live auction for the event.
- Jennifer Thomet, Director of Interlochen Public Library (IPL), expressed thanks to Andy Schuck at TADL for providing IPL with some leftover craft bags as well as opportunities to help with the space station event. Thomet highlighted a fun new program, *Mystery Book: Have Book Will Travel*. Summer Reading Club programs will be held outdoors at the township park this year. The Interlochen Friends will be having a pizza fundraiser.

A written report from Julie Kintner, Director of Fife Lake Public Library (FLPL) was included in the board packet.

Vice President Odgers inquired whether the popularity of the craft kits revealed a need for more supplemental materials in the library or if there were other trends that have risen in the past year of the pandemic. Howard noted that TADL applied for a grant for the Library of Michigan for \$2500 to use for Summer Reading Club which will be applied toward supplies and craft kits. McKenna noted that craft books and cookbooks, mindfulness and simplifying life books have been popular over the pandemic.

Vickery thanked everyone for their reports and addressed the need to discuss, during TADL's strategic planning process, recent trends as well as emerging long-term trends, specifically the budget cuts in school library support and how that would affect the curriculum of the public libraries. He appreciated Kintner's report and experiences in building a partnership with the Fife Lake school. Howard added that there is currently some movement toward more equitable funding changes with respect to the library and school relationship, also reporting that Michigan ranks 38th in literacy and that 17% of schools in the state do not have a librarian, or, their school library is simply closed. Howard is involved in some of those discussions and will keep abreast of the progress.

d. *Committee Reports*

- Finance and Facilities and Services Committee – Sullivan noted that the committee had met and discussed the re-organization of fund balances, which Howard noted will be discussed with the auditors in April, and then removing some inconsistencies to match our policies. The committee supported Howard's attendance and request for a scholarship to enroll in the Finance Certificate program offered through the Michigan Library Association. Howard noted that she plans to include TADL Business Manager, Radjenovich, in attending that program. Vickery expressed support for her team approach.

Following a brief update from Bennet on the roof status, it was noted that Spence Brothers would be addressing the board at the April meeting.

- Policy and Personnel Committee – Pakieser noted that the committee had met and discussed the nepotism policy. Howard noted that the policy discussion continues while she gathers more information before a possible revision of the policy. The committee also discussed and recommended the Wi-Fi and laptop policy later on the agenda for approval. Howard and Olson clarified for the trustees that the software referenced in the minutes called Deep Freeze allowed the computers to be wiped clean between uses, essentially waking them up for the next patron as a brand new laptop.

e. *Other Reports and Communications*

- Friends' Report – Doug Weaver, TADL Friends Board President
In Weaver's absence, Howard reported that 25 orders have come in so far for the Charles Saunders Jazz Collection bag sale. The Friends of TADL annual meeting will be held virtually on May 12th at 6pm. A public book sale is scheduled for the Fall.

7. **Old Business**

a. *Summary of Fund Balances*

In response to a request at the February board meeting to review the fund balances, Radjenovich put together a summary and provided a brief explanation of the funds and their

balance status. She also explained that the State of Michigan is requiring all governmental entities to use the same chart of accounts and that there will be a number of changes relating to these funds by year end. Howard emphasized that knowing these funds and the reserves will help in determining a payment strategy for the roof and fund strategies moving forward.

b. **3.4 Confidentiality of Library Records Policy**

c. **1.6 Freedom of Information Procedures and Guidelines | FOIA Public Summary**

Howard noted that the policy changes presented are in response to the Library Privacy Act and what was discussed at the February board meeting as per the board's response. Changes in the procedures and guidelines document are reflected in the summary. A lengthy discussion ensued, brought forth by Vickery, resulting in the following amendments to the first full paragraph on page 9 of policy 1.6:

- a. The clause "it is in the public interest that" shall be inserted into the first sentence to read as "The TADL Board determines *it is in the public interest that* video surveillance footage requested....."
- b. The last clause of the same sentence, following the word property, "because furnishing copies in this instance aids in providing a safe and welcoming environment for the Library's users by hastening the investigation of crimes committed in the library and on library property through video surveillance" shall be removed and a period inserted after the word property, thus ending the sentence.

Zeits (Counsel) had no legal issues with simplifying this section of the policy since it more accurately reflected the board's response. Vickery, and others, agreed that Zeits' revision in policy 3.4 captured the board's commitment to honoring the protection of patron records and patron privacy.

It was **MOVED** by Vickery, **SUPPORTED** by Wescott to accept the revision to policy 3.4 Confidentiality of Library Records Policy as presented. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Wescott – aye	Pakieser – aye	Vickery – aye	Jones – absent
Sullivan – aye	Odgers – aye	Budzinski – aye	

Motion **CARRIED** with 6 ayes.

It was **MOVED** by Vickery, **SUPPORTED** by Westcott to adopt the edited policy 1.6 Freedom of Information Procedures and Guidelines along with the accompanying FOIA Public Summary revisions as presented and amended in the discussion. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Wescott – aye	Pakieser – aye	Vickery – aye	Jones – absent
Sullivan – aye	Odgers – aye	Budzinski – aye	

Motion **CARRIED** with 6 ayes.

8. New Business

a. **Resolution – Rotary Charities of TC Assets for Thriving Community Grant**

Rotary Charities has asked for a resolution from the board in full support of the mobile branch library project as part of their grant request process. It was **MOVED** by Odgers, **SUPPORTED** by Sullivan to approve the resolution for the TADL trustees' agreement to apply for assistance from Rotary Charities of Traverse City through the Assets for Thriving Communities Grant program to finance a mobile library, and to authorize Library Director Howard and the TADL board Secretary to sign all documents relating to the grant as presented. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Wescott – aye Pakieser – aye Vickery – absent Jones – absent
Sullivan – aye Odgers – aye Budzinski – aye
Motion CARRIED with 5 ayes.

b. *3.7 Wi-Fi Hotspot and Laptop Lending Policy*

Howard noted that because TADL is now using the Deep Freeze software program on the lending laptops it is not necessary to include the last two bullet points in the guidelines and use section of the current lending policy. It was MOVED by Pakieser, SUPPORTED by Odgers and Wescott to approve the revised policy as presented. A roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Wescott – aye Pakieser – aye Vickery – absent Jones – absent
Sullivan – aye Odgers – aye Budzinski – aye
Motion CARRIED with 5 ayes.

9. **Strategic Planning Discussion**

This item was tabled during the approval of the agenda and is to be added to the April board meeting agenda.

10. **Public Comment**

Vice President Odgers opened the floor for public comment. There was none by attendees, or submitted via email or chat.

11. **Trustee Comment**

Vice President Odgers opened the floor for trustee comment. There was none.

12. **Adjournment**

With a motion to adjourn by Wescott, supported by Pakieser, a roll call vote was taken with the following results:

Wescott – aye Pakieser – aye Vickery – absent Jones – absent
Sullivan – aye Odgers – aye Budzinski – aye
Motion CARRIED with 5 ayes. Vice President Odgers adjourned the meeting at 5:28pm.

Respectfully submitted,

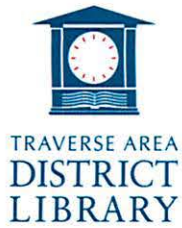


V. Carpenter, Recording Secretary

Approved by board vote on April 15, 2021



M. Pakieser, Board Secretary



Board of Library Trustees Regular Meeting
Library Director Report
 Meeting Date: **April 15, 2021**

Library Activity

For a graphical presentation of the statistical information included below, please visit the link: [online TADL dashboard](#).

Circulation Transactions			
Year-to-date activity			
<u>As of month end</u>	<u>Print/audio/video Circulation</u>	<u>Electronic books/audio/video</u>	<u>Total Circulation/Electronic Usage</u>
March 2020	222,814	60,161	282,975
March 2021	141,717	75,866	217,583

Lending

Physical item circulation decreased 38.4% in March, from the previous year. You will remember we closed the library completely on March 13, 2020, so our statistics show that we are still below our usual numbers with patrons still reticent to use the library.

E-Book, magazine, downloadable audiobook and database utilization

In March, electronic use accounted for 34% of all collection utilization 21.2% for March 2020. Year-to-date usage of electronic resources increased 26% from 2020.

Visitors – Woodmere, East Bay and Kingsley Facilities

On March 1, 2021, we again opened, again, to the public! We had 21,653 visitors. The busiest day being Monday, March 1st the day we opened with 1,030 patrons.

Public Computing

Computer Use is still very slow but the patrons at the library really need the service. Therefore, we extended the amount of time users can stay in the building. Overall for March we had 1,215 computer sessions which is a decrease of 54%.

Additions to the Collection

In March 2021, 2,428 items were added to the collection compared to 1,799 in March 2020.

Finances

I am pleased to announce that both Deb Radjenovich and I were accepted into the Library Financial Management Cohort from the Library of Michigan. The cost of \$1,500 each was provided by the Library of Michigan.

Our annual audit begins the week of April 19th and we have already begun preparing for that process in addition to working on the Uniform Chart of Accounts and the corresponding policies.

Facilities

As you read in Bruce's report, it's been a busy month and we look forward to completing some project, this summer. We'll be presenting information about the lighting RFP process and further discuss the roof at the April meeting.

Other News

Covid Update: All staff that chose to be vaccinated have received their second dose and will be considered to be fully vaccinated the week of April 12th. While numbers continue to reach record highs, the traffic in the library has been very quiet. We continue to clean and enforce mask wearing, and are confident people are not getting sick from COVID at the library.

Through a very generous donation from the Cherry Capital Cycling Club, we will be adding a bike "Fix It" station to the library property.

We are grateful to announce that the Traverse Area Historical Society is funding 2 intern positions to assist with projects in the Local History Collections. We already have some very good candidates. While we are still not using many volunteers, we are hoping to create a program so that volunteers can help us tag images from home.

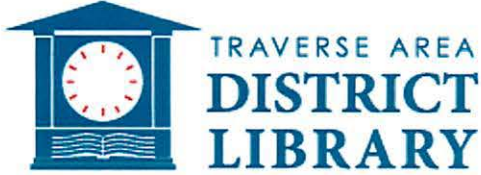
Heather Brady and I had an interview for the Bookmobile Grant with Rotary that we both thought went well. We will hear if we've been chosen sometime in May. During the month of April, we hope to hear result about the many grant opportunities from the ARPA funding and will hear if we were chosen for the NEA Big Read grant.

TADL Operations

Please see the departmental reports for a more in-depth look at what is happening at the Main Library and East Bay and Kingsley branches.

Think Spring!

