MLPL
MUSKOKA LAKES
PUBLIC LIBRARY

2026 SERVICE AND SPACE REVIEW SURVEY

What We Heard

A snapshot of key takeaways from the community survey

314
people responded
June – September 2026

95%
rate the library **Excellent** (61%) or **Good** (34%)

Asked: Overall, how would you rate MLPL?

83%
have **used MLPL**, in person or online, in the last two years

Asked: Visited a branch or used online services in the last two years?

21% ROOM TO GROW
want Port Carling **open Mondays in summer**, the top request

Asked: Which hours change would help most?

Which best describes your connection to the Township?

Of those who don't live here permanently, 52% call the GTA home.

regular vacationers · other (6%) · visiting (3%)

Services used in the last year

Borrowed materials	**81%**
Browsed in the library	58%
Got help from staff	55%
Attended a program or event	40%
Used Wi-Fi	28%
Library of Things	17%
Business services	16%

Could check more than one.

How people find out about the library

Email newsletter	**63%**
Library website	40%
Posters in the library	33%
Friends and family	29%
Library staff	25%
Facebook	15%
Township communications	11%

Could check more than one.

MLPL's highest priority for the next five years

Expand collections	**24%**
Expand programs	17%
Can't think of any	17%
Increase hours	14%
Expand online services	10%
Community gathering space	7%
Expand facilities	6%
Technology and makerspace	5%

What "collections" means here: comments asked for new titles, more copies of popular ones, physical books (not just e-books), youth and teen materials, DVDs, audiobooks, and more for Bala. One choice each.

Services people did NOT know about

Ancestry	**57%**
Creativebug	54%
Home delivery	52%
Makerspace	47%
Kanopy (films)	45%
Local history	37%
Seed library	37%
Library of Things	34%

Could check more than one. Top answers shown. 13% knew about all of them.

Preferred ways to fund improvements

Grants and government funding opportunities	**52%**
Increased municipal investment	32%
Donations, fundraising	32%
Sponsorships	27%
Partnerships	12%
User fees	7%
Reallocate existing funds	4%
No added spending	4%

Up to two choices.

Online services

52%
have used an MLPL online service

89%
of users rate them Excellent or Good

Most used: website (81%), catalogue (65%), holds (57%), Libby (56%).

Not using the library? For those who hadn't used it in two years, the top barrier was not knowing what it offers (33%).

Port Carling

38%

visit Port Carling **several times a month**

Asked: How often do you visit the Port Carling branch?

88%

rate the **collection** Good

Asked: How would you rate Port Carling: collections?

63% ROOM TO GROW

chose a **change to hours** that would increase their use; 37% would keep them as is

Asked: What change to Port Carling's hours would most increase your use?

How people rate the Port Carling branch

WHAT IS WORKING

- **Staff, a welcoming feel, the layout and the collection:** each rated Good by 87% or more.
- **Programs:** 70% rated ongoing programs Good; most of the rest answered "don't know". Several comments praised how many programs there are for a branch this size.
- **Hours suit many:** retirees and many seasonal users said the current hours work well for them. Requests for change came mostly from working people and families.
- **Built on a strong base:** many said the branch is already very good. Their ideas are about room to grow, not fixing problems.

ROOM TO GROW

- **Hours:** 27% rated days and hours Adequate, more than any other item, and 21% said opening Mondays in summer would most increase their use. Comments asked for Sundays, longer Saturdays and later evenings, mainly so working people and families can visit.
- **Space:** people asked for more quiet and private work space, larger program space and more bookable rooms. Some said programs felt crowded.
- **Awareness:** about half or more answered "don't know" for the makerspace (74%), computers (50%) and meeting rooms (49%), which usually means they haven't tried them.

Which change to hours would help most?

Happy as they are	**37%**
Mondays in summer	**21%**
Sundays in summer	**12%**
Mondays year-round	**11%**
Sundays year-round	**9%**
More evening hours	**6%**
Longer Saturdays	**3%**

Highest priority only. Port Carling is open 35 hours a week, Tuesday to Saturday.

