



# Community Consultation: 2026 Survey Results

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## **Ramara Township Public Library**

Survey Conducted:

November 28, 2025 – February 1, 2026

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## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
Background.....	4
Purpose of the Survey .....	5
Survey Development.....	5
Survey Promotion .....	5
Survey Participation.....	6
Data Review and Response Validation .....	6
Age Distribution.....	6
Relationship with the Library .....	7
Frequency of Library Use .....	8
How Residents Use the Library .....	9
Survey Results .....	10
Most Used Services.....	10
Communication Preferences .....	10
Satisfaction with Library Services .....	11
Common Themes in Improvement Suggestions .....	12
Ideas for New Services and Programs .....	13
Community Priorities and Emerging Needs .....	13
Community Needs .....	13
Library’s Role in the Community .....	14
Feedback from Non-Users .....	15
What People Value Most.....	15
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.....	16
Conclusion .....	16

## **Executive Summary**

On November 28, 2025, the Ramara Township Public Library launched a community survey to better understand the evolving needs, priorities, and experiences of residents. The feedback gathered will directly inform the development of the Library's next Strategic Plan.

Following a review of submissions, responses from individuals who do not reside in Ramara Township and do not use Ramara Township Public Library services were removed to ensure the results reflect the needs of the community the library serves. A total of 200 responses were included in the final analysis.

Survey respondents represented a broad cross section of the community, with strong participation from older adults. Residents aged 55 and over accounted for the majority of responses. Most respondents identified as active library users, and many visit the library on a regular basis, with 60 percent reporting that they use the library weekly or monthly.

The survey confirms that the library is highly valued as a welcoming and supportive community space. The highest levels of satisfaction were reported for staff helpfulness, facilities, and collections. Respondents frequently described staff as friendly, knowledgeable, and willing to go above and beyond to help. Collections, including interlibrary loan and the Library of Things, were also highlighted as major strengths.

Library use remains strongly connected to physical borrowing and in person engagement. The most used services were borrowing physical materials, attending programs and events, and accessing digital collections. Many residents also rely on the library for internet access, technology, and welcoming spaces to work or gather.

At the same time, the survey identified key opportunities for improvement. The most common concerns related to hours of operation, particularly requests for expanded evening and weekend hours, and access to services in Brechin, where the temporary space and limited hours were seen as barriers. Respondents also expressed interest in improved digital services, including a preference for Libby as a digital borrowing platform.

Residents clearly see the library as more than a place to borrow books. When asked about the library's role in the community, respondents described it as a community hub, a safe and welcoming space, and a trusted source of information and learning. Social isolation, especially among seniors and young adults, was identified as a major community issue, with many looking to the library to provide opportunities for connection and belonging.

Affordability and transportation were also highlighted as significant challenges in Ramara Township. Respondents noted that the library helps reduce financial barriers by offering free

access to books, programs, technology, and information. Transportation limitations make it difficult for some residents to reach library locations, reinforcing the importance of outreach, virtual services, and equitable access across the Township.

Overall, the survey demonstrates that the Ramara Township Public Library is a valued and essential service that supports literacy, lifelong learning, social connection, and community wellbeing. The findings provide clear direction for the Library's next Strategic Plan, with a focus on improving access, expanding programming and services, and continuing to build an inclusive and welcoming library for all residents.

## **Background**

The Ramara Township Public Library's previous Strategic Plan concluded in 2024. As the Library Board begins developing a new Strategic Plan, it is important to ensure that future priorities are informed by current community input, service trends, and local conditions. Public libraries in Ontario operate under the Public Libraries Act, which establishes library boards as responsible for the governance of library services and for ensuring those services meet the needs of the communities they serve. Strategic planning is a key part of this responsibility. It provides direction for service development, resource allocation, partnerships, and long-term decision making.

The environment in which public libraries operate continues to evolve. Changes in technology, patterns of information use, population demographics, and economic conditions all influence how residents access services and what they expect from their public institutions. Libraries today support not only reading and literacy, but also digital access, lifelong learning, social connection, and community engagement.

Ramara Township includes both rural and settlement areas, and residents experience varying levels of access to transportation, internet connectivity, and community services. In this context, the library plays an important role in providing equitable access to information, technology, programs, and a welcoming public space. Understanding how residents experience these services, and where gaps or barriers may exist, is essential to effective planning.

