

## Facilities Master Plan Update Survey and Forums – Summary

Omaha Public Library (OPL) made surveys about Himmel and Wilson’s five facilities recommendations available to the public via online (a link on OPL’s website) and paper (at OPL’s 12 branches). Email blasts to our cardholders, posts on OPL’s social media channels, and the Mayor’s Facebook page, and local television news coverage stimulated interest in the survey throughout its open period. Ten articles and one *Public Pulse* letter (see Appendix 1 for article titles and dates) that appeared in the *Omaha World-Herald* from June 3<sup>rd</sup> to October 8<sup>th</sup> also kept people interested in the survey. The surveys were available for over 11 weeks from July 7<sup>th</sup> through September 18<sup>th</sup>.

### Methodology

3571 survey responses resulted in a valid sample with a 2% margin of error and a 95% confidence rate\*\*

311 responses were in paper (9%) and 3,260 (11%) responses were online

39,281 cells of qualitative data from the surveys were coded using an OPL created taxonomy with 28 defined areas – Comment coding was done by the Strategy and Business Intelligence Office staff

78 comments from the public and staff forums (314 attended) were also coded using the survey methodology

#### **\*\*Population Base**

Douglas County – 554,995 (U.S. Census 2016 Population Estimate)

Omaha Public Library Service Area – 529,090 (CivicTechnologies’ Omaha CommunityConnect data)

Surveys needed for valid sample

- 2391 for a 95% confidence rate
- 4117 for a 99% confidence rate

### Aggregate Results

Initial review of the surveys resulted in agree/disagree/no response numbers based on each recommendation. Table 1, *Total Responses*, breaks down the responses by percentage and raw number for each recommendation.

**Table 1 Total Responses [N=3571]**

Location	Agreement	Disagreement	No Response
Southwest	80% (2857)	15% (535)	5% (179)
Willa Cather	62% (2214)	27% (964)	11% (393)
Elkhorn	59% (2107)	28% (1000)	13% (464)
Main – Swanson	66% (2357)	27% (964)	7% (250)
Saddlebrook	49% (1750)	34% (1214)	17% (607)

Table 2, *Online Responses*, breaks down the responses by percentage and raw number for each recommendation.

**Table 2 Online Responses [N=3260]**

Location	Agreement	Disagreement	No Response
Southwest	<b>81%</b> (2640)	<b>15%</b> (489)	<b>4%</b> (131)
Willa Cather	<b>62%</b> (2021)	<b>27%</b> (880)	<b>11%</b> (359)
Elkhorn	<b>61%</b> (1987)	<b>28%</b> (914)	<b>11%</b> (359)
Main – Swanson	<b>68%</b> (2217)	<b>27%</b> (880)	<b>5%</b> (163)
Saddlebrook	<b>50%</b> (1630)	<b>35%</b> (1141)	<b>15%</b> (489)

Table 3, *Paper Responses*, breaks down the responses by percentage and raw number for each recommendation.

**Table 3 Paper Responses [N=311]**

Location	Agreement	Disagreement	No Response
Southwest	<b>65%</b> (202)	<b>19%</b> (59)	<b>16%</b> (50)
Willa Cather	<b>54%</b> (168)	<b>25%</b> (78)	<b>21%</b> (65)
Elkhorn	<b>48%</b> (149)	<b>22%</b> (68)	<b>30%</b> (94)
Main – Swanson	<b>44%</b> (137)	<b>40%</b> (124)	<b>16%</b> (50)
Saddlebrook	<b>36%</b> (112)	<b>35%</b> (84)	<b>15%</b> (115)

Table 4, *Significant Differences between Paper and Online Responses*, shows the percentage differences between the online and paper surveys for each recommendation.

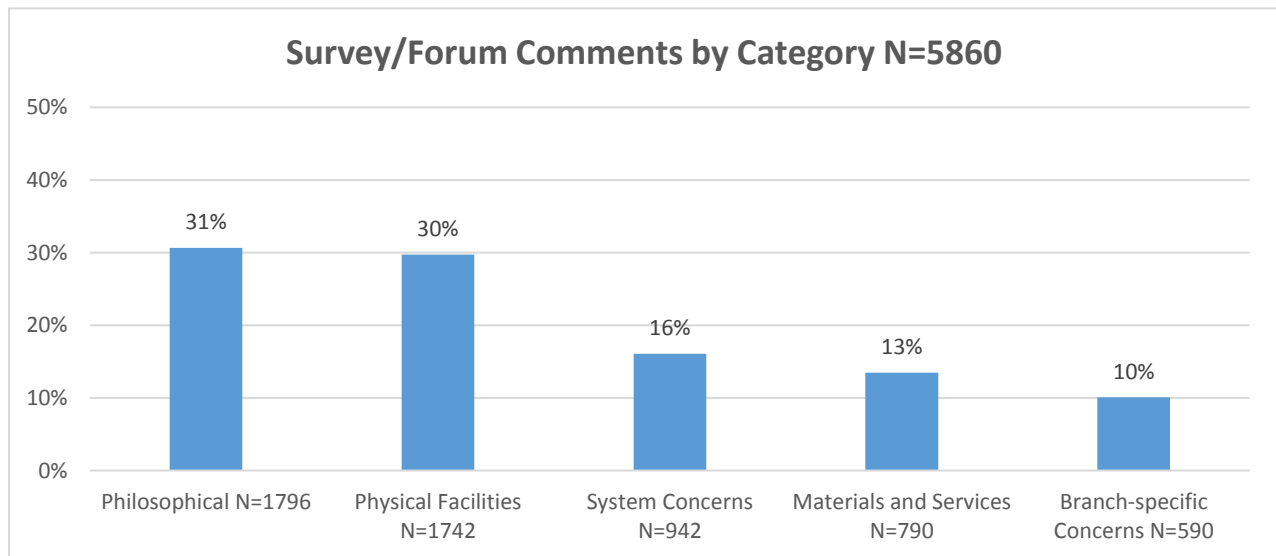
**Table 4 Significant Differences between Paper and Online Responses**

Location	Agreement		Disagreement		No Response	
	Online	Paper	Online	Paper	Online	Paper
Southwest	81%	65%	15%	19%	4%	16%
Willa Cather	62%	54%	27%	25%	11%	21%
Elkhorn	61%	48%	28%	22%	11%	30%
Main – Swanson	68%	44%	27%	40%	5%	16%
Saddlebrook	50%	36%	35%	27%	15%	37%

## Written and Forum Comments Analysis

The survey and forum respondents were very happy to share their opinions with us. 19% of the respondents wrote *something* in a comment field for a total of 7,308 comments. Quite a few comments (1,448) were just “I agree” or “Sounds good.” Our analysis centered on the substantive comments which weren’t confined to just the facilities recommendations. If a patron mentioned several different issues in one comment, we counted each issue in the same comment. For example, a respondent who had comments to share would write about parking, lack of materials, the need for a quiet space, and OPL as compared to another library, would be counted in 4 different taxonomy categories.

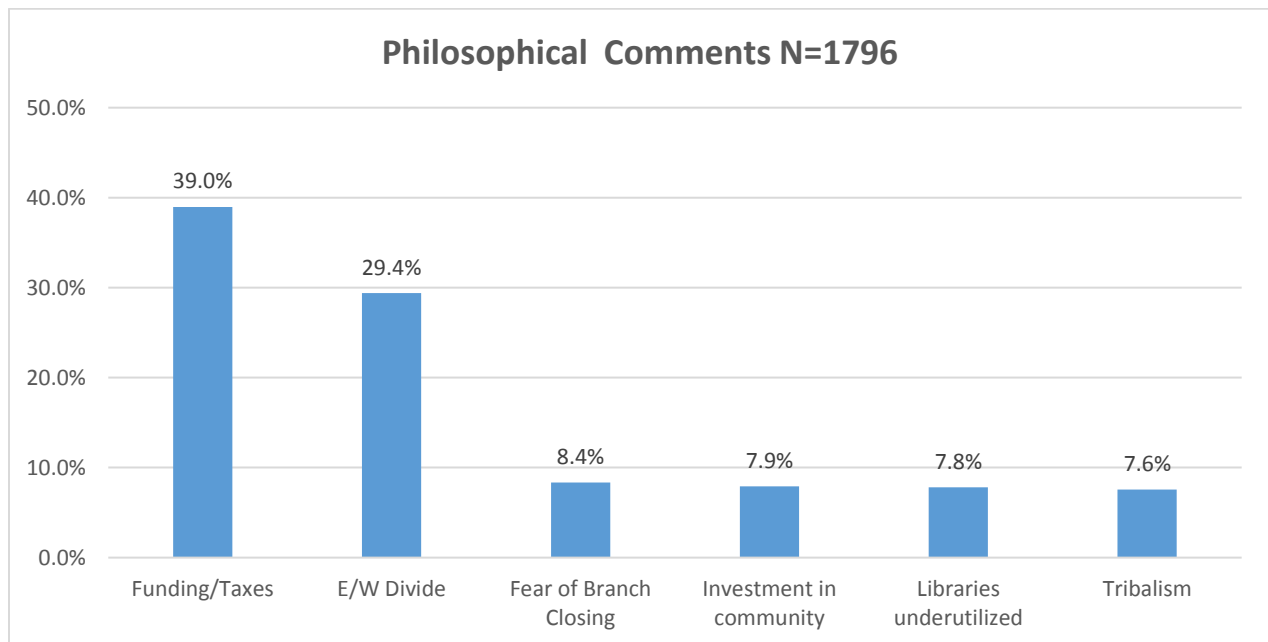
Since 5,860 comments divided into 28 areas was too unwieldy to handle, we grouped the areas into five broader categories – **Philosophical** (31%), **Physical Facilities** (30%), **System Concerns** (16%), **Materials and Services** (13%), and **Branch-Specific Concerns** (10%). Each higher-level category will be discussed with graphs and sample survey comments.



## Philosophical Comments

The Philosophical category consisted of 1,796 comments from 6 areas. **Funding/Taxes** (39%), i.e. “How are you going to pay for all of this?” was the prevalent theme in this category. The **East/West Divide** (29.4%) was another concern for a fair number of people. These respondents felt that the recommendations only addressed the western parts of our service area while the eastern neighborhoods would not be gaining libraries or library enhancements. The dividing line was often self-defined, i.e. “I never go west of 90<sup>th</sup> Street” or “I never go east of 144<sup>th</sup> Street”. There was also no agreement as to neighborhood boundaries, i.e. Midtown was considered as far east as 30<sup>th</sup> and Farnam to as far west as Dodge and I/680.

To a lesser degree, **Fear of Branch Closing** (8.4%), particularly their own favorite branch, was another theme. A similar number of respondents commented on libraries being an **Investment in Community** (7.9%) which meant that libraries should be valued and funded for the good of the community. Some respondents felt that the branches were never busy, parking was always available, and they found what they wanted at the point of need. We called this category **Libraries Underutilized** (7.8%). Other respondents did not want anything to be done with the libraries unless it was for their own library or their own neighborhood. We referred to this as **Tribalism** (7.6%).



