Tacoma Public Library

Eastside and Hilltop Feasibility Study | Community Engagement Summary

Purpose

The City of Tacoma and the Tacoma Public Library (TPL) seek to restore library services to the Eastside and Hilltop communities appropriate to current and future community needs and desires. This document provides a summary of community input for the Eastside and Hilltop Feasibility Study, informing the work of City and Library staff, members of the Project Advisory Committee, community members, the consulting team, and other interested parties. Bulleted quotes are used throughout this document to provide sample comments that exemplify common themes. ***This input has not been edited and is provided verbatim.***

Contents

Introduction

This document summarizes engagement findings for the TPL Eastside and Hilltop Feasibility Study. Community engagement, which occurred throughout the study from September 2021 through June 2022, included a mix of passive outreach and active engagement, including online surveys; engagements hosted by Community Partners; stakeholder interviews; visioning workshops; intercepts; listening sessions; and comments received via email. A full description of these engagement methods is shown in Exhibit 1. Some engagement methods broadly reached TPL stakeholders and others reached specific targeted groups.

We present engagement findings in two sections, each corresponding to a phase of engagement:

- **Phase 1: Visioning** gathered open-ended feedback on stakeholders' visions for library services.

- **Phase 2: Service and Funding Options** gathered feedback on potential size, number, and location of libraries and funding options.

Exhibit 1. Summary of Community Engagement Methods

Method	Description	Phase 1: Visioning	Phase 2: Options	Lead
Online Surveys	Two online surveys provided an opportunity for anyone with internet access to share input on the project. The survey was translated into several languages to ensure Tacoma's communities with limited English proficiency had opportunities to engage. The survey was publicized through TPL's social media channels, printed flyers, partnerships, and the project website.	✓	✓	BERK
Community Partner Engagements	Paid Community Partners led the design and planning of engagement events. This included recruiting participants and facilitating fun and inspiring exchanges in ways most relevant to Partners' communities. BERK required a pre- and post- meeting to align objectives and plans and to debrief outcomes.	✓	✓	BERK & Community Partners
Stakeholder Interviews	BERK conducted 15 interviews and/or group discussions with partners. With guidance from the Planning Committee, BERK facilitated these conversations to gather input from representatives of organizations, policymakers, and partners.	✓	✓	BERK
Library Visioning Workshops	BERK and TPL hosted community workshops as neighborhood-focused opportunities for community members to engage with key study questions such as location and priorities for space. Workshops occurred in each neighborhood and were complemented by online opportunities to engage with the same material.	✓		BERK & TPL

Method	Description	Phase 1: Visioning	Phase 2: Options	Lead
Intercepts and pop-ups	TPL and Community Partners attended existing community events with simple engagement tools to gather input from event participants, with a focus on people who may not have otherwise known about or participated in library engagements. TPL staff also conducted door-knocking, tabling, and canvassing campaigns to encourage participation in the study survey.	✓	✓	TPL & Community Partners
Listening Sessions	BERK and TPL hosted open listening sessions with members of the community in parallel with the survey open period for those who wanted to ask more questions about the study and provide more nuanced feedback. Sessions were held both virtual and in-person.		✓	BERK & TPL
Social Media and Emails	TPL conducted general outreach via its existing social media channels and distribution lists. Partners like Metro Parks Tacoma, Tacoma Housing Authority, and Tacoma Public Schools amplified this messaging.	✓	✓	TPL & partners
Project Website	BERK developed and maintained an online presence (www.tpleastsidehilltop.org) for engagement where interested parties could access transparent and up-to-date timelines, plans, and communications about the effort. This site also invited public comment at any time to be emailed to the BERK team.	✓	✓	BERK

Source: BERK, 2022

.

Phase 1: Visioning

Key Findings

Key findings of Phase 1 engagement activities include:

- Roughly one-third of community members feel they do not have access to all the library services they want (31.3% on Eastside; 37.7% on Hilltop). This is higher than respondents in other parts of the community.
  - The top barriers to access were inconvenient hours, the closest facility not having the services they want, lack of time, and lack of understanding of available services.
  - Specific to Main, community members face barriers in the steep hill, lack of parking and that is it paid parking, inconvenient hours, a sense of danger and feeling unwelcome related to the unhoused population and proximity to the Pierce County Jail and Courthouse. Neighborhood branches would be preferred to Main.
  - Some community members note gaps associated with the loss of the MLK and Swan Creek branches and a lack of culturally relevant resources.
- According to Eastside and Hilltop communities, libraries should help people "grow knowledge and skills", "learn", and "find help and resources needed to thrive."
- The top community needs and desires from engagement can be organized into the following themes:
  - **Community investment.** A library is an important investment in social infrastructure that both symbolizes that the community is valued and promotes civic pride, public safety, and community prosperity and well-being.
  - **Safe and supportive spaces.** A library should be a space where everyone is welcome, especially young people. It should be a place that is designed by and for the community served.
  - **Access to resources.** A library is a place to connect to other community resources and can provide tools to do so (e.g., computer labs, printing, and copying). Unlike other government offices and institutions, it is a judgment-free hub. It preserves culture and community history through collections and services that are delivered in-languages that reflect the makeup of the community.
  - **Community connections.** The library is a "third space" after home and work or school to meet friends or spend time with family, hold events, and otherwise bring people together. It is a multi-generational space with something for everyone, so that all ages can enjoy its benefits.
- There is an overwhelming desire for a physical location on both Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods. Specific space and location desires were similar.
  - Walkability and transit access is a priority.
  - Interest in co-locating with nonprofits and other community services.
  - A space that is warm and inviting, with comfortable furniture and art.
  - Space for community gathering and meetings, play spaces, computer labs, café.

Autumn 2021 Survey

Overview

BERK and the Tacoma Public Library developed a survey to get a broad understanding of how people currently interact with the library, their desires for library services, and recommendations for restoring services to Eastside and Hilltop. The survey was translated into eight languages other than English: Arabic, Khmer, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. The survey was promoted via TPL's digital channels and via the community engagement partners. TPL staff also partnered with the Tacoma Community House to promote survey participation in their classrooms with non-English speaking populations. Key partners in distributing the survey included:

- Metro Parks Tacoma: distributed to People's Center, Eastside Community Center mailing lists, and social media channels.

- Tacoma Housing Authority: 1,281 households reached via text message. TPL staff also attended THA Holiday Crawl events in Salishan and on Hilltop to promote the survey.

- Tacoma Public Schools: emailed to 27,000 addresses and posted on internal HUB accessible by ~3,000 staff.

- Tacoma Community House: distributed the survey to students in English Language Acquisition and Adult Basic Education classes.

- The Metropolitan Development Council sent the survey to students who, in some cases, completed it with their parents.

The survey garnered 2,080 responses in total. Seventeen responses were received in a language other than English.

Survey Respondent Demographics

As shown in Exhibit 2, roughly half the respondents were affiliated with Eastside or Hilltop neighborhoods. Neighborhood affiliation was determined by the question "Do you live, work, own a business, attend school, and/or practice a religion in any of the following places?" Respondents could choose more than one neighborhood affiliation based on the definition in the question. Thus, neighborhood results presented below will sum over 100%.

Exhibit 2. Respondent Neighborhood Affiliation

Eastside Tacoma	491	24%
Hilltop	502	24%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	1,072	52%
None of the above	186	9%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 3 shows that Eastside and Hilltop had similar proportions of respondents who identified as Black or African American. Eastside Tacoma had higher proportions of Asian and Native American respondents. Hispanic and Latinx proportions of survey respondents lag the proportion represented in the underlying population, especially in the Eastside neighborhood.

Exhibit 3. Respondent Race and Ethnicity by Neighborhood Affiliation

	Total	Eastside Tacoma	Hilltop	Another neighborhood of Tacoma	None of the above
Asian	7%	10%	7%	6%	8%
Black or African American	8%	12%	12%	4%	8%
Hispanic or Latino/a/Latinx/Latine	6%	9%	7%	5%	3%
Native American/Indigenous/Alaska Native	4%	6%	3%	3%	3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%
White/Caucasian	69%	55%	64%	78%	72%
Other (please specify)	5%	6%	5%	4%	4%

Source: BERK, 2022.

The age distribution of respondents in both Eastside and Hilltop skews significantly younger than respondents in other areas, as shown in Exhibit 4. Over half the respondents in these neighborhoods were age 44 or younger.

Exhibit 4. Respondent Age by Neighborhood Affiliation

	Total	Eastside Tacoma	Hilltop	Another neighborhood of Tacoma	None of the above
17 or younger	1%	3%	1%	0%	2%
18-24 years old	2%	3%	2%	2%	1%
25-34 years old	14%	19%	20%	11%	7%
35-44 years old	24%	27%	30%	23%	13%
45-54 years old	16%	16%	16%	15%	15%
55-64 years old	16%	14%	13%	17%	17%
65-74 years old	20%	15%	13%	22%	30%
75 years or older	8%	3%	4%	10%	15%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Current Library Use

Exhibit 5 shows that more than half of respondents said they visit a TPL library often. A majority of respondents, including in Eastside and Hilltop, responded that they visit a TPL library at least once or twice a month.

Exhibit 5. Responses to "How often do you visit a TPL library?"

		Multiple times a week	About once a week	About once or twice a month	About once every 2-3 months	About once every 4-6 months	About once a year or less	I typically use another library system (PCLS, KCLS, etc.)
Eastside Tacoma	468	6%	17%	31%	18%	8%	15%	6%
Hilltop	475	8%	19%	31%	13%	8%	16%	6%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	1,015	6%	20%	34%	16%	7%	12%	6%
None of the above	168	3%	15%	28%	12%	11%	13%	18%
Total	1,964	6%	19%	32%	15%	8%	14%	7%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 6 illustrates that use of the TPL website and/or existing online services was even across neighborhoods, (Eastside, Hilltop, and other neighborhoods of Tacoma). Respondents in Eastside noted higher use of these services (multiple times a week), whereas most Hilltop respondents noted using these services about once or twice a month.

Exhibit 6. Responses to "How often do you use the TPL website and/or online services?"

		Multiple times a week	About once a week	About once or twice a month	About once every 2-3 months	About once every 4-6 months	About once a year or less
Eastside Tacoma	469	25%	15%	24%	11%	9%	17%
Hilltop	477	21%	20%	25%	12%	9%	14%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	1,013	23%	19%	28%	11%	7%	12%
None of the above	166	22%	16%	25%	14%	8%	16%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 7 shows that survey respondents with affiliations to Eastside are most likely to visit the Moore or Mottet branches. Eastside respondents are also likely to visit the Main branch. More than half of survey respondents with Hilltop affiliations most frequently visit the Main branch, and about 22% visit the Wheelock branch most frequently. Survey respondents with ties to other neighborhoods of Tacoma, or without ties to specific neighborhoods in Tacoma, are most likely to visit the Wheelock or Swasey branches.

Exhibit 7. Responses to "Which library do you visit most frequently?"

		Kobetich	Moore	Main	Wheelock	Mottet	Fern Hill	South Tacoma	Swasey
Eastside Tacoma	458	2%	30%	14%	5%	28%	9%	6%	2%
Hilltop	471	1%	5%	54%	22%	3%	4%	4%	7%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	997	8%	9%	18%	40%	2%	6%	6%	11%
None of the above	157	6%	4%	20%	22%	3%	10%	10%	25%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Between 75 and 83% of survey respondents across all neighborhoods report that they already use the library in-person or plan to do so as the library reopens, as shown in Exhibit 8.

Exhibit 8. Responses to "As the library reopens, do you plan to or do you already use the library in-person?"

		Yes	No	It depends
Eastside Tacoma	472	80%	6%	14%
Hilltop	477	81%	6%	13%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	1,018	83%	6%	11%
None of the above	168	75%	16%	9%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 9 shows that most survey respondents with ties to Eastside or Hilltop include physical collections in their top three most important library services. This proportion is slightly lower than that of survey respondents with ties to other neighborhoods of Tacoma. About three in ten Eastside and Hilltop respondents identify people to help find materials and answer questions in their top three most important library services. Eastside and Hilltop respondents are more likely than other respondents to include children's programming; public computers and printers; and classes, lectures, activities, or other events in their top three most important library services.

Exhibit 9. Responses to "Of these library services, which three are the most important to you?"

		Physical collections: printed books, magazines, DVDs, etc.	Digital items or services you can access online or on a mobile device	Public Computers and Printers	People to help you find materials and answer questions	Classes, lectures, activities, and other events	Children's programming	Special collections (e.g., Northwest Room, Handforth Gallery)	Digital Media Lab	Book Club	Homework Center	Other (please specify)
Eastside Tacoma	470	72%	57%	30%	34%	29%	26%	12%	10%	8%	5%	3%
Hilltop	478	74%	51%	23%	30%	32%	24%	19%	7%	8%	6%	4%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	1,018	80%	57%	19%	35%	22%	18%	16%	3%	6%	3%	5%
None of the above	166	70%	55%	15%	24%	19%	10%	9%	3%	5%	4%	3%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Life and Information Needs

As shown in Exhibit 10, online resources top the list for where to go to get information or learn something, whether at home or on a mobile device. The library was the third choice across all respondent groups. Eastside and Hilltop respondents were more likely to cite community centers or nonprofit spaces, coffee shops, or places of worship as information sources.

Exhibit 10. Responses to "Where do you typically go to get information or learn something?"

		On my mobile device	Online at home	Library	Online at work	Online at TPL	Community center or non-profit space	Coffee shop or café	Park or plaza	Temple, mosque, church, synagogue, or other place of worship	Unsure	Other	None of these
Eastside Tacoma	491	73%	76%	52%	24%	11%	9%	5%	1%	6%	1%	9%	0%
Hilltop	502	71%	77%	51%	27%	10%	13%	12%	2%	8%	0%	8%	0%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	1,072	69%	81%	54%	21%	12%	4%	5%	1%	5%	0%	8%	0%
None of the above	186	58%	81%	55%	10%	8%	3%	2%	1%	4%	0%	8%	1%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 11 shows that gathering and socializing tends to happen in coffee shops or parks and plazas. There tended to be more diversity in the responses for gathering spaces. Again, Eastside and Hilltop respondents were more likely to cite community centers or nonprofit spaces. Most of the "Other" category responses consisted of bars and restaurants.

Exhibit 11. Responses to "Where do you typically go in your neighborhood to meet with friends and neighbors?"

		Coffee shop or café	Park or plaza	Community center or non-profit space	Online at home	On my mobile device	Library	Temple, mosque, church, synagogue, or other place of worship	Online at TPL	Online at work	Unsure	Other	None of these
Eastside Tacoma	491	54%	39%	19%	22%	17%	16%	12%	2%	4%	2%	22%	9%
Hilltop	502	71%	44%	18%	23%	13%	14%	15%	1%	3%	1%	23%	3%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	1,072	61%	38%	12%	21%	13%	11%	13%	1%	2%	1%	30%	7%
None of the above	186	55%	24%	11%	16%	14%	17%	8%	1%	2%	1%	20%	14%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Responses to activities over a typical week were fairly aligned in priority across respondent groups, as shown in Exhibit 12. Eastside respondents were the most likely to include taking care of children and other family members as well as schoolwork and homework. Eastside and Hilltop respondents also had the highest proportion reporting time dedicated to commuting and work.

