

Engage.

Mercer Island Library
2010 Community Study



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COMMUNITY OVERVIEW

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mercer Island is a true island community consisting of high quality residential areas, competitive schools, a blossoming downtown, a plethora of preserved parks and open space, as well as miles of developed shoreline. Located in Lake Washington, and connected to Seattle and the Eastside by the I-90 bridge, the small community of Mercer Island has a population of 24,371. The Island was first settled in the 19th century and since the second settler arrived, there has been tension between long-term residents and new arrivals.

When Mercer Island first incorporated in 1960, it had two municipalities — the city and the township. In 1970, both governments merged to form the City of Mercer Island. Recent construction has resulted in a downtown business core with mixed use buildings that include residential units.

Island residents are highly engaged in community and civic affairs. They have significantly higher education and income levels than the median for King County. Residents are also significantly less diverse — racially and economically — than the rest of King County.

About 18% of residents are 65 and older, 35% are between 45 to 64 and 24% are under the age of 18. This translates into a community with a large number of retirees, as well as families. Population growth estimates project that the area population will increase to more than 26,000 by 2040, driven by an increase in the number of families with children moving to the Island.

The Mercer Island School District has the highest WASL scores in the state. Mercer Island High has a graduation rate of 96% with 96% of graduates going on to college. While the students of Mercer Island come from affluent backgrounds, a University of Washington Study demonstrated that they more likely to suffer from depression, anxiety and to engage in high risk behaviors.

The community values the youth. The Parks and Recreation Department has formed a recreation Round Table, in which the library participates, to better coordinate youth services on the Island. Additionally, the Mercer Island Girls and Boys Club is building a new facility in partnership with the Mercer Island School District.

HISTORY OF MERCER ISLAND

Roughly five miles long and two miles across at its widest point, Mercer Island lies at the southern end of Lake Washington. The Island owes its existence and elongated shape to the north-south movement of a prehistoric ice flow where it first appeared as glacial moraine. As the ice withdrew, the Island was left in a huge lake, Lake Russell, reaching south towards

present-day Tacoma. Silt deposits gradually filled the narrower portion of the valley and the Island remained in what is now Lake Washington. Vegetation grew until dense woods and wildlife provided plentiful resources for hunters and gatherers who could reach the Island. While these ancient forests are now gone, Mercer Island retained much of the green and woody character.

Until the 19th century the Island remained uninhabited, visited only by local Native Americans in their canoes and later by white pioneers who rowed across from Seattle. The Island was originally named Mercer's Island in 1860 for Seattle pioneer Thomas Mercer who often rowed there to hunt and fish.

Mercer's Island was sparsely settled until 1889 when C.C. Calkins built a resort in the settlement known as East Seattle, which included a ferry dock. In 1890, a small ferry service began regular trips from Seattle, encouraging wealthy Seattleites to establish summer homes on the Island. More permanent residents arrived and soon a tiny one-room school, a church and a post office were built. Not until the mid-1940s was there a small library with books supplied by the King County Library System (KCLS).

Two events had a major impact on the Island's growth: the building of the Mercer Island Floating Bridge in 1940 and the Shorewood Apartments in 1949. Discussion of building a bridge from Seattle to Mercer Island began in 1928 when the Seattle City Council first proposed the idea, but the Mercer Island Floating bridge didn't officially open until July 2, 1940. Within the next decade the population tripled and school enrollment surged. Already families were attracted by the fine reputation of Mercer Island schools. Between 1940 and 1960 the Island's population grew from 1,200 to 12,000.

As demand for public services increased, it became clear that the Island needed some form of local government. Many citizens formed clubs, organizations and boards to exert influence on Island affairs. There was much campaigning and fierce debate and by the end of 1960 Mercer Island had two incorporated bodies side-by-side: the city and the township. Both had access to the library, but it wasn't until May 1970 when the two governing bodies came together as the City of Mercer Island. This tradition of citizen involvement has lasted through the years. Activists raise tough questions at school board and city council meetings, and many residents are energetically involved in a range of community issues.

During the last decade Mercer Islanders have worked hard to preserve the Island's open space, vegetation and small town character, even as new families and businesses continue to move to the Island. The north end of the Island has seen the development of a downtown core that hosts many businesses and 800 units of housing. This has resulted in more people commuting to Mercer Island for jobs than ever before.

HISTORY OF THE MERCER ISLAND LIBRARY

The Mercer Island Library opened on January 11, 1945 through the efforts of the Preschool, PTA and the South Mercer Island Community Club. KCLS provided books and Island resident Mrs. Geoffrey Lavendar was the first librarian. The library, a room in the Guild Hall of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church, was too small from the start, but it had certain advantages. It was located across the street from the school and it was cheap to operate. Light was \$1 a month, heat less than \$100 a year and rent was free.

Land was acquired for the library that had been donated for educational purposes by Vitus Schmid. A new 1,200-square-foot building with a book capacity of 10,000 volumes opened in 1955 on the corner of 88th and 44th Avenue SE.

Rapid growth of the Island's population soon caused a need for library expansion. The Library Board began a \$25,000 fundraising campaign and reached its goal at the same time the City of Mercer Island was incorporated. On October 17, 1962, a 1,920-square-foot addition was dedicated and the Library Board presented the deed to the City. As advised by the Library Board, the city council then voted to maintain KCLS services by contract. The 24-member Library Board was replaced by a seven-member Library Advisory Board.

In 1966, the City acquired a 120x300 foot piece of property directly adjoining the southern boundary of the library lot. A 5,422-square-foot expansion was completed in 1969, funded by local council bonds, city revenues, library services and Construction Act monies.

By the mid-1980s, the building had reached its capacity. The Library Advisory Board received funds from the City for a study of a new library building on the present site. The architect was selected and plans were drawn for a 14,600-square-foot library. A library bond committee was formed in 1989 to encourage passage of a \$2.18 million measure. The measure passed in November with a 66% "yes" vote and construction was under way in the spring of the following year. The library moved to temporary quarters in the business district next to the liquor store in April 1990 while the new library was being built. The new facility opened in April 1991. The 1990s saw many new technologies introduced to KCLS libraries. Mercer Island was the first to have Internet computers installed and available to the public. In 1993, voters opted to annex to KCLS with an 88% approval rate.

During the past decade, the Mercer Island Library has remained a vibrant part of the local community. Door counts and circulation continue to increase. In the mornings, small children fill the library after Story Time, seniors take computer classes and adults work on our public computers or their own laptops. In the afternoons students from nearby schools flock to the library, often filling every seat in the building as they work with tutors, do homework, attend programs and hang out with their friends. During the evenings, busy Islanders come in to pick up holds or attend a community meetings.

MERCER ISLAND TODAY

GEOGRAPHY

The City of Mercer Island is surrounded by the second largest lake in Washington. Accessible by the I-90 floating bridge, this small community retains its unique identity despite its close proximity to the large metropolises of Seattle and Bellevue. The total land area is 6.38-square-miles with a population density of 3,786 people per square mile. At its highest point, Mercer Island rises 338 feet above sea level. Steep cliffs and beaches encompass the island making the topography varied and dramatic.

TRANSPORTATION

The main arterials in the community are I-90 crossing east and west across north Mercer Island, Island Crest Way running north and south through the center of the Island, and East and West Mercer Way which circles the perimeter of the Island providing spectacular glimpses of the water views that make this such a desirable residential community. The library is located in a quiet neighborhood in the center of the Island, two blocks off Island Crest Way.

Mercer Island values the semi-rural roots of its community and works hard to keep traffic congestion to a minimum. The City builds and maintains walking paths, bike routes and horse trails to encourage residents to walk, run, bicycle and explore the Island's quiet, peaceful neighborhoods. In 1996, the City developed a plan which identified specific pedestrian, bicycle, and trail projects that would be funded and implemented during the next 20 years.

Mercer Island is served by 12 Metro and two Sound Transit bus routes. The recently expanded Park and Ride garage provides 450 parking stalls on two levels, increasing the capacity of the previous lot by about 200 stalls. Bicycling is also a popular alternative transportation option for Mercer Island residents. I-90 bike lanes provide easy and safe access to Seattle and Bellevue, connecting to bike routes all across King County.

DEMOGRAPHICS

According to a 2009 Census estimate, Mercer Island's population growth has increased by only 2,335 people since 2000. The slower population growth can be explained partly by the physical limitations of space on the Island.

The 2000 Census indicated that 84.1% of Mercer Island residents are Caucasian, while Asian-Americans comprised the second largest group at 11.9%. Of those who identified as Asian-American, 5.7% of the population were of Chinese descent and 2.6% were of Japanese descent. Recent estimates indicate a slight increase in diversity. In 2009, the Caucasian population had decreased by 3.8%, while the Asian-American population increased by an estimated 3.0% and the Hispanic population had grown by 0.7%.

In 2000, about 14.7% of Mercer Island residents spoke languages other than English at home. Of those, 3.9% spoke Chinese, 1.7% spoke Japanese, 1.2% spoke Korean, 1.2% spoke Spanish. Other Indo-European languages accounted for 5.6% of the total (2000 Census).

The average age of the Mercer Island population was 44.3 years-old in 2000. The 2009 average age estimates rose to 47.6 years (versus a King County average of 36 years in 2008). The senior community comprises 18% of total residency, while Baby Boomers hold the majority at 35%. Nearly a quarter of the Island's population is under the age of 18.

RELIGION

Religion plays an important part in the lives of many Mercer Island residents. An estimated 37.3% of Mercer Island residents have an affiliation with a religious institution, of which Catholics comprise 43%, other Christian denominations account for 11% and other religions, including Judaism, account for 45%. According to a rough estimate from the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, about 1,000 people practice Judaism on Mercer Island. Private education options on the Island include St. Monica Catholic School and Northwest Yeshiva High School.

INCOME

Mercer Island is an affluent community. The median household income on Mercer Island in 2008 was \$111,706, which was almost double the median King County household income of \$65,580 for that same year.

The median income of Mercer Island households has been estimated as high as \$176,841 in 2008. Nearly 25% of Mercer Island residents earn household incomes exceeding \$200,000 per year. From these estimates, 75% of the households received earnings and 22% received retirement income other than Social Security. About 34% of the households received Social Security. The average income from Social Security was \$18,516. These income sources are not mutually exclusive; that is, some households received income from more than one source.

