

Report to the Board

Re: GVPL Community Survey on a potential James Bay Library Branch
October, 2015

Executive Summary

The City of Victoria and the Greater Victoria Public Library Board have an opportunity to provide a James Bay neighbourhood library branch in Phase I of the Capital Park development. The City has the option to lease space for library purposes in this development as part of the Master Development Agreement between the City and the developer. The potential library space is located at the corner of Menzies and Superior Streets.

The Greater Victoria Public Library conducted a four week community survey from August 11 to September 11, 2015 with the objective of measuring the community's interest in a branch at this location. The survey included questions about the level of service, size of facility, general physical features of the branch and the type of programs desired.

Overall, the findings showed support for a 7500 sf Neighbourhood branch with community meeting space and a variety of programs offered.

Summary of findings

- 1207 responses were recorded, of which 71% are currently residents of James Bay.
- 54% respondents indicated a desire for a 7500 sf branch in the Capital Park location.
- Although many commented about the number of seniors in the area who would value the library, 61% of the respondents were under 65 years of age.
- The majority of respondents were interested in a bright, clean, modern facility with a quiet, comfortable area for reading.
- 56% indicated the importance of programs onsite and of those 78% would like adult general interest programs and 53% adult computer & technology classes.
- 59% of those that stated onsite programs were important wanted to see children's programs and another 35% wanted teen programs.
- 60% felt a meeting room was somewhat or very important, of which 93% would use the room for community group meetings.
- Of the 537 additional comments received, 60% were enthusiastically supportive of a James Bay Branch, which combined with those who were supportive, indicated approximately 80% were solidly in support of a branch library in James Bay.

*"It would be absolutely
wonderful to have a
library in James Bay!"*

No attempt was made to control the sample. However, the 1207 responses, with 855 from James Bay residents was more than double the recommended sample size for a population of around 11,000.¹

The survey collected both quantitative and qualitative information that assessed the general importance of a potential James Bay Library Branch to the community. It also sought to develop a better understanding of the respondents, what interested them in a branch library and how they would use the facility and services.

Demographics

The majority of the respondents indicated they live in James Bay and / or work close to the proposed site. 95% already use one or more of the Greater Victoria Public Library's Branches. Most commonly the Central (47%) and Oak Bay (17%) branches.

The demographics of the survey respondents indicate that 34% were between the ages of 65 and 80, and 34% of respondents were in the 46 to 64 age range. The next largest age range of respondents was the 31 to 45 years range at 19%.

Facilities and Computer Access

The survey comments reflected the high important that this community places on communal gathering spaces and walkability. The majority of respondents (54%) would like to see a 7500 sf neighbourhood branch. The top physical features of the branch included a bright clean modern facility (70%), natural light (64%), and quiet, comfortable area for reading (63%).

60% of all responses expressed that a meeting room would be "somewhat or very important". Of those, 93% would use the room for "neighbourhood or community group meetings", 49% were interested in a space for "group project work", and 31%, (205 responses), as a place for small businesses to conduct meetings.

Of the responses received on the use of computer stations, 69% specified "accessing the Library's digital collections and resources" and 50% for email, with over 30% for each of the other options: using basic office software, filling in government forms, and keeping in touch with friends/family.

"A local library may promote community interaction and encourage elderly residents who tend to isolate themselves to mix and meet others in their community: I think this would contribute greatly to a sense of overall wellbeing and health for both individuals and community - perhaps it may be in walking distance to home."

¹ Matthews, J.R. The Evaluation and Measurement of Library Services. Libraries Unlimited, 2007, 73

Services

Offering library programs for all ages in the branch is important to 56% of the respondents, particularly adult general-interest programs (78%) such as bookclubs/reading groups, literary/cultural events and lectures.

Another 53% were interested in computer and technology classes for adults. Children's programs and storytimes garnered 59% of the interest in programs and 35% expressed interest in teen programs for the community or personally.

Conclusions

The overwhelming response to the survey is enthusiasm for a James Bay neighbourhood Branch as represented by additional comments expressing excitement and approval of the proposal.

Although there is some concern to be aware of about the location being close to the Central library or the Community Library in the James Bay Community Project, the community is interested in a full service neighbourhood branch. A few comments also mentioned a future state when the Central branch will be moved to Centennial Square, making this James Bay location even more desirable to the community. Of particular note is the interest in accessing digital collections at this bricks and mortar branch and their expectation that Wi-Fi (58%) and accessibility (45% wheelchair/easy to reach shelves) are part of the design.

