



**TO:** Chair and Members of the Library Advisory Commission

**SUBMITTED BY:** JoAnne Plummer, Neighborhood Services Director

**PREPARED BY:** Elizabeth Saucedo, City Librarian

**SUBJECT:** Results of Goleta Valley Library Community Visioning Survey

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Review and discuss the responses received via the Community Visioning Survey, which will inform the interior design and furnishing selection process at Goleta Valley Library during construction.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Goleta Valley Library (Library) has been serving loyal patrons since 1972 and has not experienced significant facility upgrades during this time. In October 2023, the City of Goleta received a Building Forward Library Facilities Improvement Program grant in the amount of \$4.2 million from the California State Library to make several much-needed infrastructural improvements. The project is focused on bringing the building up to the current code standards and improving accessibility, safety, and sustainability measures. The following improvements will be included as part of the Building Forward project:

- American with Disabilities Act (ADA) restroom upgrades (both children's and adult public restrooms)
- Modernizing and replacement of HVAC systems
- ADA path of travel
- Life safety and security installation and upgrades
- LED lighting retrofits
- Doors/windows replacements and upgrades
- Fascia repair and exterior paint

In late Spring 2025, cost savings from Fiscal Year 2024/25 budget were reallocated toward interior design services, which will allow for a modern and more enjoyable library experience when patrons return.

The Friends of the Goleta Valley Library have also generously contributed funds for the renovation of the children's restrooms; an upgraded service desk, computer tables, and

select shelving; new exterior book drops; and modern bike racks. In addition, Yardi Systems, Inc. provided a donation of \$20,000 toward preparing the temporary library (“GVL Express”) for usage, and remaining funds were reallocated toward renovations after the move was complete.

In July 2025, Goleta Valley Library sought input from the community on the interior design plans for its main location at 500 N. Fairview Avenue. Patrons were encouraged to complete a brief, six-question online survey in English or Spanish to share how they used the library prior to its temporary closure for construction, and what they have on their wish list when the doors reopen after renovations are complete. The survey was open for approximately four weeks from early July through Sunday, July 27, 2025.

The input gathered through the Community Visioning Survey is intended to inform the overall interior design process to ensure improvements are relevant and responsive. Due to the scope of the construction project, the footprint of the building cannot be altered, and feedback was invited on design elements that are within the allowable range of work.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The survey was completely anonymous to invite the highest degree of transparent feedback possible, although the potential benefit of offering a participation incentive was considered. Ultimately this proved unnecessary, as almost 400 responses were received in less than 24 hours from the survey announcement, and 731 total responses were received by the survey close date.

### **Survey Structure**

The survey was made available online via Microsoft Forms through links and QR codes. It consisted of six questions:

1. How often did you visit Goleta Valley Library at 500 N. Fairview Avenue?
2. What activities brought you to the library most often?
3. When you visit Goleta Valley Library after construction, what are the top three additions from your wish list that you would aspire to see?
4. Are there elements of the library that you love now and hope they will stay the same after construction?
5. What do you value most about Goleta Valley Library, including its services, programs, and spaces?
6. Optional: Please share any other comments or feedback on the future vision for Goleta Valley Library.

The first three questions were multiple choice format, and the second three were free text format. The questions were intentionally designed to gather both quantitative data on library usage as well as qualitative data on the user experience at Goleta Valley Library. Notes were included within the body of the survey to specify the improvements that would already be completed as part of the grant project. Framing the questions to generate highly usable data points allowed the survey to remain brief, which helped achieve a high participation rate.

The survey was shared with the community across multiple platforms, including a press release, social media posts, website link, email invitations, and a QR code posted at GVL Express. Patrons were able to complete the survey using their preferred device. Public computers were also available for patrons to use for completion, and staff were ready to assist with technology support as needed.