Not surprisingly, the percentage of people living below the poverty line on Mercer Island was less than half that in King County at about 3%. About 1% of related children under the age of 18 were below the poverty level, compared with 6% of people 65 years old and older. About 1% of all families, and 4% of families with a female householder and no husband present, had incomes below the poverty level.

While Mercer Island residents earn more than average in comparison to the rest of King County, they have not been immune to the economic downturn. Mercer Island residents experienced a dramatic decrease in home values. In the second quarter of 2008, the median home value exceeded \$1,000,000. During the fourth quarter of 2009, the median value plummeted to less than \$700,000. The number of home sales has also decreased.

HOUSING

Mercer Island is primarily a single-family residential community ranging from modest ranch-style homes to expensive waterfront mansions. Located on the north end of the Island, the Town Center has the highest concentration of townhomes, condos and apartments. Of the 9,700 housing units, 80% are owner occupied with many having four bedrooms or more.

Mercer Island strives to keep the small town feeling of its neighborhoods that have helped make it one of Washington's most desirable communities. Residents have expressed concern about the scale of newer homes being built. In response, the City of Mercer Island modified the Mercer Island Unified Land Development Code to require that total residential floor area not exceed 45% of the home's lot size.

The median value of housing reveals that single family homes on Mercer Island are significantly more expensive than the rest of King County. In 2010, the median price for a single family home on Mercer Island is \$743,800 (versus \$375,000 in King County). The City is concerned that a lack of affordability may adversely affect those that would like to work and live on the Island. As a response Mercer Island, along with King County and 11 other eastside cities, created A Regional Coalition for Housing (ARCH) to provide affordable housing options for low to moderate income households in east King County. Currently ARCH lists one low-income senior apartment complex on Mercer Island that has waitlist longer than a year.

BUSINESS

The Mercer Island downtown has undergone many changes in the past few years. It has expanded with the creation of several mixed use buildings with businesses below and residences above. These changes are the biggest the downtown area has seen since the 1970s. Revitalization efforts initiated in 1993, to create a desirable and accessible downtown for Mercer Island residents, are now bearing fruit.

Six redevelopment projects are creating new retail and office spaces with the addition of about 800 apartments, condominiums and senior living units to the Town Center. The addition of underground parking and public amenities like courtyards, plazas, public art and expanded landscaping are making the downtown an attractive place to live, shop and work. New restaurants and shops add a new vitality and vibrancy. Good design, sound economic development, and a stable sales and property tax base are community-wide benefits brought about by the redevelopment of the Town Center.

While most of the business activity on the Island is in the Town Center on the north end, there is also a newly redeveloped shopping center serving the south end of the Island. Restaurants and services draw people from the entire Island. The Mercer Island Chamber of Commerce unites Island businesses and advocates on their behalf.

EMPLOYMENT

Mercer Island's most common occupations include: management, professional and related (69%); sales and office (21%); service (6%); production, transportation and material moving (2%); and construction, extraction, maintenance and repair (1%). About 77% of the people employed were private wage and salary workers, 11% were federal, state, or local government workers, and 12% were self-employed in small unincorporated businesses.

Unemployment in the Puget Sound area rose to 9.1% in December 2009 versus only 8% on Mercer Island. The majority of Mercer Island residents work off-Island and have an average commute time of 21.9 minutes.

During the past few years, the leading industries of employment on Mercer Island were professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management services (26%), followed by educational services, health care, and social assistance (19%). Finance, insurance and real estate round-out the top three (12%).

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Mercer Island is rich in recreation, art, culture and volunteerism, with more than 25 clubs and organizations. The Mercer Island Library is an integral part of a coalition of service organizations and activity centers, including the Community Center at Mercer View, Mercer Island Parks and Recreation, Stroum Jewish Community Center, Boys & Girls Club and Youth Theatre Northwest.

Mercer Island boasts a handful of organizations that offer support including Mercer Island Youth and Family Services which provides counseling, family support, food pantry and senior outreach to more than 4,000 families. The Senior Foundation supports programs that enhance the safety and well being of the nearly 4,000 seniors on Mercer Island. The Community Fund serves as a channel for social services, youth group activities and art and music programs.

The community has a history of strong support for art and cultural activities. The Mercer Island Arts Council and Mercer Island Visual Arts League (MIVAL) hold classes, art gallery exhibits at the Community Center at Mercer View and have acquired many pieces of art and Outdoor Sculpture Park and the business section Mercer Island. Each month MIVAL displays art work in the Mercer Island Library.

The citizens of Mercer Island are very active and always looking for new ways to support the community. In 2008, a group of folks met monthly at the Mercer Island Library to create a Mercer Island Farmer's Market. The market is held near Mercerdale Park and draws hundreds of people out each week during the summer and fall seasons.

The Island is full of readers. Island Books, an own independent book store, actively serves 25 organized book groups and estimates that this number occasionally doubles.

PARKS & RECREATION

Mercer Island boasts 400 acres of parks, including a stable and riding trails on the south end of the island, a booming farmer's market, and vibrant community center. PEAK, a new three-story sports and teen activity center spearheaded by the Mercer Island Boys & Girls Club, is currently under construction two blocks from the library near Mercer Island High School. The schools are widely supported by classroom volunteers, the Mercer Island School Foundation and local voters who passed three school levies in February 2010.

Mercer Island has been nationally recognized as a "Playful City USA" by KaBOOM! for its excellent spaces, facilities and recreation services. Mercer Island boasts more than 30 different parks and open spaces constituting nearly 500 acres of publicly accessible forest, field, play and waterfront areas. There are more than 50 miles of developed trails, including equestrian and biking trails. Public waterfront access is available through a number of beaches and "street ends" — areas in the city where the street leads directly to Lake Washington — as well as a city maintained boat launch.

Mercer Island has eight fields available for baseball, soccer, lacrosse and volleyball, one of which is open year-round. Mercerdale Park hosts the Island's skateboard park while water polo and swimming are available though Mary Wayte Pool. Play structures and basketball courts are located in parks throughout the Island.

A number of organizations, including the Mercer Island Recreational Round Table of which Mercer Island Library is a member, provide recreational services to the Island. Programs and events include Letterbox Adventures, a giant outdoor scavenger hunt and a Summer Celebration. In 2007, the library, Parks and Recreation Department, and Island Books worked together to create the **Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.** Potter Celebration at the newly remodeled Community Center at Mercer View, serving more than 2,000 participants.

EDUCATION, SCHOOLS & CHILDREN

One of the supreme values in the Mercer Island Community is education. Many families choose to live on Mercer Island because of the school district, which is reputed as one of the best in Washington State. About 94% of eligible students living on Mercer Island attend the local high school with Seattle teens competing for additional open spaces. Mercer Island High School (MIHS) maintains an astounding 96% on-time graduation rate and is a U.S. Department of Education Blue Ribbon School with WASL scores in the top 10% for Washington State. About 96% of students also graduate from high school and go on to college.

With more than 4,000 students, the district is made up of one high school, one middle school, three elementary schools and the Crest Learning Center (an alternative high school). The school district offers a variety of services to meet the needs of both academically gifted students and the 10.3% of students with special needs. There is also an Autism Spectrum Program and an ESL program in the school district.

Private schools include the Children's Institute for Learning (CHILD), French American School of Puget Sound, Saint Monica Catholic School, Northwest Yeshiva High School and three small private schools: American Academy, Privett and ECT Preparatory Academy. CHILD draws three quarters of its students from various school districts in the greater Puget Sound area. Various classes from the school come to the library for tours and help with projects.

There are 19 preschools and childcare centers on Mercer Island that serve about 1,000 children 5 years old and younger. Children are well served on Mercer Island with numerous activities. Play groups meet at the Community Center at Mercer View. The Mercer Island Preschool Association (MIPA) offers tremendous support, promoting family social groups and special events such as "Circus."

The community is very supportive of the schools and every year has approved the maintenance and operation of the school levy. In addition, they have voted for \$54 million in capital bonds to renovate five of the six schools in the district. The Mercer Island Schools Foundation has raised \$8 million dollars over the past 25 years with community support.

THE MERCER ISLAND LIBRARY TODAY & TOMORROW

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Mercer Island has a host of community groups with which the library has maintained strong partnerships over the years. The Mercer Island Preschool Association (MIPA) has supported the library in numerous ways. MIPA maintains a community notebook in the library that lists resources and preschools on the Island. MIPA has also partnered with the library by co-hosting three joint children's programs, including puppet shows, musicians and storytellers. The children's librarian participates in the Preschool Fair held each year.

Mercer Island Parks and Recreation spearheads a recreational round table each year, gathering summer activities, events and ideas from representatives of the Community Center at Mercer View, Boys & Girls Club of Mercer Island, MIPA, Stroum Jewish Community Center, Youth Theatre Northwest, Mary Wayte Pool/Northwest Center, Fernacity (a charitable fund sponsored by a local realtor) and the Mercer Island Library.

For the past three years, the library has participated in Leap for Green — an Earth Day Celebration teaching families conservation and earth friendly habits. The library has supplied booklists, programs and a booth of information. Each summer the library also marches in the Summer Celebration Parade that draws over 1,000 people.

Look to Your Library provided the impetus for library to extend outreach, resources and classes to Hopelink and Youth Eastside Services. The library also meets with the Chamber of Commerce to look at ways to meet the needs of small businesses in the community.

The Mercer Island Library is also fortunate to have huge support from the Friends of the Mercer Island Library. Their book sales fund 75% of the library programs for all ages, including the Big Read, author events, and Story Train each year.

CURRENT AND FUTURE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN

The children's librarian offers an average of 15 Story Times per month, with early literacy activities for babies, very young toddlers, toddlers and preschoolers. Evening Story Times and special programs, such as puppet shows or music concerts, are offered once a month. This year the library will offer a six week chinese language Story Time series to meet the needs of one of the largest ethnic groups on the Island and on the Eastside.

The library has a strong relationship with the local schools and visits each of the three elementary schools and St. Monica School twice yearly for Ready-Set-Read and the Summer Reading Program promotion. Book talking is a big part of each school visit and the children's librarian also offers database classes. St. Monica and Lakeridge Elementary students challenge each other annually during the Global Reading Challenge.

