Rye Free Reading Room

October 27, 2026
Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda
7:30 pm

1. Roll Call
2. Public Comment
3. Consent Items (Attachments, VOTE)
    a. Sept 2026 minutes - pg. 2
    b. Sept 2026 financials - pg. 5
4. President's Report
    a. Education - pg. 10
    b. 2027 Meeting Schedule – pg. 12 (attachment, VOTE)
5. Information Items
    a. Staff Reports (Attachments)
        i. Director's Report - pg. 13
            a. 3rd Quarter Statistics – pg. 14
        ii. Adult Report - pg. 16
        iii. Teen Report - pg. 17
        iv. Children's Report - pg. 18
    b. Auxiliary Board
6. Board Discussion (Attachments)
    a. Strategic Planning – pg. 19 (Attachments)
    b. Nominating – (handout)
7. Mission Moments – pg. 44
8. New Business
9. Executive Session

Next meeting dates: Tuesday, December 15 – 7:30 pm

Notable dates: Budget Workshop – November 10 – 6:30 pm
Spelling Bee – November 11
Holiday Open House – December 19 – 4 to 6 pm

1061 Boston Post Road, Rye, NY 10580 | 914-967-0480 | www.ryelibrary.org

Rye Free Reading Room

Minutes of the June , 2026
RFRR Board Meeting

Trustees: Lina Eroh, Georgia Dyer, Kathleen Riegelhaupt, Stephanie Larsen, Katie Vernace, Bettina Funk, Meredythe Ryan, Diane Martin, Emily Tisdale, Joe Lorono, Jim Steinthal, Duncan Sibson, Jen McArdle, Emilie Reddoch, John Cocke

Lina Eroh called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m. No members of the public were present.

Consent Agenda

Jim made a motion to accept the consent agenda. Duncan seconded, and all approved.

President's Report

Lina reminded trustees to complete the required two-hour education requirement and sexual harassment prevention training. She noted that the October Board meeting will include an executive session to discuss Executive Director compensation. A survey will be distributed to trustees as part of the process. The Executive Board will meet to review the feedback and bring a recommendation to the full Board at the next meeting.

Staff Reports

Director's Report

The Director reported that strategic planning with the LEO group has been progressing well, with strong initial feedback. Annual campaign materials have been mailed to all Rye Residents. WLS agreed to submit the library's funding request for building meeting room and audiovisual upgrades, as well as carpet replacement. Work is expected to begin after October 1st. Staff has participated in Positive AI training.

The search for an Assistant Director is progressing well. The library received approximately 60 applications, of which 14 candidates were asked to submit essays, and seven candidates have been selected for further consideration. Candidate interviews will take place in November, with an Executive Board member participating. The applicant pool reflects diversity in location, gender, and professional experience. The primary responsibilities of the new Assistant Director will include direct staff interaction, scheduling, department-level goals, serving as the first line of support for patron experience, and desk coverage. The library hopes to have the position filled by December.

The library had a busy second quarter. E-content use increased, accompanied by an increase in circulation. Collection activity showed modest growth. Summer Reading helped increase the number of library cards issued, and Discovery Zone programming helped maintain strong door counts. The Vehicle Fair also contributed to increased activity during the second quarter. The Summer Reading program included 290 children and 109 teens. Approximately 1,100 books were distributed as prizes.

Chris explained the library's yellow-tag system. When the library purchases two copies of a book, one copy receives a yellow tag, indicating that it is an express copy for Rye patrons while the other copy may be loaned through other libraries.

The WLS Free Direct Access Plan must be updated every five years, and approval from at least 20 libraries is required by the WLS Board. Kathleen made a motion to approve 2027-2031 WLS Free Direct Access Plan, Jen seconded, all approved.

Auxiliary Board

The annual book sale was a significant success despite the weather and raised approximately **$20,000**. No books were discarded; charitable organizations accepted all remaining books. The price of books for grades 1–4 increased from $1 to $2. Chris invited Patrick and his band to perform during the Friends' Book Sale preview on Friday evening.

Novel Night is scheduled for approximately three weeks from the meeting. There are currently 416 tickets sold, with approximately 460 people expected to attend, including hosts. Sponsorship ticket sales exceeded general admission ticket sales, with approximately $111,000 in sponsorship ticket revenue compared with $90,000 in general admission revenue, for approximately $214,000 in gross revenue. The Board discussed the challenges of ticket sales in 2026, including competition from other galas and the event's high price point. The organization is considering ways to reimagine Novel Night for 2028.

Strategic Planning

The LEO group is using a four-phase process to develop a living strategic framework. The first phase focused on designing the approach. During August and September, LEO conducted an extensive listening phase, including time spent in Rye during the book sale, visits to CVS (where the tweens hang) and downtown, and meetings with community leaders. Over the next two months, LEO will analyze the information gathered during the listening phase and develop the approach. The final phase will

focus on designing a living framework that the library can use on an ongoing basis. One theme identified during the listening process was the need for spaces and resources for tweens, including discussion of parking and community space. The Board discussed how other organizations are addressing the needs of teens and tweens in the community. Jim and the committee expressed high praise for the LEO group and its work to date.

Buildings & Grounds

WLS received approximately $5.5 million in funding requests from nine libraries. WLS approved approximately $49,000 for the library's new server, new rug, and audiovisual system. The total project cost is expected to be approximately $98,000. Rex and his engineer toured the library and explored options for adding shelving and seating, including the possibility of a mezzanine or balcony, with the goal of creating additional space for books and other library uses.

Finance

Lina recapped that the library has received 100% funding of its operational budget since 2008. For 2027, operating costs have increased by approximately $77,000. The Finance Committee worked to develop a budget with an overall increase of less than 5%. Key uncertainties include health insurance costs, healthcare coverage for a potential new Assistant Director, pension estimates, and union costs. The library has also changed its Sunday staffing model. Two librarians recruited a children's library assistant to provide support rather than staffing three librarians. The newsletter will be published four times per year instead of six. Lina expressed confidence in presenting the proposed budget to the Council. Chris will first review the proposal with Brian to ensure there are no unexpected issues.

John made a motion to approve projected 2027 budget, Diane seconded, all approved.

There being no further business, Lina called for a motion to adjourn. Jen so moved and Kathleen seconded. All approved. The meeting was adjourned at 9:01pm.

Action : The Board approve the September meeting minutes

September Financials

September income reflects the first portion of the Annual Campaign.

September expenses are within expectations.

Library operations are ahead of budget mainly due to timing issues – Automated Systems and Auditing are paid in full before the end of the year, so those are head of budget.

With the capital projects transfer backed out, building operations are behind budget. Heat was turned on in October, so heating expenses will start rising in the next month.

There are three payrolls in September, due to timing, so salaries are slightly ahead of budget. Personnel is under budget, as the retirement payment will not be done until December.

Action : The Board accept the September financial statements

Rye Free Reading Room
Income and Expense Report
For 9 Months Ending September 30, 2026

	Current Month 2026	2026 YTD Actual	2026 YTD Budget	2026 Budget
Income				
City of Rye	$ -	$ 1,663,000	$ 1,663,000	$ 1,663,000
Annual Campaign	$ 18,582	$ 158,350	$ 210,000	$ 280,000
Miscellaneous Income	$ 1,747	$ 25,553	$ 26,250	$ 35,000
Osborn Branch Library	$ 4,434	$ 40,324	$ 39,800	$ 53,066
Auxiliary Board Transfer	$ -	$ -	$ 60,000	$ 80,000
Endowment Transfer	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ 110,000
	$ 24,762	$ 1,887,227	$ 1,999,050	$ 2,221,066
Expense				
Library Materials				
Books	$ 6,782	$ 69,599	$ 74,164	$ 98,885
Audio Visual	$ 3,388	$ 19,032	$ 19,455	$ 25,940
Periodicals	$ 455	$ 7,899	$ 9,675	$ 12,900
Programs	$ 1,024	$ 15,839	$ 10,125	$ 13,500
Ebooks/ Binding	$ 2,262	$ 32,252	$ 64,500	$ 86,000
	$ 13,911	$ 144,621	$ 177,919	$ 237,225
Library Operations				
Supplies	$ 2,022	$ 12,796	$ 11,453	$ 15,270
Equipment & Systems - New	$ -	$ 285	$ 3,000	$ 4,000
Equipment & Systems - Maintenance	$ -	$ -	$ 3,375	$ 4,500
Automated Systems	$ 2,018	$ 84,848	$ 71,438	$ 95,250
Telephone	$ 1,624	$ 6,090	$ 5,250	$ 7,000
Postage	$ 1,170	$ 7,080	$ 7,500	$ 10,000
Printing & Publicity	$ 666	$ 24,442	$ 22,500	$ 30,000
Auditing	$ -	$ 25,688	$ 18,750	$ 25,000
Legal Services	$ -	$ -	$ 1,500	$ 2,000
Interest	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Transfer to Designated Account	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Capital Projects - Operating	$ 4,070	$ 32,070	$ 45,000	$ 60,000
Miscellaneous	$ 1,517	$ 6,979	$ 5,850	$ 7,800
	$ 13,086	$ 200,278	$ 195,615	$ 260,820
Building Operations				
Heat	$ 52	$ 17,407	$ 20,250	$ 27,000
Light & Power	$ 4,403	$ 30,656	$ 26,625	$ 35,500
Water & Sewer	$ 308	$ 8,445	$ 7,875	$ 10,500
Fixtures, Furnishings & Equipment	$ 1,487	$ 4,962	$ 3,750	$ 5,000
Building Supplies	$ 1,203	$ 5,492	$ 9,000	$ 12,000
Contracted Services	$ 2,005	$ 35,799	$ 27,750	$ 37,000
Repairs & Maintenance	$ 679	$ 19,759	$ 13,500	$ 18,000
Insurance	$ -	$ 34,824	$ 28,388	$ 37,850
Capital Projects Fund Transfer	$ -	$ 100,000	$ 75,000	$ 100,000
Miscellaneous	$ 200	$ 400	$ -	$ -
	$ 10,337	$ 257,744	$ 212,138	$ 282,850
Personnel				
Salaries	$ 119,492	$ 860,199	$ 854,900	$ 1,139,866
Social Security	$ 8,953	$ 67,056	$ 65,803	$ 87,737
Retirement	$ -	$ -	$ 112,097	$ 149,462
Medical Insurance	$ 7,025	$ 66,738	$ 70,226	$ 93,634
Other Insurance	$ 1,639	$ 1,903	$ 12,000	$ 16,000
Payroll Services	$ 854	$ 6,902	$ 5,250	$ 7,000
Staff Development	$ 611	$ 4,573	$ 3,750	$ 5,000
Miscellaneous	$ -	$ -	$ -	
	$ 138,574	$ 1,007,371	$ 1,124,024	$ 1,498,699
Total Income	$ 24,762	$ 1,887,227	$ 1,999,050	$ 2,221,066
Total Expense	$ 175,908	$ 1,610,015	$ 1,709,696	$ 2,279,594
Net Receipts (Expense)	$ (151,146)	$ 277,213	$ 289,354	$ (58,528)

