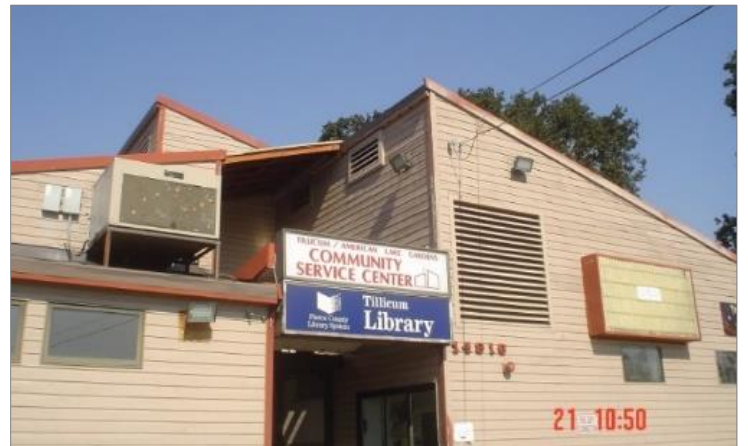


Pierce County Library System & the City of Lakewood

# Lakewood Libraries 2022 Community Advisory Committee Report & Community Engagement Summary

November 9, 2022



## Community Advisory Committee

David Anderson  
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### Project Team

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# Introduction

## Project Overview

In June 2022, Pierce County Library System and the City of Lakewood formed a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) to help determine next steps for the Lakewood and Tillicum Libraries. Twelve members of the Lakewood community were appointed to the Committee. The PCLS Board of Trustees will consider the Advisory Committee's recommendations and determine the path forward.

## Community Advisory Committee Charge

The Community Advisory Committee was charged with advising how the Library System can provide quality services in a safe, welcoming space for Lakewood and Tillicum residents. More specifically, the CAC was asked to:

- Review existing community input and additional public engagement efforts.
- Review the facility history and current conditions of the Lakewood Library and the Tillicum Library.
- Develop an evaluative framework and decision-making process for considering long-term facility options.
- Make directional recommendations to the Lakewood City Council and the Pierce County Library System's Board of Trustees.

## Context

**The Downtown Library was built in 1963 and gifted to PCLS in 1991.** Significant renovations and repairs occurred in 1974-75, 1993-94, 2004, 2006, 2009, and 2011-12. The Library is located within the Lakewood Downtown subarea. The building is 32,592 sq. ft. The library has 22,456 sq. ft for public space and has 68 parking spaces.

In late 2021, the building was found to be critical and unsafe condition. Further engineering reports determined that full renovation would require replacing the roof; improving safety and access including repairing damages throughout the building from the leaking roof; replacing the elevator, heating and cooling system, and plumbing system; and upgrading windows and doors. PCLS closed the building in June 2022.

Additional engineering reports in August and September 2022 determined requirements to bring the building to code with mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems, and fire panel and seismic upgrades, bringing estimated costs to repair systems and make replacements roughly \$22 million. Hazardous materials were found in a recent assessment. Mitigation costs are estimated to be under \$100,000. These costs do not reflect full modernization of the building, the addition of structured parking, or other potential enhancements.

**The Tillicum Library is in a 7,350 sq. ft. building that also houses a community center, a food bank, and a medical clinic.** The Tillicum Library serves an area where household incomes are among the lowest

in Pierce County. Tillicum is geographically separated from the rest of the Lakewood community, with travel to or from the neighborhood requiring a segment on I-5.

The building was constructed in 1985 and renovated in 2004. PCLS leases space in the building. In late 2021, the building was found to be in poor condition. Engineers recommend building a new library instead of renovating the existing building. In April 2019, the City acquired a site in Tillicum in anticipation of potentially using it for a new library. The site is 1.25-acres, located at 14702 Union Avenue SW.

## Community Advisory Committee Process

The Community Advisory Committee met five times between June and October 2022 and discussed the following:

- **Contemporary library best practices.** Staff from PCLS and BuildingWork presented information about contemporary public library design and shared examples of transforming an existing library or building a new library.
- **Community engagement strategies and results.** The CAC reviewed prior public engagement conducted in 2019 and discussed additional engagement opportunities. The consultant team conducted an online survey, interviews, and outreach at community events between June and September of 2022. A full summary of the engagement effort is included in [Appendix A](#).
- **Evaluative Framework.** The CAC developed evaluative criteria to assess different options for Downtown and Tillicum. The CAC's determination of which criteria are most important are included in the Recommendations section below.
- **Consideration of options.** The options considered by the CAC for Downtown included substantially renovating the existing building, rebuilding in the same location, building in a new location, or renovating an existing building in a different location. The options considered for Tillicum were to substantially renovate the existing building, build on a parcel owned by the City of Lakewood, or build in a different location.
- **Financial analysis of different options.** The CAC reviewed cost estimates for each option based on a range of sizes and assumptions for construction and renovation costs, land acquisition costs, and leasing costs.
- **Recommendations for Downtown and Tillicum.** The CAC finalized recommendations for the Downtown and Tillicum locations as described below.

In the last two meetings, the CAC held time for public comment at the end of each meeting.

## Community Priorities

The engagement activities in 2022 revealed the following community priorities for the libraries in Lakewood:

- A desire for spaces with updated technology and additional programming for all ages.

- A convenient location accessible via Pierce County Transit and with adequate parking, integrated in the community and near underserved and lower-income neighborhoods.
- A well-maintained, safe, clean library with adequate lighting.
- Some interest in the preservation of the existing Downtown Library and the “big log.”

## CAC Recommendations

Given significant unknowns, the CAC agreed that it would make conditional recommendations. For example, the Committee could recommend a preferred option if specified conditions could be met, backed up by one or more alternatives if conditions cannot be met. The goal was to reach consensus so that all members could support the CAC recommendations. If consensus could not be reached, a majority vote determined the CAC recommendation, with the full range of opinions described below.