Community consultation is a standard and recommended practice in public library planning across Ontario. Gathering direct input from residents helps ensure that decisions are informed by lived experience as well as service data. It also supports transparency and accountability by demonstrating how community feedback contributes to planning and priority setting.

This survey represents one component of the library's broader strategic planning process. The results provide both quantitative data and qualitative feedback that, when considered alongside operational data and community demographics, will help guide the development of a responsive and sustainable Strategic Plan for the Ramara Township Public Library.

## **Purpose of the Survey**

The purpose of this survey was to:

- Identify services the Library is doing well and should continue or expand
- Determine gaps in current services and emerging community needs
- Understand barriers faced by non-users
- Gather input to guide the Library Board in setting strategic priorities for the next planning cycle

The results will be used by the Library Board and staff to guide decisions about services, programs, collections, and resource allocation over the next planning cycle.

## **Survey Development**

The survey was developed in partnership with Ontario Library Service. The goal was to create a survey that was short and accessible, easy to complete online or in print, and designed to generate both quantitative data and meaningful written feedback.

Questions focused on library usage, satisfaction, community needs, communication preferences, and ideas for future services.

## **Survey Promotion**

To reach a broad and diverse audience, the survey was promoted through multiple channels:

1. Promotional flyer sent through postage for door-to-door mailout
2. Paper copies available at all library locations
3. Flyers inserted into books on hold and at checkout
4. Staff email signatures
5. Emails to program participants
6. Announcements during library programs and events
7. Media release shared with OrilliaMatters
8. Direct outreach to
  - Township staff
  - Council members
  - Volunteers
  - Library Board members
  - Library staff
  - Friends of the Library and Quilters' Club
  - Key community partners and stakeholders
9. Social media posts
10. Website banner
11. Homepage feature on the Library website

## Survey Participation

### Data Review and Response Validation

During the review of survey responses, a small number of submissions were identified from individuals who indicated they do not reside in Ramara Township and do not access Ramara Township Public Library services. As this survey was intended to inform service planning for Ramara residents and local library users, these responses were removed from the final analysis to ensure the results reflect the intended service population.

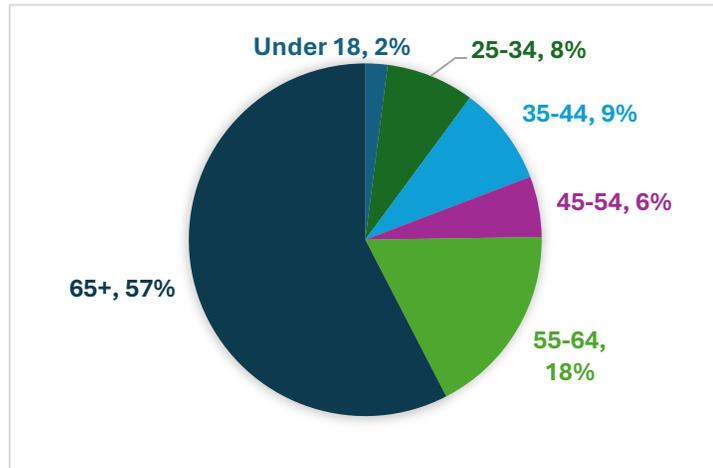
After this review process, a total of 200 valid responses were included in the final results. Responses were collected between November 28, 2025, and February 1, 2026.

### Age Distribution

Respondents represented several age groups, with the strongest participation from older adults. Residents aged 65 and over made up the largest group of respondents, followed by those aged 55 to 64.

Fewer responses were received from adults under 55, and participation from youth and young adults was limited. This age distribution provides context for the survey results, which reflect particularly strong input from older residents.