Rye Free Reading Room
Annual Campaign
September 2026 YTD

Donations to the Current Annual Campaign		*2023*	2024	2025	2026
Donations received & deposited in	JAN	32,982	3,137	18,105	9,264
	FEB	1,446	1,255	14,900	10,339
	MAR	2,953	6,143	2,295	2,282
	APR	4,214	15,077	2,279	3,701
	MAY	2,689	3,311	52,865	1,756
	JUN	1,736	7,783	11,260	4,698
	JUL	9,500	69,110	53,367	88,027
	AUG	1,032	10,330	6,509	8,335
	SEP	16,056	9,775	15,672	18,582
	OCT	134,064	32,760	41,740	-
	NOV	35,114	76,764	55,613	-
	DEC	64,832	87,511	93,200	-
	Total	306,618	322,956	367,805	146,984
Donations to *Previous or Subsequent* Annual Campaigns					
Donations to *prior* Annual Campaigns		30,883	12,738	20,931	11,367
Donations to the *subsequent* Annual Campaign		0	0	-	-
Sub-total		30,883	12,738	20,931	11,367

Rye Free Reading Room
Endowment Report
September 2026

Endowment Inflows/Outflows:	YTD 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2023
Beg of Period (Market Value)	2,335,519	2,221,126	2,160,398	2,109,492
Expenses	(12,397)	(15,603)	(15,538)	(14,636)
Transfer to/from Other Funds	0	(100,000)	(101,387)	(105,000)
Interest & Dividend Income	33,954	72,776	60,868	53,480
Appreciation	125,219	157,220	116,785	117,063
End of Period Bal (Market Value)	2,482,294	2,335,519	2,221,126	2,160,398
Endowment Performance	6.28%	9.65%	7.50%	7.39%
Return of S&P 500	12.75%	17.88%	25.02%	26.29%
Return of Barclays Bloomberg Aggregate Bond Index	-2.91%	7.30%	1.25%	5.53%

Silvercrest:		YTD 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2023
Cash & Equivalents	0%	9,515	66,153	111,218	(27,006)
Fixed Income	36%	794,860	766,991	669,740	760,448
Equities	55%	1,236,350	1,072,653	1,157,022	1,166,785
Gold	7%	149,608	144,945	24,213	19,117
Other	2%	39,720	43,469	31,358	30,573
Silvercrest Total	100%	2,230,052	2,094,210	1,993,551	1,949,918

Endowment Breakdown at:

YTD 2026	Permanently Restricted	Temp Restricted & Board Designated	Total
Shea	41,680	71,100	112,780
Flores	76,650	(2,047)	74,603
Balf	27,390	37,469	64,859
Silvercrest	745,086	1,484,966	2,230,052
	$ 890,806	1,591,488	2,482,294

Rye Free Reading Room- Combined Report

For 9 Months Ending September 30, 2026

	Unrestricted (Operating)	Temp. Restricted (Designated)	Endowment and Board Restricted	Combined
Income				
City of Rye	$ 1,663,000	$ -	$ -	$ 1,663,000
Annual Campaign	158,350	0	0	158,350
Contribution	-	297,666	0	297,666
Grants	-	0	0	-
Osborn Branch Library	40,324	0	0	40,324
Income from Invested and Equity	-	6,896	33,954	40,850
Miscellaneous	25,553	22,423	0	47,976
Transfer: Auxiliary to Operating	-	0	0	-
Transfer: Operating to Designated	-	0	0	-
Transfer: Operating to Cap Projects	-100,000	100,000	0	-
	1,787,227	426,985	33,954	2,248,166
Transfer: Auxiliary to Operating	0	0	0	-
Transfer: Endowment to Operating	0	0	0	-
Appreciation/Depreciation		0	125,219	125,219
Total Funds	1,787,227	426,985	159,172	2,373,384
Expense				
Library Materials				
Books	69,599	0	0	69,599
Audio Visual	19,032	0	0	19,032
Periodicals	7,899	2,000	0	9,899
Programs	15,839	105,281	0	121,120
Online Resources	32,252	0	0	32,252
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	-
	144,621	107,281	0	251,902
Library Operations				
Supplies	12,796	6,651	0	19,447
Equipment & Systems - New	285	0	0	285
Equipment & Systems - Maintenance	0	0	0	-
Automated Systems	84,848	5,250	0	90,098
Telephone	6,090	960	0	7,050
Postage	7,080	0	0	7,080
Printing & Publicity	24,442	392	0	24,834
Auditing	25,688	0	0	25,688
Interest	0	0	0	-
Legal Services	0	0	0	-
Miscellaneous	6,979	5,027	0	12,006
	168,208	18,280	0	186,488
Building Operations				
Heat	17,407	0	0	17,407
Light & Power	30,656	0	0	30,656
Water & Sewer	8,445	0	0	8,445
Fixtures, Furnishings & Equipment	4,962	27,602	0	32,564
Building Supplies	5,492	0	0	5,492
Contracted Services	35,799	91,724	0	127,523
Repairs & Maintenance	19,759	3,650	0	23,409
Insurance	34,824	0	0	34,824
Miscellaneous	400	0	12,397	12,797
	157,744	122,976	12,397	293,117
Personnel				
Salaries	860,199	0	0	860,199
Social Security	67,056	0	0	67,056
Retirement	0	0	0	-
Medical Insurance	66,738	0	0	66,738
Other Insurance	1,903	0	0	1,903
Payroll Services	6,902	0	0	6,902
Staff Development	4,573	0	0	4,573
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	-
	1,007,371	0	0	1,007,371
Total Expense	1,477,945	248,537	12,397	1,738,879
Net Receipts/Expenses	309,283	178,448	146,775	634,506
Prior Year Funds	407,118	677,714	2,335,519	3,420,350
Balance	716,401	856,162	2,482,294	4,054,856

Rye Free Reading Room

Trustee Education

Trustees are required to complete an annual sexual harassment prevention training. You may credit any interactive sexual harassment prevention training course taken this year to fulfill this requirement. Contact Chris to self-attest, or submit a certificate of completion. Please note this training does not count towards the 2 hour continuing education requirement.

NYC Sexual Harassment Prevention Training - https://www.nyc.gov/site/cchr/law/sexual-harassment-training.page

Upcoming Trainings

Trustee Handbook Book Club - Oct. 29

The next Trustee Handbook Book Club session is Thursday, October 29, 5:00–6:30 PM, on Duties & Responsibilities of Key Officer Roles, with panelists Pat Placona (Roeliff Jansen Community Library) and John White (Hauppauge Public Library). It counts toward the NYS trustee education requirement, and directors are encouraged to attend. Recorded past sessions are archived and may be added to library training platforms.
Learn more and register at: Register: Trustee Book Club, Oct. 29
Archive available at: Trustee Book Club archive

Nonprofit BoardCon Comes to Westchester – Nov. 4

NYN Media and Nonprofit Westchester are hosting Nonprofit BoardCon on Wednesday, November 4, 2026, 8:30 AM – 2:00 PM at the Westchester County Center, 198 Central Ave., White Plains. The full-day event offers panels, networking and resources for nonprofit executive leadership and board members, which may interest library directors and trustees. Sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities are also available.
Learn more at: Nonprofit Westchester
Reminder: All WLS member library staff and trustees are Nonprofit Westchester (NPW) members

Resilient Leadership in Community: 3-Part Virtual Series (NYS TINRC) – Nov. 5, 12, 19

The NYS Trauma-Informed Network Resource Center (NYS TINRC) is offering a free, highly interactive three-part virtual series that reframes resilience from personal endurance toward relational and collective care. Sessions run Thursdays, November 5, 12 and 19, from 12:00–1:30 PM, covering resilient-leadership traps; boundaries, pacing and direct communication; and collective, interdependent leadership.
Learn more and register at: Register (via Coordinated Care Services link in the email)

Do You Really Need Non-User Input for Strategic Planning? (Fast Forward Libraries) – Nov. 10
Fast Forward Libraries is offering a free webinar on Tuesday, November 10, 2026 at noon Central (1:00 PM Eastern) that challenges the common practice of chasing non-user input during strategic planning. Presenters Amanda Standerfer, Laura Huddleston and Kirstin Gebhart will share lower-effort ways to understand non-users, useful data sources, and how to build a plan that still brings non-users in. The session will be recorded and available for 30 days to registrants. It has been flagged for the WLS November training listing.
Register at: Webinar registration (Zoom)
Learn more at: Fast Forward Libraries

Recording and Related Documents Available: Trustee Institute/Attorney Education Session on New Minimum Standards for Policies
The recording and documents from the October 15 Trustee Institute/Attorney Education Session, "We are Ready – Confirming Your Library Complies with the New Minimum Standards for Policies," are available to library staff and trustees on the WLS IT Wiki. Documents include the presentation slides and templates for the board-approved policies libraries are required to have in place by **January 1, 2027**. A policy for following the new Labor Law 210-b will follow soon.
Individuals who watch the entire recording may self-affirm and receive 2 CE hours toward trustee education or public librarian certification requirements.
Watch the recording at: WLS IT Wiki – Training

Webinar: Embodied Carbon in Library Building Projects – Nov. 17
The New York State Library, a founding member of the Northeast Summit on Climate Adaptation for Library Facilities, is sharing a webinar on embodied carbon in library building projects on Tuesday, November 17, 2026, 2:00–3:30 PM ET. Experts in embodied carbon and library design will cover concepts and practical applications to help libraries make informed, sustainable choices on materials and building projects. A recording will be posted and emailed to registrants. Relevant for any library planning construction or renovation.
Register at: Register (LibCal)
More information at: Northeast Summit on Climate Adaptation for Library Facilities

2027 Meeting Schedule

Jan 19

Feb 4 - Annual Meeting

March 16

May 18

June 15

Sept 28

Oct 19

Dec 14

Action : The Board approve the 2027 meeting schedule

Rye Free Reading Room

Director's Report

LIBRARY OPERATIONS:

- Budget
  - Reviewed year end spending plans with business manager and library departments
- Strategic Planning
  - Coordinated "making meaning workshops" with LEO Group
  - Scheduled outreach meeting with City Comprehensive Plan committee member

FUNDRAISING, OUTREACH & COMMUNITY RELATIONS:

- Annual Campaign
  - Continued outreach to new, returning, and increased donors
- Community Relations
  - Interviewed JM Hirsch for "Trashy Good" author event

Fundraising

- Completed 2026 Novel Night

BUILDING & GROUNDS:

- Submitted 2027 NYS Construction Grant for meeting room improvements
- Worked with architect for tween space

STAFF & PERSONNEL

- Completed recruitment for technical services assistant
- Finalized interview schedule for assistant director
- Reviewed year end goals for staff evaluatiuon

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3rd Quarter Statistics

It was a busy summer and back to school at the Rye Free Reading Room. The most significant change was in visitor count. Door count had a significant increase in September - driven entirely by the booksale. Almost 3,000 more visitors passed through the doors compared to 2025.

