

Regular Session, August 3, 2026, at 7:00 p.m.
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

<u>Appointments</u>	137	08/03/2026
NCACC Annual Conference Voting Delegate-Commissioner Cole Setzer		
Juvenile Crime Prevention Council – Tyler Mace		
Sister Cities Board – Tracey Trimble		
Home and Community Block Grant Advisory Board – Mark Bumgarner		
Home and Community Block Grant Advisory Board - Gail Henson		
Home and Community Block Grant Advisory Board – Alice Layne		
<u>Awards</u>	137	08/03/2026
2026 NACo Achievement Award: Cracking the Code: Decoding Books for Beginning Readers		
2026 NACo Achievement Awards: Digital Navigators		
<u>Budget</u>		
Budget Transfers	168	08/03/2026
<u>Economic Development</u>		
Microsoft Economic Development Agreement Termination	169	08/03/2026
<u>Facilities</u>		
NC Department of Public Instruction Facility Needs Survey	168	08/03/2026
<u>Finance</u>		
ABC Store Appropriation	168	08/03/2026
<u>Library</u>		
2026 NACo Achievement Award: Cracking the Code: Decoding Books for Beginning Readers	137	08/03/2026
2026 NACo Achievement Awards: Digital Navigators	137	08/03/2026
Library Strategic Plan	137	08/03/2026
<u>Presentations</u>		
2026 NACo Achievement Award: Cracking the Code: Decoding Books for Beginning Readers	137	08/03/2026
2026 NACo Achievement Awards: Digital Navigators	137	08/03/2026
Library Strategic Plan	167	08/03/2026
Healthy Safe Community: Opioid Update	137	08/03/2026
<u>Public Comment</u>		
Michael McRee	137	08/03/2026
<u>Public Health</u>		
Healthy Safe Community: Opioid Update	165	08/03/2026
<u>Public Hearings</u>		
5310 Rural & Urban Transportation Grant	165	08/03/2026
<u>Resolutions</u>		
Public Transportation Resolution (2026-18)	166	08/03/2026
<u>Social Services</u>		
5310 Rural & Urban Transportation Grant	165	08/03/2026

FY26-27 5310 Title VI Program Plan Adoption

The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, August 3, 2026, at 7:00 p.m., in the Board of Commissioners Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, Catawba County Justice Center, 100 Government Drive, Newton, North Carolina.

Present were Chair Randy Isenhower, Vice Chair Austin Allran and Barbara G. Beatty. Commissioner Robert C. Abernethy, Jr. and Commissioner Cole Setzer were not present.

Also present were County Manager Mary S. Furtado, Assistant County Manager Paul Murray, Assistant County Manager Adam Lindsay, County Attorney Jodi Stewart, and County Clerk Dale Stiles.

1. Chair Randy Isenhower called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., noting a quorum was present.
2. Chair Isenhower led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Commissioner Barbara G. Beatty offered the invocation.
4. Vice Chair Austin Allran made a motion to approve the Minutes from the Board's Regular Meeting and Closed Session of July 20, 2026. The motion carried unanimously.
5. Recognition of Special Guests:
Chair Isenhower welcomed everyone present, including Tim Settlemyre, Chair of Catawba County Board of Education.
6. Public Comments.
Michael McRee came forward and spoke about Newton Conover City Schools.
7. Appointments.
Upon a recommendation by Chair Isenhower that came in the form of a motion which unanimously carried, the Board appointed Commissioner Cole Setzer as the 2026 NCACC Annual Conference Voting Delegate.
Upon a recommendation by Chair Isenhower that came in the form of a motion which unanimously carried, the Board appointed Tyler Mace for a 1st term to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, with a term expiration of June 30, 2028.
Upon a recommendation by Commissioner Barbara Beatty that came in the form of a motion which unanimously carried, the Board reappointed Tracey Trimble to the Western Piedmont Sister Cities Association for a 4th term, with a term expiration of July 31, 2030.
Upon a recommendation by Chair Isenhower that came in the form of a motion which unanimously carried, the Board reappointed the following to the Home and Community Block Grant Advisory Board: Mark Bumgarner to a 2nd term, Gail Henson to a 4th full term, and Alice Layne to a 10th term, each with term expirations of June 30, 2029.
8. Presentations.
 - a. Chair Isenhower presented Library Director Siobhan Loendorf and Library Head of Collection Development Regina Reitzel with the 2026 NACo Achievement Award: Cracking the Code-Decodable Books for Beginning Readers.
 - b. Chair Isenhower presented Library Digital Navigators Ashley Galeote and Brenda Moore with the 2026 NACo Achievement Award: Digital Navigators.
 - c. Library Director Siobhan Loendorf requested the Board approve the 2026-2031 Library Strategic Plan. The Library's previous strategic plan expired in 2025. An updated plan is necessary to qualify for State Aid and to ensure the Library continues to provide responsive, community-focused programs and services.

