



JOHNSON CREEK
— PUBLIC LIBRARY —

**JOHNSON
CREEK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY
STRATEGIC
PLAN**

2026-2030

Jodi Kessel Szpizar
Library Director

INTRODUCTION

The Johnson Creek Public Library (JCPL) is a very well-regarded and well-used community resource that provides highly valued services to the public. It is located within Johnson Creek, a village of 3,420 in Jefferson County in southern Wisconsin. The library's serve population of 5,474 residents, that includes nearby communities such as Farmington, Aztalan, the Town of Watertown, and other surrounding areas.

This strategic plan reflects our library's commitment to evolving community needs, expanding equitable access, and strengthening service excellence. It was developed based on survey insights, annual report data, and direct feedback from library users and non-users.

GOVERNANCE

Wisconsin Statute § 43.54 (1) (a) stipulates a Board of Trustees for the Johnson Creek Public Library to be between five and seven members. Four (4) of whom are appointed by the Village Board President with approval by the Village Board representing at least one (1) rural resident and one (1) village board representative, one trustee appointed by Jefferson County (began in 2025), and one (1) trustee of whom is appointed by the Superintendent of the Johnson Creek School District.

FACILITY

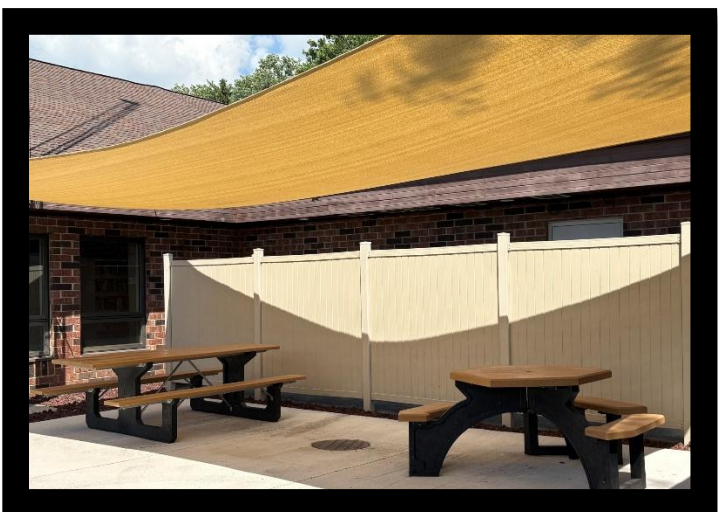
The Johnson Creek Public Library moved into its present building in 1991. The building consists of the village hall on one side and the library on the other with a hallway and shared bathrooms connecting the two. The library proper is a 3,276 square foot open floor plan with separate sides for the children's area and adult area. The children's area underwent a remodel in August 2018 which included new carpeting, mobile book bins, DVD shelving, flexible seating options, and vibrant paint. The remodel was entirely paid for by donations and completed by the library staff and volunteers. Donated and second-hand shelving has been added to the adult side to expand collection space over the last three years.



In December 2021 the Adult area of the library was painted and new carpet laid. From the remodel of the Watertown Public Library, wooden shelves were obtained for a nominal fee of \$10 each. We were able to rearrange the shelving to do away with the plain metal shelving that wasn't uniform with the rest of the area. We also spaced shelving symmetrically for ADA access and one wide aisle back to the table and chairs by the windows. We turned the study room into an office for the director and added a second checkout station at the circulation desk. This was able to be accomplished with excess in our operating budget due to many months without a full-time director. In the 1st quarter of 2023 the meeting room was painted by staff and library board volunteers, and a chair rail was added by DPW to enhance the space and protect the walls. Professional mobile tables (two) and mesh chairs (four), all on wheels and all nesting were purchased in 2022 and 2023. The current library space doesn't address the lack of quiet reading and study areas, private work/meeting areas, or insufficient shelving for a growing collection.



In 2024, thanks to a grant from the Bridges Library System, a generous donation from Lyle Wuestenberg and J & L Tire, and the hard work of our DPW, we were able to install a covered patio outside the library's side door. Our Wi-Fi extends outside the building and reaches the neighboring park, providing additional seating and a comfortable space for visitors during the warmer months.