Library circulation saw a modest increase compared to the previous year. Digital content reflected a decrease in use – this is due to the hoopla restrictions put in place by WLS. Hoopla will be eliminated as a service offering in 2027, as the WLS budget will no longer support the use. Libraries may opt to create individual accounts, however. Express content shows a drastic increase in use.

Card registration reflects the outreach efforts of the librarians – an increase in children's cards follows visits by nursery schools in September. Teen cards should show an increase in the next quarter, when those outreach visits are completed.

Program offering expanded, with only a small uptick in attendance. Many of the adult programs had lower than anticipated attendance. Children's program attendance was driven by Discovery Zone programs, with some bookclubs in September being canceled due to zero registration.

Rye Free Reading Room	Statistical Summary														
Lending Services															
Circulation to Patrons				**July 25**	**Aug 25**	**Sept 25**	**July 26**	**Aug 26**	**Sept 26**	**Q3 25**	**Q3 26**	**Q3 change**	**YE 25**	**YTD 26**	**YTD change**
RFRR - Total				**16453**	**14961**	**14726**	**16002**	**15791**	**14707**	**46,140**	**46,500**	**1%**	**177,978**	**137,809**	**-23%**
	Adult - All Categories			***11212***	***10487***	***10541***	***10485***	***10820***	***9873***	**32,240**	**31,178**	**-3%**	**123,382**	**93,489**	**-24%**
		Fiction		3156	3035	2619	2824	2957	2443	**8,810**	**8,224**	**-7%**	**30,398**	**22,875**	**-25%**
		Non-Fiction		985	921	929	903	1041	846	**2,835**	**2,790**	**-2%**	**11,621**	**8,584**	**-26%**
		Express (Book + AV)		178	126	138	245	263	227	**442**	**735**	**66%**	**1,833**	**1,845**	**1%**
		E-Media		6214	5792	6208	5994	5825	5841	**18,214**	**17,660**	**-3%**	**71,552**	**54,857**	**-23%**
		Movie		521	416	496	370	503	366	**1,433**	**1,239**	**-14%**	**5,665**	**3,680**	**-35%**
		Music		39	9	36	18	32	18	**84**	**68**	**-19%**	**383**	**348**	**-9%**
		Other		119	188	115	131	199	132	**422**	**462**	**9%**	**1,930**	**1,300**	**-33%**
	Children's - All Categories			**5241**	**4474**	**4185**	**5517**	**4971**	**4834**	**13,900**	**15,322**	**10%**	**54,596**	**44,320**	**-19%**
		Fiction		4128	3546	3348	4532	3987	3930	**11,022**	**12,449**	**13%**	**43,314**	**35,638**	**-18%**
		Non-Fiction		792	623	562	719	697	628	**1,977**	**2,044**	**3%**	**8,399**	**6,298**	**-25%**
		Movie		19	10	21	21	7	12	**50**	**40**	**-20%**	**189**	**165**	**-13%**
		Music		0	1	8	4	3	5	**9**	**12**	**33%**	**20**	**23**	**15%**
		Other		302	294	246	241	277	259	**842**	**777**	**-8%**	**2,674**	**2,196**	**-18%**
ROS				**267**	**261**	**208**	**390**	**290**	**341**	**736**	**1,021**	**39%**	**3,394**	**2,609**	**-23%**
ILL to Other WLS Libraries				**July 25**	**Aug 25**	**Sept 25**	**July 26**	**Aug 26**	**Sept 26**	**Q3 25**	**Q3 26**	**Q3 change**	**YE 25**	**YTD 26**	**YTD change**
RFRR				1234	1082	1024	1046	1117	858	**3,340**	**3,021**	**-10%**	**12,697**	**9,090**	**-28%**
ROS				34	27	29	19	21	20	**90**	**60**	**-33%**	**330**	**182**	**-45%**
New Patron Registration				**July 25**	**Aug 25**	**Sept 25**	**July 26**	**Aug 26**	**Sept 26**	**Q3 25**	**Q3 26**	**Q3 change**	**YE 25**	**YTD 26**	**YTD change**
RFRR				**92**	**95**	**92**	**71**	**134**	**86**	**279**	**291**	**4%**	**913**	**707**	**-23%**
	Adult			63	74	60	40	92	59	**197**	**191**	**-3%**	**636**	**459**	**-28%**
	Teen			7	12	13	3	14	7	**32**	**24**	**-25%**	**71**	**53**	**-25%**
	Children			22	9	19	28	28	20	**50**	**76**	**52%**	**206**	**195**	**-5%**
	Digital			34	40	40	33	43	39	**114**	**115**	**1%**	**390**	**298**	**-24%**
ROS				**5**	**0**	**5**	**2**	**4**	**5**	**10**	**11**	**10%**	**49**	**41**	**-16%**
Reference Services															
Questions Answered				**July 25**	**Aug 25**	**Sept 25**	**July 26**	**Aug 26**	**Sept 26**	**Q3 25**	**Q3 26**	**Q3 change**	**YE 25**	**YTD 26**	**YTD change**
RFRR				**4475**	**4144**	**4140**	**4754**	**4725**	**4518**	**12,759**	**13,997**	**10%**	**47,779**	**37,445**	**-22%**
	Adult			3024	2916	2914	3345	3466	3416	**8,854**	**10,227**	**16%**	**32,963**	**26,664**	**-19%**
	Children			1451	1228	1226	1409	1259	1102	**3,905**	**3,770**	**-3%**	**14,816**	**10,781**	**-27%**
ROS				161	135	137	184	120	161	**433**	**465**	**7%**	**1,786**	**1,303**	**-27%**
Programs & Events (RFRR Only)															
Programs & Program Attendance				**July 25**	**Aug 25**	**Sept 25**	**July 26**	**Aug 26**	**Sept 26**	**Q3 25**	**Q3 26**	**Q3 change**	**YE 25**	**YTD 26**	**YTD change**
	Programs			**211**	**92**	**61**	**160**	**102**	**157**	**364**	**419**	**15%**	**1,245**	**1,099**	**-12%**
		Adult		57	18	9	31	23	47	**84**	**101**	**20%**	**309**	**311**	**1%**
		Teen		60	21	10	39	15	33	**91**	**87**	**-4%**	**220**	**186**	**-15%**
		Children		94	53	42	90	64	77	**189**	**231**	**22%**	**639**	**602**	**-6%**
	Attendance			**4204**	**1950**	**2195**	**3425**	**2511**	**2553**	**8,349**	**8,489**	**2%**	**29,750**	**24,440**	**-18%**
		Adult Programs		1500	93	152	331	145	331	**1,745**	**807**	**-54%**	**4,195**	**3,377**	**-19%**
		Teen Programs		509	141	208	435	153	96	**858**	**684**	**-20%**	**2,303**	**1,702**	**-26%**
		Children's Programs		2195	1716	1835	2659	2213	2126	**5,746**	**6,998**	**22%**	**23,252**	**19,361**	**-17%**
Library Visits (Doorcount; RFRR Only)															
Doorcount				**July 25**	**Aug 25**	**Sept 25**	**July 26**	**Aug 26**	**Sept 26**	**Q3 25**	**Q3 26**	**Q3 change**	**YE 25**	**YTD 26**	**YTD change**
RFRR				15215	14186	15325	15118	14423	18294	**44,726**	**47,835**	**7%**	**166,822**	**129,924**	**-22%**
Electronic Services (RFRR Only)															
Computer Sessions				**July 25**	**Aug 25**	**Sept 25**	**July 26**	**Aug 26**	**Sept 26**	**Q3 25**	**Q3 26**	**Q3 change**	**YE 25**	**YTD 26**	**YTD change**
Use of Public PCs				**164**	**171**	**162**	**99**	**133**	**81**	**497**	**313**	**-37%**	**1,785**	**1,129**	**-37%**
	Adult PCs			14	12	7	9	4	5	**33**	**18**	**-45%**	**95**	**54**	**-43%**
	Laptops			150	159	155	90	129	76	**464**	**295**	**-36%**	**1,690**	**1,075**	**-36%**
Website Use				**July 25**	**Aug 25**	**Sept 25**	**July 26**	**Aug 26**	**Sept 26**	**Q3 25**	**Q3 26**	**Q3 change**	**YE 25**	**YTD 26**	**YTD change**
	Sessions (Visits)			6243	6152	6489	8690	7890	11655	**18,884**	**28,235**	**50%**	**66,519**	**67,838**	**2%**
	Users			5520	5,224	3302	7044	5966	4391	**14,046**	**17,401**	**24%**	**50,383**	**46,545**	**-8%**
	Pageviews			9579	8973	9165	13113	11533	8243	**27,717**	**32,889**	**19%**	**103,909**	**90,166**	**-13%**
Wifi Usage				**July 25**	**Aug 25**	**Sept 25**	**July 26**	**Aug 26**	**Sept 26**	**Q3 25**	**Q3 26**	**Q3 change**	**YE 25**	**YTD 26**	**YTD change**
	Sessions			1243	1401	1568	1395	1395	1603	**4,212**	**4,393**	**4%**	**17,784**	**12,358**	**-31%**
Technical Services															
Items Added				**July 25**	**Aug 25**	**Sept 25**	**July 26**	**Aug 26**	**Sept 26**	**Q3 25**	**Q3 26**	**Q3 change**	**YE 25**	**YTD 26**	**YTD change**
RFRR				**594**	**446**	**614**	**714**	**535**	**444**	**1,654**	**1,693**	**2%**	**6,734**	**4,863**	**-28%**
	Adult			***527***	***327***	***446***	***518***	***366***	***373***	**1,300**	**1,257**	**-3%**	**5,226**	**3,612**	**-31%**
		Fiction		423	220	256	217	208	184	**899**	**609**	**-32%**	**2,973**	**1,990**	**-33%**
		Non-Fiction		35	54	19	73	16	58	**108**	**147**	**36%**	**505**	**310**	**-39%**
		eBooks		33	35	123	183	114	96	**191**	**393**	**106%**	**848**	**1,014**	**20%**
		Express (Book + AV)		25	4	25	26	19	28	**54**	**73**	**35%**	**205**	**199**	**-3%**
		Movie		5	8	10	13	8	6	**23**	**27**	**17%**	**168**	**66**	**-61%**
		Other		6	6	13	6	1	1	**25**	**8**	**-68%**	**527**	**33**	**-94%**
	Children's			**67**	**119**	**168**	**196**	**169**	**71**	**354**	**436**	**23%**	**1,508**	**1,251**	**-17%**
		Fiction		60	103	161	133	107	60	**324**	**300**	**-7%**	**1,219**	**901**	**-26%**
		Non-Fiction		7	16	7	63	62	11	**30**	**136**	**353%**	**289**	**350**	**21%**
		Other		0	0	0	0	0	0	**0**	**0**	**#DIV/0!**	**0**	**0**	**#DIV/0!**
ROS				30	**28**	**12**	15	**13**	**18**	**70**	**46**	**-34%**	**196**	**169**	**-14%**