Of additional interest is the emphasis on literary programs and programs that compliment what other organizations are offering in the community, a trend that our partnership programing demonstrates we can easily commit to.

*"Great idea to have a
branch in a very vibrant
active
Community"*

"Thank you for considering public input on planning the James Bay neighbourhood branch. I feel that having a library in James Bay will add real value to the folks that live here.

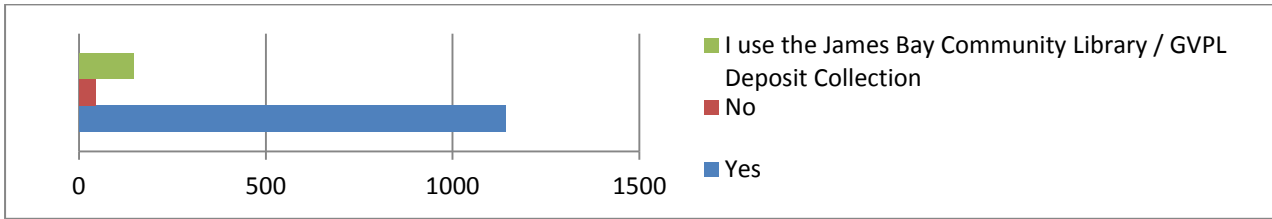
There are lots of young families in James Bay and I think the various daycare groups would make regular use of the library if there were "story times" and children programming.

We are very excited about possibly having a library in James Bay!!"

Appendix A: Survey Responses

Q1. Are you a GVPL user? Please choose all that apply.

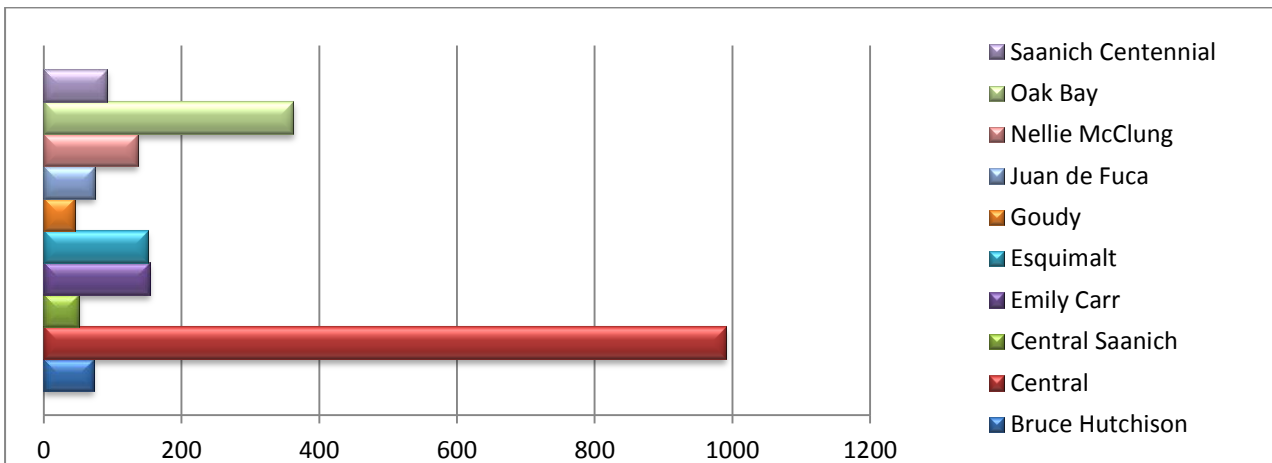
Answered: 1330 Skipped: 7



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	86%	1141
No	3%	44
James Bay Community Deposit Collection	11%	145
Total	100%	1330

Q2. If Yes, what Greater Victoria Public Library branch(es) do you use? Please check all that apply.