Exhibit 12. Responses to "What activities make up your typical week?"

		Housework, chores, errands, and home repair	Media	Reading	Commuting and work	Leisure activities	Taking care of children or other family members	Physical activities	Socializing (in-person or online)	Mindfulness, self-care, mental health	Community involvement, volunteerism, activism, and mutual aid	Educational goals	School and homework	Other
Eastside Tacoma	472	88%	70%	63%	60%	58%	42%	38%	35%	28%	27%	19%	18%	6%
Hilltop	477	89%	69%	69%	66%	58%	37%	43%	37%	31%	30%	19%	12%	5%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	1,018	91%	68%	72%	53%	62%	34%	51%	39%	24%	24%	13%	8%	6%
None of the above	168	86%	64%	83%	39%	59%	25%	42%	31%	24%	26%	12%	5%	4%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 13 shows that all respondent groups were likely to select lifelong learning as a top priority for educational goals. Eastside and Hilltop respondents were more likely to choose job or career growth and degree completion than respondents from other areas.

Exhibit 13. Responses to "What are your educational goals?"

		Lifelong learning	Job or career growth	Degree completion	Technology literacy and skills	English literacy	Other (please specify)	None of the above
Eastside Tacoma	490	53%	17%	9%	5%	2%	2%	11%
Hilltop	500	60%	16%	8%	4%	1%	4%	7%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	1,071	64%	12%	3%	3%	1%	5%	12%
None of the above	186	58%	11%	4%	4%	0%	5%	19%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 14 shows that respondents' priorities for their relationship with the library were similar across respondent groups. The top roles were to grow knowledge and skills, learn, connect to resources, and relax. Eastside and Hilltop respondents were the most likely to prioritize connecting with others and doing work and homework. "Other" responses commonly included learning additional languages, teaching certification, and business and investment goals.

Exhibit 14. Responses to "I want the library to help me..."

		Grow my knowledge and skills	Learn	Find the help and resources I need to thrive	Relax	Be creative	Connect with others	Do work and homework	Other (please specify)	None of these
Eastside Tacoma	491	59.1%	50.7%	49.1%	48.1%	39.7%	29.1%	14.5%	12.4%	1.6%
Hilltop	500	60.8%	49.6%	45.8%	45.2%	38.2%	32.0%	15.4%	14.4%	1.6%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	1,070	56.9%	50.4%	40.3%	47.1%	33.5%	20.1%	6.5%	14.1%	2.3%
None of the above	186	50.0%	49.5%	40.3%	49.5%	23.7%	16.1%	4.3%	14.5%	3.8%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Current Access

Exhibit 15 shows that Hilltop and Eastside affiliated respondents were the least likely to report ability to access all the library services they want, with about one-third reporting they do not have the access they want.

Exhibit 15. Responses to "Are you able to access all the library services you want?"

		Yes	No
Eastside Tacoma	470	68%	32%
Hilltop	477	66%	34%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	1015	81%	19%
None of the above	168	91%	9%

Inconvenient hours and lack of relevant services were the two primary reasons for lack of access, shown in Exhibit 16. One-fifth of Eastside respondents also reported not understanding how to access all the library services and lack of time.

Exhibit 16. Responses to "Why do you not have the access you want?"

		The hours are not convenient for me	My closest TPL facility doesn't have the library services I want	I don't understand how to access all the library services	I don't have time	I don't feel safe or welcome at the library	I don't have transportation to get to the library with the services I want	Services are not available in the languages I need	Other (please specify)
Eastside Tacoma	151	40%	32%	23%	21%	13%	15%	4%	32%
Hilltop	164	35%	27%	16%	24%	16%	12%	4%	30%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	188	36%	16%	15%	23%	9%	6%	2%	41%
None of the above	14	14%	7%	14%	7%	14%	7%	0%	64%

Source: BERK, 2022.

▪ Most "Other" reasons were primarily related to COVID-19, overall and the subsequent closure of Main and limited hours. This is likely driving some of the Hilltop responses to inability to access services they want in Exhibit 15.

▪ Second most common reasons had to do with transportation, internet access, and feelings of safety related to loitering and homeless population at Main.

▪ A few mentioned services and programming that were not relevant to them.

Language Access

Over 40 unique non-English languages were reported as either a primary or secondary language at home for respondents. Forty-two respondents indicated a primary language other than English. The most common languages reported were:

▪ Spanish

▪ French

▪ German

▪ Chinese (Mandarin)

▪ Russian

▪ Korean

▪ Vietnamese

▪ Tagalog

▪ American Sign Language

Most respondents felt they had sufficient access to materials in their preferred language, as shown in Exhibit 17. Eastside and Hilltop respondents were the least likely to report sufficient access. Those who said they did not have sufficient in-language materials at their library primarily spoke Spanish. A second, smaller group spoke Chinese languages, including Cantonese and Mandarin. Two respondents mentioned French, and two mentioned Korean, as well.

Exhibit 17. Responses to "At the library you visit most, are there sufficient materials available in your preferred languages?"

		Yes	No	Somewhat	I don't know
Eastside Tacoma	466	80%	5%	10%	6%
Hilltop	462	84%	5%	6%	5%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	999	87%	3%	6%	4%
None of the above	163	80%	1%	9%	10%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 18 shows the types of materials or services that respondents indicated they would like to see TPL offer in their preferred language. Hilltop and Eastside respondents were the most likely to want programs delivered in their home languages, and books were the top material or service desired in home languages.

Exhibit 18. Responses to "What types of materials or services would you like to see Tacoma Public Library offer in your preferred languages?"

		This is not a need for me	Books	Programs	Magazines/ Newspapers	Website information	Library informational material
Eastside Tacoma	462	50%	31%	10%	4%	4%	2%
Hilltop	460	52%	33%	9%	2%	3%	1%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	988	57%	29%	5%	5%	3%	1%
None of the above	163	54%	32%	3%	3%	4%	4%

Source: BERK, 2022.

Investments to improve access to library services in Eastside and Hilltop

The survey asked respondents to imagine how they would invest funds to improve access to library services in Eastside and Hilltop. The following sections present high-level themes and representative or notable excerpts from respondents' answers, categorized by respondents' neighborhood affiliation. Excerpts have been lightly edited for clarity.

Eastside Responses

Services and programming

Respondents expressed interest in a range of services. Common service interests included:

- Activities, classes, and education, including about how to use the library.

  - "STEM or other programs would also be great… provide weekly skills training by paying a professional to come in so people can generate side income (soap-making, simple automotive repair, how to start selling on Etsy/Shopify, etc.)"

  - "More in-person classes about entrepreneurship and creative classes."

  - "I personally need training on how to use the library's vast online services, and it's not obvious how all the apps and systems connect."

- "It would be nice to have more arts and crafts events for adults."

- "Art projects that can be done with little/no supervision, like origami, could be available in a box that can be checked out or used in the library. Cake pans in novel shapes to check out."

- "More community meetings that help the needs like education on finances, how to get into college, how to write resumes."

- "I would like to attend lectures, work shops, arts opportunities etc. [....] I would also like to be able to meet neighbors and others in the community. Classes and things like the tool library."

- Connections to service providers and resources.

  - "Free access to community services and resources."

  - "Free access to hygiene products. The free covid tests are amazing."

  - "Better community information such as medical, social programs facilities, food programs, clothing and other essential needs."

  - "Community outreach, nonprofits, caseworkers."

- Cultural relevance in the collections, services, and staff, and community engagement.

  - "La maquina del eastside community center fue horrible. Necesitamos una Library con una Libraryria bilingue. Contraten a gente del Eastside que hablen Spanish y hagan clubes de prÃ¡ctica de English como el de Tacoma community House "talk time". Hagan de vez en cuando clinicas de inmigracion u otra programacion en Spanish. Lectura de libros en Spanish." // [English translation] "The machine at the Eastside Community Center was horrible. We need a library with a bilingual librarian. Hire people from the Eastside who speak Spanish and start English practice clubs like the Tacoma community House "talk time." Do from time to time immigration clinics or other programming in Spanish. Reading books in Spanish."

- Expanded collections.

  - "I actually recently discovered that I have a library within walking distance to my house, Mottet, but I don't frequent it as often because it doesn't have the books that I need and it's easier to go to larger libraries for that."

  - "Invest in more books, magazines, newspapers, more lectures, and classes."

- Extended or nontraditional hours, including opening on Sundays and Mondays.

  - "Keeping the libraries open at the times that young people can access and likely computers would be the bulk of investment."

- Mobile services, book delivery services, or pop-up locations.

  - "I teach for TPS and I taught in Salishan for a very long time. When the library on Portland Ave closed, that was devastating for the community. I would invest funds in either reopening or creating mobile libraries. Creating mobile services to help with literacy and language acquisition in Salishan. Partnering with the Eastside Community Center to have librarians available a few times a week to help with digital literacy and media skills."

- □ "Bookmobile through neighborhoods, daycare, or after school so books can come to kids. Mobile library day at different schools, kids could order ahead online."

- □ "Shuttle services to seniors, those without transportation."

- □ "Mobile services/home delivery for homebound patrons, pop-up locations with hot spots with laptops and physical materials for check-out."

- □ "I might also add a mobile book truck for kids and teens, especially during the summer months."

- Services for children, youth, and families with children.

    - □ "In-person children's programs are very important to our family."

    - □ "If the plan is to re-open/launch locations in these two areas, offer robust young adult and children's collections (print/physical materials) and partner with schools on Hilltop and Eastside to orient kids to the available services. Offer evening and/or weekend programming for families, including pickup kit options for families to do together."

Respondents offered mixed reviews of the Eastside Community Center kiosk. Some called it "horrible," others noted that it was convenient and could be expanded.

- "If reopening branch locations is not possible, expand the kiosk model being used at Eastside Community Center to other blocks."

Locations

Most comments were related to simply building a branch, encouraging TPL to bring a library back to the neighborhood.

- "Build a bigger library than in the past. The Eastside library was way too small and crowded."

- "I think the Eastside especially needs a branch! Neither transit nor a branch, and a lot of folk don't have a vehicle, or access to a computer. It's a Library Desert."

Some respondents recommended specific locations, including several who expressed interest in a branch in Salishan.

- "I would like to see a library near the Eastside Community Center. This is closest to where I work and convenient for me to drop by before or after work."

- "I just want my branch to stay open. Mottet is awesome and so are the people who work there."

- "Open a branch in Salishan."

- "Opening a branch along the Portland Ave corridor again. Improving access to transit dependent families on the Salishan area."

- "Would find a place to put a library in Hilltop. Eastside has the library off of McKinley, but could put a small one in Salishan."

Some respondents noted that the location should be accessible and safe.

- "Accessible by foot and by bus."

- "Not a library issue, but a city one -- to make the main street crossings across McKinley safer (such as using bump-outs across Harrison and Morton)."

Spaces

Some commenters specified that the library should include meeting spaces and places to relax for public use.

- "I think having meeting spaces (that allow food and drink) and are able to be reserved are really important - it would also help me as a work-from-home worker, to have physical space nearby I can reserve as needed. I also think it's important that the library serve a safe, dry place where anyone (regardless of status) can relax, use the restroom, and stay warm for awhile."

- "1 or more meeting rooms."

Some respondents recommended the library include a dedicated children's space.

- "A large children's area and a young people's area like the one downtown."

- "Large children's area that kids can utilize after school and weekends that provides a safe place to do activities, communicate, and seek out books and other resources. Facilitated story time, meditation and art activities as well as other enrichment opportunities would be great."

Other respondents expressed interest in the library transitioning to a shared space, or fully online.

- "A physical space would be nice, but it doesn't have to be full of books and media. What if you could pick up hold, browse a micro collection and use the space for more interactive pursuits like classes, tutoring, crafts, book talks, movies, etc. Maybe a shared space where the library is there on specific days?"

- "I believe it is time to start phasing out many of the brick & mortar libraries. It is easier & much safer to use the library services online. this would save money also."

Inclusion

Several respondents emphasized that the library should invest effort in diversifying its staff, collections, and programming to be more representative of the range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds of its patrons.

- "Foremost, the Eastside library should acknowledge and advance existing ethnic and cultural communities. In doing so, traditional library services become a facilitating component for sustaining our diverse heritage and traditions."

- "Programs co-designed with BIPOC communities. Increased outreach and engagement to promote and hear community feedback."

- "Diverse staff; increased non-librarians hired that are reflective of these communities for programs and services."

- "Culturally relevant services to the Native population in a location and setting that is comfortable. Invest in real Indigenous content, not white content written about us."

- "Improve collections. For instance, the 'ethnic collection' mostly consist of books about gangsters, pimps, or church - diversify, it's offensive. Also, more items in different languages. Culturally relevant

activities for everyone in the community. Better collaboration with community partners already doing work in that area. Being more sincere and building trust within those communities. Just do something!"

Community Partnerships

Several respondents recommended the library partner with community centers and other community institutions.

- "Micro libraries in community centers, gyms, or other public buildings that have room, focusing mostly on access to computers, printing, job help, etc."

- "Partner with community centers for children's activities."

- "Stronger collection partnerships with Tacoma public schools. Share resources and get more books to kids Build something to improve education and do something with stem. I was so frustrated that they would close our library in the poorest area instead of making it more accessible and useful."

- "Partnering with a community service, such as the Boys and Girls Club, to provide transportation or have a mobile library brought to after school programs."

Funding

Some commenters suggested potential funding mechanisms to bring library services to Eastside and Hilltop.

- "Usually a bond is what is in place for it. I would vote in one if it was reasonable."

- "Taxes."

Communications and Advertising

Many comments signaled low awareness of all the libraries offerings, especially digital, and "how-to" access and connect all these services.

- "More events and advertising all the resources that the library offers."

- "Have more FYI boards, so patrons can see and view the many things available at your local TPL."

Hilltop Responses

Services and Programming

Respondents expressed interest in a range of services. Common service interests included:

- Computers

    - "I know there's need for computers and printing services in Hilltop (from my job)."

    - "Благоустроила и обновила здания и установила больши компьютеров" // "Improved and renovated buildings and installed more computers."

    - "Computadoras, libros en idiomas como Spanish, Ruso, Vietnamese y mas. Un lugar para que niños pequenos escuchen cuentos, classes de English, GED." // [English Translation] "Computers, books in languages like Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese and more. A place for young children to listen to stories, English classes, GED."

- Digital collections and online resources

  - "I would expand the online collections of ebooks and audiobooks and make available more online movies (through Hoopla, even.)"

  - "Create digital collections."