SYSTEM

On January 1, 2016, Johnson Creek Public Library joined the newly formed Bridges Library System, a product of the jointure of the libraries in Jefferson and Waukesha counties. With the strength of this 24-member library system, JCPL can offer its community access to millions of physical items via the shared Café Catalog, access to thousands of digital books and magazines via Overdrive (Libby), and access to valuable databases such as Ancestry.com and Consumer Reports. Beginning January 1, 2024, Udemy, an online, on-demand learning platform, was added to the system-wide databases. This resource provides access to thousands of courses across a wide range of subjects, supporting professional development and lifelong learning.

PERSONNEL

The library currently employs 5 (five) staff members. The library Director is a full-time employee and responsible for collection selection and management, marketing and promotion, library technology, circulation and all administrative duties. The Associate Cataloging Librarian is a 90% employee, 36 hours a week, who oversees collection maintenance, cataloging and processing all materials added to the collection, and Inter-Library Loan (ILL). The Associate Youth Librarian works 22 hours a week and is responsible for all Youth Programming. One Circulation Clerk I is employed for 21 hours per week and generally oversees the circulation desk. One Circulation Clerk I is employed between 12.25 and 14.25 hours per week and is responsible for working the circulation desk. All staff work the circulation desk weekly, including processing of the delivery bins and shelving.

PROCESS

In August of 2023 the Board approved the development of a new Strategic Plan under the guidance of WiLS, coordinator of the Small Library Strategic Planning Cohort. The process included sets of phases and activities designed to review existing data and information and to gather ideas and input from stakeholders, including staff, the board, and the community, to inform a strategic framework of goals, measurable objectives, and activities. WiLS also created and analyzed a Community Survey. The Bridges Library System covered the entire cost of this service, including preparing and analyzing the survey. We gathered nearly 150 responses from community members, including both users and non-users of the library itself.

Our Strategic Planning Committee included Jodi Kessel Szpiszar, Library Director; Mindy Markus, Library Staff Circulation Clerk; Bev Deppe, Village and Library Board Trustee; Phyllis Schicker, President of the Friends of the Johnson Creek Library; Miki Kooiker, resident and patron; Matthew Cheek, Innovation/Media Specialist for Johnson Creek Schools.

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Johnson Creek Public Library is to provide quality materials and services which fulfill educational, informational, cultural, and recreational needs of all citizens in the village of Johnson Creek and the surrounding area in an atmosphere that is welcoming, respectful, and businesslike.

From Community Survey

Community members' perception of the value of the library and its services was highly favorable with 99% agreeing that the library is important for the community.

Library Perception Statement	% Indicating Agreement
The library is important for the community.	99%
The library is important to me and/or my family.	98%
The library exposes people to new things.	95%
The library is effective at promoting literacy and a love of reading.	94%
The library is a place to relax.	93%
The library provides a safe space for people to spend time.	93%
The library helps people find information they can trust.	92%
The library creates learning opportunities for people of all ages.	92%

Strategic Goal #1 Expand Community Engagement and Outreach

Goal Statement

Increase community awareness, access, and usage of library services by strengthening communication channels, enhancing the library's visibility, and reaching underserved or infrequent users where they already seek information.

Key Objectives & Strategies

1. Strengthen Communication Channels – see Appendix A for Survey Graphs

- **Enhance Social Media Presence**

Develop and share targeted content that appeals to both current users and non-users across major platforms.

- Track Facebook and Instagram Insights

- **Improve Website User Experience**

Redesign navigation and visuals to make services, events, and resources easier to discover and use.

- Refresh the website layout – more user friendly

- **Update Physical Signage**

Install clear, engaging signage inside and outside the library that highlights current offerings and upcoming events.

- Have uniform designed signs with the new logo inside the library
 - Explore a new outdoor sign with the new logo
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2. Broaden Outreach Through Community Networks – see Appendix A for Survey Graphs

- **Partner with Local Institutions**

Collaborate with schools, municipalities, and other local entities to include library updates in their newsletters, bulletins, and announcements.

- Regularly get information to Johnson Creek Elementary School to share with families
- Form a connection to the JC Middle and High Schools to share information with families
- Form a connection with St. Peters Lutheran School in Helenville

- **Launch Homebound Outreach Service**

Deliver materials and provide remote support to residents unable to visit the library in person.