Age Group	# of Respondents
Under 18	4
18-24	0
25-34	16
35-44	18
45-54	11
55-64	35
65+	114



Relationship with the Library

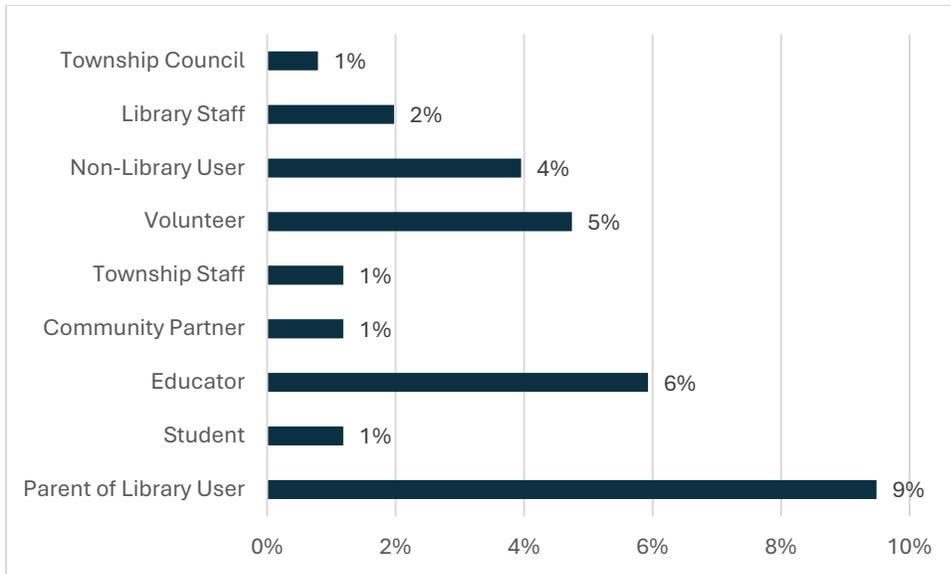
*Respondents could select more than one option.*

Respondents were asked to describe their relationship with the library and could select more than one option. The majority identified as library users. Other commonly selected relationships included parent of a library member, educator, and volunteer.

A smaller number of responses were received from non-users, Library staff, Township staff, community partners, and members of Township Council. This distribution indicates that most feedback reflects the perspectives of current users, with more limited input from external partners and municipal representatives.

<b>Relationship</b>	<b># of Respondents</b>
Library user	176
Parent of library member	24
Student	3
Educator	15
Community partner	3
Township staff	3
Volunteer	12
Non user	10
Library staff	5
Township Council	2

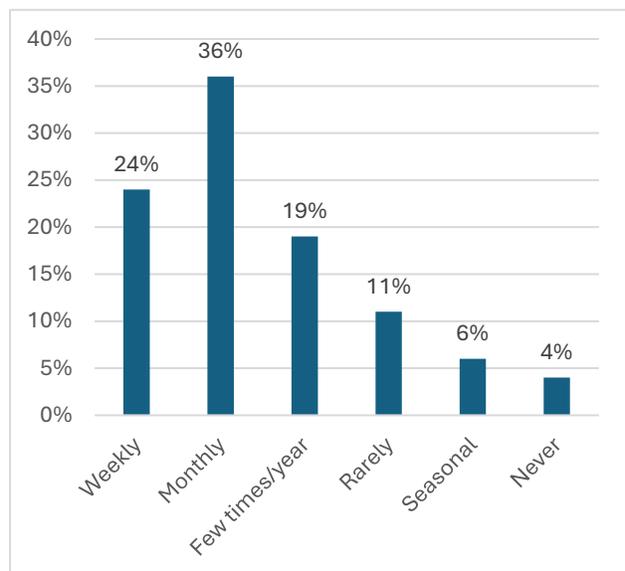
70% of survey respondents identified as ‘library users’, with the remaining relationships being identified as:



### Frequency of Library Use

Library use among respondents shows strong ongoing engagement. Over half of participants visit regularly, with 36% using the library monthly and 24% visiting weekly. An additional 19% access services a few times a year, while 11% report visiting rarely. Smaller groups identified as seasonal users (6%) or non-users (4%). Overall, the results highlight that the library remains a consistent and valued resource in the community, with opportunities to further engage occasional and non-users.