### Overall

The CAC agreed upon the following overall recommendations:

- Lakewood should continue to be served by a **Downtown Library** and a **Tillicum Library**.
- To do this, the CAC supports a total capital investment that may be **between \$17.2 million and \$26.5 million (in 2022 dollars) for both buildings**.<sup>1</sup> PCLS staff estimated that this would cost the average Lakewood homeowner between \$6 and \$8 per month or \$72 and \$96 per year. Successful fundraising efforts would reduce this cost to taxpayers.
- **Sustainable maintenance of the building and robust operating hours** are critical to serving the community well.
- **Partnerships with other providers** may offer a cost-effective way to provide additional services for the good of the community.

**When evaluating different options for each location, the following values were prioritized as most important by the CAC:**

- Service suitability for contemporary library services and flexibility to adapt to future service models.
- Accessibility by foot or transit.
- Ownership of the building, as opposed to leasing.
- Capital investments that are affordable to the Lakewood community.
- Robust operating hours.

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<sup>1</sup> Final cost will depend heavily on property costs, construction costs, bond rates, etc. at the time of issuance and underwriter verification.

## Downtown

The existing Downtown Library is valued for its location being central to the Downtown and accessible by foot or transit, its long tradition of providing library services to the community, and the character of the building, to which many in the community have an emotional attachment.

The CAC's preference is to **keep the library at the same location, building a new facility on the current location**. This was the consensus of the group as it was seen as the most cost-effective solution, with renovation costs similar to new construction, and that a new building would best support contemporary library services and flexibility for future uses. The central location and high pedestrian and transit accessibility of the current site are valued and it is advantageous that the Library System owns the property. Retention of elements of the existing building's character would be desirable but not required.

If construction of a new facility on the current site is not feasible, the CAC recommends **building a new library in an equally accessible location**. CAC members expressed some concern that suitable property may not be available.

One CAC member would prefer to build a larger library on a different location if a large, equally central and accessible site can be found.

## Tillicum

The Tillicum Library is valued for the services provided to an otherwise underserved community, the proximity to Tillicum Elementary School and other locations within the Tillicum business district, and the mix of services currently provided in one location.

If the property where the library sits now can be acquired, the CAC recommends **renovating the existing building or rebuilding on the existing site**. In doing so, PCLS should strive to retain space for other service providers.

If this is not financially or practically feasible, the CAC recommends **pursuing the acquisition of other property near the existing library**. If no other site is found, the CAC recommends **building on the parcel currently owned by the City**. This would include making investments to improve safe access, as CAC members expressed concerns about safe access to this site, and seeking opportunities to co-locate with other service providers. One CAC member expressed a preference for building a library on the City-owned parcel because of its location on a main road, stating it would be more visible to community members, and another preferred construction on the City-owned property, stating it would be quicker than having to acquire another parcel.

## Next Steps

The CAC will present its recommendations to the Library Board of Trustees and the Lakewood City Council on November 17, 2022. The Board will review the CAC's recommendations and determine the most appropriate path forward for providing quality library services to the Lakewood community.

# Appendix A. Community Engagement Summary

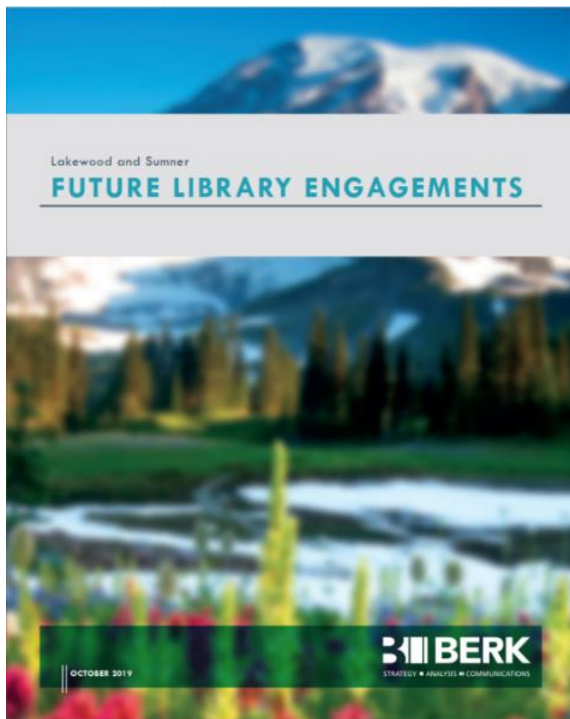
## Introduction

### Background

The Pierce County Library System (PCLS) provides essential library services to communities across Pierce County. City of Lakewood Downtown and Tillicum libraries are well-loved community institutions, but the buildings are aging and are now in poor to critical condition.

In 2019 PCLS engaged BERK Consulting to learn what Lakewood residents thought about potential new libraries in the Downtown and Tillicum, and to understand facility and service needs the residents were interested in. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and Governor’s order, libraries had to close for a period and this work was put on pause.

#### Exhibit 1. 2019 Future Libraries Engagement Report



Source: BERK, 2019.

### Project Overview

In April of 2022 PCLS and the City of Lakewood engaged BERK Consulting to lead a second phase of engagement to learn how PCLS can provide quality services in safe, welcoming spaces for Lakewood and Tillicum residents.



In June of 2022 PCLS and the City of Lakewood appointed 12 Advisory Committee members to help determine next steps for the Lakewood and Tillicum Libraries. The Committee is expected to provide Lakewood City Council and PCLS's Board of Trustees with a recommendation in the Fall of 2022, after which PCLS's Board of Trustees will choose a path forward.

Parallel to the Advisory Committee's process, the project team gathered input from a broader set of community members as well as key stakeholders, a summary of which is presented in this report. This report was provided to the Advisory Committee to inform their recommendation to Lakewood City Council and the Library System's Board of Trustees in late Fall of 2022.