- Build the program with volunteers to launch the service

- **Leverage Community Platforms**

Utilize popular community channels like local Facebook groups and village newsletters to promote library resources.

- Regularly submit news for the monthly village newsletter
 - Work with JC Tourism to promote the library in both social media and the newspaper
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3. Promote Awareness of Underutilized Services

- **Run Targeted Campaigns**

Spotlight services such as online learning tools, subscription databases, and curbside pickup through email, social media, and print materials.

- Grow our new Instagram account
 - Increase traffic to our website, and Facebook
 - Increase open rate of Library email newsletter
 - Use patron testimonials and stories in promotion
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4. Increase Presence Beyond Library Walls

- **Offer Pop-Up Library Services**

Set up mobile outreach booths at community events, farmers markets, parks, and festivals.

- Continue to attend community events to share library information

- **Host Offsite Programming**

Deliver classes, Storytimes, and workshops in community spaces to engage residents where they already gather.

- Offer library programming offsite to engage more people
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Success Indicators

- ✓ **Increased traffic** to the library website and social media platforms
- ✓ **Growth in** email newsletter open rates and content engagement
- ✓ **Measurable rise** in usage of targeted services (e.g., online databases, curbside pickup)
- ✓ **More library card registrations** from underrepresented or previously inactive groups
- ✓ **Positive feedback** from surveys, focus groups, and outreach event participation

Strategic Goal #2 Enhance Library Space and Infrastructure – see Appendix B for Survey Graph

Comments from Community Survey

“I feel like our library is the “little library that could” as you all do SO much for the community given the building you have. I think you all would be able to do even greater things if you had a larger space to work in (not that you don't already do enough)!”

“The library is very limited by space. Would love to see it in a bigger building, with more books and resources at our disposal. It is the smallest library I have ever seen, and people would use it more if there was more space to relax with more resources.”

“My adult son would like places to hang out with friends in the community that isn't someone's house or a bar.”

“I consider the library to be very important to me, but unfortunately the Johnson Creek Library does not meet my needs... there is no silence, there is no place to concentrate and study. I understand that the building is small, but being inside it is like being packed, everything is very close together.”

Goal Statement

Improve the functionality, comfort, and accessibility of library facilities to better serve our growing and evolving community needs by addressing space limitations, enhancing environments for diverse users, and increasing access through expanded hours.

Key Objectives & Strategies

1. Explore Expansion Opportunities

- **Conduct a Feasibility Study**
 - **Identify Sustainable Funding Sources**
Seek out capital grants, fundraising campaigns, and municipal partnerships to support infrastructure growth.
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2. Create Flexible and Purposeful Spaces

- **Redesign the Interior Layout to serve multiple user types**
Feature quiet reading and work areas, private study and meeting rooms, collaborative creation spaces (e.g., makerspace or digital lab), and dedicated zones for teens and child-free adults to gather, work, or relax.
 - Be innovative in creating and utilizing current space
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3. Increase Access Through Expanded Hours - see *Appendix C for Survey Graph*

Comments from Community Survey

“I appreciate the extended hours on Thursdays so I can stop in after work.”

“I would really love it if our library could expand its hours and be open on more evenings (love the Thursday evening hours!) and extend their open hours during the weekend. The hours services are available currently are really a limiting factor for usage.”

“We would love more weekend hours to relax and participate in activities or check out materials when we're off work and school!”

- **Evaluate Community Demand**
Analyze library traffic and community feedback to determine preferred extended hours.
 - Periodically survey patrons and community members on preferred extended hours

- **Pilot Evening and Weekend Access**

Implement trial schedules and collect feedback to shape long-term access improvements.

- Track usage of library through visitor traffic, check outs and meeting/study room use during extended hours

Success Indicators

- ✓ **Feasibility study completed**, with space planning and funding options identified.
- ✓ **Increased user satisfaction** (comfort, noise levels, workspace availability – measured via surveys).
- ✓ **Growth in usage** of study rooms, teen/adult zones, and collaborative spaces.
- ✓ **Higher attendance** and engagement during extended evening and weekend hours.