Frequency	Percentage %
Weekly	24%
Monthly	36%
A few times a year	19%
Rarely	11%
Seasonal	6%
Never	4%

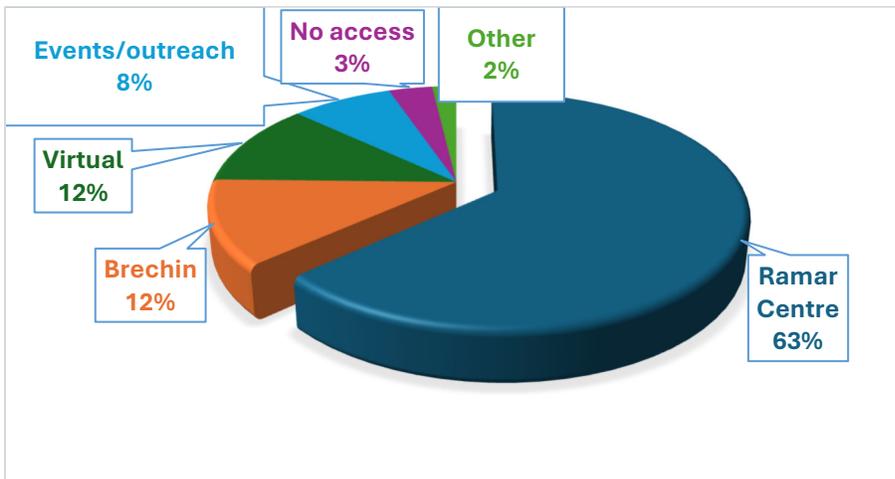


## How Residents Use the Library

*Respondents could select more than one option*

Survey results indicate that residents primarily access library services through the Ramara Centre, which accounts for approximately 63%. The Brechin Branch and virtual services each represent about 12%, suggesting that online access is nearly as common as visits to the secondary branch. Outreach and events comprise roughly 8%, pointing to a smaller but meaningful avenue of engagement. Only about 3% reported not accessing the library, and because respondents could select multiple options, these figures reflect modes of use rather than unique individuals.

Location or Method	# of Respondents
Ramara Centre	170
Brechin Branch	32
Virtual services only	31
Outreach and events	21
Do not access the Library	9



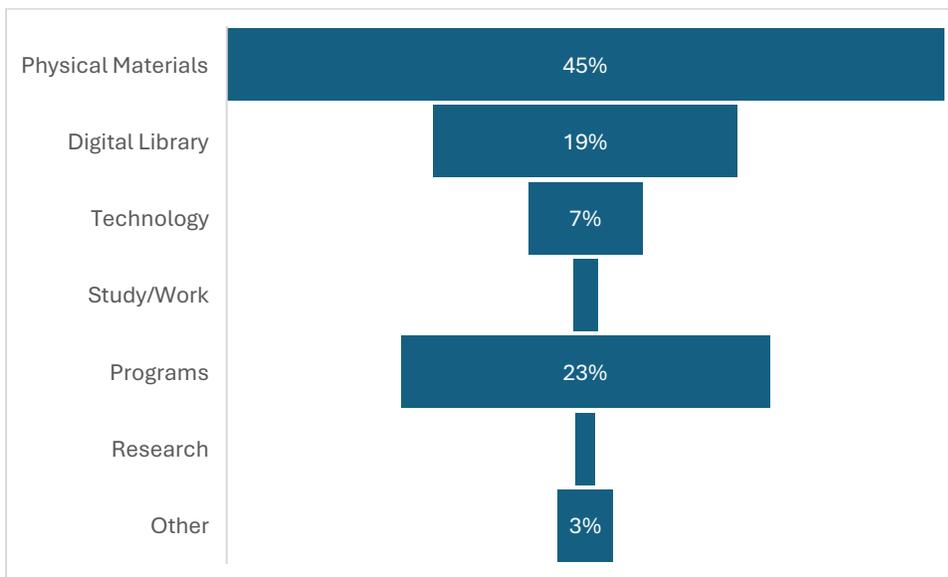
## Survey Results

### Most Used Services

*Respondents could select more than one option*

Top selections included:

- Borrowing physical materials such as books and DVDs, 144 respondents
- Digital library including eBooks, eAudiobooks, and databases, 61 respondents
- Programs and events, 74 respondents
- Technology access including Wi-Fi and computers, 23 respondents