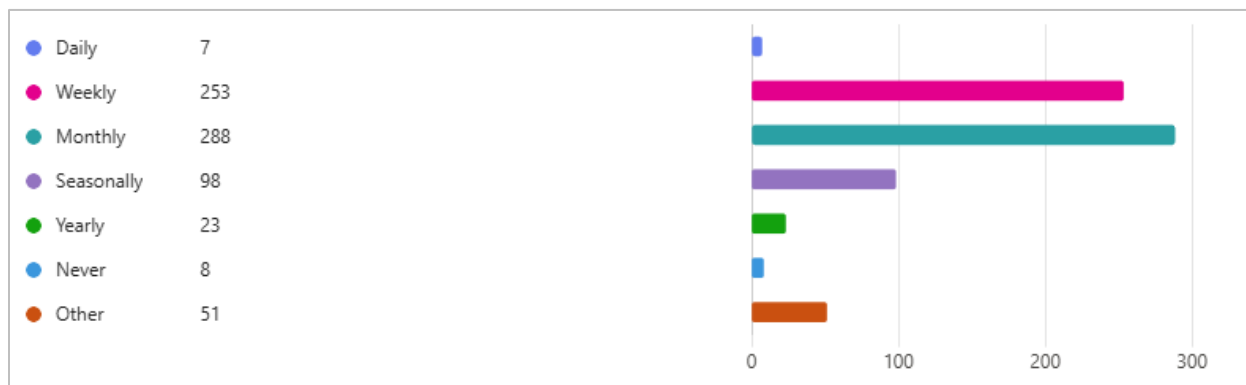
## **Survey Findings**

Each graph below illustrates the responses received to the Community Visioning Survey. A brief analysis of the responses is included as well.

Please note: Three responses were received via the Spanish survey, and the numerical totals are combined with the English responses in the parentheses included in the narrative analysis below each question.

### **Multiple Choice**

#### *1. How often did you visit Goleta Valley Library at 500 N. Fairview Avenue?*



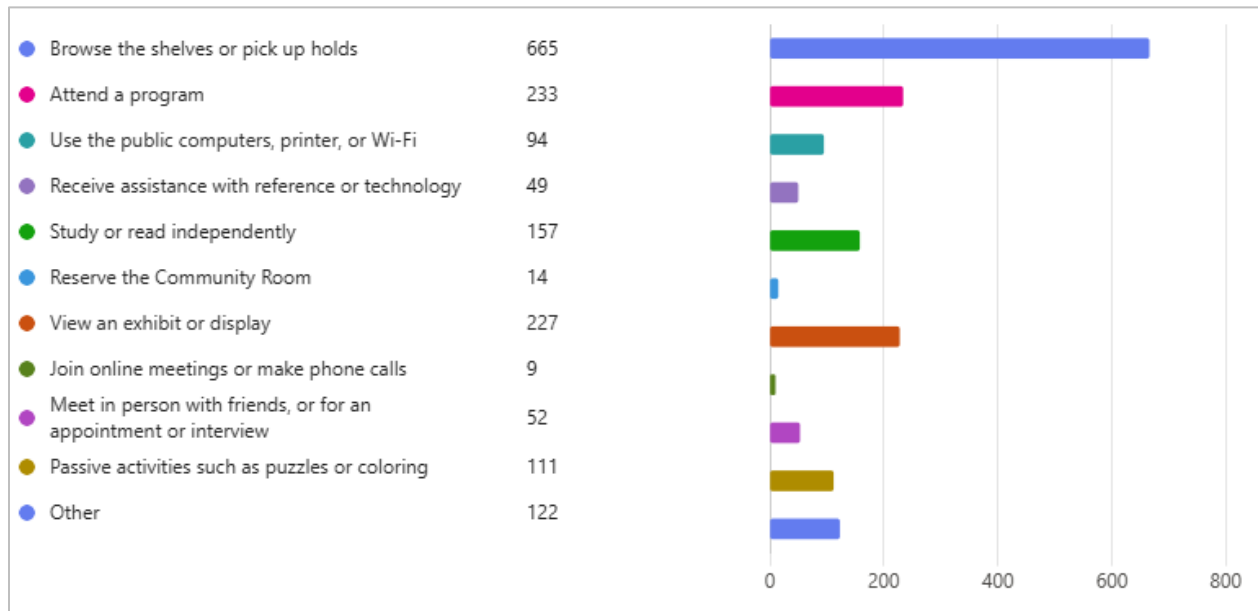
The majority of survey respondents reported visiting Goleta Valley Library on a monthly basis (290), followed by the second highest response of weekly visits (254).

These responses indicate regular usage from the majority of visitors. While some patrons may visit infrequently or on an as-needed basis, most patrons have integrated visits to the Library as part of their routine.

Survey respondents who selected “Other” cited a combination of the visit frequencies listed above. Others provided narrative explanations that their usage varied based on schedules, borrowing habits, school calendars, and more.

The responses to Question 2, below, help provide more context for the purpose of these visits, whether linked to specific services, events, or community information needs.