Michele P. Howard
Director



Administrative Reports
for the month of March
(April 15, 2021 Board Meeting)

Adult Services

- Staff and patrons are very excited to get to see each other and use the library in more of the “usual” way after the reopening of TADL on March 1st. Everyday we get to hear how happy people are to be back in the library among the bookshelves and working at our tables with the fantastic views up on the second floor. They also let us know how much they were reading over the course of the pandemic and how important the library was to them during that time with ebooks and curbside service.
- The Poets' Night ~~Out~~ In 2020 video is up on TADL's website and YouTube channel: <https://www.tadl.org/2021/04/02/poets-night-in-video-poetry-reading/> Many thanks to all the poets, the PNO committee, TADL, and Heather Brady!
- On March 17th TADL debuted a Zoom reading of *The Importance of Being Earnest* through a partnership with Old Town Playhouse. We really appreciated being able to showcase another different type of program to our community and work with another prominent TC nonprofit organization. I'm pleased to report that the community is enjoying the play, with 55 views so far!
- Adult Services Staff have been eagerly working on the In-Service monthly trainings. I appreciate the time every month to have a short check-in with each staff member to learn what they found most interesting or that they will be applying to their library experience.
- This month the Adult Services Dept. held 7 programs with a total live attendance of 106 and 90 video views. Topics included discussion with local author Tricia Frey about her new book *River Love*, mindfulness for calming, Tom Carr talked about true crime in Michigan and his latest book *Dark Side of the Mitten*, and the monthly Traverse Area Historical Society meeting that discussed women's history and the connection with the libraries in Traverse City's history. We also are continuing to hold our two monthly book groups online - Queer Tales and Books & Brewskis.
- February Adult Services Statistics:
 - Questions Answered In-Person - 1,043
 - Questions answered via Phone - 882
 - Questions Answered via Email/Chat - 187
 - Readers' Advisory/Tech Help - 89
 - Craft Kits Distributed - 71 (2 different crafts-sewing lavender sachets & origami flowers)

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa A. McKenna
Adult Services Coordinator

Youth Services

Youth Services has been delighted to see the families of our community again. Our families bring a whole new energy to the department after the time we've been closed due to the pandemic. It was also nice to reacquaint several families with the department after being away, especially during the Spring Break week. In total, we answered 1,105 total reference questions, including 916 in person questions, 125 phone questions, and 12 digital questions.

March also means our annual March Book Madness competition, which celebrates great books from children's literature "competing" for patron votes against one another within their particular brackets. We started with 32 books in 8 different categories (from "Page to Screen" to "Readalouds" and more) and ended with the *Elephant and Piggie* series being victorious. In total, we had 444 patrons vote for their favorite books both in person and via Facebook.

Programming continued through March with our virtual storytime, Drive-Up storytime, and afterschool programs. For our afterschool virtual programming, we added Maker Monday, as part of this year's Virtual MakerFest and in collaboration with the [STEAM/Maker Alliance](#). We also added Tech Tuesdays, as part of our ExoLab 8 exploration with educational partner, [Magnitude.io](#), and featuring the Main Library as well as branch project partners, East Bay and Kingsley libraries. Both projects are featured on @TADLKids Facebook Live and will run through the end of April. We also continued regular Saturday virtual programming with the Traverse Symphony Orchestra and Just Bee Yoga.

In total, we hosted 38 programs, including 34 virtual and 4 in-person (or drive-up). Our in-person programming totaled 36 delighted patrons. Our virtual programs maintained the following monthly totals: 57 peak live viewers on Facebook, 16 live viewers on Zoom, 47 views on YouTube. In addition to the above live views on Facebook, we registered increased activity including 277 1-minute plays, 477 engagements, and 3,292 people reached.

We collaborated with a classroom from TBA-ISD's New School to host a StoryWalk in the Children's Walkthrough Garden behind the library. Teacher Ashley Heyboer contacted us about this opportunity and we aided the classroom in adding *Cozy* by Jan Brett to the garden just in time for Spring Break.

Speaking of Spring Break, we hosted several in house activities including the above mentioned March Book Madness as well as a Sticker Art activity. Patrons who were interested could ask for an envelope of stickers at the Youth Desk and apply to a poster holding over 3,700 stickers. In total, we had over 90 patrons participate in this collaborative art activity.

Patrons were also delighted to find numerous craft possibilities for their families during the

Spring Break week. During March, we created 13 different crafts, which totaled 675 crafting opportunities. Families have really come to depend on us for these at-home activities and will be something that we continue to do even after the pandemic is over.

Submitted by:
Andy Schuck, Youth Services Coordinator

Teen Services

Since January Teen Services has passed out over 150 craft kits. We still don't have many teens coming into the building compared to the year before last so we are trying to serve our absent patrons in any way possible. We now have 48 teens signed up to receive the book boxes that I mentioned in January. We will resume programs when the weather allows them to be regularly held outside.

Linda Smith
Teen Services Coordinator

Sight & Sound

The date was set March 1, 2021 as the re-open date and also the first day of the TADL Friends / Saunders "Random Bag of Jazz Sale." My team and I cleaned the dept, I reinstalled new plexi-glass for better protection. We were ready! Overall the jazz sale has been successful, not a huge money maker. I think it created as much goodwill as it did revenue. We know this, we will have plenty for a public sale, whenever that is a safe possibility.

In early March, Scott and the Tech team delivered the Lending Laptop collection. Now it's our turn to prepare the ID Tags, labeling and prepping for Cataloging. These are very nice machines and they have very specific data preservation requirements. Things are coming along nicely and we should be ready for cataloging in the next few days here in early April. Exciting times!

- Keith swapped out 200 Multi disc into slim cases
- I had meetings with vendors for AV upgrades in the McGuire Room.
- Vaccination Complete! 3/31/2021 for most of the TADL Staff!
- Enjoying the exercises in our new "In Service" process.
- Worked on a new S&S video that features new material and Library of Things, to be shared in National Library Week. [Window Gazing @ TADL Sight & Sound](#)



On Aaron's Desk: 2021 Library of Things Collection development, Developing and supporting new programming for 2021.

Thanks for reading.

Aaron

Circulation

The library opened its doors again in March. We still continue offering curbside service 3 hours each day. We had 505 patrons who used the curbside service. Notary services started back up too. I had 4 notary requests.

I am very sad to say Jody Wilson will be leaving us. She was a key person in Circulation and will be missed greatly. Jody is still planning on subbing in the future.

Interviews were held for Jody's job. I would like to welcome Mike Decker to the Circulation department.

TADL-wide we sent out 1,266 items in MeLCat and received 1,863.

Anita Chouinard

Circulation Coordinator

Marketing and Communications

It was a welcome task to prep the library and reopen to welcome patrons. Our communication style changes format when we're open vs. when we are curbside only. March is a busy month for Summer Reading Club preparation, Michele and I interviewed with Rotary Charities on our grant application, and I assisted departments with special events (such as ExoLab) and programming. I also assisted the FOTL with promotional prep for the Jazz CD sale and helped Traverse Area Historical Society move a new exhibit into the atrium for Women's History Month (pictured below).



Website traffic: 11,700 users

Press:

- Reopen - Interlochen Public Radio March 2
- Jazz CD Sale - Record-Eagle Feb. 28
- General update - Record-Eagle March 7
- Poem Contest - Ticker, Mar 29
- Women's History Month Exhibit - Northern

Express, Mar. 28; mynorth.com

Heather Brady

Marketing & Communications Manager

HR & Finance

Human Resources – We've had a few changes taking place. We had a full time employee from the Circulation department leave for other adventures so we shuffled the deck a little and hired Mike Decker from the Sight & Sound department to replace her. We then hired Ian Berry from the Public Computing Center to replace Mike in the Sight & Sound. Therefore, we are now in the process of replacing Ian in the PCC.

We are continuing our monthly In-Service training with March being our Disability Awareness month. We had virtual learning on Disability Sensitivity Training, Sensory Disability Awareness, and Vision Loss Simulations just to name a few of the many options that were available. We also had options for hands on training where the employees were encouraged to maneuver through the library in a wheelchair or using a walker; or they could create their name in Braille or try out a Braille book. There were also apps available to try out that assist the visually impaired. Finally, we have an employee comments section for employees to comment on their experiences personally and from the training. April is Financial Fitness month.

Finance – We received payment from Interlochen Center for the Arts for their annual service agreement. We also received our Local Community Stabilization check for \$30,202. This was down about \$4000 from last year. This is another funding source that has been trending downward over the last few years. Michele and Heather must have done a great job of grant writing because we received a \$16,500 grant from the Grand Traverse Band for the Local History Collection! This grant is for special shelving to house the collection. Lastly, our Sales jumped from \$872 for the first two months of the year to \$2808. Almost a \$2000 jump in just one month. I think that means the public is happy to be back in the building!

For expenses, a notable item would be under Professional & Contractual Services. We are \$10,000 more than last year this time. This is due to last year's number being lower than

normal as Michele was negotiating one of our annual contracts and we had not yet paid. This year's number is more the norm. Also notable is the Communications number versus last year. This year's number reflects the addition of the circulating hot spots. Education and Travel is obviously down from last year as conferences are still being held virtually. Other than these items, not much to note as far as the financials are concerned.

Projects for this month include preparing for the annual audit which starts on the 19th of this month and working on our Chart of Accounts.

Deb Radjenovich
Business Manager

Facilities

- When checking the sidearm filters on the heating system we found a large accumulation of brown sludge. We suspect a plugged heating zone opened up after the first drain and fill of the system. To protect the new boilers we drained the system again and ran cleaner through it. The water is looking very clear now.
- I changed the pre filters in the air handlers and VAVs.
- The Liebert air conditioning unit in the server room began dripping water. I purchased the parts needed to fix the problem and will have it repaired in April.
- I have ordered a new entrance mat for the entryway. The old mat has an aluminum frame and the sidewalk salt is eating it away. The new mat is made of hard-wearing, flexible PVC so it should hold up better to heavy traffic and salt. It hopefully will arrive in three to four weeks.
- I got quotes to replace three windows on the first floor. The seals are leaking and they are full of condensation. They will be replaced in April.
- I participated in a call with Scott and Bibliotheca about pre construction issues for the new sorter. We talked about what needed to be done with the current opening in the outside wall and established a timeline for completing the work.

Bruce Bennett
Facilities Manager

Technology

New Sorter Update - Monday, June 14 has been set as the start date for the installation of the new outside book return / sorter at the Woodmere branch. After working with the engineers at

Bibliotheca / local contractors and reaching out to other library systems that had recently installed this new model of sorter, we anticipate the project will be able to be completed within 48 hours. While the project is underway, the return lane and sorter room will be unavailable. We will do everything in our power to minimize the inconvenience to both staff and patrons during this time. I'd like to thank Bruce Bennett for his help in the effort.