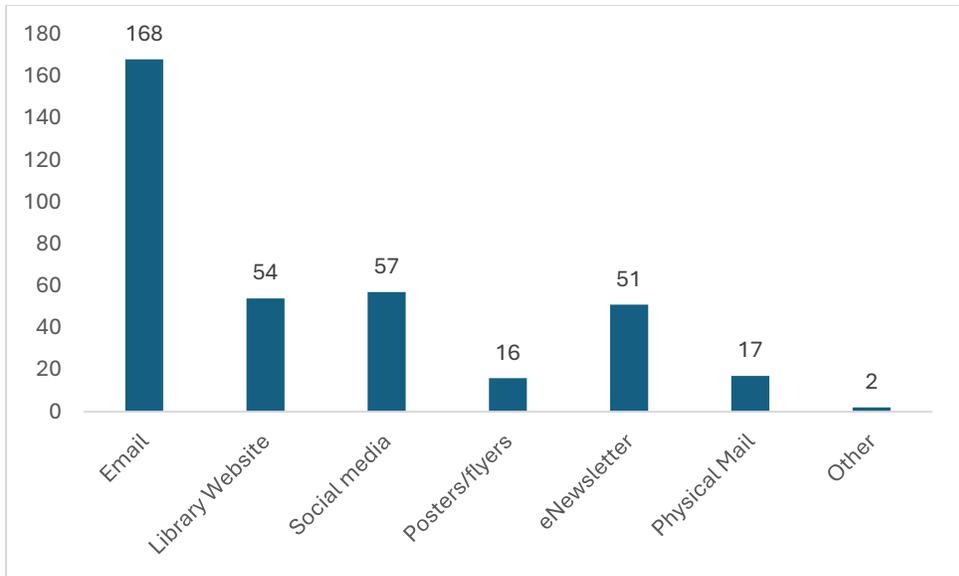


### Communication Preferences

*Respondents could select more than one option*

Residents prefer to receive information through:

1. EMAIL: Most preferred email communication with 168 respondents
2. SOCIAL MEDIA: 57 respondents preferred online platforms
3. WEBSITE: 54 respondents preferred the library’s website



**Satisfaction with Library Services**

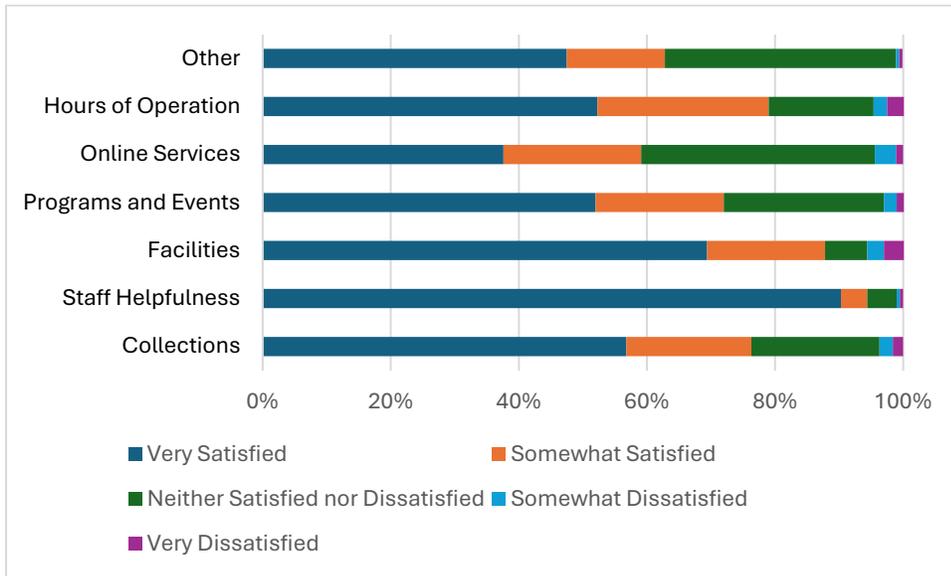
Most Satisfied with:

1. Staff helpfulness
2. Facilities
3. Collections

Least Satisfied with:

1. Other (will be outlined in the next section)
2. Online Services
3. Hours of Operations

	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Collections	57%	20%	20%	2%	2%
Staff Helpfulness	90%	4%	5%	1%	1%
Facilities	69%	18%	7%	3%	3%
Programs and Events	52%	20%	25%	2%	1%
Online Services	38%	22%	37%	3%	1%
Hours of Operation	52%	27%	16%	2%	3%
Other	48%	15%	36%	1%	1%



### Common Themes in Improvement Suggestions

Among the 40 respondents who expressed dissatisfaction, the most frequent concerns were:

- The Brechin temporary location is too small and has limited hours, creating barriers for many community members.
- Hours at both Brechin and Ramara were a recurring topic, with requests for extended Saturday hours, Sunday service, and Monday operations.
- Many respondents prefer Libby over CloudLibrary, which is the current digital collection.
- A number of respondents expressed interest in accessing larger facilities for more opportunities for programs, collections, and makerspaces.