## Community Engagement Overview


This report summarizes input from Lakewood and Tillicum residents and stakeholders gathered between June and September of 2022. Input was primarily collected through a survey and interviews with stakeholder organizations. The survey was widely promoted through PCLS and Lakewood's social media accounts, as well as through news media, direct mailings, an email campaign, and individualized emails to stakeholder organizations. Over 2,000 residents of Lakewood and surrounding areas completed the survey and six key organizations participated in stakeholder interviews.

## How We Engaged the Community

### Survey

**2,061 residents of Lakewood and nearby communities responded to the Survey.** Open from July 22 through August 19, 2022, the five-minute survey posed a set of multiple choice and open-ended questions about how PCLS and Lakewood can best provide quality services in safe, welcoming spaces for Lakewood residents in the Downtown and the Tillicum neighborhood.

## Exhibit 2. Introduction to the Community Survey



**Lakewood Libraries Community Survey**

**Welcome!**

The Pierce County Library System and the City of Lakewood need to hear from you about how they can provide quality services in safe, welcoming spaces for Lakewood and Tillicum residents.

Please take this 5-minute survey to share your thoughts!

This survey will help to supplement outreach conducted in 2019, prior to the pandemic. Your responses will be instrumental in understanding community priorities in 2022. Learn more by visiting [LakewoodCAC.pcls.us](https://LakewoodCAC.pcls.us)

If you have questions, please contact Pierce County Library System at 253-548-3300 or [LakewoodCAC@pcls.us](mailto:LakewoodCAC@pcls.us).

Thank you!

Source: BERK, 2022.

## Survey Advertisement

In addition to promoting the survey on the project webpage ([LakewoodCAC.pcls.us](https://LakewoodCAC.pcls.us)), PCLS led a promotional campaign that included:

- **Social media** posts on Facebook and Twitter;
- **Direct mailing** to all addresses in the City of Lakewood;
- **E-newsletter** articles to Lakewood, and Steilacoom PCLS cardholders, age 18+ as well as others;
- **Placements in three print and online news media**, including Patch, The News Tribune, The Senior Scene, and The Suburban Times; and
- **Distribution of hard copies** at the Tillicum, Steilacoom, Parkland/Spanaway, and University Place Libraries, as well as at City Hall.

### Exhibit 3. Project Webpage

**Pierce County Library System**  
Information & Imagination

Library Catalog | My Account | Contact Us | Search Site

SERVICES | PROGRAMS | BOOKS/MATERIALS | CALENDAR | LOCATIONS | KIDS & TEENS | COMMUNITY RESOURCES | CAREERS | ABOUT US

Search the Catalog | Any Field | Go!

## Locations

- Imagine Your New Library
- Locations Listing
- Lakewood Library
- Locations Map
- Meeting Rooms, Conference Rooms, and Study Rooms
- Other Library Systems

# Lakewood Library Buildings Community Advisory Committee

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE INFO** | **PROJECT DOCUMENTS**

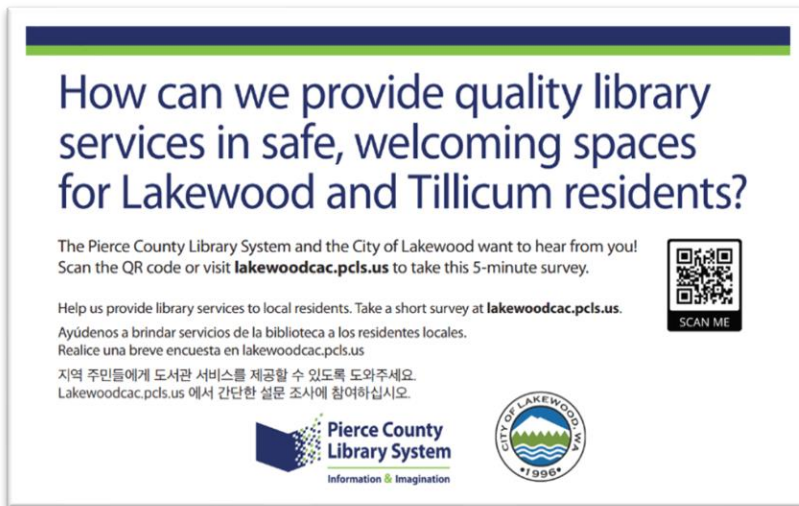
Through the years, the Pierce County Library System has taken many steps to repair and maintain the Library's buildings, including Lakewood and Tillicum Pierce County Libraries, which are both now in critical condition.

- Recently architects assessed the 59-year-old **Lakewood Library** and determined rough estimates for the building requires \$10 million-\$15 million in repairs for improved safety and access, including replacing the roof and damage throughout the building from the leaky roof, replacing the elevator, heating and cooling system, and plumbing system, and upgrading windows and doors. This estimate includes urgent needs and long-term investments.
- In late 2021, building inspectors examined the now 38-year-old **Tillicum Library**, and they found significant amounts of water seeping into the building at both the roof and the siding. They also found dilapidated insulation, windows doors and building systems. Overall, they concluded the building is in need of a substantial overhaul.

In the spring of 2022, the Pierce County Library System and the City of Lakewood appointed an **Advisory Committee** to help determine next steps to best serve residents. While the committee is working, the Library System will not invest further in the buildings because costs for repairs far outweigh the value of the buildings. The Committee is expected to provide the Library System's Board of Trustees with its recommendation in fall 2022.

Source: PCLS, 2022.

#### Exhibit 4. Direct Mailer



Source: PCLS, 2022.

#### Exhibit 5. PCLS Facebook Post



Source: PCLS, 2022.

## Stakeholder Interviews

The project team interviewed six stakeholder organizations to hear about their needs and priorities for potential new libraries. These 30-minute interviews took place between August and September of 2022, and each followed the same script and series of seven questions.