Mercer Island sees a number of homeschoolers beyond the three dozen registered in the Mercer Island School District with many coming from Seattle.

The Mercer Island Library is a busy hub after school between 3-5:30pm, with students coming across the street from St. Monica School, Islander Middle School students being dropped off at the nearby bus stop and the high school students coming from just four blocks away. At one point, library staff counted 101 children and teens in the building! Every table is crowded with students, many working on group homework projects, some being privately tutored and others wanting to socialize—especially on Monday afternoons when each of the public schools and St. Monica School have early release days. Sometimes there are not enough tables, so groups of students end up sitting on the floor. Groups of students ask for meeting room space, but both library meeting rooms are often heavily booked.

Considering the crowds, especially on Monday afternoons, staff found themselves having to manage the noise level and volume of people in the building. Several changes occurred this year to help mitigate the noise, behavioral and space issues. Now a staff person from the Mercer Island Boys & Girls Club comes every day after school to work with students. St. Monica School just built a 2,500-square-foot building that serves as a place their students can hang out after school. This fall, a new 41,000-square-foot Boys & Girls Club will open just six blocks from the library. The project, called PEAK (Providing and Empowering Activities for Kids,) will have facilities for a teen center, a before and after school program and gymnasium that will be shared by the school district. In addition, Kidsquest Museum has provided a series of monthly science programs on early release days. These science programs are funded by a grant from Lego Children's Fund and the Friends of the Mercer Island Library.

The numbers of students and groups that use the library is, at times, overflowing the library's capacity. One of ways the library can support student use is by offering space for groups of students to work together without disturbing other patrons.

CURRENT AND FUTURE SERVICES FOR TEENS

As a whole, Mercer Island teens are a highly driven, academically successful group. The library is located at a geographic confluence of several Mercer Island schools and serves a large number of teens, particularly between 3-5pm. An informal six month accounting placed an average of 60 youth in the library, with occasional peak use of over 100, after school on Monday afternoons.

Along with academic success, Mercer Island teens have particular behavioral habits. According to an eight year study, funded in part by the U.S. Department of Health and conducted by Columbia University psychologist Dr. Suniya Luthar, Mercer Island teens are two to three times more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety, and to engage in high risk behaviors like drug and alcohol abuse or petty crime. Dr. Luthar attributed these tendencies to a number of factors including intense pressure to perform, lack of positive adult relationships outside of organized environments, and a shortage of unstructured peer interaction time in a safe noncompetitive environment.

In response to these needs, teen programming at the Mercer Island Library may look slightly different. Every Monday, the library offers Teen Zone — a casual gathering space for teens in the large meeting room. Teens may play computer or board games, tables are available for group homework and study, and a librarian is available to answer questions. Teens may also check out laptops for use in the library.

Additionally, the Teen Advisory Board (TAB) provides opportunities for teens to find meaningful ways to connect while contributing to their community. TAB advises the teen librarian on the collections, facilities and programs the library should offer. TAB has been the basis for a number of successful programs and facilities changes at the library, ranging from the addition of a power strip bar in the teen area to the 2007 Harry Potter program. Teens from TAB frequently volunteer at community events like Summer Celebration through the library.

The library also makes frequent use of community partnerships to best serve teens. For example, the library partnered with Mercer Island Rotary to bring books and programming to teens for The Big Read. Island Books frequently helps sponsor or participates in author or book events. Next month, the library will partner with Islander Middle School for a book and reading party for 6th graders.

To accommodate Island teens' busy schedules, the library offers Pre-Pub Club, an informal book group that does not have a set meeting date. Instead, teens receive Advanced Readers'

Copies of teen books, read them on their own time and write reviews. This year, Pre-Pub Club will become Online Book Club, allowing teen readers to share their reviews and opinions online.

CURRENT AND FUTURE SERVICES FOR ADULTS

The library maintains a large collection of fiction and non-fiction materials in a variety of formats to provide adults the opportunity to explore or improve their vocational needs, leisure interests and life skills. All of the non-fiction books (except basic children's books) are interfiled to allow patrons to select the most appropriate level of reading material.

Computers are a huge draw for patrons. The library has 15 computers, as well as two laptops. Many patrons are proficient at using computers, but there is a senior population that appreciates basic computer instruction (e.g. introduction to email and Internet). The library plans to offer one-on-one training sessions in the future.

Approximately 15% of Mercer Island residents speak a language other than, or in addition to, English. In recognition of this, the library's world language collection currently includes materials in five different languages, as well as a modest Adult Basic Education collection, ESL collection, citizenship materials and foreign language movies. For patrons who want to work on their English language skills, the library hosts a Talk Time each week, where volunteers provide an informal environment for non-native speakers to practice their English.

The library also offers additional programs for adults including a regular Saturday matinee film series, Rick Steves travel lectures, music programs and opera previews which regularly draw large audiences.

The Mercer Island Friends of the Library put on three successful annual book sales raising funds for library programs. The library is also fortunate to have a few patrons who volunteer their time each week to assist the library staff with a variety of tasks.

After the 2010 launch of KCLS' Library2Go mobile services vans, library staff hopes to reach adults in the community that either are not aware of KCLS or are unable to make it to the library. Staff plans to visit Mercer Island senior housing complexes and family service centers at least once a month to bring library materials and services.

PATRON FEEDBACK AND SURVEY RESULTS

This community analysis provided an excellent opportunity to ask patrons how they felt the library was doing and give them a chance to offer suggestions on how to improve. Surveys were distributed surveys to library patrons, schools, community centers, the Chamber of Commerce and City Hall to get as broad a response as possible. Staff also videotaped in-depth interviews with patrons and key members of the community in an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of our community's thoughts about the library.

The survey included demographic and usage questions, as well as some additional open-ended questions that were meant to solicit suggestions and comments. A total of 236 surveys were returned. The age of the respondents covered the spectrum and nearly 24% indicated they use the library more than once a week. In addition, more than 80% of the respondents said they use other KCLS libraries, including Bellevue, Issaquah and Kirkland.

The top reasons patrons said that they visit the library were to borrow books and other library materials, and use the library computers. The surveys also indicated that the top three reasons they use KCLS.org was to search for items, place holds and use the databases. There was a nearly even split between those who use the Internet at the library more than once a week and those that never do.

One question tried to ascertain factors that might prevent patrons from using the library. About one quarter of the respondents answered this question; the predominant reasons were access and the hours we are open. The most common requests were for extended open hours, more computer instruction and increased computer time.

One of the chief concerns of any library is whether it is meeting its patrons' needs. Two survey questions solicited responses to address this. While there was the expected chorus of requests for more resources, the respondents were overwhelmingly appreciative of the library's staff. About 98% who answered this question stated they were satisfied or, overwhelmingly, "very satisfied." As one patron wrote the library is, "one of my most prized possessions, truly a home away from home."

A summary of the survey results can be found in the appendices at the end of this report.

MERCER ISLAND LIBRARY

COMMUNITY STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS

FACILITATE EARLY LITERACY AND CULTIVATE YOUNG READERS

Services and resources for parents, caregivers and their children (age birth to five) that enable children to be ready to learn, read and write.

- Strengthen the relationship with the Mercer Island Preschool Association (MIPA).
- Improve communication with and support to preschools, daycares and play groups.
- Create opportunities for parents and caregivers to socialize or network at the library.
- Highlight and promote KCLS' Early Literacy resources, including Books to Grow On kits.

ENGAGE AND SUPPORT TEENS AND CHILDREN

Services and resources for youth (ages 5 through 18) that support their education and learning, develop information literacy skills, and encourage creativity and the cultivation of interests.

- Support and encourage unstructured time for children and teens in the library.
- Increase online programming that fit teens' preferences, hours and needs.
- Utilize the Digital Discovery Zone (DDZ) vehicle to offer unique technology connections with teens at different locations on Mercer Island.
- Develop programs to offer at the local schools that feature diverse cultures.

ENCOURAGE LIFELONG LEARNING

Services and resources for patrons to cultivate lifelong learning in a variety of areas.

- Utilize Library2Go! vans to offer personalized reader's advisory service to the Island's senior community.
- Expand outreach and educational mobile services programs for all ages.
- Develop community partnerships and programming focused on the arts.
- Develop regularly varying displays to highlight the library's non-fiction collection.

PROVIDE PERSONALIZED INFORMATION ACCESS & ASSISTANCE

Services and resources that provide all patrons with high quality information and personalized information search strategies, and that proactively respond to patrons' evolving information needs.

- Recruit Netmaster volunteers to provide one-on-one drop-in computer assistance.
- Offer computer instruction at the Island's three retirement facilities using the Digital Discovery Zone (DDZ) vehicle.
- Pilot new ways to deliver library services and information to meet patrons expectations and availability (e.g. through text, online venues, etc.).

REACH & ENGAGE THE COUNTY'S CULTURALLY DIVERSE POPULATIONS

Services and resources that reflect and celebrate the County's culturally diverse population and ensure open access to information for patrons facing cultural and language barriers.

- Evaluate the World Language collection based on the needs of the population.
- Expand World Language Story Time offerings.
- Partner with outside organizations to offer more culturally diverse programming.
- Create displays that welcome and celebrate diversity in culture, ideas and lifestyles.

DELIVERING ON A PROMISE TO VOTERS

Implementing the facilities improvements approved by voters in the 2004 Capital Bond measure.

- Participate in planning for library remodel with emphasis on:
 - Additional seating, including smaller and more mobile tables
 - Developing small group study rooms for 4-6 people
 - Designing a flexible more integrated space for meeting room
 - Improving noise abatement inside the library
 - Providing adequate electrical and data connections to support technology
 - Evaluating the need for Self Check-In
 - Adding seating to the exterior plaza
 - Exploring alternative periodical shelving
 - Creating a single service point for patrons

Community Study

Mercer Island Library



April 2010

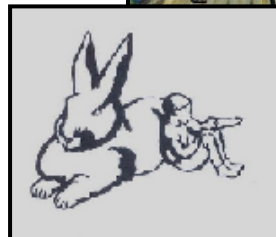
Community Study

Mercer Island Library



ABOUT THE LIBRARY

- The library is situated on Mercer Island and is connected to Seattle and the Eastside by the I-90 bridge.
- The library circulated more than 400,000 items and had more than 200,000 visitors in 2009.
- The Library is supported by the active Friends of the Mercer Island Library, whose highly successful book sales fund 75% of the programs offered each year.