## Selected Philosophical Comments

### Funding/Taxes

- Too much strain on an already tight budget. Improve what you have already making it irresistible to west Omaha. What benefit would there be on putting a new library on county lines?
- Do you have funding for this already?
- Taxes are high enough already.
- Last I heard OPL was having problems staying afloat?? Wouldn't want these new grand buildings taking place of the current libraries because I'm pretty sure it would be the older ones in the poorer areas of town that would be affected.
- Many library users live in the midtown, south, or north areas of the city and are using old, underfunded libraries. These other parts of the city are always passed over in favor of western locations.
- I don't want to pay for this or have my property taxes go up to pay for this.
- There is a growing need for adequate library facilities to serve annexed neighborhoods that pay taxes for public services.
- I would agree with this if money is available without reducing funds for existing library branches.
- A plan should be in place to purchase land as soon as available given the increasing cost of land within the city.
- How much money do you think you have for new land and another building? My blood is boiling over this one.
- Absolutely. I 100% agree. Main library needs such a face lift that the current building would drastically cost more. Hopefully that building can also be sold for a tidy profit due to the location and can help offset the price of building the new branches.
- Political pressures seem to put moving the main library as a higher city priority. Downtown development should not take precedence over the needs of outlying areas. Plans should be put in place to secure land for Swanson so that, when a good location comes up, the City can purchase it.
- Have it funded by impact fees in the neighborhood. Don't make people east of 72nd pay for subsidizing wealthy suburbanites.
- We need to devote more resources to Omaha's library system so that it matches the quality of the city and is comparable with other like-size communities.
- Chronic underfunding of our library system and lack of investment each City budget cycle.
- It is unclear whether you're factoring in staff, materials, and UPKEEP for any new buildings. Please don't overlook that.
- We pay city taxes but there are no services near us (library, parks, pools, etc.). It would be nice to have our tax dollars used for something we can easily access.
- I have long thought the downtown branch isn't very useful any more. It should be eliminated entirely. Selling the land would do a lot to cover the cost of your plans.

## Selected Philosophical Comments

### East/West Divide

- I'm not a fan of the suburbanization of Omaha. I'll never understand why people want to live so far out west. People who choose to live out there know they're going to be driving further distances to EVERYTHING including their public library! I chose to live in midtown in an older neighborhood. I love it. I personally feel we should be encouraging growth and development East of I-680 and discouraging that which occurs closer to Gretna.
- West Omaha does not need it. Increased library services are needed downtown and in south and north Omaha.
- People in the southwest have money. They can drive into the city if they need a library. Closing libraries where the socio-economic status is low to build one out west is not a smart use of funds for our residents.
- Too many libraries in North Omaha.
- Westies get spoiled at the expense of east Omaha.
- You have several pathetic facilities in the older neighborhoods that need HELP. Our libraries are understaffed, short on resources and in desperate need of updating. Stop building west and redo what you have irresponsibly neglected.
- West Omaha suburbanites do not use public libraries.
- I wish we would stop catering to the people who have chosen to move really far away from the city center and expect all the same city services.
- If this incents the westward communities to better use the library then I am ok with that.
- I feel the west side of town needs first priority since they have been underserved.
- Because our Mayor likes to annex things and we absorbed so much of the West, I think there definitely needs to be another library there. So many people are moving out there (which is gross) but we need to accommodate for their movement.
- I feel that east branches have some work that needs to be completed before a new branch.
- There are multiple West Omaha libraries. Generally speaking, the families living in West Omaha have their own personal vehicles that allow them to frequent various locations. Unlike the downtown branches, many of the individuals that frequent the Main Branch do not own their own vehicles.
- Publicly funded entities should be leading reinvestment in infill development, not sprawl. Perhaps this could mean expansion/refurbishing of the current Millard library.
- Reinvest in existing eastern and urban core assets instead of continuing to cater/aid in sprawl.
- Just want to be certain that the Library doesn't abandon their constituents inside the interstate while moving west.
- So far, all of your recommendations have involved replacing/expanding facilities in West Omaha and shrinking/moving facilities in the eastern half of the city. This facilities plan is a joke.
- Too much emphasis on west Omaha -- don't forget midtown (Swanson!). Folks out west have more options than we do.

## Selected Philosophical Comments

### Fear of Branch Closing

- We use Swanson all the time; there would no longer be a branch for Dundee/Midtown.
- Can you maintain the existing libraries? There has been talk about closing existing libraries in the past. Some existing libraries are not open Monday -Saturday. The stacks are shockingly empty in places.
- Having visited the Millard branch with some frequency, the volume of patrons is easily handled by staff there. What evidence is there that there is an unmet demand further west at this time? I surely would object if the Millard branch was closed to accommodate a further west branch.
- Agree if keep Millard branch too.
- Only if you are keeping the Millard Branch open.
- Please don't close other libraries in order to do this.
- I'm assuming that this is in addition to, and that the Millard Branch will remain open.
- If they eventually build a new one, I definitely do not want them to close Millard.
- Don't replace, just build another branch.
- Solely a selfish one, it would be further from my house.
- The people in this neighborhood love this library. Please don't move it.
- Keep down town branch.
- Present location serves a big need.
- I hate to see any branch close.
- The population in Elkhorn has grown and this would make sense. However, I do not support this if it would mean taking away from other branches or closing other branches to put money toward this new project.
- Just don't want to lose our Florence Branch. Am 75 years old now and will not drive to the others as they are too far away from my home in Ponca Hills!!
- Do not get rid of any branches! They are vital to the public!
- Keep the location as it is near my address.
- Will disenfranchise local patrons.
- I think the children in this area need this branch to remain!
- Consider satellite location in Aksarben.
- I do not want to see Swanson Library close. It is a wonderful library in a beautiful neighborhood. I like that it has the good old "library smell" too which Benson and Sorensen branches got rid of. Swanson is close enough to Crossroads.

## Selected Philosophical Comments

### Investment in Community

- Libraries and schools are vital to an economically successful community.
- A good library system shows the strength of the community!
- Omaha is expanding and we need to allow the community's knowledge the ability to expand with it!
- I feel that having a library in the community works positively for all.
- Libraries are one of the best services Omaha offers & the Millard branch needs help.
- As a community, we need to make library services available to all citizens, especially children and students of all ages.
- The library is a major component of any active, growing community – all of those living in Western Omaha are missing this resource.
- Everyone in all parts of our city should have access to comfortable, well-stocked libraries. A library which is overcrowded and perhaps noisy, along with the lack of parking space, is not welcoming, to say the least.
- Libraries are a critical part of a city's cultural infrastructure. They should be geographically convenient for all residents.
- Omaha is expanding and we need to allow the community's knowledge the ability to expand with it!
- I feel that having a library in the community works positively for all.
- The best way to spend taxpayer money to reduce crime and poverty is to make the masses smarter! Go, Go, Go!
- Libraries should never go away. I grew up not really knowing them and, now as an adult, I'm really sad I didn't have that. I love all the services and opportunities that are offered for free by libraries and people need to use them more.
- Yes, I heartily agree as this branch's facilities cannot adequately serve its community. It is unfortunate to lose some of its heritage but libraries are a living resource to the community. They should honor the community's needs for library books and spaces.
- I COMPLETELY support this relocation. We need libraries to be bright shiny fixtures in the heart of our communities if we want the next generation of thinkers to put their screens down and open their minds.
- Modernize. Make Omaha proud. Every great city has a great library – except Omaha.
- Every community deserves local and universal access to a public library. It should be a standard in Omaha.
- We need to make Omaha the best library city in the nation. I know it takes money but having an educated community is an investment not a luxury.
- All the library facilities are inadequate, and all citizens deserve a nice library!
- Library services are best investment in people of Omaha.



## Selected Philosophical Comments

### Libraries Underutilized

- I have never seen the library overcrowded. Save the taxpayers' money.
- I don't feel the amount of people at the Millard branch is so overwhelming that we need to have another library built.
- I visit the library frequently, variety of days and hours, I live off of 144th. I have never been at the library where it was at the capacity, nor near the capacity level. Increased staff or more parking on side may assist the problem versus an entirely new library.
- Traditional libraries are being used less and less with the advancement of the Internet, Google search, etc.
- Libraries are going extinct. Build more places like Do Space.
- The facilities that are available now are not being used enough to generate money. We are also moving into times where books are becoming obsolete.
- I use Millard Branch quite often. Wouldn't use one as far west as 180th & Q. I'm not sure if building another branch would be beneficial or not. I've never noticed Millard being too busy; however I'm not there during peak times either.
- From my limited experience, Willa Cather Branch is often sparsely populated. Again, this is only an observation based on a few visits. On the other hand, it seems as if the South Branch is pretty active.
- I go in there at all different days and times and it is NEVER crowded – ever. No need to spend money on a bigger facility.
- I have used Elkhorn periodically and it never seems busy, but since so much housing is built in that direction, it will probably need an update in the near future.
- The Swanson branch is centrally located and would serve as a proper site for the Main Library. The Swanson branch is also aging and in need of replacement. The current Main Library is underused with the western movement of population and jobs.
- Main Library is huge and relatively empty when I have visited.
- Main Library is being insufficiently and inefficiently used (aren't two floors practically empty?), and the Swanson Library is practically falling down (it actually \*smells\* old). This solution would solve both problems.
- For the size of the downtown library it never seems very crowded and is under used. When we lived downtown I never went there because of the parking situation and the vagrants. We drove all the way to Millard Branch!
- Library seems to not be crowded every time I go there. However, I do not like it being attached to the school. For 1/2 hour before dismissal, the parking lot is so difficult, overcrowded and a real mess at dismissal time. Also, handicapped parking is quite a distance from the entrance. My father could not park and walk that far, so wasn't able to use that branch.
- I've never seen Saddlebrook anywhere close to capacity.

