

PCLS Lakewood Libraries Feasibility Study Facilitation

Advisory Committee Meeting #1 | Thursday, June 30, 2022 | 11am – 1pm

Meeting Objective

- Establish a shared understanding of planning purpose, context, process, and desired outcomes.
- Lay groundwork for staff and advisory community, and community engagement

Agenda

11:00	Welcome	Mary Getchell, Becky Newton
11:05	Introductions and Agenda	All; Led by Rebecca Fornaby, BERK
11:20	Project Purpose and Process	Michelle Ellsworth, BERK
11:30	Committee Charge and Ground Rules	Rebecca, BERK
11:40	Project Context	Michelle, BERK
	▪ PCLS Planning and Community Input; Q&A	Mary Getchell, PCLS
	▪ Relevant City of Lakewood Plans and Initiatives; Q&A	Becky Newton, City of Lakewood
	▪ Building Use and Conditions: History and Current State; Q&A	Melinda Chesbro & Cliff Jo, PCLS
12:30	Community Engagement Effort	Rebecca, BERK
12:50	Next Steps and Meeting Close	Michelle, BERK / All
	▪ Recap next steps	
1:00	Adjourn	

Basic Stats

Lakewood Pierce County Library

- **Building Size:** 32,592 square feet, with 22,456 square feet dedicated to public areas and 4,054 square feet dedicated to staff areas. There are 10,136 square feet in the basement. It has 68 parking spaces.
- **Building and site ownership.** The Pierce County Library System (PCLS) owns the Lakewood Library. Friends of Lakewood Library donated the library building to PCLS in 1991 because the Friends group said it could no longer afford to maintain the building, which needed costly repairs and maintenance.
- **Usage.** Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Downtown Lakewood Library boasted the **highest annual visits** of any of the Pierce County libraries, hosting **262,000 annual visitors**. It is also one of the highest use libraries for checkouts of books, movies, and other materials: approximately **430,000 items are checked out annually**, which is the **fourth highest in the Library System** (following Gig Harbor, University Place, and South Hill Pierce County Libraries).

Tillicum Pierce County Library

- **Building Size:** 2,100 square feet of a 7,350 SF total building, with 1,600 square feet dedicated to public area and 470 square feet dedicated to staff areas. It has 38 shared parking spaces.
- **Building and site ownership.** The library is co-located with a community center, a food bank, and a medical clinic. As a Housing and Urban Development (HUD)-built and joint-use building, the Tillicum Library has complex ownership and maintenance agreements, making renovation work more difficult than for buildings the Library System owns.
- **Usage.** Pre-COVID, people made nearly **33,000** (32,895 in 2019) **visits** a year to the Tillicum Library. Visitors **checked out** nearly the same amount of books and materials, i.e. approximately one item for every visitor, **32,000** (32,157 in 2019). Tillicum is the smallest full-service Pierce County Library, serving the smallest population in the the Library's service area. **The Tillicum Library serves one of the lowest income areas in the county.**

Planning Context

This section summarizes City of Lakewood and Pierce County Library System plans and policies that are relevant to this study.

City of Lakewood

City Council Goals

The Lakewood City Council supports expanding and improving libraries as part of its [2021-2024 City Council Goals](#).

City of Lakewood Comprehensive Plan

The [Lakewood Comprehensive Plan](#), approved in July 2000 and last revised in August 2021, is the City of Lakewood's guiding document on the long-range planning perspective to guide the City's growth and development. The Plan guides key decisions on elements related to capital facilities, economic base, environment, government, human services, land use, transportation, urban design, and utilities. The City considers its libraries one of its top strengths.

Library services are provided by Pierce County Library. The Public Services (PS) Element outlines the following relevant policies.

- **PS-13.1:** Work with the Pierce County Library System to address current service deficits, continued population growth, changing library services, increased and changing customer needs and expectations within the Lakewood service area.
- **PS-13.2:** Promote the construction a new main library facility within the City's downtown core.
- **PS-13.3:** Assist the Pierce County Library System in the reuse/sale of the existing library building/property located at 6300 Wildaire Rd SW [the location of the existing Lakewood Library].
- **PS-13.4:** Work with the Library System to ensure that its facilities are located and designed to effectively serve the community.

The City's Capital Facilities Element establishes a Level of Service standard for libraries of .62 sq. ft per capita. The Element also references the [Pierce County Library 2030 Facilities Master Plan](#).

City of Lakewood Downtown Subarea Plan

The [Lakewood Downtown Plan](#), approved by Council in 2018, articulates the City of Lakewood's vision for Downtown focused in the Central Business District (CBD) zone. Related to public libraries, a key theme that emerged from public outreach included having space for family activities and gathering spaces, including indoor cultural facilities.

Tillicum Neighborhood Plan

The [Tillicum Neighborhood Plan](#), adopted in June 2011, is a foundation to guide the City of Lakewood's efforts to revitalize this part of the community. As an "isolated community" as defined by Lakewood's

Comprehensive Plan, the Plan seeks to revitalize the community by emphasizing the neighborhood's assets, including its strong sense of community and walkability promoted by its street grid.

The neighborhood plan references the [Pierce County Library 2030: Facilities Master Plan Summary Report](#) as evaluating the future of the Tillicum Library in terms of facility improvements.

A key goal of the Tillicum Neighborhood plan is to develop community capacity. A task to support that goal is "1.3 Encourage public and private investment in human services, libraries, community centers, schools, and the arts to support Tillicum." To help support community capacity development, the Plan lists the following action item as a high priority:

- **A-2** – Identify appropriate funding to support the development of community outreach and life skills programs utilizing existing community facilities such as the Tillicum/American Lake Gardens Community Service Center, PCLS Library, &/or Youth and Family Center.

Pierce County Library System

Pierce County Library 2030: Facilities Master Plan Report

The [Pierce County Library 2030: Facilities Master Plan Summary Report](#), finalized in January 2010, outlines library services and buildings to meet community needs through 2030. It guides future construction, expansions, and replacements of its 17 locations (now 19 locations) over 1,600 square miles (now 1,800) in Pierce County. Since the Library commissioned the plan, the Library System added Anderson Island and Fife Pierce County Libraries. The Plan was shaped by engaging collaboratively with more than 5,000 individuals. Outreach included direct phone calls and in-library and online surveys, as well as focus groups and community meetings to learn directly from its communities about their needs and ideas.

The Library System has updated parts of the Facilities Master plan in recent years.

The Plan establishes a Level of Service standard of 0.61-0.71 square feet per capita. The Plan recommends relocating and expanding both the Downtown Lakewood and Tillicum libraries:

- **Lakewood Library.** The Master Plan identified the Lakewood Library as too small to serve customers' needs. Proposed improvements include an expansion of total square footage for public use, total parking spaces, and more.
- **Tillicum Library.** The Tillicum Library is recommended for expansion and relocation, from 2,100 sf to a facility of 7,500 – 8,700 sf. The Facility Summary recommends a new, expanded facility at a new site in Tillicum that is centrally located. It highlights central locations near Maple Street and Union near commercial businesses and resources.

Future Library Engagements

In 2019, the Library System conducted extensive public engagement to learn the public's interest in new libraries for Lakewood, Tillicum, and Sumner. The full report can be found here: [Lakewood and Sumner Future Library Engagements](#). Highlights from the effort include:

- **Survey Respondents Engaged:** Outreach and engagement work was conducted in three languages (English, Spanish, and Korean). 943 people completed the Lakewood and Tillicum survey. 67% of survey respondents were 50 years of age or older.
- **The libraries are valued in the community.** 90% of the Lakewood and Tillicum survey respondents value the library because they themselves use it. Two out of three (66%) resident survey respondents indicated they value the library because others in the community use the library. Resident survey respondents view the Lakewood and Tillicum Libraries as an integral part of their community’s identity and value having services that benefit the whole community.
- **Lakewood survey participants are overall interested in new libraries for the community.** 84% of overall survey respondents favor new libraries in Lakewood, with 64% very interested. Of the 254 people polled at in-person engagements, 88% affirmed that the communities need new libraries. 84% of Lakewood and Tillicum resident survey respondents expressed that they are “very interested” or “kind of interested” in new libraries.
- **Priorities for a new library include resources, security, and longer hours.** The most discussed topic in open-ended responses was security. Qualities desired include a community-focused library in both Lakewood and Tillicum.

“Lakewood needs more community spaces! And Lakewood needs resources that are accessible to low-income populations, as well. Our city and country need places for a healthy and honest exchange of ideas. A good library could offer all of these things.” – Survey Respondent, 2019 Future Libraries Engagement

- Top concerns for potential new libraries include location and access, cost or taxes, and homelessness or loitering.
- “While I would like to see upgrades at the Lakewood Branch because it is my home library, I think that the Tillicum Branch needs a lot more attention and funding.” – Survey Respondent, 2019 Future Libraries Engagement*
- 73% of resident survey respondents rank libraries within their top four priorities, with public safety, schools, and transportation ranked higher.

Key Findings	Related Recommendations
Lakewood resident respondents are concerned about the economic impact of a potential new library or libraries.	Develop a modest and efficient budget.
The precise location of the library matters to resident respondents.	Identify and publicize potential new locations.
The Lakewood Pierce County Library plays a significant role in community wellness.	Continue to ground the possibility of a new library or libraries in the community’s needs.
Resident respondents are attached to the current Lakewood Library building and the Douglas fir cross section.	Ensure that the design for a potential new library or libraries in Lakewood is cohesive with the building’s surroundings and that the log cross section remains a feature at the potential new location.