## Events and Presentations

Members of the project team tabled and made presentations at in-person events while the survey ran in July and August of 2022. At each event, member(s) of the project team engaged in conversations about the project and encouraged the public to take the survey.

### Exhibit 6. Lakewood Farmers Market



Source: BERK, 2022.

## Public Comment

Public comment is accepted for the duration of the Advisory Committee's work via email at [Lakewoodcac@pcls.us](mailto:Lakewoodcac@pcls.us). Comments received are captured verbatim in a document posted on the project website and shared with the Advisory Committee members at each meeting.

## Advisory Committee Meetings

Members of the public are invited to listen in to all Advisory Committee meetings. Materials and detailed notes from all meetings to date are available at [LakewoodCAC.pcls.us](http://LakewoodCAC.pcls.us). In meetings four and five, the public may make comments during an up-to 30-minute comment period.

### Exhibit 7. Advisory Committee Meeting 2



Source: BERK, 2022.

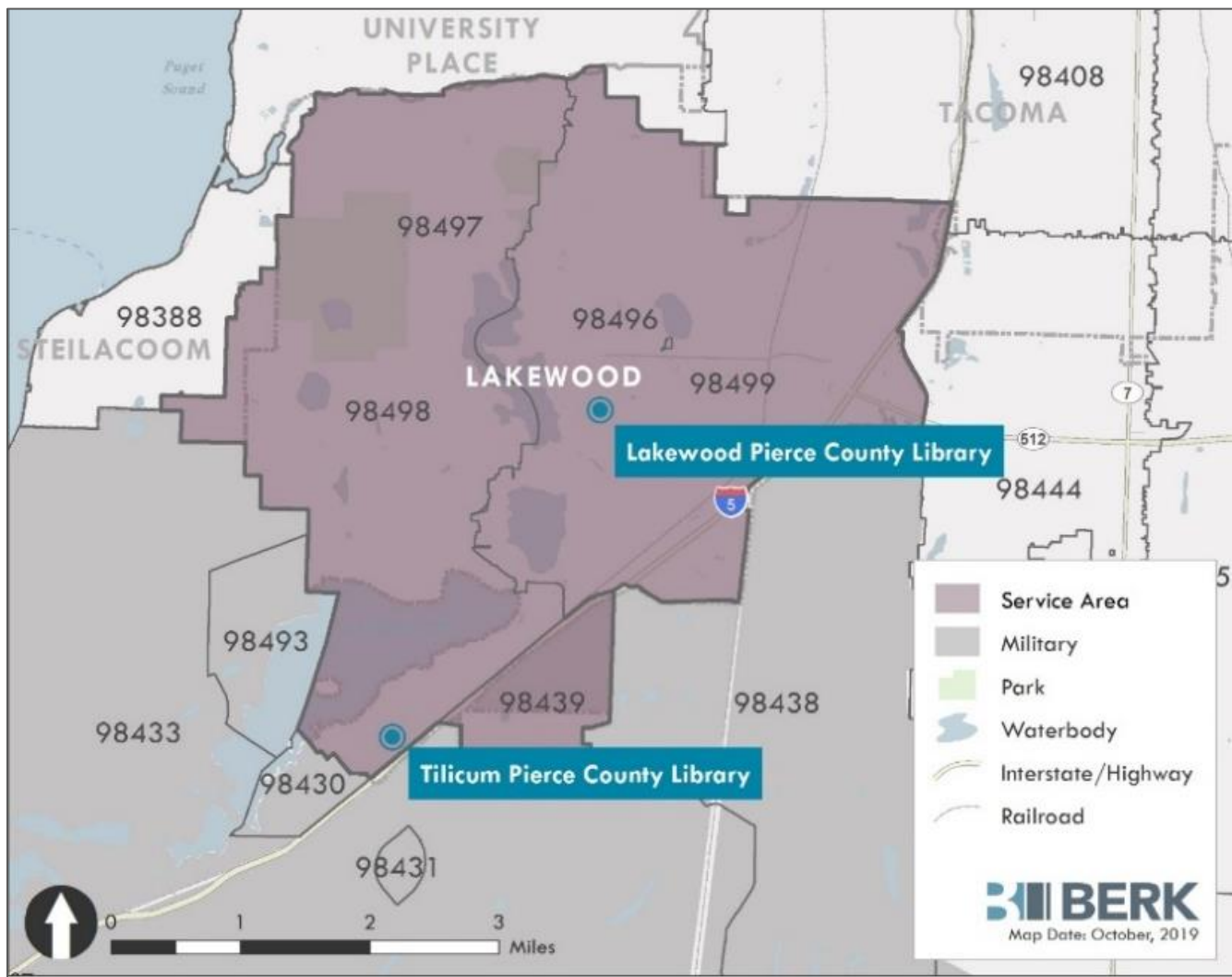
# Who We Reached

## Survey Respondent Demographics

Note: This project defines Lakewood by five ZIP codes: 98439, 98496, 98497, 98498, and 98499, as shown in Exhibit 8. Exhibit 9 shows that of survey respondents who live these five ZIP codes, 54% live in 98498 and 44% live in 98499. Respondents who live in 98439, 98497, or 98496 account for 2.5% of survey respondents.

While most survey respondents reported that they reside within the five Lakewood ZIP codes, 25% reported that they reside outside of Lakewood or did not disclose their ZIP code. Because Lakewood residents will ultimately decide whether to invest in a new library or libraries for the community, this survey analysis focuses on respondents residing within the five Lakewood ZIP codes. Open-ended feedback did not differ notably between Lakewood and non-Lakewood respondents.

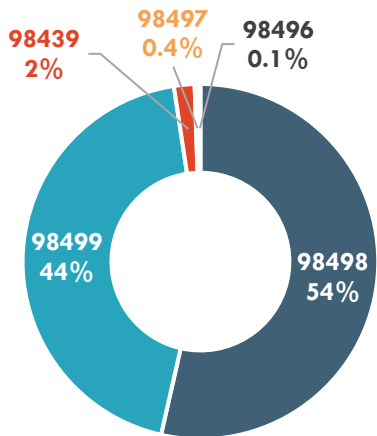
**Exhibit 8. ZIP Codes of Survey Respondents' living in Lakewood**



Source: BERK, 2019.