Strategic Goal #3 Enhance Community-Driven Services and Improve Digital Access & Literacy

Goal Statement

Deliver responsive, inclusive, and skill-building services by aligning programs with community interests, expanding partnerships, and improving access to and understanding of digital resources.

1. Tailor Programs to Community Interests

- **Gather ongoing input**

Conduct surveys, add suggestion boxes, and ask for program feedback to identify high-interest topics

 - Implement feedback forms for the end of every program
- **Prioritize adult, family, and intergenerational programming**
 - Partner with the Friends of the JC Library for events
 - Address gaps in current offerings and broaden audience appeal
 - Use intergenerational and community events
 - Host parent-child workshops, bilingual Storytimes, and teen-parent tech nights

2. Strengthen School and Community Partnerships Coordinate with local schools

- **Align library resources with curricular needs and student interests**
 - Get in front of the Johnson Creek School teachers to talk about the library
 - Develop relationships with individual teachers to support their classroom needs

- **Partner with community organizations**
 - Co-host events, cross-promote services at community centers or places of worship to reach new users.
 - **Explore shared-use initiatives**

Such as lending tech tools, learning kits, or event space.

 - Find out what tools, kits etc. would be used in the community
 - Partner with Friends of the JC Library to add those items to the collection
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3. Promote Digital Access, Literacy and Confidence

- **Promote awareness of existing digital offerings**
 - **Offer workshops and one-on-one assistance**

Use eBooks, databases, streaming platforms, and online learning tools.
 - **Develop basic and advanced digital literacy classes**

Tailor to different user groups (e.g., seniors, job seekers, teens).
 - **Encourage use of digital resources**

Integrate them into in-person programs and displays.
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4. Use Data to Drive Decisions and Advocate for Resources

- **Track and analyze usage metrics**

Such as circulation per cardholder, program attendance, digital resource use, and feedback on interest alignment
 - **Use data insights**

To justify programming shifts, space reallocation, or budget requests.
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Success Indicators:

- ✓ **Increased attendance** in skill-based and intergenerational programs.
- ✓ **Growth in digital resource usage**, especially among current non-users.
- ✓ **Expanded collaboration** with schools and community groups (measured by co-sponsored events, shared initiatives).

✔ **Improved digital literacy** scores through pre/post program evaluations or participant feedback.

✔ **Clear, data-backed reporting** to stakeholders supporting program and service development.

Strategic Goal #4 Grow and Diversify Library Membership and Usage

Goal Statement

Increase library membership and active usage by engaging underrepresented groups, expanding outreach to non-residents, enhancing the relevance of programs and services, and aligning budget priorities to support long-term growth.

Key Objectives & Strategies

1. Increase Library Cardholders and Broaden Reach to infrequent users

- **Launch targeted outreach campaigns**
Focus on true non-residents (TNRs) to boost county-level funding, underserved populations, including Hispanic/Latino residents, men, and young adults without children
 - **Use demographic and usage data**
Shape programs and marketing strategies aimed at lesser-engaged groups.
 - **Offer flexible and inclusive scheduling**
Including evening and weekend programs, and multilingual content and support
 - **Promote convenient, high-impact services**
Such as curbside pickup, online learning, and job search assistance
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2. Align Budget to Support Usage Growth

- **Advocate for an increase in materials spending**
Advocate for both digital and physical spending, targeting a healthier balance compared to staffing.
 - **Pursue additional support**
Pursue funding from grants, Friends of the Library fundraising, and county funding linked to TNR usage
 - **Ensure growth in materials budget does not compromise core operations.**
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Success Indicators

- ✓ **Growth in total cardholders**, especially among TNRs and underrepresented populations
- ✓ **Increased attendance** at programs tailored to men, young adults, and Hispanic/Latino users
- ✓ **Higher satisfaction levels** among new or returning users (tracked via surveys and usage patterns)
- ✓ **Expanded materials budget** and improved circulation per dollar spent
- ✓ **Proven link** between TNR growth and increased county funding support

Strategic Goal #5 Sustain High Service Quality and Staff Recognition

Goal Statement

Preserve and enhance the library's reputation for exceptional service by continually improving the user experience, recognizing and supporting staff excellence, and ensuring consistent operational performance.