New Phones - I'm happy to report that the district was able to obtain over 70 "new to us", VOIP phones at a fraction of the anticipated cost. Our colleagues at Northern Lakes Community Mental Health reached out to us and indicated they had a large collection of barely used, high-end Cisco phones that they were planning to get rid of and wanted to know if we would be interested in purchasing them. After borrowing a couple phones for testing to ensure they would work in our existing infrastructure, we agreed to the deal and are now in the process of provisioning these new devices and expect to begin deploying them to users before the end of the month. These new phones will replace our current fleet of devices which are over ten years old and beginning to fail. The new phones also bring a lot of extra functionality that should make our communication with patrons / each other more efficient and being able to obtain them for ~25% of the anticipated cost is a huge win for the district. I'd like to thank Dean Baldwin at NLCMH for helping us make this a reality.

Additional E-rate Funding - The recently passed federal recovery bill includes billions of dollars in additional E-rate funding to help further subsidize network equipment and internet services. While the guidelines for obtaining this funding have yet to be released, the legislation explicitly states that mobile hotspots will for the first time be eligible for these subsidies. This is a major win for the district as demand for hotspots continues to increase. We have also reached out to a networking vendor whom we've worked with in the past to go over the weaknesses in our current network infrastructure and develop a strategy to potentially use this extra funding to increase the robustness and future proof our network as demand for high speed internet access continues to grow.

- Scott Morey, Asst. Director for Technology

TADL Talking Book Library

During the month of March, we circulated 3791 books through the mail, and an additional 649 books were downloaded by patrons and staff from our Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service. With the building reopened to the public, we have resumed one-on-one technology training appointments as well as in-person mini orientations for new and prospective patrons.

We were thrilled to contribute to the development of and training opportunities for the Disability Awareness in-service unit this month. Many thoughtful discussions and questions arose from the content, which can only enhance our level of understanding and customer service moving forward.

Polly O'Shea
TBL Librarian

East Bay Branch Library

We are still “Curbside Only” here at The East Bay Branch. With TADL Main reopening to in person service, things have been more manageable here for our small staff. This month we circulated 1460 items with 325 unique curbside appointments and we answered 874 questions/phone calls. Rosie May set up the ExoLab, and along with KBL and Youth Services Coordinator Andy Shuck, has helped host “Tech Tuesdays @ 4:30 p.m.” on Zoom and FB Live. Our temporary worker Robin Stanley was hired by TADL to work at KBL and with the Local History Collection. We are grateful for the time she was here and glad to have Chantel Cook back from maternity leave.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rosie May
Branch Manager

Kingsley Branch Library

We partnered with Kingsley Elementary School for March Reading Month. Beth Anderson visited every preschool through 4th grade classroom for storytime and activities. Kingsley Friends of the Library funded an educational and fun program with “Michigan’s Family Funnyman” Joel Tacey, who used magic and interactivity to introduce books to the students. Through those two programs, we reached all 480 students plus their teachers twice in one month! Students also got a special prize for visiting the library outside of school hours; in the end, 14 new students received library cards, a huge success!

Respectfully submitted,

Amy Barritt
Branch Manager

TRAVERSE AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY
CONSOLIDATED EXPENSES
MONTH ENDING
MARCH 31, 2021

CATEGORY	BUDGET	2021 YTD	2020 YTD	VARIANCE	% OF BUDGET
Salaries & Wages	2,431,419	472,119	485,524	1,959,300	19.4%
Social Security/Medicare	68,125	12,027	13,585	56,098	17.7%
Health/Hospitalization	375,446	132,329	100,342	243,117	35.2%
Vision Insurance	4,035	1,433	835	2,602	35.5%
Dental Insurance	28,908	9,316	7,677	19,592	32.2%
Life Insurance	9,295	1,911	2,655	7,384	20.6%
MERS Defined Contribution Retirement	153,995	30,069	30,135	123,926	19.5%
MERS Unfunded Liability	120,000	30,000	30,000	90,000	25.0%
401K Retirement Contribution	115,820	22,009	21,935	93,811	19.0%
Unemployment Comp.	1,500	0	0	1,500	0.0%
Workers' Compensation	10,000	0	0	10,000	0.0%
Disability Insurance	8,425	1,382	2,493	7,043	16.4%
Office/Cat./General Supplies/Postage	119,795	22,076	26,875	97,719	18.4%
Covid-19 Supplies	7,000	1,815		5,185	25.9%
Books/Media/Online Resources	626,100	166,446	175,452	459,654	26.6%
Repair & Maintenance Supplies	6,750	741	403	6,009	11.0%
Professional & Contractual Services	270,355	49,602	39,287	220,753	18.3%
Communications	37,790	7,969	4,180	29,821	21.1%
Education & Travel	45,460	1,207	6,064	44,253	2.7%
Printing & Microfilming	3,900	0	19	3,900	0.0%
Advertising & Outreach	17,500	2,474	1,769	15,026	14.1%
Insurance & Bonds	33,746	33,113	30,093	633	98.1%
Utilities	118,200	16,335	17,362	101,865	13.8%
General Building & Grounds Maintenance	355,170	64,179	53,686	290,991	18.1%
Member Allocations	569,721	569,720	550,188	1	100.0%
Miscellaneous	3,500	55	0	3,445	1.6%
Property Tax Reimbursement	6,500	51	1	6,449	0.8%
Furniture/Equipment/Software	85,925	13,604	24,478	72,321	15.8%
Contingency	7,000	0	0	7,000	0.0%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	5,641,380	1,661,982	1,625,038	3,979,398	29.5%
2021 APPROVED BUDGET					
EXPENSES BY CATEGORY					
Personnel	3,326,968	712,595	695,181	2,614,373	21.4%
Supplies	759,645	191,078	202,730	568,567	25.2%
Other Services and Charges	1,461,842	744,704	702,649	717,138	50.9%
Capital Outlay	92,925	13,604	24,478	79,321	14.6%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	5,641,380	1,661,982	1,625,038	3,979,398	29.5%
This statement reflects activity through the third month of the 2021 fiscal year.					
Percentage of the year completed 25%.					
Certain items with higher percentages may have been paid quarterly or annually for the fiscal year.					

TRAVERSE AREA DISTRICT LIBRARY

**REVENUE
MONTH ENDING
MARCH 31, 2021**

CATEGORY DESCRIPTION	BUDGET	2021 YTD	2020 YTD	VARIANCE	% OF BUDGET
Property Tax (Current, Delinquent, Other)	5,164,735	4,978,804	4,775,275	185,931	96.4%
State Aid - Library	83,750	0	0	83,750	0.0%
State Aid - TBL	41,075	0	20,536	41,075	0.0%
Local Support - TBL & Other Grants	18,400	17,853	6,430	548	97.0%
Fees/Services	42,150	29,021	16,136	13,129	68.9%
Sales	20,000	2,808	6,538	17,192	14.0%
Penal Fines - \$196,000 for this Category per budget		0			
Penal Fines - Grand Traverse Co.	168,250	0	0	168,250	0.0%
Penal Fines - Leelanau Co.	5,900	0	0	5,900	0.0%
Penal Fines - Benzle Co.	21,850	0	0	21,850	0.0%
Overdue Fines/Replacement Fees	32,000	2,901	17,655	29,099	9.1%
Interest & Dividends/Gains/Losses on Inv.	15,000	(3)	16,859	15,003	0.0%
Rents & Royalties	2,200	0	1,400	2,200	0.0%
Contributions	24,570	4,863	9,865	19,707	19.8%
Misc Revenue & Reimbursements	1,500	4,359	600	(2,859)	290.6%
TOTAL REVENUE	5,641,380	5,040,606	4,871,294	600,774	89.4%
Transfer In				0	
Use of Fund Balance				0	
TOTAL	5,641,380	5,040,606	4,871,294	600,774	89.4%
TOTAL REVENUE, TRANSFERS & USE OF FB	5,641,380	5,040,606	4,871,294	600,774	89.4%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	5,641,380	1,661,982	1,625,038	3,979,398	29.5%
REVENUE OVER (UNDER) EXPENSE		3,378,624	3,246,256		
This statement reflects activity through the third month of the 2021 fiscal year.					
Percentage of the year completed is 25%.					



APRIL DIRECTOR'S REPORT—JENNIFER THOMET

IPL's staff and patrons are happy to be open to the public! In-person service has gone very smoothly, and we're pleased to "see" everyone again.

In honor of March is Reading Month, IPL hosted two Blind Bag Book Challenges for adults and children. To some, the challenge may have seemed simple enough, pick out a bag and read what is inside. When you think of how much uncertainty this community has endured in the last year, I can understand why some patrons were leery of inviting more challenges into their lives. Through the challenge, adults traveled the world, and children read our librarians' favorite classic children's books with activities to do at home. Participating patrons received a little sweet treat as a reward for trying something new and branching out of their usual genre. Two children's prizes and one adult prize went to the winners of the drawing. We also gave away two \$20 pizza certificates to the winners of the guessing game we had all month long. The certificates were given by one of our Friends, and Cicero's added one as well.

IPL partnered with Great Start for Peace Meal Solidarity and gave out 32 Swedish Meatball dinners to local families. Each family also received a goody bag with a book and other toys for the family to enjoy. Thank you to Maxbauer's in Traverse City for providing the meat. Families were encouraged to prepare the meal together. The act of preparing and eating a meal together is a great bonding and learning experience for a family to share. This was an entertaining program, and we're so grateful for the opportunity.

The children's library is undergoing a few changes right now, and we appreciate everyone's patience and understanding as we move and shake things up in there. New material was purchased using an Enhancement Grant from Northland Coop, and our goal is to make finding materials easier for patrons and encourage the act of discovery and curiosity.

Suzanne helped Jennifer start red clover and kidney beans with the other libraries participating in Exo Lab 8, and so far, we have kept the seedlings growing! Thanks again to Andy from Woodmere for providing all the materials and the TSO Tots kits--what fun our little ones are having! Make sure to check out our Website at InterlochenPublicLibrary.org for Bite-Sized Baby Time!

Circulation March 2021: 3,820 (March 2020: 2,473)
Hold Transit Counts March: 784 to other libraries, 882 from other libraries to IPL
Programs March 2021: 17
Program Attendance March 2021: 392
Curbside Pickup March 2021: 60
Questions Answered: 572
Computer Use: 83
New Library Card Issued for 2021: 27



APRIL 2021 DIRECTOR'S REPORT - VICTORIA SHURLY

We are in the process of Spring clean-up inside and out. Down to Earth, our snow removal company has spent this week cleaning up the parking lot and areas that collected debris over the winter. Not to tempt fate too early, they have left the barrel of snow-melt. Siler's Maintenance will put us on the schedule for lawn and garden clean-up as well. I am hoping to have volunteer students from Old Mission walk over one day to pick up the trash on our property that has accumulated here and there. We will provide a pizza and pop lunch in exchange for their community service.