  - "I would invest in making the website more user friendly (hard to tell when a hold is in place or not)."

  - "Make a "card" catalog (the inventory of books) more available to library users (eg, special computers that don't require a login)."

- Educational programming

  - "Potentially have foreign language learning services?"

  - "Genealogy resource."

  - "I would have more help for illiterates."

- Events

  - "Game nights- Go, board games, chess, cards."

  - "I would have more book clubs, especially at Main, including enabling patrons to run book clubs/reading groups."

  - "Getting community members connected around things the library provides - book clubs, outreach."

- Expanded collections

  - "Expand Sci-fi book library."

  - "Expanding the book collection (some books and subjects I was looking for were not listed)."

  - "Ebooks More of the series that are big hits with kids- Dog Man, Minecraft books, graphic novels- arranged by reading level."

- Extended hours

  - "Increase Saturday and Sunday and evening operating hours."

  - "Increase hours at the main branch to support Hilltop - it's close enough to walk to from most parts of Hilltop, but the hours aren't always convenient."

- Mobile library

  - "Book mobile. Open as many hours as possible."

  - "Probably a mobile library vehicle with book/cd/dvd bundles that was mostly near schools during peak after school hours and maybe the weekend peak hours by a grocery store or people center [..] Perhaps shuttle services? Internet provided to those in need?"

- Programming for kids

    - "Open back up the in person services for young children that are not enrolled in preschool and for kids and parents to connect in person with activities to promote reading and learning and play."

    - "I don't have small kids so not sure what TPL does for children but maybe more?"

    - "Invest in getting students from school to libraries and explaining to families of students the many resources available."

- Supports for people experiencing homelessness

    - "I would provide showers, laundry and bathrooms for the unhoused."

    - "Provide people experiencing homelessness somewhere else to wash their bodies and their clothes."

- Youth programming

    - "After school programming would be spectacular in Hilltop."

    - "A staffed 'homework help hour' in the early evening for kids 9-15."

Locations

Most comments focused on the importance of a physical location in Hilltop.

- "A physical location in Hilltop with an awesome children's section and a child 's librarian. Even if there aren't funds for a full library branch, it would be great to have a "mini" branch. Not a library vending machine, but a small library with a media lab, access to printers, access to librarians who can connect people to services, and the ability to pick up holds and other library materials. Of course, I would like both neighborhoods to have full libraries, but having a smaller branch that is focused primarily on services and pickups might be a good place to start."

- "It would be nice to have a nice local hilltop branch that we can walk to."

- "I would like to have a full-service city library on the Hilltop and keep the NW room and various items not now showed in the Main Library."

- "It's important to me to have a physical neighborhood library space in the Hilltop."

- "I would get the Main branch open again ASAP! A large population segment has no access while that branch is closed."

Some respondents recommended specific locations for a potential branch.

- "Open a branch library right near a light rail stop in the heart of Hilltop"

- "Location on MLK; location near medical mile for access to printers, computers and scanners."

Respondents described the importance of walkability and accessibility by various modes of transportation, including for youth. Some respondents mentioned transportation services as a potential support for access.

- "Build a library in Hilltop that is located off of the new light rail line opening in 2022."

- "More street signs directing to the library."

- "Add facilities in high density areas. Most users in shortest distance with equitable access (bus, walk, etc.)."

- "Parking should also be considered, although I would be willing to walk with my child if it was close enough and I felt safe enough."

- "Transportation Services to branches and maybe mobile units?"

Some comments recommended that a branch be in close proximity to schools.

- "We need a child centered library in Hilltop-- by McCarver Elementary."

- "I would put a library with tutoring programs in the old Hostess factory as that is central to Hilltop Heritage, Bryant Montessori, and Grant Elementary."

Spaces

Many respondents described a library space that is a shared space for community events and connection.

- "Create space for creatives. Create space for application of learning."

- "Many creative spaces could be envisioned and used by community such as Tacoma Tool Library."

- "Unsure. But I think a nice community space focused on a safe place to gather, learn and connect along with staff to help in book/resource finding and selecting."

- "Community meeting space and quiet rooms for study or working like University Place library has."

- "It would be great to emphasize the neighborhood in the design of the building and programming it would offer."

- "Create a Hilltop community center with a library in the style of the Crossroads Mall in Bellevue, which combines grocery, retail, recreation, cinema, many kinds of services, and a gathering place for the whole community."

- "Create small libraries that focus on activities rather than material storage. If materials (books etc.) can be ordered and delivered from a larger library then TPL can be in more places, learning what the needs of each neighborhood and connecting with more people."

Several respondents emphasized that a library space must be welcoming.

- "In general make the space attractive an welcoming (side note: Seattle library is not - it's cold and angular and no place I would want to go or spend much time in. So don't go 'Seattle' :))"

- "Having attractive and varied places to read including big & small collections of chair/tables, etc."

- "I would love library access that was also a community space. I would love to sit in a chair and read while my kiddo peruses the collections, but our closest library (Main) doesn't feel warm or welcoming."

- "I would make more welcoming places to sit and read. Right now the downtown library doesn't feel like a place you can be..narrow backless benches makes it feel like a transit center."

Inclusion

Some respondents described the importance of Hilltop library services being inclusive to everyone.

- "I would form a community trust to be sure public events are accessible so that for example if a deaf person plans in advance to attend an interpreter is scheduled in accommodation."

- "Whatever is necessary to reduce physical and economic barriers to library use but I don't have a lot of insight into how that could be a be accomplished."

Community Partnership

Several respondents suggested that a Hilltop library could be offered in collaboration with other community organizations.

- "Collaborate with the many education focused orgs operating in Hilltop."

- "Connection with a community center."

- "Community outreach, partnership with public schools for after school programs I would need to know options before answering but I am willing to invest."

- "If a full-service library isn't feasible for Hilltop (top choice!), I would propose a micro-library in conjunction with People's Community Center."

Funding

Some comments were related to fundraising and financial support for bringing library services to Hilltop.

- "I would donate if asked"

- "Have a levy But not to big"

- "Not sure how to answer this, but our family would make a donation to a hilltop location. Plus, you would make money off our late fees because we always keep items too long!"

- "I would contribute to a fundraiser for this purpose. You guys should design cool, limited edition merchandise like tote bags, coffee cups, and t shirts to sell to raise funds, working with a local artist to design them."

Several respondents acknowledged that they would like to see higher wages for library staff and an increase in staffing.

- "Probably by increasing payroll so hours can be extended and properly staffed. More people, I guess. […] So hire more people, and pay them and existing staff more. That's my big thing."

- "Increase staff & hours."

- "I can 'chat with an online librarian' for help in selecting books for my kids, but in person when I've asked for support, that doesn't seem to be something they do??"

Security and Safety

Respondents' safety and security comments may be related to current use of Main rather than what people hope to see in Hilltop.

- "Security downtown would be nice. More for the elderly."

- "Get rid of the homeless encampments. They make the area feel unsafe and, therefore, make the library unusable."

- "I have a child and would like to take them to the library for children's programs and reading but safety is a concern."

Non-Residents of Eastside and Hilltop

Non-resident voices of Eastside and Hilltop tended to prioritize the same things that residents in both neighborhoods mentioned. Several were unaware of the 2011 closures. Many comments from non-residents chose to "defer" input here to the residents of these neighborhoods. Many non-residents voiced support for redirecting more resources or a willingness to pay to restore services to Hilltop and Eastside in support of equity.

Respondents seem to identify Wheelock as the "gold standard" for libraries.

- "I believe it's incredibly important that every district has a library that is equal to the others in Tacoma. Whatever needs to be done to ensure Hilltop and the Eastside have a library that's like ours here at Wheelock, then it needs to be done and I fully support it."

- "I would be willing to lose some hours at my location (Wheelock) if it meant other locations could be restored. If anything, people in the Proctor area have the ability to get themselves to other locations. Eastside and Hilltop residents have greater need for these services."

Community Partner Engagements

BERK recruited trusted community organizations and individual organizers, referred to in this document as Community Partners, for formal, paid partnerships to support this project. Community Partners independently organized engagements to gather input from populations that were identified as priority groups for library services but less likely to take a survey.

Nine community partners were engaged, plus library partner and literacy promoter The Peace Bus attended several events to motivate community participation. The nine Community Partners and their engagement activities included:

1. **Alma Villegas Consulting** attended Festival Latinx and other Latinx community events including church services to conduct intercept interviews.

2. **Booked with Hilltop in partnership with the Hilltop Library Planning Committee and the Hilltop Action Coalition** conducted intercept interviews at neighborhood community events, elementary schools, and after-school events such as Halloween on the Hilltop at Tacoma Community House. They also conducted canvassing days and focused engagements at neighborhood low-income housing, churches, senior and disabled housing, and food banks.

3. **Community Convenors,** a collective group of local organizers and long-time residents, hosted four virtual focus group discussions and conducted one-on-one neighborhood outreach.

4. **Eloise's Cooking Pot** is a food bank associated with the **Making a Difference Foundation** on McKinley Ave. This group engaged individuals and families as they waited in line on foot and in their vehicles at the McKinley Ave Food Bank.

5. **Metropolitan Development Council** hosted family engagement nights at First Creek Middle School, Lincoln High School, and Mt. Tahoma High School in partnership with staff embedded in these schools. They also partnered with Proyecto Mole to ask questions of Latinx high school seniors at their Super Saturday event.

6. **New Connections Outreach** conducted pop-up style focus groups at encampments of houseless people and established shelters on the Eastside and Hilltop, including Irma's Place, Nativity House, Bethlehem Baptist Family Shelter, and the G Street encampment between S 14th St and S 15th St. New Connections also attended a Halloween themed event entitled "Trunk N' Treat" at the Bethlehem Baptist parking lot.

7. **Parable** and Eastside Little Free Libraries catered a community event at the Parable business and community space on McKinley Ave. Spanish and Vietnamese interpretation was available. Kwabi Amoah-Forson from The

Exhibit 19. Library Outreach Paired with Metropolitan Development Council and Proyecto Mole College Prep

Source: Shot By Hana, 2021.

Exhibit 20. New Connections Outreach at Irma's Place.

Source: New Connections, 2021.

Peace Bus supported this event, attending with The Peace Bus vehicle and delivering opening remarks. Beyond the event, this group also undertook a range of activities, including:

▪ Distributed English, Spanish, and Vietnamese flyers on the Eastside, including at restaurants, at community spaces, and directly to houseless community members.

▪ Used Little Free libraries as engagement points to promote the event and invite input with paper forms and goodie bags for participation.

▪ Presented at a regular meeting of the Portland Avenue Community Center Advisory Board.

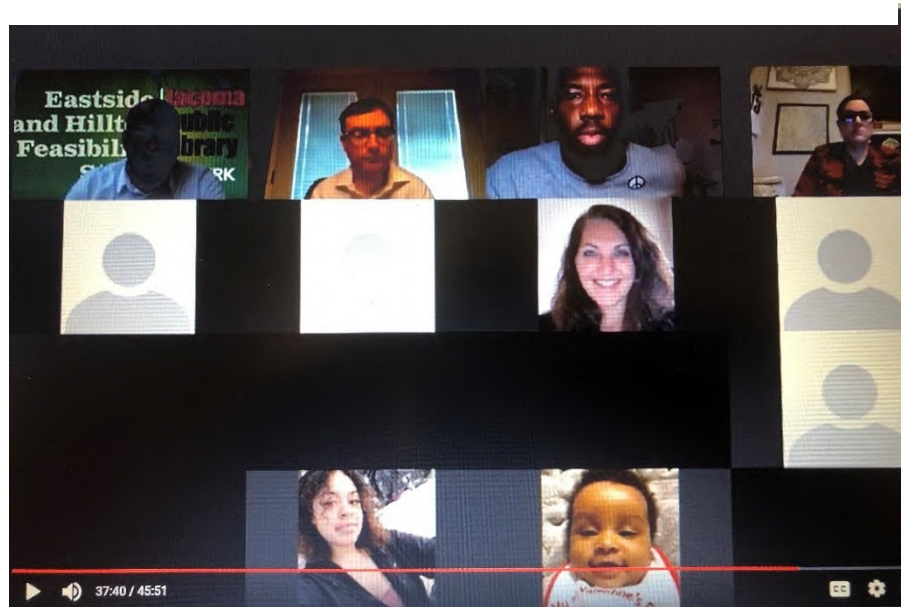**Exhibit 21. Parable Event and Little Free Library Example**

Source: E 35th and McKinley Collective (Parable and Eastside Little Free Libraries), 2021.

8. **Sound Outreach** held two virtual focus groups and recruited participants via their financial counselors, their Center for Strong Families, and partners Recovery Café and RISE Center. The target group was job seekers, individuals experiencing housing instability, college students, seniors, children, and family members.

9. **Tahoma Indian Center** hosted an Indigenous-focused community event at their space, which included providing food for local houseless populations. They delivered a presentation and conducted a survey with participants.

Exhibit 22. Sound Outreach Virtual Focus Group

Source: Sound Outreach, 2021.

Tacoma Public Library staff also supported several community partners with their engagement and conducted their own door-knocking and tabling campaigns to encourage participation in the study survey. TPL staff also canvassed the Eastside with flyers the weekend of November 19.

Assuming unique individuals were engaged, Exhibit 23 summarizes the total number of individuals reached and their demographic information.[1] The demographics of the community engagement align well

---

[1] To encourage frank and honest feedback from participants, Community Partners did not record participants' contact information or attribute any feedback to individuals. It is therefore possible that some individual community members could have participated in multiple input opportunities.

with the demographics of the underlying neighborhoods, which is summarized in the accompanying **Baseline Situation Assessment.**

Exhibit 23. Community Partner Engagement Participants in Fall 2021

Community Engagement Participation		
Total Participants	**835**	
Neighborhood Connection		
Hilltop	422	53%
Eastside	259	33%
Another neighborhood in Tacoma	120	15%
None of the Above	69	9%
Total Respondents for Neighborhood Info	**790**	
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian	73	9%
Black or African American	243	30%
Hispanic or Latino/a/Latinx/Latine	136	17%
Native American/Indigenous/Alaska Native	67	8%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	60	7%
White/Caucasian	323	40%
Other	24	3%
Total Respondents for Race/Ethnic Info	**805**	
Age Options		
17 or younger	157	21%
18-24 years old	46	6%
25-34 years old	108	14%
35-44 years old	148	19%
45-54 years old	111	15%
55-64 years old	106	14%
65-74 years old	62	8%
75 years or older	27	4%
Total Respondents for Age Info	**765**	**100%**

Notes: Not all parties submitted full demographic information, so the disaggregated data does not add up to the total participant number. Participants could report connections to more than one neighborhood, so the percentages for neighborhood connection sum to more than 100%. The same is true for race and ethnicity.

Source: BERK, 2022.

User Experience with TPL

How do people currently engage with TPL or other libraries?