In August 2025, the Library began working with Library Strategies, a consulting firm specializing in library strategic planning. The process included a review of county demographics, library collections, and services as well as the formation of a Strategic Planning Steering Committee. Library Strategies also facilitated

SOAR sessions (structured feedback sessions designed to evaluate Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations, and Results) with the Steering Committee, Library Advisory Board members, and staff.

Community engagement was a key component of the process. More than 1,000 residents and stakeholders provided input through a community survey, focus groups, stakeholder sessions, one-on-one interviews, and feedback from local high school students. The community survey alone received 846 responses. This input helped identify what residents value most and how the Library can continue to evolve to meet the changing needs of Catawba County.

The resulting 2026–2031 Strategic Plan establishes four high-level goals to guide the Library over the next five years.

Library staff worked with Library Strategies to draft a Year One Work Plan with specific initiatives and measurable outcomes to advance these goals. A new work plan will be developed annually, allowing the Library to measure progress, respond to changing community needs, and make effective use of staff time and public resources.

The 2026–2031 Strategic Plan provides a focused and flexible roadmap for the Library's future, supported by annual work plans and measurable outcomes.

After Ms. Loendorf's presentation, there were no questions. Commissioner Beatty made a motion to approve the 2026-2031 Library Strategic Plan. The motion carried unanimously.

A copy of the Library Strategic Plan is hereto attached:



catawba county
library system
MAKING. LIVING. BETTER.

2026-2031 STRATEGIC PLAN



PREPARED BY
LIBRARY STRATEGIES

5.2026

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

A strategic plan is a roadmap for the library. It helps us decide where we want to go over the next five years, what matters most to our community, and how we will use our resources to get there.

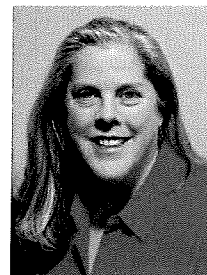
At Catawba County Library, the community is at the heart of everything we do. This plan was shaped by the voices of the people we serve. More than 1,000 residents shared their thoughts through surveys, focus groups, interviews, and feedback from local high school students. Their ideas helped us better understand what our community values most—from books and technology to programs, learning opportunities, and welcoming spaces to connect.

By setting clear goals, this plan helps us be responsible stewards of the public funds and resources entrusted to us. It guides our decisions, helps us focus on what matters most, and keeps us responsive as community needs change. In the end, this plan is both a practical guide and a shared commitment to sustaining and strengthening the library for the community it serves.

Thank you to our Library Board, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee, library staff, and the many community members who shared their ideas to help shape this plan.

Siobhan Loendorf

Siobhan Loendorf,
Library Director



VISION & MISSION



VISION:

*We aspire to
empower lives and
build community.*

MISSION:

*We help Catawba
County connect,
explore, and grow.*



2026-2031 GOAL AREAS

GOAL 1: Serve as a **community anchor for a connected and thriving community.**

Strategies:

- 1.1** Advance literacy, learning, and discovery by **connecting people of all ages with relevant, responsive collections, programs, and services** that inspire personal growth and help residents achieve their educational, recreational, and creative goals.
- 1.2** **Strengthen and sustain outreach partnerships** between the library and community organizations to reach new populations, provide culturally responsive services, and achieve shared goals.
- 1.3** Establish the library as an **economic development hub** with literacy, educational resources, programs, and partnerships for workforce development and small business growth.
- 1.4** Foster **community health and wellness** through strategic partnerships, dynamic programs, and services.
- 1.5** **Enhance outreach and marketing efforts** to community members who have limited awareness of or access to library services.



2026-2031 GOAL AREAS

GOAL 2: Activate **dynamic, welcoming, and accessible spaces.**

Strategies:

- 2.1 Develop a compelling vision and business case to support a **new Main Library** that includes innovative and engaging spaces to meet the needs of the community.
- 2.2 Strengthen **community resilience** by preparing library facilities to serve as trusted post-disaster resource hubs for information and recovery support.
- 2.3 Position the library as a **community center**, with spaces, programs, and services to encourage people of all backgrounds to connect, learn, and participate.