Key Objectives & Strategies

1. Maintain High User Satisfaction

- **Ensure friendly, consistent, and knowledgeable service**
Educate staff with best practices and customer service training
 - **Conduct regular patron satisfaction surveys**
Regularly survey patrons to measure experience and identify areas for improvement.
 - **Use patron feedback**
Use the feedback to guide service adjustments, and celebrate staff and service successes
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2. Recognize and Retain Exceptional Staff

- **Launch a formal staff recognition program**
Acknowledge staff who show outstanding service, creativity and innovation, and initiative and teamwork
- **Offer ongoing professional development**
Offer staff training workshops, conference participation, and peer learning sessions
 - All staff will have a minimum of two continuing education opportunities a year
 - Advocate for time and money for additional continuing education including conferences
- **Foster a culture of open communication and collaboration**
Find ways to strengthen morale and alignment with strategic goals.

3. Enhance Operational and Technical Reliability

- **Perform routine audits**

Check-in/check-out and circulation processes to identify inconsistencies or inefficiencies.

- Routinely review and update staff on procedures

- **Ensure transparent, accurate, and timely user account management**

To maintain quality control review hold notifications, overdue reminders, and billing communications

- **Invest in technology improvements**

- Meet at least once a year with Information Technology company to review and evaluate IT coverage and security
 - Budget to stay up to date with IT security and to follow computer/laptop replacement schedule
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Success Indicators

- ✓ **User satisfaction** ratings remain above 95% across all core services
- ✓ **Increased participation** in staff training and recognition programs
- ✓ **Fewer user complaints** related to system or procedural issues
- ✓ **Improved circulation** performance (fewer missed returns, more accurate checkouts)
- ✓ **Positive internal feedback** regarding workplace morale, communication, and teamwork

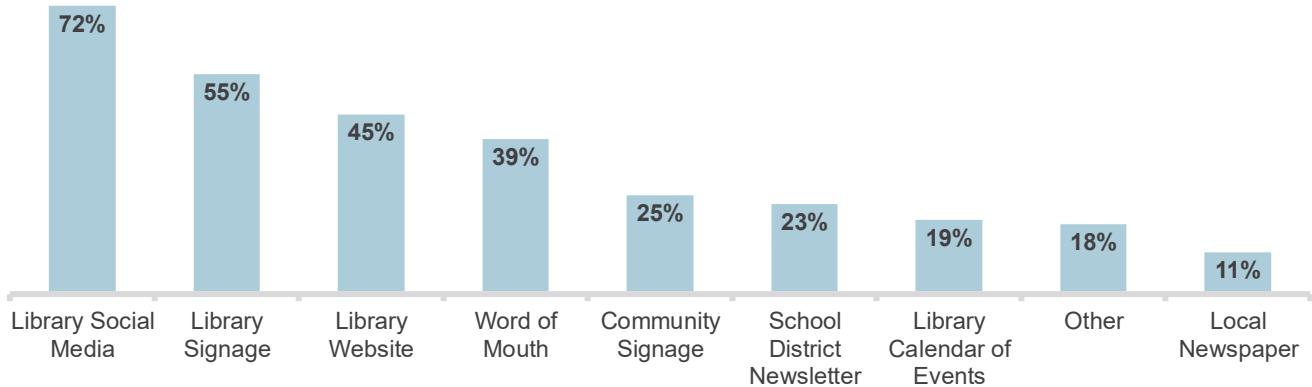
Conclusion

This plan positions Johnson Creek Public Library to continue as a vital, responsive, and inclusive institution. By focusing on both outward community impact and inward service quality, we will remain a cornerstone of learning, connection, and opportunity for all residents.