Shelving volunteers are anxious to come back. We are not there yet. We are still at 50% capacity and that includes staff. I am hoping to bring some of them back on a limited schedule in June when I plan as well on returning to normal hours. Those hours will be 10-7 Monday and Thursday; 10-5 Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and 10-2 on Saturdays.

The Spring wreath project for adults was a HUGE success. We gave away almost 40 kits in two days. They cost a little more than the other kits but were still under \$5 each. Many patrons sent us pics of their beautiful creations including the 95-year-old mother of a regular.

I still have two tickets left for our annual fundraiser Books from the Boathouse. It features a takeout meal for two including a bottle of wine that patrons will pick up at the library and take home. That evening, we will offer a virtual live auction and short presentation on the history of PCL.

Some great programs are coming up this month including Brit Eaton's demonstration of making Beef Wellington, a kite program with staff, a financial awareness program for children co-sponsored with TBA Credit Union and, of course, all our regular programming. Craft bags continue to be popular with both kids and adults. I am certain that those and curbside pick up are here to stay!

I have participated in several webinars of late – one on OPIOD overdose response training. We do now have a NARCON kit on site. It will be mounted next to our AED unit. I also did two trainings on the new Michigan Uniform Chart of Accounts and signed up for one more this month on the same topic.

The Old Mission Historical Society would like to plant a COVID Memorial Tree – a maple – in the front of the library. It will be in memory of friends and relatives of Old Mission residents who lost lives to the virus. The Historical Society will plan a ceremony and residents will bury letters during the planting to those they lost. OMHS will cover all costs, but I will look for a donor of a bench for under the tree.

I have received an anonymous donation for two flower shaped musical xylophones for the Children's Garden. They are on order and will be installed this summer. I am excited to add these. They are beautiful and patrons young and old love the one we already have. I hope to find a sponsor for signage for story book quotes for the Garden this summer as well.

Circulation March 2021: 2842

Hits on Local History Room Video: 201

Hold Transit Counts March 2021: 686 to other libraries, 496 from other libraries to PCL

Programs March 2021: 11

Program Participation March 2021: 251

MISSION

To provide dynamic resources and innovative services that stimulate intellectual curiosity, facilitate lifelong learning, promote literacy, and nurture personal enrichment.

VISION

We are a forward-thinking and responsive hub, connecting, supporting and strengthening our community.

CORE VALUES

Diversity

We strive to offer a wide variety of resources, programs and services that meet the needs of all segments of our community.

Open Access

We desire to provide equitable access to all and provide a place where people feel supported and respected.

Flexibility

We listen and adapt to the changing needs of our community and develop life-long resources that grow with our patrons.

Innovation

We don't mind being uncomfortable with change and are consistently evolving and embracing growth.

Teamwork

We are a friendly, creative and caring team that help each other, and our patrons, improve and succeed.

Stewardship

We hold ourselves accountable for the effective use of our funding and take responsibility for the resources entrusted in our care.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

INCLUSIVE SPACE

Enhance gathering spaces where people can be themselves, encounter one another and have more access to diverse materials, programs and services.

INNOVATIVE ENGAGEMENT

Excite and energize the community by expanding the idea of what a library can be.

TARGETED OUTREACH

Connect to the community through outward communication.

PURPOSEFUL PARTNERSHIPS

Enrich existing and seek-out new collaborations that enhance and impact our quality of life.



3/9/2021

Community Engagement Report

Prepared for
Traverse Area District Library
by the Midwest Collaborative for
Library Services



Jan Davidson

MIDWEST COLLABORATIVE FOR LIBRARY SERVICES

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Summary of Interviews and Public Survey

The Traverse Area District Library embarked on a new strategic planning process in January 2021, 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 library service area of the Traverse Area District Library. The library system is unique in its model, and includes a main branch in Traverse City, two branches - East Bay and Kingsley, and three member libraries - Fife Lake Public Library, Interlochen Public Library, and Peninsula Community Library.

Traverse Area District Library, known from here as TADL or the Library, used a combination of one-on-one interviews with a wide variety of community leaders and a public, online survey open to all residents or workers in the service area. The interviews and survey were based on The Harwood Institute’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.

The members of the Library’s strategic planning committee conducted one-on-one interviews with various community leaders, asking about their aspirations for the community, the concerns they have and challenges facing the community, their thoughts about what it might take to reach those aspirations, and identifying areas where the Library might help. Seventy-one community leaders were interviewed. The public survey was offered through the websites of TADL and the member libraries and asked the same questions. Three-hundred-eighty-six people participated in the online survey.

The notes from the interviews and survey have been summarized in a blended community narrative and public knowledge summary. The most-shared community aspirations have also been organized in a word cloud illustration for visual reference. Additionally, information on how the interviewees and survey participants believe the Library can help the community to reach its aspirations are organized, themed, and aligned with specific aspirations or concerns that they might address.

Community Narrative

Community members openly shared their aspirations and concerns. The following is a narrative of the information, summarized in a blended form of The Harwood Institute models of the “Community Narrative” and “Public Knowledge Summary”. The themes are listed in the order most mentioned.

It is important to recognize that this Community Narrative was written in a specific and intense context. Locally and nationally, there is incredible political polarization and division. These interviews and surveys were completed on the heels of both an extremely divisive presidential election and inauguration and a local political situation that gained national attention. There are clearly frustrated people across the community and across the political spectrum. At the same time, we are almost a year into a global pandemic which has caused disconnection, isolation, and fear for most. These factors came through loud and clear in the interviews and survey responses and are important to consider when using the narrative and public knowledge summary to guide long-term planning.

Traverse Area District Library Community Narrative/Public Knowledge Summary

The Traverse Area District Library community, including residents of their member library communities, collectively aspires to be a community that is, above all else, welcoming, friendly, kind, and respectful. They aspire to be diverse in all ways – racially, economically, sexual orientation, age, gender, education level, skill sets, and more. They want a community that offers many and varied opportunities. These opportunities include convenient recreation, entertainment, shopping, and restaurants, but also opportunities for jobs, professional growth, and enrichment for all ages. They want a community that values the arts and provides cultural programs. They desire to live in an inclusive community, where truly all are welcome and can feel at home. They recognize the importance of connection, and desire to be united in shared experiences, goals, and vision. They aspire to be a community where people take care of each other and where the needs of all are met. This aspiration is most often mentioned in regard to affordable housing but reaches beyond into making sure that those in need of any services can access them. They want to be a community that builds each other up, seeks the common good, and brings out the best in all; a community that looks out for its most vulnerable. At the same time, many feel a keen sense of individual freedoms and responsibility and desire a community where those freedoms are respected. They value education and want to live in a community that offers quality schools, varied educational opportunities, and lifelong learning. They hope to have a community that is safe, with low

levels of crime, and family-friendly. While their political leanings vary widely, they are agreed that they want a community where people are politically active, involved, and engaged. Many want opportunities for safe, civil discourse involving critically-thinking participants who are open to hearing and understanding other points of view. They desire a community that is naturally beautiful and environmentally sustainable for the long term. They want to be led by appointed, elected, and unofficial leaders who are honest, ethical, responsible, and forward-thinking, and who communicate with the public.

In addition to the aspirations above, many who identified themselves as users of the Kingsley branch, Interlochen Public Library, and Peninsula Community Library aspire to live in a peaceful, rural community, although they still aspire to have access to convenient recreation, stores, and amenities.

Diversity & Inclusion

The desire to live in a community that values diversity and inclusion appeared in the largest number of interviews and survey responses, far and above all other answers, and across all physical parts of the service area. Diversity was used in a very broad way, encompassing racial, ethnic, culture, socio-economic, gender, sexual orientation, identity, education level, age, background, and point-of-view. It is a shared aspiration across the TADL service area to be a community where truly ALL are welcome, and where people can learn from each other. There is a desire to be sure that children are exposed to others different than themselves in order to learn that the world is wider than their own. Participants want a community where all have a voice, and where leadership is representative of the wide and diverse population. Some expressed that they wish it went beyond simply being diverse into celebrating differences as strength. They desire a community that is just and equitable, where all are heard, and all contribute; a community that acts upon inequity so that it becomes ever more inclusive. Some shared that they would aspire to be a community that is truly, and in all ways, integrated, where people who are different have shared experiences to build upon. Many want a community where people are open-minded and open to learning from each other and evolving.

As is often the case, the highest aspirations of this community are also one of the areas of greatest concern. There is a sense that the community is not diverse enough, that it is still too homogenous and insulated. Some feel that, while the community has become a bit more diverse in recent years, the attitude around that has not kept up and so people who are “outside the norms” of the community – whether that be financially, racially, in sexual-orientation, or otherwise – are not made to feel safe and welcome enough, which then slows the progress toward more diversity. Some even feel that the diversity is shrinking again, as people are no longer willing to be where they don’t feel welcome or wanted. Specifically,

community members mentioned that they would like the community to be more welcoming to those of the LGBTQ+ community, and that they'd like to see more racial diversity and cultural representation. Several mentioned a large migrant worker population in the area, and that they feel this piece of the community, so important to the economic structure, is not respected and is underrepresented. A few mentioned wanting to see local leadership be more representative of the actual community. Participants are concerned about an apparent assumption that everyone thinks alike, rather than an openness to become aware of and place value on different viewpoints. There was much mention of the area being more exclusionary than inclusive. Many expressed that they would personally like to see the diversity and inclusion grow but feel that the community as a whole is more and more unwilling to embrace this. Some feel that recent political extremism and polarization has contributed to a public perception of the Traverse Area as racist and unequitable, which hinders growth. Phrases such as, "us-vs.-them mentality," "zero-sum attitude," and "systemic division" were mentioned as concerns. There was also mention of youth leaving the community, and a feeling that this is sometimes because of the inability for young people to feel welcome and safe to be themselves.

Opportunities

The second-most mentioned aspiration for Traverse Area residents was opportunities. Some expressed a hard-to-achieve desire for a community that is small, walkable/bikeable, and where everyone knows each other, while still having convenient access to all the advantages of a big city. This included everything from quality public transportation to social services to stores to a variety of restaurants and entertainment options. Many mentioned a desire for a busy, social, vibrant, and engaging city-center or downtown with lots of available options. Access to quality healthcare was mentioned repeatedly. Respondents want to live in a creative community with cultural activities and a focus on the arts and music. Some expressed a desire for these events, activities, and opportunities to be available all year, rather than only in the summer for tourists. Many would like to be part of a growing community, although what was meant by "growth" widely varied (growth of industry or activities or people or jobs or green space or tourism or full-time residents.) A large number expressed the desire for outdoor activities and recreation opportunities.