Facility History and Current State

Downtown Lakewood Library

History

- 1963 - Library opened as Tenzler Library, funded by the Tenzler Foundation.
- 1974-75 - Library expanded from 8,800 square feet to 31,000 square feet. A new roof was installed. The Tenzler Foundation paid the total project cost of \$1.3 million.
- 1982 – Library building renamed to Lakewood Library.
- 1989 – A memo to Friends of Lakewood Library noted that the roof on the Lakewood Library is a significant problem, citing its inappropriate style and improper installation as the cause of continuous leaking during the rainy season.
- 1991-92 – Friends of Lakewood Library donated the library building and \$350,000 for renovation work to the Pierce County Library System because the Friends group said it could no longer afford to maintain the building, which needed costly repairs and maintenance.
- 1993-94 – Library enlarged and renovated, including major interior work and a roof repair to remove asbestos.
- 2004 – Roof was repaired.
- 2006 – Library interior was remodeled. Updates included self-service checkout, a teen center, additional computers, and a Wi-Fi hotspot.
- 2009 – Roof was repaired again with an understanding it would remain in good condition until 2029.
- 2009-2010 – Library System created a Facilities Master Plan for its library district. The Lakewood Library was recognized as needing significant improvements.
- 2011-2012 – Updated library layout with improved customer service desk, more places to read and study, additional computers, and more.
- 2019 – Future Libraries Engagement identified significant community desire for improved library facilities in Downtown and Tillicum.
- 2021 – Building Condition Assessment report issued, marking Lakewood Library as a building in critical condition.
- June 2022 – Lakewood Library closed.

Current Conditions

The Library System closed the Lakewood Library building on June 5, 2022 because engineers found it to be in critical condition. Architects determined the current building requires \$10 million to \$15 million in repairs for improved safety and access, including an urgent need to replace the roof and repair damages throughout the building from the leaking roof.

Plans are in place for temporary service delivery through other Pierce County Libraries, including Steilacoom Pierce County Library and University Place Pierce County Library.

In October 2021, BuildingWork conducted a detailed building condition assessment report for the Lakewood and Tillicum libraries. According to the Condition Assessment Summary, the Lakewood Library needs a comprehensive renovation.

- **Library Condition:** Engineers found the current Lakewood Library to be in critical condition. From significant amounts of water seeping into the building from the roof to a septic system that backs up and has caused the Library System to close the building from time to time, the building needs a substantial overhaul. In addition, the elevator needs upgrades, the carpeting is past-due replacement and worn and torn in areas, the interior has not been painted since 2008, and the heating and cooling system needs to be replaced in 2026-2029.
- **Roof Condition:** The assessment calls for both urgent roof and safety repairs and replacements (\$3-\$4.4 million) as well as long-term repair and replacement investments needed within the next 5-7 years. Overhang areas at the public and staff entrances are waterlogged and are not expected to last another year.
- **Exterior Condition:** Building exterior recommendations include, at a minimum, new roofing and skylights, new windows to meet current energy code requirements, and exterior doors.

Exhibit 1. Lakewood Library



Source: PCLS Condition Assessment Report, October 2021

Exhibit 2. Lakewood Library Courtyard Near Entry



Source: PCLS Condition Assessment Report, October 2021

- **Building System:** Building system recommendations include, at a minimum an upgrade or replacement of the elevator, the HVAC system, plumbing due to original or old plumbing fixtures and frequent backups in the sewer lines, the lighting system, and electrical systems.
- **Interior Condition and Building System:** The interior is dated and in need of a comprehensive remodel and update, including interior finishes, furniture, and technology. This includes programming updates, accessibility, lighting, carpet, ceiling, shelving, etc.
 - Public restrooms are not ADA compliant and need to be renovated and / or enlarged.
- **Site Condition:** The side sewer frequently experiences backups during heavy rain. Repair or replacement is recommended. The safety and security of the site needs to be addressed, with areas of the site that are open to the public but hidden from view. There is unauthorized access to service areas and the roof. Assessment also recommends expanded parking and parking improvements and updates to the landscaping and its installation.
- **Project Budget:** The project budget to make these updates and replacements is in the range of \$10.5-11 million for overall updates and replacements plus \$3-\$4.4 million for roof rebuilding, equaling \$10-\$15 million for a total rough estimated budget.

Exhibit 3. Lakewood Library Entry Lobby and Elevator



Source: PCLS Condition Assessment Report, October 2021

Exhibit 4. Lakewood Library Interior - Reading Room



Source: PCLS Condition Assessment Report, October 2021

Tillicum Library

History

- 1985 - Library moved from Tillicum Elementary School to the Tillicum / American Lake District community center / library building funded by Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).
- 2009-2010 – Library System developed a Facilities Master Plan for its library district. The Tillicum Library was recommended for site expansion and relocation to an expanded facility.
- 2004 – Library renovated. Specific details on renovation not provided.
- 2019 – Future Libraries Engagement identified significant community desire for improved library facilities in Downtown and Tillicum.
- 2021 – Building Condition Assessment report issued, marking Tillicum Library as a building in very poor. It recommended a new library be considered instead of a renovation.

Current State

In October 2021, BuildingWork conducted a condition assessment report for the Lakewood and Tillicum libraries. According to the Condition Assessment Summary, the Tillicum Library is in very poor condition. Engineers determined the current building requires \$2.5 - \$3 million in repairs and recommend a new library instead of a renovation, due to the poor condition of the building.

- **Library Condition:** Engineers found the Tillicum Library to be in very poor condition. They indicated a range of facility deficiencies, including deteriorating wood siding with visible water intrusion, potential rotted or deteriorating structural wall framing. They also stated that the current building is of insufficient size for its customers and staff.
- **Exterior Condition:** The exterior wood siding has deteriorated and is beyond repair, with areas of significant visible water intrusion. The condition is considered severe and is not acceptable for a public facility.
 - Due to the water intrusion, the structural wall framing inside the wall should also be

Exhibit 5. Tillicum Library



Source: PCLS Condition Assessment Report, October 2021

Exhibit 6. Tillicum Library Exterior Wall Water Damage and Deterioration



Source: PCLS Condition Assessment Report, October 2021

evaluated for rot or deterioration. The building should also be investigated for mold contamination.

- The roof is in critical need of replacement and is leaking.
- The windows are in a critical state of disrepair, with sealant in poor condition and failing in some locations.

- **Interior Condition:** The building's interior finishes, furnishings, technology, HVAC system, and lighting systems are all in need of replacement. Carpet, floor, walls, and ceilings in various parts of the library are all in poor or critical condition.

Exhibit 7. Tillicum Library Interior - Reading Room



Source: PCLS Condition Assessment Report, October 2021

- The HVAC system is beyond its expected service span and is in need of replacement.
 - The IT closet overheats due to lack of air conditioning and ventilation.
 - The library is insufficient in size, including a small staff work area, no staff break room, no public study rooms, no meeting rooms, and a small reading room impacted by interior structural columns. The public areas are considered very inadequate.
 - The public restrooms are not ADA compliant and need to be renovated and/or enlarged.
- **Budget:** The project budget to make these updates and replacements is in the range of \$2.5-3 million. However, the engineers recommended building a new library instead of a renovation of the current facility.

Appendix

Excerpted pages from the Pierce County Library 2030: Facilities Master Plan Summary Report

LAKEWOOD



Lakewood
Pierce County Library
6300 Wildaire Road, S.W.

Built in 1963; Renovated in 1994

32,592 Square Foot Facility
1.96 Acre Site (85,483 SF)
68 parking spaces



Existing Lakewood Library

-  material checkouts
- Locations used:
-  Lakewood
-  Parkland/Spanaway
-  Steilacoom
-  University Place
-  Tillicum

COMMUNITY NEEDS

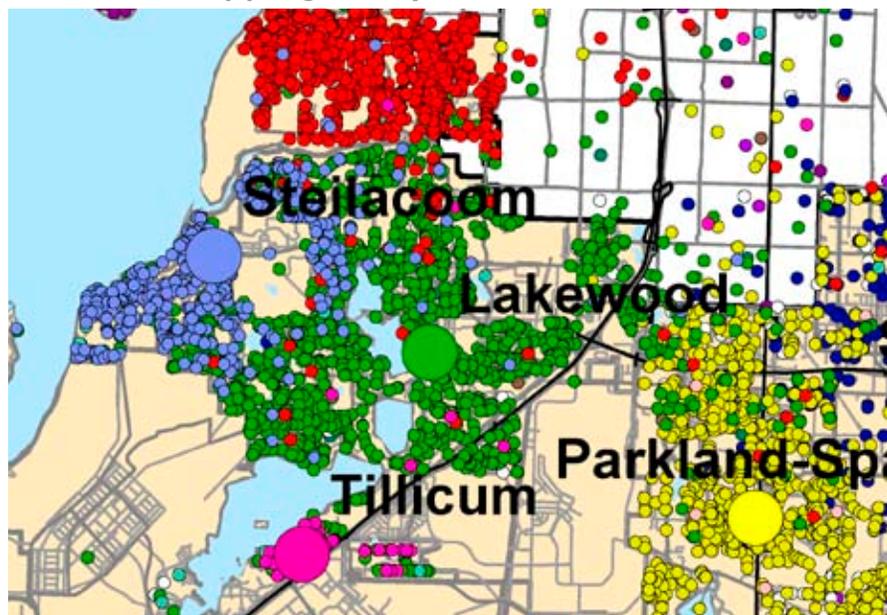
The Lakewood service area includes the City of Lakewood and nearby unincorporated areas. The Tillicum Pierce County Library serves the Tillicum area which is south of Lakewood.

The current facility is located near the high school and the Lakewood Town Center, which includes shopping as well as community services such as the Lakewood City Hall. While it is well-located, the current building and parking is far too small to serve the needs of the service area. The Library owns the building and site.

	Current	2030 proposed
population:	79,878 (2010 est. pop.)	73 - 81,000 (PSRC projected)
materials (items per capita)	152,830 items (2.01 items/capita)	178,500 - 207,500 items (2.5 items/capita)
seating (per 1,000 people)	107 seats (1.41 seats/1,000)	260 - 320 seats (3.8 seats/1,000)
computers (per 1,000 people)	41 computers (0.54 comp/1,000)	100 - 130 computers (1.5 comp/1,000)
meeting room seats	129 seats	135 - 165 seats + 60 seats in a second room
group study	16 seats in 5 rooms	40 - 50 seats in 6-8 rooms
total square footage	32,592 sf (0.43 sf/capita)	42,500 - 49,400 sf (0.55-0.64 sf/capita)
parking spaces	68 spaces	170 spaces

¹ Includes approximately 7,000 sf of Friends of the Library space which is not open to the public.