Community Study

Mercer Island Library



HISTORY

- 1860** Island named for Seattle pioneer Thomas Mercer
- 1889** Resort built in the East Seattle settlement
- 1928** Discussion begins about building a floating bridge
- 1940** Mercer Island Floating Bridge opens
- 1945** Mercer Island Library opens
- 1960** Two incorporated bodies exist: the city and the town
- 1991** Current 14,600-square-foot Mercer Island Library opens
- 1993** Mercer Island annexes to KCLS



Community Study

Mercer Island Library



DEMOGRAPHICS

- Age:
 - 65 years and older (18%)
 - 45-64 years (35%)
 - 18 years and younger (24%)
- Largest minority populations :
 - Asian/Pacific Islander (14.9%)
 - Hispanic (2.8%)
 - African American (1.3%)
- An 18.3% population increase by 2040 driven by a significant increase in multi-family households.
- Households (2009):
 - Married w/Children Under 18, (37.5%)
 - Married w/No Children Under 18 (50.1%)
 - Male, No Wife Present (3.14%)
 - Female, No Husband Present (9.27%)



Community Study

Mercer Island Library



COMMUNITY

INCOME/HOUSING

- Median home value (2010):
 - Mercer Island: \$743,800
 - King County: \$375,000
- Median income (2008):
 - Mercer Island: \$176,841
 - King County: \$65,580
- Owner Occupied: 81%
- Renter Occupied: 19%



Community Study

Mercer Island Library



COMMUNITY

BUSINESS AND EMPLOYMENT

- Efforts to create a desirable and accessible downtown for Mercer Island residents began in 1993.
- Six redevelopment projects are creating new retail and office spaces with 800 apartments, condominiums and senior living units to the Town Center.
- Nearly 73% of residents commute more than 15 minutes from home.
- About 8.3% of residents work at home.



Community Study

Mercer Island Library



COMMUNITY

PARKS, RECREATION & COMMUNITY SERVICES

- The Island is rich in recreation, art, culture and volunteerism, with more than 25 clubs and organizations.
- The Island boasts 400 acres of city parks, including a stable and riding trails, a booming farmer's market, and vibrant community center.
- PEAK, a new three-story sports and teen activity center is currently under construction two blocks from the library.



Community Study

Mercer Island Library



COMMUNITY

EDUCATION/SCHOOLS

- The Library serves 3 elementary, 1 middle, 1 high school and 4 private schools.
- The School District is reputed as one of the best in Washington State:
 - 86.9% of 10th graders met standards in math, writing and reading
 - 96% of students graduate from high school and go on to college
- Educational attainment (2008):
 - High School Graduate (4.14%)
 - Associate Degree or Higher (31.52%)
 - Bachelor's Degree or Higher (8.46%)
 - Graduate Degree or Higher (16.04%)



Community Study

Mercer Island Library



RECOMMENDATIONS



Community Study

Mercer Island Library



FACILITATE EARLY LITERACY & CULTIVATE YOUNG READERS

- Strengthen the relationship with the Mercer Island Preschool Association.
- Improve communication with and support to preschools, daycares and play groups.
- Create opportunities for parents and caregivers to socialize or network at the library.
- Highlight and promote KCLS' Early Literacy resources, including Books to Grow On kits.



Community Study

Mercer Island Library



ENGAGE AND SUPPORT TEENS & CHILDREN

- Support and encourage unstructured time for children and teens in the library.
- Increase online programming that fit teens' preferences, hours and needs.
- Utilize the Digital Discovery Zone (DDZ) vehicle to offer unique technology connections with teens at different locations on Mercer Island.
- Develop programs to offer at the local schools that feature diverse cultures.



Community Study

Mercer Island Library



ENCOURAGE LIFELONG LEARNING

- Utilize Library2Go! vans to offer personalized reader's advisory service to the Island's senior community.
- Expand outreach and educational mobile services programs for all ages.
- Develop community partnerships and programming focused on the arts.
- Develop regularly varying displays to highlight the library's non-fiction collection.



Community Study

Mercer Island Library



PROVIDE PERSONALIZED INFORMATION ACCESS & ASSISTANCE

- Recruit Netmaster volunteers to provide one-on-one drop-in computer assistance in the library.
- Offer computer instruction at the Island's three retirement facilities using the Digital Discovery Zone (DDZ) vehicle.
- Pilot new ways to deliver library services and information to meet patrons expectations and availability (e.g. through text, online venues).



Community Study

Mercer Island Library



REACH & ENGAGE THE COUNTY'S CULTURALLY DIVERSE POPULATIONS

- Evaluate the World Language collection based on the needs of the population.
- Expand World Language Story Time offerings.
- Partner with outside organizations to offer more culturally diverse programming.
- Create displays that welcome and celebrate diversity in culture, ideas and lifestyles.



Community Study

Mercer Island Library



FACILITIES IMPROVEMENTS

Participate in planning for library remodel with emphasis on:

- Additional seating, including smaller and more mobile tables
- Developing small group study rooms for 4-6 people
- Designing a flexible more integrated space for meeting room
- Improving noise abatement inside the library
- Providing adequate electrical and data connections to support technology
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- Adding seating to the exterior plaza
- Exploring alternative periodical shelving
- Creating a single service point for patrons

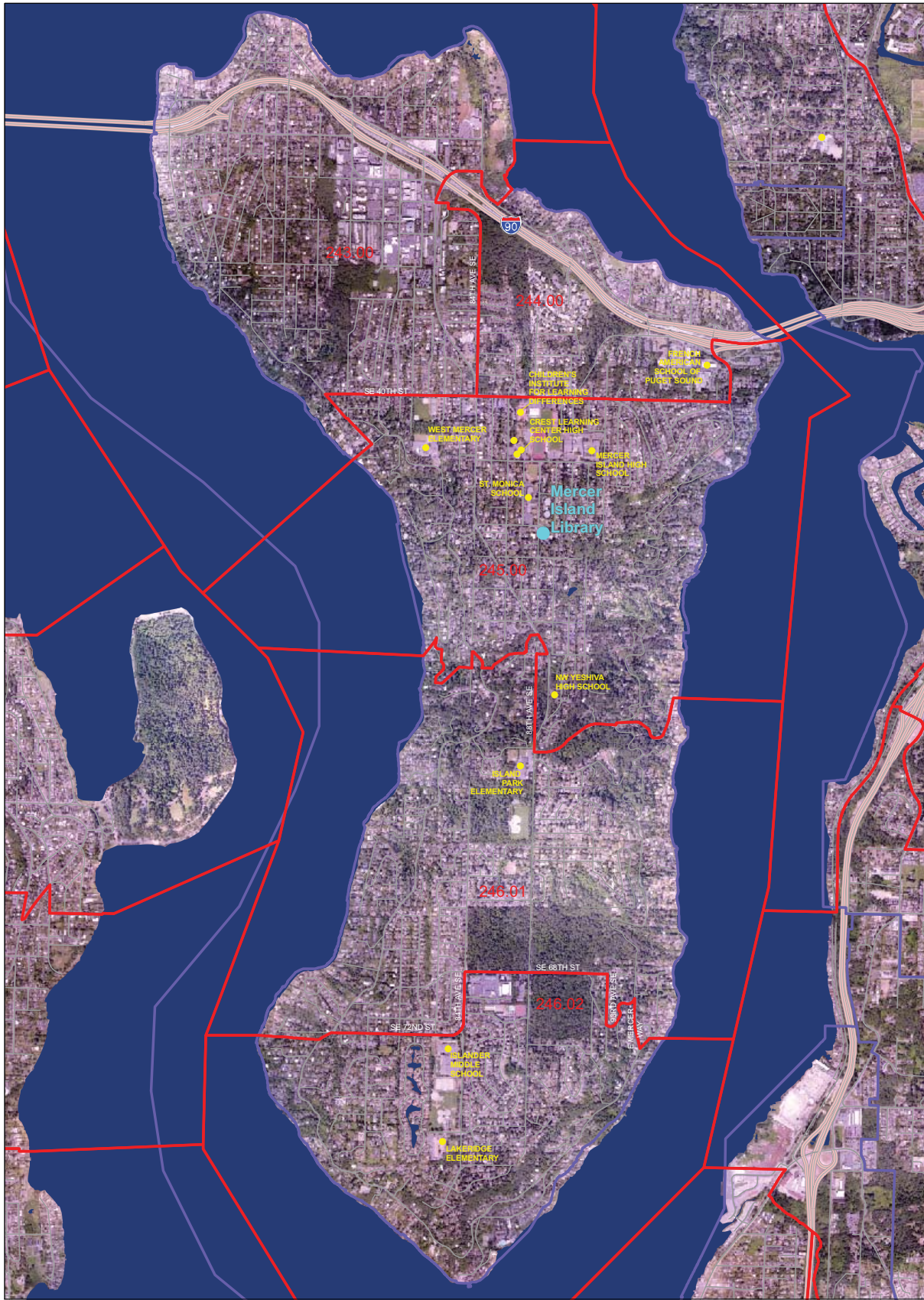


Community Study

Mercer Island Library



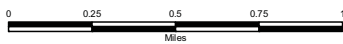
QUESTIONS?