The largest concerns addressing this theme of "opportunities" centered around maintaining the balance of growth in order to have variety and access with retaining the small-town feel, "small-town values," and quiet, peaceful, close-knit community they have cherished. There was a lot of recognition that they "want it all" and how difficult that balance is to achieve. Those served by the Kingsley branch, Interlochen Public Library, and Peninsula Community Library especially expressed the desire to stay rural and natural, but admitted that they, too, struggled with the balance of wanting amenities and opportunities close at hand. Many do feel that there

are lots of opportunities in the area already, or at least that there will be once the pandemic restrictions are loosened. For many, there is a sense that local leadership is too focused on growth and money over the charm and character of the community. Several mentioned concerns that young people are moving away due to a lack of jobs and things to do.

Connection & Unity

Almost as strongly as the first two themes, connection and unity came through the interviews and surveys loud and clear. It makes sense that in this time of global pandemic, with businesses including the Library closed and people instructed to distance, people are feeling an acute desire for connection, and are concerned about the disconnected nature of their community. The answers people shared, though, about both aspirations of and concerns for their community, seemed to go beyond just this current time of separation. It is clear that the people of the Traverse Area desire a community that is focused on the common good and building community together. People spoke both about being interconnected with and needing each other, as well as desiring a connection to the bigger world. They want to know their neighbors and live in a community where there is sharing, of ideas and resources. They spoke of being a cohesive community, where those living in, working in, and being served by the community have a united sense of values and purpose, and in which the local organizations form partnerships to support that purpose. A community that all are proud of, that has a sense of togetherness, positivity, and building each other up. A community that supports small, local businesses, which in turn then provide job and income opportunities for residents. They desire a community where decisions are made collectively, and where residents with the various points of view mentioned previously find common ground and learn to work together toward the greater good.

Connection and a sense of unity was the second-largest area of concern for both interviewees and survey participants, after taking care of each other (which is similar and has some overlap.) It is clear that the community is struggling with division and disconnection. Much of this has to do with the pandemic, and the isolation, loneliness, and disconnection many are experiencing this past year. However, it came through equally clearly that the political issues facing the country have deeply affected the Traverse Area. People spoke of concern over the accelerating divisions as people become more and more politically polarized. There were concerns over adversarial language and a growing tendency to react to each other with judgment, criticism, or even violence rather than empathy and effort to understand. They spoke of a desire to return to the civility, politeness, and respectfulness of the past, and are concerned that the community (and wider world) seem to be losing these attributes and ways of being.

Community members also spoke of an area that is geographically spread out and the difficulties this creates. In such a widespread community, it can be hard to find shared goals since the needs vary so much. In the more rural parts of the area, residents spoke of it being difficult to form community because of physical distance, especially for young people and seniors, even before the pandemic.

Takes Care of Each Other

A natural next aspiration of a community that wants to connect and find strength in their diversity is to be a community that takes care of each other. Many directly used the words “cares about each other,” “cares for others,” and “takes care of its most vulnerable,” while others showed the same aspiration through desires for accessible public transit for those who can’t or don’t drive, accessible social services, and experiences and opportunities being available to all, regardless of socioeconomic status. They aspire to be a community where children are valued and taken care of in such a way that residents stay in the community their whole lives. They aspire to be a community where families are supported through quality, affordable childcare. A community that places an emphasis on including those who have been excluded and looks out for each other. A community where people know their neighbors and help each other. A community where everyone has enough, and inequities are justly addressed. A community that is food-secure, has jobs and affordable housing, and values outreach. They hope for a community where there are plenty of volunteer opportunities and engaged community members ready to fill them.

Taking care of each other was also, however, the most-discussed concern. Participants spoke of an aging population and the changes that brings to the needs of a community; of a lack of affordable childcare that leaves families struggling; of “exploitative systems” and “entrenched barriers” leading to an ever-widening system of “haves and have-nots.” Mentioned were concerns about drugs, guns, homelessness, lack of internet access, quality public transit, and accessibility services for those with disabilities. Some feel there is a lack of awareness about mental health in the community. It was expressed that there are many organizations and social service agencies around, but some questioned whether they match the needs of the community. For example, one expressed concern over a lack of services for “those outside the cultural norms of the area.”

They do feel like there are lots of individuals and organizations who want to address these problems but are concerned that organizations are too often siloed or territorial, causing duplication of services and leaving gaps of unmet needs. Some worry that individualistic attitudes, fear, and the polarized political situation, along with the pandemic, is only

contributing to a deepening apathy and an unwillingness to speak up or act to fix long-standing systemic problems.

Values Lifelong Education

Traverse Area is a community that values education and lifelong learning opportunities and aspires to be a community where these values are shared and prioritized. Many feel that the value is already there, but that perhaps there is room to improve when it comes backing that value up with adequate resources. Community members spoke of desires such as a community that promotes learning; that is literate, intelligent, and informed; that has quality and trustworthy schools; that offers and supports a variety of educational opportunities, including tracks other than college; where young people are given the tools they need to succeed. They want a community that is curious and dives deeper into what they want to learn about. There were concerns mentioned about educational disparity and lack of access to education for those without wealth, and for those for whom a traditional educational track is not appropriate. A few spoke of inflexibility in curriculum in local schools, and politics affecting what children are taught. It was mentioned that there is a large migrant worker population in the area, and that the children of these workers are falling through the cracks.

Many expressed a desire to live in a community comprised of educated, thoughtful people who trust science and facts; people who are media-literate and can think critically and evaluate information. Some expressed concerns that this is getting less common, and that more is being based on emotions, extreme and inflexible positioning, and a “toxic technocratic media cycle.”

It was mentioned many times that a quality library is at the heart of their aspirational community, as it provides access to books, learning and enrichment programs, internet connectivity, and open, truthful, trustworthy information, accessible by all regardless of financial status. It was clear that this community values its library system, and interviewees and survey participants from the Main Library, both branches, and all three partner libraries had wonderful things to say about the good work the Traverse Area District Library is already doing. There is concern about access to all of these important services and information due to COVID-related closure and restrictions, but this is due to an uncontrollable global event rather than choices and strategies of the Library, and hopefully temporary. Participants look forward to full services and access being restored!

Affordability

Throughout interviews and surveys, the words “affordable” and “affordable housing” came up many times as both aspirations and concerns. This community aspires to be one where people

have access to quality, affordable housing, and many said that there is not enough available. They desire a community that is “economically stable,” “vibrant,” “successful,” and “thriving,” but vary in opinions about how to achieve that. Some feel there needs to be an increase in businesses coming to the area to boost the local economy and job availability, while others feel this will negatively affect other aspirations (like beauty, environmental concerns, and the small-town feel.) Some feel that to stay “thriving in a dynamically changing world,” the area will need to evolve and are concerned that the community is not open to that. They aspire to retain residents over a lifetime, and to be a community where those lifelong residents can retire comfortably. Many spoke of fears of having to leave the community when they retire, as they will not be able to afford it. Others spoke of not being able to attract young families and young professionals because the area is too expensive. Concerns over “livable wages” were raised again and again.

There was again concern raised over pandemic-caused struggles for small businesses, and hopes that the community will find new and innovative ways to support their local business community, and thereby boost the local stability and the opportunities for stable jobs. There was some mention of empty buildings, but it was unclear if this is a long-term problem or due to the current crisis; either way, it may affect the community in long-term ways. Many feel the “wealth-gap” is growing and that economic disparity is increasing and becoming more obvious. They hope the community will find opportunities for housing, services, activities, recreation, learning, and enrichment that are affordable enough to be available to all.

Safety

People in the Traverse Area want to live in a community that both IS and FEELS safe. They desire a community that has a low crime rate, is drug-free, and where kids are able to have freedoms, “like in the past.” Some specifically want an area free of guns (more than one person said, “except for hunting,”) and referred to a recent, local County Commission meeting that became national news and stirred up fear. They spoke about physical safety concerns increasing instead of decreasing.

The safety concern most raised, though, was poor roads and sidewalks making it unsafe or difficult to get around. Many expressed the desire for a walkable and bikeable community, and pointed to issues with sidewalks, busy roads, and lack of traffic signals and crosswalks.

Even more than physical safety, this community spoke of aspiring to be one that is safe for every resident to be themselves and speak out against injustice, and many respondents feel the community has a long way to go to achieve this. They spoke of issues with bullying and

intimidation between each other as well as between leadership and residents. They spoke of fear of each other and that even in a community that wants more diversity, people remain afraid of those different than themselves. They hope for a community where everyone is free to truly be themselves, and where it is safe to be “different.”

Sustainable Beauty

Not surprising to anyone who has ever set foot in the Traverse Area, the community places a high value on the natural beauty they are graced with. They want to live surrounded by picturesque views and access to lakes, parks, trails, and outdoor recreation. Many spoke of the peacefulness the water brings. They recognize that their community already meets and exceeds these aspirations, although several mentioned that more trails would be great. The concerns raised here had mostly to do with the sustainability of this gift.

Many mentioned concerns over environmental-consciousness – or lack thereof – and whether the community was thinking long-term enough to keep the beauty for future generations. This caused some clashes between those who want to see the business community or convenient access to stores grow, and those who want to keep a low-skyline and more focus on the environment. Some expressed that they feel the community is “getting crowded” and that increased vehicular traffic is contributing to congestion, noise, and physical pollution. There was mention of desire for farmland preservation, continued ruralness in the outlying areas, and increased green space in all towns and corners of the district. Several mentioned valuing and working to maintain healthy air and water and raised concerns over pollution of both. There are fears about abuse of natural resources and environmental destruction, and many feel the community has work to do regarding increased environmental consciousness and responsibility. The idea of being a “regenerative community” was promoted. Some would like to see greener and renewable energy given more attention. More than one person would like the community to focus more on sharing resources instead of buying new.

Attractiveness, cleanliness, and beauty were mentioned over and over, although sometimes with the purpose of attracting new people, and other times with the purpose of the community being comfortable and enjoyed by those already living there. One thing that stood out about this community is the tension that being a desirable destination creates. As an area that heavily relies economically on tourism, includes a large percentage of second homes and vacation rentals, yet is also home to many full-time residents, there is a clear divide in focus, and a need to find a balance that serves all. Many in this community wish the local government and infrastructure would be more focused on residents and want to live in a town that prioritizes those who contribute to the community year-round. Others recognize that much of the financial wellbeing of the community is created through visitors and partial-year residents, and

want to be sure that adequate resources are put into supporting the tourism system, including taking care of the people who are employed by the industry. While many expressed aspirations and concerns that highlighted this divide, some pointed out that a balance needs to be achieved to ensure prosperity and sustainability for the area and to create a cohesive community with shared goals.

