

South Portland Public Library Community Feedback Survey April/May, 2010

Below is a summary of the information gathered through the collection of survey responses during April and May of 2010.

For the ease of understanding the data within the context of which library the respondent was using at the time of the survey, I have split the gathered data into three parts:

Part One: Online Responses

There were 100 responses to the online survey between April 15 and May 10, 2010. As you will note in this section, for some of the data, I segmented the response based on the respondent's identified primary library service point.

Part Two: Paper Responses – Main

There were 38 surveys filled out on paper and left at the Main Library.

Part Three: Paper Responses - Branch

There were 37 surveys filled out on paper and left at the Branch Library.

Part One: Online Responses

Question #1: Which days of service are most important to you?

Note: this question allowed for multiple answers

Sunday: 37%
Monday: 44%
Tuesday: 38%
Wednesday: 48%
Thursday: 46%
Friday: 50%
Saturday: 72%

Question #2: What time of day are you most likely to visit the library?

Note: as with the previous question, respondents were not limited in how they could answer the question.

Morning: 34%
Afternoon: 54%
Evening (after 5:00pm): 43%

Question #3: Please rate the following library services in terms of how important they are to you.

Note: this question required a ranking of each of the four service areas on a scale.

Borrowing materials (books, audio, video):
98% Very Important
2% Somewhat Important
0% Not Very Important
0% Not Important

Computer Use
7% Very Important
14% Somewhat Important
31% Not Very Important
48% Not Important

Programs for children (story times and other activities)
30% Very Important
20% Somewhat Important
14% Not Very Important
36% Not Important

- Programs for adults (book groups, guest speakers, etc.)
 - 15% Very Important
 - 32% Somewhat Important
 - 31% Not Very Important
 - 22% Not Important

Question #4: Which library location do you use most often?

- 72% Main library, 482 Broadway
- 13% Memorial Branch Library, 155 Wescott Road
- 15% I use both locations equally

Question #5: Is there a time during the week that the library currently does NOT offer access which you would like to see us open (particular days or times of day)?

Note: below, I have segmented the response comments into groups based on how the respondents identified themselves in question #4. Of the 100 respondents, 50 entered an answer in this field and I have included the responses, verbatim, below.

Main Library Users

Friday Evenings
Be open past five on fridays. A lot of people have to work until five so the library is closed.
the library is very accessible
Saturday afternoon
no
Wednesday morning would be helpful.
Saturdays and Sundays!!!!
Wednesday, am
No
Saturdays during the summer.
Wednesday morning
later on Friday night
Saturday 10-5
Friday evening and Sundays (Main branch)
no
Saturdays
N/A
Sunday
Friday at the Branch
weekends and holidays
Wed mornings
Sundays at the main library- ? alternate between each
no
Sunday afternoon; Saturdays in the summer
No
Saturdays in the summer

saturday afternoon
no
would like open later on saturday
Saturdays in the summer
I would like to see the library open on Sundays
Saturday during the summer.
No. I'm satisfied with the current hours of operation
Saturday afternoon after 2:00 and Sunday anytime at the main library
5-6 pm on Friday

Branch Library Users

Evenings at the branch.
After 6pm
I would LOVE to see more evening hours after 5pm!!
Saturday afternoon, any evening
Saturday of a holiday weekend / Saturdays year-round
Saturdays- branch library
Saturdays (Branch Library)

Users of both library locations

Saturday afternoon!
later in the evenings or on the weekends since I work during weekday hours
no
More morning hours - less night hours
Week ends, wednesday morning.
Wednesday mornings and Sundays
Weekends
n/a

Question #6: Please feel free to share any additional comments with us.

Note: as above, I have segmented the response comments into groups based on how the respondents identified themselves in question #4. Of the 100 respondents, 48 entered an answer in this field and I have included the responses, verbatim, below.