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KEY

- Census Tracts
- Municipal Boundaries
- Mercer Island Library
- Schools



January 14, 2010

**Mercer Island Library
King County Library System**

Mercer Island Library Community Study Demographic Summary

Census Data	Mercer Island Library Service Area (2000 Census)	Mercer Island Library Service Area (2008-09 estimates)	King County (2000 Census)	King County (2008 American Community Study)
Population	22,036	24,371	1,737,034	1,859,284
Average household size	2.58	3.03	2.39	2.39
Median age	44.3	47.6	35.7	38.5
Birth to 5 Years	5.99%	6.00%	7.61%	N/A
17 years and younger	16.50%	24.90%	22.5%	21.6%
18 years and older	83.50%	75.10%	77.5%	78.4%
65 years and older	18.70%	18.80%	10.5%	10.6%
85 years and older	2.61%	3.20%	1.4%	N/A
White	84.1%	80.3%	75.7%	73.2%
African American	1.1%	1.3%	5.4%	5.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	12.0%	14.9%	10.8%	13.8%
Hispanic	1.9%	2.8%	5.5%	7.4%
American Indian and Alaskan Native	0.2%	N/A	0.9%	0.7%
Owner occupied housing	80.5%	81.0%	59.8%	62.3%
Median home value	\$ 573,900	\$ 874,322	\$ 236,900	\$ 433,300
Renter occupied housing	19.5%	19.1%	40.2%	37.1%
Median Rent	\$ 1,159	\$ 1,446	\$ 698	\$ 1,164
Median household income*	\$ 151,904	\$ 176,841	\$ 53,157	\$ 65,580
Education, Less than High School	2.27%	2.0%	8.4%	N/A
Education, High School Graduate	4.14%	7.9%	18.2%	N/A
Education, Some College	37.57%	16.5%	24.5%	N/A
Education, Associate Degree	31.52%	4.1%	7.5%	N/A
Education, Bachelor's Degree	8.46%	38.1%	27.7%	N/A
Education, Graduate Degree	16.04%	31.6%	16.6%	N/A
Employment, Blue Collar	5.7%	5.5%	17.1%	N/A
Employment, White Collar	88.8%	88.7%	69.8%	N/A
Unemployed	N/A	2.8%	3.7%	N/A
Not in the Labor Force, Male	N/A	29.0%	22.6%	N/A
Not in the Labor Force, Female	N/A	47.4%	35.1%	N/A
Foreign born	13.8%	N/A	15.4%	19.0%
Language other than English	14.7%	N/A	16.9%	23.1%

**Mercer Island Library Community Study
Population Growth Trends**

CENSUS POPULATION COUNT																					
Mercer Island Library Service Area (by census tract)	2000	2001 (Estimate)	2002 (Estimate)	2003 (Estimate)	2004 (Estimate)	2005 (Estimate)	2006 (Estimate)	2007 (Provisional Estimate)	Change in Population 2000-2007	% Change in Population 2000-2007	2000	2001 (Estimate)	2002 (Estimate)	2003 (Estimate)	2004 (Estimate)	2005 (Estimate)	2006 (Estimate)	2007 (Estimate)	2008 (Estimate)	Change in Population 2000-2007	% Change in Population 2000-2007
243.00	6,477	6,396	6,398	6,374	6,331	6,326	6,418	6,882	405	6.25%	22,036	21,970	21,955	21,840	21,830	21,710	21,860	22,380	22,650	614	2.79%
244.00	2,531	2,540	2,548	2,543	2,643	2,531	2,549	2,563	32	1.27%											
245.00	4,787	4,783	4,768	4,754	4,712	4,717	4,732	4,759	-28	(0.59%)											
246.01	4,498	4,506	4,493	4,431	4,423	4,421	4,431	4,419	-79	(1.75%)											
246.02	3,743	3,745	3,749	3,738	3,721	3,714	3,730	3,757	14	0.37%											
Total	22,036	21,970	21,955	21,840	21,830	21,710	21,860	22,380	344	1.56%											
City of Mercer Island	22,036	21,970	21,955	21,840	21,830	21,710	21,860	22,380	22,650	614											

Source: WA State Office of Financial Management Small Area Estimates Program (SAEP) version September 13, 2007

Mercer Island Library Community Study Projected Population Growth

	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	Change in Population 2000-2040	% Change Population 2000-2040
Mercer Island (4400)							
Total Population	22,036	22,838	24,892	25,340	26,075	4,039	18.3%
Total Households	8,437	8,907	10,047	10,573	11,238	2,801	33.2%
Single Family Households	6,739	6,971	7,392	7,339	7,433	694	10.3%
Multi Family Households	1,698	1,936	2,656	3,234	3,805	2,107	124.1%

Source: Puget Sound Regional Council, 2006 Forecasts of Population, Households, and Employment

Note: Although the FAZ's are labeled with place names, most do not match official definitions of these places. FAZs are composed of Census tracts, which are not required to follow city or neighborhood boundaries.

Mercer Island Library Community Study School Statistics

2008-09 School Year	School District	Enrollment*	Grades	Free/Reduced Lunch*	English Language Learner*	Ethnicity				
						Black*	Asian or Pacific Islander*	American Indian or Alaska Native*	Hispanic*	White*
Elementary School										
Island Park	Mercer Island	542	K-5	0.6%	8.5%	1.3%	21.2%	0.2%	2.2%	71.7%
Lakeridge	Mercer Island	578	K-5	0.9%	0.0%	0.3%	17.4%	0.3%	1.7%	76.4%
West Mercer	Mercer Island	689	K-5	2.3%	0.6%	1.2%	19.0%	0.5%	2.0%	74.7%
Middle/Jr. High School										
Islander Middle	Mercer Island	960	6-8	2.2%	1.5%	1.0%	21.0%	0.4%	1.6%	75.4%
High School										
Mercer Island High	Mercer Island	1,364	9-12	1.2%	1.1%	1.3%	19.5%	0.1%	2.3%	75.6%
Private Schools										
St. Monica School	Private	245	K-8							
Children's Institute for Learning Differences	Private	39	PK-10, 12							
French American School of Puget Sound	Private	651	PK-8							
NW Yeshiva High	Private	133	9-12							
Total Enrollment in Library Service Area										5,201

*Source: OSPI Internet site <<http://www.k12.wa.us>>, 2008-09 school year

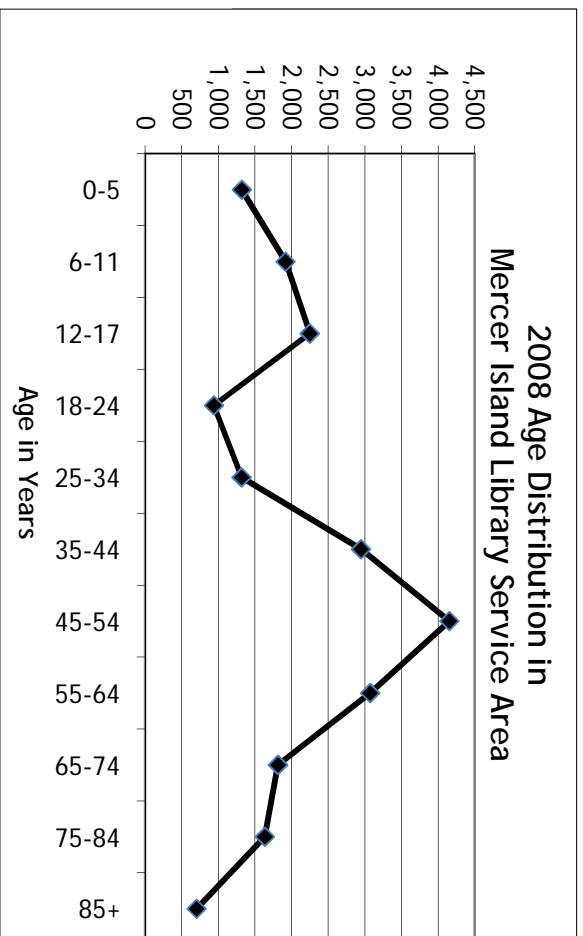
Mercer Island Library Community Study
Test Scores

2008-09 School Year		Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL)				
Elementary		Grade	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
Island Park	Mercer Island	3rd	92.3%	85.9%		
		4th	93.5%	87.0%	95.9%	
		5th	94.5%	93.5%		87.0%
Lakeridge	Mercer Island	3rd	96.9%	89.8%		
		4th	94.7%	88.3%	87.2%	
		5th	98.9%	95.7%		76.1%
West Mercer	Mercer Island	3rd	92.2%	91.3%		
		4th	93.6%	85.3%	91.7%	
		5th	95.6%	86.0%		77.9%
Middle/Jr. High		Grade	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
Islander	Mercer Island	6th	89.3%	81.9%		
		7th	87.6%	89.5%	92.5%	
		8th	85.5%	84.7%		80.1%
High School		Grade	Reading	Math	Writing	Science
Mercer Island High	Mercer Island	10th	93.10%	83.20%	96.60%	80.90%

*Source: OSPI Internet site <<http://www.k12.wa.us>>, 2007-2008 school year

Mercer Island Library Community Study Age of Service Area

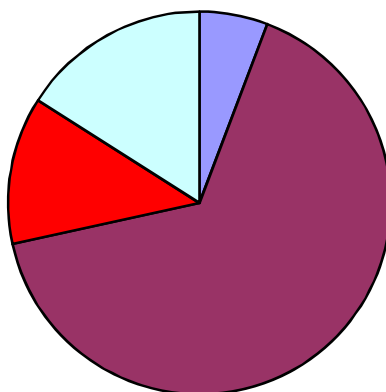
AGE (2008 Estimates)	Mercer Island Library Service Area	King County
0-5	1,321	142,218
6-11	1,916	138,689
12-17	2,247	141,735
18-24	940	183,506
25-34	1,317	302,004
35-44	2,946	297,410
45-54	4,151	292,910
55-64	3,071	181,899
65-74	1,814	86,841
75-84	1,635	71,714
85+	704	30,337



Mercer Island Library Community Study
Race of Service Area

RACE (2008 Estimates)	Mercer Island Library Service Area	King County
White	80.30%	71.53%
African American	1.30%	5.67%
Asian	14.80%	13.29%
Hispanic or Latino	2.80%	7.07%
Other Races	3.60%	9.51%