Civil Discourse & an Involved Citizenry

Residents of this community expressed a desire for an increase in civil discourse and an involved citizenry, and a concern that these are decreasing in favor of apathy and an inability to disagree respectfully. They spoke of a hope for residents to be able and willing to engage in issues facing the community, nation, and world with facts and empathy, and a willingness to try to see someone else's point of view, while still standing strong for their own beliefs. Some expressed a frustration at feeling "censored," and others are worried that the area is being unfairly defined or represented to the wider world by one small, extreme position. Some expressed fears that misinformation is being spread and that people don't know who to trust or what to believe.

People mentioned, again in this category, a desire for more balance and a willingness to seek first to understand. They want a community where people are involved and participatory and feel this would lead to a more effective ability to solve problems facing the area. They hope people will be plugged into current events, locally and globally, yet that they will "stop blaming politics for everything." Again and again, residents voiced that there are not safe places, resources, or opportunities for open discourse. Many are concerned that those who are involved are so extreme and have their heels dug in on either side, and that those who feel more moderately have just disengaged.

Responsible Leadership

Much of the community expressed aspirations regarding local leadership, including those who are appointed, elected, and unofficial leaders. Many adjectives were used to describe their desired leadership, including, "respectful," "BIPOC and LGBTQIA+," "transparent," "forward-thinking," "diverse," "trustworthy," "progressive," "conservative," "honest," "just," "balanced," "positive," "quality," "unafraid," and "visible." They want leadership that strives to truly represent their constituents rather than their own interests or perspectives; leadership that is politically balanced and cares about the community. They want honest and frequent communication from their leaders, and a focus on both the long- and short-term, the big picture and day-to-day, "the macro and micro." They want to see strong accountability by (and expected of) their leaders.

This was an area of much concern, mostly regarding politics and elected/appointed, “official” leadership. Many referred to the recent County Commission meeting that gained national attention, one calling it a “shocking show of disrespect by our leadership.” When asked how the reality of the Traverse Area differs from their aspirations, people spoke of concerns over dishonest politicians and what they see as ineffective, unethical, irresponsible, unprofessional leadership. They spoke of a distrust by the public of their leaders, and shared concerns over appointed leadership not truly representing the interests of people in the community. They spoke of an “old boys club” and raised concerns over representation, meaning that the community is more diverse (racially, culturally, gender, sexual orientation) than the leadership. Some worry about short-term thinking or a lack of transparency. It was mentioned repeatedly that there are many “unofficial leaders” and influencers trying to solve problems, but that too often they are not as effective as they could be because of a general lack of trust, or because of duplication of services instead of partnerships.

Traverse Area District Library Community Aspirations



How can the Library help?

Interviewees and survey participants were asked how the Library can help achieve the community aspirations and address community concerns. The responses were compiled and loosely themed, and are listed below, including some of the specific suggestions offered. Some suggestions could fall under more than one category. The suggestions are a combination of activities the Library already conducts (which the community wants to see continued or grown or may not be aware of) and ideas for new activities.

Keep the good work coming!

In both conversations and interviews, participants across the locations made it clear that they love and cherish Traverse Area District Library, and feel the Library is doing a great job. They had many, many quotes and examples of how and why they love what you're already doing and hope that you'll keep up the great work. One said, "I think our director and staff are doing an excellent job moving us forward." One interviewee shared a, "great admiration" for how the Library has contributed to the community in the past, and a hope that the Library can be central to bringing the community together. Another participant said, "Helping a community is the heart of a community, and the Library is the brain of that. Librarians are a helping profession." Many acknowledged TADL as an invaluable, "hugely important resource to the Greater Traverse Area." Others spoke in general terms of what a library does for a community, including being for families, a free source of entertainment and opportunities, a connector, and a boost to the education level of residents. One person mentioned that TADL gives kids in the community the opportunity for freedom in a safe environment, and the opportunity to see a world wider than their own perspective. Another said, "The library is the center for public health and public learning; the library reinforces community." Several participants specifically recognized the Peninsula Community Library as a vital and well-respected "cornerstone" of the Old Mission community. One participant summed it up, saying, "(Traverse Area District Library) plays so much into our community already and the location is perfect with all that is happening on 8th Street."

Diversity, Inclusion, and Equal Access

The most-mentioned way the Library can help create participants' aspirational community is to support diversity and inclusion, including making sure there is equal access to needed services for all community members. This included ensuring diversity and representation in the collection, artwork, and displays. It was pointed out that ALL should see themselves represented in the books and other resources available through TADL. One participant said,

“The Library has tremendous influence and responsibility in curating and featuring stories that our children are exposed to and which instruct and inspire them to interact with our community and the world.” Another person said that, “The Library can give everyone a place to see and be seen.” People spoke about creating awareness of, and exposure to, people who are different than each other, whether culturally, racially, in sexual orientation, in abilities, or in backgrounds, for mutual learning and increased understanding, respect, and kindness. They would like to see opportunities for fostering intergenerational dialogue, to increase acceptance and tolerance. Another person feels, “the Library can help highlight that there are queer people in this community. Even something like a basic panel discussion for things like fighting racism, and intro on how to be a community ally, or info on gender vs sexuality, these are the kind of talks the Library could foster.” Community members would like to see disability-awareness trainings offered. Other ideas offered included curated and vetting a list of quality resources for EDI education and personal enrichment, and offering education to the community on what the, “wide range of normal is.” There was interest in language instruction and resources in order to get a better understanding of other cultures. There is interest in more community activities to bring people together and celebrate diversity and strength in differences. It was also suggested that TADL could support area schools in regard to Equity, Diversity, & Inclusivity education and history curriculum. A specific example was given to investigate whether the Michigan history taught is fully accurate and tells the whole story. The idea was also raised that the Library could adopt a theme around kindness, caring, or inclusion and then take that into schools with stories and themed activities.

When discussing ensuring equal access, a variety of areas were mentioned, including finding innovative ways to provide computer and internet access, social services (even having an in-house social worker at the Library), and more accessible online resources. It was mentioned more than once that signage in the community, including at the Library, is written for a highly-literate, English-speaking population, and suggestions were given to incorporate more symbol signage or increased translation services, and that perhaps the Library could partner with other community organizations to increase this across the whole community (public transit, stores, media, etc.) There was a suggestion to host an English as a Second Language (ESL) program for immigrants, using TADL staff as coordinators and volunteer tutors. Ideas were given for getting resources out of the building and to those who need them, whether through book delivery to the homebound, mobile libraries to bring services and wifi to neighborhoods with access issues, or a warming tent outdoors during the pandemic. It was offered that the Library should consider really making an effort to invite and encourage those who may not have experienced the Library to come in: “For some in a low socioeconomic demographic, (or those in minority groups,) I think the Library represents fear and insecurity, perhaps even superiority, which simply is not the case.”

Many mentioned the branches creating more opportunity to utilize the Library, and some would like to see even more branches or small locations, even more spread out through neighborhoods and rural areas. One idea was to provide wireless internet servers in remote parts of the county without access. Another was to be sure there is proper engagement and education of the older population on using TADL's online services. One interviewee pointed out that it is a "full-time job to be poor," and wondered if the Library could find ways to help with the fact that many needs like filing paperwork, meeting with the courts, etc. have to happen during business hours, when those in need are also expected to be working. Similarly, someone else mentioned that, "the more we shift to an online culture, the harder it is for the poor to communicate what they need." They wondered if more person-to-person, relationship-building services, rather than large, impersonal networks, would be a route to relieving some of this burden.

One participant did mention a personal experience with not feeling as welcomed and represented at TADL, as a person of color, as he would have liked. It was mentioned by several that TADL is already doing "a good job" of trying to include diverse voices and creating a community of inclusivity, but that there is always room for more growth in this area, and that perhaps promotion of the associated activities, events, and resources could be improved or increased. A suggestion was to look critically at the entrances of the Library buildings and think about "placemaking" in these spaces, considering whether they are welcoming to all, including new people to the community. It was also suggested to conduct some "inclusivity assessments," starting from within – building accessibility, policies, staff, collections.

Community Connector through Partnerships

In both interviews and surveys, participants made it clear that they see an important role of the Traverse Area District Library, and libraries in general, as a connector for the community – of people to each other, of people to information, and of organizations. As one person put it, "The Library is a key influencer because it has enduring and meaningful partnerships with hundreds of organizations and thousands of individuals in our community."

First, they talked about the Library connecting individuals and families to each other. The term "hub of the community" was used again and again. Holding events and activities that bring people together (once the pandemic has lessened, or virtually now) was suggested. One participant said, "A good thing I (have taken) from the pandemic is that technology can help us connect, and hear and see faces, voices, tones, it can be an amazing tool. It helps people find their people and connect. So I want the Library to figure out how we can develop some programming that they can use to grow year after year, and help us reach and find those partnership opportunities." They like the idea that the Library creates opportunity for human

interaction and exposure to others unlike themselves and would like to see more interest-based groups and meet-ups. Some mentioned wanting to use the Library as a place to relax, read the paper, and run into neighbors. An idea that was suggested was to look for opportunities to use existing programming time to connect people. For example, TADL could intentionally create an opportunity for parents to “talk and bond” and create their own subcommunity during Library Storytime, when their children are occupied.

It was stated that a library is a “clearinghouse of information,” and that it can be a central point of contact for community information for people to access. It was suggested that perhaps the Library create or grow a Community Liaison position, who would go to community groups such as the Grand Traverse Community Collaborative, the Northwest Food Coalition, or the Front Street Irregulars, and cull all information into a central resource. They would love to see the Library work with local organizations to create a new resource guide about the community as a whole, and asked that it be regularly updated and that there would be both print and online versions to access. It was suggested that the Library could coordinate a volunteer group, or compile information on where and how to volunteer. There was interest in more job fairs and resources around job services the Library already offers. It was pointed out that by partnering with groups such as The Chamber or Networks Northwest, the Library could gain access to larger funding sources, but cautioned that it would be important to find ways to keep the content untethered and unbound to any agendas or biases of the organizations. Besides all of this, residents hope the Library will continue to be what they feel it always has been – a container to hold truthful information, print and digital.

Many mentioned that if community organizations were more connected and less siloed, there would be less duplication of services, and more efficient service to the community, and that they feel the Library can be the central facilitator of that connection. They feel all the local non-profits need to be, “woven together into a network to make all systems more robust.” As one participant said, “we’re not in a huge city that needs repetition (in organizations.) There should be something unique in either your service or who you serve. We don’t have the funding available to be competitive with each other.” Community members also said that the Library can be a link, an efficient way to connect people to organizations rather than one-on-one, slow, personal invitations. The Great Start Lending Library’s director was interviewed and was interested in a more collaborative relationship with TADL, sharing that they have significant budget for infant and toddler materials and would love to get those into the branches and partner libraries. The community members could envision the Library coordinating a fund to help school-aged children participate in extracurricular activities so that kids of all socioeconomic levels would be equal in opportunities, which would strengthen their ties as they grow into adults in the community.