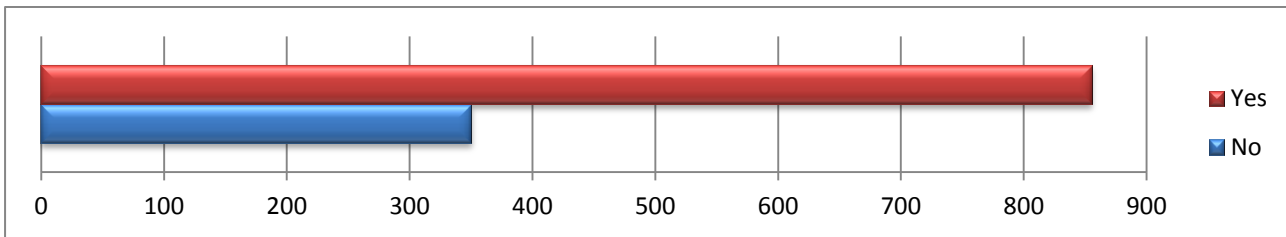
Answered: 2127 Skipped: 64



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Bruce Hutchison	3%	72
Central	47%	990
Central Saanich	2%	51
Emily Carr	7%	154
Esquimalt	7%	151
Goudy	2%	45
Juan de Fuca	3%	74
Nellie McClung	6%	136
Oak Bay	17%	362
Sannich Centennial	4%	92
Total	100%	2127

Q3. Are you a James Bay Resident?

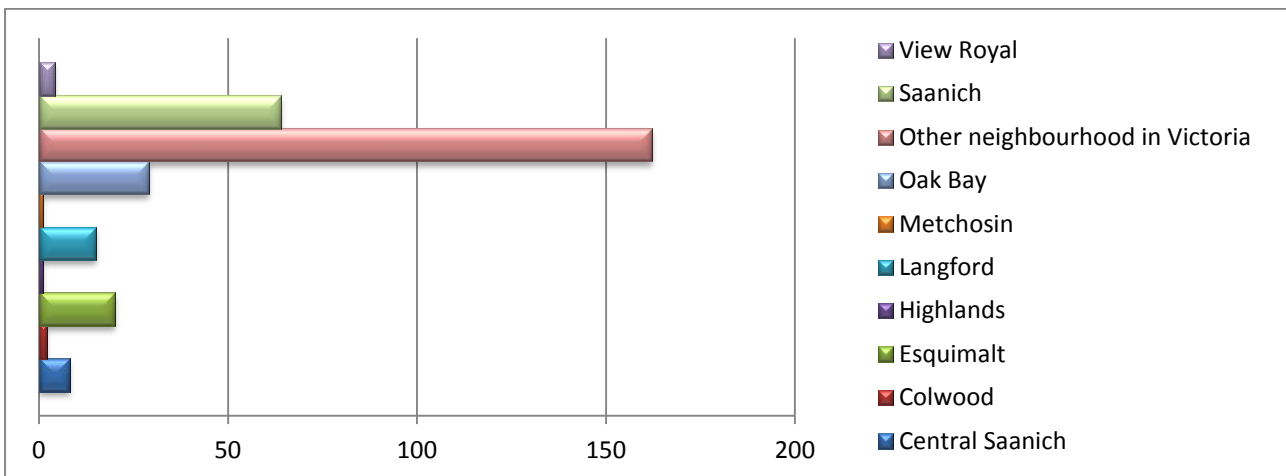
Answered: 1205 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	71%	855
No	29%	350
Total	100%	1205

Q4. If no, please indicate where you live.