Adult Services

PROGRAMMING:

- *Beginner Magic Workshop for adults and teens*
- *AI Scams: Seeing Is No Longer Believing*

- Art Exhibits & Receptions - *In the Gallery*
  - October – Art for Purchase – Susan Deshkensky Quilts

COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

Strategic Priority 1: Independent Reading Services

- Book Displays - RFRR *Off The Shelf* Book Picks, Hispanic/Latinx Heritage Month, Banned Books Week, Halloween, Italian-American Heritage & Culture Month, Filipino American History Month
- Upcoming 11/1: *The Unself-Help Book* - Carl T. Vreeland - A serene afternoon of de-stressing
- Library Book Groups - Cookbook, Current Events, Rye Readers, Thursday Afternoon (hybrid)
  - *New* SPRYE Men's Book Club - First meeting 11/5 ; in collaboration with SPRYE

Strategic Priority 4: Community Interest Advancement

- Programs
  - *The Rye Record's Biweekly Word Search Puzzle, The Rye Finder, was entitled Available At The Library and highlighted both expected and unexpected things that can be found here! Copies are available at the main desk and patrons can show a completed puzzle to get a piece of candy.*

SPACE BOOKINGS – September

- Local History Room – 51
- Left Study Room – 47
- Right Study Room - 42

ONE ON ONE APPOINTMENTS - September

- Notary Appointments – 19
- Technology Training – 2

Teen Services

PROGRAMMING AND DISPLAYS:

- The Teen Space is in regular use with a steady crowd of 30-40 teens in the Teen Room on Fridays, not necessarily all at once, but within the afterschool window.
- The Manga Book Club has grown to 20 members(!!!), where I have capped it as what I am reasonably able to manage in addition to financially sustaining the model of offering the first volume for readers to keep. This month's pick is The Summer Hikaru Died. November's book for the middle school group will be One Piece and for the high school group it will be Windbreaker.
- We had 33 kids attend the murder mystery lock-in event, and they had an absolute blast! Slots for the upcoming gingerbread house competition are already starting to fill.
- The multi-generational Magic 101 was poorly attended, which may have been due to athletic conflicts on the teen's part, and there were train delays which impacted adults. We had 20 people sign up, but only 5 came, even with LibCal sending a reminder.
- The babysitting certification class had close to 100% attendance, with 15 out of 17 registered people showing up

Strategic Goals

1. Independent Reading and Reading Drop-off Prevention
    - The manga book club, with unanimous consent of all the kids, has split with this month being the last shared read between the middle school group and the high school group

2. Community Interest Advancement.
    - Middle School and High School visits are set for 10/29 for outreach and engagement

Children's Services

Community Interest Advancement

- A new item will be on the shelves shortly. 4 Tonie boxes, along with several Tonie figurines have been purchased and will be available for checkout.

Independent Reading and Reading Drop-off Prevention

- Book Groups for kids got off to a slow start. Both Books & Beyond & Graphic Novel book club for 3rd-5th graders were cancelled for their first meet due to lack of signups. The American Girl Book Group's first meeting had 4 children attend, and was a nice group. Next month's focus is on Felicity and will feature a partnership with the Square House. We hope the popularity of book groups will increase.
- The Therapy Dog Brigade was scheduled to begin the first week of October, but this was also cancelled due to lack of signups.

Outreach:

- Two school visits are planned for the next few months with CCNS. The kids will come to learn about Thanksgiving in November, and another group will visit in January and learn about polar animals.
- Librarians participated in Back to School nights at Milton, Midland, and Osborn schools. Calendars and flyers were distributed.

Strategic Planning Meeting
October 20

From the results of the survey, Linda Braun from the LEO Group, presented a high-level overview of the feedback with a few main themes identified.

The first was access – how people get in the building, park, and navigate the library programs and services.

The second was the programming offered – age groups, the nature of the library activities, and the ways users engage with the space.

The third was the vision for the future – building bridges across audiences and stakeholders that incorporate the needs of users and residents.

Linda led the discussion and the guided the attendees through activities. Jim and Chris will lead an activity session at the October 27th board meeting.

Rye Free Reading Room

Community Survey (August 2026)

Practices, Perceptions, and Priorities: Data synthesis to inform the Living Strategic Plan

Note on tools: AI assistance was used for slide formatting, chart/graphic creation, and some exploratory data analysis. Full analysis, data cleaning, interpretation, prioritization, and recommendations are the work of the researcher (C. Martin).

Who we heard from

328

Started the survey but did not get past demographic information

244

Completed the survey questions. This is our sample.

89%

Already hold a library card

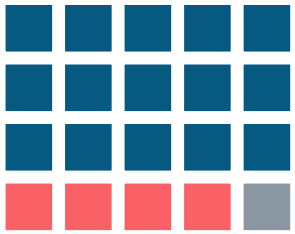
24 people

Never set foot in the building, and only 7 of 203 arrived via QR code rather than a link or newsletter from the library

Despite targeted outreach through community organizations & accessible surveys (including Spanish language and paper versions), the survey did not reach far beyond existing patrons.

Sample composition (each square = 5%)

Gender (skews female)



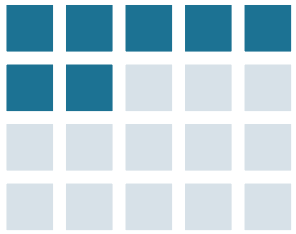
- Women — 75%
- Men [see deep dive p.15]— 20%
- Non-binary / declined — 5%

Age (skews older)



- 65+ — 40%
- 35-49 — 25%
- 50-64 — 25%
- Under 35 [see deep dive p.16] — 10%

Household



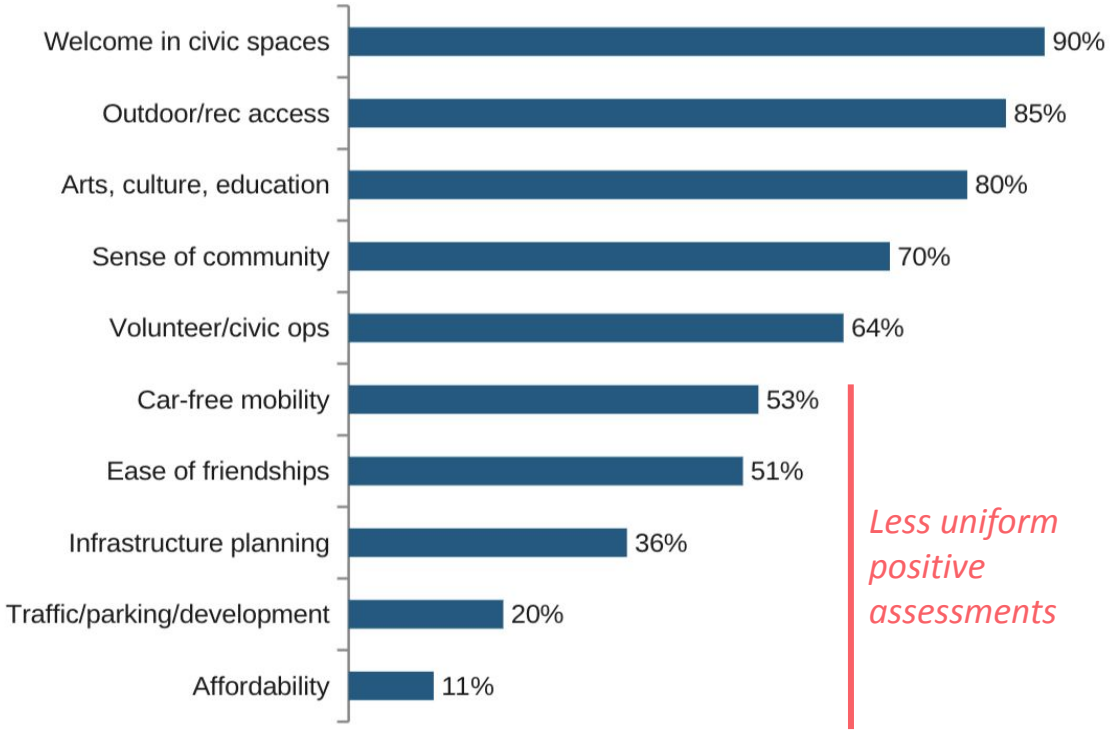
- Kids at home — 35%
- No kids at home — 65%

Broad Snapshots

Community Reflections

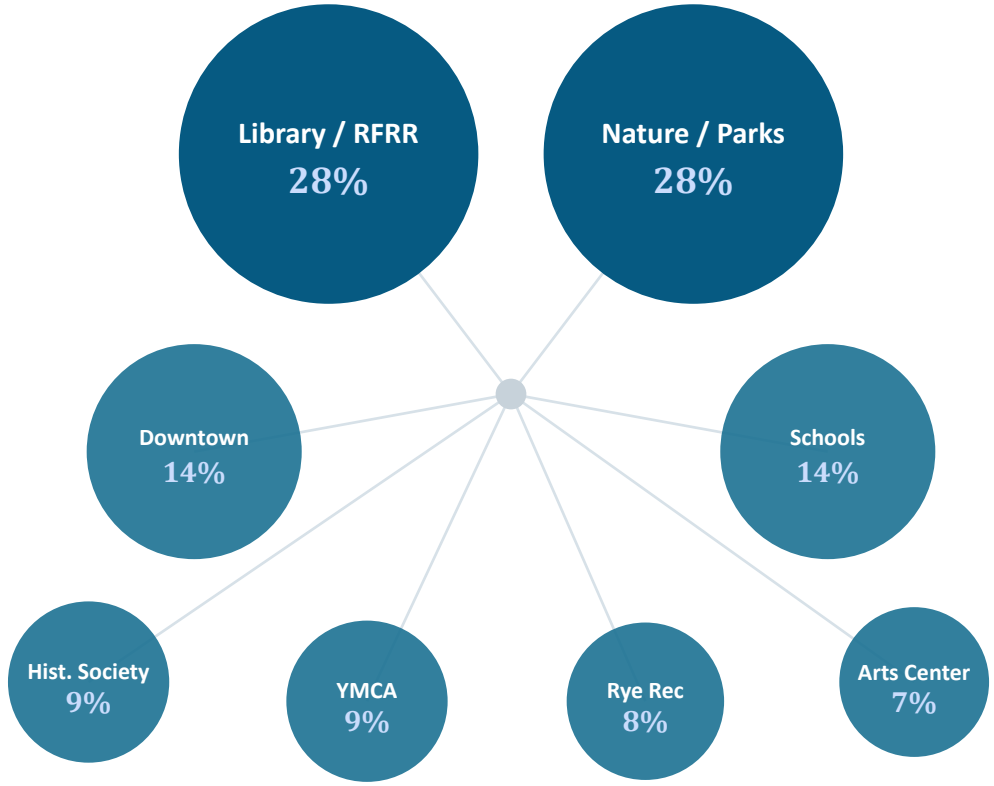
> *"The number of organizations and facilities we have in our little town is amazing! The beach, park, library, arts center, nature center, Rye Golf Club, etc., all make this town special.*
> — resident, 65+