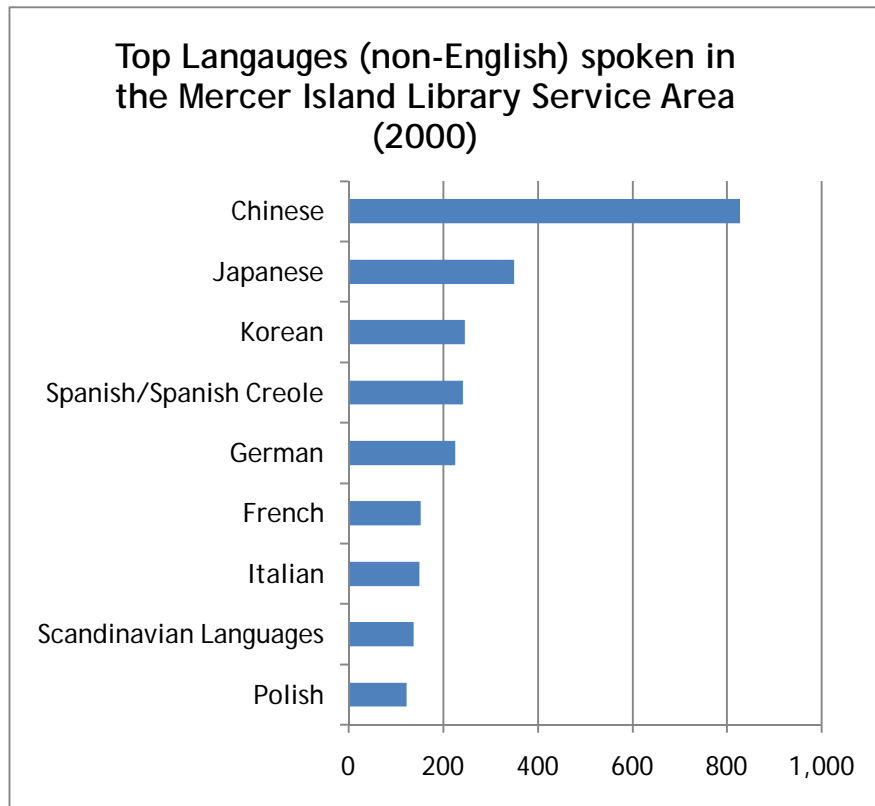
**Race (other than white) of Population in
Mercer Island Library Service Area (2008)**



■ African American
 ■ Asian
 ■ Hispanic or Latino
 ■ Other Races

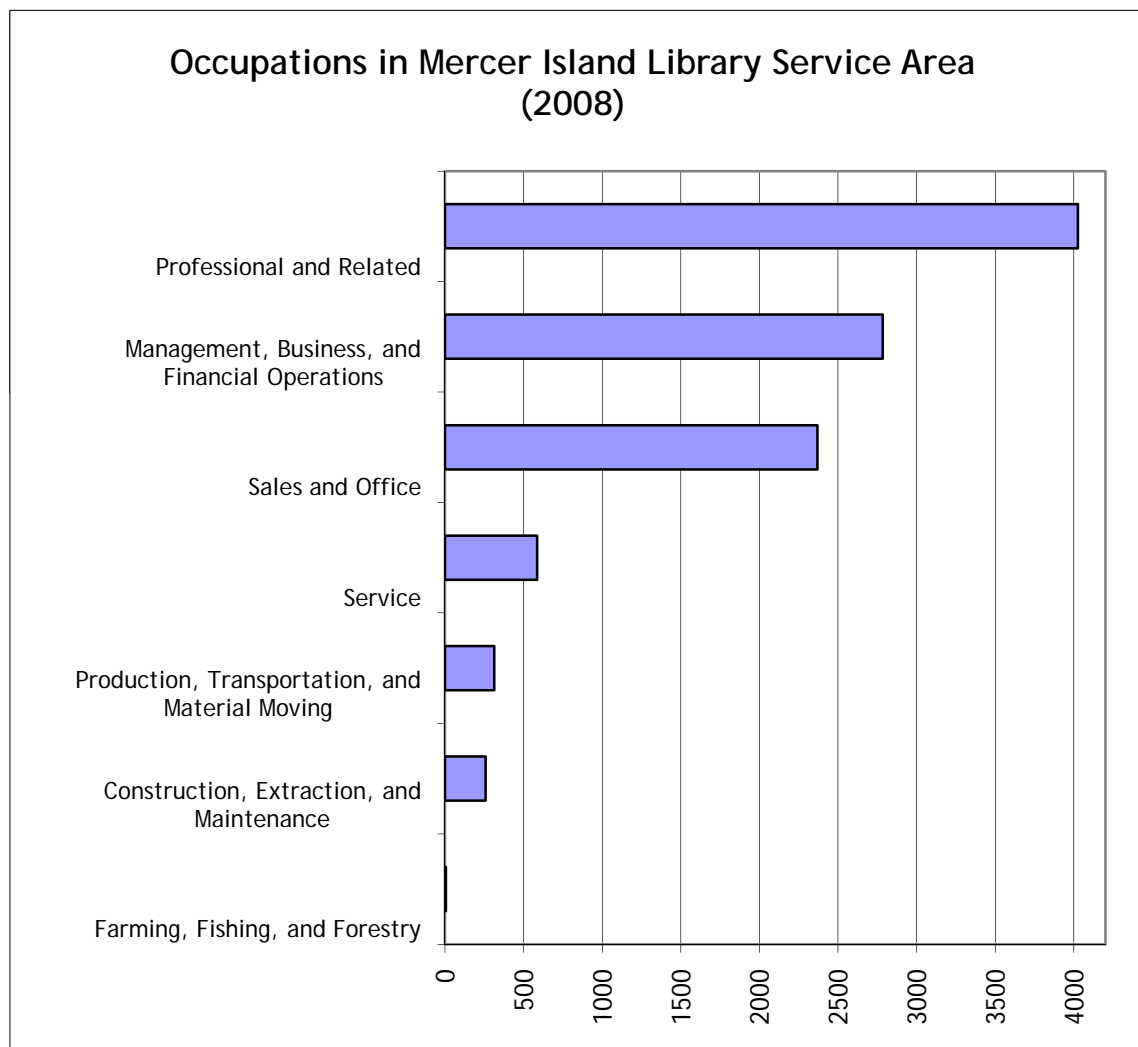
*Mercer Island Library Community Study
Languages Spoken at Home*

LANGUAGE (2008 Estimates)	Mercer Island Library Service Area	King County
Spanish %	258 1.2%	79,771 4.6%
Other Indo-European Languages %	1,176 5.6%	78,839 4.5%
Asian and Pacific Island Languages %	1,775 8.5%	159,180 9.1%
Other Language %	97 0.5%	17,468 1.0%



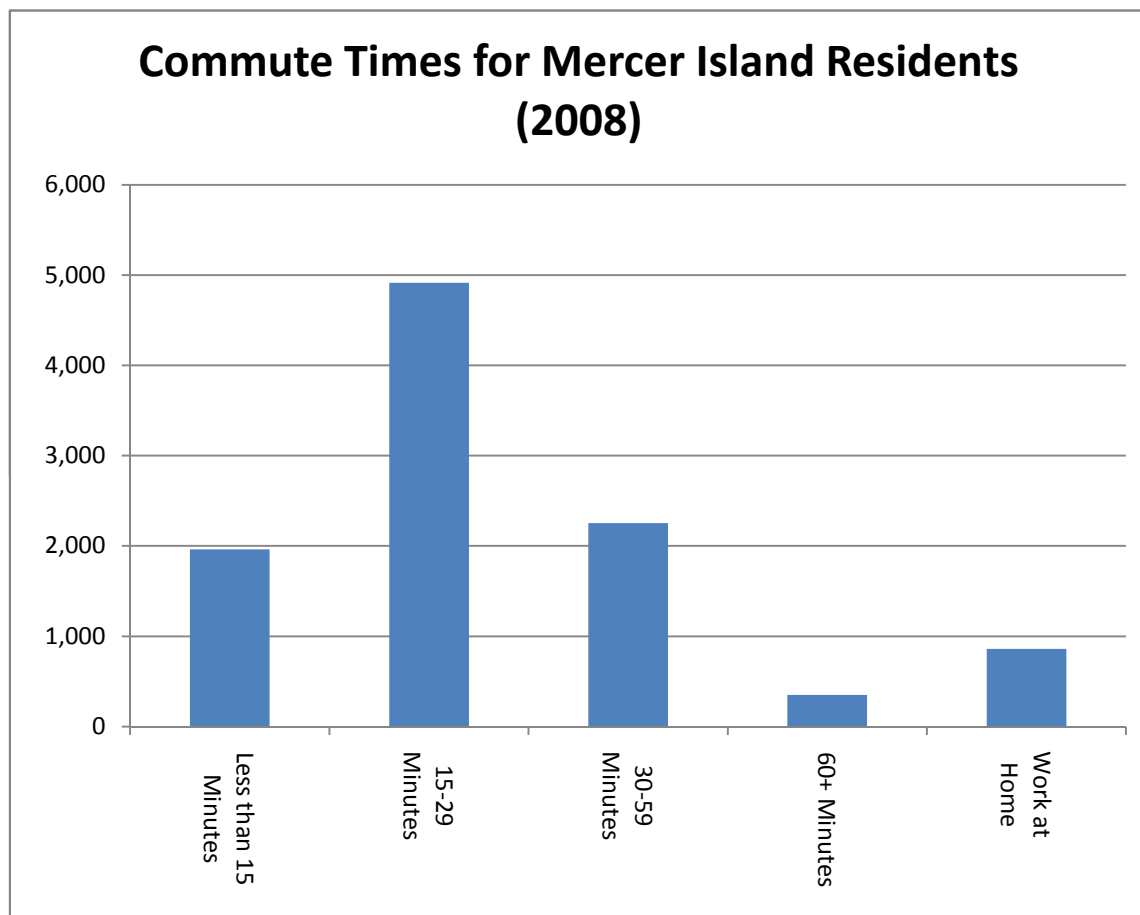
Mercer Island Library Community Study Occupation Profile

OCCUPATION (2008 Estimates)	Mercer Island Library Service Area	King County
Construction, Extraction & Maintenance	2.50%	7.31%
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	0.10%	0.19%
Management, Business & Financial Operations	26.90%	18.26%
Production, Transportation & Material Moving	3.00%	9.26%
Professional and Related	38.90%	26.21%
Sales and Office	22.90%	25.70%
Service	5.70%	13.07%



Mercer Island Library Community Study Commuting Profile

COMMUTING (2008 Estimates)	Mercer Island Library Service Area	King County
Travel Time Less than 15 Minutes	18.98%	18.39%
Travel Time 15-29 Minutes	47.53%	36.02%
Travel Time 30-59 Minutes	21.80%	33.51%
Travel Time 60+ Minutes	3.37%	7.24%
Work at Home	8.31%	4.84%



MERCER ISLAND LIBRARY CHILDCARE INFORMATION

Licensed Childcare

(Based on data received from Child Care Resources for 98040)

- ❑ 14 licensed center-based childcares with a capacity to serve 661 children
- ❑ 2 licensed home-based childcares with a capacity to serve 14 children

Preschools

Preschools are difficult to identify because they are usually private and not required to be licensed, but this list includes those identified by Child Care Resources in the library service area. Capacity is in parentheses () when it was available.