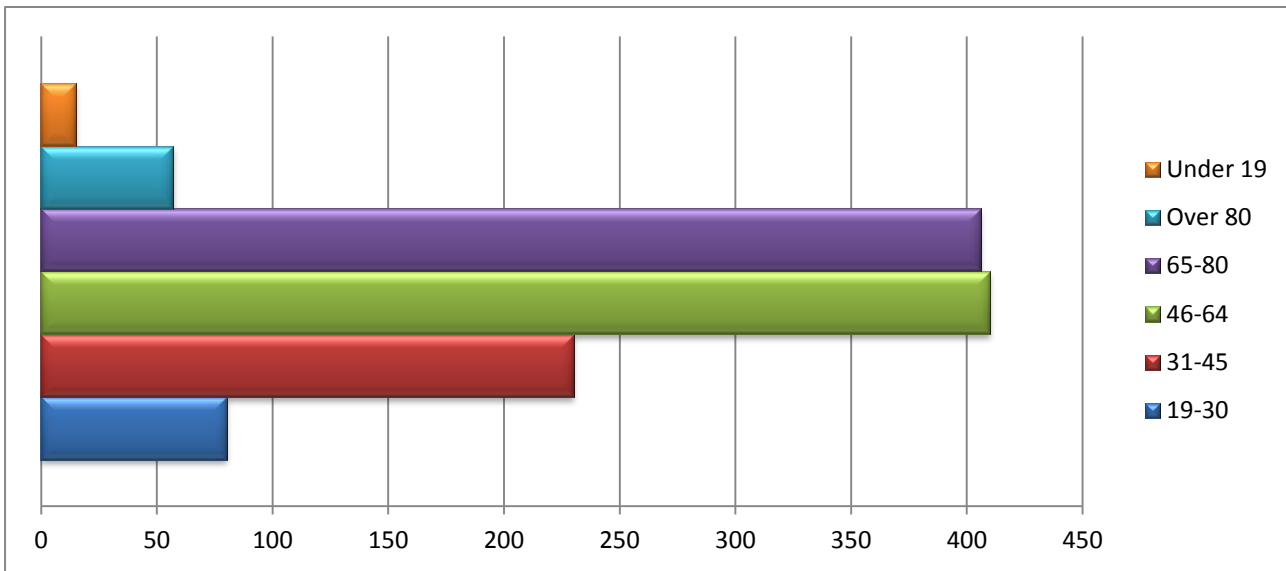
Answered: 353 Skipped: 0



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
James Bay	71%	855
Central Saanich	.7%	8
Colwood	.17%	2
Esquimalt	1.7%	20
Highlands	.08%	1
Langford	1.2%	15
Metchosin	.08%	1
Oak Bay	2.4%	29
Other neighbourhood in Victoria	16.4%	197
Saanich	5.4%	65
View Royal	.3%	4
Other	.6%	7
Grand Total	100%	1205

Q5. Please indicate your age category

Answered: 1198 Skipped: 10

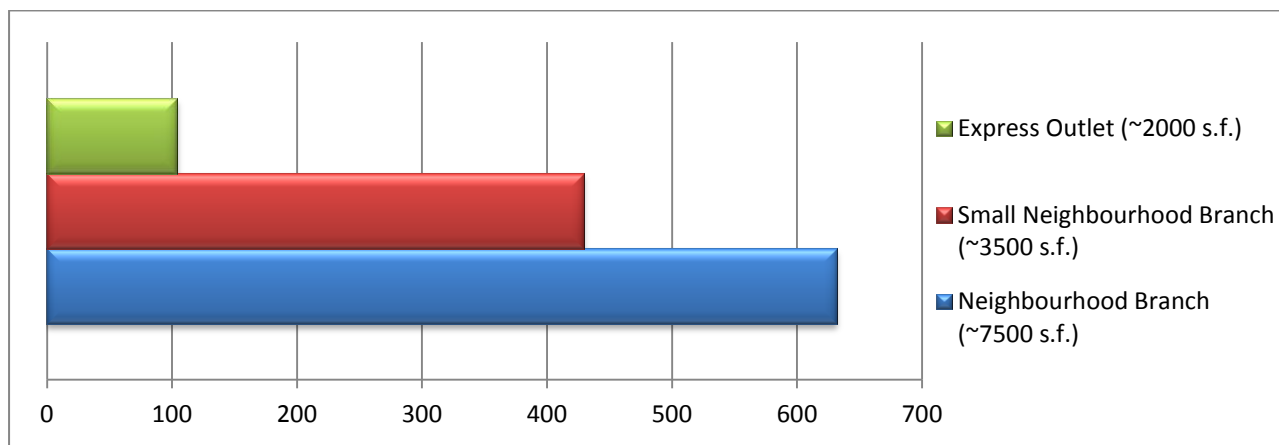


Answer Choices	Responses	
Under age 19	1%	15
19-30	7%	80
31-45	19%	230
46-64	34%	410
65-80	34%	406
Older than 80	5%	57
Total	100%	1198

This is exciting. James Bay and Cook St Village area have many young families and many older folks - I am very happy to hear of these plans! Good luck - this is a bonus to the community

Q6. What type of library branch would you like to see in James Bay? GVPL has a variety of neighbourhood branches, described below. Please select the one you or the community would prefer:

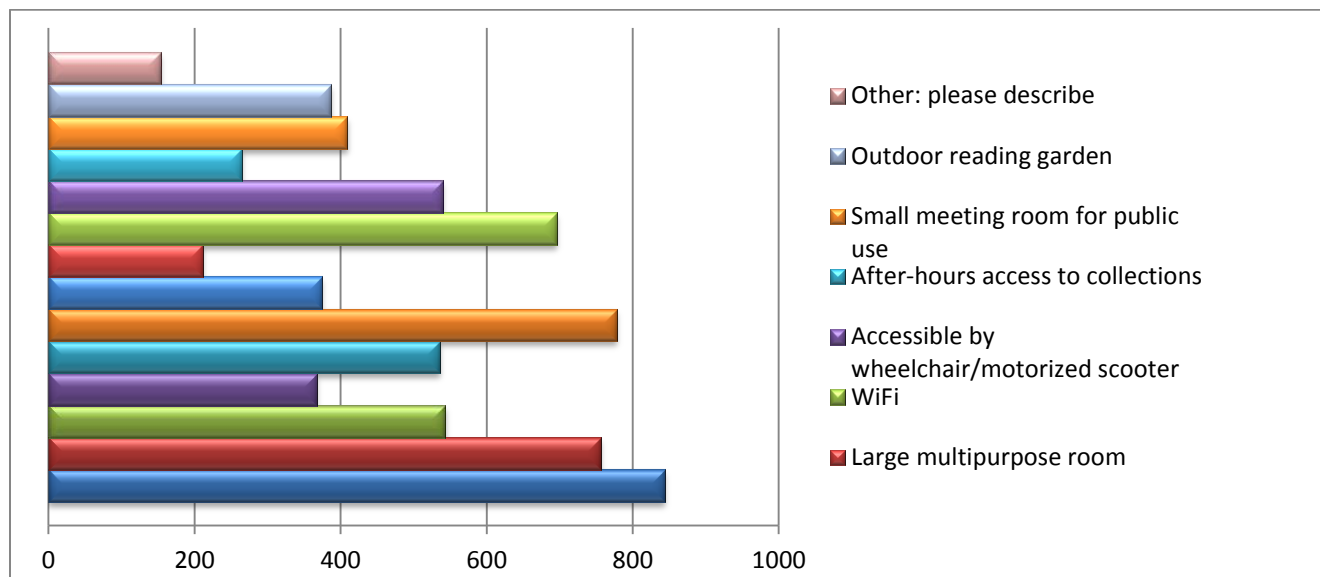
Answered: 1165 Skipped: 43



Answer Choices	Responses	
Express Outlet (~2000 s.f., similar to the Goudy Branch): this location has a limited collection focused on popular material, bestsellers, box-office DVDs, CDs, 6-8 computer workstations, staff assistance, a small amount of seating, no space to offer library programs or hold meetings. Express locations could have a vending unit for after-hour access to library collections.	9%	104
Small Neighbourhood Branch (~3500 s.f., similar to the Emily Carr Branch): this branch has small, broad, primarily popular collection in a variety of formats 8-10 public computer workstations and staff information assistance, flexible living room seating area, kids' space and teen zone, small study/seminar room, no program or meeting space and limited quiet space.	37%	429
Neighbourhood Branch (~7500 s.f., similar to the Esquimalt Branch): this branch has a broad collection in all formats, 12-20 computer workstations and staff information assistance, quiet spaces, flexible living room, kids' space and teen zone, separate space for a variety of programs and/or community meetings.	54%	632
Total	100%	1165

Q7. What physical features of a library branch are most important to you? Please check all that apply.

Answered: 6856 Skipped: 28



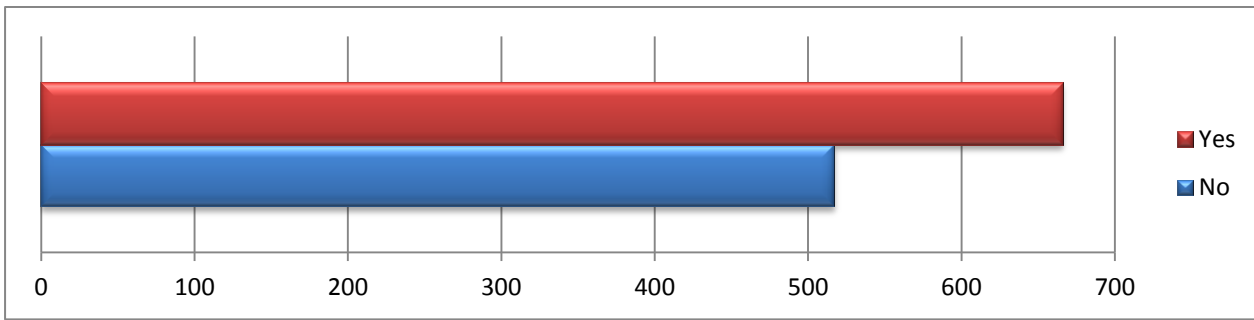
Answer Choices	Responses	
Bright, clean, modern facility	70%	843
Quiet, comfortable area for reading	63%	756
Easy-to-reach book shelves	45%	543
Interactive children's area	30%	367
Public computers for Internet and office use	44%	535
Natural light	64%	778
Program space in the branch	31%	374
Large multipurpose room	17%	211
WiFi	58%	696
Accessible by wheelchair/motorized scooter	45%	540
After-hours access to collections	22%	265
Small meeting room for public use	34%	409
Outdoor reading garden	32%	386
Other: please describe	13%	153
Total	100%=1207	6856