Customer Mapping Analysis



LIBRARY IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

An expanded facility between 42,500–49,400 square feet is recommended for the Lakewood area. Preliminary analysis has determined that approximately 2.8–4.3 acres will be needed for this expanded facility.

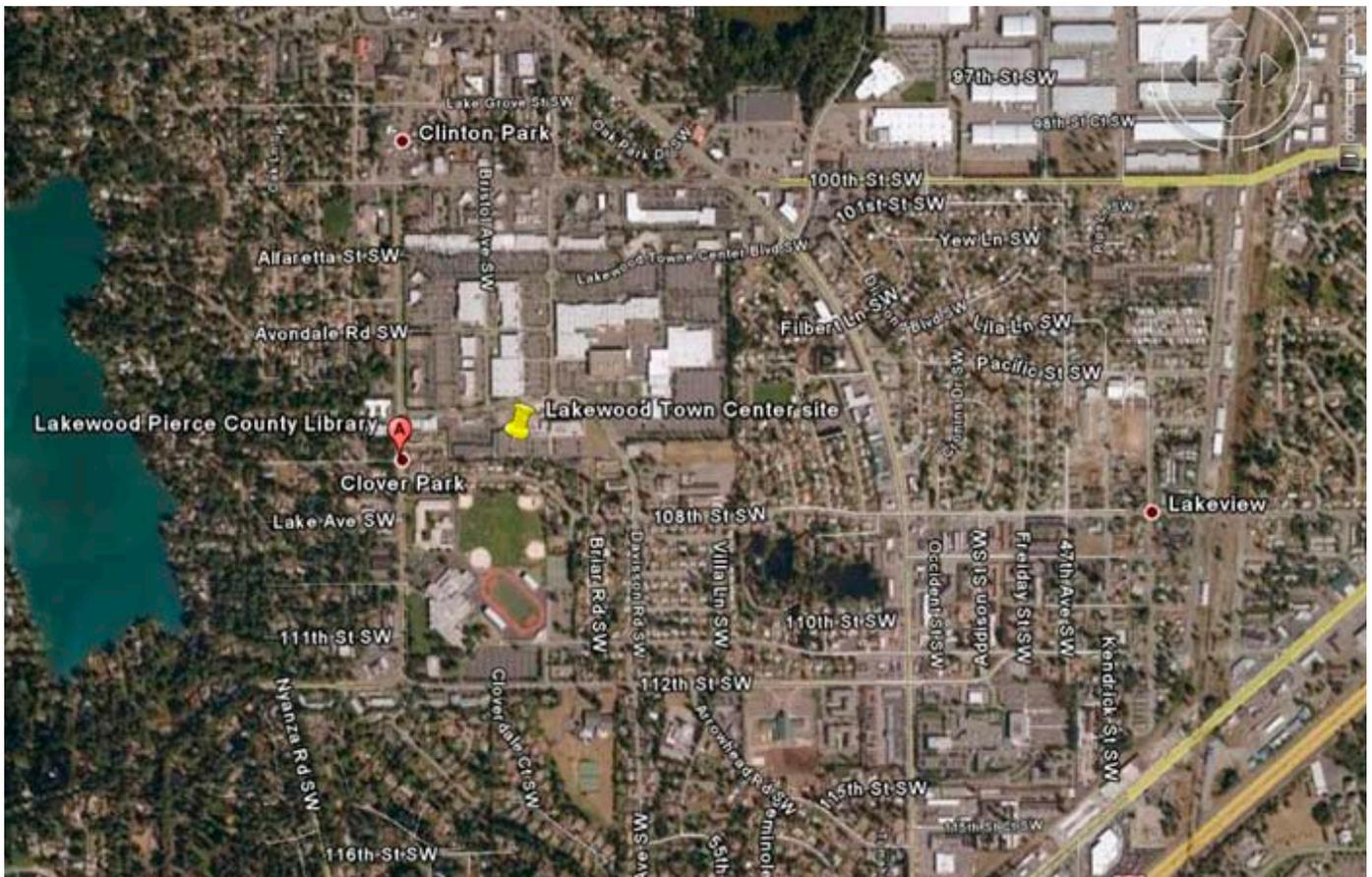
Recommended Option: Relocate and expand

- Relocate to the Town Center area in close proximity to City Hall if an appropriate site that is large enough for the building and parking is available. The Library will need to reassess the available site locations with the community and city at the time of implementation.

Alternative Options:

- Replacing the existing building with a larger building and structured parking on the existing site.
- An alternative site within the immediate area that is large enough for the required building and parking and convenient to residents.

Map of Potential Sites



TILLICUM



Tillicum
Pierce County Library
 14916 Washington Ave. S.W.

Built in 1979

2,100 Square Foot Facility
 38 shared parking spaces



Existing Tillicum Library

🌸 material checkouts

Locations used:

🌸 Tillicum

🌿 Lakewood

🌻 Parkland/Spanaway

🌸 Steilacoom

🌸 University Place

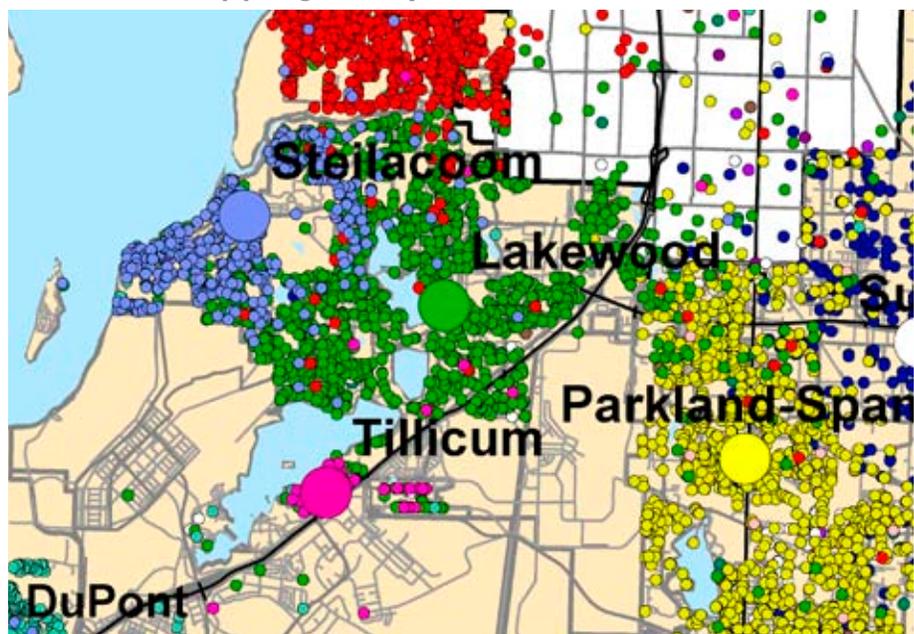
COMMUNITY NEEDS

The Tillicum service area serves the Tillicum, Woodbrook, and American Lake Garden areas of the City of Lakewood. These areas are isolated from the rest of the City of Lakewood by Interstate 5, McChord Air Force Base, American Lake, and Fort Lewis. With the introduction of sewer service in 2010, the area is expected to see much development.

The existing Tillicum Library is located in the heart of the Tillicum neighborhood near the Tillicum Elementary School. The library is currently in a joint-use facility with a WIC (Women Infants Children) Community Center. The building is an aging HUD-funded facility which the Library occupies on a no-fee basis. The library does not own the building.

	Current	2030 proposed
population:	4,650 (2010 est. pop.)	5 - 6,000 (PSRC projected)
materials (items per capita)	17,844 items (3.84 items/capita)	18,500 - 21,500 items (3.7 items/capita)
seating (per 1,000 people)	16 seats (3.44 seats/1,000)	30 - 40 seats (6.5 seats/1,000)
computers (per 1,000 people)	7 computers (1.51 comp/1,000)	25 - 35 computers (5.6 comp/1,000)
meeting room seats	Limited Access	65 - 85 seats
group study	0 seats	10 - 20 seats in 3-4 rooms
total square footage	2,100 sf (0.45 sf/capita)	7,500 - 8,700 sf (1.39-1.61 sf/capita)
parking spaces	38 shared spaces	30-35 spaces