2. *What activities brought you to the library most often? Please select up to four.*



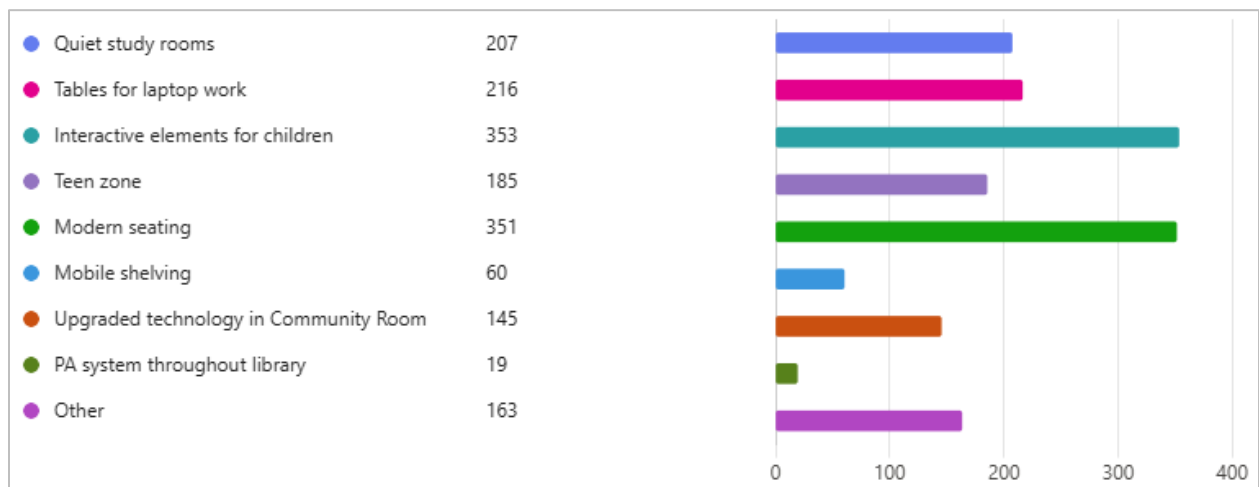
The most common reason reported for visiting Goleta Valley Library was to browse the shelves or pick up holds (666). This reflects usage data about the library as a whole by underscoring the importance of the physical collection, even in the presence of a significant e-Library of digital materials.

Programming was the second most reported reason for visiting the library (233), highlighting the engaging and enriching components of this service that are valued a great deal by patrons. Insight can also be gathered from the next most common draws to the building, which are viewing displays and exhibits (227), studying and reading independently (160), or participating in passive activities such as puzzles or coloring (111); this is indicative that the community values the physical space of the facility, which is in and of itself a service to patrons.

Trends emerged from survey respondents who answered “Other” to this question:

- Parents and caregivers brought young children to the library to learn about the space, to play, and to create a positive introduction to books
- Patrons visited to attend specific programs, such as the Mystery Book Club or craft workshops
- Some respondents shared specific reasons for a visit, such as purchasing used books from the Friends of the Library sale area or using the restrooms, reflecting the library’s function as a space that is free and open to the public.

3. *When you visit Goleta Valley Library after construction, what are the top three additions from your wish list that you would aspire to see?*



Given the high numbers of families and children who frequent Goleta Valley Library, there is little surprise that the most common aspiration for the renovated interior design includes interactive elements for children (353). Many modern or redesigned libraries include furnishings that foster play, fine and gross motor skill development, art, and imagination. These are appropriate in a library setting as they correlate to pre- and early-literacy skill development to support later reading and writing.

Almost tied for the most common response, the desire for modern seating (351) was the second most reported aspiration among patrons. This aligns with a variety of usage areas as reported in Question 2 and reaffirms the importance of the Library space as a service that should be comfortable and accessible by all.

A compelling insight can be drawn when analyzing the top responses to Questions 2 and 3. Although most patrons reported a desire for improved seating (351), quiet study rooms (207), and tables for laptop work (216), comparatively lower responses were reported for visiting the library for the purpose of using Wi-Fi (95), studying/reading (160), or taking online meetings or calls (9). This suggests that patrons' service needs are not effectively being met by the library's current furnishings, and that usage of these areas could increase in the event that improvements were made to seating, workstations, and private zones throughout the facility.

Moderate-level responses provided to improvements in the Community Room's technology (147) and for a dedicated Teen Zone (185) reflect the importance of designated spaces to serve specific functions and populations.

Notable trends in the "Other" responses included:

- Comfortable and inclusive seating and shelving for all ages and bodies
- Private zones and spaces to reduce disruptions, and usage of outdoor spaces
- Increased lighting and cozy environment
- Check-in machines for efficient return of library materials

## Free Text

4. *Are there elements of the library that you love now and hope they will stay the same after construction?*

The following trends were observed from the written responses to this question:

- Atmosphere/Environment: Patrons describe the Library as welcoming, inviting, and neighborly, with a nostalgic and warm atmosphere. Several respondents cautioned against a clinical or overly modern redesign that would not honor the Goleta character of the Library.
  - Children's Area: This area in particular was cited as valuable for families and children to have a space to call their own that was designed with early childhood development in mind
  - Community Room: Several respondents identified the value of this space for gatherings, events, reservations, and gallery exhibits.
- Collection: Patrons expressed appreciation for the varied materials and placed importance on not sacrificing shelf space for seating or other areas
- Programming: Gratitude was expressed for the current all-ages programming, with an interest in more for additional ages and languages

Some additional comments of note include patrons' appreciation of: the ease of holds pick-up; the availability of independent workspaces, with the need for more; patio spaces; Friends of the Library book sale; and air conditioning.