Main Library Users

More hours on Saturday. I can never make it over there by 2PM.
Fight hard for all the funding you can get! It's a shame the city is cutting more from the library budget. I marked computer use as somewhat important, because I don't use the machines you have there (except for the online card catalog terminals, which I use almost every visit), but I do take advantage of the free wireless connection. Having the access is very important to me.
thank you for continued excellence in service and personnel. difficult times require difficult decisions. i'm grateful that our library will remain open at all during these economic struggles.
I would like to see a better designed and useful website.
Having the library open every Saturday during the summer would also be great. There appears to be a staffing problem at times. This morning, April 20th, at the main library, there appeared to be only one person at the desk and another in the stacks. The volume of people that were at the library during this time was very high. The person at the desk had far more work than she could do. At times like this, it would seem that the Director might be able to come and assist when staffing is low. I was told that there were more employees who had resigned. The employees are really great, especially Claudette!
As a homeschooler, the library is a priceless resource to me. If it come right down to it, I feel that the branch should be closed before hours at the main library are cut. I also think that actually borrowing books is the main function of a public library, and computers/story times/adult groups should be cut before library hours or buying new books for the collection.
Libraries are so important for all that it is imperative to try to keep the libraries open as much as possible. Volunteer help might be an option.
Great library!
your acquisition of books has declined to the extent that most books I have to receive by Minerva services. Your young adult collection and clientele is strikingly ignored and missing.
Library should not be closed on Saturdays before every Holiday. If staff needs that time off they should use their own vacation time like the rest of the world. Nonfiction is in deorable shape and there are partically no current periodicals.
We love our Library and the staff! Everyone is so helpful, friendly, and knowledgeable. Weekend hours (year round) would be great and evening hours at least until 6 would fit our needs best. Thanks for all that you do!!!!
I know this has nothing to do with hours or services but something really needs to be done about the parking lot. At the very least, fix the big potholes.
The library is very important to me and my family. I borrow books, movies and audio books every week. The librarians are very knowledgable and are always extremely helpful.
I use the main library the most because of its location, but I prefer the branch library's atmosphere.

I have always had a good experience at our local library...good selection and friendly staff. Monica Banks
The young adult area is nice, but could be improved with a designated librarian
I love the Library!! Easy access with interlibrary loans creates a huge catalog. When we moved back to South Portland, I was thrilled to rejoin. No public library available in the community we lived before our return. If I have known no library, we would not have moved.
I'm most likely to visit on weekdays after 5:00 PM because the current weekend hours aren't convenient for me.
The entire staff is the best!!
You should offer more evening and weekend hours
I wish we were allowed to check books out of any library in the system as opposed to having to wait for a book to come to our "home" library. BUT the inter-library loan system is MUCH appreciated...I use it often.
The after 5pm time on weekdays is the most important feature for me. Also- staff are incredibly helpful and professional.
satisfied at present
I LOVE the library!!!!
I'm very satisfied with this library.
I am a consistent book borrower and greatly value the SoPo library and its employees. Library services are extremely important to me personally and to the community as a whole. Please please continue to provide as many services as you are able.
The library staff are all wonderful: always helpful, friendly, cheerful. My wife and I have used the library 2, even 3 times a week since moving here 3 years ago. We wish the building could be renovated, or better yet a new library built (raise our taxes!). But again, the staff is superb.
I spend winters in WPB, FL. Library there is 90% automated. Requires fewer employees and easy check-in check-out renewal, etc.
The communication between the Wescott branch and the main library does not appear to be good. At the main branch, I requested that a book be transferred from the Wescott branch to the main branch for me to pick up. The main library staff person said "We'll TRY (my emphasis) to get it for you. When I asked her why she phrased it that way, she said they have difficulty getting transfers of books from the Westcott branch. After about 10 days, I came in to check at the Main branch about why I hadn't received a call that my book was in. The book still hadn't arrived. So I offered to go and pick it up at the Westcott branch myself. When I went to the branch library, they still had the book there and had no record of the request. It makes me uneasy about returning the book to the main library because the flow of information between the two libraries is not working.
I hope you will apply for Maine Humanities Council funding for a reading group at the library. This grant allows you to have a paid professor come and lead discussion groups. I enjoyed these in Connecticut when I lived there in the 1990s.
I've always been so pleased with the knowledgeable and friendly staff and their commitment to a high level of service. We're so lucky here in SoPo!
I very much dislike the holiday schedule the main library follows. It seems whenever there is a Monday holiday the library is closed Sat, Sun & Mon which is too much. I also dislike no Saturday hours in the summer.
Inter-library loan via Web is super! Very important to me. Also reading "more about this item"--reviews, summaries Also email notification of due dates and items in.