The community feels the Library could help connect and unite community members around common goals. One interviewee summed it up: “The Library is the glue that holds the community together.”

Safe, Neutral Gathering Space

Community members from the Traverse Area see their Library as uniquely positioned as a safe, neutral gathering space. They feel that people trust the Library more than the government or other entities, and that it is seen as available to and belonging to all. Several different ways were suggested to capitalize on this position.

First, they would like to see the Library use its neutrality and perceived sense of trustworthiness and as being welcoming and accepting of all to be a place for “healthier community conversations, to help with disagreements.” They feel TADL can take on more of a “Neutral Convener” role in creating space for open dialogue and the chance to take on hard topics. Since it’s already the center of the community, without religious or political agendas, and already fighting censorship and defending freedom of information based in facts, many feel it is in a prime spot to address important issues head on. One person mentioned that, “It is so important to have that neutral ground available for some of these talks, on topics like diversity and inclusivity.” They would like to see the Library become an even more safe place to learn, listen, and become aware of the issues facing the community and varying points of view. They suggest that the Library take an intentional and active role in convening these events and discussions. As one person put it, “I’d like to see the Library host discussions about the future of the area away from Township buildings, where the community can speak together as concerned neighbors, not as board members versus ‘the public.’” Participants could imagine the Library not just providing space but helping teach people how to have civil discourse, how to be allies to those on the margins, and how to come together to learn even when they are afraid to say or do the wrong thing. It was suggested that the Library could support healing in a divided community through lectures, events, or workshops on how to talk to each other.

Secondly, they feel TADL could go even further in this role, and could actively bring residents together to work toward shared community plans and goals and infrastructure improvements. They would like to see open discussion groups to support problem-solving from within the community and feel the Library could become the “neutral expert facilitators” for community engagement. They can see the Library being a place to host dialogue highlighting prior challenges and how the community came together to address issues, in order to facilitate discussion and generate ideas about addressing current issues. Hosting classes on how to create community leadership in neighborhoods was one specific suggestion. It was mentioned that the community got a good start with the Grand Traverse Community Foundation’s

dashboard, which showed what the area is doing and where the gaps and challenges lie; the idea was raised that perhaps the Library could take that foundation and start a dialogue around where to take that next, working actively to include all voices. Another idea was to put major city projects and designs on display at the Library as they develop, to allow for public awareness and input, perhaps even dedicating a room or space to this.

Third, community members love that the Library has meeting space available to outside groups, and would like to see this continue and grow. They feel it is an asset that the Library can share with the community, and appreciate that TADL already, “does a great job hosting without judgement.” Some feel there is a need for more meeting rooms.

Support our Value of Education & Lifelong Learning

Interviewees and survey participants felt that one of the more obvious, direct roles the Library can take in supporting the aspirational community they desire is in supporting education and lifelong learning. This can start with traditional ways, like making sure the collection is strong and growing. One person mentioned that, “A knowledgeable community starts with reading and the Library can play a major role in that.” Many mentioned literacy initiatives and targeting young children and pre-reading learning as programs to develop and grow, and it was acknowledged that TADL already has a “stellar youth services department to engage kids and families.” It was mentioned that if the Library is not doing so already, sending liaisons to work with the local schools could greatly benefit the community. Some mentioned how the Library’s Facebook Live classes enrich their at-home learning for homeschool and preschool curriculums, and that they’d love to see these programs continued even after the pandemic. There was some discussion of a considerable segment of the local population being agricultural workers, many with non-English speaking homes and migrant or partial-year work, and whose children are not part of formal summer school for various reasons. The suggestion brought forward was for some sort of “traveling library” to go to the agricultural camps or local churches near the camps, bringing music, puppets, storytimes, and crafts to the children, and perhaps even lending books. Those who suggested this felt it would solve a lot of access problems and help children in those communities to stay productive and learning. The “debilitating pause in the educational process, especially for young and developing minds (due to COVID)” is seen as creating new opportunities for innovative programming to help young minds, and participants feel the Library can play a significant role in that effort.

Some would like to be sure the Library has enough comfortable, usable space for students to study. One suggestion was to create a tutoring center, staffed by volunteer and paid tutors, possibly by partnering with STEP (Students in Transition Empowerment Program.) A participant referred to this balance as making the Library, “a one-stop-shop for learning.” Overlapping with

the themes of “partnerships” and “safe, neutral spaces,” many of the comments around supporting education had to do with partnering with existing organizations to be the most effective, and/or providing space for these activities.

As people spoke beyond formal education into supporting a community aspiration of lifelong learning, they spoke of helping the community to grow through increasing people’s exposure to information and ideas. They would like to see workshops or programs created to help residents learn more about facts and critical thinking, and to develop the skills needed to gain more media literacy and navigating a polarized, 24-7 media cycle. It was mentioned that, “through the internet, many have access to vast quantities of information, but what we DO with it is the real issue. We need mentors who can teach with passion about building a better community (using the information.)” Another idea raised was to develop a literacy network in order to reduce the stigma surrounding adult illiteracy.

They would like to see the Library encompass research and formal educational opportunities, as well as recreation and casual reading that promote ongoing learning. One participant said, “To quote a Bible Proverb, ‘Education is your light, guard it well.’ The Library is the source of that educational light for a lot of people. It can protect and provide that light for people their entire lives. Schools play a role, but libraries are there for life.”

Continue and Grow Quality Programming and Library Services for ALL

Many of the appreciations expressed for TADL, as well as specific ideas for ways to help the community, had to do with programming and services offered by the Library. Some were clear that they already love a program and hope it will continue, others weren’t sure if they were suggesting a new idea or just weren’t aware of something already happening. Either way, those interviewed and who participated in the survey want to see quality programming and services available, innovating, and growing.

One mentioned having older people do storytimes for children as an intentionally intergenerational learning opportunity. Activities and programs like yoga, crafts, reading groups, beer/wine book clubs, music programs, cultural events, instrument play for toddlers, dogs reading with kids, young adult-specific opportunities, college-focused nights, teen after-school programming, basic technology classes, dance parties for all ages, and a tool shed for sharing were given specific mentions. Some of the services mentioned were tax services, MeLCat, access to free entertainment (dvds, music, etc.), job fairs, Read Alikes, and curbside service. The Library of Things TADL offers was mentioned repeatedly and there was hope for expansion. A few would like to see programming and events specifically for full-time locals, perhaps around local history. Some suggested exploring how the Library could make itself available to outside events and programs benefitting the community, such as being an

emergency shelter during bad weather, providing voter registration, or as a voting or vaccination site. It was clear that this community desires many, diverse offerings to ensure there is something at or from the Library for everyone in the community.

One participant suggested that the Library consider who is involved in planning and providing programs and think about whether broadening those involved at that stage might widen the audiences they serve.

Many mentioned that they appreciate all that has been done virtually to keep people busy during the pandemic but are “eagerly anticipating” the return of in-person events and programs as soon as possible and safe. Some asked that the Library consider what, such as virtual broadcasts of programs and curbside pick-up, might be of benefit to continue even after the pandemic, to benefit those whose access issues exist outside of the current medical crisis.

Get the Word (and Resources) Out

It seems that many who were interviewed or filled out the survey felt that while they already know the wonderful things the Library is and does, an unfortunately large part of the community does not. They want the Library to continue to do the fantastic work you’re doing, “but be more visible!” Many feel that a major way TADL can contribute to their aspirational community is by communicating what you do to a wider audience. They appreciated this opportunity to share their ideas, but want to be sure the Library is finding ways to ask these questions to those who aren’t already TADL users. Over and over, communication and outreach were mentioned.

One suggestion was to turn the director report or highlights of programs/services into a video segment on the monthly library newsletter. Another was to be sure that other nonprofit organizations know all of the amazing things TADL has to offer so that they can help spread the word among their constituents. There was also a suggestion to build, “better and more robust content via social media to engage younger patrons and create a TADL ‘voice’ to translate its resources and possibilities and inspire people to learn.” They want it known that the Library is “a resource hub for anyone wondering, ‘Can you help me?’” Several mentioned getting excited to see the Book Bike out at the Farmer’s Market, and that this is a great start, but that they would like to see the Library out in the community more often and in more places. Some participants would like TADL to better communicate the available Library resources to the migrant and seasonal communities. Repeatedly, community members asked the Library to go out to the community rather than taking for granted that you’re here and they’ll come to you if they want to. One participant told a story of her work with the children of migrant workers: “Three years ago, we tried to bring kids to the Library using transportation services available during the summer, but it was an absolute nightmare and we never tried again. It’s hard to

coordinate all those bodies coming into town, and would be much easier to bring the Library to the children." They also feel better public transit routes including the Library would help get more people to the physical buildings.

A specific idea was to place a "greeter" at the door of the Library, whose job is to put marketing materials for the Library in peoples' hands as they enter, adding to the welcoming nature of the Library at the same time. It was also suggested that the Library create or use signage to tell people that the phones are open for reference assistance even during the pandemic (in addition to the curbside phone number.) As a bigger strategy, a community member proposed that the Library use the state and national Library system "membership" (platforms and connections) to promote what is happening in this region, especially regarding partnerships and meeting regional goals. They continued, "TADL should be connecting our story with the nation, it's really a story about visibility and lifting up the story of who we are, so we can meet more of those economic sustainability goals."

Opportunities, Entertainment, and Culture

Not surprisingly, perhaps, since a large aspiration was to be a community with lots of opportunities, entertainment, and cultural activities, many of the ideas for how the Library could help centered here. Respondents would like to see the Library be a "hub of collaboration between arts, education, and culture." They see the Library as a big audiovisual entertainment provider, and would like to see that grow even more, with a bigger and more current and appealing movie department. They suggest bringing in artists, writers, authors, and musicians for classes and seminars, or to display their work in the Library. There was a suggestion for murals or artwork when you first enter the buildings. One participant even asked, "Please let me check out art from the Library to hang on my walls (at home.) I would so love to have painting in my house, and always something fresh and new to put up." The community would like to see more music-focused outreach, and noted that it doesn't seem to exist elsewhere, so it might be a great opportunity for the Library to take on. Ideas included free concerts where the community is already gathered, which would also expand people's worldviews and exposure. One participant mentioned that they would love to borrow all of the Traverse City Film Festival films after each year's event. was repeatedly suggested that TADL partner with the Interlochen Center for the Arts more extensively. A specific idea was to offer guest passes or discounts at local cultural institutions with your Library card. Fitting together with desires expressed to be a more walkable community, there was a suggestion to offer dog water bowls outside the doors of the Library.