The top themes related to the current role of libraries in people's lives were safe and supportive spaces, access to resources, and community connections. These themes came up repeatedly across all community conversations.

- "[Libraries] are bridges, they are foundations that connect families; to the communities, to every culture…They build bridges so that [people] can come out of their norm..To help the unsolved, to be resolve what needs to be solved."

Safe and Supportive Spaces

Participants observed that the Library provides a calm, safe, and supportive environment where everyone is welcome, regardless of what language they speak.

- "Yes, we can Google for what we need, but especially for people who are second language, the librarian can help you focus and save time to find the information that you are searching"

Some participants note they use the Library for shelter if they're without transportation or alone for a part of the day while waiting to pick up family members from work or activities. It is also used as a cooling or warming shelter for adverse weather events.

Collections, Services, Programs, and Resources

The community sees the library as a point of access for much more than books, audiobooks, CDs, and DVDs, though many did mention using these materials. Among the houseless population, many stated that they wanted more reading material in shelters. For formerly incarcerated individuals, the library represented a space to get away and have access to books and other forms of entertainment. Resources commonly mentioned by all types of participants included:

- Community rooms.

- Job search and preparation.

- Libby.

- Museum passes.

- Subscriptions to do research.

- Support from librarians.

- Technology for kids.

Printing, copying, computer labs, and other business services were a key feature for those navigating administrative systems, and were particularly in demand on the Eastside. Adults use the internet to complete job applications and benefits paperwork, or to develop small businesses. Youth and students were less likely to use the Library for these functions, as many have home computers or school libraries for these purposes.

Some participants highlighted TPL as a library system that delivers high-quality Native programming, but that the programming is not offered in neighborhoods where Native community members reside.

While feedback on Main overall was neutral to negative, community members want to preserve the Northwest Room.

- "NW Room was one of the only places I could go as a child to learn about the treaties. Tribal people who want to access those records cannot lose access... Could be a cool project to partner with the Puyallup Tribe on this."

Community Connections

Many participants described the library as a community place to meet with friends, spend time with family, receive tutoring, or attend events like online TPL events, Tacoma Reads, and Summer Reads. Story time for children is especially important, as for many young people or families with young children, Story Time is their primary or only contact with the library. Youth who don't choose to play sports appreciate the library as an alternative to recreational sports opportunities at community centers.

Librarians play an important role in the community atmosphere, as some participants noted that library staff have a unique ability to connect with people and develop one-on-one relationships with patrons. Customers see library staff as an approachable, neutral, and trusted resource to connect people with help, not as an "authority" or "enforcer" of library rules.[2]

One participant noted that the library also creates connections across time and generations.

- "Library as a space is more than just about checking out books, it is a space for youths, families, and elders. Library is a container for knowledge that can be passed down and a bridge to expand knowledge and wisdom that ancestors may not have been able to pass down."

Participants say they would love the Library to play a resource communication role and for librarians to support patrons in learning about and applying for public benefits at the Library.

Gaps

Many community members raised the loss of the MLK and Swan Creek branches to the community. Lack of story time, circle time, and computer access were some key losses noted. Some houseless individuals felt that they miss the Library as a place to go and seek refuge away from daily life.

- "Some people don't have internet access; not having a library you're missing out a bunch of information; it's the library everything is there."

- "It's been a long time that the library has been taken away from the Eastside. I don't know why they built [it] then closed it down. I could not understand that. Now the City is trying to sell the building to community people. How can we get it back?.. The kids are not able to get their books to read. There's a lot of assignments for their children that parents need to be able to go to space to look at books to check out, read to the kids, have a space where student can go and study. There's nothing for the Eastside right now. There's no space for the community right now."

- "For the eastside really nothing is available as alternative; we have to go out to downtown to find books. I think we have been robbed of opportunity to be better educated. There's no alternative besides going to main library"

---

[2] There is a common misconception that TPL charges late fees. TPL has not done so since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some participants indicated some library use, especially borrowing books, and awareness of library services such as holds, audio books, YA materials, and events. Some participants were not aware of other programming at libraries, such as tutoring, online resources, access to E-books, and other services outside of brick-and-mortar buildings

Some respondents mentioned they were not regular TPL users despite residing in Tacoma, largely due to difficulties accessing the current distribution of branches without a car. Those who have the means (e.g., transportation or time) visit the Wheelock and Mottet Branches, PCLS libraries including in Lakewood and University Place, service providers like the Recovery Center or Worksource, and UW Tacoma and Evergreen College libraries. Some of these other libraries are attractive because of convenient parking, clean grounds, adequate study/quiet space. In contrast, many Hilltop respondents mentioned reservations about the Main Library including inconvenient hours, the steep hill, inaccessible parking (hard to find and not free), discomfort with the population that is homeless, and a perceived sense of danger. Others cited personal reasons like lack of time.

Students in high school and middle school lacked understanding of library offerings or the differences between a public library and school library. Several students noted that unless they are looking for citations for schoolwork, they do not regularly engage with TPL, though some students' siblings received craft kits during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some students shared fond memories of TPL story times and activities from earlier in their lives.

- "Why don't they just help the school library that we are already using?"

While most youth identified the Library as a safe space, some shared a feeling of being unwelcomed in the libraries, including due to a lack of Vietnamese and Spanish signage and an assumption that the library will not have culturally relevant resources. These students noted that the Main library is particularly unwelcoming due to a feeling that they are being "watched," which they stated was similar to being at the mall. While these students expressed concern about this experience, they noted that librarians there must address significant loitering and panhandling.

Many respondents stated they were not aware about library hours and whether the Library was open, especially because of confusion due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some comments suggested that the collections were not culturally relevant and are tailored to a White-dominant narrative:

- "My white privilege library doesn't have books I want to read."

- "…dislike limited cultural books."

Community Needs

Most people felt very positively about their community, noting neighborhood cohesiveness and willingness to work together. Participants enjoy the community atmosphere, including a variety of new and old growing businesses, a walkable neighborhood, and a sense of social justice. Some participants also noted they appreciate cultural diversity, access to resources, affordable restaurants, a feeling of safety, and access to medical care.

Hilltop participants most often cited crime, safety concerns, gentrification, and homelessness as concerns about their neighborhood. Eastside participants also expressed concerns about safety, violence, and homelessness, and were more likely than their Hilltop counterparts to also mention concerns with traffic

safety and walkability, especially lack of pedestrian infrastructure and stop signs at intersections. Physical accessibility was a high concern for those without access to transportation, and the isolation felt in the Eastside. Some younger participants noted that public transportation doesn't feel adequately safe.

What are the top community needs and priorities?

Top community needs echoed many of the previously described themes about the role of the Library in creating safe spaces, access to resources, and community connections.

- "Having a full-service library with a large variety of books, periodicals, computers and instruction, meeting space, study space, etc. A library that reflects the community and offers opportunities to meet with others and learn."

- "A library's role is to do more than have books, but to educate, provide resources, and safe spaces for learning and community building."

Participants also cited a need for library materials that are meaningful and relevant to the community. For example, the Eastside is a diverse place with many elders and an immigrant population who sometimes speak three or more languages. Library resources should be culturally sensitive to these patrons.

Many participants also mentioned needs related to youth and education. Participants noted that youth especially need a safe place to hang out, receive guidance and mentorship, be themselves, learn, and augment their K-12 education.

- "We need programs for all ages including children's story times, financial education for teens, and author events."

Library Space and Location

Survey respondents indicated what they want to see in a library space and location. Across the two neighborhoods there was a desire for any new library to be designed by and for the community they serve.

- "Treat Eastside and Hilltop equally; look at North, South Tacoma. Treat us the same. Give us the same opportunities, don't look at the crime, treat us the same. It may look different based on the needs of the people in the community"

Eastside

Eastside participants want a library on the Eastside. They find that getting to a local library is currently very challenging. A central, accessible, convenient location that is walkable and accessible via transit is a priority. Some participants noted that it is especially important for the Library to be accessible by children and people with mobility needs.

Participants expressed overwhelming support for a brick-and-mortar branch or other physical location. It needs to be spacious and accessible. Exceptions to this desire for a physical space were the houseless population and young students without transportation, both of which imagined mobile services and collections that could meet them where they were in shelter or in school.

- "I have four young kids ages 10, 9, 7, and 6. Even though there's digital resources…there's something important about going to the place to see and touch the books"

- "Physical location is a big deal. Church is like my home, so like a library being close to my home and I need something I can always stop by. Emotionally if you have a library closer to you. I feel like with a library closer will make it feel a friendly neighborhood."

Parts of this neighborhood lack community centers, places to gather, grocery stores, and other community resources. Some participants seek for TPL to fill this void by offering gathering spaces and spaces where community members can build relationships, including potentially partnering with other nonprofit communities active in the area like Asia Pacific Cultural Center and Korean Women's Association. One participant noted that a library can serve as a place that eliminates barriers between cultures and another observed that libraries can be spaces where parents can connect with other parents while children are at events. There was also discussion of a partnership with the Puyallup Tribe. Suggested gathering spaces included:

- Community space for nonprofits to use as a free place for gatherings and events.
- Gathering spaces for the public including room for community meetings.
- Movie viewing spaces (large rooms).
- Playgrounds for kids.
- Room for community meetings.
- Small conference rooms.

Specific locations mentioned in the Eastside neighborhood include:

- 38th and Pacific.
- A Spokane-like library/park combination at the Portland Avenue Park in collaboration with Metro Parks Tacoma.
- Tacoma Housing Authority's Arlington Drive Youth Campus – a location for mobile services.
- McKinley hill near the current Mottet Branch location.
- Near the Eastside Community Center where people are already gathering to work out.
- Swan Creek Park.

Design ideas include:

- Art.
- Comfortable chairs.
- A warm and inviting structure.

Desired amenities include:

- Café.
- Children's spaces.
- Computers, internet, and printing services.
- A modern space to study.

Hilltop

As with the Eastside, Hilltop participants expressed overwhelming support for a brick and mortar or other physical location. An exception is the houseless population and young students without transportation who imagined mobile services and collections that could meet them where they were in shelter or in school. Most are hopeful for a full-service library branch on the Hilltop.

- "A standard library like other areas of the city."

- "[It should be the] beating heart of the Hilltop. It would be easily accessed by public transportation and have an adequate parking lot. The library should be located in central Hilltop and walkable from homes and businesses."

- "Would like a place within walking distance to be able to see other humans."

Specific recommendations in the Hilltop neighborhood include:

- On MLK Jr Way, especially near People's Park, People's Center, the AME Renaissance Center, or at the future site of Grit City Coop.

- Near Hilltop Heritage Middle School.

- On M Street.

- On the Evergreen campus.

- Near Division Ave.

- At the old Wonder Bread building on Sprague.

- On street level of new development.

- Near Forterra.

- On 12th or 15th with bus access.

- Near Wright Park.

Design ideas include:

- ADA accessibility.

- Architecture that makes spaces quiet but not silent.

- Art by local artists.

- Skylights.

- Window seats.

Desired amenities include:

- An art room.

- Café.

- Classrooms.

- Meeting spaces, including space to celebrate and host events.

- Play area.

- Public bathrooms.

- Space to display student writing.

- Space to listen to audiobooks.

Library Collections, Services, and Programming

Collections

Many attendees described the importance of books and e-books, including books by authors of color and books that reflect the interests of youth and students. Specific suggestions included:

- Authentic Native material, including books on Native grief.

- Books in languages other than English, especially languages spoken by nearby residents.

- Large-print books.

- Manga and graphic novels.

- A range of genres including fantasy and horror.

- Recipe books and cookbooks.

- Research materials, including:

  - Genealogical information.

  - Local history.

  - Resources to research medical sciences.

  - Textbooks.

- Movies.

- Newspapers and periodicals.

- Tool library, especially for vehicle repairs.

- Recreational collections, including:

  - Video games and board games.

  - Museum pass or zoo pass.

  - Costumes for patrons to use to play out stories.

Services

Participants seek a wide range of supports, including:

- Academic supports, including:

  - College application information and support.

  - Tutoring and homework support for children to equalize educations.

-             Tutoring for adults.

- **Food:**
  -      Farmers markets in the parking lot.
  -      Mobile food pantries.
  -      Summer lunch.

- **Job and career supports, including:**
  -      Unemployment supports.
  -      Job training.

- **Life skills education, including:**
  -      Financial education.
  -      Literacy education in English.
  -      ESL support and classes.
  -      Information about COVID-19 supports, such as resources about rent moratoriums.
  -      Mentorship from knowledgeable staff.
  -      Support with legal research and services.
  -      Tax help.

- **Social services for specific populations, including:**
  -      Drug outreach.
  -      Rotating community services representatives, such as DSHS or other state resources.
  -      For formerly incarcerated individuals, support researching background check data on themselves to fix inaccurate information.
  -      Job and housing resources for people experiencing homelessness.
  -      Resources in languages other than English.

- **Supports for people with hearing and vision impairments, including:**
  -      Devices for people with hearing impairments.
  -      Storytelling for people with vision impairments.

- **Tech resources, including:**
  -      Cable television.
  -      Computers and workstations.
  -      Laptops and other devices for checkout.
  -      Online support for gaming resources.
  -      Phones.

- ▫ Printing, copying, and fax.
- ▫ Training on technology, tech skills, and computer literacy, especially for older adults.
- ▫ Wireless hotspots and high-speed wi-fi.
- ▪ Other suggestions include:
  - ▫ Book delivery to residences nearby, including to shelters, via mail or bookmobile.
  - ▫ Free book on birthday.

Programming

Participants seek a range of programming at the library, including:

- ▪ Activities, including:
  - ▫ Art classes.
  - ▫ Exhibits of artifacts from other countries.
  - ▫ Hands-on science and experiential opportunities.
  - ▫ Interest groups such as book clubs, Anime club, or board games.
  - ▫ Language classes for languages other than English.
  - ▫ Take-home activities.
  - ▫ Teen activities.
  - ▫ Yoga classes.
- ▪ Children's and family-friendly programming, including:
  - ▫ Read-aloud sessions.
  - ▫ Programming and services for families of children with special needs including a dedicated room to read and meet other families.
  - ▫ Programming in schools to bring the library directly to youth.
  - ▫ Summer programming.
- ▪ Events, including:
  - ▫ Events focused on cultural awareness, DEI, and critical race theory
  - ▫ Community celebrations: holidays, cultural events, e.g., "Books and Burritos."
  - ▫ Guest speakers.
  - ▫ Programming tailored to Native and Indigenous peoples.
  - ▫ Programming that can engage the whole family. "Even if there is something I want to do, I watch my siblings, is there something we can do all together?"
  - ▫ Storytelling for older adults.
  - ▫ Video game tournaments.

- □　Viewing parties for large athletic events.

- □　Workshops.

Hours and Staff

Many participants seek extended hours of library services, including on weekends and in evenings. This is especially important to accommodate a range of patrons' work schedules. Some participants also requested extended check-out periods to accommodate the reading schedules of people in school and those reading in a second language.