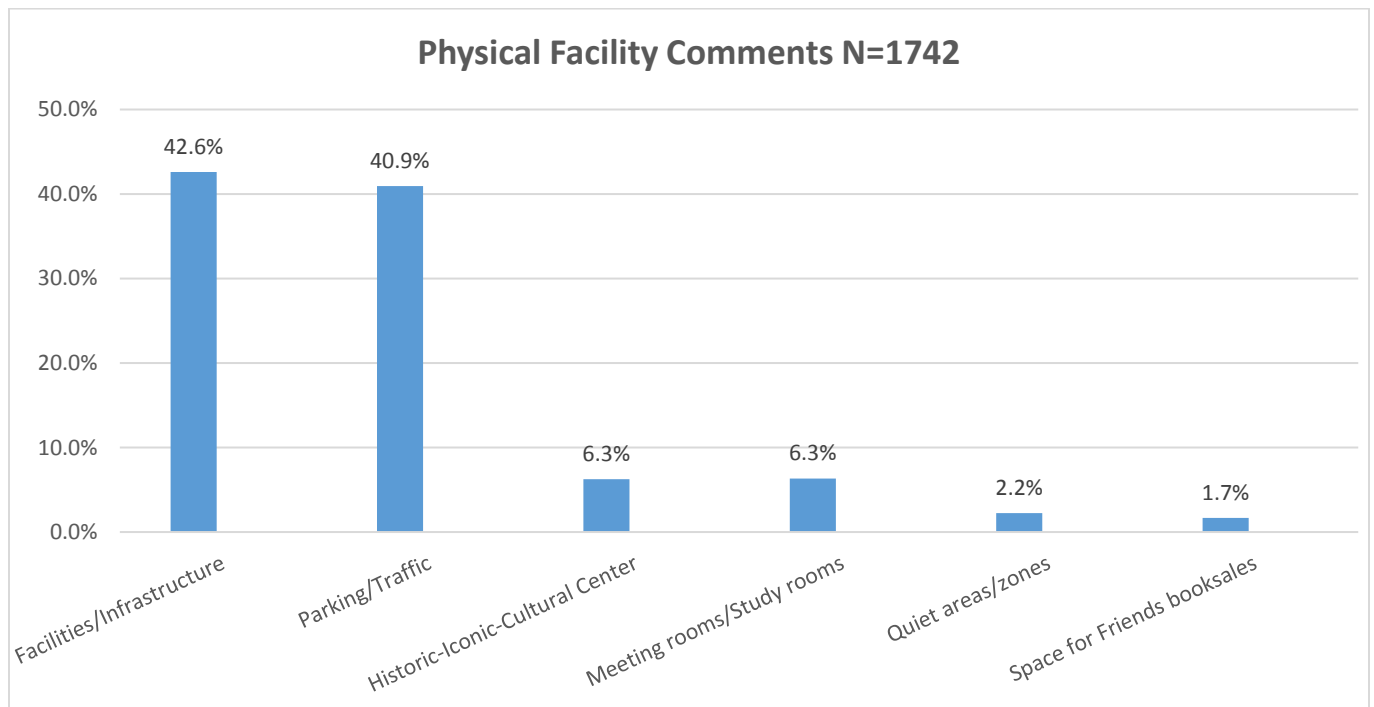
## Selected Philosophical Comments

### Tribalism

- Live in Willa Cather branch which we feel needs a new building.
- Let Elkhorn take care of its own library.
- Why not listen to your patrons? We go to the current Millard Branch location for a reason. Why not invest more funds in THIS location?
- If people want to live out there then they can drive to Millard.
- I don't use the west libraries so I don't know if it is necessary.
- I do not live in this area, so would not use.
- Doesn't concern me...I live in another area of town.
- Really no opinion on this. I live in midtown and don't know about the status of branches out west. Obviously would prefer investment in downtown and midtown locations.
- Too far out from my location to get any use out of it.
- Don't live in this area.
- I think this sounds like a good plan if there is money to do so. But, it doesn't affect me so I don't feel strongly one way or the other.
- I won't use that location.
- I am neutral because I live in NW area of Omaha.
- I don't care; I don't live in this area.
- This has no significance to me.
- This is my go-to library and I like it where it's at and just the way it is.
- Not a priority for me.
- They annexed themselves out of Omaha.
- I do not know anything about that facility. Never been there. If they pay for it and use it, well, fine.
- Not sure about this one...I like my Abrahams branch...Would this interfere with the Abrahams branch?
- Again, I don't really use these branches.
- I agree with any replacement in areas of larger populations as long as it does not make my library close (Florence Branch, a small library, but still vital to our community).
- Not my part of town.
- No because you left my branch alone [in the plan].
- Don't care about that area.
- Willa Cather serves Morton Meadows and Field Club perfectly. Great location and no reason to close/move.

## Physical Facility Comments

The Physical Facilities category consisted of 1,742 comments from 6 areas. This category garnered only 54 fewer comments than the Philosophical category. The majority of **Facilities/Infrastructure** comments (42.6%) were about the poor condition of our facilities. These remarks ranged from the current state of our carpet and lighting to furniture, restroom fixtures, and technology. There were almost as many **Parking/Traffic** (40.9%) comments about the parking, parking lot access, and traffic flow around our buildings. Although Willa Cather and Swanson had the most “bad parking” comments, almost all of our branches were mentioned about their parking and parking lot accessibility issues. Lesser themes revolved around the role of a “Main Library” – whether it should be a **Historic-Iconic-Cultural Center** or not (6.3%); the desire and need for more **Meeting room/Study room** spaces (6.3%), and **Quiet areas/ Zones** so that noisier groups and activities were not disruptive to patrons who wanted a less-noisy experience in our libraries (6.3%). A small number of respondents mentioned the **Space for Friends book sales** at Swanson Branch (1.7%).



## Selected Physical Facility Comments

### Facilities/Infrastructure

- Many of the libraries need to be updated. They're failing in this way. My sister who just graduated from college, works for UP and lives on 10th street is highly disappointed with the library downtown. So many homeless people she's frightened to go back. She moved from IL and the library downtown REALLY put a poor taste in her mouth.
- Do you not have anyone who on occasion goes through your facilities to see how things are? How they are working day-to-day? Maybe something needs to be fixed? Maybe something needs to be cleaned more than normal? Who oversaw the construction of the new bathrooms in the Swanson Branch?
- More charging outlets and better kid-sized restrooms.
- I see the holes in the roof of the Benson Branch and other structural problems with Swanson and other libraries.
- The new libraries and existing ones need to be taken better care of in the future.
- I would like to see family restrooms and/or unisex restrooms.
- Design the facilities for growth. Consider geothermal, solar and alternative energy for these new facilities.
- Please update restrooms with quiet hand dryers. The noise decibels are extremely loud especially for those suffering with sound sensitivity.
- Please make sure to invest in landscaping as well as facilities. Trees, please!
- The board and OPL need to make sure the future library budget is going to account for the added facilities maintenance costs of these new locations. The current branches already look run down and could use additional funding for basic maintenance. The budget also needs to account for tens of thousands of dollars of additional materials that have to be purchased to fill those libraries.
- I think all branches need to rethink teen spaces and try to incorporate "family" spaces for parents to work on computers but to be in close proximity to children's area and collection. Better technology and infrastructure is most important.
- You have several pathetic facilities in the older neighborhoods that need HELP. Our libraries are understaffed, short on resources and in desperate need of updating. Stop building west and redo what you have irresponsibly neglected.
- Other facilities also need upgrades, poor lighting, updated paint, etc.
- Updates should have been done way before now. The Swanson library is from the "dark ages" !!!!
- Willa Cather building is old. No proper electrical outlets. No parking and nowhere to expand.
- The Willa Cather branch needs a new building. It's old and smells musty. I think more people would utilize this branch if it was on 63rd Street.
- Downtown library is showing age and elevator fails constantly.
- Swanson building is grim and terrible. Hate to see downtown shrink. However the librarians there are over taxed with secondary social work.

- The Main Library is gross, smells like armpits, and is just plain dated. I like the Swanson branch for its architectural style, but it too is due for an update. Heck, I live 5 minutes away from Swanson and still go to the Millard branch because it is a nicer facility.
- It is an embarrassment to the city of Omaha that Swanson has not been upgraded long before now!!!
- Avoid over the top architecture like W. Dale Clark used. Those atriums on each floor are a huge waste of square footage and HVAC resources.
- Would love to see Swanson updated. Basement has an off smell.
- In planning for the new buildings, having community meeting spaces is a must. Especially for spaces that would hold more than 10 people. Having a room where children can "make a mess" and would be easy to clean up would be great for programming and then could be used for teen/adult outreach also (cooking, art, craft, metal/woodworking, gardening, hands-on classes). Family bathrooms. Spaces designed for court monitored parent/child meetings in each branch is a must. Community resource area with a space for organizations to come in and provide services if necessary. More technology specific areas with room for expansion, such as 3D printers for example.
- Do you employ any kind of a decent cleaning service? Does the library contract out the landscaping and yard work? Because several of the libraries look grubby and uncared for and the bushes and grass look awful.
- There needs to be given a much bigger budget in OPL's plan to take care of the grounds of the libraries. I volunteered for a time at Benson but health reasons caused me to quit. OPL needs either to provide dedicated paid labor or develop a good volunteer group to take care of it. The library should be a jewel in any neighborhood's area, not a shabby embarrassment.
- Yes, it is time for OPL and its Board of Trustees to really come into the 21st Century. The facility updates should be purposeful to the services, media and book offerings. The space should be expanded to remain relevant and warm not utilitarian. Facility updates should reflect this change in the use of space by current and anticipated usage not just expansion by square footage. Ambiance, use of color, accessibility, openness, privacy yet safety and community building should be considered when designing or renovating facilities.
- Once the buildings are up regular maintenance inside and out would be nice.
- There needs to be family bathrooms for nursing mothers. There are a lot of stay-at-home moms who take their children to the library who also may be nursing a little one. If grocery stores have it, why not libraries?
- Outside drop off boxes/bins that are located on the passenger side of the car/lane are rather cumbersome. It would be most helpful if they were located so the driver could drop off items without getting out of the vehicle or blocking oncoming traffic.
- Be sure you have adequate "tornado safe places". 2 bathrooms at Elkhorn which sits atop a very windy place are not adequate.
- This is the stupidest library idea yet. We need repairs and more books at both locations, not tearing down existing buildings.

## Selected Physical Facility Comments

### Parking/Traffic

- Millard location is nice but small parking lot and too congested.
- I currently use the Millard branch and it is always crowded. Many times I wait for people to leave in order to find a parking spot.
- The parking lot at Willa Cather is a mess, it needs changes and expansion.
- I like the idea of moving special collections to a more central location. I know lots of people who don't want to deal with going downtown, paying for parking, etc.
- YES! Swanson library does not have enough parking, staff, or space to thrive. It is a huge burden on the neighborhood to allow patrons to park on the street as there are very few houses near Cass that have off-street parking available. The library itself is not worth visiting with few book options.
- I use the downtown library for my genealogy research. Since the change in free parking meter times, I don't get down there as often. Something with better parking would be wonderful.
- Downtown parking and commute problems prevent that facility from being used to the optimum. A more centrally-located, accessible facility would better serve the population.
- We have never gone to the Main Library because of distance and parking.
- Swanson parking areas (open areas for vehicles to come in, park, and leave) are too small. Too little space for ingress and egress. Also, super easy to box anybody in (for example in a gang-type confrontation after hours or in the US Marshals' take down of a suspect last week in that lot), the way it's set up. Feels like some planner trimmed a foot here and a foot there to add green space but those 2 feet in one parking lot are the difference between safety and fender benders. Also every branch needs drive thru returns for books and other borrowed materials. The green space retaining walls are starting to fail, too, just FYI. Public libraries are very important to my family.
- As a regular patron of Saddlebrook library, it frustrates me that all of the parking spots closest to the library entrance are used by the elementary school staff. In my opinion, the staff should be required to park either in the parking lot nearest the school entrance on the opposite side of the building, or park in the further rows. It becomes much more difficult for residents of the Omaha community with mobility issues to utilize the public library and community center spaces when they are forced to park far away from the door while the staff uses the close spaces.
- Only thing I can say is about parking at the main branch downtown. We were there on a Sunday and I am currently on crutches from surgery. The handful of handicapped spaces were taken and like 15 other spaces were all reserved for employees which I'm fine with when they are there, but it left pretty much nothing else. We did find two spots that were for employees but said M-F so I did get a space that was relatively close to the door. Normally I wouldn't have an issue with the street parking, but in my current state, I'm noticing issues for handicapped accessible issues. Maybe a few more of the employee M-F slots would be nice.

## Selected Physical Facility Comments

### Historic-Iconic-Cultural Center

- Main Library – why not move into the historical building downtown that used to house the Omaha library? Swanson is an awesome architectural gem – don't get rid of it!
- Swanson is ICONIC, though it would nice to remodel basement tiles/bathrooms.
- As a global cultural institution, the library is central to community. The Main Library belongs in its current location. It is critical to the integrity of Omaha and its downtown core. It is one of the very few indoor public spaces we have.
- The main branch needs to be downtown. It is the only part of town with a relationship to all other parts of town. Look at every other major city. The iconic main branch should be in a walkable area and served well by transit.
- The Willa Cather building is iconic.
- Swanson is an iconic building, a work of art. You have greatly undervalued its architectural significance. Main library is fine where it is. Can still house special collections. It has great prominence in front of grand city park.
- The downtown branch doesn't match the historic flavor of the neighborhood. In larger cities, downtown branches are typically in historic buildings with unique stories.
- There must be a compromise here. To raze architecturally significant structures seems short-sighted. The historical significance of these structures far outweighs any benefit of tearing them down. These public buildings will become a draw for students of architecture and an inspiration for every person visiting. Let's not erase our heritage in the name of "progress".
- Omaha needs a great flagship library downtown, which remains Omaha's cultural, intellectual, and social hub. The current plan would move a premier cultural institution away from downtown right as that area is experiencing a renaissance. Omaha's usage patterns certainly demand branch facilities that cover central and western parts of town, but a main library should serve additional purposes: it demonstrates to visitors and potential future residents and business owners that the community is vibrant, it helps the community tell its own story, it communicates the importance of knowledge to its residents.
- This is a neighborhood library. Even though there is westward expansion, which seems to be culturally lacking in diversity, the neighborhood branches that serve culturally more diverse areas should be maintained.
- To me, this is the biggest issue in the whole survey. Don't abandon downtown!!! Omaha continues to be an up and coming city, and all the important cultural and arts locations are downtown. Let the branches be out west, keep the library relevant by keeping it downtown.
- If you keep the historic name, I agree. [Willa Cather]
- Main needs the special collections and Admin close to Mayor's Office, cultural center of city.