Overall, there is high importance placed on the functionality of both the entire facility and its individual zones in order to meet the dynamic needs of a wide range of visitors. It is also evident that the user experience of visiting is closely as important as the library's resources themselves.

5. *What do you value most about Goleta Valley Library, including its services, programs, and spaces?*

Respondents' most treasured elements of the Library are summarized below:

- Physical Collection: A significant number of responses included feedback on the value of the print collection at Goleta Valley Library. In some instances, libraries undergoing renovations opt for a new service model that emphasizes online access to digital materials and resources and transforms the interior space into one that centers around programming and technology. Patrons are interested in maintaining print resources, shelving, and a "classic" library environment throughout the redesign process.
  - Collection Breadth and Depth: Patrons specifically value that the print collection contains materials in multiple formats (including digital as an

option, not a sole format) on a wide range of genres and subjects. Emphasis was placed on materials for all ages and balancing new releases with older favorites and classic literature.

- Black Gold Cooperative: Several patrons placed importance on Black Gold membership for purposes of resource sharing, which allows them to place materials on hold and utilize the shared online catalog.
- Activities: Patrons value the wide range of year-round programs that are held for all ages, including children's events and the Summer Reading Program. There is also an appreciation of special events, such as the Festival of Trains and Friends of the Library Lecture Series, and an interest in more specific programming geared toward middle grade children, teens, non-senior adults, and English language learners. This represents an interest in space to facilitate programming, such as the Community Room, and could correlate to purposes of flexible furnishings such as mobile shelves and modern furniture that are easy to reconfigure for expanded programming.
- Facility: Patrons value the facility itself, including parking access, proximity to neighborhoods and schools, and the ability to occupy the library without spending any money.
- Principles Related to Libraries: The community values the library as an institution. Many respondents shared that libraries are welcoming spaces where all are safe and equal. The lifelong benefits of reading and community connection that are fostered in a public library are appreciated by local patrons. A sampling of quotes is included below:
  - "Libraries are the cultural heart of a community - I value the diverse and creative space the library offers. I also value its complete accessibility to all members of our community."
  - "It's truly Goleta's town square. I always run into friends and we can chat, our kids can play together or we can read to each other's kids. There are so few spaces in our little town like this. That makes the library really special and important."
  - "Everything. Libraries are one of the best uses of tax dollars."

6. *Optional: Please share any other comments or feedback on the future vision for Goleta Valley Library.*

A total of 351 responses were received for this optional question. Trends emerged from the narrative text responses that were submitted, with some overlap with feedback from earlier questions. New input included:

- Functionality suggestions regarding location of specific collections
- Concerns regarding screen time and computers in the children's area
- Need for all patrons (including adults and children) to use the same single-room space without impacting one another's visit

- Service adjustments such as a drive-through book drop for convenient returns, and increased hours on Mondays and later evenings
- Security concerns (such as exterior lighting) which will be addressed by the project
- Sustainability opportunities to align with Goleta's environmental goals

As frequent users of the library, patrons were prepared to identify specific needs that would improve the quality of their visits. There was an understanding of the project and gratitude for access to GVL Express, but also an eagerness for reopening the library as soon as possible. There was also appreciation expressed for the opportunity to provide input.

### **Next Steps:**

Staff will utilize these findings as part of their work with the architectural team on the interior design of the Library, as well as during the selection of furnishings, as the project moves forward into the next phase of the timeline.

The responses received to the Community Visioning Survey reflect a sincere investment in the future of this beloved and well-used public library. Reimagining the interior design produced data that represents the elements of the existing service model that should be retained, such as collections and programming, as well as those that would benefit from improvements to increase usability, access, and comfort to all patrons.

The analysis of responses also saw a significant appreciation of the value of the Library staff, whose helpful and courteous service was a key component of what makes patrons' visits so special. This response was included numerous times to each survey question.

Overall, the survey responses illuminated the community's vision for a more modern facility that retains the warmth, charm, and identity of the Library, and remains centered on the interpersonal component of library service.

### **Review By:**



Elizabeth Saucedo  
City Librarian

### **Approved By:**



JoAnne Plummer  
Neighborhood Services Director