Sampling of other comments received:

- Enough space to house the largest collection of materials possible. BOOKS!
- Professional librarians! Helpful staff.
- Café; A small area to purchase coffee/tea & muffin.
- Work tables for study and personal laptop use. Bike racks. Decent washrooms.
- Multi-language books (including Chinese).
- After-hours access to holds. Easy access to book drop.
- Open on Sunday.

Q8. Is it important to you that a James Bay Branch provide programs onsite?

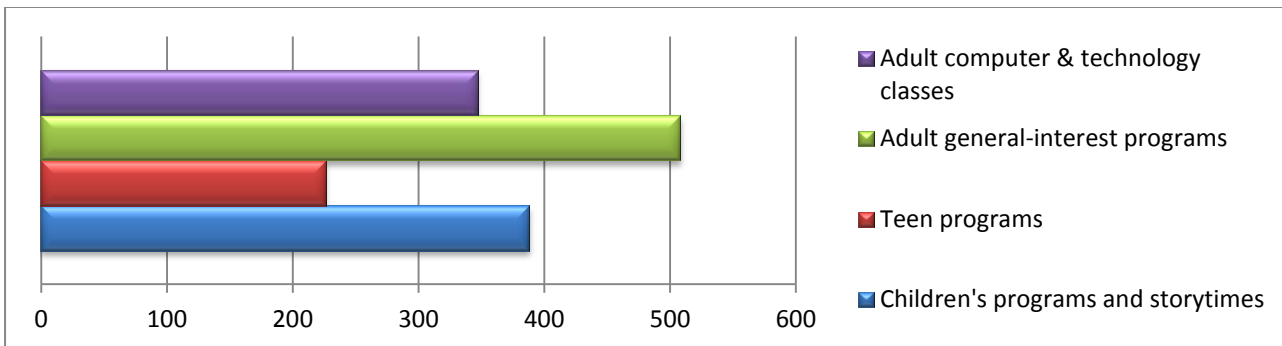
Answered: 1183 Skipped: 25



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Yes	56%	666
No	44%	517
Total	100%	1183

Q9. If yes, please check all programs that are of interest to you or the community. Check all that apply. (If no, skip to next question).

Answered: 655 Skipped: 11



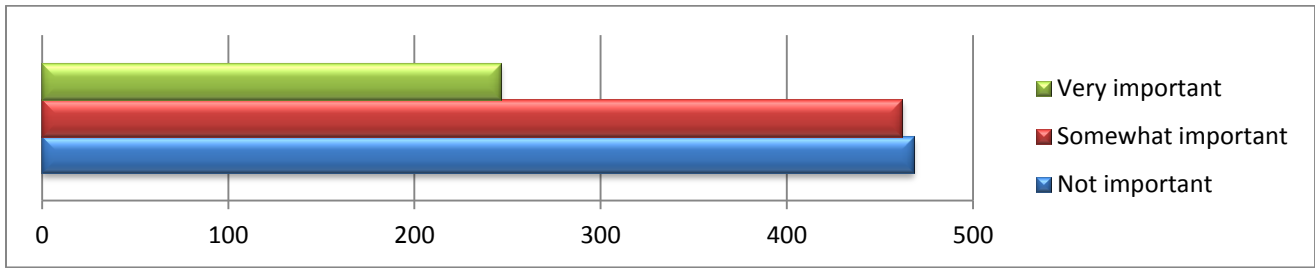
Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Children's programs and storytimes	59%	388
Teen programs	35%	226
Adult general-interest programs	78%	508
Adult computer & technology classes	53%	347
Other: please describe	9%	60
	100% = 655	1469

Sampling of other comment received:

- Book club, guest speakers; author reading series, book discussion groups and lectures/discussion groups re subjects of interest given by university professors, visiting speakers on political, cultural (like some First Nations speakers) topics.
- Programs should complement not compete with existing programs in James Bay

Q10. How important is it to you to have a meeting room in the library for groups to meet, socialize and work together?