## Selected Physical Facility Comments

### Meeting Rooms/Study Rooms

- Would love to see new facility offer study and meeting rooms.
- More branches should have study rooms and be able to book online.
- The Willa Cather is small and doesn't have adequate parking. A new larger branch would be desirable. Make sure to include meeting rooms for book clubs, community meetings and teen activities.
- Our WOW group meets at Swanson – an upgrade is needed and more meeting rooms would be great – also the location between 90th and 72nd and Dodge is vital.
- I think the library itself is large enough, but the amount and size of meeting rooms for classes is not. We need more and some that are larger.
- What will happen to Swanson? Need the meeting rooms and amenities and more parking if you are planning to enlarge!
- More meeting rooms needed city-wide.
- I would like to see more meeting rooms so groups could meet. My library sponsored book club has often had to meet in a corner of Willa Cather or back in work area because the meeting room is in use. Makes it unappealing.
- Provide adequate parking at the new location. Small meeting rooms for study groups would be beneficial, like the ones at South Omaha or Millard, but a few more than those locations currently have.
- We need a Millard style branch with the same level of resources, services, activities, and study/meeting space in the midtown area. We live in midtown but often go to the Millard branch because of the resources and great hours! We're a home school family with some voracious readers. We also utilize the study rooms, audio books, etc. There are a lot of families with children in the area, not just college students and "hip young adults". Also, the downtown library feels unsafe and is dirty feeling. We no longer take our 4 children there because of the high number of loiterers/bad atmosphere and a poor children's collection. Our last experience there was one I don't want to repeat!
- All branches would definitely benefit from having study rooms for quiet study and at least one meeting room. Some of the layouts of even the newest locations were not planned very well to have both kids and quiet study at the same time. I think having input regarding facility planning from those who work at the libraries would be very valuable.
- Make sure to have study rooms and kids' area like Millard has.
- I visit the Abrahams branch at least 25 hours a week to find a suitable study area for college classes. While the facility is maintained and the library offers a wealth of opportunity for the community there are not enough computers for the patrons of this location and there are not enough study rooms or tables available with appropriate electrical outlets to support the needs of the electronic devices of today. Expanding these areas are more of a concern to me than the expansion of the western portions of the Omaha area where the median income level appears to be the driving force in building new and larger facilities in the area.



## Selected Physical Facility Comments

### Quiet Areas/Zones

- All libraries should teach and maintain quiet, thought-producing atmospheres. What's offered by libraries is more important than the physical structures.
- Better parking at Florence with expanded concrete, not blacktop. Please -- quiet in library -- Do we need "play areas" in the library to entice kids in?
- Create more branches that are community centers and make rooms sound proof. Branches such as Abrahams become noisy when they host activities such as rhumba and public speaking events while patrons and library guests that utilize libraries to study are distracted; soundproofing needs to be installed in recently renovated branches, and in community center library combined buildings. Also looking at the possibility of community centers like Adams Park, housing smaller/micro-sized branches for quick in and out business. The Sorensen branch is dual level, using community center and sound proofed from community center portion.
- Children's area is very small, especially during summer reading programming, plus adult patrons don't get needed "quiet space".
- Expansions of any and all branches should include children's quiet areas for ages 1-11yrs. As the library is starting to become like a daycare, causing inconvenience for students and professionals alike.
- I LOVE Swanson – it was the first library I've ever been to. It is one of the few quiet libraries. (I don't like the "new" libraries which allow noise and teens to be loud.) It has an ambiance that can't be found anywhere else.
- Quiet room for reading in all branches.
- I hope it will be bigger and have more amenities than Willa Cather. Willa Cather is a great little library but the one big room tends to get noisy when kids are enjoying the kids section which my kids do.
- When we go to the library in the summer many of the shelves are picked clean, and it is packed and noisy.
- I love our Elkhorn branch but I agree it could be bigger! While we're not the size of Council Bluffs, they did a great job with their branch back in 2001 roughly. They have fabulous study spaces, kid friendly rooms that can be closed off for noise, and two floors which is awesome. Anytime we can improve upon a library is time and money well spent! As far as placement, I like our Elkhorn location because it's tucked away nicely away from commotion. That's a huge bonus! I love that we can sit outside on the library benches and it's not absurdly noisy. We can overlook a field of native wildflowers at the same time. Improve upon our site but please don't move the location! Perhaps a way to turn in off the side road facing Common Ground would be a nice bonus but without taking away from the beauty we have already. I'd love to sit on this board!!

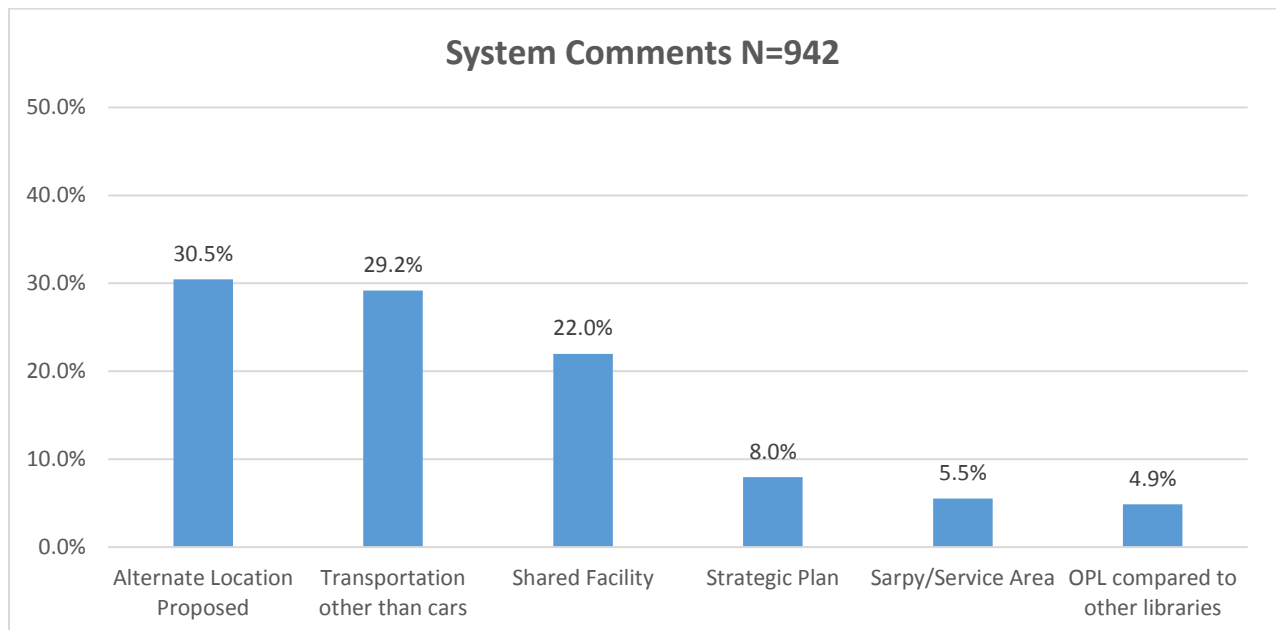
## Selected Physical Facility Comments

### Space for Friends Book Sale

- Important to keep a presence downtown; also important to continue to have space for Friends' book sales.
- What would happen to the Friends Book Sale during this time?
- Have space at new library for Friends of Library book sales.
- Keep space for Friends of Library and book sales. How will we pay for all of these changes?
- Make sure Friends have sufficient space at Main Library or Swanson!!
- The new Swanson should also have additional retail space for Friends book sale.
- Don't forget about the Friends – they will need room for their book sales if you close Swanson.
- I go to the Friends of the Library sale every Thursday. Would like to see their area enlarged and some fans or air conditioning as it is so hot and stuffy in those rooms. They really need more room to spread out and be able to put out more of the books that are returned to them for sale.
- I'm not sure about the 72nd and Dodge locale at this time with Do Space being directly across the street. I am not sure about the actual closing of Swanson and how that would work, but they definitely need to move the Friends out of the branch and into their own space. I think that various departments from ML could be housed at different locations (the Willa Cather building for example could be kept and used for the Friends, or IT, or cataloging if some remodeling was done, especially since it has a dock for a truck).
- Swanson is a good location. Depending on getting sufficient land in Crossroads area, Swanson could serve as administrative headquarters. Maintain Friends great book sales location.
- Downtown Branch is like an old schooner, it's not pretty to look at and its size is ridiculous. As far as Swanson Branch, the sooner Omaha gets rid of the moldy basement the sooner I'll return to the book sales.
- Central library more accessible to entire city if not downtown. Swanson landlocked so can't expand there. Don't eliminate FOPL book sales!
- I agree that Millard needs help but I'd like to see them move to the old K Mart store on 144th (next to Super Saver). The additional space could be used for book sales to get them out of the basement.

### System Comments

The Systems category consisted of 942 comments from 6 areas. This was another broad theme that consisted of comments ranging from an **Alternate Location Proposed** to those in the recommendations (30.5%), to concern about patrons who needed **Transportation other than cars** (29.2%), i.e. bus or biking/walking access to libraries to proposing a **Shared Facility** with other organizations, schools, community centers, non-profits, etc. (22%). Others had concerns or questions about our **Strategic Plan** and vision for our library system (8%) and a misguided hope that new library branches would serve people outside Douglas County in **Sarpy/Service Area** (5.5%). There were also some enlightening comments about how **OPL compared to other libraries** (4.9%) and what the respondents would like to see in OPL libraries.



## Selected System Comments

### Alternate Location Proposed

- I don't think the Elkhorn and Saddlebrook branches should be relocated and made larger. Since these two areas share a "border" of clients, why not keep these locations and then build a third location in the northwest area. Maybe somewhere between 180th and 204th and north of Blondo.
- I can understand making the Main Library smaller but a central library would not need to be on Dodge, maybe Pacific? Then it would be easier to keep Swanson open too. Swanson and Abrahams are not too far apart and both seem to do well. Moreover, if you decide to close Swanson, then yes, Dodge Street between 72nd and 90th. (Crossroads, as was planned?) would be the ideal location for a central library.
- Put Willa Cather in Center Mall –plenty of parking and services.
- 63<sup>rd</sup> Street is a hot mess of Aksarben retail and Baxter traffic. Gentrification has caused property costs to rise beyond the area's actual improvements. There are still road issues throughout the area.
- The current possible locations for the new structure would be at 84th & Dodge in the old HDR HQ (if Methodist hasn't taken it over) or in the old Crossroads area. Any other location would require purchasing & relocation of existing businesses.
- I agree with the caveat that this new branch not be part of Crossroads.
- Would love a branch closer to our house at 192nd and Center.
- We need a better library in the Northwest part of the city. Elkhorn's library is outdated and too small so our family ends up driving to the Millard Branch and I've talked to MANY families that do the same thing. It is ridiculous to have a community the size of Elkhorn with a small, outdated library and pool, especially when considering the amount of city, state, property and federal tax monies that come out of THIS area!
- Another northwest branch would also be welcomed. The Saddlebrook location is not user friendly to area residents, only to students. Do not understand why Omaha Public Library is gifting a "wealthy" school with its own library when other areas seem more in need of library services.
- I live extreme northwest, and there is nothing out here.
- Almost all of these questions are about expanding libraries out west. I live in Florence area. 21% of the population of Douglas County lives northeast of 72nd and Dodge Streets. Yet there are zero large libraries in that area. Why don't you build a new big library in North Omaha so the west Omaha folks can drive across town to get services the same way I need to now.
- Didn't know it was a public library -- need a 156th and Fort stand alone.
- Place the central library in a place close to readers. I believe studies have shown or will show the new central library could well be sited south of Dodge Street, west of Methodist Hospital complex and east of 90th Street. What funds, if any, might be coming from sale of present central library? Answer will be forthcoming, I assume, in due time. Is present site leased or owned?