- ❑ Pixie Hill Preschool (20)
- ❑ Country Village Day School (180)
- ❑ Early World Montessori
- ❑ Emmanuel Day School
- ❑ French American School of Puget Sound (79)
- ❑ Stroum Jewish Community/Mercer Island (115)
- ❑ Sunnybeam School

Head Start/ECEAP Sites

There are no ECEAP sites in the Mercer Island Library Service Area.

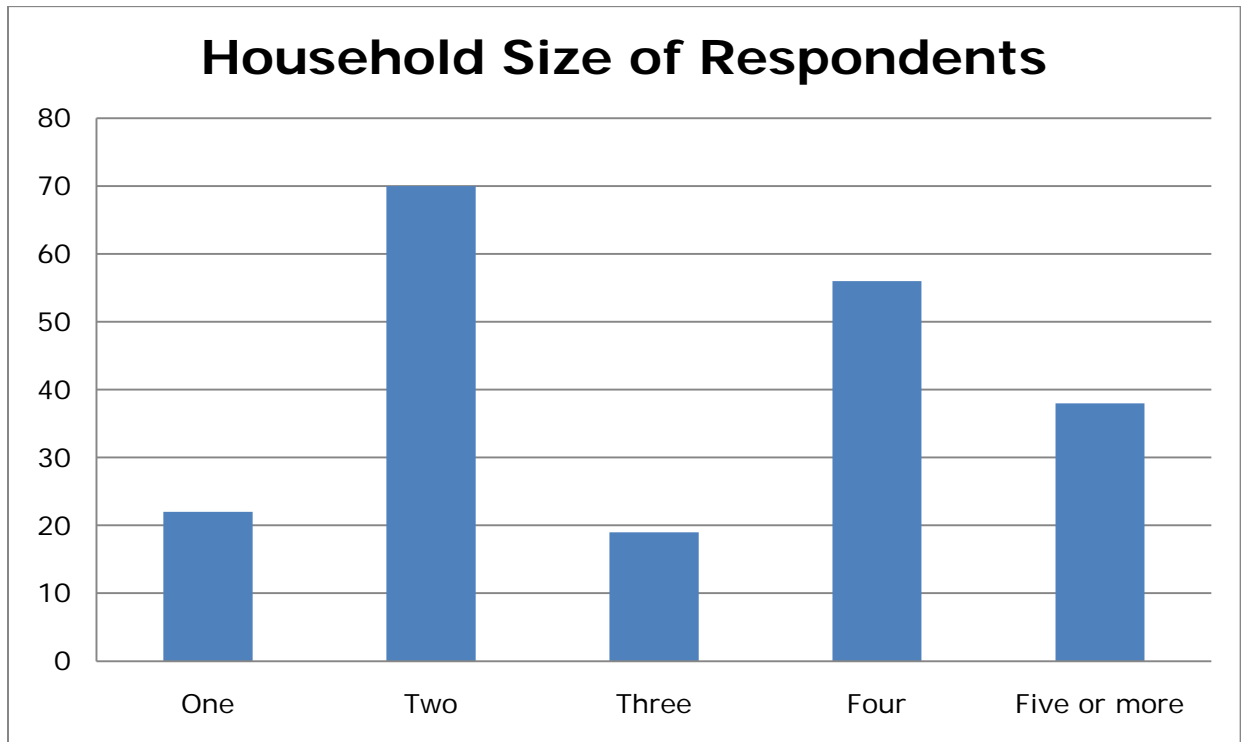
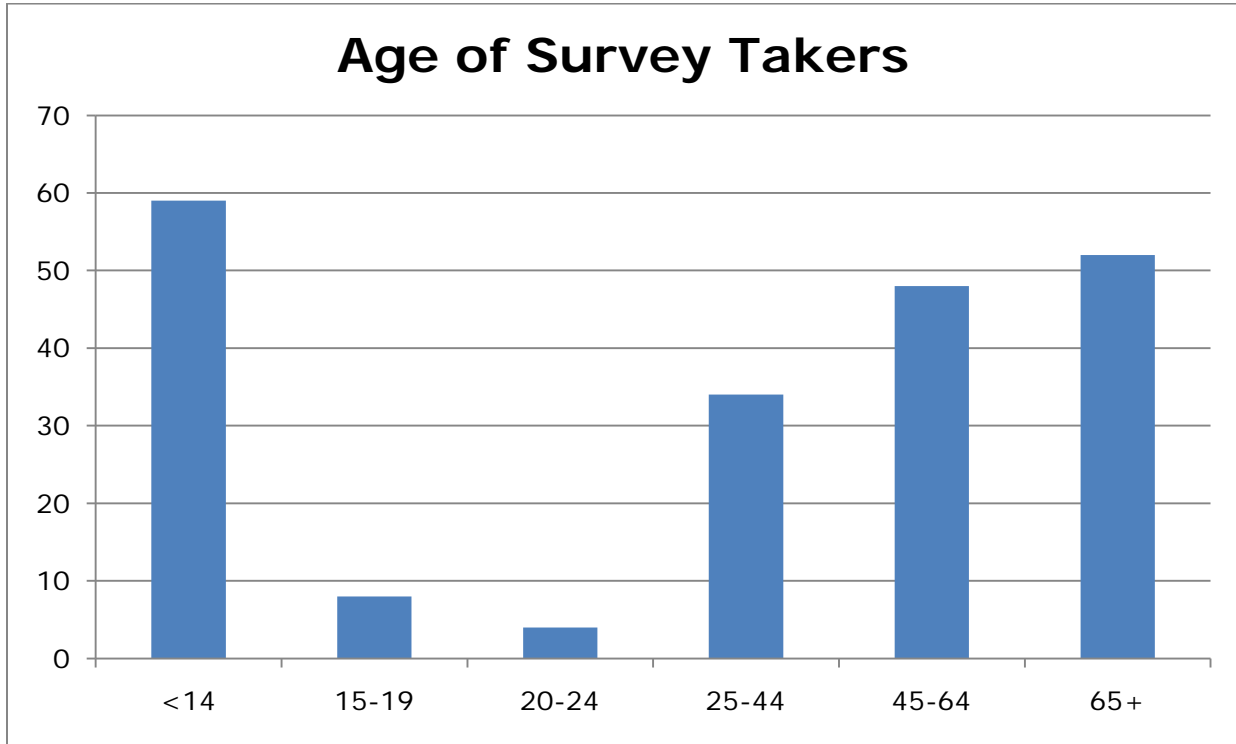
KidReach Service (after school and summer programs receiving books)

There are no KidReach sites in the Mercer Island Library service area

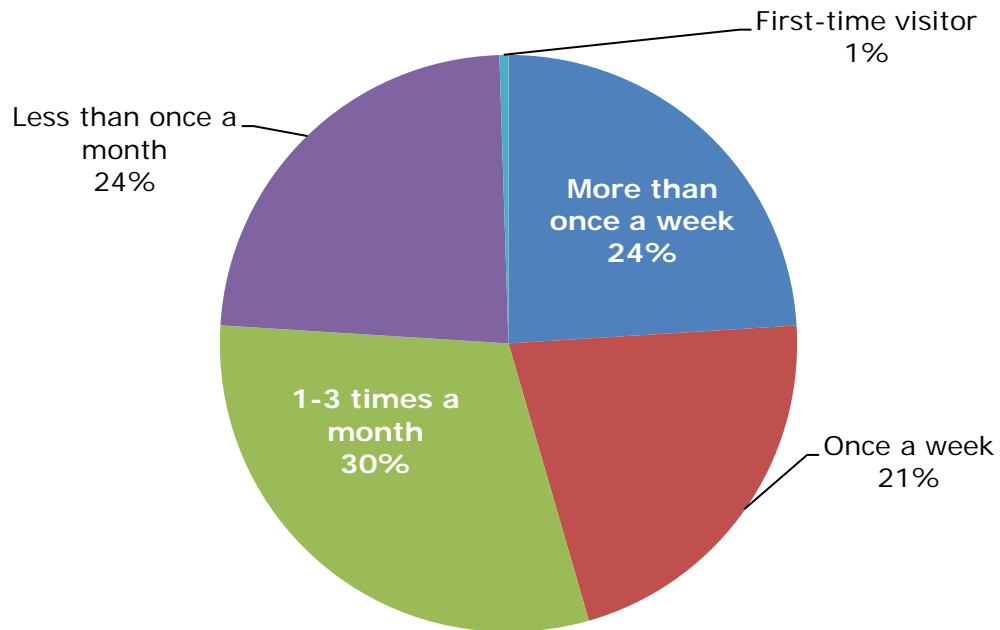
StoryTrain Service

The KCLS/Literacy AmeriCorps program has visited the Valley View area six times and trained 1 licensed provider serving 32 children.