Appendix A

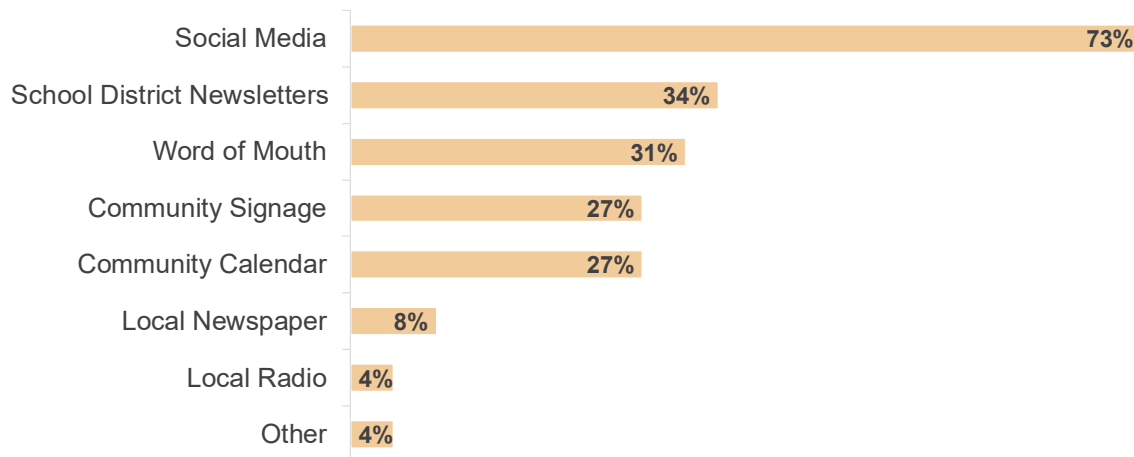
Regular Users of Johnson Creek Public Library find out about events and activities at the library most frequently through the library's social media presence and signage in the library.

Which of the following are ways that you learn about activities, programs, or news about the library? (Check all that apply.)



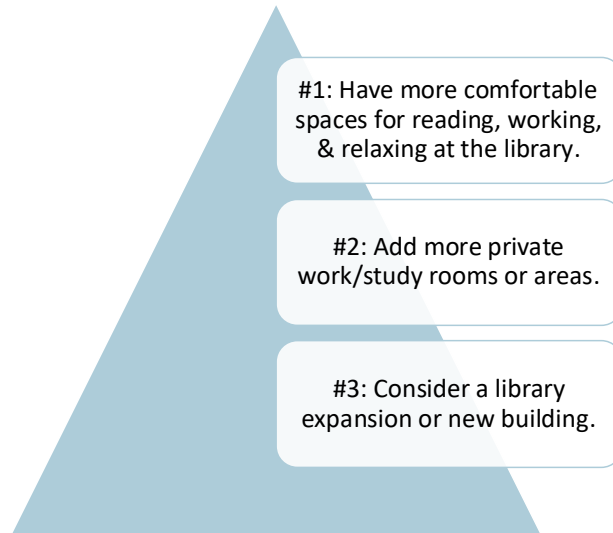
Infrequent and Never Library Users find out about community events and activities through a variety of channels, with social media and school district communications being the most common.

How do you learn about events and activities happening in and around the community? (Check all that apply.)