## Selected System Comments

### Transportation Other Than Cars

- As long as it stays in the same area, not miles or blocks away for those who use public transportation.
- Add a midtown branch near Midtown Crossing. I walk miles to get to the closest library (2.2 miles).
- While new facilities are nice, it's clear that the A.V. Sorensen is utilized so much in part because it is a walkable and bikeable location. I always see kids there who have walked or biked. Please consider making the other branches more accessible in this way, away from the traffic (i.e. Dodge).
- Glad to see that none of the facilities in east/north are scheduled for closure. Accessibility (on bus lines, walking distance) is important for patrons with limited income.
- Instead of "drive time" for those capable of driving (ages 16 and up), add a "walk-time" component for ages 8 to 15 years during summer vacation, Saturdays, and "after school" hours.
- Please actively pursue alternative transportation access to all locations. Bus AND bike AND walk. Wide multi-use trails are so much easier to build from the beginning. And, community meeting spaces as well as quiet study areas (perhaps small rooms for individual quiet study)? I am glad the libraries are so popular and used, but sometimes quiet focus is needed too.
- This is complicated and needs more than just an agree/disagree answer. I would have to see specifics. Both branches would need to be on walkable, bikeable and bus thoroughfares. Currently, the downtown branch is and the 90th and Dodge branch sort of is.
- Make any new or renovated/updated facilities more pedestrian friendly for walkers and bicyclists. Bring the facilities closer to the side-walks and reduce large parking lots (or put the lots in the back or underground).
- A lot of older people live close by there and walk to the branch. I think they would not want to travel to Aksarben to go to the library.
- There are wealthier residents in the Aksarben area that are more likely to drive. Willa Cather is more "walkable" for us without transportation.
- The community is expanding rapidly and could use a library in this location. We frequent the Bess Johnson library and it would be great if there was one within walking distance of our house.
- Please keep the downtown Dale Clark branch in the location it is now. It is easy and safe to walk to for people of all ages and income levels who live and work downtown. Many more apartment renters and condo owners are choosing to live downtown and in the Old Market area. We want a library close enough to walk to during the day and early evenings. It is also easy for visitors in Omaha to find. The present location is convenient and safe. Perhaps the building may need updating or renovations, but the location is perfect. We hear rumors that the library may move to the old Civic Center site. That location is not close to the majority of people who walk to the library from their homes downtown.

## Selected System Comments

### Shared Facility

- Can you team with another organization for a shared facility?
- Incorporate Ralston and Bennington and Council Bluffs into a larger Metro Library family, sharing resources and online functionality.
- Would like to explore joint plan with parks using their donated land -- separate buildings but same land.
- I don't agree or disagree on this. But it didn't make sense to me why they had a shared building with a grade school.
- Do away with shared OPS library.
- Just clarify the Do Space in terms of OPL somehow and consider how you can tie in to the Crossroads Mall option for the new central location. Have you tried to incorporate the Ralston system more? What is their rationale for not sharing? There is just history there that I don't know. Thanks for all you do and all you consider to serve the Omaha community! We are grateful. You could charge more for overdue books to make up some funds :)
- Just as I mentioned before. Locate smart, build smart. Share with schools, Parks/pool sites, Do Space, etc.
- I like the concept of sharing space with a school and activity center.
- Population has moved west and does not necessitate a large facility downtown. A central library closer to the UNO campus would be ideal for foot traffic and allow students to use the central library along with a potential share program between the UNO library and city library.
- This was a poor decision in the first place, sharing a library with a school. However, it seems to be a waste of money to upgrade this area of town so soon to the first plan.
- Is there an opportunity to "share" facilities, books, services, personnel, etc. with surrounding community resources? For example with other towns such as Papillion, Blair, Bennington, etc.
- If you build a facility at 180th & Q, perhaps Elkhorn would not need to be expanded. What about the library at Elkhorn MCC campus? How does that fit in to the plan?
- If the South Omaha/MCC branch is working why not Elkhorn/MCC branch?
- Looking at this area, can something be done in coordination with universities and planning for this space that reflects the needs of the growing UNO, UNMC, and St. Mary's student body?
- Consider another community center facility in northwest Omaha?
- I like this idea. Place the new Swanson next to Do Space so they can work together and the Branch would not duplicate what Do Space does.
- Yes, I would love to see expanded hours and use of our library facilities. Similar to how Do Space and the UNO Community Engagement Center have made their facilities accessible to all even for meetings and events is great. It is a shame we pay to maintain these facilities, but they don't get much use other than for library or city programming.

## Selected System Comments

### Strategic Plan

- We are trying to "build up" downtown area with more residences. I see the reverse as a more suitable solution-larger, more suitable downtown branch incorporating a better facility to enhance needs for this up and coming citizenship (younger millennial, older retired and visitors from special events). We have a need there in the area with new hotels, condos, and (sorry to say homeless people) that I can vision a "grand, all encompassing" structure to serve multiple communities and also make up some tax money by providing a need to people just visiting in need of a relaxing area to get away from "hotel living". Could this be combined in the area of the downtown "Y" to save tax dollars?
- This is a great start. I'm a former OPL and OPL Foundation president and PR professional. I would like to be involved in helping promote this plan. I have some suggestions for how to gather and use public input. We need to offer older areas a vision of better service at updated facilities east of 72nd (or 90th) so it feels like a win for the older parts of Omaha as well. I feel it would be but would love to help head off the seemingly automatic defense of keeping outdated and inefficient branches just because they are in XYZ neighborhood.
- The facilities plan is only an update on the old facilities plan and doesn't take into account a wide array of things (programs, services, operations) that one must consider in planning for the future of such a rapidly changing organization. In other words, the facilities plan is not a strategy. I look forward to library leaders articulating a real vision for the library system, and then also defining a strategy to make it happen.
- The main library is very outdated and does not represent the vision & future of Omaha. By making the downtown location smaller it would still accommodate the people who use it but also allow for growth in other areas of the city.
- I'm inclined to support this effort, just because the corner of 72nd and Dodge is in desperate need of infrastructure improvement, however, given the uncertainty of the general space and efforts to replace the section of land formerly occupied by Crossroads, I think the library could delay this initiative in favor of a larger visionary directive for this area from the city/mayor.
- Your study was good background; listen to the public for the real future planning.
- Technology infrastructure and capacity \*might\* fall outside the edges of facilities planning, but without serious improvements in bandwidth we'll be majorly hamstrung in expanding services and new facilities opportunities.
- OPL planners need to be more farsighted in the planning of facilities.
- I think the master plan is very complete.
- I would recommend a renovation of the building, and a new mission.
- Planning for future needs is more important than remedying past mistakes.

## Selected System Comments

### Sarpy/Service Area

- What's happening to the Bennington Branch?
- We need one in Papillion!
- Need library that direction. Gretna library is not beneficial or up to speed.
- Why build a library for Gretna?
- I'm a Gretna resident and the library is extremely far away.
- It is technically not in Omaha.
- Is that even Omaha?
- Will this be within Douglas County?
- Allow Sarpy County/Omaha residents access to a library card for free.
- How are plans for the new Bennington Library coming? Does it make sense to consider that Bennington might become part of Omaha as Elkhorn did?
- Is that Sarpy County? If so, could the people of Douglas County use it?
- Merge OPL with other public libraries in Douglas and Sarpy counties into a regional public library.
- This branch needs to include those living in Millard with a Sarpy County address. A very small fee could be charged, but needs to be a less than what non-Douglas County residents are being charged now.
- Sarpy County residents need a library accessible to them without charging a ton of fees. My daughter, who is mildly mentally handicapped and has graduated from public schools, loves to read but has to pay a fee at the Millard library as well as the Gretna and La Vista branches. She is on a fixed income so there are only so many books she can afford to download or purchase from a store.
- Reconsider annual fee for users in Sarpy County. I live 3 blocks south of Harrison, a senior who is widowed therefore 1 user of library services. \$75 seems excessive as an annual fee. I supported the library for 50 years with my property taxes when I lived in Millard.
- Please allow people who live in Omaha, but Sarpy County to use the facilities.
- If a new facility was to be constructed in this area, it would be important to partner with the population living in western Sarpy County and eastern Saunders County; this community is also served by the Gretna library system, which is planning a new expansion of their own facilities. Work should be prioritized to minimize overlap of resources while allowing access for any local resident.
- I also think it may bring in money from Sarpy County residents willing to pay for a library account that are in close proximity to that area.
- I believe that there should be a "southwest" location but a location further away from the Sarpy County border may be a better solution. For example, 168 and center. Also, what about communities north of Dodge such as 144 and Blondo?