What residents consider *good* or *excellent* aspects of their community:



> *"Rye is very expensive, and the wealthy forget that not everyone works in finance* — resident, 50-64

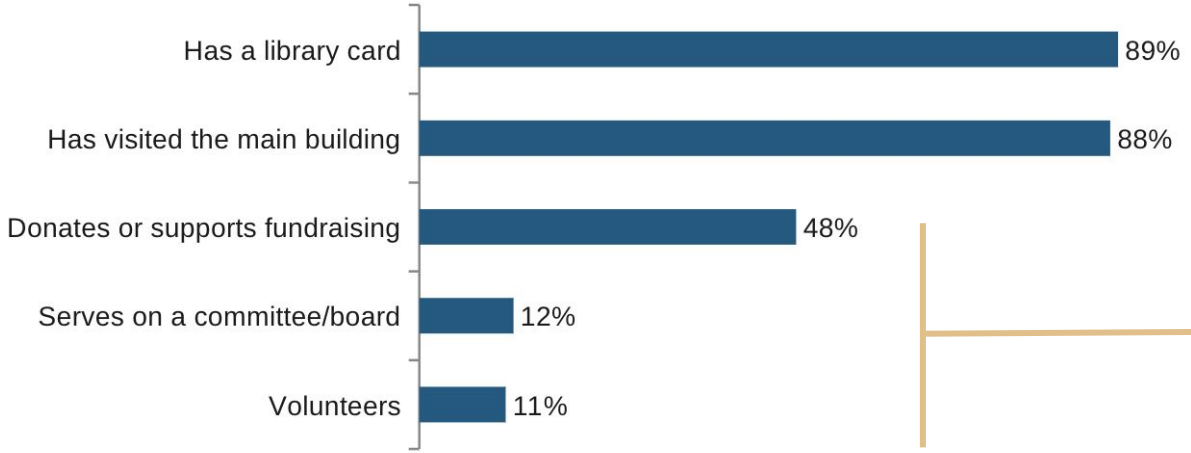
What people name unprompted as "what makes Rye unique or special":



Residents rarely name one place; they describe a small constellation. Library and Nature/Parks are central anchors, with schools, downtown, and a handful of civic nonprofits (YMCA, Historical Society, Arts Center, Rye Rec) forming the supporting network around them.

Library Participation Patterns

About half of the respondents are doing more than just using the library



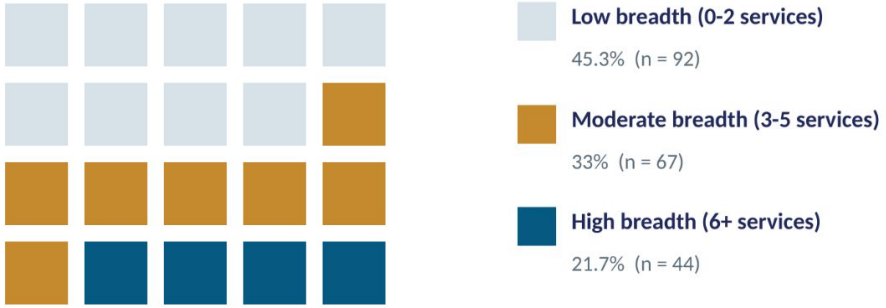
> ***"The library is the most important third space we have left in the town, and it is the most important to me."***
> — lifelong resident, 35-49

Who is engaged beyond card-holding & visits?

- Age and gender mix look almost identical to the sample overall
- 92% are homeowners, vs. 81% of all respondents (renters are underrepresented)
- 10+ year residents modestly overrepresented (70% vs. 67% overall); newcomers less likely

Use is focused. Nearly half of patrons use two or fewer services.

Groups based on number of services (/16) patrons report using, each square = 5%



Who takes advantage of range of services?

- Younger people, especially parents. High-breadth group is more than double the overall rate of 35-49-year-olds
- Low-breadth group is heavily 65+ (53% of seniors low v. 21% in high breadth group)

Opportunity Findings

1 Community & Belonging: Room for more supports

FINDING

Sense of community in Rye rates well (70% good/excellent), but not for everyone (30%), and nearly half of survey takers don’t find it so easy to make friends.



Proportion of respondents who rated these aspects of Rye ‘good’ or ‘excellent’

OPPORTUNITIES

> *[We need]* ***More third spaces that aren't explicitly family focused, centered around alcohol consumption, or require expensive memberships.*** — man, 35-49

> ***Many people live here for years. I would like a 'new to rye' group of people who like myself moved here within the last two years. A way to meet friends of all generations. Other seniors. New young families etc. I went to the library the day I moved in and introduced myself. I was given a map of town and it was very helpful. More of that kind of thing. Tips on locals businesses etc. A way to meet like minded people.*** — women, 65+

2 Community & Belonging: Opportunities for library emphasis/connection

77%

consider “connecting people & creating community” a valuable or essential focus for RFRR (31% think it is essential)

40%

identify “community & cultural gathering space” as part of their future vision for the library (**35% as part of “an equal mix”**)

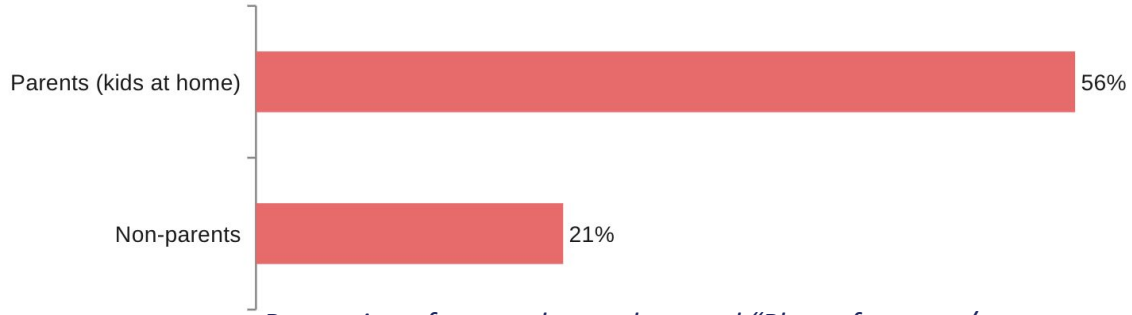
29%

of those who rent out spaces for parties and events use the library (more likely to reserve meeting or study spaces).

OPPORTUNITY

Making this a priority for the space and services of the library, thinking about how existing and new offerings and supports might advance this goal, including encouraging people and groups to host parties and events, reaching out to newcomers in the community, thinking about the idea of a third space not just for teens but for residents who are not engaged in the other key community hubs.

3 Teen & Tween Space: Cross-generational interest



Proportion of respondents who rated "Places for teens/tweens to hang out" 'fair' or 'poor'

FINDING

Recognized as a need by ages 25 to 65+ (33% overall), including people with no teens at home. More than half of parents rate teen/tween spaces in Rye as less than good.

> ***A recreation center … a place to play ping pong, knock hockey, board games, pickleball, and other social games, especially for teens.*** — resident, 65+

> ***Cool teen only hang out spots … that's what I constantly hear students say they don't have.***
> — resident, 25-34

68%

consider "providing a space for teens or tweens to hang out" a valuable or essential focus for RFRR (29% think it is essential)

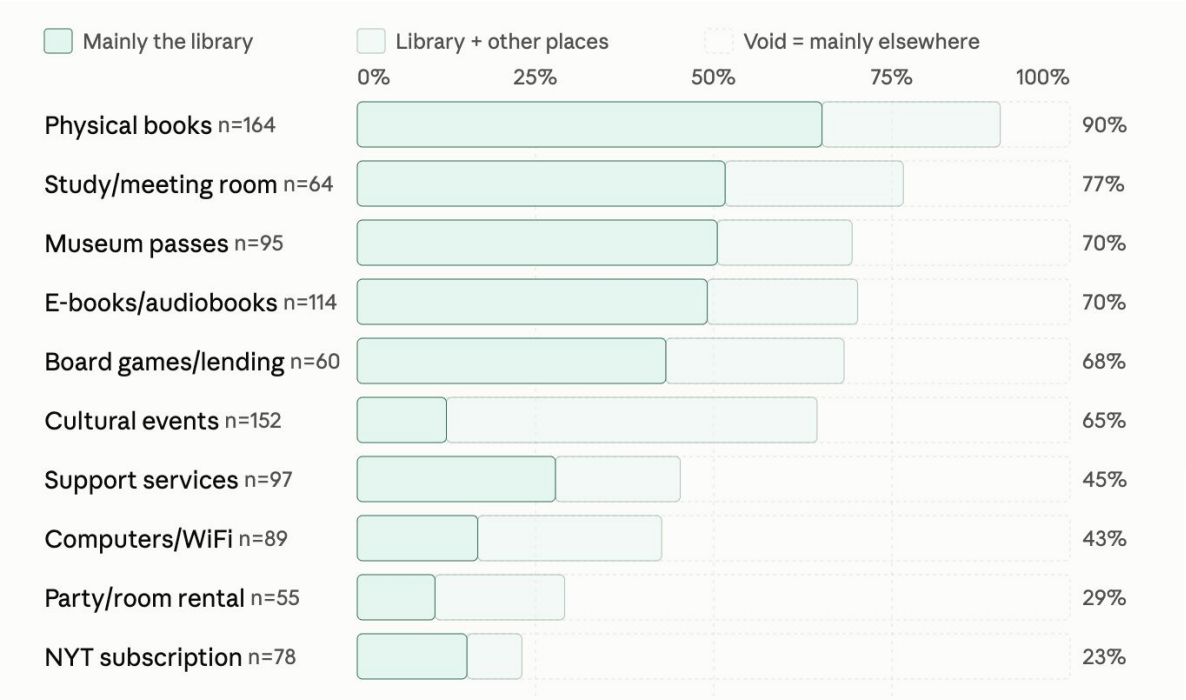
OPPORTUNITY

Residents proposed ideas for the library related to teen services as well as spaces including lowering the volunteer age barrier (currently 16). Reaching out to teens to see what a cool teen only spot looks like, and confirming if THEY think they need it (voice we are missing). Teen advisory board, volunteers, leadership to guide.