Customer Mapping Analysis



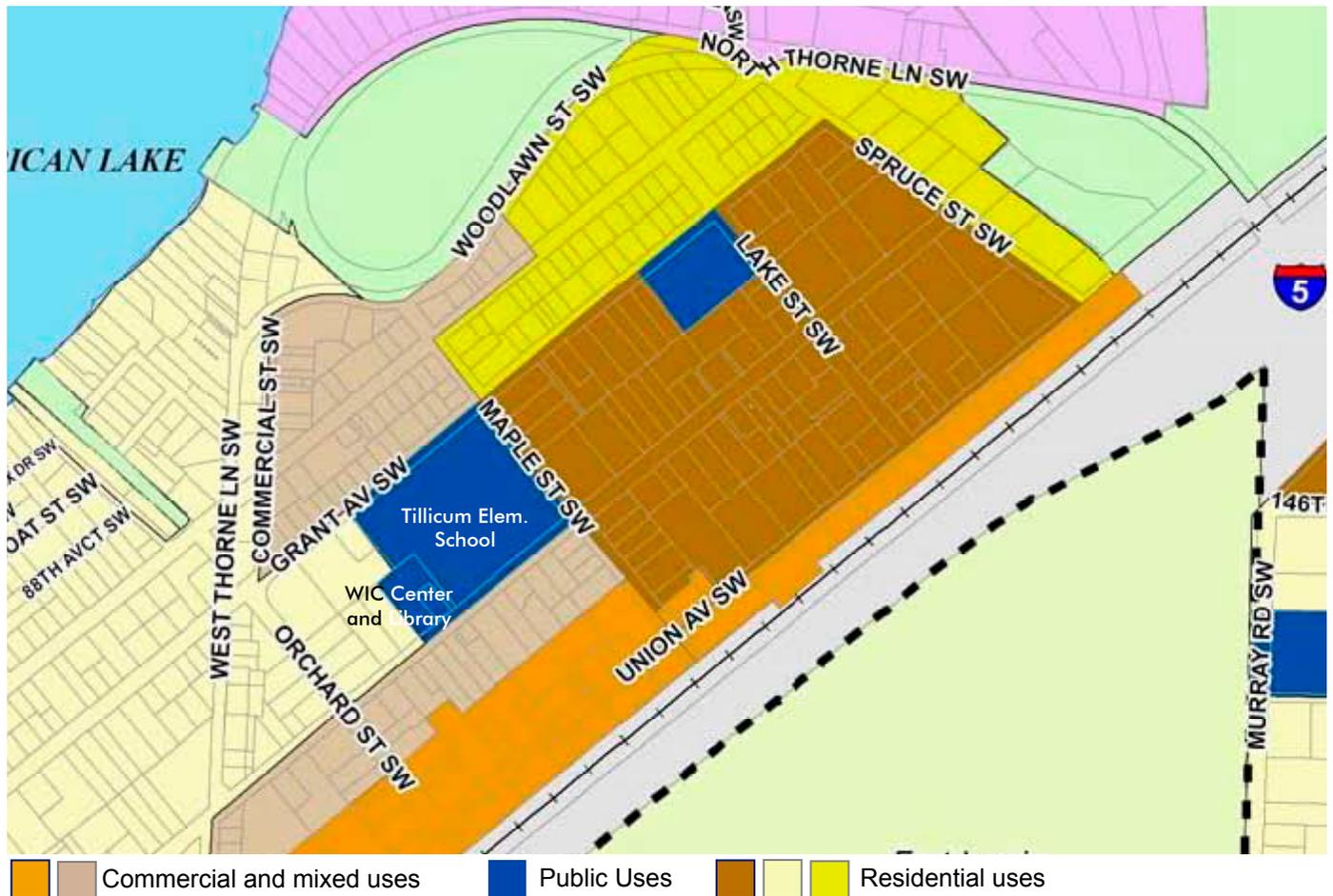
LIBRARY IMPROVEMENT OPTIONS

An expanded facility between 7,500–8,700 square feet is recommended for the Tillicum area. Preliminary analysis has determined that approximately 0.6–0.8 acres will be needed for this expanded facility.

Recommended Option: Relocate and expand

- The library does not own its current site. In addition, a planning study was recently completed by the City of Lakewood that looked at re-zoning and the revitalization of Tillicum.
- A new, expanded facility at a new site in Tillicum is recommended. The site should be centrally located in the service area, and near Maple Street and Union near commercial businesses and the important community resources of the elementary school and WIC center.
- The Library is open to partnerships with community services or retail partners in this area.

Map of Potential Sites



Excerpted pages from Future Libraries

Lakewood and Tillicum

WHO WE ENGAGED

Survey Respondents

Lakewood Survey Respondents and Survey Respondents by ZIP Code

In total, 943 people completed the Lakewood and Tillicum survey. **While most survey respondents reported that they reside within Lakewood, 21% of respondents reported that they reside outside the bounds of Lakewood.** In this study, we define Lakewood by the following five ZIP codes — 98439, 98496, 98497, 98498, and 98499 (Exhibit 9) — and we focused our analysis on respondents who reside within these ZIP codes. Residents will ultimately make the decision about whether to invest in a new library or libraries for the community, so we are most interested in this demographic’s opinions.

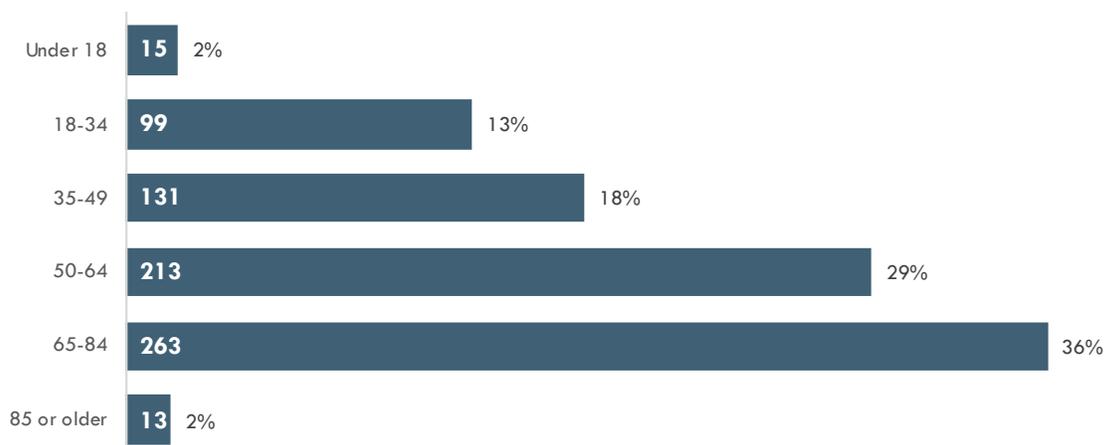
Because Tillicum is a neighborhood within Lakewood, we refer to both collectively as “Lakewood” throughout the report.

Lakewood Survey Respondents by Age

The Lakewood survey included two demographic questions, asking a given respondent to report their ZIP code of residence and their age.

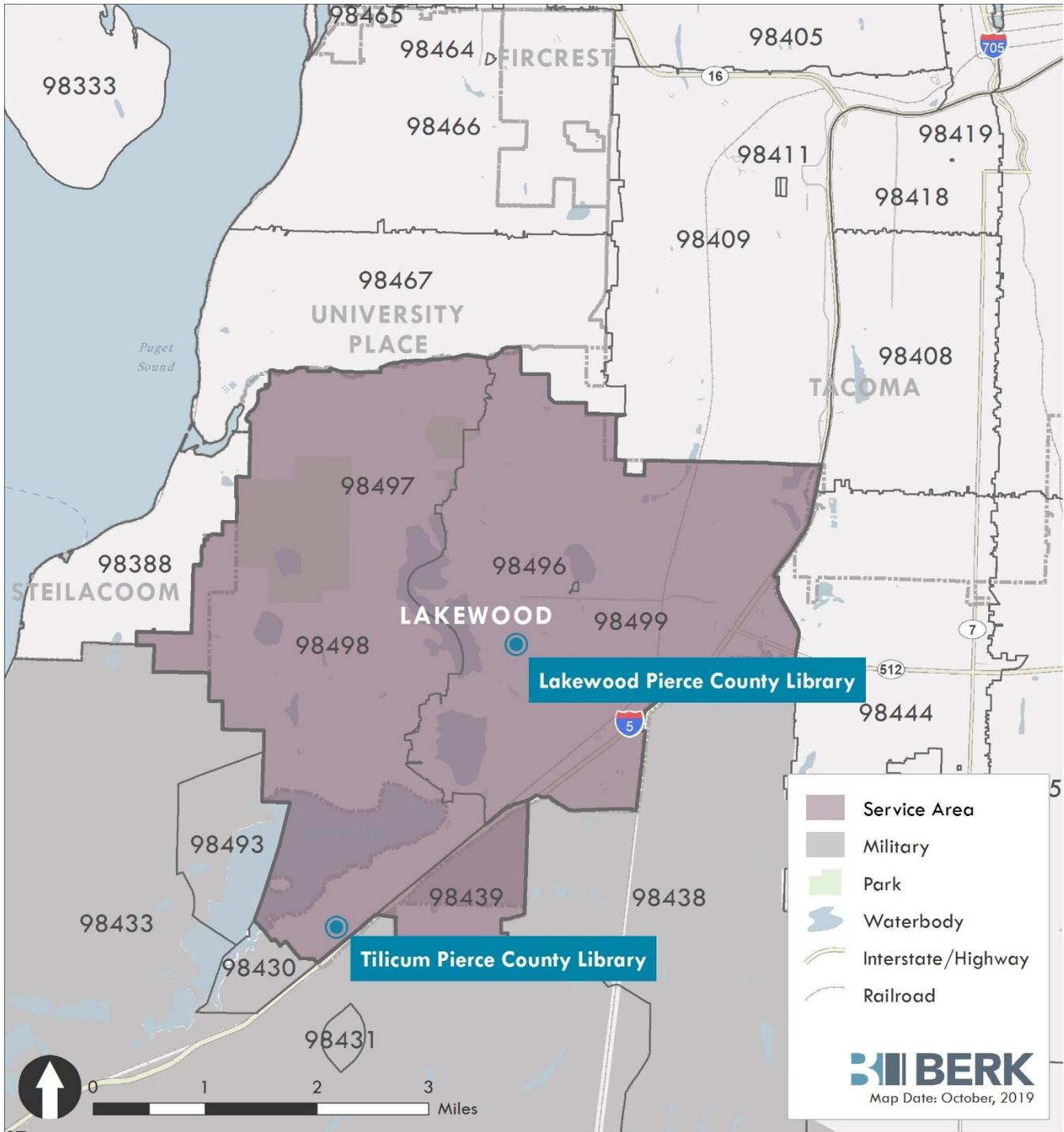
As is often the case in engagement work, Lakewood resident survey respondents were more likely to be older adults as compared to Lakewood’s actual population. As shown in Exhibit 8, 67% of survey respondents were 50 years of age or older. This is almost twice the actual proportion (34%) of Lakewood residents in this age bracket as of 2017, according to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey. The older skew of resident survey respondents is typical, and especially unsurprising given that the Library promoted the survey and overall engagement opportunities to individuals over age 18. Other engagement activities were designed to solicit input from younger populations within the community.

Exhibit 8. Age of Lakewood Survey Respondents (n = 741)



Source: BERK, 2019.

Exhibit 9. City of Lakewood as Defined by 5 ZIP Codes.



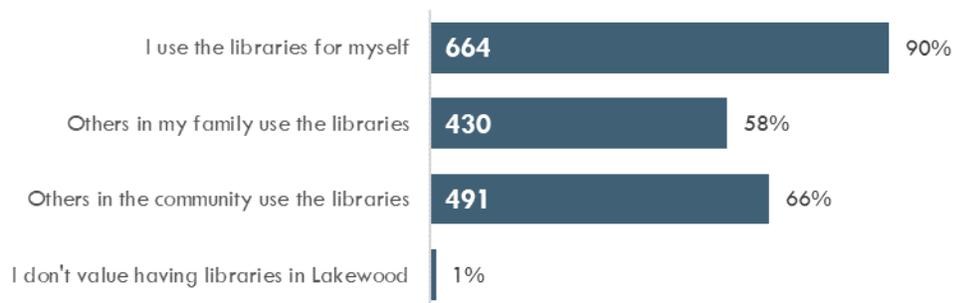
Source: BERK, 2019.