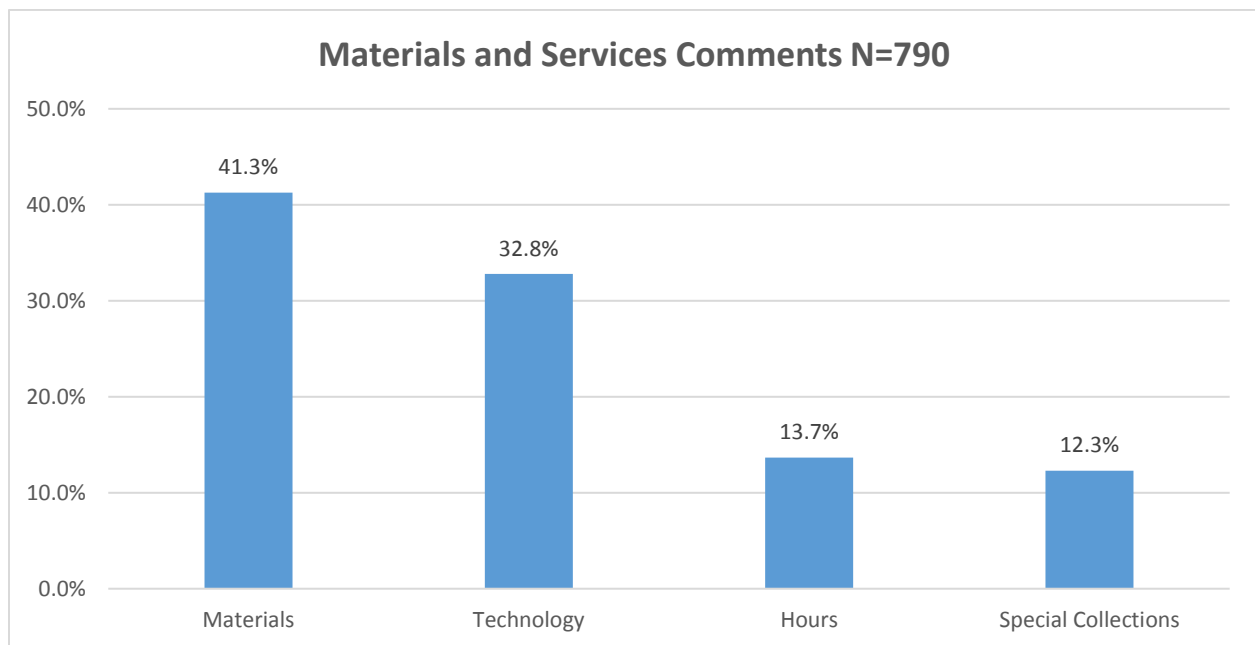
## Selected System Comments

### OPL Compared to Other Libraries (See Appendix 2 for All Named Libraries)

- I was born and raised in Omaha. Returned in 1975 to Omaha to raise our son and take advantage of Omaha's excellent school system. Moved to Highlands Ranch, CO in 2001 to watch our grandchildren grow up. Douglas County Colorado had the best library system ever. Moved back to Omaha in 2016 and live close to Swanson Library. Such a disappointment to me how Omaha has let this library deteriorate. Of course in the 15 years we were gone, Omaha never fixed the streets either, so I guess that I should not be too surprised.
- I love the Omaha library system! As a lifelong user of libraries in 3 different states, I can tell you that Omaha's system stand head and shoulders above others. I say keep improving.
- A big downtown library branch is crucial, in my mind. Think of cities like Kansas City and Salt Lake City that have showpiece urban libraries! I think it would be a very, very shortsighted idea to move the main library from downtown. Instead, make it an amazing destination for people! I get why people don't like to go to the current one, because it's a dark and outdated facility and parking can be hard. Don't give in to patrons' fear of black people or homeless people, save the downtown library!
- We spend time in downtown San Diego, across the street from a recently completed (5 years?) Central Library. The down side of this location is the large population of homeless who spend their days (& nights nearby), but the upside remains strong for bringing the surrounding areas, who have branch libraries, downtown for special events/concerts/ample parking, as well as tourists. Think the 72-90th corridor in Omaha would eliminate part of the homeless "hangout", and at the same time would bring in suburban residents. The architecture is very special to the downtown buildings. ([www.sandiegocentrallibrary.com](http://www.sandiegocentrallibrary.com))
- Get funding away from City budget. Look at cities like Topeka, KS where the county funds supply their award winning library: Topeka and Shawnee County Library. Topeka is a distressed city, Kansas is broke however the library is their gem and unlike Omaha they have funds to keep it that way. Consider looking at their model which has an active bookmobile service to possibly extend service without enlarging westward branches.
- We moved here from St. Charles, MO one of the top library systems in the country. We are surprised at the state of the Omaha Libraries. We use Florence two or three times a week. Nice people there but Florence needs a good cleaning/renovation, especially the parking lot. Someone needs to tell the karate guy not to park his van in front of the front door all day Saturday. Swanson is an embarrassment. The smell in the lower level is hard to take. Lastly, our taxes were much lower in St. Charles. A \$350,000 house had approximately \$150 a year assessment for the library system. Omaha needs to have a much better system. Take a tour to St. Charles or Oklahoma City. Nice libraries there.

## Materials and Services Comments

The Materials and Services category consisted of 790 comments from 4 areas. The number and length of patron comments in this category was particularly noteworthy. Comments about the lack of **Materials** [physical, digital, children, adults] (41.3%) and **Technology** issues (32.8%) were predominant in this category. **Hours** (13.7%) were also mentioned with patrons wishing that we were open more days or more hours. **Special Collections** (12.3%) were mentioned in the proposed Main Library/Swanson recommendation. Patrons who use our special collections, primarily genealogy, want to make sure that this collection had a “home” in whatever facility we built. Many patrons wanted the special collections centrally located in the county for easier access and use.



## Selected Materials and Services Comments

### Materials

- I agree with this because of the limited availability of books. I often wait weeks for certain books to become available. The Millard branch is also not close to my neighborhood.
- Where will all the money come from? I agree with the idea of new buildings if it is realistic. Do not cut back on buying books. Not everyone wants to read online. Focus on books.
- You will spend millions on buildings, yet cut hours and cut back ordering books. I love the library, friendly, helpful staff, am able to request books online and pick up @closest location, get garden seeds. Keep up the good work.
- Benson and Abraham could use a variety of books. No western books.
- Current location is difficult to access and inadequate. Every time I have visited, I have to request books since it is too small to adequately house many books readily available on a broad range of topics and interests.
- More audio books for the people who can't get out and have trouble reading.
- Find it hard to find books "in" the current libraries, though ordering them in is always the option. Fear brick and mortar buildings for book may become dinosaurs.
- Buy more books. Expand days and hours of operation.
- My family currently uses the Millard Branch library and it would be nice to have something closer (we live near 168 & Q). Also, when we try to check out books there, they are usually already checked out and you have to be put on a waiting list.
- Money spent expanding eBooks and online resources would help alleviate the crowding of current facilities described as a problem.
- Enlarge the online availability of books and video.
- It needs more resources, and more books available. Elkhorn is growing by leaps and bounds.
- Not up to date with materials and seminars.
- There also needs to be more copies of books and e-books. Sometimes my kids have to wait 3 months to read a book, even if that book was selected for their OPL book club.
- I have no problem with this program PROVIDED that services in town, particularly at branches like AS and other smaller branches are NOT cut back on services and materials.
- The Willa Cather branch is extremely dated and in desperate need of additional resources, larger collection, and updated facilities compared to many other branches. As more and more families move into the UNO area and those areas South of UNO, there is greater need for kids programming and materials.
- Needs more variety and materials.
- We need a larger library downtown. It has shrunk too much as is. We need more books and better access to reference materials.
- There is a real need for a library in this area. It is difficult to access and lacks the materials my children ages 15, 15, & 11 need.
- Fill up shelves with books downtown.
- Millard is too busy and has few history books (Indian wars, WWII, Pirates, etc.).

## Selected Materials and Services Comments

### Technology

- Too congested and outdated computers.
- All branches need larger and more technology.
- Rundown buildings with not enough tech capacity.
- Update computers to handle web-based programs, i.e. Blackboard, Canvas & Google Drive, old and outdated and can't handle printing from online college sites like CANVAS at Willa Cather Branch; always in use so keep but update with new!
- We desperately need 2 LARGE whiteboards in each section of the large conference room at Millard Library for teaching purposes. Why you have 2 large whiteboards in the small conference rooms and none in the large one is beyond me. Comparing the cost/benefit ratio of purchasing/installing these whiteboards vs. building whole new libraries. I think the whiteboards take priority. I teach in this room twice a week. It is often so cold students stop coming. In addition, simply adding a "booster" (I don't know the correct name) to boost the range of internet connectivity might be a simple solution to some of the internet reliability issues at Millard Library.
- No library in my opinion should be larger than the Main Library of the state or county. There's not enough to connect our phones and laptops at Omaha libraries. The seating arrangements are from the plug outlets. No outlets in the tables for more private activities. Think more Wi-Fi. Thanks.
- Sirs, I visit Willa Cather Branch regularly at all hours of the day. I have rarely had to wait behind even one other patron for help. I have rarely had any trouble finding parking, although I grant this has happened rarely. Most of the clientele appear to be there to use the computers, and from my observations, very few of these patrons are reading anything. Instead, many computer games are played. Some people are doing email. Given the ability of the library system to transport books efficiently from one venue to another for pickup upon request, I see no need to build larger branch libraries. Technology affords the ability to centralize storage and farm out books to peripheral venues. I would recommend this as the cost effective model. I don't think we should be building more libraries to provide computer connections. The city could provide scattered sites for Wi-Fi connections, but I don't think this should be the library's purpose.
- The perks for patrons that use public libraries like to use libraries because #1 they are FREE (does not require any purchases to: use Wi-Fi, (i.e. Starbucks, coffee shops), computers or to get information; #2 they offer HELP with actual human interaction with knowledgeable librarians/staff, provide classes/resources, and community engagement; #3 they are SAFE, inclusive, judgment-free spaces #4 they are ACCESSIBLE. Take out any of these and the public library will lose its flavor.
- Both should be replaced to make them more modern and suitable for the 21st Century. The main library could offer more relevant services and equipment. Books and computers will always be the mainstay. However use the excess space to house more tech like video and green room space think YouTube, audio-visual and sound equipment for music listening or podcasts,

plus more interactive like films or classes. Have a multi-purpose space and offer mixed media. People and human interaction and involvement are the key to keeping public libraries viable. No one wants to hunt to find someone for help nor do many people go to a library just to read books or newspapers any more.

- I agree only if the downtown location changes its format. All computers should be in small, monitored labs where phone usage and personal conversations are strictly limited. The facility should function as a location for picking up ordered materials and not contain large numbers of materials for browsing. There also should be enclosed areas for meetings and studying, but not a lot of open space for lounging and loitering.
- Just update all branches with new technology.
- The internet capabilities of all the facilities should be upgraded to current standards for each level of our educational system.
- Wouldn't the money be better spent on more technology? I would love to use the library without having to go there. I was recently trying to order something online, and it wouldn't let me until I went into a branch to update my card - really? This should be allowed online. Also, I tried using eBooks, but it was a rather cumbersome process - I would do it more if it was as easy as the Barnes & Noble website.
- More computers in the branches and longer accessibility time. Sometimes an hour isn't long enough.
- I know technology isn't really addressed, but there is a big need for more computer terminal access at all the facilities I use - mostly east of 90th Street. There are almost always people waiting to use terminals. Many students, especially, need access to complete assignments or locate materials and there needs to be space to put the monitors/terminals. As a book reader, I am saddened by the lack of, and variety of, books in many branches. For those of us who can't afford Kindles and online book subscriptions - especially young, retired, and/or lower-income people - this makes libraries less attractive. In addition, the sheer joy of being able to explore and taste new genres is lacking when books aren't there to explore.
- Start introducing more "maker equipment" into locations.
- Very much concerned about the internet and that we are using it for so many things. Wonderful that we can download books, etc. Would like a better transference of materials. Would like to not have to do ILL or find another library she can get it from. Wants to do e-audio from other libraries.
- Please keep an eye on the future of electronic and the availability through the internet of library services.
- Overdrive app is easy to use and would like the e book process to continue to be updated as needed.
- Yes, I used audible books and need more help with the technology. As library resources become more digital, we need more help to access them. This needs to be part of the plan. I use Millard library and Elkhorn and they are both short on tech help...though they are always very nice.

## Selected Materials and Services Comments

### Hours

- I'm very pleased with the library system here in Omaha. The ease of getting books to hours of operation, kudos.
- Also, where would the money for all this come from? It seems like every time there's a budget crisis, the city council talks about closing library branches or shortening hours?
- The site is not being used effectively now! It's closed on Sundays and Mondays, and has shortened hours on Friday and Saturday. Make better use of the facility you have!
- Please do not cut hours or days. This is one of the most important community services and community building aspects for Omaha. We need up to date, vibrant public libraries.
- I would hope they wouldn't cut hours at the other locations just to open a new facility further west!!
- I disagree when hours have been cut at branches I use due to budget or to add new costs.
- I would use the Swanson branch more frequently if they had extended hours. I suspect a new location might have extended hours.
- I just hope a building plan doesn't drain the library fund and lead to shortened hours. I hate it when the doors are shut.
- Hopefully you will fund library hours to maximize the availability to the Omaha population.
- NW Omaha needs larger location with better hours.
- I think the hours need to be extended. I think all libraries should be open on Mondays. It is ok if Sundays they are closed, but I think the libraries should be more accessible Monday through Saturday.
- Expanded hours so that people can enjoy their local libraries on weekends.
- Increasing hours and days open should be explored first.
- Longer hours at some facilities. Saddlebrook closed Sunday and Monday is not conducive to serving the community.
- Sunday hours would be a bonus, even if the libraries were open one Sunday per month. Also, I appreciate having the study rooms – I tutor English to adults, and having a public place where we can work on reading without them feeling self-conscious (being in study room vs. a table out in the open) is a valuable community service.
- Why is the library system seeking to spend so much money on these massive projects when it sees fit to reduce hours due to budget restraints?
- Having another central branch that doesn't have the weird hours/congestion of Swanson would be nice as well.
- Please have later hours!!
- Increased hours! Hire more staff to accommodate growing Omaha populations!
- Would love to see more evening or weekend events for those of us with small children who work traditional hours.
- Having Swanson closed for 2 days a week is excessive I feel.