What would get you to visit more often?

Coffee shop	**36%**
Longer hours	**26%**
Can't think of anything	**25%**
More programs	**18%**
Expanded collection	**13%**
More community events	**9%**
Child care	**6%**

Up to three choices. Top answers shown.

> "A beautiful building with a great staff"

> "Would love if library was also open Monday in the summer but understand staff need time off too."

Source: 2026 Service and Space Review Survey, questions 17 and 23 to 29.

Bala

71%

rate Bala a **welcoming, comfortable** space (Good)

Asked: How would you rate Bala: feeling of welcome and comfort?

26%

say a **larger branch** would bring them in more often, the top answer

Asked: What could Bala do to convince you to visit more often?

33% ROOM TO GROW

rate **quiet space** as needing improvement, more than any other area

Asked: How would you rate Bala: availability of quiet space?

How people rate the Bala branch

WHAT IS WORKING

- **Staff:** the three staff questions were Bala's highest-rated.
- **Doing a lot with a little:** a repeated theme in the comments.
- **New hours noticed:** several comments said this year's expanded hours are an improvement.
- **Valued locally:** comments praised having a library in Bala for families and asked to keep the branch open.

ROOM TO GROW

- **Space:** quiet space drew the most "needs improvement" ratings (33%), then meeting room space (22%). Comments describe it as very small, with nowhere to sit or work.
- **Hours:** 29% rated days and hours "needs improvement". Comments asked for more days open and the same hours each day, so they are easier to remember.
- **Collection:** 46% rated it Adequate. People asked for more and newer books and more variety on Bala's own shelves.
- **Programs:** more for children aged 5 to 13 (some felt most are in Port Carling), more regular programs and a book club.

Which change to hours would help most?

Happy as they are	**29%**
Wednesdays year-round	11%
Wednesdays in summer	11%
Saturdays year-round	11%
More evening hours	11%
Fridays in summer	8%
Sundays in summer	8%
Fridays year-round	3%

Highest priority only.

What would get you to visit more often?

Larger library branch	**26%**
Coffee shop	23%
Longer hours	23%
Expanded collection	23%
Can't think of anything	21%
More programs	21%
More seating or lounge	12%

Up to three choices. Top answers shown.

> "It's a very small library, space and collection. But it's great that we even have a library."

> "Appreciate the expanded days open this year."

Source: 2026 Service and Space Review Survey, questions 30 to 36.

In their words

> **"Thank you for your investment into the community! The library is such an important part of our summer!"**

A VALUED COMMUNITY PLACE

"The Port Carling library is an amazing space - keep it active please. The kids and seniors especially need it."

A VALUED COMMUNITY PLACE

"When I am in Port Carling, I love stopping in to see the friendly faces and love the open, inviting atmosphere."

A VALUED COMMUNITY PLACE

"The Port Carling library and its staff are really excellent. I love visiting!"

A VALUED COMMUNITY PLACE

"Great library. Good staff. Although only a few visits a year, we are always amazed at what we check out. Thanks!"

BALA

"I've been using the library for my whole life. The Bala staff are always wonderful"

BALA

"I selected 'adequate' due to the size and space available at the Bala branch. Considering this, I feel it is serving the community as best it can."

HOURS AND ACCESS

"Open on Sundays and Mondays in summer months would be most welcome!"

HOURS AND ACCESS

"I always seem to miss events I want to attend or cannot attend them due to a 8-5 job."

SERVICES

"Very much enjoy the Yoto card borrowing for my kids, we don't have that at our home library and it's a great offering."

SERVICES

"Huge fans of MLPL, you have resources unlike any other libraries I've enjoyed..."

A VALUED COMMUNITY PLACE

"Love what you guys do! Thanks!"

> **"Grateful to have the library, the strength of a library directly impacts the community. The more available, accessible, the better."**

Comments from survey respondents, quoted as written, spelling errors edited. Some are shortened (...).