### Ideas for New Services and Programs

87 respondents frequently suggested new or expanded services. Some key recurring ideas were:

- expanding the Library of Things collection with suggestions for technology items, passes to various activities, and other gadgets to assist community members.
- classes that have to do with activities such as physical activity, cooking/baking, technology, author talks, and social services groups. Other programs suggested art classes, parenting, special speaker presentations, and gardening.
- Access to makerspaces or the desire to access larger facilities for items.
- requests for virtual programs and new hours for programs to make them more accessible such as weekends and evenings.



### Community Priorities and Emerging Needs

#### Community Needs

When the community was asked to identify the most important issues that the Library could help address, several key themes emerged.

**Isolation** was identified as a recurring concern, particularly among seniors and young adults, with many residents feeling disconnected and looking to the Library to offer opportunities to gather, build connections, and engage with others.

**Education** was also a prominent theme, with respondents expressing concerns about literacy for young children and teens, and emphasizing the importance of having accessible resources and information to support learning and reading.

**Affordability** emerged as a significant issue for many residents in Ramara Township, particularly those on fixed incomes who are experiencing rising costs for food, housing, and day-to-day necessities. The Library helps reduce financial barriers by providing free, or low-cost, access to resources, programs, and services that might otherwise be unaffordable.

**Transportation** was noted as an ongoing challenge due to the absence of a public transit system in Ramara. Respondents suggested expanding outreach, increasing service access in Brechin, and reaching residents in more remote areas of the Township.



### Library's Role in the Community

When residents were asked to describe the role the library plays in the community, several clear themes emerged.

**Information** was the most frequently identified theme, with respondents describing the Library as a trusted place to access reliable content related to the community, current news, programs, and educational materials.

The library was also widely recognized as a **community hub**, with many residents noting that it serves as a place to gather, connect, and socialize with others.

Residents further emphasized the importance of the library as a **safe and welcoming space** and highlighted the value of its programs and opportunities for gathering as essential components of community life.



### Feedback from Non-Users

27 non-users identified the following main barriers to library use:

- **Distance:** Many cited transportation issues or distance to the physical locations as a main barrier.
- **Services:** Many were not library members as they did not know what services the library had available. Several cited joining after learning more from the survey about what the library has to offer.
- **Not a resident:** Many who were not library users were not members due to being in a different municipality (most cited was Orillia).

### What People Value Most

When asked what they like best about the library, respondents most often mentioned:

- **Staff:** Friendly and knowledgeable staff were the main component of what people valued the most. Specifically, the willingness for staff to help, find resources, or provide information.
- **Collections:** Respondents praised collections, specifically citing Interlibrary Loans which allows a reduction in barrier to accessing more books from other libraries. The respondents cited the helpfulness of staff, quickness of getting new books, and ease of use. Other collections identified were the Library of Things which was cited as a reason why many non-users had joined the library.

- **Programs:** Many people attended the library for the programming provided by staff and all age groups were cited.



### Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Residents suggested the Library could better support equity, diversity, and inclusion by:

- Ensuring diverse perspectives in programs and collection materials
- Equal access to library services, as transportation was a key concern for the community and the ability to access the library remains a priority for users. Suggestions included outreach, mobile unit, and virtual options for programming.
- Being the voice for EDI by providing information about EDI, diverse collections and showcasing minority voices, hosting diverse programs, and making sure content of resources and services are available in accessible ways (such as different languages).

### **Conclusion**

The 2026 Community Survey provides meaningful insight into how residents use and value the Ramara Township Public Library. The findings highlight strong satisfaction with core services, particularly staff, collections, and welcoming spaces, while also identifying opportunities to improve access, hours, digital services, and outreach.

This feedback will support the Library Board and staff in developing a Strategic Plan that reflects community priorities and continues to provide responsive, inclusive, and accessible library service across Ramara Township.