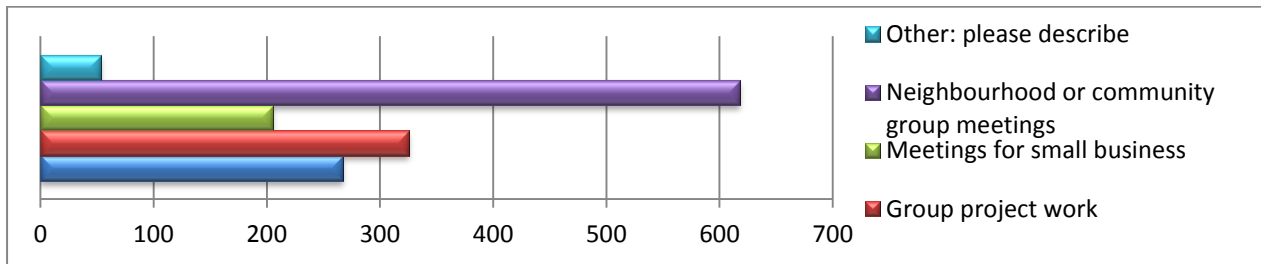
Answered: 1176 Skipped: 32



Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Very important	20.9	246
Somewhat important	39.3	462
Not important	39.8	468
Total	100%	1176

Q11. If “very important” or “somewhat important”, indicate how you or the community would use the room. Check all that apply. (If “not important”, skip to next question).

Answered: 663 Skipped: 45



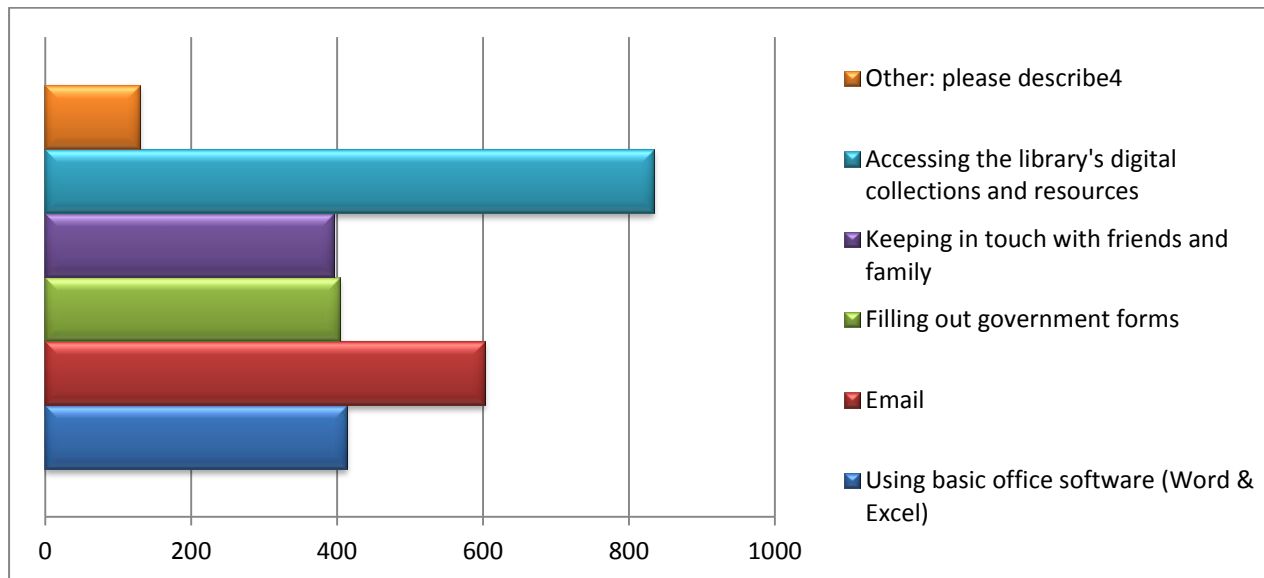
Answer Choices	Responses	Count
Other: please describe	8%	53
Neighbourhood or community group meetings	93%	618
Meetings for small business	31%	205
Group project work	49%	325
Tutoring	40%	267
Total	100% = 663	1468

Sampling of other comments received:

- Meeting room for Strata building meetings, private small group initiatives.
- For other programming compatible with library programming and objectives; writer's groups
- Meeting places for non-profits (social or education) at no/little cost.

Q12. All GVPL branches provide public computer workstations. Please tell us what you or the community would use the public computers for. Check all that apply.