How Lakewood Survey Respondents Use and Value the Library

The survey prompted respondents to select up to three reasons why they value having libraries in Lakewood, or to indicate that they don't value the Library. **Almost all resident survey respondents value the Lakewood and Tillicum Libraries** (see Exhibit 10).

- 90% of the 741 resident survey respondents value the library because they themselves use the library.
- Nearly 60% of resident survey respondents value the library because other members of their family use the library.
- Two out of three (66%) resident survey respondents indicated they value the library because others in the community use the library. Resident survey respondents view the Lakewood and Tillicum Libraries as an integral part of their community's identity and value having services that benefit the whole community.
- Only 1% of resident survey respondents indicated that they do not value having a library in Lakewood.

Exhibit 10. Survey question: "Why do you value having libraries in Lakewood? Please select all that apply." (n = 741)



Source: BERK, 2019.

Non-Survey Input from the Lakewood Community

In addition to the online and print survey, the project team collected feedback from hundreds of community members at public events as shown in Exhibit 11. All the events took place in the community, outside of libraries. Throughout the following section, we weave feedback collected at these events into our analysis. As noted on the previous page, the input gathered at community engagement events (listed below) diversifies the voices represented beyond those who opted in to the survey.

To represent activities that asked activity participants to share single-word ideas, we present feedback in the form of word clouds. Larger words indicate that more individuals shared the given word. In some cases, words have been lightly edited for spelling or consistency (e.g., making plural and singular versions of words the same).

Exhibit 11. Lakewood and Tillicum Community Events

Date	Event	Audience	Number of Attendees or People Engaged
June 13, 2019	Lakewood Senior Center Aging Exposition	Seniors	48
June 25, 2019	Lakewood Farmers Market (1 of 3)	General population	133 adults, 92 children
July 13, 2019	SummerFEST	General population	92
July 16, 2019	Lakewood Farmers Market (2 of 3)	General population	157 adults, 43 children
July 23, 2019	Lakewood Farmers Market (3 of 3)	General population	90 adults, 25 children
July 25, 2019	Lakewood United	Business community	20
August 1, 2019	Lakewood Chamber of Commerce Luncheon	Business community	60
August 1, 2019	Lakewood Tillicum/Woodbrook Neighborhood Association	General population	25
August 3, 2019	Boo Han Market Intercept	Korean-speaking community	35
August 3, 2019	Lakewood Towne Center Intercept	General population	25
August 7, 2019	Rotary Club of Clover Park	Business community	35
August 14, 2019	Union Avenue Intercept	Business community	20
August 14, 2019	Floats on the Lake	Hispanic community	20 adults, 5 children
August 24, 2019	Lakewood Gardens Community Day	General population	63 adults, 36 children
September 3, 2019	Lakewood Kiwanis	Community leaders	25
September 13, 2019	Lakewood Rotary	Business community	68

Sources: Pierce County Library System, 2019; BERK, 2019.

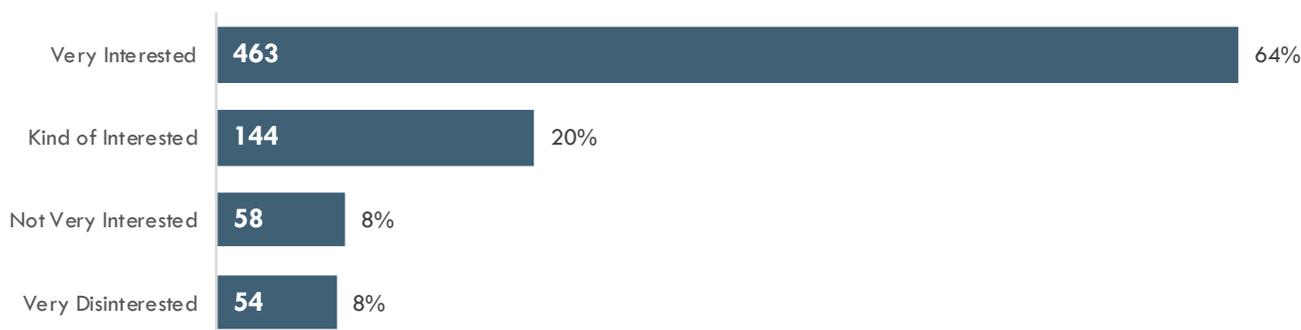
WHAT WE LEARNED

Overall Interest in a New Library

Lakewood activity participants are overall interested in new libraries for the community. Of the 254 people polled at in-person engagements in Lakewood and Tillicum, 88% affirmed that the communities need new libraries (87% at Lakewood events and 95% in Tillicum events).

Lakewood and Tillicum resident survey respondents expressed a similar, though slightly diminished, level of interest: 84% of the 719 resident survey respondents are either “very interested” or “kind of interested” in new libraries for Lakewood (see Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 12. Survey Question: “How interested are you in new libraries for Lakewood?” (n = 719)



Source: BERK, 2019.

Examining the results by age bracket reveals some interesting trends. As resident survey respondents age, they are slightly less likely to be “very interested” in a potential new library or libraries, with proportions decreasing from a substantial 76% of adults between the ages of 18-34 to 61% of adults ages 65 and above. Older resident survey respondents are also more likely to be “not very interested” or “very disinterested.” Only 9% of resident survey respondents between the ages of 18-34 selected these responses, compared to 20% of resident survey respondents ages 65 and above.

General Desires for a New Library

Traditional library resources, including books and access to technology like computers and copiers, remain the most important feature of a potential new library for Lakewood resident survey respondents. These findings are reflected in Exhibit 13 for survey resident respondents, and sample quotes are shown to the right.

Dozens of resident survey respondents specified “other” desires for a potential new library or libraries. The next page includes a sample of the open-ended responses. Categorizing these comments by primary theme reveals a few key additional ideas as shown in Exhibit 14 and summarized below:

- The most commonly discussed topic was **security**, particularly perceived risk from library customers experiencing homelessness. This theme appeared in 24% of the 117 comments received.
- Several other priorities had equal importance, including location, availability of resources, activities and classes, and a wide variety of spaces.

Longer and convenient hours, especially outside of standard work hours, along with online resources such as audiobooks, were top priority at engagement events as shown in Exhibit 15.

Finally, Exhibit 16 summarizes open-ended responses provided in response to the question “What three words describe your hopes for a new library?” during non-survey engagements.

IMAGINE COMING TO NEW LIBRARIES IN LAKEWOOD. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

Quotes from resident survey respondents that focused on specific future desires:

- “A space for local artists to hang their art work.”
- “Several elevators, book drop-off point without having to get out of a car, indoor cafe/refreshments area, lots of large windows for natural light to enter, escalator if we have a multi-storied bldg.”

Some resident survey respondents suggested retaining aspects of the existing facility or even retaining the existing facility as an efficient strategy:

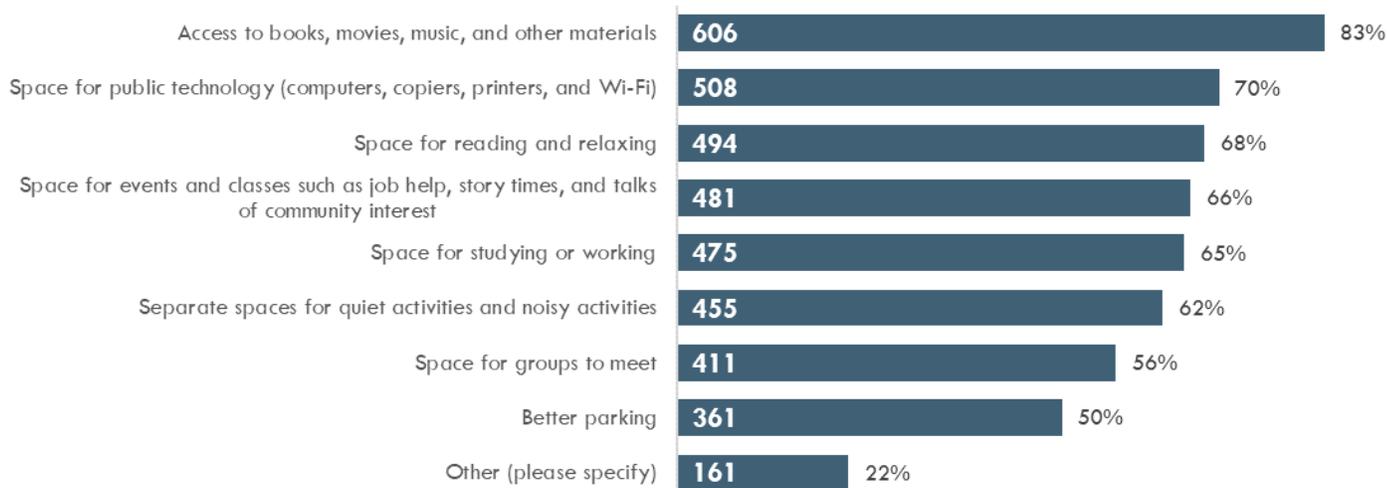
- “Please keep the ‘log cut’ from the front and incorporate a better viewing of this piece of history.”
- “The upgrade of existing facilities, especially the Lakewood library, and possibly added locations making the facilities better accessible. Adaptive re-use is almost always more affordable than new construction. It is also a better use of our resources. The Lakewood branch does have some historical significance and is architecturally unique.”

WHAT INTERESTS YOU MOST ABOUT POTENTIAL NEW LIBRARIES IN LAKEWOOD?