**Exhibit 9. Survey Respondents' ZIP Codes (n = 1546)**

Survey Question: "In what ZIP code is your home located?"

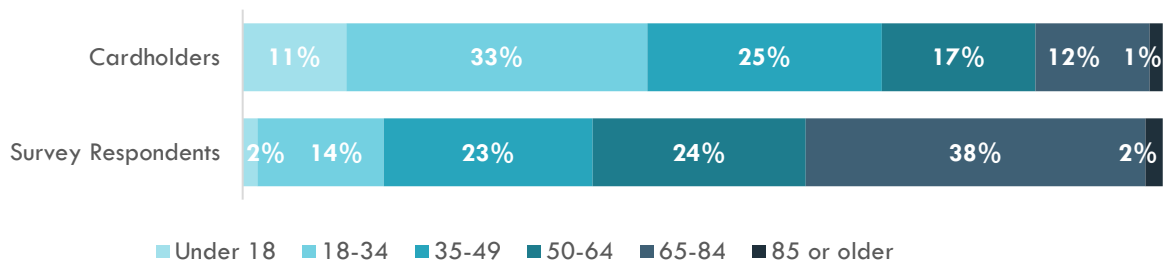


Source: BERK, 2022.

Exhibit 10 shows the age breakdown of survey respondents and of library cardholders in Lakewood. In general, survey respondents are older than cardholders: respondents under the age of 35 are underrepresented and respondents over the age of 64 are overrepresented. 38% of survey respondents are between 65 and 84 years old, 24% of survey respondents are between 50 and 64 years old, and 23% of respondents are between 35 and 49 years old. Respondents under 18 and over 85 each account for 2% of survey respondents.

**Exhibit 10. Age of Survey Respondents' (n = 1527)**

Survey Question: "What is your age?"

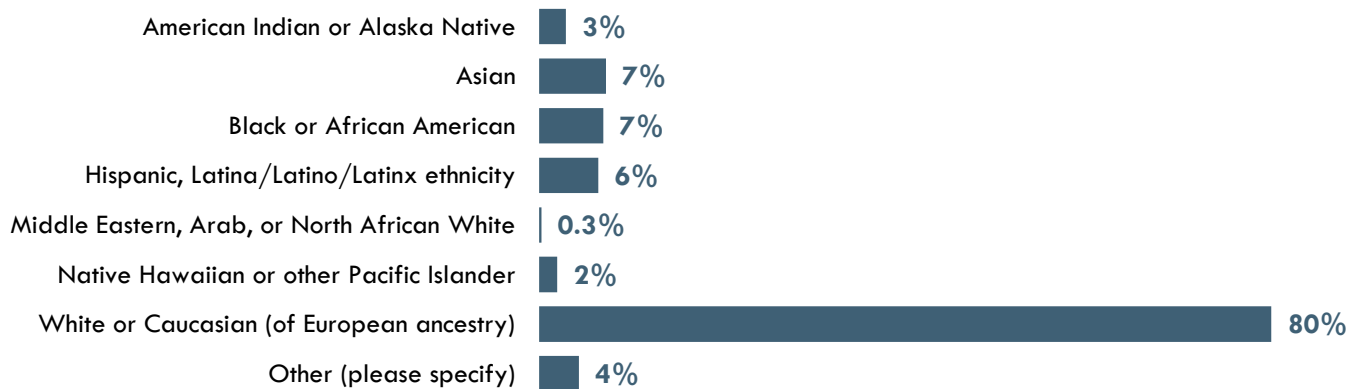


Source: BERK, 2022.

**Exhibit 11** shows respondents' self-identified race(s) or ethnicity(ies). The largest proportion (80%) of survey respondents identify as White. Seven percent of respondents identify as Asian, 7% identify as Black or African American, and 6% identify as Hispanic or Latina/o/x. 3% identify as American Indian or Alaska Native, 2% identify as Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander, and 0.3% identify as Middle Eastern, Arab, or North African White. 4% of respondents identify as another race or ethnicity.

**Exhibit 11. Race or Ethnicity of Survey Respondents (n = 1470)**

Survey Question: "What is your race or ethnicity? Select all that apply."



Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% because respondents could select multiple options. Source: BERK, 2022.

## Stakeholders Organizations

The following organizations participated in one-on-one interview with the project team:

- Boys & Girls Club
- Emergency Food Network
- Lakewood Community Senior Center
- Nourish
- Pierce College
- Rainbow House

## Events and Presentations

In addition to the formal stakeholder interviews listed above, the project team hosted a table and/or gave a brief presentation at the following events to encourage attendees to respond to the survey:

- SummerFEST
- Lakewood Farmers Market
- Clover Park Rotary Club meeting
- Lakewood Rotary Club meeting



- Lakewood Youth Council meeting

## Summary of Findings

### Why does the community value libraries in Lakewood?

#### What Survey Respondents Said

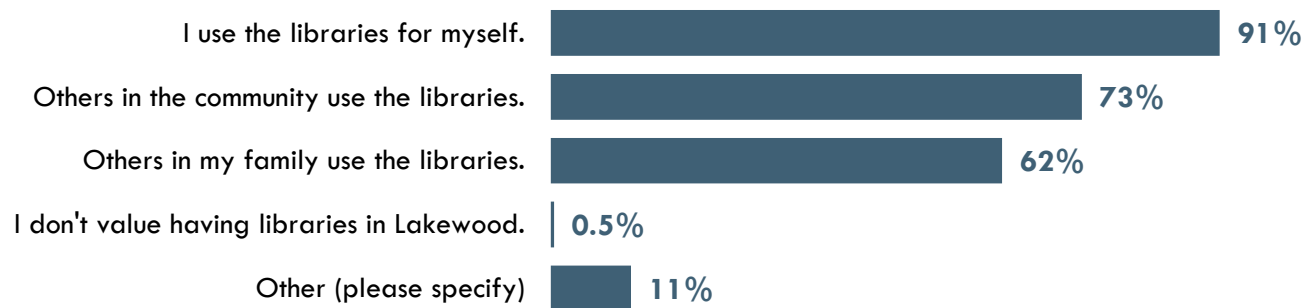
**Exhibit 12 shows that 91% of respondents value libraries because they use them for themselves, 73% value libraries because the greater community uses them, and 62% value libraries because a family member uses them.**