Participants emphasized the importance of library staff. Some participants suggested that staff could better serve the community through increased cultural competence and resilience, including:

- Diverse staff to relate to and speak the languages of the people that live in the area.

- Staff trained in anti-racist principles and the ability to work with people from different cultures.

Other Comments

A few notable other comments include:

- Interest in reciprocal agreements with other libraries to allow people with library cards from other library systems to be able to use the library.

- Variations in recommendations for partnership with the Puyallup Tribe.

- Participants wanted to understand more about the reasons behind the closure of the two branches.

Visioning Workshops

In late January and early February, the engagement team hosted a series of in-person and virtual visioning workshops to gather community members' input about their hopes and dreams for library services in Eastside and Hilltop. Exhibit 24 shows a list of these events, across which 114 people participated. Each workshop was designed as a drop-in event, which allowed participants to attend at a time that was convenient for them and to participate in the engagement for a length of time of their choosing. In-person events included boxed meals for participants to take home with them.

Exhibit 24. List of Visioning Workshops

Date and Time	Location	Neighborhood Focus
Saturday, January 22 at 11 am	Virtual	Both
Saturday, January 29 at 11 am	Tacoma Community House	Hilltop
Saturday, February 5 at 11 am	Eastside Community Center	Eastside
Thursday, February 10 at 7:30 pm	Virtual	Both

Source: BERK, 2022.

The study team identified workshop learning objectives for both the Feasibility Study consulting team and participants, as described in Exhibit 25.

Exhibit 25. Learning Objectives for Visioning Workshops

Learning Objectives for the Feasibility Study Team	Learning Objectives for Participants
▪ Identify priorities for library services in Eastside and Hilltop, building on what we learned in the survey and community partner-hosted engagement in the fall of 2021. ▪ Identify community assets and resources that can support the delivery of library services in Eastside and Hilltop. ▪ Identify specific options (e.g., types of partners; locations; types of services) that can support community desires and needs within the community.	▪ Understand the community input from the survey and fall engagement. ▪ Understand what is possible in terms of library services, not just as brick-and-mortar buildings, but the full scope of library service possibilities and relation to existing community assets. ▪ Understand what is possible within TPL's current financial context and political will, and relative costs. ▪ Understand TPL's role within the context of City of Tacoma services and operations. ▪ Feel a sense of community agency and opportunity to voice concerns, identify challenges, and feel validated in front of TPL leadership and staff.

Each workshop offered several informational and interactive activities, including:

▪ Informational posters about the Feasibility Study and options for library services.

▪ A "recipe station" to identify the "perfect balance of ingredients" for library services.

▪ A map station to identify potential locations for library services in Eastside and Hilltop.

General Feedback

Participants in both Eastside and Hilltop expressed interest in collections and events, including activities, classes, and workshops.

Many participants described the physical spaces they desire for a library. Commonly noted spaces included a café, outdoor greenspace, quiet study areas, and a lounge. Some participants emphasized that indoor-outdoor space could expand the usable area of a library building without a need to renovate or expand a building.

In both Eastside and Hilltop, participants desired a location that is close to other businesses and accessible by transit. While many participants noted the importance of transit access, they also observed that parking is important as Tacoma's transit system is not comprehensive. One strength is that students have access to free transit.

Some participants expressed concern that potential co-location with another organization could "water down" the focus on library services.

Exhibit 26. "Ingredient List" for Eastside Library Services developed by a Visioning Workshop Attendee
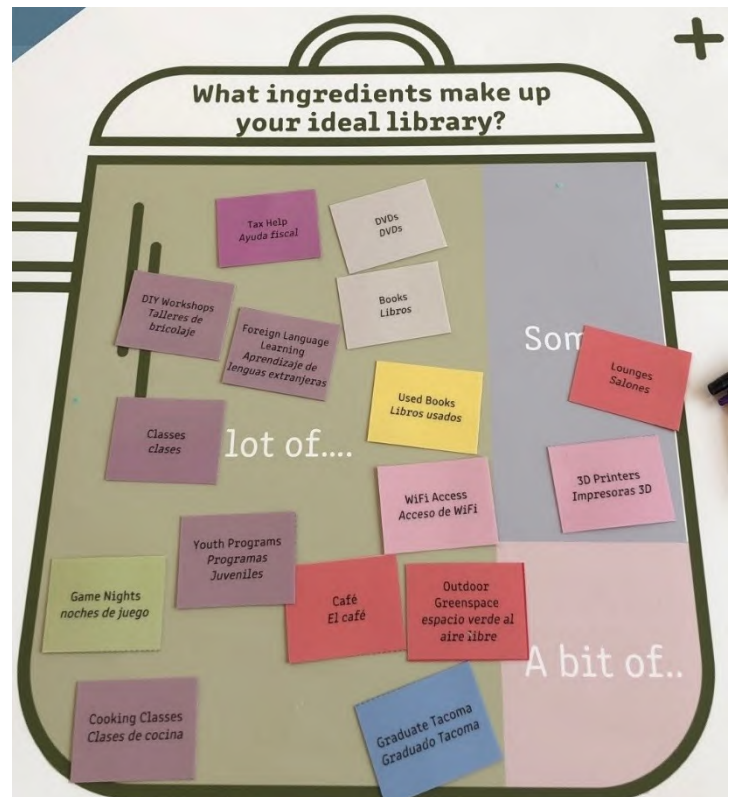
Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 27. Hilltop Visioning Workshop on Saturday, January 29

Source: BERK, 2022.

Eastside Feedback

Some participants noted that the community has a larger Latinx population, which may be more family-oriented and tight-knit than other communities in Tacoma, and that the Library should consider culturally relevant services for this segment of the community.

Eastside participants also provided input on potential locations for library services. See Exhibit 28 for an example map with participant input and the text box at right for a list of potential specific locations for library services. Participants noted that the neighborhood is dispersed and does not have a clear center, which creates challenges in distributing services to residents in this area. Hilly topography in the neighborhood creates challenges in identifying a single location that is accessible to everyone, and similarly creates challenges for Eastside residents looking to access the Mottet branch.

Hilltop Feedback

Some participants noted that Hilltop is more resourced than Eastside due to its proximity to downtown Tacoma and expressed desire in supplementing the neighborhoods existing resources – especially providing additional technology access – with a full-service library.

Hilltop participants also provided input on potential locations for library services. See Exhibit 29 and Exhibit 30 for example maps with participant input and the text box at right for a list of potential specific locations for library services. To avoid duplication of services with Main, some participants suggested that library services in Hilltop should be located a significant distance away from Main.

Some participants observed that the neighborhood is gentrifying.

Potential Locations for Library Services in Eastside

- In or near Salishan.

- In the center of the neighborhood near McKinley Playfield.

- In the south part of the neighborhood, especially near the Eastside Community Center.

- Near the neighborhood business district in the north part of the neighborhood near the Mottet branch.

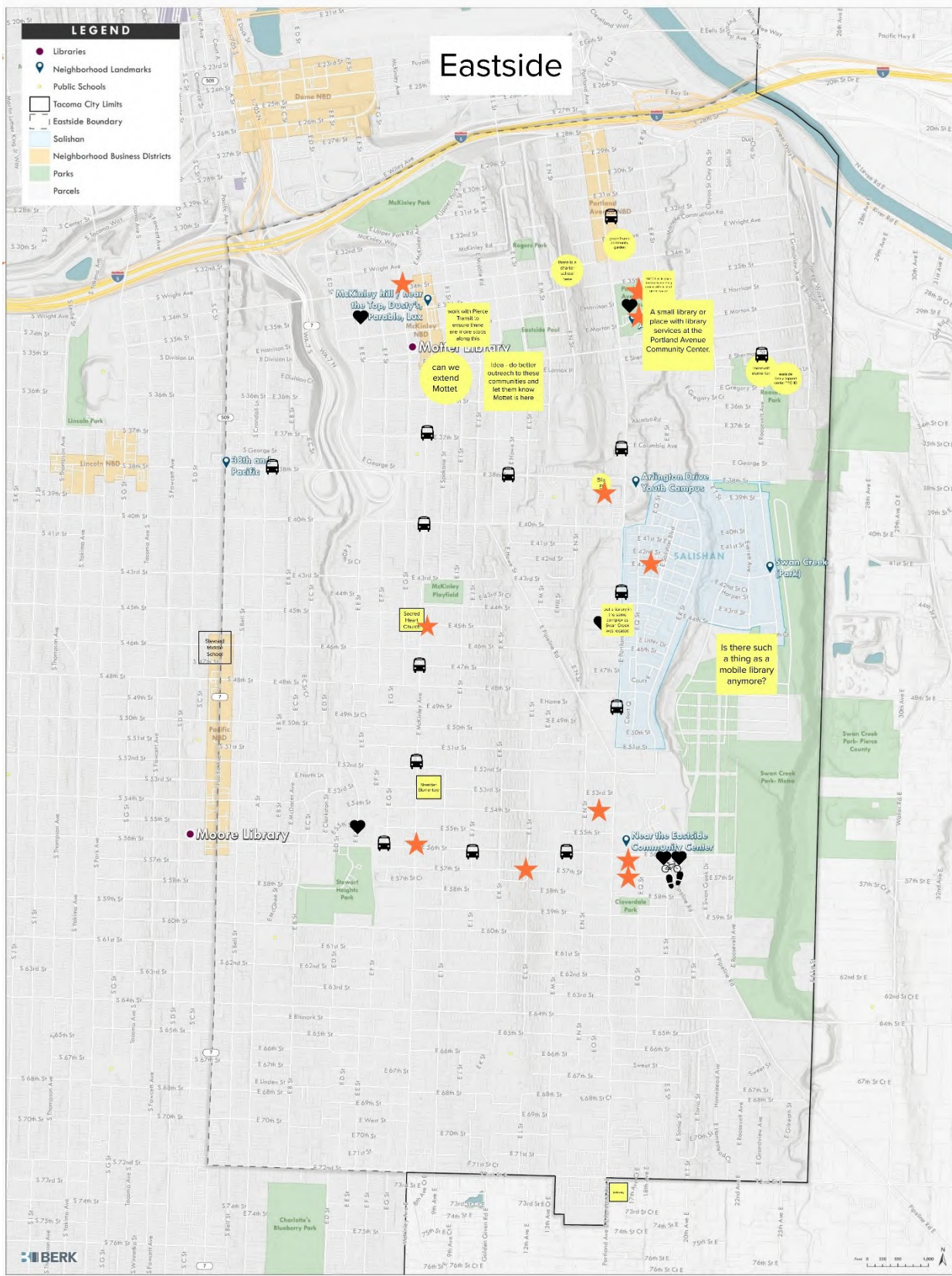- Near Portland Avenue Park or along Portland Avenue.

Potential Locations for Library Services in Hilltop

- In the northeast corner of the neighborhood near Wright Park.

- Within walking distance to schools like Stanley and McCarver elementary schools or Hilltop Heritage Middle School.

- Within the Neighborhood Business District, including on MLK Avenue, near People's Park.

- Within the triangle created by the following three points: Safeway on 11th, Stanley Playfield, and McCarver Park.

Exhibit 28. Sample Eastside Map from a Virtual Visioning Workshop
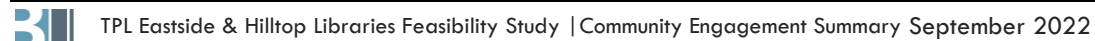

Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 29. Sample Hilltop Map (1 of 2) from a Virtual Visioning Workshop

Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 30. Sample Hilltop Map (2 of 2) from a Virtual Visioning Workshop

Source: BERK, 2022.

Phase 2: Service and Funding Options

Key Findings

Key findings of Phase 2 engagement activities include:

- **Eastside participants are most interested in the option to develop two libraries in different areas of the neighborhood,** as this would offer the greatest accessibility and walkability for the neighborhood and offered a good balance of cost and benefit. Some participants suggested one library be located near Salishan. Some participants also expressed interest in upgrading and expanding Mottet, particularly because of a love for the building and its role in the community. Many participants also noted that the existing building is quite small. Few participants expressed interest in creating a large new library in the neighborhood, as it would be costly and would not be accessible to portions of the large neighborhood.

- **Hilltop participants are most interested in the option to develop a medium-sized library inside the neighborhood business district** (NBD), as it would offer the greatest accessibility and walkability and would be lower-cost than other options. Many participants highly prioritized locating a library inside the neighborhood, though did not anticipate that an Express Library in the neighborhood would be sufficient.

- **Participants most commonly support funding options** focused on acquiring new funding and oppose the options focused on reallocating funds. While some participants expressed concern about having their taxes raised, others expressed a willingness to pay higher taxes for library services. There was widespread concern about options to fully or partially close Main or Mottet.

- **Participants highly value outreach from the library.** Much of the support for the Eastside options to upgrade/expand or refurbish Mottet were centered on the outreach components included in these options.

- **Participants do not want any of the existing libraries to close.** Some participants expressed concern that existing or future libraries might be closed in the future if the plans to bring services to Eastside or Hilltop are too ambitious.

Spring 2022 Survey

Overview

From May 9 through May 31, 2022, a survey about library service and funding options was available online in English, Korean, Russian, Spanish, and Vietnamese.[3]

The survey was promoted via TPL's digital channels and via the community engagement partners. TPL also engaged the same distribution partners as the Autumn 2021 survey, including Metro Parks Tacoma,

---

[3] The fall 2021 visioning survey was available in three additional languages that are also commonly spoken in Tacoma, but no respondents submitted survey responses in those languages. As a result, we did not translate the spring 2022 survey into those languages.

Tacoma Housing Authority, and Tacoma Public Schools. During this time, 414 individuals submitted responses, including 411 English responses and three Spanish responses. The response was significantly lower than in fall, perhaps due to survey fatigue or confusion with the first survey.

Respondent Demographics

Exhibit 31 shows the neighborhood(s) to which survey respondents have connections. Similar proportions of survey respondents have connections to the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods. About four in ten survey respondents have a connection to other neighborhoods of Tacoma, including Central, Downtown, Lincoln, Northeast, North End, South End, Stadium, and West End.

Exhibit 31. Respondent Neighborhood Affiliation

Eastside Tacoma	40%
Hilltop	40%
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	42%
None of the above	2%
Total Respondents	**355**

Note: Totals do not sum to 100% because respondents could select more than one option.

Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 32 shows respondents' race(s) and ethnicity(ies). About three in four survey respondents is White, one in eight is Black or African American, one in ten is Asian, one in ten is Hispanic or Latino/a/x/e, one in twenty is Native American, Indigenous, or Alaska Native, and one in thirty is Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Respondents with connections to Eastside and Hilltop are slightly less likely to identify as White or Caucasian than respondents with connections to other neighborhoods.