Quotes from survey respondents answering the open-ended question above:

- “Availability of Librarians to assist, inform, suggest, and BE INTERACTIVE is a Library’s MOST VALUABLE QUALITY, so their high-profile presence is the TOP PRIORITY in my opinion!”
- “An environment that is inviting and engenders community pride.”
- “Lakewood needs more community spaces! And Lakewood needs resources that are accessible to low-income populations, as well. Our city and country need places for a healthy and honest exchange of ideas. A good library could offer all of these things.”
- “I’d love a library that attracts all people in Lakewood to visit and use it! That means services for our homeless neighbors and places where families and parents feel safe.”
- “Always enjoy the current library but felt Tillich was left out. Want to see a larger footprint in Tillicum!”

Exhibit 13. Survey Question: “Imagine coming to new libraries in Lakewood. What would you like to see? Please select all that apply.” (n = 729)



Source: BERK, 2019.

Exhibit 14. Survey Question: “Imagine coming to new libraries in Lakewood. What would you like to see? Please select all that apply.” – Top Themes of “Other” responses (n = 117)

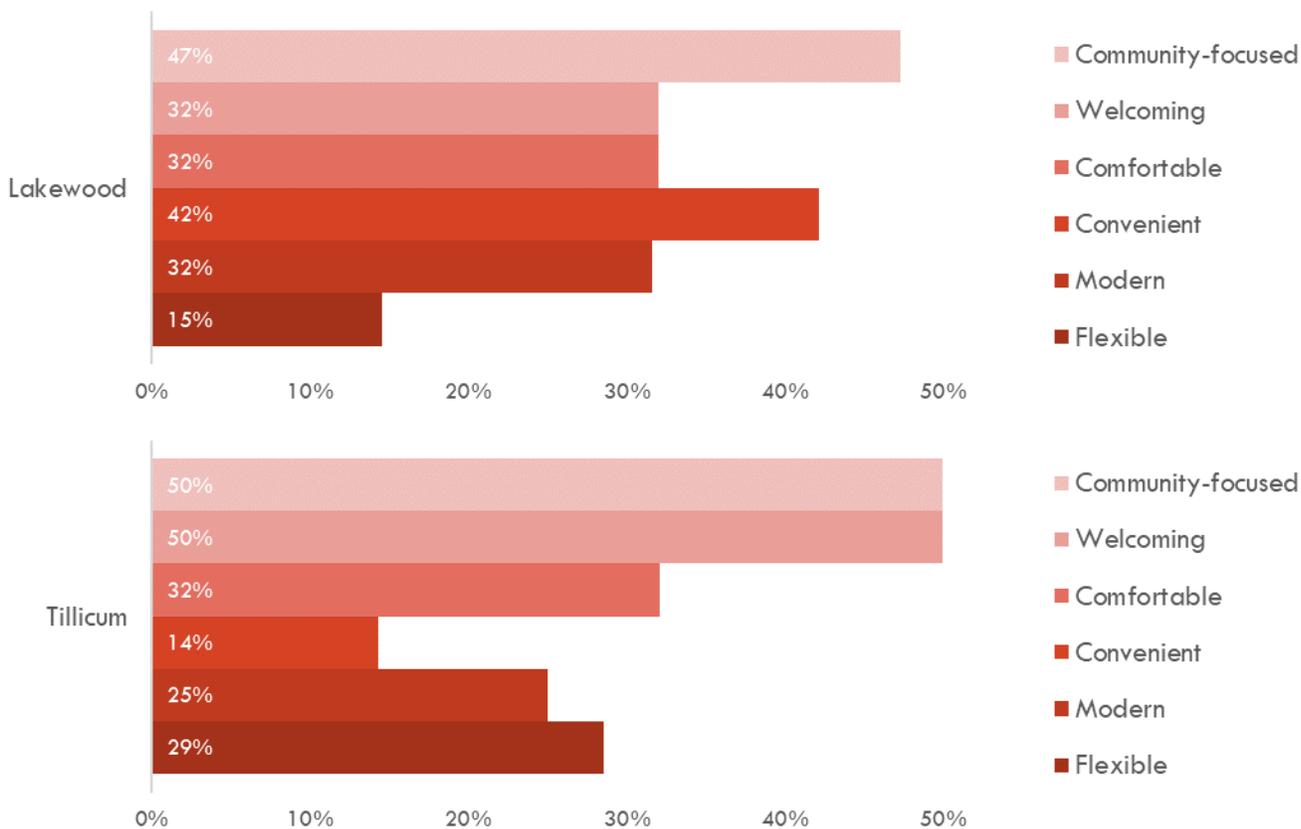


Source: BERK, 2019.

Qualities Desired in a New Library

Activity participants most strongly emphasized the quality of having a community-focused library in both Lakewood and Tillicum. As shown in Exhibit 17, Tillicum activity participants equally valued a space that feels welcoming, which may be in response to the fact that a relatively greater proportion of the community currently feels unwelcome at the Tillicum Library. Exhibit 18 summarizes open-ended input provided under “Other.”

Exhibit 17. Non-survey Activity Question: “What two qualities would you most like in a new library?” (Lakewood n = 275, Tillicum n = 28)*

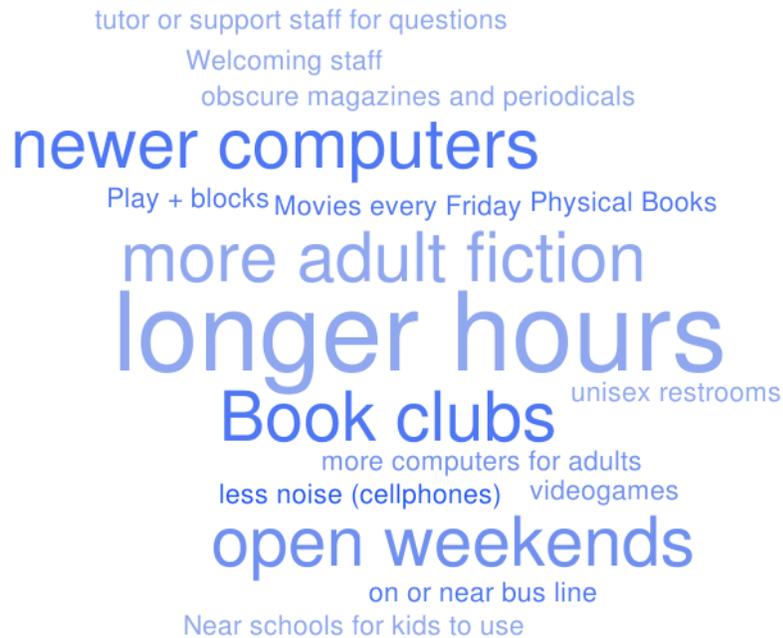


*Totals sum to approximately 200% as two responses were allowed.

Source: BERK, 2019.

Exhibit 18. Non-survey Activity Question: “What two qualities would you most like in a new library?”

– “Other” Responses (n = 23)



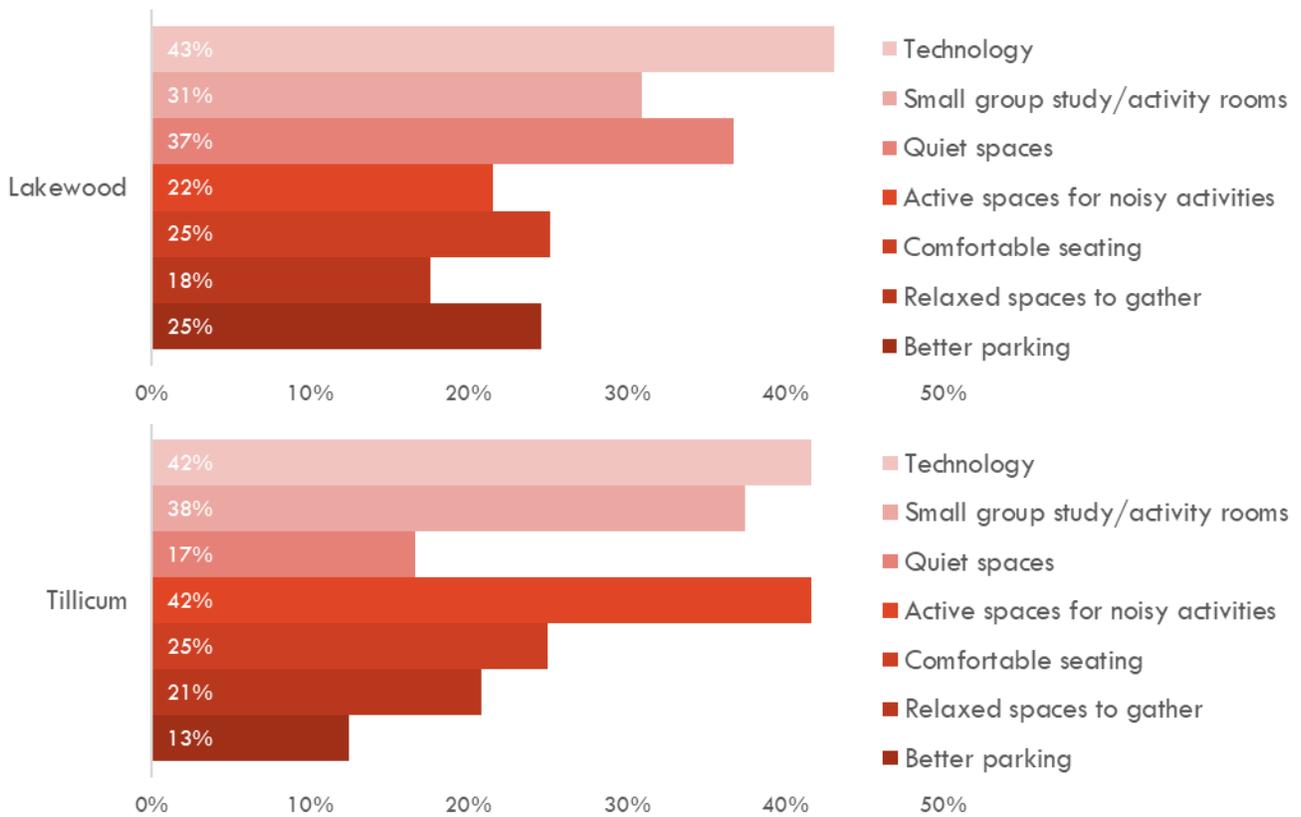
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Source: BERK, 2019.