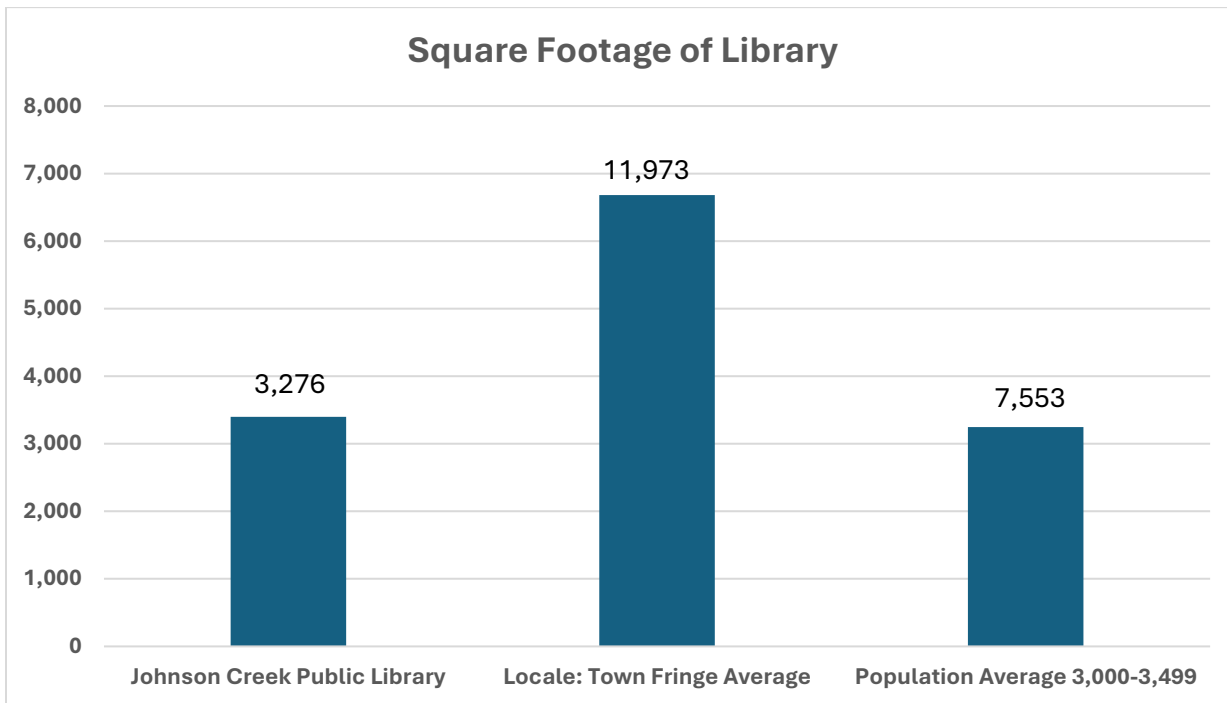


Appendix B

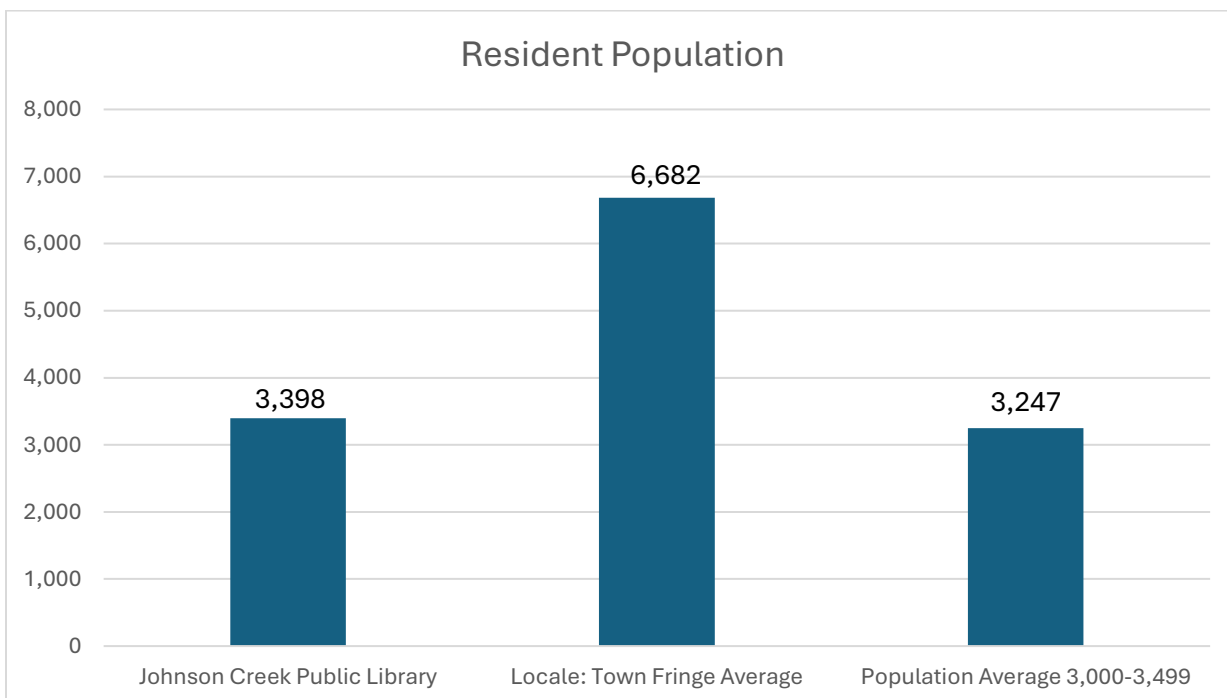
Community members were asked to rank their priorities for potential changes to the physical spaces of Johnson Creek Public Library's facility. Having more comfortable spaces for reading, working, and relaxing at the library was the top ranked item.