Exhibit 32. Respondent Race(s) and Ethnicity(ies) by Neighborhood Affiliation

	Total	Eastside	Hilltop	Another neighborhood of Tacoma
Asian	10%	11%	10%	10%
Black or African American	13%	15%	18%	12%
Hispanic or Latino/a/Latinx/Latine	9%	8%	11%	8%
Native American/Indigenous/Alaska Native	5%	6%	5%	4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	3%	3%	4%	3%
White/Caucasian	77%	71%	74%	81%
Other (please specify)	3%	5%	4%	2%
Total Respondents	**329**	**133**	**136**	**135**

Note: Totals do not sum to 100% because respondents could select more than one option.

Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 33 shows respondents' ages. Over half of respondents are between the ages of 25 and 44 inclusive.

Exhibit 33. Respondent Age by Neighborhood Affiliation

	Total	Eastside	Hilltop	Another neighborhood of Tacoma
17 or younger	2%	2%	2%	1%
18-24 years old	3%	4%	2%	2%
25-34 years old	21%	20%	20%	18%
35-44 years old	31%	33%	41%	29%
45-54 years old	17%	21%	15%	18%
55-64 years old	13%	12%	10%	16%
65-74 years old	9%	6%	7%	9%
75 years or older	5%	2%	2%	7%
Total Respondents	**356**	**140**	**143**	**147**

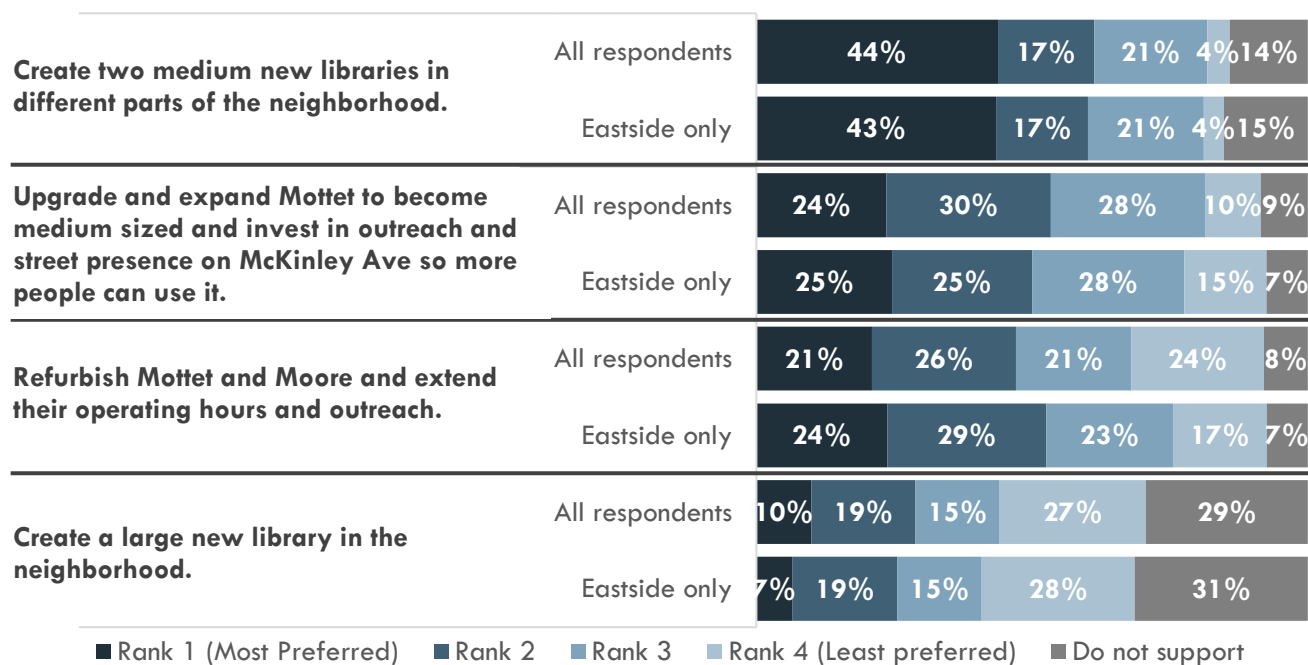*Source: BERK, 2022.*

Eastside Option Preferences

The survey presented four potential options for library services in Eastside and asked respondents to rank these options, shown in Exhibit 34. If a respondent did not support one or more of the options, they were able to exclude this option from their ranking and indicate it as unsupported. As the exhibit shows, responses do not differ significantly between all respondents and respondents with connections to Eastside.

Respondents most highly rank the option to create two medium new libraries in different parts of the neighborhood. More than four in ten respondents selected this as their most preferred option. Respondents about equally support two other options: upgrading and expanding Mottet to become medium sized and investing in outreach and street presence on McKinely Ave so more people can use it, and refurbishing Mottet and Moore and extending their operating hours and outreach.

Respondents are least likely to support creating a large new library in the neighborhood. Nearly one in three respondents excluded this option from their ranking and indicated that they do not support it.

Exhibit 34. Ranking of Eastside Options (N=395)

		Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Rank 4	Do not support
Create two medium new libraries in different parts of the neighborhood.	All respondents	44%	17%	21%	4%	14%
	Eastside only	43%	17%	21%	4%	15%
Upgrade and expand Mottet to become medium sized and invest in outreach and street presence on McKinley Ave so more people can use it.	All respondents	24%	30%	28%	10%	9%
	Eastside only	25%	25%	28%	15%	7%
Refurbish Mottet and Moore and extend their operating hours and outreach.	All respondents	21%	26%	21%	24%	8%
	Eastside only	24%	29%	23%	17%	7%
Create a large new library in the neighborhood.	All respondents	10%	19%	15%	27%	29%
	Eastside only	7%	19%	15%	28%	31%

■ Rank 1 (Most Preferred)   ■ Rank 2   ■ Rank 3   ■ Rank 4 (Least preferred)   ■ Do not support

Source: BERK, 2022.

313 respondents provided a comment describing the rationale behind their ranking. A summary of the pros and cons that commenters identified about each option is provided in Exhibit 35.

Several commenters also expressed an interest in a library in Salishan.

Exhibit 35. Pros and Cons of Eastside Options as Identified by Survey Commenters (N = 313)

Option	Pros	Cons
Option 1: **Create two medium new libraries in different parts of the neighborhood.**	▪ **More libraries would serve more people and could offer a diversity of services to reflect Eastside's diverse population** ▪ **Two libraries would offer more equitable access and increase the level of safe walkability, especially given the size and dispersed nature of the neighborhood** ▪ **Would balance cost and benefit** ▪ More libraries would encourage more people to visit and create opportunities for residents to build relationships with librarians and other community members at their branches ▪ Medium libraries feel welcoming and would be less crowded ▪ Multiple libraries would increase the visibility of the TPL system ▪ Multiple libraries would create more jobs	▪ **High cost** and could be vulnerable to future funding shortages ▪ Concern that this option would lead to closure of Mottet and Moore ▪ Would not leverage existing buildings. Construction could create environmental waste ▪ Concern that the library cannot maintain two structures, especially given recent temporary closures of other branches ▪ Would relocate but not resolve the current problem of too few libraries
Option 2: **Upgrade and expand Mottet to become medium sized and invest in outreach and street presence on McKinley Ave so more people can use it.**	▪ **Would balance cost and benefit** ▪ **Would leverage existing resources** ▪ **Emphasis on quality over quantity of services** ▪ **Viable to be funded** ▪ More environmentally friendly ▪ Mottet's location is convenient and close to McKinley NBD	▪ Low usage of Mottet library would minimize the impact of this investment ▪ Would not resolve the current problem of too few libraries
Option 3: **Refurbish Mottet and Moore and extend their operating hours and outreach.**	▪ **Would balance cost and benefit** ▪ **Viable to be funded** ▪ **Would leverage existing resources and potential of Mottet** ▪ **Importance of extended hours and outreach** ▪ Emphasis on quality over quantity of services ▪ As older branches, Mottet and Moore need upgrades ▪ More environmentally friendly ▪ Community has familiarity with these locations ▪ Smaller project could offer high impact in a short time or could be done in addition to the other options ▪ Would maintain the historic Mottet building and cohesiveness of the neighborhood	▪ Extension of operating hours at these branches could be unfair unless the change was made at all branches ▪ Would not add a new branch to replace the closed Swan Creek branch or resolve the current problem of too few libraries ▪ Mottet is too small
Option 4: **Create a large new library in the neighborhood.**	▪ Would create a neighborhood destination ▪ Desire to "dream big" ▪ Could incorporate current technologies and environmentally sustainable materials ▪ Large library would reflect the large size of the neighborhood	▪ **High cost** and could be vulnerable to future funding shortages ▪ Concern that this option would lead to closure of Mottet and Moore ▪ Would not leverage existing buildings. Construction could create environmental waste ▪ Large size is unnecessary and could be intimidating or unwelcoming

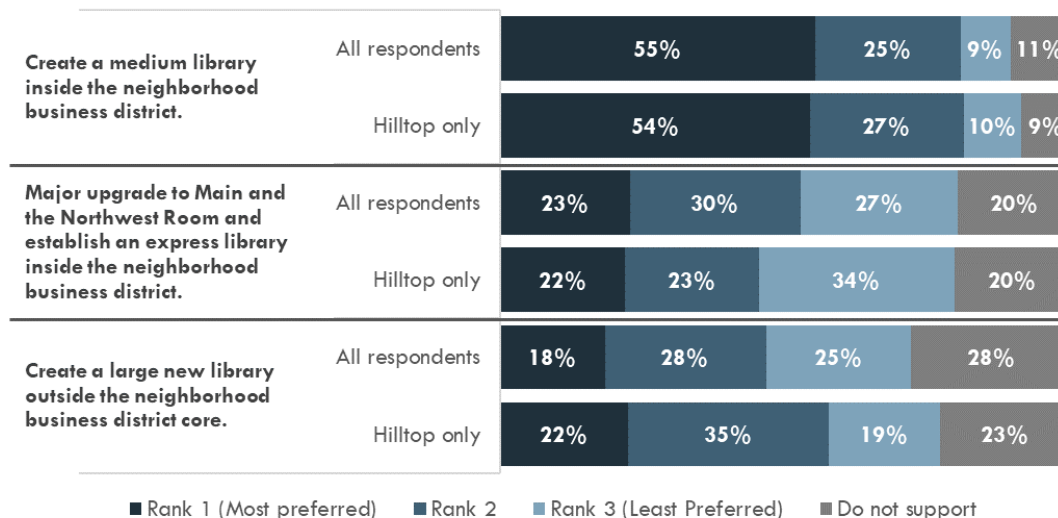*Note: More commonly noted sentiments are shown in bold.*

Source: BERK, 2022.

Hilltop Option Preferences

The survey presented three potential options for library services in Hilltop and asked respondents to rank these options, as shown in Exhibit 36. If a respondent did not support one or more of the options, they were able to exclude this option from their ranking and indicate it as unsupported. As the exhibit shows, responses generally do not differ significantly between all respondents and respondents with connections to Hilltop.

Respondents most highly rank the option to create a medium library inside the neighborhood business district. More than half of respondents selected this as their most preferred option and eight in ten respondents selected it as either their top or second options. Respondents had similarly lower levels of support for the other two options, though respondents with connections to Hilltop were more likely to prefer the option to create a large new library outside the neighborhood business district core over the option to make a major upgrade to Main and the Northwest Room and establish an Express Library inside the neighborhood business district.

Exhibit 36. Ranking of Hilltop Options (N=361)

		Rank 1 (Most preferred)	Rank 2	Rank 3 (Least Preferred)	Do not support
Create a medium library inside the neighborhood business district.	All respondents	55%	25%	9%	11%
	Hilltop only	54%	27%	10%	9%
Major upgrade to Main and the Northwest Room and establish an express library inside the neighborhood business district.	All respondents	23%	30%	27%	20%
	Hilltop only	22%	23%	34%	20%
Create a large new library outside the neighborhood business district core.	All respondents	18%	28%	25%	28%
	Hilltop only	22%	35%	19%	23%

■ Rank 1 (Most preferred)   ■ Rank 2   ■ Rank 3 (Least Preferred)   ■ Do not support

Source: BERK, 2022.

278 respondents provided a comment describing the rationale behind their ranking. A summary of the pros and cons that commenters identified about each option is provided in Exhibit 37.

Some commenters also noted that the Central neighborhood needs a library.

Exhibit 37. Pros and Cons of Hilltop Options as Identified by Survey Commenters (N = 278)

Option	Pros	Cons
Option 1: **Create a medium library inside the NBD**	▪ **Easier access by foot and transit, including light rail, for most of the neighborhood** ▪ **Would balance improvements with lower cost** ▪ Would support neighborhood density and visitation would benefit from foot traffic in the area where people already gather ▪ Would help establish a sense of neighborhood community ▪ Developing a medium rather than large building could leave remaining funds for minor upgrades to Main ▪ Long-term operations would be sustainable	▪ Could increase displacement and gentrification ▪ Voters may not be willing to fund ▪ Location inside the NBD necessitates a smaller library, which is less preferable
Option 2: **Major upgrade to Main and the NW Room and establish an express library inside the NBD**	▪ **Would leverage existing resources** ▪ Transit changes are improving access between Hilltop and Main ▪ Building is old and would benefit from upgrades ▪ Express library, such as a drive-through, would help with accessibility ▪ Current facility is familiar to the community ▪ Would reduce TPL's carbon footprint ▪ Main is spacious	▪ **Main does not directly serve Hilltop and is a far and hilly walk for much of the neighborhood** ▪ **Express Library would be insufficient and undesirable** ▪ **Safety concerns with the Main branch** ▪ **Difficult parking at Main** ▪ Main lacks a community atmosphere and would need significant improvements ▪ Voters may not be willing to fund ▪ Major upgrades are unnecessary ▪ Could be more doable in a short period of time
Option 3: **Create a large new library outside the NBD core**	▪ **Would be a desirable facility that would support exploration and provide resources for youth and locals** ▪ Would connect the community ▪ Would create jobs	▪ **High cost to build and operate** ▪ **Unnecessary given proximity to the Main library** ▪ Voters may not be willing to fund ▪ Could increase displacement and gentrification ▪ Concern it would be vulnerable to closure in the case of future funding shortages