Features Desired in a New Library

Lakewood activity participants most highly value technology as a potential feature of a new library, with quiet spaces, study rooms, and spaces for small groups also receiving support (Exhibit 19). While Tillicum more highly valued some features, interest was fairly distributed among all possible options. The top two priorities in Tillicum were technology and active spaces for noisy activities, each of which received prioritization from 18% of activity participants. Spaces for small groups and study rooms received nearly the same amount of interest at 16%. Exhibit 20 summarizes open-ended comments provided under “Other.”

Exhibit 19. Non-survey Activity Question: “What two features would you most like in a new library?” (Lakewood n = 329, Tillicum n = 24)*



*Totals sum to approximately 200% as two responses were allowed.

Source: BERK, 2019.

Exhibit 20. Non-survey Activity Question: What two features would you most like in a new library?
– “Other” Responses (n = 31)

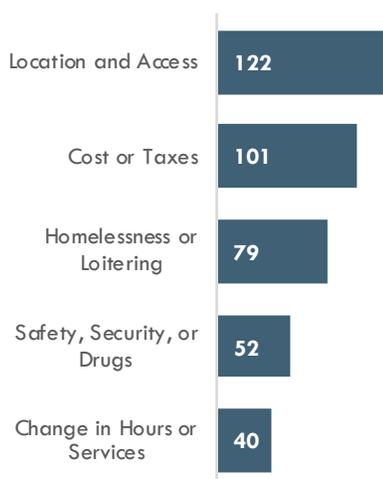


Source: BERK, 2019.

Concerns About a New Library

Cost and the accessibility of a potential new location are the two top concerns for resident survey respondents. Exhibit 21 shows the top five categories of concerns and questions raised in response to this open-ended question.

Exhibit 21. Survey Question: “What concerns or questions do you have about potential new libraries in Lakewood?” (n = 508)



Source: BERK, 2019.

Additional input provided by a number of respondents included:

- Changes to open hours or services offered.
- Historic preservation of the current building.
- Cohesion of a potential new building with the greater community.
- Use of the old building or site.
- Size or distribution of space of a potential new building.

WHAT CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE ABOUT POTENTIAL NEW LIBRARIES IN LAKEWOOD?

Quotes from resident survey respondents:

- “How will the library keep children safe while also providing services to underserved populations such as homeless?”
- “Concern for loss of physical collection in favor of electronic.”
- “No cutting corners. Must be large enough for growth, artistic and inspirational, tied to community’s origins, and green (solar, water conversation, wind power).”
- “Will there be additional staffing and funding for libraries as they grow into a larger space with a wider variety of programming? Will your hiring be open to people without library science degrees? Will there be expanded programming for youth, LGBTQ+, people of color or the elderly? How will the library system expand to meet the needs of marginalized communities?”
- “The Tenzler Branch of Lakewood is a heritage building that generations of families have used. It should be respected, honored and preserved by using the money allocated for a new building to bring Tenzler into the 21st century. [...] Another concern is that absolutely no heritage oak trees or old growth conifers be removed for any future project, whether it be a new building or an updated Tenzler Branch.”
- “I would like to see you utilize the current Lakewood property and improve it, or use another current building, such as the empty department store building in the Town Center, no new building!”
- “While I would like to see upgrades at the Lakewood Branch because it is my home library, I think that the Tillicum Branch needs a lot more attention and funding.”

Activity participants at engagement events were not concerned with costs or taxes. Instead, activity participants were most concerned with general location, safety, and parking as shown in Exhibit 22.

Exhibit 22. Non-survey Activity Question: “What three words describe your questions or concerns for a new library?” (n = 53)



Source: BERK, 2019.

One social media post sparked concern among a few followers of the Pierce County Library System. These followers expressed concerns about potential new libraries for Lakewood, primarily in response to a local news article that some commenters misinterpreted as implying that the libraries would no longer house books. When library staff shared this article on the Pierce County Library System Facebook and Twitter accounts, commenters on these posts were mainly concerned that:

- Books would be deemphasized as a resource.
- The library would become more of a community center than a traditional library.

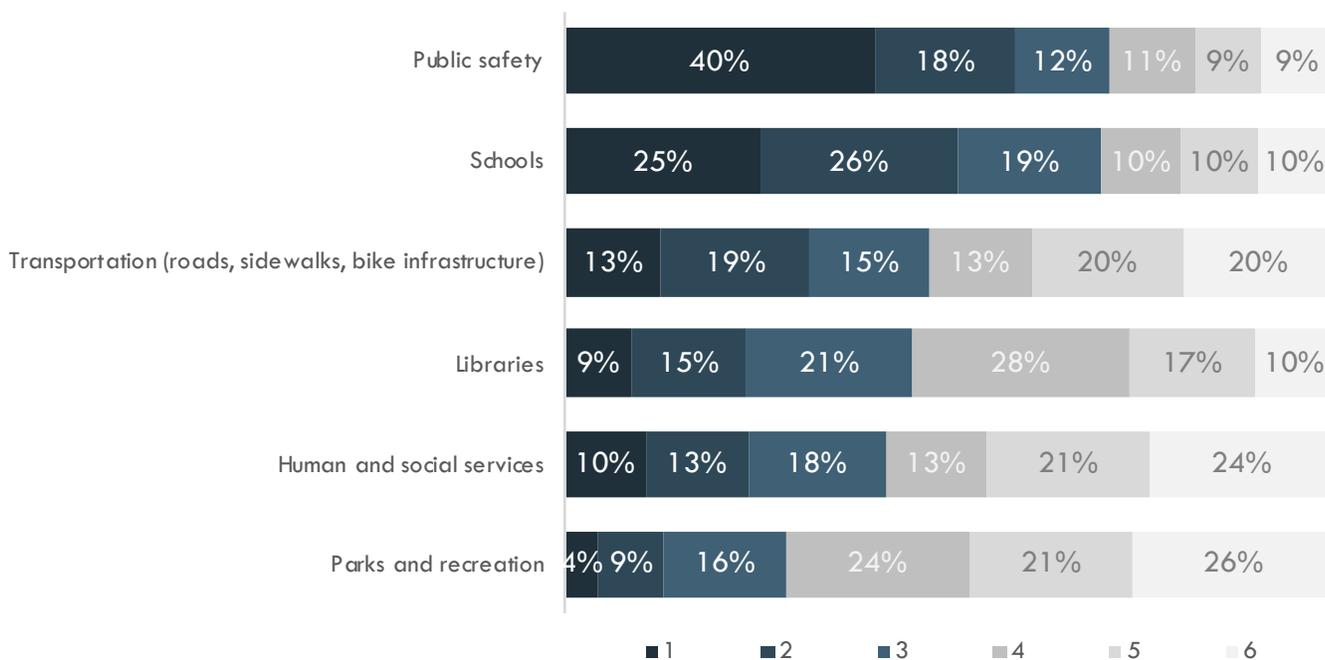
While a misinterpretation may have led to these comments, they emphasize the importance of traditional library resources to residents, also reflected throughout this study.

Investment Priorities

Resident survey respondents ranked a list of six potential Lakewood community investments by their level of importance. While libraries were not the top priority for many resident survey respondents, nearly three quarters (73%) of respondents ranked libraries within their top four priorities for community investment (see Exhibit 23).

Public safety was resident survey respondents’ top priority, with 40% of resident survey respondents listing it as their top priority and 70% of resident survey respondents listing it within their top three. This is consistent with the substantial number of resident survey respondents who provided feedback about perceived safety concerns at the libraries or risks from library customers experiencing homelessness. Public safety, along with schools and transportation which also scored as top investments, are common priorities for residents.

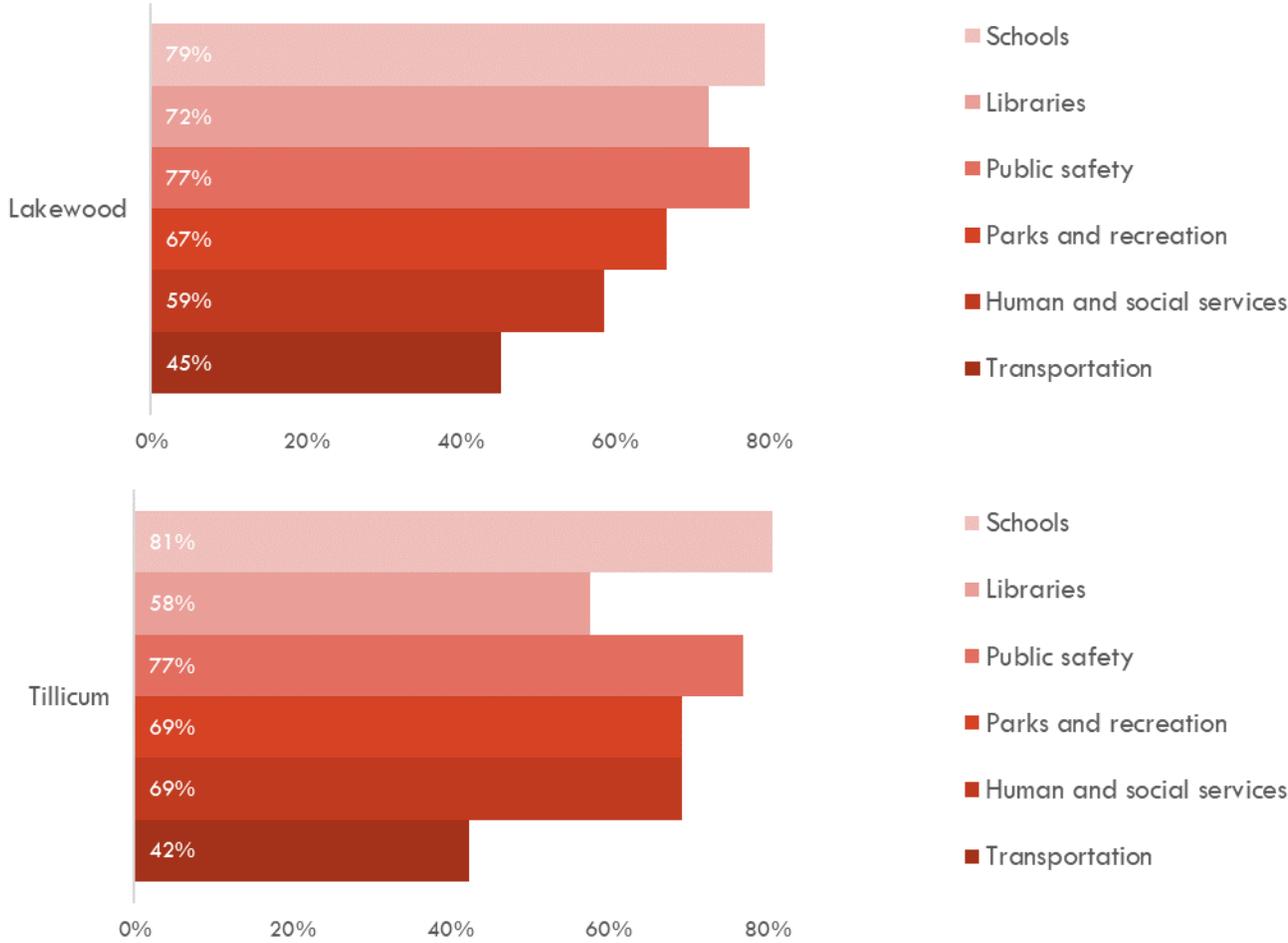
Exhibit 23. Survey Question: “What are your top priorities for investing in the Lakewood community? Please rank the following potential investments from 1 = most important to 6 = least important.” (n = 520)