This aligns with responses to the 2019 survey, in which 90% of respondents answered that they valued libraries because they use them themselves and 60% valued libraries because a family member uses them.

The 11% of respondents who selected “other” highlighted specific characteristics of value, such as the Lakewood library’s proximity to schools and other services. Events and presentations generated similar but more conversational input and is not captured explicitly in this report.

#### **Exhibit 12. What Survey Respondents Value about Having Libraries in Lakewood (n = 1487)**

Survey Question: “What do you value about having libraries in Lakewood? Select all that apply.”



*Note: Respondents could select multiple responses. Source: BERK, 2022.*

#### What Stakeholders Said

Stakeholders offered more detailed insight into the value of libraries in Lakewood from the perspective of each of their organizations. The organizations the project team interviewed value libraries for providing:

- **Programs for people of all ages and backgrounds.**
- **Information about food pantries** and other resources.
- **Access to essential technology** such as phone and internet, as well as technical support for those in need.
- **Downloading and printing services for voters** to mitigate disenfranchisement.
- **Free space for families with children to play and learn** and a safe space for teens do homework.

- **More convenient hours and year-round access** for college students who need more flexibility than their school library’s schedule offers.

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*“Libraries are a safe place for people from all walks of life to learn, be curious, and be supported in their quest for relaxation or aid to get to their next level in life.” – Sue Potter, Nourish*

*“Libraries are now acting as community centers—a safe space to meet and to be who you are.” – Troy Christensen, Rainbow House*

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## What library facilities does the community need?

### What Survey Respondents Said

**Exhibit 13 shows that more than three-quarters (77%) of respondents want space for public technology and approximately two-thirds want space for events and classes (68%) or space for reading and relaxing (63%).**

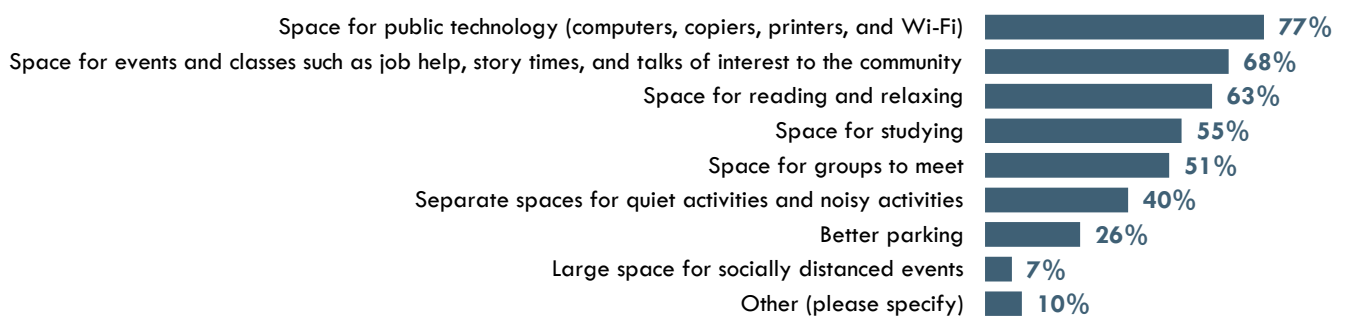
Just over half of respondents want space for studying (55%) or spaces for groups to meet (51%). Four in ten (40%) respondents want separate spaces for quiet activities and noisy activities. Smaller proportions of respondents want better parking (26%) or large spaces for socially distanced events (7%).

Compared to the results of the 2019 survey, these results indicate more interest in space for technology, events, and classes than there was pre-pandemic.

The 10% of respondents who selected “other” mentioned themes like more space for children; more secure parking, restrooms, and entrance; and more parking for disabled people close to the entrance. Events and presentations generated similar but more conversational input and is not captured explicitly in this report.

#### **Exhibit 13. Survey Respondents’ Priority Library Facilities (n = 1546)**

Survey Question: “Imagine coming to new library buildings in Lakewood. There will of course be access to books, movies, music, and other materials. In addition to these fundamentals, what else would you most like to see? Select your top priorities (no more than five) from the options listed below:”



*Note: Respondents could select up to five options. Source: BERK, 2022.*

## What Stakeholders Said

Stakeholders offered more detailed insight into the facilities and spatial needs of the community. The organizations the project team interviewed advocated for:

- **Easy access by Pierce County Transit.**
- **Ample parking**, including handicap-accessible spaces.
- **Adequate exterior lighting** for safety.
- **Space for technology, especially for families who don't have access at home.** Affordable printing, hybrid meeting spaces, rentable Wi-Fi hot spots, and child-safe computer rooms for parents were among the top suggestions.
- **Class and activity space for youth, adults, and older adults**, noting that dedicated space for each age group would be more successful than heavily shared spaces.
- **Lockers** for people to store their belongings safely outside.
- **Sensory-friendly space** for kids on the Autism spectrum.
- **Gender-neutral restrooms.**