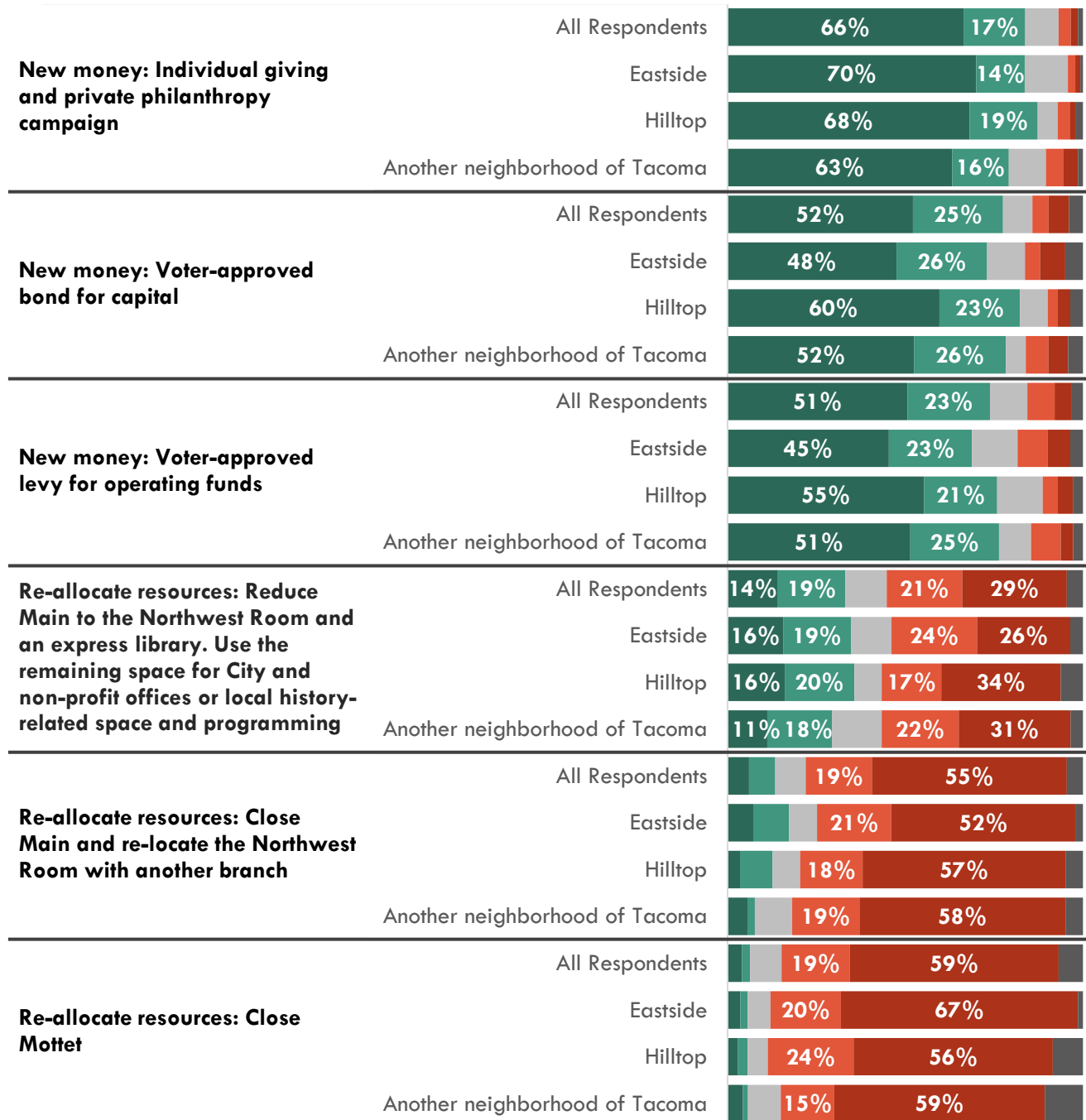*Note: More commonly noted sentiments are shown in bold.*

Source: BERK, 2022.

Funding Option Preferences

The survey presented six potential options for funding library services in Eastside and Hilltop and asked respondents to rate their level of support for each of these options. Exhibit 38 shows respondents' rating of these funding options. As the exhibit shows, a respondent's connection(s) to Eastside, Hilltop, or another neighborhood in Tacoma generally did not impact their level of support for each of the options.

Exhibit 38. Level of Support for Funding Options (N=353)

	Highly support	Somewhat support	Neutral	Somewhat against	Fully against	N/A or unsure
New money: Individual giving and private philanthropy campaign						
All Respondents	66%	17%				
Eastside	70%	14%				
Hilltop	68%	19%				
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	63%	16%				
New money: Voter-approved bond for capital						
All Respondents	52%	25%				
Eastside	48%	26%				
Hilltop	60%	23%				
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	52%	26%				
New money: Voter-approved levy for operating funds						
All Respondents	51%	23%				
Eastside	45%	23%				
Hilltop	55%	21%				
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	51%	25%				
Re-allocate resources: Reduce Main to the Northwest Room and an express library. Use the remaining space for City and non-profit offices or local history-related space and programming						
All Respondents	14%	19%		21%	29%	
Eastside	16%	19%		24%	26%	
Hilltop	16%	20%		17%	34%	
Another neighborhood of Tacoma	11%	18%		22%	31%	
Re-allocate resources: Close Main and re-locate the Northwest Room with another branch						
All Respondents				19%	55%	
Eastside				21%	52%	
Hilltop				18%	57%	
Another neighborhood of Tacoma				19%	58%	
Re-allocate resources: Close Mottet						
All Respondents				19%	59%	
Eastside				20%	67%	
Hilltop				24%	56%	
Another neighborhood of Tacoma				15%	59%	

■ Highly support ■ Somewhat support ■ Neutral ■ Somewhat against ■ Fully against ■ N/A or unsure

Source: BERK, 2022.

Overall, respondents support the options focused on acquiring new funding and oppose the options focused on reallocating funds. Respondents had the highest level of support for acquiring new funding via individual giving and a private philanthropy campaign – 83% of respondents indicated they highly support or somewhat support this option. Respondents also support the options to acquire new funding via a voter-approved bond for capital (77% highly or somewhat support) or via a voter-approved levy for operating funds (74% highly or somewhat support).

Of the options to reallocate resources, respondents least oppose the option to reduce Main to the Northwest Room and an Express Library. One-third of respondents highly or somewhat support this option. Respondents do not support the options to either fully close Main or Mottet.

135 respondents also provided a comment with additional thoughts about funding options. Common themes are described in the following sections.

New money: Bonds or Levies

Many participants expressed a willingness to pay higher taxes in the form of a bond or levy to enhance library services in Eastside and Hilltop, though a few participants noted that they would struggle to afford higher taxes. Some participants noted that bonds and levies are riskier mechanisms in that they can fail based on the will of the voters and discussed the potential for either of these such measure to pass. A few participants noted that any capital funds raised should be used to upgrade all the branches in the TPL system.

Some participants opposed these mechanisms because they wanted Council to fund libraries out of the City's general fund.

New money: Individual Giving and Philanthropy

Participants had limited feedback about individual giving and philanthropy. Some participants noted that private funding would be consistent with the Library's history and could support businesses, though others cautioned that private funding can come with stipulations or fail based on the will of funders.

Reallocate Resources: Close or Reduce Main or Close Mottet

Many respondents expressed strong opposition to any library closures and noted that closing any libraries would be counter to the purpose of the study. Few commenters expressed support for any of these options.

Other Feedback

Several participants noted that the Central neighborhood also needs a library.

Some participants provided feedback on other ways of raising funds for library services in Eastside and Hilltop. These ideas included:

- A state income tax.

- A tax on developers in the Eastside and Hilltop neighborhoods.

- Federal funding or grants.

- Reducing Tacoma Police Department's budget.

Community Partner Engagements

BERK once again recruited trusted Community Partners for formal, paid partnerships to support this project. Community Partners independently organized engagements to gather input from populations that were identified as priority groups for library services but less likely to participate in the online survey.

Six formal community partners were engaged. These Community Partners and their engagement activities include:

1. **Coaching With Purpose (CWP)** conducted two types of engagement. At the Mottet Branch, CWP hosted a pajama story time to draw parents and youth. At this event, CWP engaged attendees to discuss the service and funding options. Each adult received a gift card for attending and each child received a book to take home. The event was advertised through flyers across the neighborhood and on social media. About five families, primarily from Eastside, attended. Some attendees were newcomers to the neighborhood and some were previously unaware of the Mottet Branch.

    CWP also conducted small group and one-on-one conversations in street intercepts in both the Hilltop and Eastside neighborhoods, gathering input from about 15 individuals in Hilltop and 50 people in Eastside.

2. **Evergreen Empowerment Group (EEG)** hosted an evening event at the Rainbow Center on May 18. Participants included approximately twenty people from greater Pierce County— though all had connections to Eastside or Hilltop through work or school – and included adults and youth from the Rainbow Center, Oasis Youth Center, and the greater community. At this event EEG facilitated a small group conversation about the service and funding options for participants who arrived at the beginning of the event and conducted one-on-one conversations with other attendees who arrived later in the evening. The Rainbow Center and EEG co-promoted the event on social media. EEG also attempted a second community event at the Evergreen State College, but participants were unable to attend. In lieu of this event, EEG conducted phone interviews with a few stakeholders with connections to the Hilltop area.

3. **Making A Difference Foundation (MADF)** conducted two engagements at the Eloise's Cooking Pot Food Bank to hear from food bank clients. At each event, MADF tabled and gathered responses to print versions of the online survey (see Spring 2022 Survey). MADF engaged 56 walk-up clients at the first engagement and 67 drive-through clients at the second engagement. All but six of these clients primarily had connections to the Eastside.
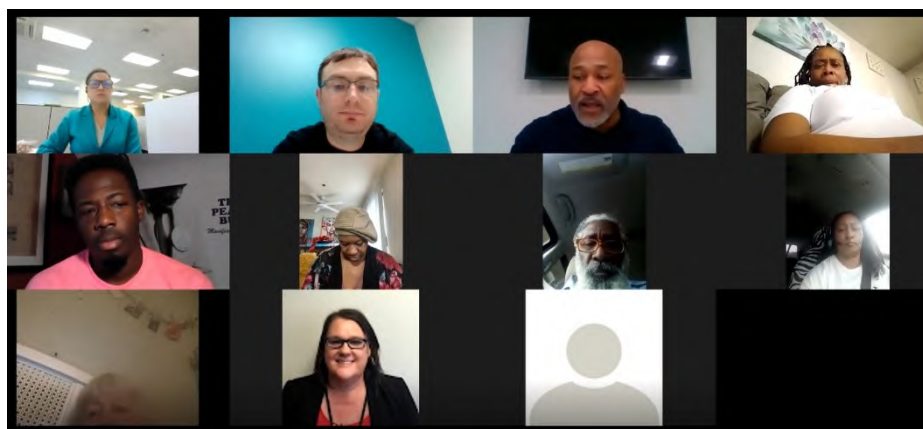
4. **Sound Outreach** hosted two virtual focus group discussions to share information and gather feedback from participants. At each event, Kwabi Amoah-Forson from The Peace Bus delivered opening remarks about the importance of Libraries and community, then participants discussed the service and funding options.

Exhibit 39. Sound Outreach Flyer

Source: Sound Outreach, 2022.

Each attendee received a gift card as a gesture of gratitude for their participation. Sound Outreach conducted outreach through their own channels and distributed flyers, as shown in Exhibit 39, via the Center for Strong Families, the Multicultural Center for Family Hope, Recovery Café, RISE Center, and Valeo Vocation. The two events drew 26 participants, mostly with connections to Hilltop and including retired teachers, community leaders, people experiencing homelessness, and people receiving services from various local organizations.

Exhibit 40. Sound Outreach Virtual Focus Group

Source: Sound Outreach, 2022.

5. **Tacoma Community House (TCH)** conducted two types of engagements. First, TCH delivered presentations and gathered input at two advanced English-language acquisition classes at TCH with a total of 20 students. TCH also conducted 19 one-on-one phone interviews with TCH clients. For both types of engagements, each participant received a gift card and hand-written thank you card as a gesture of gratitude. Most participants received services such as English classes or employment supports from TCH and other organizations in Hilltop, and therefore primarily provided input about the Hilltop options. Few participants had much of an awareness of the Eastside neighborhood, even if they lived in that neighborhood.

Exhibit 41. TCH Presentation to an English-language Acquisition Class
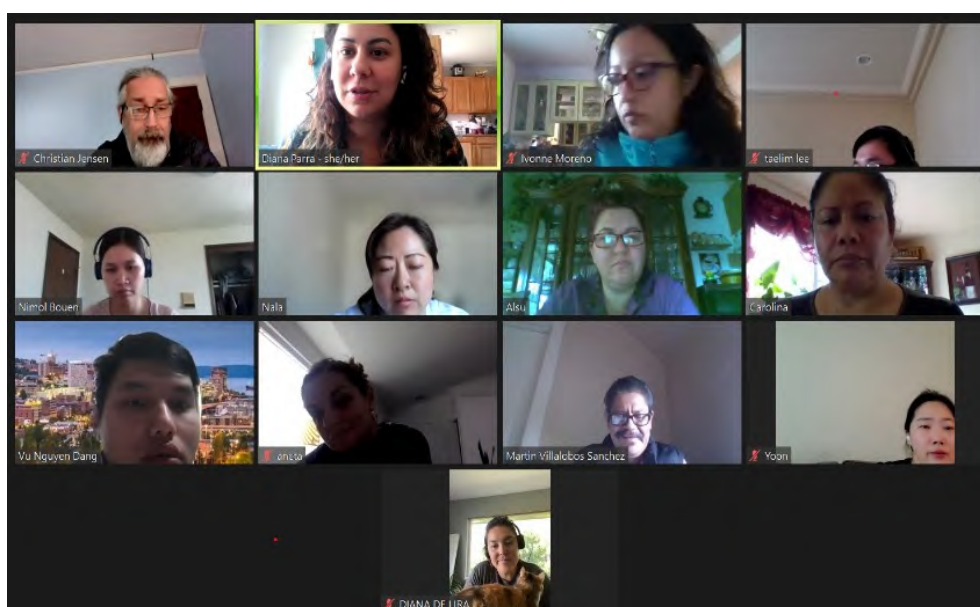

Source: TCH, 2022.

6. **Tacoma Urban Native Alliance / Tahoma Indian Center (TUNA/TIC)** hosted two engagements. The first event was a series of discussions at the Tacoma Indian Center. Approximately 20 people, primarily from Eastside, attended, including people experiencing homelessness, housed community members, and a few youth. At this event, TUNA/TIC provided information about service and funding options and discussed participants' preferences. TUNA/TIC also offered catered food to participants and distributed books written by indigenous authors to youth.

The second engagement was an intercept hosted at a powwow at Surprise Lake Middle School. The powwow was cohosted by three school districts: Puyallup, Fife, and Federal Way, and included several participants from Chief Leschi. TUNA/TIC engaged about forty people in discussions about service and funding options and gathered responses to print versions of the online survey (see Spring 2022 Survey).