Source: BERK, 2019.

Rather than asking respondents to rank their top priorities, the paper survey and activities at in-person events asked respondents to simply select their top four priorities unranked. In this case, schools and public safety still came in as the top two priorities of respondents, and libraries ranked third. Similar to the online survey, in Lakewood, libraries scored just over 70% as shown in Exhibit 24. Schools were the highest ranked priority in both Lakewood and Tillicum, and human and social services scored somewhat more strongly in Tillicum than Lakewood.

Exhibit 24. Non-survey Activity Question: “What four potential community investments are your highest priority?”*



*Totals sum to approximately 400% as four responses were allowed.

Source: BERK, 2019.

Sense of Welcoming and Safety

Overall, resident survey respondents feel welcome and safe at the Lakewood Library. In Lakewood, 93% feel welcome or very welcome (Exhibit 25) and 82% feel safe or very safe at the Library (Exhibit 26).

In Tillicum, residents have more concerns, though the majority still feel welcome and safe. At the Tillicum Library, 88% of resident survey respondents feel welcome or very welcome (Exhibit 27) and 76% feel safe or very safe (Exhibit 28).

Resident survey respondents love Pierce County Library staff. When given the opportunity to provide open-ended feedback on their perceptions of safety and of being welcome at the libraries, resident survey respondents overwhelmingly cited staff as playing a large, positive role in their experiences.

In describing why they feel unsafe or unwelcome, 35% of resident survey respondents mentioned perceived safety risks from library customers experiencing homelessness. However, many of the resident survey respondents also explicitly noted that these customers do not make them feel unsafe, and that they appreciate that the Libraries provide services and are welcoming to customers regardless of their housing status.

HOW WELCOME OR SAFE DO YOU FEEL AT THE DOWNTOWN LAKEWOOD AND TILLICUM LIBRARIES?

Many respondents made comments about populations experiencing homelessness. Quotes include:

- “Even tho some unsavory-LOOKING people hang around the property at large, once I’m inside the library charm envelops me. I can get help from the desk. I go there with purpose and come away satisfied.”
- “I am concerned about the increasing number of homeless at the library. I understand they need to charge their electronics, use wifi, and generally need someplace to be during the day, but I would like to see Lakewood provide a separate day-center for this purpose. Some of these people get into large and animated discussions outside the doors of the library (not to mention the smoking), and I have been uncomfortable entering and exiting the library with my son during these times.”
- “Inside the facility is fine. It’s the getting to and from the parking lot, Especially in the evening.”
- “The homeless population is under control in a safe way where we can all coexist.”
- “The overloaded shopping carts parked at the entrance by homeless is uncomfortable at best. I have great sympathy for the homeless and feel great frustration when I cut my library visit short because I am uncomfortable. I’m 77 years young, very hearing impaired and walk with a cane and at times feel very fragile.”

Other comments included:

- “I love my Lakewood Library. Everyone there is very helpful and friendly. It has a good vibe.”
- “The Tillicum Branch has obviously been overlooked and needs a lot of help.”

Exhibit 25. Survey Question: “How welcome do you feel at the downtown Lakewood library?” (n=701)

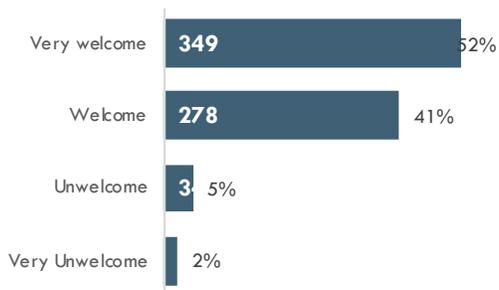


Exhibit 26. Survey question: “How safe do you feel at the downtown Lakewood library?” (n=656)

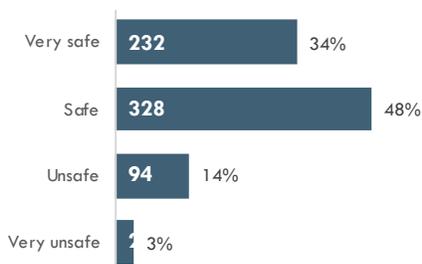


Exhibit 27. Survey Question: “How welcome do you feel at the Tillicum library?” (n = 615)

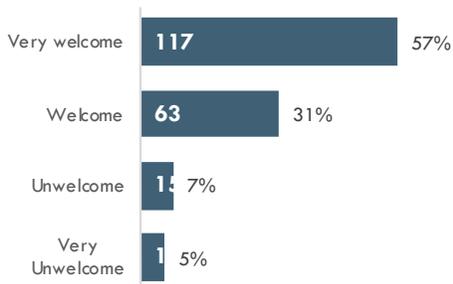
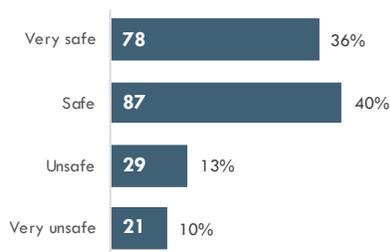


Exhibit 28. Survey Question: “How safe do you feel at the Tillicum library?” (n = 215)



Source: BERK, 2019.

AGE SPOTLIGHT

Younger resident survey respondents who use the Lakewood Library are more likely than their older counterparts to feel only “welcome” instead of “very welcome” at the library. At the Tillicum Library, the trend is the same. Resident survey respondents between the ages of 35 to 49 feel the least welcome: 22% report feeling “unwelcome” or “very unwelcome.”

Adults ages 65 and above feel safest at both the Lakewood and Tillicum Libraries.

At the Lakewood Library, 29% of resident survey respondents within the ages of 35 to 49 feel “unsafe” or “very unsafe,” more than three times the proportion of resident survey respondents within the ages of 65 to 84.

At the Tillicum Library, the trend is the same. Only 13% of resident survey respondents between the ages 65 to 84 feel “unsafe” or “very unsafe.” In contrast, 29% of resident survey respondents between the ages of 18 to 64 feel this way, with a similar distribution across all ages within this range.

The fact that younger adults feel overall less safe and welcome may further explain why the average age of resident survey respondents skews older than Lakewood’s population. Younger Lakewood residents may be less likely to use the Lakewood libraries, and thereby to respond to the survey, because they feel less safe or welcome at the libraries.

Staff are one of the most important resources to the Lakewood and Tillicum Libraries and their customers. Engagement activities at in-person events asked activity participants to share words about what would make them feel more welcome in a library (Exhibit 29). Given that staff play such a significant role in making resident survey respondents feel welcome and safe, it is no surprise that more staff is a top priority for activity participants.

Exhibit 29. Non-survey Activity Question: “What would make you feel more welcome in a library?”
(n = 15)



WordItOut

Source: BERK, 2019.



Focused Community Engagements

Rotary Club of Clover Park

Attendees of a Rotary Club of Clover Park meeting were overall interested in potential new libraries for Lakewood and saw several benefits to the community from the Lakewood and Tillicum Libraries:

- Access to educational resources for children from families with high rates of poverty.
- Access to meeting and conference rooms for small-business owners, especially for client meetings.
- Access to technology and computer training.

Kiwanis Club of Clover Park

Library Staff met with the Kiwanis Club of Clover Park on September 3, 2019 to share information and collect feedback on a potential new library or libraries for Lakewood. The 25 community leaders in attendance represented community and business interests and were overall very interested in and appreciative of the Library System's work.

Tillicum's Union Avenue

BERK staff conducted an intercept of business owners on Union Avenue by dropping by on a weekday in the late morning to survey small business owners and employees. Many respondents expressed public safety as their top concern in Tillicum and were interested in more security investments in the Tillicum community.

Union Avenue

Many of the small businessowners on Union Avenue engaged are of various Asian ethnicities and expressed feeling most welcome when they saw their ethnicities and heritages represented at the library. This included in available materials (e.g., Korean television shows for rent), in the demographics of library staff, and in the kinds of events the library offers. The businessowners also expressed an interest in increased partnership with the local schools as well as additional hours outside of standard business hours, as many of their businesses are sole proprietorships.

Floats on the Lake

Some of the mothers who participated in library engagement activities at Floats on the Lake expressed feeling that the Tillicum library needs additional resources to be more welcoming to children with disabilities. Ideas included creation of a larger children's area with activities designed specifically to accommodate this population.

Rotary Club of Clover Park

Attendees of a Rotary Club of Clover Park meeting expressed interest in collocating a potential new library with other existing services and institutions, including a café, a senior center, a Friends of the Lakewood Library meeting space, or the Lakewood Playhouse.