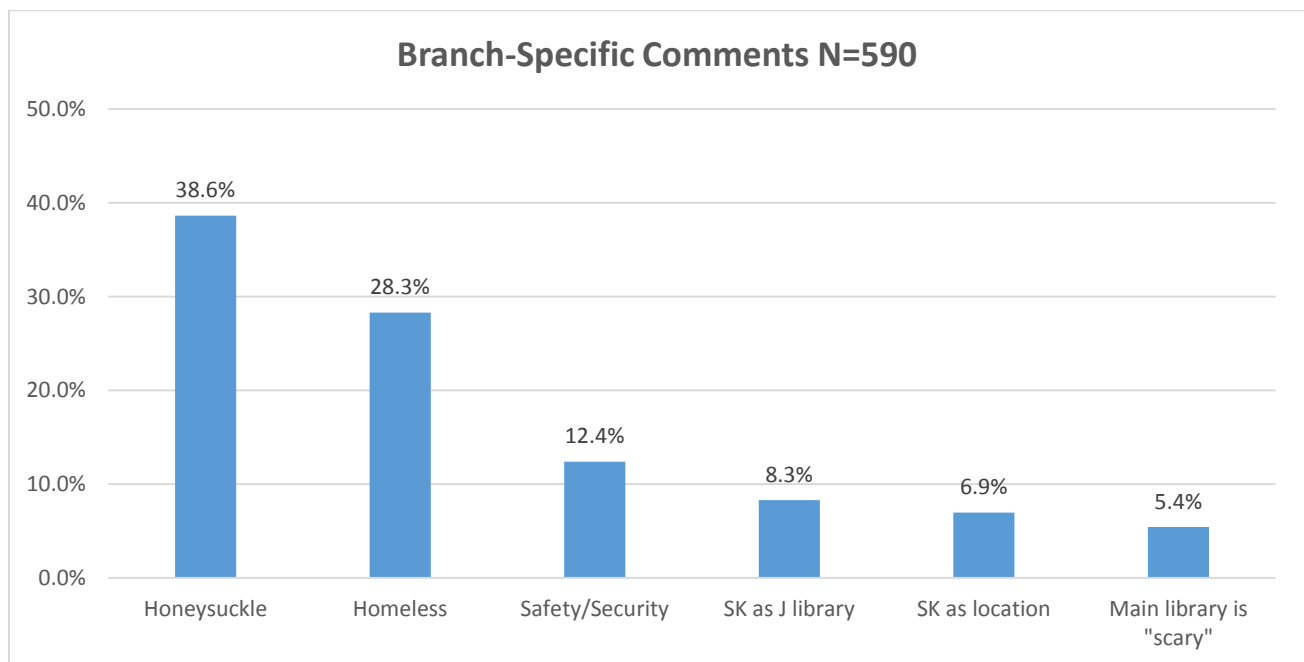
## Selected Materials and Services Comments

### Special Collections

- Make special collections more accessible to all citizens.
- That would be closer to me now to use the special collections.
- It makes sense to move special collections to a different location as many of those accessing these collections are put off by travel distance and parking at Main Library. I think the central library should house a normal library collection too – not JUST admin and special collections.
- I like the idea of moving special collections to a more central location. I know lots of people don't want to deal with going downtown, paying for parking, etc.
- We need a larger facility to house the special collections such as Genealogy, Nebraska Reference, Large Print, etc.
- I think that downtown needs to maintain the special collections and remain the same.
- I'd go more often to use special collections and see the art exhibits if it were easier to get to and to park.
- Better central location for population and special collections like genealogy and services for community.
- Move the special collections out of downtown and make them more accessible to researchers.
- Downtown library is a city landmark and not much further to travel for special collections once factoring in traffic.
- I think it's a good idea to replace the main library with a smaller downtown branch. It would be good to have special collections or functions west of DT area. However, I really love Swanson. The facility and the location are nice. I'm not sure how busy Swanson is. If that branch would get more "traffic" if it were replaced with a larger library.
- I don't think special collections will see a lot of use. More current computers will be used. The reserve a book system is excellent – put resources into that.
- No one likes going downtown. Many people avoid it like the plague! Having a more centralized main branch would allow more access to special collections.
- The new mission for Clark? Reference library, just like NYPL's Schwartzman. Special collections. Genealogy. Gov docs. Subject specialists.
- We still need the downtown library for many of the historical and special collections. All in central place.
- I enjoy visiting the downtown library to research special collections but a central location would be more convenient.
- Would be sorry to see special collections leave downtown :(
- Virtually all major cities have their central library downtown. Many tourists and researchers visit the W. Dale Clark Library to use the genealogy and other special collections; they then patronize downtown establishments for food and entertainment, or visit such places as the Durham, Joslyn, or tourist bureau, both adding to and benefiting from the vibrancy of downtown, the Old Market, etc. All that advantage would be lost at 72nd St., and bus access would be more difficult, given our current inefficient transportation network.

### Branch-Specific Concerns Comments

The Branch Specific category consisted of 590 comments from 6 areas. These were expressed concerns that related to only one branch. The issue of adding an Elkhorn Branch entrance from **Honeysuckle** Drive was specifically mentioned many times (38.6%). Main Library drew specific comments in regards to the **Homeless** (28.3%), and **Main Library is Scary** (5.4%). A few patrons talked about **Safety/ Security** issues (12.4%). Although Main Library was mentioned the most, some patrons had concerns about security issues at Millard and Swanson. Some respondents mentioned that Saddlebrook (SK) was not meeting their needs because of the **J Collection** (8.3%) – either because the children’s collection was not available to the public during school days or because the library did not feel like it was meant to serve adults. There were also comments about **SK as location** (6.9%). Patrons either didn’t know it existed, had trouble finding it, or found it too out of the way to patronize.





## Selected Branch-Specific Concerns Comments

### Honeysuckle (Elkhorn Branch)

- I like Elkhorn's branch. I don't know if it needs to be replaced. But it would be nice if it was easier to get to and from. I think a road from Honeysuckle Road to the library would be nice (or whatever that street is just south of there, I think Honeysuckle).
- You have room to grow at this facility. There is land around the facility. To make easy access put a driveway going south onto Honeysuckle.
- We live in Pacific Springs and come north on 204 and into library. No problem to get here, but going home I and all others from the south and east make a right turn down hill to old road, turn left onto it, continue under overpass, then make a left turn up a short street, with a 90 degree left curve we face 204 stop and turn right to head home. The best, simplest, and cheapest would be to make entrance and access to present library from Honeysuckle Road, thus reducing to less than half the driving hazards we now have to navigate!
- It would be helpful to add an entrance off of Honeysuckle Drive. And possibly put a stoplight at Honeysuckle and Hwy 31.
- I do agree the library should be more accessible, but I feel this could be much more easily accomplished by building a road from Honeysuckle Dr (just south of the library). I do not agree that the library should be replaced. In my experience utilizing the Elkhorn Branch, I have not found it to be used by a large number of people. While I recognize that it in theory serves a large number of residents, on my visits I have always found it to have only a handful of residents there (in contrast to Millard or Abrahams Branch).
- Make current building bigger. There is plenty of land. Cut the road through from Honeysuckle Drive and put a big sign on the corner of Honeysuckle and 204<sup>th</sup>.
- If you build something at 180th and Q – Bess Johnson can stay as is for a bit longer. Although rather than replace, can you simply add on? It seems like the space is there. Also would be great if the access to this library could come from Honeysuckle Drive rather than it is now.
- There are several acres to expand on, the location is beautiful, and another access can be added from the south on Honeysuckle Drive. There has been talk of combining with the Metro Community College building. During the daytime/evenings there is no parking and it would just be another disaster like South Branch. Combining two staffs and two different collections. Not ideal.
- It would be nice if they open a road to Honeysuckle Drive.
- Access would be easier if there was an entry off Honeysuckle.
- Increased access from 204th St or Honeysuckle would be beneficial.
- That branch is very difficult to access from the north.
- Add access from the industrial that abuts the building.
- Facility is fine but it needs a better access road.
- It is small and hard to access from highway.
- If they could make an entrance on the south side, it would help a lot! Very hard to get to!

## Selected Branch-Specific Concerns Comments

### Homeless

- We need a large central library near Swanson. Downtown library has no parking and is a resting place for the homeless.
- Where would the homeless go?
- Homeless need day time facilities!
- Downtown is worn out, tired and depressing. The homeless are a problem too. Parking at Swanson is hard – especially during book sales.
- LEAVE THE CURRENT MAIN LIBRARY WHERE IT IS. You've heard the saying, "IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T FIX IT". Have YOU BEEN ON DODGE between 72 and 90th, DURING "RUSH HOUR"??? Now, you'll be stuck in that CRAZY TRAFFIC, just to go to the Library. DON'T MESS WITH YOUR SUCCESS. There's NOTHING WRONG with the main library downtown at this point – unless you want to move it away from Gene Leahy Mall, because you think perhaps fewer homeless people would hang out in the library as a result. I can see the point, as it may make some patrons uncomfortable, to see someone like that sitting quietly in a corner seat somewhere (especially if you can smell it), but they're usually quite harmless when they visit the library.
- Dodge is too congested to get in and out of easily. I really like Swanson where it is, and it is a great neighborhood center. The Main branch should be shrunk so that it isn't a hangout for homeless folks.
- I don't want our downtown library to have to babysit homeless and, more importantly, monitor their shenanigans. Sure, please have library use for all. But I don't want anyone to feel scared to work there or to be fearful using library. Moving main library west could be an answer.
- Personally, I don't go downtown to use the main/central library. I would go to the Swanson area (because I have done that over the years) since it would be closer to me. Part of the problem with the downtown library is the number of homeless that frequent the library. They deserve the chance to use the facilities, too, but it seemed they were taking over the place.
- Sadly, people are afraid of homeless people and that ridiculous prejudice stops some from using the main library. I think moving the main library to Dodge Street / Crossroads would be great.
- The Downtown branch currently is used primarily as a hangout for homeless and derelicts that have nowhere else to go during the day. Downtown residents do not feel safe there and don't use it for its intended purpose. People don't even like to walk by it because the outside has also become a nuisance where the homeless sit and harass patrons.
- Keep the smelly homeless and criminal element out and off the steps outside, too.
- Would be nice to figure out how to make the downtown library safe. I understand it is supposed to be "public". But it is NOT a place where anyone wants to visit when homeless people use it as a shelter. I love the genealogy area and I am embarrassed that anyone from out of town who wants to do research has to deal with the homeless people. Yes, I have been approached by several homeless people in the library and therefore, I do my genealogical research online. I pay taxes and they have run me out of the building I help pay for.