Answered: 1024 Skipped: 183



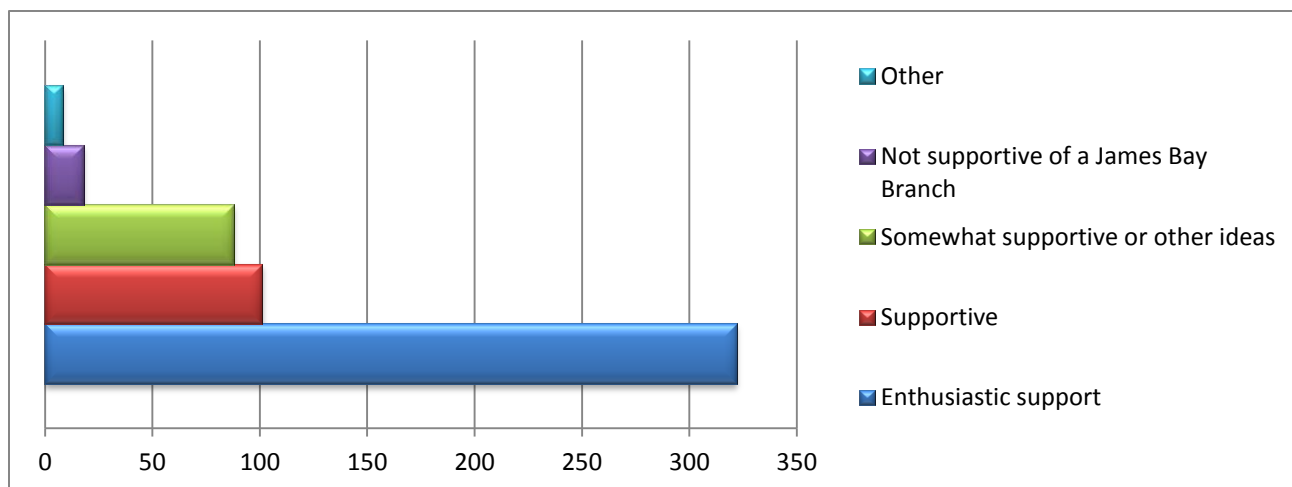
Answer Choices	Responses	
Using basic office software (Word & Excel)	34%	413
Email	50%	602
Filling out government forms	34%	404
Keeping in touch with friends and family	33%	396
Accessing the library's digital collections and resources	69%	834
Other: please describe	11%	130
Total	100%=1024	2779

Sampling of other comments received:

- Printing
- Internet, research
- Online job applications, printing flight and entertainment tickets, playing games
- Keeping up with local and world events
- Wi-Fi and power outlets are now more important than computer stations. The trend is for personal devices and access to quiet table, Wi-Fi and power.

Q13. Do you have any other comments?

Answered: 537



Answer Choices	Responses	
Enthusiastic support	60%	322
Supportive	19%	101
Somewhat supportive or other ideas	16%	88
Not supportive of a James Bay Branch	3%	18
Other	1%	8
Total	100%	537

Sampling of other comments received:

- I believe a library branch in this exciting new space would be a wonderful addition to the community and would be a great "people" place for community members.
- Generally James Bay has been thought of as "downtown" and not needing services because of its proximity to Central. In fact, this is a high-density, mixed economic and age neighborhood that would welcome its own branch. I hope that we actually see these plans move forward
- As a James Bay resident, I am excited at the prospect of a library - even if few books are available on site, a library space would allow holds to be sent directly to James Bay, and would allow after-hours returns of books I borrow elsewhere. The idea of an outdoor garden or space around the library makes it inviting, and if it could be tied in with the library's new seed-lending library, it would be all the more appealing....Overall, I love the ideas being put forward and I hope the support is there within our communities to create and maintain healthy community spaces!!
- We live in James Bay. A local library would be a great asset to the community.
- I think James Bay is well equipped with community gathering spaces and community programs, but we lack a public library and this is a gap that needs to be filled. The role of an information hub - digital, print, periodicals, and inter-branch loan pick-up location is vital to the James Bay community. Wheelchair and scooter accessibility is also accessible for strollers. Location on a public transit route is important.
- How are the homeless & vagrancy issues to be addressed? For example, comfortable seating, warmth & a hygienically clean environment / amenities are obviously welcomed by all, but are vulnerable to those with substance addictions, social maladjustment problems and who otherwise are homeless / vagrants.
- I feel that the Central Branch is within easy walking distance and buses can drop passengers just a half a block from the entrance. A public library in James Bay would be an extravagance