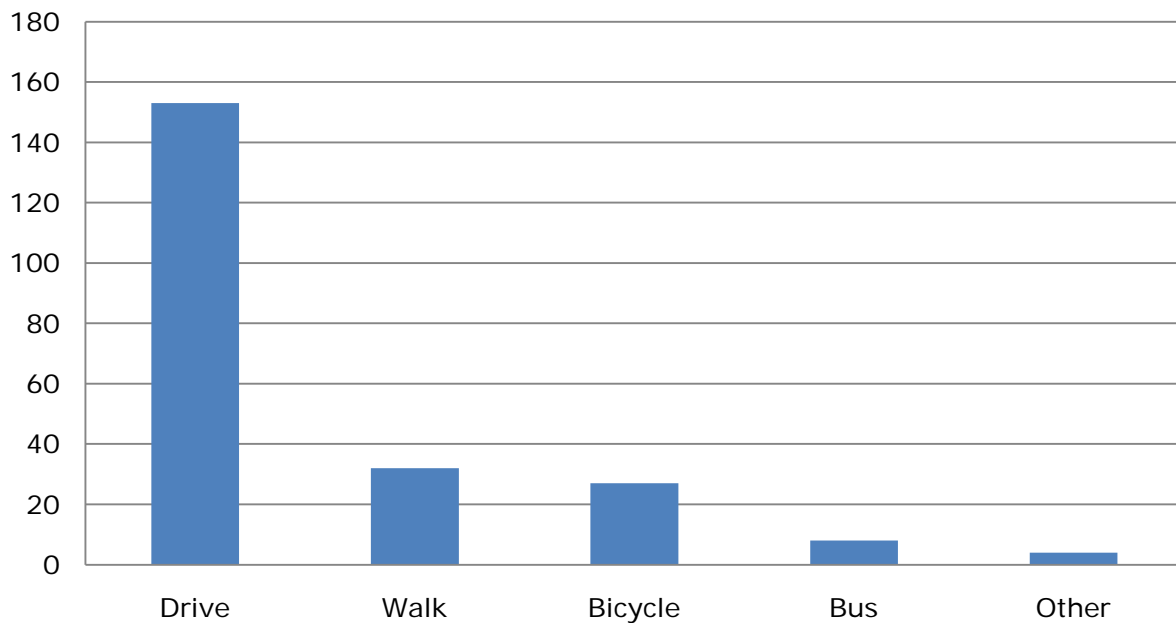
MERCER ISLAND LIBRARY SURVEY RESPONSE SUMMARY



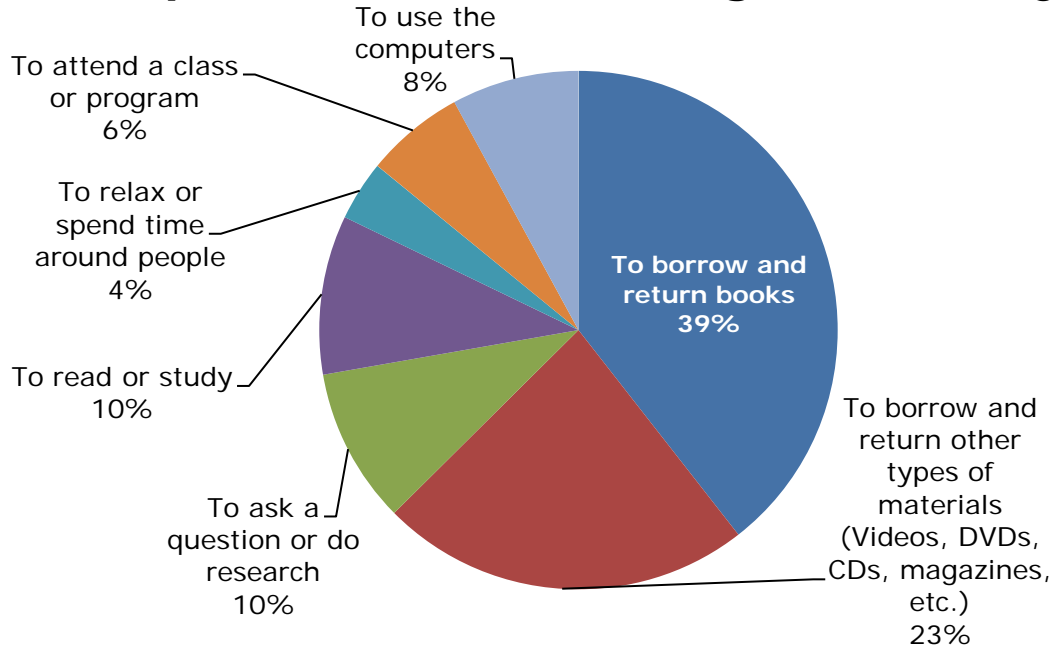
Frequency of Library Visits



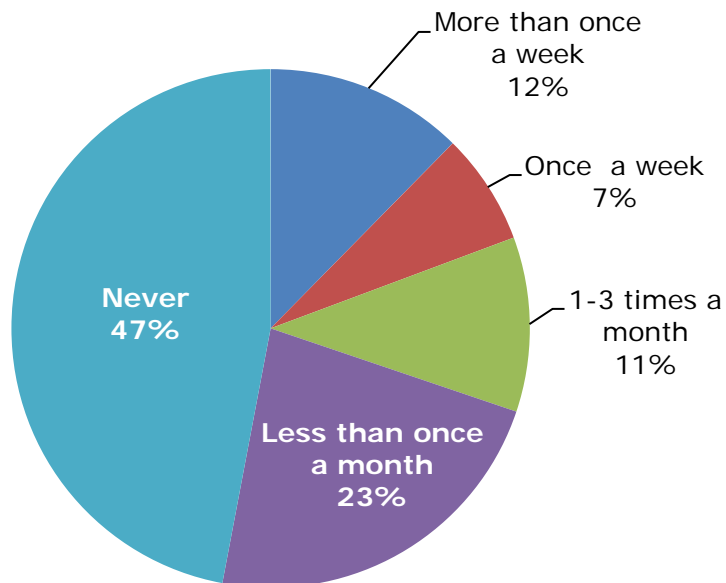
How do patrons get to the library?



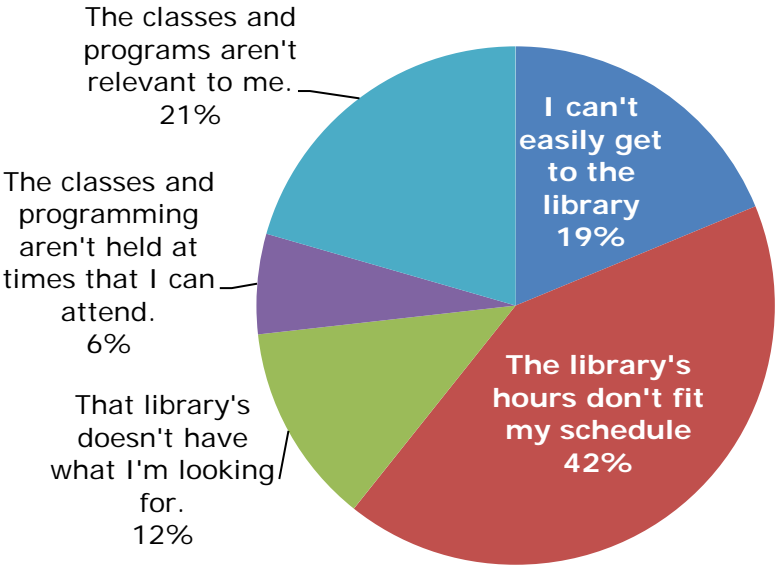
Top Reasons for Visiting the Library



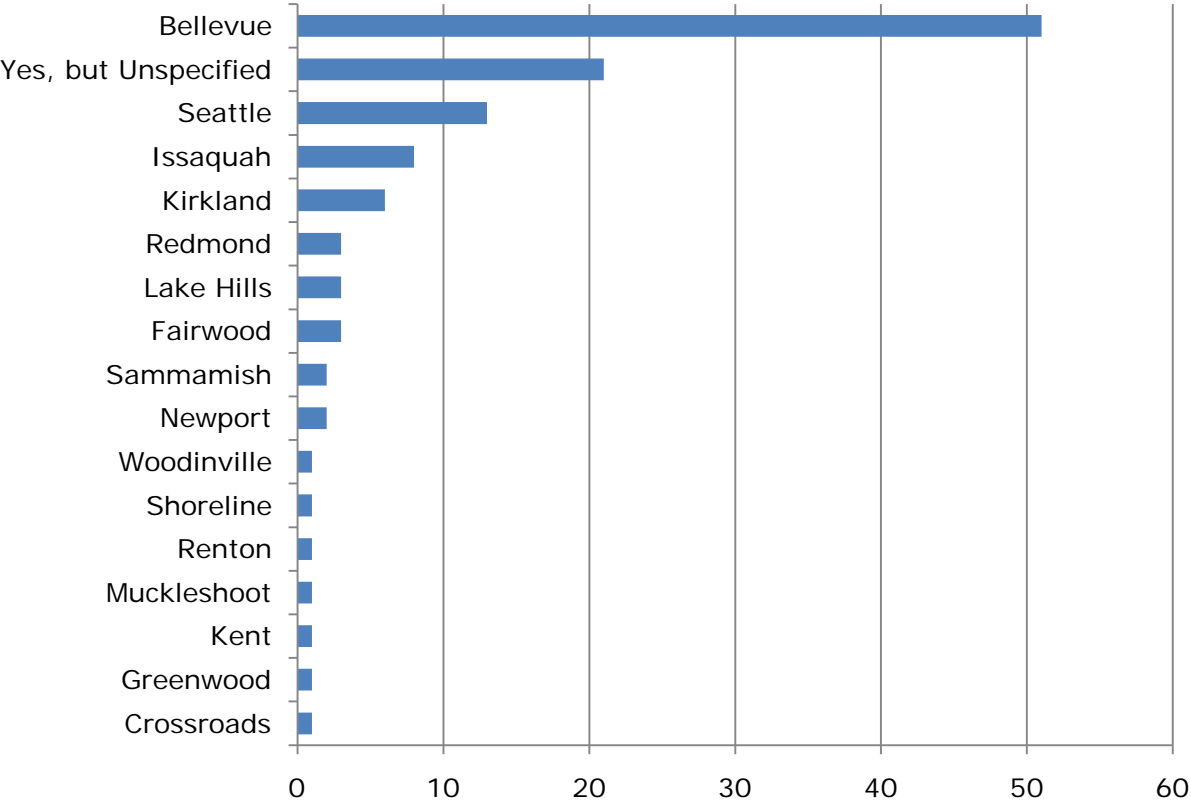
Internet use at the Library



Factors Preventing Library Use



Other Libraries Used



Source: 2010 Mercer Island Library Patron Surveys

SOURCES

<http://www.mercergov.org/Files/2000MIBLOCKGROUP%20MEDIAN%20AGE.pdf>

<http://www.city-data.com/city/Mercer-Island-Washington.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Poverty_line_in_the_United_States

http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/NPTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=16000US5345005&-qr_name=ACS_2008_3YR_G00_NP01&-ds_name=&-redoLog=false

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