There was mention of expanded evening and weekend hours and increased staffing, in order to provide the opportunity for a safe "hang out" space for all ages, access to entertainment, and

the ability for wider audiences to participate in programs. Some felt the community would benefit from a safe place for youth to congregate that isn't centered around athletics and is free or affordable. Several suggested a coffee/tea or snack shop within the Library. Participants recognized the potential financial challenges but would love to see some creative solutions.

Overall, the community feels the Library can build upon the rich value already in the community by highlighting it and making it freely available to all.

Capitalize on Our Outdoor Beauty

Participants had some thoughts about how TADL could help the community capitalize on the natural beauty of the area and encourage green initiatives for sustainability. They appreciate the Seed Library and hope to see that expand. One idea of how the Library could help promote a sustainably beautiful Traverse Area would be to create and organize a community garden. This would be a multifaceted project, since it would allow for green space and nature, but also act as new programming, bring people together to work on shared goals, depend on partnerships, and could include an educational aspect. One participant said that creating walking trails through the community garden could help achieve another aspiration for the community. They love the current children's garden and the opportunity that gives to teach the younger generation about sustainability. Another suggestion was that the Library look at ways to partner with Boardman Lake, maybe to create educational programming. It was suggested that the Library put more mature trees of different varieties around the Library, labeled, to inspire curiosity, and sponsor tree planting each year. Another idea was to designate a landscape planning area in the Library, where people could put moveable pieces on a screen or board to plan their home projects, encouraging tree planting and having information available about options. They would enjoy programming that, "celebrates local farms and the people who feed us, local forests, fields, and waterways, and the diversity of life in these ecosystems that so richly reward the observant visitor," as well as community courses or workshops on Climate Literacy. They would like to see the Library promote resources on smart transportation, urban cycling laws and guidelines, and utilize more signage along the TART directing folks to the Library. One participant commented that, "we are at a crossroad where we can become just another shoreline city/surburbia like so many others or choose to cherish and nurture those things that make our area truly special."

Participants mentioned that the Library's grounds are, "beautifully unique" and should be used to their fullest potential. Community members would like to see an outdoor, covered pavilion, which could be used for outdoor reading and enjoyment of Library resources, Library programming, and even other community events, along with play space and picnic tables. They could envision Storytime, checkers or chess matches, or other programs taking place outdoors

in the summer. They hope TADL will, “remember to merge the Library with the outside natural world.” An idea was also offered to make outdoor meeting space usage available to the public.

Some participants hope that TADL will lead the way for the community as the, “green model.” One participant said, “it would be amazing to see the Library be a sustainable building... using alternative energy (like solar or wind) and teaching by example.” They would appreciate a place for the community to easily recycle batteries and can envision some chargers for electric vehicles in the parking lot. By living these principles in their own buildings and programs, starting initiatives to be more environmentally conscious, and offering programs and learning opportunities around sustainability, they feel the Library can set the example.

Evolve with Our Community

One interviewee said it this way: “Libraries need to grow and update with the times. It's not about just the books, it's about the information in the books. Philosophy can stay consistent but can adapt to newer technology while holding on to culture.” Traverse Area community members hope the Library will continue to grow with society and with new technology, and feel the Library, “will have a vital role (to play) in what comes next for our area.” They see the Library as something very different than libraries of 20 – 30 years ago and want TADL to communicate that to the community. Many feel the changes toward more of a community center, being a more welcoming place, and moving away from the old silent, intimidating stereotypes of the past should be embraced and advertised to the wider community, in order to draw more people into all TADL offers. One participant said, “A (thriving, effective) 21st Century library (may be) quite a different proposition from protecting the quaint, historical building it is in.”

As for ideas on HOW the Library should evolve in the near future, some would like to see more branches, or many neighborhood locations, even if very small, in order to better serve a spread-out, aging population with ever-more access needs. It was mentioned that TADL might be ready to explore a new, updated logo. One participant suggested that the Library staff, “think outside the box” in exploring how the assets already available to them might serve an evolving community effectively. For example, asking, “Is there anyone on our staff that speaks other languages? If so, how could that be utilized? Are the immigrant populations in town using the Library’s services? If not, why not, and what could we do to help?”

There are some who want to be sure the Library retains its core, though, and feel that libraries have an important role to play in being a quiet space in the community, rarer these days in the wider community than in the past. They hope that TADL will, “get back to the basics of being a quiet place to read and think.” One person would like to see the model switched: rather than having a quiet room, this individual would prefer a quiet main space with a “noisy room”

available. While it's a tough balance to find, some want to be sure that as TADL evolves with the community, it doesn't lose what it already did well.

Community members feel this is a "ripe time", politically and culturally. They were happy to have been asked the interview and survey questions and suggested that the Library continue to poll the community regularly about their wants and needs. As one participant said, "I want the Library to be the beacon of reason, a catalyst for interaction, and open to all." Another shared hope and encouragement, stating that, "the Library's mission statement is strong and can handle growth and change."

#1 Inclusive Space

We will enhance gathering spaces where people can be themselves, encounter one another and have more access to diverse materials, programs and services.

What does this mean to our patrons and how does the community benefit?

- Experience: Feel welcome, increase patronage, make new connections, creates a more personalized library experience.
- Experience: feeling they belong, something here for them, they are important and can be themselves, they are safe.
- Benefit: Relevant community programs/experiences based on previous conversations with community groups.
- Experience: Dynamic and varied spaces that allow for individual experience, comfortable areas, safe to experience library how you see fit.
- Benefits: Meet new people, discover new experiences, practice empathy (appreciate differences in community), safe and comfortable space, community takes more ownership of library, and more ...
- Benefit: If we make it more accessible, all people in our community could benefit from the library's resources.
- Experience: Users of all ages and abilities
- Experience: everyone can get to what they need without having to ask for assistance. Independence!
- empowerment of patrons

Ideas generated to implement this Focus Area:

- **Input from diverse community groups about needs**
- **visible sign out front**
- accessible collections
- road sign and internal wayfinding improvements,
- more diverse meeting spaces
- skill-sharing series
- physical changes to the entrance
- **Outside area to gather.**
- After hours targeting of special groups.
- open-ended spaces for activities
- **gender-inclusive, family, nursing, accessible bathrooms**
- training for cultural/inclusivity competency
- Diversity audit of the collection
- **audit of building layouts**
- **Open ended & passive programming...low/no pressure!**

#2 INNOVATIVE ENGAGEMENT

We will excite and energize the community by expanding the idea of what a library can be.

What does this mean to our patrons and how does the community benefit?

- Opportunity to get library experiences outside the library; "Meeting people where they're at"
- Customize/personalize their library experience based on their need at that moment (do they need quiet, do they need assistance, do they need a group to learn from)
- Patrons will look forward to and ask to try new things;
- The library can facilitate meetings where people learn from each other (open-ended programming)
- Patrons can be exposed to new things (and try them out); Maybe there's passive things going on that people can engage with if they want, like a VR station for example
- Promoting exciting things will draw patrons in, and then we can snag them to meet our core mission (literacy/lifelong learning)
- Encouraging curiosity & Surprising and delighting; Enriching experiences
- Unity in the community, fostering a sense of community, making neighbors into friends
- Community will have a public space where they feel comfortable asking questions and learning things
- We want to be one of the things people talk about when they're describing our community to other people not in our community in a positive way
- Orienting staff and do some training so we can encourage independent learning and growth (competencies)
- Using the grounds to engage people (outside the library spaces can encourage invitations into the building)

Ideas generated to implement this Focus Area:

- Open mic night or outdoor music events,
- **Outdoor seating & gathering space**
- Open-ended programming
- intentional accessibility
- **Patrons are the program- cooking contests, chilli cook-off, etc.**
- Accessible programs,
- Forum for public discussions
- **Multigenerational programs (storytime; miniatures; gaming)**
- **expand LoT and have associated programming;**
- DIY and artistic programming
- **Bookmobile**
- Cultural programs to highlight our diverse community (global access, locally sourced)
- collaborating with other community organizations on "meet them where they are at"
- Listening party's where we feature music or an audiobook outside as a drop in program.
- Replace display cases with touch panel digital signage
- Raise TADL visibility like partnership w/BATA GTB

#3 TARGETED OUTREACH

We will connect to the community through outward communication.

What does this mean to our patrons and how does the community benefit?

- Clear and direct information
- Updates on coming events and news
- Fresh information and Innovative approaches
- Engaging opportunities - including volunteering
- Online experience - fluid and dynamic, with intuitive links
- Cross-calendar - information that overlaps and reaches different groups/segments of patrons
- Sense of the library in the community- meeting patrons and non-patrons where they are, not just in our buildings
- Stronger relationship with the library and its services
- Feel that their investment in the library is well spent
- The library is us and we are the library - community view
- Enrichment, inspiration, excitement for opportunities; hopeful
- Outreach should consider a range of language options and non-language versions, including first peoples; accessible versions

Ideas generated to implement this Focus Area:

- **School outreach**
- **Programming at festivals, TADL podcast , mobile library TCAPS other school outreach**
- **Bookmobile**; regular podcast, IPR, etc.; meeting communities where they are
- **Outreach coordinator**
- Continual but not endless community survey
- Outreach to vulnerable populations: shelters, homeless, homebound; migrants
- Increasing literacy skills for kids and adults
- Purposeful connections with media personalities local
- Popup programs and stories offsite
- ebike as a second book bike
- continue to build on a library of online/digital resources (storytimes, etc), s
- how up in unexpected places (example: bookmark of targeted resources like cookbooks, info, music, movies etc. at the next Amical cultural food week related to the evening's food),
- need to determine who does not have access vs who is just not accessing the library

#4 PURPOSEFUL PARTNERSHIPS

We will enrich existing, and seek out new, collaborations that enhance and impact our quality of life.

What does this mean to our patrons and how does the community benefit?

Customer Experience can be learned about us through our partnerships.

- Increased visibility.
- Building trust.
- Increased access and partnership to subject matter experts.
- Wider range of programs and resources.
- Exposure to resources they don't have access to.
- Synergy between partnerships enriches people's lives.
- Breaking down of community silos.
- Expands the number of locations people can go to experience the library resources.
- Awareness can lead to more financial contributions.
- Benefit: Monetary donations that increase service to the community.

Ideas generated to implement this Focus Area:

- **Outreach/volunteer coordinator especially focused on Diverse and Inclusive partnerships.**
- nonprofit org fair - help bring people to the organizations and connect them with each other.
- increasing access to library services in schools
- **Create a list of whom we partner with;**
- **create a list of potential partners**
- Have a staff member who acts as a diversity/inclusion partnership coordinator and
- **Providing services to schools in our area (peer-to-peer with librarians/literacy staff as well as tech, library cards)**
- Raise the status of the library to the extent that other nonprofit orgs think of the library first as a partner to help reach a cross-segment of the community
- increased partnership with non-profits
- **Partner with GTB and tribal outreach**
- Ask the expert