Exhibit 42. TUNA/TIC's Books by Indigenous Authors (top) and Intercept Station (bottom)
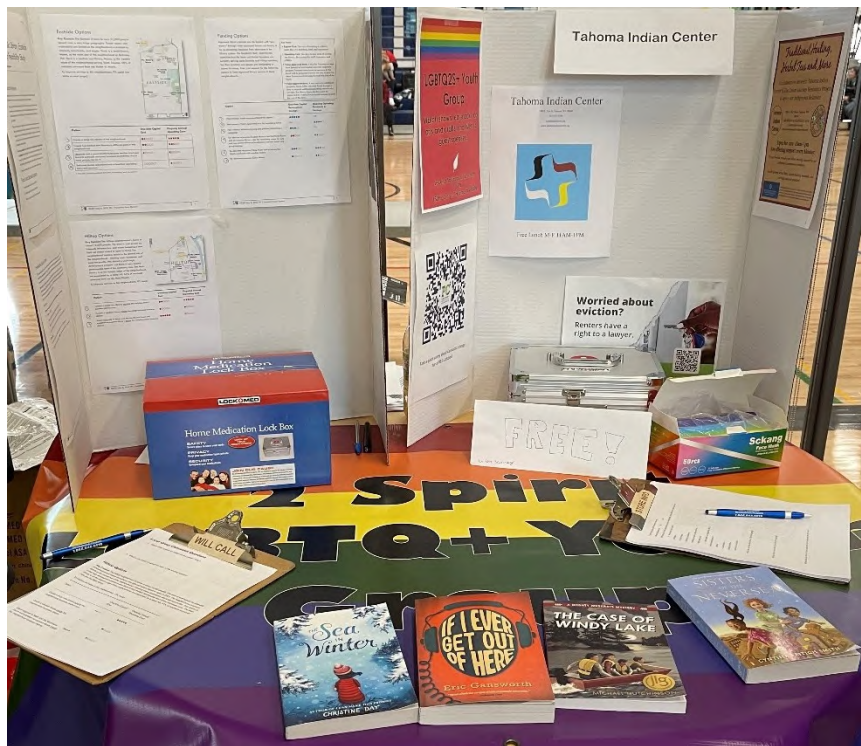
Source: TUNA/TIC, 2022.

Other organizations and individuals also supported the engagement effort as follows:

- **Hilltop Action Coalition** distributed messages about engagement opportunities on their outreach channels.

- **Students in Dr. Anne Taufen's class at the University of Washington Tacoma Graduate Program in Community Planning** engaged with the project materials and developed self-directed research projects on various aspects of the TPL Feasibility Study.

- **Theresa Evans** (an individual community partner) also supported engagement by conducting fifteen one-on-one intercept conversations with community members in the Eastside about service and funding options.

Assuming each Community Partner engaged unique individuals, Exhibit 43 summarizes the total number of individuals reached and basic demographic information.

Exhibit 43. Community Partner Engagement Participants in Spring 2022

Community Engagement Participation	#	%
Estimated Total Participants	**348**	
Neighborhood Connection		
Hilltop	70	26%
Eastside	170	64%
Another neighborhood in Tacoma	24	9%
None of the Above	30	11%
Total Respondents for Neighborhood Info	**267**	
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian	30	11%
Black or African American	46	17%
Hispanic or Latino/a/Latinx/Latine	51	19%
Native American/Indigenous/Alaska Native	65	24%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	14	5%
White/Caucasian	86	32%
Other	7	3%
Total Respondents for Race/Ethnic Info	**267**	
Age Options		
17 or younger	11	8%
18-24 years old	12	9%
25-34 years old	29	21%
35-44 years old	28	20%
45-54 years old	22	16%
55-64 years old	27	20%
65-74 years old	8	6%
75 years or older	1	1%
Total Respondents for Age Info	**138**	

Notes: Not all parties submitted full demographic information, so the disaggregated data does not add up to the total participant number. Participants could report connections to more than one neighborhood, so the percentages for neighborhood connection sum to more than 100%. The same is true for race and ethnicity.

Source: BERK, 2022.

Eastside Option Preferences

Participants provided feedback about their preferences for library services on Hilltop. The options that participants most commonly preferred are shown in Exhibit 44 and specific feedback about each option is shown in the sections below. **Participants were fairly divided on their option preferences, though participants with closer ties to Eastside were more likely to prefer the options to upgrade/expand Mottet and to add two medium libraries in different places.**

Exhibit 44. Most Commonly Preferred Eastside Library Service Options by Engagement Participants with Community Partners

		Eastside Service Options			
		Option 1: Two medium libraries in different places	**Option 2:** Upgrade/expand Mottet; outreach; McKinley street presence	**Option 3:** Refurbish Mottet and Moore; expand their operating hours; outreach	**Option 4:** Large new library
Community Partners	**CWP**		✓		
	EEG		✓		
	MADF	✓	✓		✓
	Sound Outreach	✓*		✓*	✓*
	TCH	✓*			✓*
	TUNA/TIC	✓			

These respondents primarily represented the Hilltop neighborhood and therefore may have less strong of ties to Eastside.

Source: BERK, 2022.

Option 1: Two Medium Libraries in Different Places

Participants who supported this option felt that two libraries would increase accessibility and convenience, especially for people with limited access to transportation. Some people noted that the specific locations of the libraries would be important for the libraries to be truly convenient and explained as an example that the current locations of Mottet and Moore are not convenient. Some participants suggested that a facility on Portland Ave near Salishan could be an accessible option.

Some participants also suggested that two buildings could minimize crowding at each building. As in the first option, some participants expressed doubt that the City would fund construction of a new structure.

Option 2: Upgrade/Expand Mottet; Outreach; McKinley Street Presence

Many participants who supported this option expressed a love for Mottet, including its architecture, historical role in the community, services and activities offered, and location. Many participants who find the location favorable live within walking distance of the building. Despite participants' love for Mottet's

architecture, some noted that the building is small and if it couldn't be expanded, that it could be replaced with a multistory building.

Some participants were unaware of Mottet and its location. The inclusion of outreach in this option was attractive to many participants.

Some participants expressed concern about the recent closure of Mottet due to safety concerns and suggested that a security officer be stationed at the building to prevent another closure.

Option 3: Refurbish Mottet and Moore; Expand their Operating Hours; Outreach

Participants in favor of this option expressed interest in cost savings and extended hours of operation. Some participants noted that this option could be selected instead of option 2 to work with the library's existing assets.

Option 4: Large New Library

Some participants felt a large new library could serve the entire Eastside, especially by providing a larger community gathering space. The word "new" attracted some participants. Other participants had questions about where a new library would be located, and if it would necessitate the closure of Mottet. Some participants expressed doubt that the City would fund construction of a new building.

Other Feedback

Participants provided some additional feedback beyond these four options. Some participants expressed confusion about whether outreach would only be included with the third and fourth options or if it would also be incorporated in the first and second options. Other participants suggested that an Express Library be co-located with a school.

Hilltop Option Preferences

Participants provided feedback about their preferences for library services on Hilltop. The options that participants most commonly preferred are shown in Exhibit 45 and specific feedback about each option is shown in the sections below. **Overall, participants most commonly favored the option to create a medium library inside the neighborhood business district.**

Exhibit 45. Most Commonly Preferred Eastside Library Service Options by Engagement Participants with Community Partners

		Hilltop Service Options		
		Option 1: Medium library inside the NBD	Option 2: Upgrade Main and establish an Express Library in the NBD	Option 3: Large new library outside the NBD
Community Partners	CWP	✓		
	EEG	✓		
	MADF			✓*
	Sound Outreach	✓		
	TCH	✓		
	TUNA/TIC			✓*

These respondents primarily represented the Eastside neighborhood and therefore may have less strong of ties to Hilltop.

Source: BERK, 2022.

Option 1: Medium Library Inside the NBD

Participants who favored this option noted that they have a strong existing familiarity with the NBD and regularly visit the area, so the library would be accessible. Some participants also noted that the light rail would contribute to effective library access. Many participants favored a library with a walkable location and easy access to services and resources over a large building, and some suggested that the library could serve as an academic and resource hub for the NBD, including by serving youth.

The low one-time capital costs and ongoing annual operating costs were also appealing elements of this option for some participants.

Option 2: Upgrade Main and Establish an Express Library in the NBD

Participants who favored this option noted that Main is a historical building for which they feel nostalgia and know how to access.

Participants who opposed this option noted access issues to Main due to limited parking and the large hill between Main and Hilltop and expressed concern that Main is not often used and often closed. Others who opposed this option noted the high one-time capital cost. Some participants were unaware of Main. Some participants expressed concern about encampments at Main and felt that they were unsafe visiting the building.

Option 3: Large New Library Outside the NBD

Participants favored this option as an opportunity to bring significant services to the neighborhood. Some participants suggested that Evergreen College could be a good location for the library. Participants who did not favor this option felt that a large building was unnecessary or would be challenging to navigate.

Some participants expressed confusion about whether this option would involve closure of the Main library.

Other Feedback

Participants provided some additional feedback beyond these three options. Some participants expressed confusion about the difference between the locations inside and outside the NBD, and what the NBD was.

Funding Option Preferences

Participants provided input about their funding option preferences. Exhibit 46 shows a summary of participants' most commonly preferred funding options. **Overall, participants favored the options focused on acquiring new funding over the options to reallocate existing resources.**

Exhibit 46. Most Commonly Preferred Funding Options by Engagement Participants with Community Partners

		Funding Options					
		New: Bond	New: Levy	New: Philanthropy	Reallocate: Reduce Main	Reallocate: Close Main	Reallocate: Close Mottet
Community Partners	CWP			✓			
	EEG		✓				
	MADF	✓	✓	✓	✓		
	Sound Outreach						
	TCH		✓				
	TUNA/TIC	✓	✓			✓	

Source: BERK, 2022.

Participants provided specific feedback about both the new and reallocated funding options. Regarding the new funding options, some participants were concerned about having their taxes raised or concerned that the community would not vote for new taxes. Some of these participants who were not homeowners supported a levy because they would not be impacted by these raised taxes. Other participants favored paying taxes to support library services. Some noted that they anticipated taxes to increase regardless of a library bond or levy and that they'd prefer to have their tax dollars fund library services over other needs. Some participants expressed concern that philanthropy would not be a realistic method of funding library services.

Regarding the reallocated funding options, most participants felt strongly that no libraries should close, though one community partner noted that several participants had a strong distaste for the Main library.

Participants also provided other feedback about funding for library services. Themes of this feedback included:

- **Lack of clarity:** Some participants struggled to provide feedback because they had limited understanding about how each of the funding options differed. Some were unclear on why the restoration of library services in Eastside and Hilltop would be so costly.

- **Frustration about past closures:** Some participants expressed frustration that the libraries had closed in the first place, and others felt it was the City's responsibility to fund the library services to right this wrong.

- **Concern about lack of funding:** Some participants expressed concern that funding wasn't yet available for library services and that their efforts to participate in these engagements wouldn't result in action.

General Feedback

Across the engagements, many participants expressed the importance of library services in providing a safe place for people of all ages to access services, support, and shelter. Some participants shared that they felt they have been "forgotten" by the City, that they seek additional communication from the Library, and that they want Library leadership to reimagine the Library's potential to serve community members.

Some participants were unaware of the designations and names of the different neighborhoods. Others were unaware of existing library services, indicating an opportunity for outreach — including in languages other than English.

Listening Sessions and Tabling

Berk Consulting and Tacoma Public Library staff hosted three listening sessions to present options and gather feedback from community members:

- Thursday, May 12, 6:30 – 8 pm (virtual).

- Saturday, May 21, 11 am – 12:30 pm (virtual).

- Monday, May 23, 6 – 7 pm at Tacoma Community House (1314 S. L St.), cohosted by Hilltop Action Coalition.

Across the three listening sessions, 29 participants attended. Sessions were publicized via a press release, social media, the Tacoma Public Library mailing lists and website, the project website, and community partner mailing lists including the Hilltop Action Coalition and the Tacoma Art Community list. Flyers publicizing the engagements were placed in all branches.

In addition to the listening sessions, TPL staff attended the Hilltop Spring Crawl to collect feedback via tabling and poster-based activities.

Exhibit 47. Listening Session Advertisements

Source: Tacoma Public Library, 2022.

Eastside Option Preferences

Listening session participants generally favored two medium libraries over one large library on the Eastside. They cited transportation challenges and limited transit. McKinley Hill was highlighted as a growing area with good walkability, though Mottet is a very small library to be serving such a large population. There was interest in expanding and upgrading Mottet, especially with meeting space, in addition to creating a new Eastside location. A new location near to Salishan or between Salishan and the Eastside Community Center was proposed. Further participants suggested that Mottet and Moore expand their outreach efforts to serve a larger portion of the Eastside Community and make their offerings more well known.

There was little to no interest in one large location in the Eastside discussions.

Participants also highlighted location desires to be accessible to schools, and perhaps even partnering with Tacoma Public Schools to locate on school property. There was a general concern about reducing or closing existing libraries, even if they are less than ideal.

Hilltop Option Preferences

Most listening session attendees preferred a medium-sized library in the core of the Hilltop neighborhood district. Meeting rooms and community gathering space are a priority need for the neighborhood. Participants discussed the benefits of the medium option including walking accessibility and access to public transit. Concerns with this specific option included parking impacts.

A smaller number of participants preferred the idea of a larger library outside of the neighborhood core and embedded in residential neighborhoods. They highlighted benefits such as better access for school age children and youth if located near schools or parks, lower property acquisition costs, and the high number of abandoned buildings just outside of the Hilltop core neighborhood. These participants are concerned that all investment is being concentrated in a very small part of Hilltop and not reaching the rest of the area. If the building is ultimately located in the neighborhood core, the new library should intentionally conduct outreach and programming in the rest of the neighborhood.

Most participants did not support the idea of an Express Library in Hilltop. They believe this would not be sufficient for the neighborhood needs that extend beyond books and computer access. This would be

unable to meet the community's expressed desire for community gathering space and space for children and youth to engage safely after school. Participants from the Hilltop did not feel that Main served the neighborhood.

Participants also highlighted location desires to be accessible to schools and the need to preserve the Northwest Room, especially the Carnegie building. As in the Eastside discussions, there was a general concern about reducing or closing existing libraries, even if they are less than ideal, though the idea of re-purposing Main into a civic hub was worth considering.

Funding Option Preferences

Participants acknowledged that a mix of funding options would be necessary to make these options feasible. The groups also acknowledged that the library is currently very leanly staffed and funded, raising concerns about whether operating funds would be available for new locations. The groups discussed the relative challenges of raising capital and operating costs though bond measures, levies, grants, and private campaigns. Some participants preferred setting ambitions more modestly to ensure greater likelihood of funding availability and sustainability. There was a concern that libraries would close in the future if the plan was too ambitious.

Email Comments

The team received seven comments through email over the course of the project. Commenters shared their personal experiences with the library, the impact it has had on their lives, and general support for more libraries. Two of the seven commenters focused on their dissatisfaction with Main in terms of public safety and customer service. Commenters also shared parts of their vision and ideas for new library spaces, including an artist residency like the Shadle Library in Spokane, tutoring programs for children, ESL classes, group outings for adults and children to learn more about the political system. Several commenters highlighted the importance of libraries for low-income residents, and especially children. They envision libraries as a safe place where children can go, including without adult supervision if their home situation does not allow.