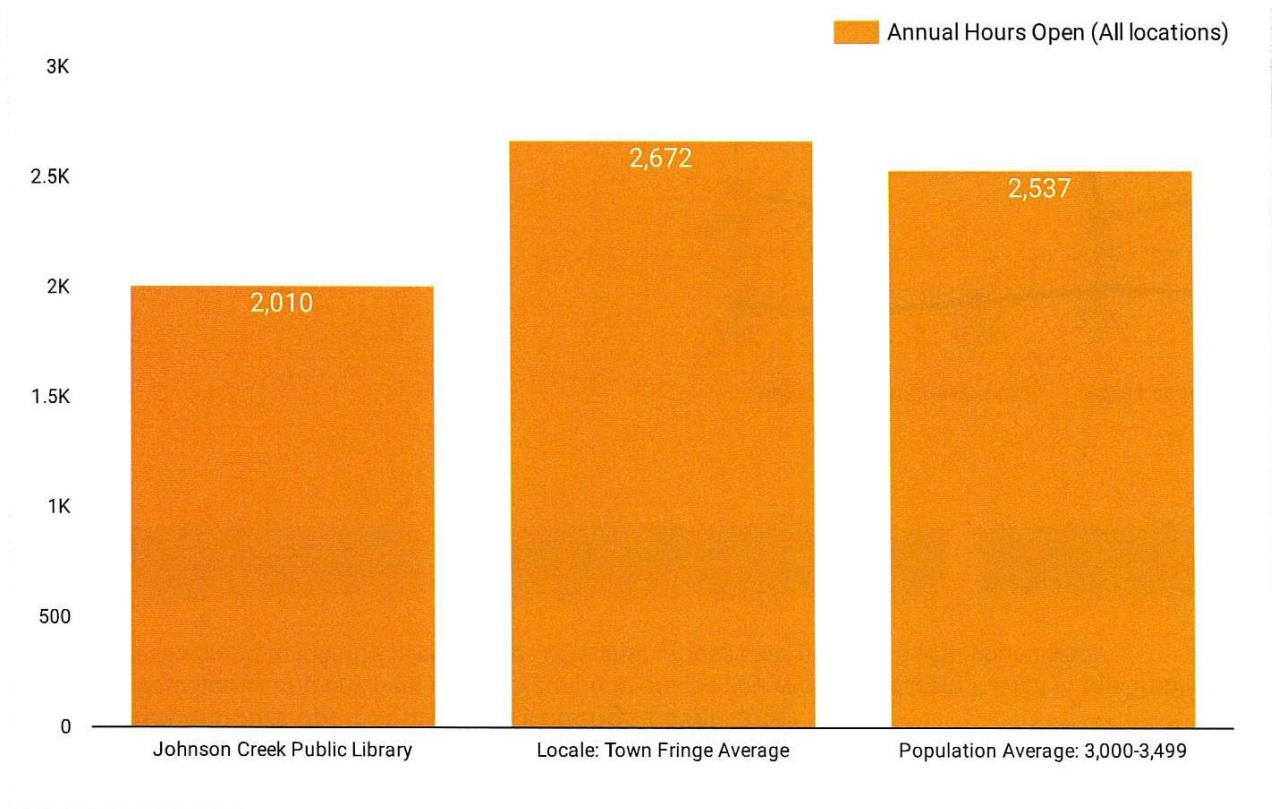
Appendix B



Public Library	Square Feet per Resident	Square Feet per Extended County Population	Square Feet per Cardholder
Johnson Creek Public Library	1.0	0.7	2.0
Locale: Town Fringe Average	1.8	1.0	2.6
Population Average 3,000-3,499	2.3	0.9	3.0



Appendix C



Note: Open hours increased by two hours a week beginning in September 2023

Annual Hours for 2024 were 2,080 (40 hours a week)

Open hours are scheduled to increase by another two hours a week in October 2025, which will bring weekly hours open to a total of 42, and annual hours to 2,184.