4 Library Services: Balancing usage with essential access

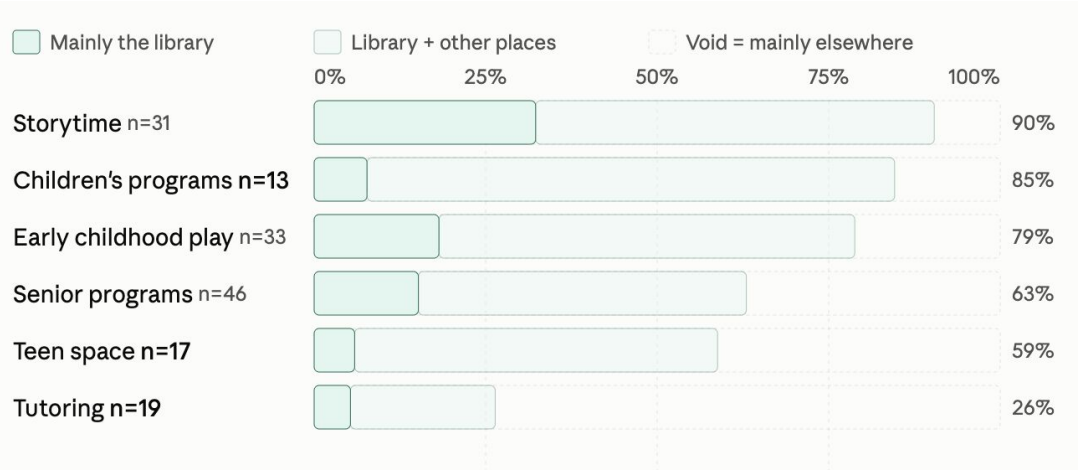
"Unbiased Medicare Info, free Tax Preparation (AARP/IRS)"
—women, 65+, lives alone

General



Note: graphs show use among people who use each service at all (not the full respondent base)

Age/life-stage specific (parents, seniors)



OPPORTUNITIES: Looking at the proportion of people using a service for whom the library is the *only* access point. Basic supports & services may not be needed for most residents, who have access to other supports, but may be essential for some. Also, more purposeful collaboration and strategic planning with other local organizations who offer cultural/enrichment programming (minimize redundancies or conflicts, optimal allocation of time and space, filling in gaps of breadth/depth of experiences, connecting).

FINDING

Traditional library practices are *library reliant* (physical books, study/meeting rooms, museum passes, ebooks, lending), with two thirds or more people saying they predominantly use the library for these things.

The ***library is a meaningful contributor to residents' cultural and enrichment life***, complementing the broader landscape of programming available across Rye and the New York area.

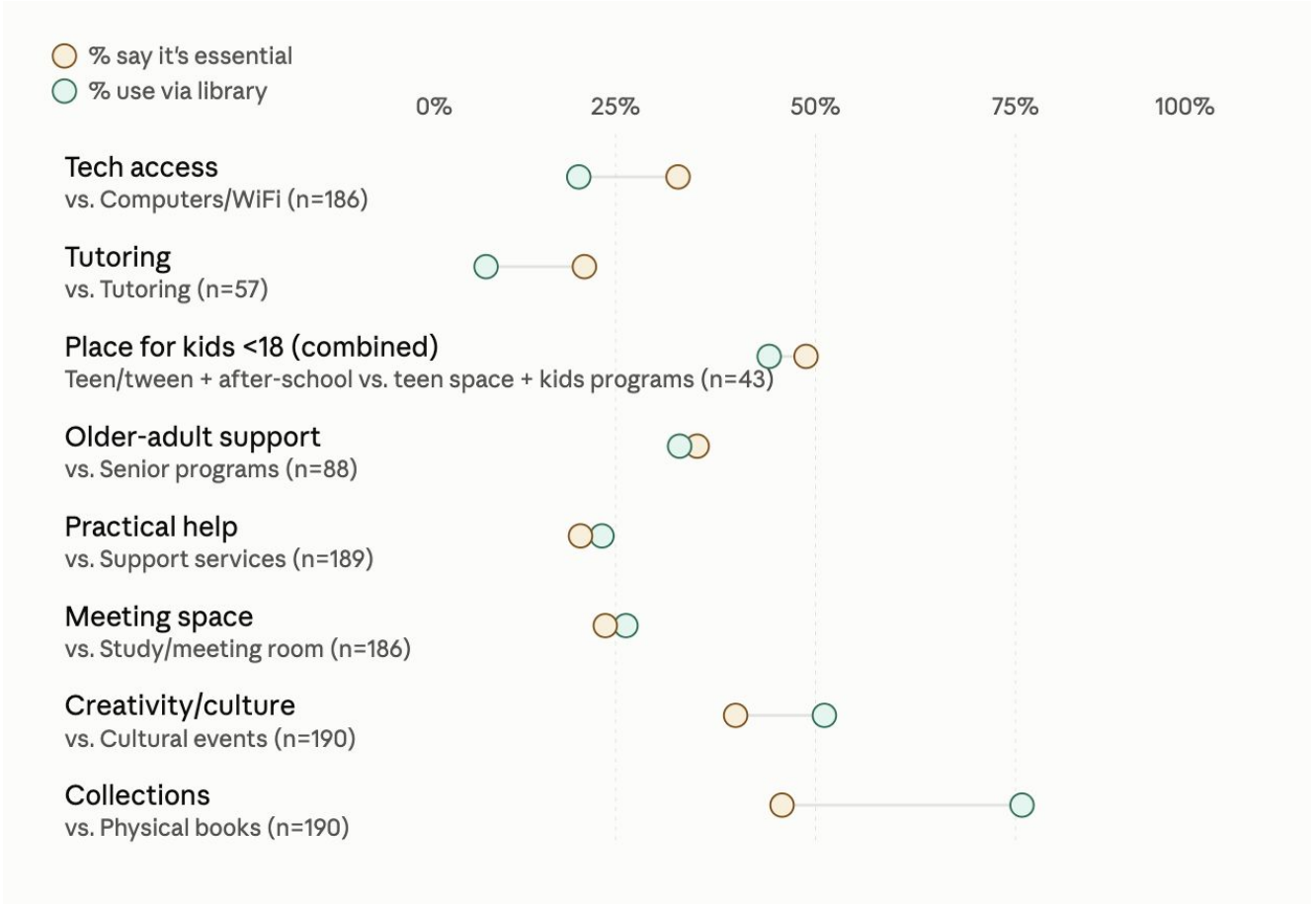
Using the ***library for specific supports is less common*** (research, notary, computer help, tutoring, Times), but it is important to note that for over half of those using the library for support services or for NY*Times* access, the library is their *primary* source of access.

5 Library Services: Value perspectives & actual use

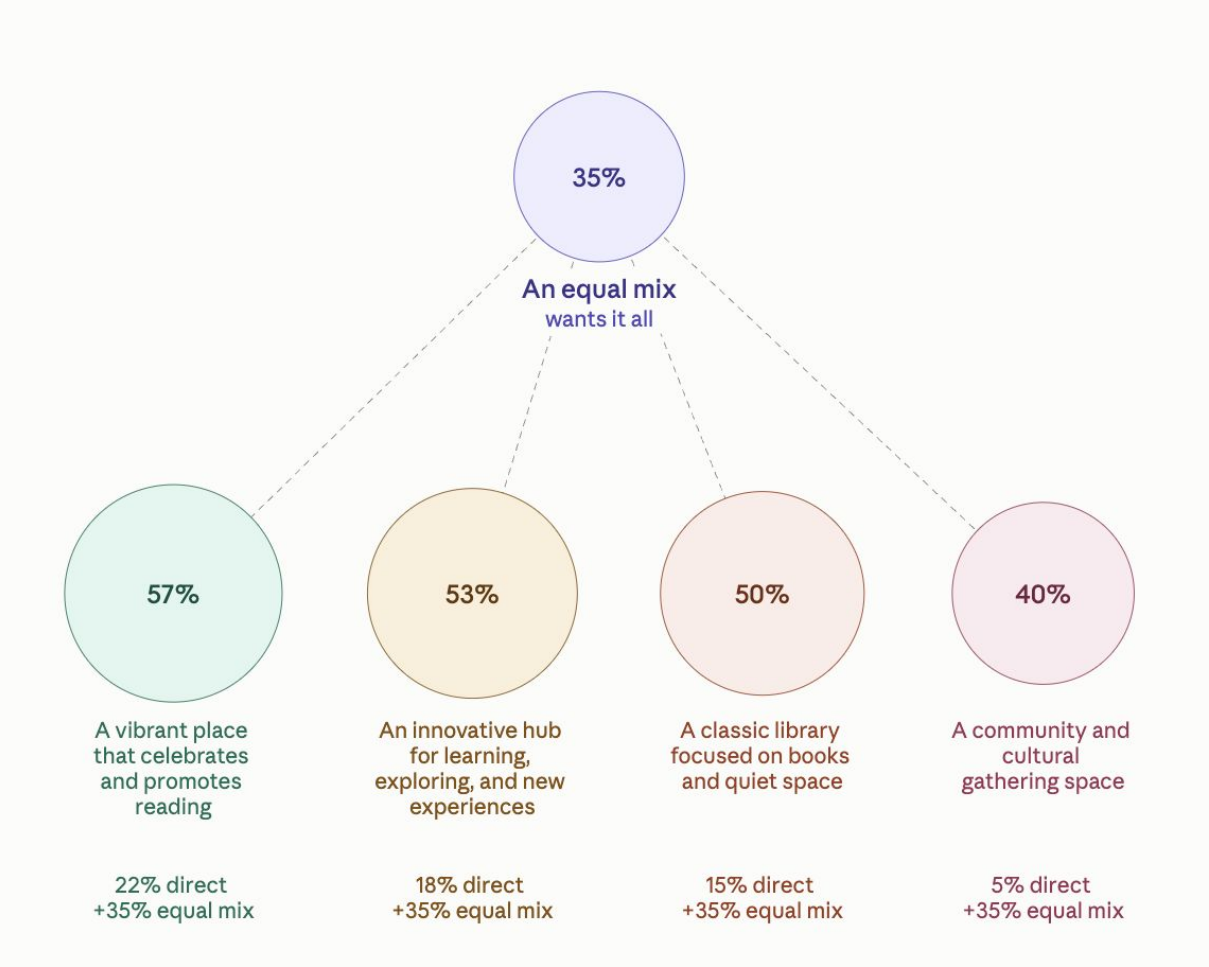
FINDING
Tech access and tutoring are the only items where stated priority is greater than current use. Everything else in the middle — older-adult support, meeting spaces, practical help, and being a space for children and teens — is pretty balanced: meaning respondent library priorities and their actual habits line up. Creativity/culture and collections show usage over how "essential" people rate these aspects of library services (maybe valued more through habit than active reflection).

OPPORTUNITIES: With tech access and tutoring, learning more about the disconnect (do people think it is essential in theory, but not for them? If so, who do they think this is important for? Or is it logistical conflicts or other reasons they don't take advantage?

Also, opportunities to move beyond collections as the center (most people use the library this way, but far fewer think balancing collections with user interests/etc. is essential.