Branch Library Users

<p>We have found the branch library to be a wonderful resource for our family. We especially enjoy all of the storytimes for our children that are provided by Kim. My kids have made a real connection with her. We hope the storytimes for all ages stay put!</p>
<p>I know it's difficult to find a good balance of hours, but I do think that evening hours are very important for those of us who work regular daytime jobs - As one of the rare people in the 20-35 age group who actually uses the library, I would have to say that evening hours are very important for retaining my patronage. So much programming takes place during the day it makes me feel like retired folks are perceived as being more valuable to the library, but for the library to be sustainable I think you need to appeal to all ages.</p>
<p>We are so lucky to have the library resources we do. PLEASE DON'T CUT ANYTHING! My family utilizes the library several times a week. It is especially during these hard economic times that families rely on the "free" things to do. Education is priceless! Please use our tax dollars to keep these wonderful, resourceful libraries up and running. Thank you!</p>
<p>Love the sweet community feel of the branch; wish I could make it there more often</p>
<p>I realize the Main Library is open on Saturdays, but it would be nice to have a few hours on Sat. afternoons at the branch.</p>
<p>I live in the west end, and because of how bad the traffic sometimes is, it can take up to 20 minutes to drive from here to the main library... therefore, I find it much easier to use the branch library.</p>

Users of both library locations

<p>I like having both locations available for service because the branch library is closer to my work for pick ups but when I have a day off I can go to the main library for the larger selection.</p>
<p>I work normal business hours, so weekday evenings and weekends are the times I frequent the libraries. I am a habitual patron on Sundays at the branch library, the staff there is wonderful, they know my name and are pleasant and helpful. I like the fact that they have been open on Sundays, even during a holiday weekend!</p>
<p>The value of both libraries cannot be understated.</p>
<p>There could be more programming offered at the main library, especially in the childrens area.</p>
<p>I like to use the library on weekends. I think it should be open until 6:00PM each day and later on Saturdays.</p>
<p>We love the story times for toddlers! It is something we do EVERY week wed and fri at both libraries. We hope they will continue as the children look forward to them every week for the fun and interaction with the other children. Thank-you</p>
<p>i feel i library should be open on weekends especially during the school year. kids need to use the facilities and not get into trouble;also during the summer their schools should set up a program for them to utilize this service.</p>
<p>I think the Main Library should just stay closed on Saturdays as they are often closed due to Monday Holidays and I get confused and often show up only to find they are not opened.</p>
<p>Every week my friend and I look forward to taking our children to story time. We enormously enjoy and value this time each week.</p>
<p>Could we get the audiobook download option that Saco library has?</p>

Part Two: Paper Responses - Main

Question #1: Which days of service are most important to you?

Note: this question allowed for multiple answers. Respondents could make anywhere from 0 to 7 selections.

Sunday: 21.1%
Monday: 65.8%
Tuesday: 44.7%
Wednesday: 60.5%
Thursday: 57.9%
Friday: 71.1%
Saturday: 57.9%

Question #2: What time of day are you most likely to visit the library?

Note: as with the previous question, respondents were not limited in how they could answer the question.

Morning: 52.6%
Afternoon: 63.2%
Evening (after 5:00pm): 44.7%

Question #3: Which library service(s) do you use the most?

Note: this question is slightly different than the question asked on the online version of the survey.

Borrowing materials (books, audio, video): 94.7%
Computer Use: 26.3%
Programs for children (story times and other activities): 18.4%
Programs for adults (book groups, guest speakers, etc.): 5.3%

Question #4: Which library location do you use most often?

92.1% Main library, 482 Broadway
0% Memorial Branch Library, 155 Wescott Road
7.9% I use both locations equally

Question #5: Is there a time during the week that the library currently does NOT offer access which you would like to see us open (particular days or times of day)?

Wednesday AM
Sunday @ Main library in afternoon
Sunday?
Hey, Fridays are too brief.