## What library programming does the community need?

### What Survey Respondents Said

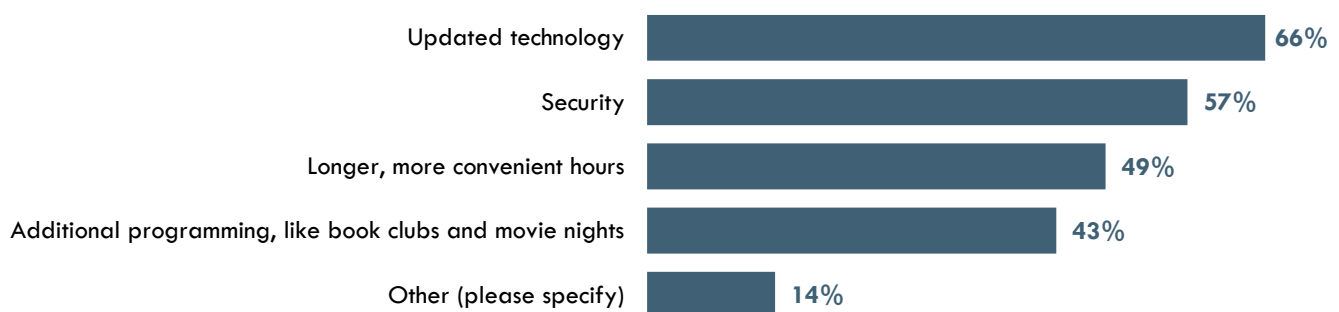
**Exhibit 14 shows that two thirds of respondents identify updated technology as a top priority (66%), and over half of respondents identify security as a top priority for investment (57%).**

About half identify longer, more convenient hours as a top priority (49%), and just under half of respondents identify additional programming like book clubs and movie nights as a top priority (43%).

The 14% of respondents who answered “other” further emphasized interest in investments such as expanded hours and security. Events and presentations generated similar but more conversational input and is not captured explicitly in this report.

#### **Exhibit 14. Survey Respondents' Priorities for Library Programming and Investment (n = 1310)**

Survey Question: “What are your top priorities for investment in new libraries? Select all that apply.”



*Note: Respondents could select multiple responses. Source: BERK, 2022.*

## What Stakeholders Said

Stakeholders offered more detailed insight into the community’s needs for library programming and investment. The organizations the project team interviewed advocated for the following:

- **Longer, more convenient hours**, particularly on Saturday evenings to increase accessibility for people who work.
- **A range educational programming**, including activities and classes for: Job seekers; English learners and multilingual learning; youth interested in learning self-sustaining skills for adulthood; older adults, both for socializing and learning technology; students who are parents, such as childcare; and financial and insurance literacy.
- **Ample staffing** to help users—particularly older adults—navigate library services and facilities.
- **A resource hub for social services.**
- **A family-friendly library setting** for college students with small children.

## How have community needs changed during the pandemic?

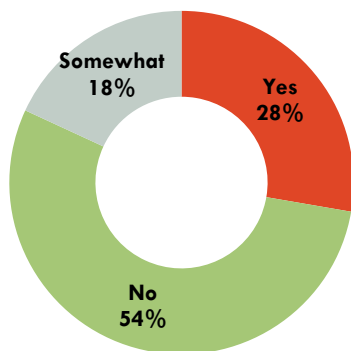
### What Survey Respondents Said

The survey asked respondents to evaluate whether their needs or interests in using library facilities changed over the COVID-19 pandemic. Over half of respondents reported no change (54%), a third reported that their needs or interests changed (28%), and less than a quarter reported that their needs or interests “somewhat” changed (18%).

Some respondents also provided open-ended comments about how their needs and interests in using library facilities changed over the COVID-19 pandemic. Themes include an increased use of e-books and newfound appreciation for the efficiency and convenience of curbside pickup. Events and presentations generated similar but more conversational input and is not captured explicitly in this report.

#### Exhibit 15. Change to Survey Respondents’ Needs and/or Interests during Covid-19 (n = 1527)

Survey Question: “Have your needs or interest in using library facilities changed over the COVID-19 pandemic?”



Source: BERK, 2022.

## What Stakeholders Said

While the organizations themselves have seen drastic changes over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic, their library needs have evolved in smaller ways, some of which are due to the closure of the library rather than Covid-19. Some growing needs include:

- **Programming for youth**, as library programs such as The Bee’s Program at the Boys & Girls’ Club have been put on hold, and programs to encourage kids to read and be curious.
- **Channels to reach people in need of social services.**
- **Programs and support for the growing population of older adults.**
- **Rentable technology, such as laptops and hot spots.**
- **Hybrid meeting space.**

## What are the community’s questions and concerns?

### What Survey Respondents Said

**Exhibit 16 shows that the largest proportion of respondents (70%) have questions or concerns about the location of the library, which aligns with the 2019 survey.**

About four in ten respondents have questions or concerns about health and cleanliness (43%), cost to residents (42%), and personal safety (41%). More respondents in 2022 identify cost and personal safety as a question or concern than in 2019.

One-third of respondents (34%) note that they do not want the current Lakewood library building to be replaced.

The 14% of respondents selected “other” brought up the importance of accessibility for users of all abilities and incomes, accessibility by public transit, and accessibility for children and underserved populations. Other write-in responses further emphasized interest in maintaining the Lakewood Library’s current location, particularly due to its proximity to Clover Park High School. Events and presentations generated similar but more conversational input and is not captured explicitly in this report.

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*“Please remember accessibility for people with low incomes and disabilities.” – Survey Respondent*

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## Exhibit 16. Survey Respondents' Concerns or Questions about Potential New Libraries in Lakewood (n = 1511)

Survey Question: "What concerns or questions do you have about potential new libraries in Lakewood? Select all that apply."



Note: Respondents could select multiple responses. Source: BERK, 2022.

### What Stakeholders Said

Stakeholders echoed issues identified by survey respondents and reiterated their priorities for the facility itself, including:

- **Easy access by Pierce County Transit.**
- **Ample parking**, including handicap-accessible spaces.
- **Adequate exterior lighting** for safety.