6 Library Vision: More than half see room to grow beyond books



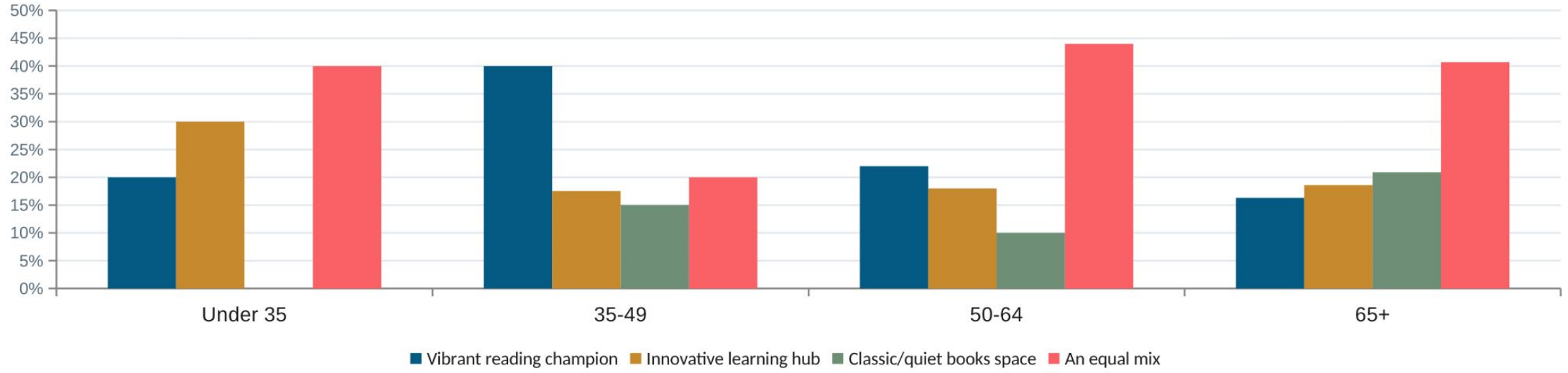
58%

chose “an equal mix” or “an innovative hub” or “a community and cultural gathering space” indicating that **a majority are open to the library as a social and dynamic space for learning, connecting, and growing**.

“Providing spaces and resources for people with differing opinions to engage in meaningful conversation. — man, 65+

“Program series — 3 or 4 sessions, be it art, lecture, poetry writing, exercise. A good way to form new friendships around common interests.
— woman, 65+

7 Library Vision: Different by age groups



FINDING

Library vision shifts by age: 35–49-year-olds (parents are often represented in this category) favor an active reading champion over "equal mix". Visioning a classic, quiet space is absent for those under 35 and strongest for those over 65 (25%). Interestingly, it is not seniors but those in 35-64 age groups who bring an anti-tech stance into the story.

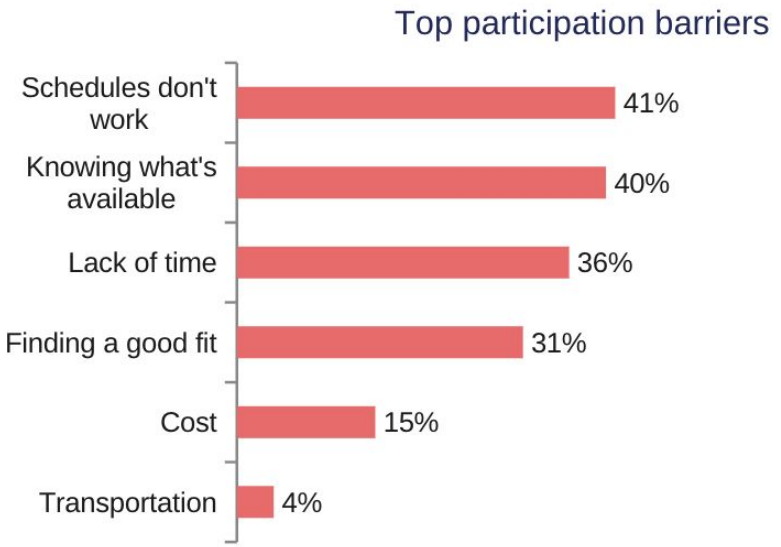
"A resource for parents with kids (boys) aged 6–12 that are reluctant readers and help those parents as they try to find a way to spark joy of reading with kids. —woman, 35-49

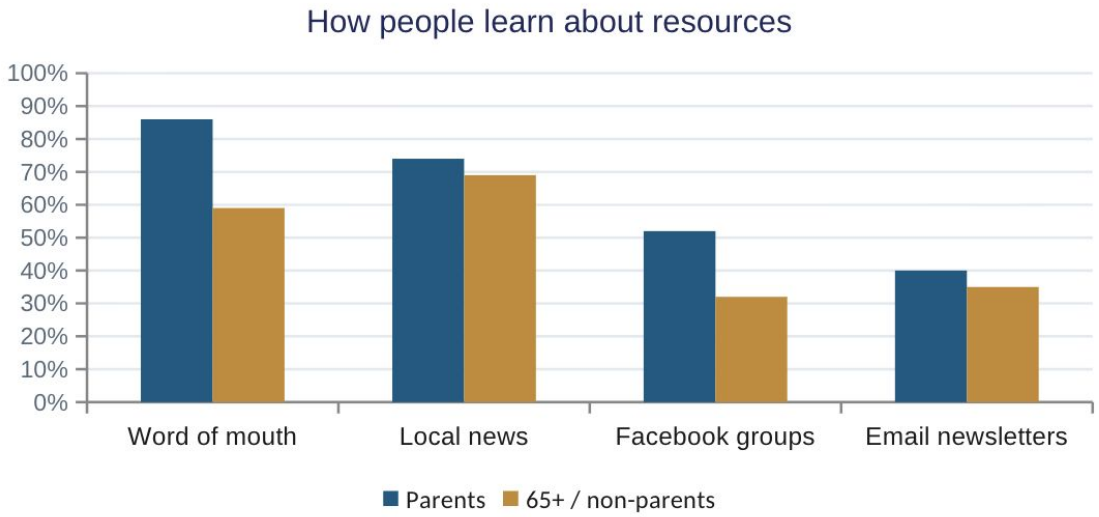
"Please keep the books and steer clear of the screens and digital. We have plenty of that elsewhere. — resident, 50-64

"QUIET — man, 65+

8 Participation Barriers & Information Channels

> *I don't know which events I'm likely to see my 'generation' of school parents at, since our kids have graduated RHS.*
>
> — resident, 50-64





FINDING

"Knowing what's available" (40%) and "schedules don't work" (41%) are the top-cited barriers, not cost (15%) or transportation (4%). Parents skew toward time-constrained barriers; seniors and non-parents skew discovery-constrained (how to know what is going on).

OPPORTUNITY

Opportunity in better-targeted, channel-specific communication with different strategies for different groups and attention paid to people who are not parents, who may have smaller networks of information sharing.

9 Parking & Infrastructure: Residents ideas for community changes

FINDING

Traffic/Parking was considered a less-than-optimal aspect of life in Rye for 4 of 5 respondents and about half did not find it super easy to get around without a car. While accessibility and transportation were rarely identified as barriers to community participation, solutions related to these dimensions were volunteered repeatedly and unprompted in open-ended responses.

> **A free shuttle**
>
> *"Free shuttle with stops around the city to hop on and off." — resident, 65+*

> **Protected bike lanes**
>
> *"Dedicated, protected bike lanes." — resident, 65+*

> **No-car zone**
>
> *"Close downtown to cars. Build an elegant 3-story parking garage behind Purchase Street." — resident, 35-49*

OPPORTUNITY

None of these ideas are for the library alone. This is an opportunity for the library to raise access and parking in conversation with the city, or other community locations downtown to consider joint capital projects or strategic priorities toward community solutions that would benefit these businesses and support the community.

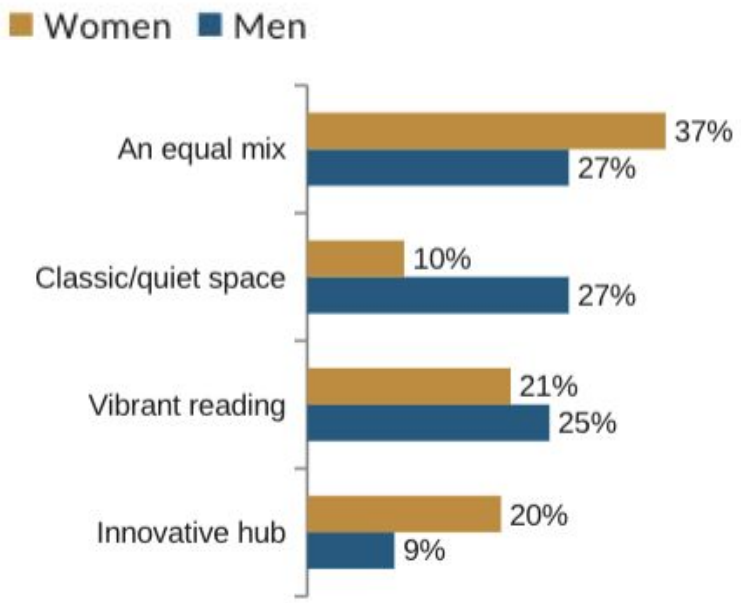
Deep Dives (Groups Underrepresented in the Data)

DEEP DIVE

Men (n = 47)

FINDING

A classic, quiet library vision is picked by men nearly 3x more often than women. Concentrated in the 65+ group, with younger men and women looking similar.



> *"The books are updated, staff is helpful and the setting is good for work/study."* — future vision from man, 65+

FINDINGS

- Men have lower depth of connection than women (0.7 vs 1 connection types). Men/women donate at fairly similar rates; women are roughly twice as likely to have an actual governance role or personal relationship with someone who does.
- Breadth of services look similar across gender, with women 4x more likely to report using for senior services (social/learning) and men more likely to report NYTimes (access, materials).
- For men, suggestions for the future are often framed as features the library can fix or optimize (lighting, materials, format)

"You recently cut back on Bloomberg Business Week and don't carry the Financial Times. Those would seem to have a lot of interest in Rye. — man, 65+

"Library has served as a more active center for local writers to meet and share work … I'd love to see Writes and Bites, and the like, rekindled. … should have decent, hardcover copies of the great books. Most are tattered paperbacks that don't smell good. — man, 65+

In-Person Conversations: September 16-19

Who We Talked With, Why, When

September 16-19

Combination of 1:1 conversations, small focus groups, person on the street interviews - town square, book sale, Purchase Street, CVS, etc. 27 conversations: 5 @ CVS with teens/tweens, 13 in the square during the book sale Saturday, 9/20, 6 on the street mixed groups of young people between 2 and 5 at a time, 4 at the Y. Square provided the greatest opportunity to talk with men between 30 and 45 (5), also talked with couples and older men and women. 1 focus group, attendance at Aux meeting, and interviews with Rye Record publisher and previous mayor.

Participants in the group sessions were those actively involved in Rye activities and in the RFRR. While it is useful to learn from this type of resident it also creates limits in what we learn. The person on the street interviews were intended to mitigate this while in the long run the book sale and the SAJE and Osborn conversations were the most effective way to learn from those not fully connected.

DRAFT

Rye as a Community

Connectedness is how people describe what makes Rye work. The town is small enough that residents "constantly overlap," on the street, at the park, on walks, at the clubs. Because there is no busing, parents see each other at school pick-up every day, and that line is one example of how information gets spread.

Word of mouth is the key way people learn what's going on. Residents described asking each other when they need a service or information on events, etc. One participant who uses no social media said she still hears everything, because "you have all of this information in your head, and you can just pass it on."