## Selected Branch-Specific Concerns Comments

### Safety/Security

- Swanson, 90th and Dodge, has foundation that raises funds for capital improvements and needs visible security guards. Need another Omaha library further west on Dodge all the way to 168th St., perhaps in shopping plaza, need more police/security appearances, visible and invisible.
- The plan mentioned better lighting for the Benson Branch and it was unclear whether this was indoor or outdoor lighting. Given the high incidence of vandalism in that area, I'd support improving lighting and security wherever possible for that branch.
- The downtown library can be intimidating due to the transient and homeless populations. Though security works hard, it does not feel safe when visiting with children.
- I fear that the city is proposing moving the Main Library from its current location as a result of the expected income from the sale of real estate and because of its perceived "problems" – mainly past security issues caused by the homeless or nearly homeless persons who frequent the library.
- The Main Library has security issues and also needs to be better showcased for our city.
- Used to visit main branch frequently but due to parking and security concerns, I haven't been there in years.
- Increase security at Washington and Main branches.
- Crowding at Millard and lack of safety in parking lot. Need cameras or security guards.
- I don't know about larger, but the dual function school/library is a security nightmare.
- Willa Cather is the closest branch to my home. However, I never go there because, as a young woman, I do not feel safe there, and have not for many years. It is sad to see the condition it is in compared to other branches. Dark, depressing and outdated. Unfortunately, that neighborhood is not as safe as it once was. I currently have to go to Swanson or Millard, which is not fair, and even then, I have felt unsafe at those libraries on occasion.
- Don't bother putting a library downtown. It is not safe, and no matter where you put it downtown, it will still be in an unsafe area, with no parking. I have had to skip great events at the downtown library because it is not safe. Too many homeless people in the main library.....especially unsafe for kids.
- I moved to Omaha and live near the Main library, have gone there once, and didn't feel safe. I've been a library goer my whole life, so it makes me sad that the branch I'm closest to and which has much of the resources is so sketchy.
- YESSSS!!!! I Love the downtown branch BUT I DO NOT FEEL SAFE. I used to go to the downtown branch all the time. No longer do. It is now a homeless shelter.
- I would like the main library on 90th and Dodge. I have done Genealogy for 38 years. I have had to endure the indigents using the Library for their own personal comfort. Plus I have feared for my safety with the undesirables lurking in the isolated hallways around the restrooms on the upper floors.

## Selected Branch-Specific Concerns Comments

### SK as J Library (Saddlebrook)

- The joint venture between OPS, OPL and Parks was a good idea on paper, but fewer adults use the library because they associate it with a children's library because it's attached to an elementary school. The community probably would have been better served if it was a separate building in the community.
- The kids use it and there is a staff there that is allergic to adult needs (i.e. programs and marketing the fact that it exists beyond being attached to an elementary school). This staff catered to children and young people. Adults? I always felt as a tax payer I was a nuisance whereas if I was an unruly child who made noise staff was scared to correct them for adults using the computer lab.
- I was thrilled when this library opened up due to its proximity to my house. Loved its innovative nature! What a joke that was. While the school is in session the children's section is not accessible to the public. Makes sense from a security standpoint, but forced me to other libraries rather than the one in my "backyard". Fine for your baby to 4 year old, but my child learned to read early and needed access to higher level books that were unavailable. The adult section is sooooo small. Our family does reserve a lot of books, but also likes to just browse. Doesn't take long!! Love the staff here, because of its small nature they are able to know their patrons personally. Will miss that part of it, but they are not positioned to handle any further growth. Seems like they were a stop-gap solution for the time being.
- If it is truly to be a city library, it should be focused on meeting the needs of all nearby residents, not focused on just elementary school children who attend the school.
- This is my branch. I do not like having the kids section closed off during school hours. Perhaps have another branch put in one of the new schools being built.
- This one is iffy because Saddlebrook is "my" branch. However, I would welcome a location in which the library is the ONLY facility. Don't even THINK about trying to use the library when all the entitled parents are picking up their children. They park in no parking zones, the outside book drop horseshoe, even in handicapped spaces. Neither the parent nor the child bother to look to see if a car is coming. They just march out...as I said, entitled. I would prefer to use the library ANY time not just when school is in session or way past dismissal time. So, yes, I guess I want Saddlebrook to be in its own location and slightly larger to accommodate more books.
- We home school. I find it annoying that the children's area is closed during school hours.
- Saddlebrook was an experiment which may have met the needs of the school but not the surrounding area.
- I stopped going to the Saddlebrook branch because you aren't allowed to browse through much of it while school is in session. A library should be for everyone, not just at certain hours. It's a public facility! If a larger facility would solve this problem, I would be in support.
- Saddlebrook library is very small and is focused on serving mainly kids, which is a turn off to adults in the area.

## Selected Branch-Specific Concerns Comments

### SK as Location (Saddlebrook)

- Saddlebrook is one of the more recent buildings. It's hard to find, should be open longer.
- Placement in the bedroom community is not the most ideal. Add on to the space and create way finders to the library through the neighborhood.
- The library is small and hard to find, and many people have issues with not having full access during school hours.
- I have only been there once. I get lost trying to find it.
- It never seems crowded. It is a nice facility. I always need my GPS to find it. That neighborhood is difficult to get around in.
- Keep all libraries easy to access from main streets – Saddlebrook is too buried in the residential neighborhood.
- Probably going to have to happen eventually since it is currently buried inside of a school.
- I've never seen the Saddlebrook Branch. It's buried in the subdivision north of Fort Street.
- It seems to be a logistical nightmare right now.
- Why did you even build a library attached to a school and tucked away in a suburb where no one could find it in the first place?

## Selected Branch-Specific Concerns Comments

### Main Library is “Scary”

- Swanson serves the needs of many people. It is a great library – Keep it. I agree with Main Library could be downsized. It is a scary place now.
- The Main Library is scary; I live close to it but will drive to a west location because I feel safer at other locations and parking is an issue downtown.
- Parking is ridiculously absent and I really hate to walk in library that is being used as a daytime homeless shelter. Too many scary nooks and hidden crannies.
- Downtown Library is not used by downtown businesses. It is scary to use because of the homeless persons hanging around for meals. Downtown residents are uncomfortable in it and it is dated.
- Swanson is almost as crowded as Millard. The land could be sold to residential developers who are busy tearing down houses in that area. Main Library does not need to be so big; population is west (including those interested in genealogy). Maybe this would help eliminate the scary, smelly denizens of Main.
- I've never been there but I hear that it is very hard and scary to find, and that's not what you want in a library.
- No parking at current downtown location. I avoid this location because it has scary patrons and armed police. Very sad situation at the downtown library. I feel that the Omaha Public Library can do better than this.
- The reason the downtown branch isn't used as much is because it is so old and outdated. The elevators are scary and the stairwells are even worse. Why not build something people want to come to? Want to spend time at? Look at what Indianapolis did with their downtown library. They made it a place to go, cafe, beautiful reading rooms, ample room for classes, an amazing kid friendly space, plenty of tables to work at, and smaller rooms for groups to meet without disrupting other guests.
- Downtown library is FAR! Also smells and is a little scary. I like to take kids there sometimes, for a change of pace, but parking is also an issue. Swanson is so Omaha central and would be a great choice.
- While I would be sad to see Swanson go, I do think it is most centrally located for a larger library. A smaller, more intimate library downtown might bring more people in. That big library downtown has gotten scary to go into.

## Other Comments

We made note of other comments that did not fall into these categories. A large number of comments and questions made us realize that our public has some misperceptions about the Facilities Master Plan recommendations. People were concerned that the Millard Branch would be eliminated when we opened a new Southwest branch. People also seemed to think that there would no longer be a library downtown at all. Others were wondering how we could build all of these branches in two years, not realizing that this is a 15-year recommendation. Some people were asking about the money that was given to Sorensen Branch. A few people mentioned ADA accessibility, mostly in regards to the buildings but a few were putting in a plug for ADA technology. Some patrons mentioned the Elkhorn annexation which fell into two camps. Camp 1 felt that we needed to be cautious about tearing down the branch built by Elkhorn. Camp 2 felt that the Elkhorn population who were against annexation should be happy that Omaha is giving Elkhorn something new and nice. A very few comments were made about the “downtown revitalization” with a concern that if OPL moves out of downtown, we would not be a part of the revitalization.

Although the survey was designed to gather the public’s input on the 5 main recommendations in the Facilities Master Plan Update, the instrument’s open-ended nature yielded much data that was not directly related to the recommendations. Our patrons commented on everything from their philosophy about library service to materials and services in our existing buildings to branch-specific concerns such as no access off Honeysuckle Drive for Bess Johnson Elkhorn Branch to Saddlebrook Branch being perceived as only a children’s library for elementary school students. Unsolicited comments on our collections, technology, and programming gave us insight into what our patrons perceive we do well and what we don’t. An additional 60 comments echoed our patrons’ misperceptions about who we serve, how our funding works, building renovation always being cheaper than a new building, and the physical/structural conditions of our current libraries. We have a lot of opportunities to educate everyone about our situation.

## Strategy & Business Intelligence Office Staff

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**Appendix 1 – Facilities Master Plan Articles in the *Omaha World-Herald* May to October 2017**

**30 May 2017** – *Plotting a bigger, better future – Report recommends new branches in west, how success is tracked*

**3 June 2017** – *City Library Needs – Omaha can plan it together*

**6 July 2017** – *Bold moves on horizon in library master plan – Leaders’ want public input while they craft “grand vision” for system*

**7 July 2017** – *Another new plan for Crossroads – Mall Site Developer is “ready to make this happen,” but Mayor expresses doubt – Crossroads Mall timeline*

**9 July 2017** – *Public Pulse letter*

**19 July 2017** – *Library Plan – A strong vision*

**26 July 2017** -- *Project passes first test 'Conceptual' plans approved by council, but no discussion on library going there*

**8 August 2017** -- *Meetings will offer 5 chances to check out plan for facilities*

**15 August 2017** – *Capital Improvement Plan - Bike lanes, trails, libraries on list - Southwest branch, new downtown library in city's plan, as are park projects*

**14 September 2017** – *Library leaders hear reaction to proposed changes – About 50 attend a forum on consultant's ideas, which include building a new branch in southwest Omaha*

**8 October 2017** – *Locals like expansion proposals, survey says – Residents think new branch in southwest part of city is most important recommendation*



## Appendix 2 – Other Libraries Mentioned by OPL Survey Respondents

1. Boston, Massachusetts – architecturally interesting
2. Cedar Rapids, Iowa – efficient and patron-friendly
3. Chicago, Illinois – public school/public library combination not a good idea
4. Colorado libraries – all-state access
5. Council Bluffs, Iowa – more amenities, more new books, study spaces, kid-friendly areas – mentioned by 2 different respondents
6. Des Moines, Iowa – downtown anchor, Sculpture Park -- mentioned by 2 different respondents
7. Fort Wayne, Indiana – centrally located Main Library
8. Grandville, Michigan -- beautiful quiet reading room with a huge fireplace, comfortable chairs and a coffee shop
9. Hennepin County Library, Minnesota – Downtown Minneapolis location inviting and inspiring
10. Highlands Ranch, Colorado – experienced Omaha libraries in two widely separated time periods
11. Indianapolis, Indiana – reading rooms, meeting rooms, amazing kid-friendly space, lots of tables for work
12. Iowa City, Iowa – children’s area and materials
13. Jacksonville, Florida – old Main Library repurposed as a non-profit center – mentioned by 2 different respondents
14. Kansas City, Missouri – showpiece urban library, interesting displays and exhibits – mentioned by 3 different respondents
15. Lincoln, Nebraska – more materials
16. New York City, New York – architecturally interesting
17. Oklahoma City, Oklahoma – clean and inviting
18. Phoenix, Arizona – joint facilities with public high schools – mentioned by two different respondents

19. Prince George County, Maryland – safe space respected by everyone
20. Ralston, Nebraska – more materials
21. Salt Lake City, Utah – showpiece urban library – mentioned by two different respondents
22. San Diego, California – performance space, ample parking
23. Seattle Public Library – “Wow” factor – mentioned by 2 different respondents
24. Sioux Falls, South Dakota – better number of libraries per capita
25. St. Charles, Missouri – clean and inviting
26. Topeka and Shawnee County, Kansas – funding model