Finally, several stakeholders noted their interest in assurance that a new building will be properly maintained.

### Library Location and Opportunities for Collaboration

The final survey question was open-ended, asking, "What other thoughts would you like to share about the possibility of new libraries in Lakewood and Tillicum?" Similarly, the final stakeholder interview question asked organizations' if they would like to share any additional thoughts with the project team. Many responses from both survey respondents and stakeholders focused on library location. The following sections summarize the range of perspectives.

## Support for Rebuilding on the Current Downtown Location

**Roughly half of 200 open-ended survey responses and most stakeholders supported rebuilding or renovating the current Downtown library to take advantage of its centralized, convenient location.**

Advocates of this option highlighted the importance of accessibility via Pierce Transit and accessibility by foot via well-connected sidewalks. Comments also noted the library should be integrated with other Lakewood services and schools located Downtown.

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*“I suggest you build a new building on current site. Lots of parking. Very convenient.” – Survey respondent*

*“The location is centralized between Lakewood and Lake City. Would love to see it torn down and rebuilt in same location.” – Samantha Zipper, Boys & Girls Club*

*“I hope the new library will be located in the same place as the current one.”  
– Survey respondent*

*“I want the same location, but a remodeled or NEW building.” – Survey respondent*

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## Support for Any Central Downtown Location

**Roughly one-third of 200 open-ended survey responses and most stakeholders were supportive of building a new library at any central Downtown location.**

Like those who favor rebuilding at the current Downtown location, advocates of this option highlighted the importance of accessibility via Pierce Transit and accessibility by foot via well-connected sidewalks.

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*“Ideally the library would be better integrated within Lakewood community, close to City Hall in Town Center.” – Survey respondent*

*“There is a density of youth in Downtown Lakewood, supporting them is important.” – Christie Flynn, Pierce College*

*“We need a location that has better connections to transit and access by foot.” – Survey respondent*

*“For our underemployed customers, having the libraries close to our services gives folks an opportunity to use internet, search for jobs, and learn job search skills. Meanwhile, kids have a safe place to do homework and an opportunity to learn to read and build other skills.” – Sue Potter, Nourish*

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Comments also noted the library should be integrated with other Lakewood services and schools located Downtown.

## Support for Retaining the Current Downtown Building

**Less than a quarter of 200 open-ended survey responses supported retaining the current building, though the stakeholders the project team interviewed were not supportive of this option.**

Those who want to retain the current building explained that the building is beloved in the community and should be restored and maintained. Many comments focused on retaining the tree currently being displayed.

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*“Our Lakewood library building was a gift from a Lakewood patron. It deserves to be restored and maintained, either as a library or other community-focused venue.” – Survey respondent*

*“We want you to invest in the historical building we already have here.” – Survey respondent*

*“Our giant log! What’s going to happen to it?” – Survey respondent*

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## Support for a Tillicum Location

**Both survey respondents and stakeholders expressed interest in a Tillicum location in addition to a Downtown Lakewood location.** Both groups articulated that the Tillicum Library is a much-needed community space in an already underserved community that greatly benefits both school-aged kids and older adults. Furthermore, a Tillicum location would allow people without cars or to access library services more easily than if they had to commute to Downtown Lakewood.

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*“The library . . . represents the only real community space in the entire neighborhood. It has the potential to provide any number of resources to an underserved community, with hundreds of people below the poverty line.” – Survey respondent*

*“The location in Tillicum library is perfect for school kids to use after school let out for the day. The Tillicum library is inside the community center which is ideal for senior citizens. I am a senior citizen I do not have ride the bus to another library.” – Survey respondent*

*“A library in Tillicum . . . gives access to the members of that community that may not have a way to reach a library in Lakewood proper. The community is locked by the base and the freeway so residents without vehicle access are dependent on resources located in their community.” – Survey respondent*

*“We have a desperate need for a new building in Tillicum.” – Sue Potter, Nourish*

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## Stakeholder Interest in Future Collaboration

Interviewees expressed interest in a range of possible partnerships and opportunities for collaboration, including:

- Extending the library's reach by providing Nourish with extra books for "mini libraries" within their food banks.
- Co-locating with the Nourish food truck on a weekly basis to allow people to select a week's worth of groceries.
- Organizing youth outings from the Boys & Girls Club to the library.
- Partnering with organizations with mobile laundry and shower units to provide wraparound services.
- Partnering with the Rainbow Center to bring their programming to the library and expand the Center's potential meeting space.
- Partnering with Pierce College to augment their services, including:
  - Offering childcare and/or story time for students with young children,
  - Hosting events and classes for non-English speakers and those interested in learning other languages,
  - Bolstering the College's fiction and audiobook collection to increase options for students, and
  - Offering creative writing classes and workshops to supplement Pierce College's academically oriented Writing Center.

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*"Think about the 'whole person'—how can libraries partner with other agencies to think about whole people? The library is living, breathing entity with capacity to partner people up in an amazing way.  
– Michelle Douglas, Emergency Food Network*

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## Next Steps

Along with other supporting material, this Engagement Report will inform the Advisory Committee's recommendation to the Lakewood City Council and Library System's Board of Trustees with its recommendation this Fall. Following the Committee's recommendation, the Library's Board of Trustees will identify a path forward to provide long-term library services to Lakewood and Tillicum residents.

**Follow the final phases of the project through Fall 2022 at [LakewoodCAC.pcls.us](https://lakewoodCAC.pcls.us)**

# Appendix B. Information Shared with CAC

The following materials were provided to the CAC and are available at [Lakewoodlib.pcls.us](https://lakewoodlib.pcls.us):

- Engagement report and public comments.
- Lakewood community demographics.
- Condition assessments for the Downtown and Tillicum Libraries.
- Building systems evaluations of the Downtown Library.

Meeting materials and summaries are also available on the same site.