Helping each other is a source of pride. Help comes from acquaintances and not just friends. Postings and word of mouth play a role in this.

One long-tenured resident summarized the whole pattern as the community becoming "sort of your family," and said reciprocity has always been a feature of the place.

Who Participates and How

Volunteerism in Rye is heavily female and it is recognized by those who volunteer as a strength. Women we talked with were heavily involved in multiple organizations and groups and frequently took on leadership roles.

Men are engaged differently. Some women pushed back on the idea that men are absent from community events and organizing. "Dads donate billions of hours as coaches." Men hold seats on local boards such as the Nature Center and Friends of Rye Town Park. What constrains them is the working day: commuting, travel, and meetings. It was also noted that men choose to participate in different

types of activities. These may include activities such as strategic planning, overall not the same type of community-centered work that women are involved in.

Scheduling challenges also rose to the top when talking about gender roles and age:

- "If you're saying, can you drop off something at ten a.m. on a Tuesday? No. They're traveling."
- "Why is everything on a Friday?"
- Seniors are less likely to attend evening events because of driving, and asked for daytime concerts, author talks, and study groups.

Every group named time as a barrier, and each named a different time.

Participation is unevenly distributed. Some residents are a part of boards, school life, and committees. Others were described as feeling excluded or overwhelmed by the financial and social fabric of the city. Participants named real pressure on parents, and especially on mothers, balancing work, children, volunteering, and social expectation.

One structural change: a participant mentioned employers now giving staff a volunteer day, which has produced fathers available on Fridays for driving and similar work. It is a small signal that the constraint on men's participation is scheduling rather than willingness.

Commented [1]: Question we can ask is about how this impacts other activities in town and even mention that the train parking lot perhaps shows this reality.

DRAFT

Change and Pressure

A consistent point across conversations is that Rye is getting more expensive

Participants described tear-downs, mansion rebuilds, and sharp price jumps on ordinary streets. One talked about a friend in an older part of town saying "you would have no idea how much these are worth right now." One person noted that “the town has moved from affluent to very affluent”

The consequences people named:

- Less socioeconomic diversity than a generation ago.
- Young families and some older residents find it hard to stay.
- A community that is, as mentioned by one person we talked with, increasingly self-selecting on income.
- Some community activities center on wealthier residents, producing a sense that not everyone is equally included.

An interesting tension in the community is that the qualities that make Rye desirable, the schools, the waterfront, the density of civic life, the people who built it, are the same qualities driving the prices that limit who and what is available. As one participant said, "it's people like you that make this community so nice that have caused it to become so desirable."

Development and flooding are two primary pressures on downtown. Flooding near the brook and the Sound was described as serious, recurring, and getting worse. It directly constrains the library's building.

Inclusion

Racial diversity. Noted directly and, without hedging, as limited. It was mentioned alongside affluence in the same breath, as a description of who the town is now.

LGBTQ+ youth and teens who don't conform. A participant speaking from her role with the LGBTQ+ school group described real challenges for kids who "don't fit into the kind of square that many of us are," particularly in the teenage years. They said that the group does not always feel celebrated. Her framing was that “there is still work to do,” in a community that is otherwise proud of its openness.

Family structures. Participants noted that the primary narrative for Rye is still the traditional nuclear family, the man goes off to work, while the reality includes many households with a female primary earner and many dual-income families. Those families were described as present in the community but not as visible or engaged in various activities.

The High School. The high school was described as having shifted markedly under a new principal, who was credited as helping families see going to the local HS as a positive and not "a second class choice,"

The Library

The library was described as widely respected and important to the city. It is seen as a place where people get together around books, stories, and each other.

What people named as working:

- Book club support reserving titles and helping members get multiple copies, including through the wider system.
- Staff who are proactive and friendly in locating materials and placing requests.
- The fireplace and the atmosphere, which came up as part of why the building feels like somewhere to be.
- Morning children's programming, described as active and well used.
- The teen room and the teen librarian, described as "awesome," with the high school GSA treating the library as a very safe space.
- Partnerships and varied presentations, which one participant singled out as something to protect.

Some don’t feel welcomed - even as a part of the “in” group - One person described coming in with a new baby, finding no relationship with anyone in the children's room, no enthusiasm about the books, and no recommendations offered, she noted this as a real problem for her use of the library.

Access and the Building

Physical access came up in every conversation. That limits what can be offered inside the library and who uses the facility.

Parking. Described as a major problem for the library, City Hall, the Y, downtown businesses, etc. One participant said: "you can't do the thing you need to do in the library, because there's no parking." Another noted she cannot even return books.

Drop-off and senior access. The lack of a convenient drop-off point was raised repeatedly in connection with seniors. "If you don't have a handicap sticker, when you're with somebody, it's just difficult." One suggestion was a dedicated drop-off in the circle behind the firehouse. Participants connected this directly to isolation: when places are not easy to reach, people get left out.

DRAFT

Commented [2]: I'm trying to figure out what to do with this and for everyone of these I think we heard a bit of the opposite or we experienced the opposite for ourselves.

The $2 senior ride program, in a neighboring town, was praised as exactly the right kind of intervention, and was contrasted with what the library itself can offer.

Book returns. Parking difficulty makes even returning books a point of tension. This led to suggestions for a drive-up drop or off-site return bins in town.

Flooding. The library's location near the brook was noted as a long-term constraint on expansion and facility planning, and one participant asked directly why the flooding seems to be getting worse.

Collaboration

Convening and coordination. One person talked about the need for the school district, city council, and other leaders meeting more often and saw the town's major institutions as interconnected and under-coordinated. The library was discussed as a candidate for that convening role.

Reducing duplication. With the YMCA, arts center, nature center, schools, and synagogue, the idea raised was that organizations should specialize, share space or programs, and stop treating one another as competitors.

Specific Examples: A new mother described isolation and a children's room that felt like nannies' territory and suggested thinking about serving a group like this with specific programs and events. Seniors would like daytime concerts, author talks, and study groups. Teens might want more passive programming.

Ideas: a satellite presence at the beach ("books and beaches go together hand in hand"); book lockers or a kiosk at the train station; little libraries in the parks; improved digital licensing so a whole book club can read the same title at once; better promotion of Westchester Library System perks, including museum passes; a clearer monthly calendar across libraries; and a drop-in childcare idea, prompted by a shortage of daycare places in town, which participants themselves flagged as probably too big for the library.

DRAFT

What Does “User” Mean?

Many of those we talked with were considered users, whether as members of the auxiliary board, book borrowers, program attendees, etc. We did find two groups of people who might be invisible to library staff and board members as users:

- We heard that men aged roughly 25–45 are not library users. During book sale conversations we learned that some men who work from home use the library as a place to work when they need to be somewhere other than the house.
- Men who use the library as a second place to work are not seen as users and are often invisible because they don’t interact with staff, don’t borrow materials and don’t attend programs and events.

Why a tension and a challenge. The narrative has been that men participate differently — coaching, boards, donations. Working-from-home use is different than coaching or board member participation because it is solitary, anonymous, and about the space used rather than the institution.

Other examples:

- Teens who travel to Greenwich Library to study because it feels "more like a museum" and they can be "more anonymous there."
- A participant's son who studies in the Marriott lobby, discovered while taking the SAT, because it is quiet.
- The new mother who walked into the children's room, found groups of nannies who already knew one another, and did not find a way in.
- The Osborn resident who uses her library every day, is "not a joiner," has no interest in committees, and is not connected to Rye.

Each of these is looking for space without having to participate in social activities or interactions with staff. As a result they might not be considered a user as they aren't engaged "normally."

The Challenge. Rye residents appreciate that everybody knows everybody. For the hidden non-social user this becomes a reason not to engage in/with activities that demonstrate use. The library may be one of very few places in town where a person can be engaged in a solitary way. This is actually a tension within the desire to see the library as a community hub or third space.

A question. How does the invisible user get recognized in meaningful ways?

DRAFT

Overarching Tensions

Tension	What sits on each side
How user is defined	Borrowing, attending, joining and bringing a child are what often gets counted but people are using the building in ways none of those capture
Connection and anonymity	Relational density is what people praise about Rye., For some teens, new parents, remote workers and non-joiners it is the barrier
Insider network and on-ramp	The library often appeals to people who are already engaged, what about those who aren't?
Affluence and access	What makes Rye desirable is what is narrowing it,
Whose input built this	The most connected residents are where most of our data comes from, what does that do to validity
Programming and space	Some groups want more to attend; others want somewhere to be

The last one deserves a note. Several asks in these sessions were for programs, and several were for the

What We Don't Know

Who we talked with. Participants were overwhelmingly long-tenured, high-volunteering, and female. The people described as excluded are not a part of most of our conversations

Non-users. We have very little from people who do not use the library at all. The Osborn residents and men at the book sale are the closest we came. The board raised this itself, asking how to attract survey responses from non-users in future. This is why defining user is of key importance

Anyone who answers in Spanish. No Spanish-language survey responses were received, and no Spanish-speaking participants were in the sessions. Is that because people who are Spanish speakers are service workers and don't spend time in Rye outside of the time they spend on their job?

Teens and men. Often we learned about these groups from parents and spouses. What about each group's own voice?

Questions

Commented [3]: We can build this out

- What would we have to start counting to see the people who use the building without borrowing or attending?
- Is the daytime population of Rye different now than the commuting assumption behind our scheduling debate?

DRAFT

Rye Free Reading Room

Mission Moments

Make More Possible by making a donation to the Annual Campaign! This year, your continued support would make even more possible. Your gift expands the collection of books and ebooks, increases programs to engage and inspire, offers more technology to expand access, and creates more ways for people to learn and gather together.

Donate now at www.ryelibrary.org/friend

Notable Activities

November 2nd – 6 pm
Graphic Novel Book Club
Calling all Graphic Novel lovers! This book club will meet monthly to read and discuss graphic novels together. Come chat, eat a snack, and do an activity inspired by each month's book. This book club is for kids in 3rd - 5th grade. Registration is required.

November 8th – 3 pm
This Land is Your Land by Beverly Gage
Join Dr. Beverly Gage, the Pulitzer Prize-winning historian, on a journey to the places where history happened. From sea to shining sea, take an unconventional road trip and explore the ways in which we remember ourselves and our country.

November 21 – 10:30 am
Mandarin Storytime
Join us for an inclusive storytime that welcomes tots and preschoolers of all language backgrounds. For Chinese speakers, this is gentle reinforcement of their language in a fun environment and a chance to interact with other Chinese speakers. For non-Chinese speakers this is an opportunity to explore new words, new cultural traditions, and more.

December 19th – 4 pm
Friends of the Library Holiday Open House
Join us for an afternoon of wintery fun for all ages! Grab a seat by the roaring fire, make a festive craft, decorate a cardboard gingerbread house, and listen to a beautiful performance of classic songs by The Jolly Holidays Carolers. Before the afternoon ends, cozy up with a cup of cocoa while enjoying a special storytime with Ms. Elizabeth.