No
No more 3 day holiday weekends!
Saturdays in summer
Great as is
Sunday
Not really, as long as there is some access, the hours could even be shorter for my purposes.
Wed. morning
Later on weekends, Main branch Sunday
Like Saturday mornings. Evenings except Saturday.
I am very happy with your weekday hours - very accessible and friendly.
I particularly enjoy using your library facilities - keep up the best use of my tax \$s!!
Sat afternoon
Wednesday morning open earlier 10 a.m. / Open everyday at 9a.m.
Hate 1:00PM opening on Wednesday
Our library is outstanding!
Nope!
Weekends would be great
Sunday / More Saturday hours in Winter
The hours vary enough that it is not often we wish to go to the library on Saturday afternoon or Sunday

Additional Comments:

I love this library and the incredibly upbeat and very helpful staff. I've enjoyed using this great library since the mid 1980's and am looking forward to many more years! (Myself and the staff!)
So Portland is most fortunate to have such an outstanding staff and rich/diverse collection of books and videos. Thanks.
The library is the heart, mind and soul of the community. All of its services are essential.
More graphic novels and manga, (new ones and new vols of existing series) would be wonderful! Thanks. :)
Great staff in both locations. Lousy WiFi in both locations, very frustrating. I'm grateful for the access however.
The library is the best thing we spend taxes on! = Access for all.
The Main branch staff is fantastic.
I'm retired so days open are not a problem.
In response to questions above, patron wrote:
1. Children are often here after school
2. Depends on the day's schedule
3. Art Program (crafts for holiday)

Part Three: Paper Responses – Branch

Question #1: Which days of service are most important to you?

Note: this question allowed for multiple answers. Respondents could make anywhere from 0 to 7 selections.

Sunday: 83.8%
Monday: 40.5%
Tuesday: 45.9%
Wednesday: 37.8%
Thursday: 37.8%
Friday: 10.8%
Saturday: 27.0%

Question #2: What time of day are you most likely to visit the library?

Note: as with the previous question, respondents were not limited in how they could answer the question.

Morning: 18.9%
Afternoon: 70.3%
Evening (after 5:00pm): 48.6%

Question #3: Which library service(s) do you use the most?

Note: this question is slightly different than the question asked on the online version of the survey.

Borrowing materials (books, audio, video): 86.5%
Computer Use: 16.2%
Programs for children (story times and other activities): 21.6%
Programs for adults (book groups, guest speakers, etc.): 8.1%

Question #4: Which library location do you use most often?

8.1% Main library, 482 Broadway
81.1% Memorial Branch Library, 155 Wescott Road
10.8% I use both locations equally

Question #5: Is there a time during the week that the library currently does NOT offer access which you would like to see us open (particular days or times of day)?

No
All mornings
No
After 5pm
No
Fridays?
No
Saturday
Summer Weekends in the afternoon. Holidays.
Friday
No
Later evening one weekday -> miss the Monday night.
Friday
Please give the community BACK more hours to our Branch!
Fine as it is! Thank you!
N/A
No
Friday evenings at the Branch
Friday and Saturday
Monday evening at the Branch so our book group can go back to meeting there.

Additional Comments:

We find the library, branch mostly for us, to be easy access, VERY HELPFUL staff, and comfortable atmosphere. Maybe a few more large print newer books could be available.
Thanks for helpful staff!
Teen Room - Please!! Great Work
We LOVE the Branch Library & Staff!
If the Library could be open mid-afternoon to accomodate Moms@ home w/ young children and then until at least 6:00 to allow those of us the opportunity to stop after work, all of the hours in between would be of benefit to all of us.
The Branch Staff are the most helpful and wonderful people - Crazy too?
A glass of wine would be useful while browsing.
The branch is much more convenient to our home. Saturdays are hectic with activities, so our family appreciates Sunday afternoons at the branch. If that wasn't available, our use would be very limited. My daughter adores "her" librarian, Kim. I think it is invaluable - my daughter loves going to the library and seeing "her" librarian.
P.S. your librarians are exceptional! THANK YOU
If the Main Library is open when the Branch is closed that is the most important thing.