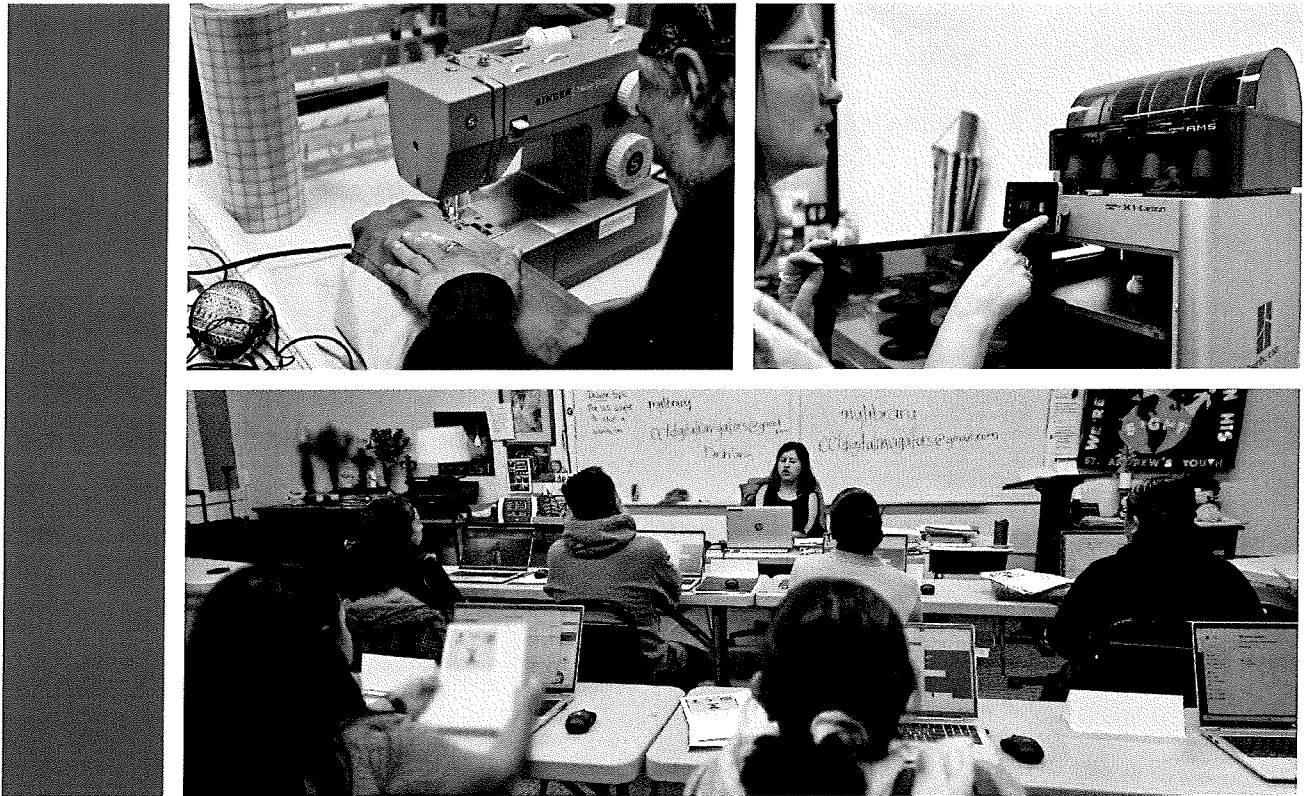


2026-2031 GOAL AREAS

GOAL 3: Ensure equitable access to **technology** and **digital resources**.

Strategies:

- 3.1** Maintain **excellence** in library technology while driving **innovation** for education, workforce development, business, and personal use, including Makerspace, Library of Things, and the library website.
- 3.2** Leverage emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, to **bridge the digital divide** and **empower patrons** with the skills needed to safely navigate a rapidly changing workforce and information landscape.
- 3.3** Integrate the **digital literacy outreach program** into core library services.



2026-2031 GOAL AREAS

GOAL 4: Build a strong, adaptive organizational culture grounded in operational excellence, innovation, stewardship, and continuous improvement.

Strategies:

- 4.1** Ensure **system-wide consistency** and support all branches in achieving established outcomes via clear two-way communication and shared understanding of policies, guidelines, and service expectations.
- 4.2** Support **operational and individual excellence** through cross-training, professional development, leadership training, succession planning, and customer service training.
- 4.3** Grow **staff capacity** to support patron technology needs by providing ongoing training and learning opportunities that build confidence and proficiency in digital tools for education, workforce development, business, and personal use.
- 4.4** **Acknowledge and celebrate** staff and organizational excellence.





THANK YOU

We could not have created this roadmap without the help, support, and thoughtful contributions of the individuals listed below. Their time, effort, and dedication helped shape a meaningful strategic plan that will guide the library system over the next five years. We are deeply grateful to the members of the Library Board and the Strategic Planning Steering Committee for their commitment to the future of our libraries and our community.

Library Board of Trustees

Pam Cansler
Carmen Isenhower
Jeanne Lebens
Katie Perkins
Donna Reece
Ed Sain
Morgan Williams

Strategic Plan Steering Committee

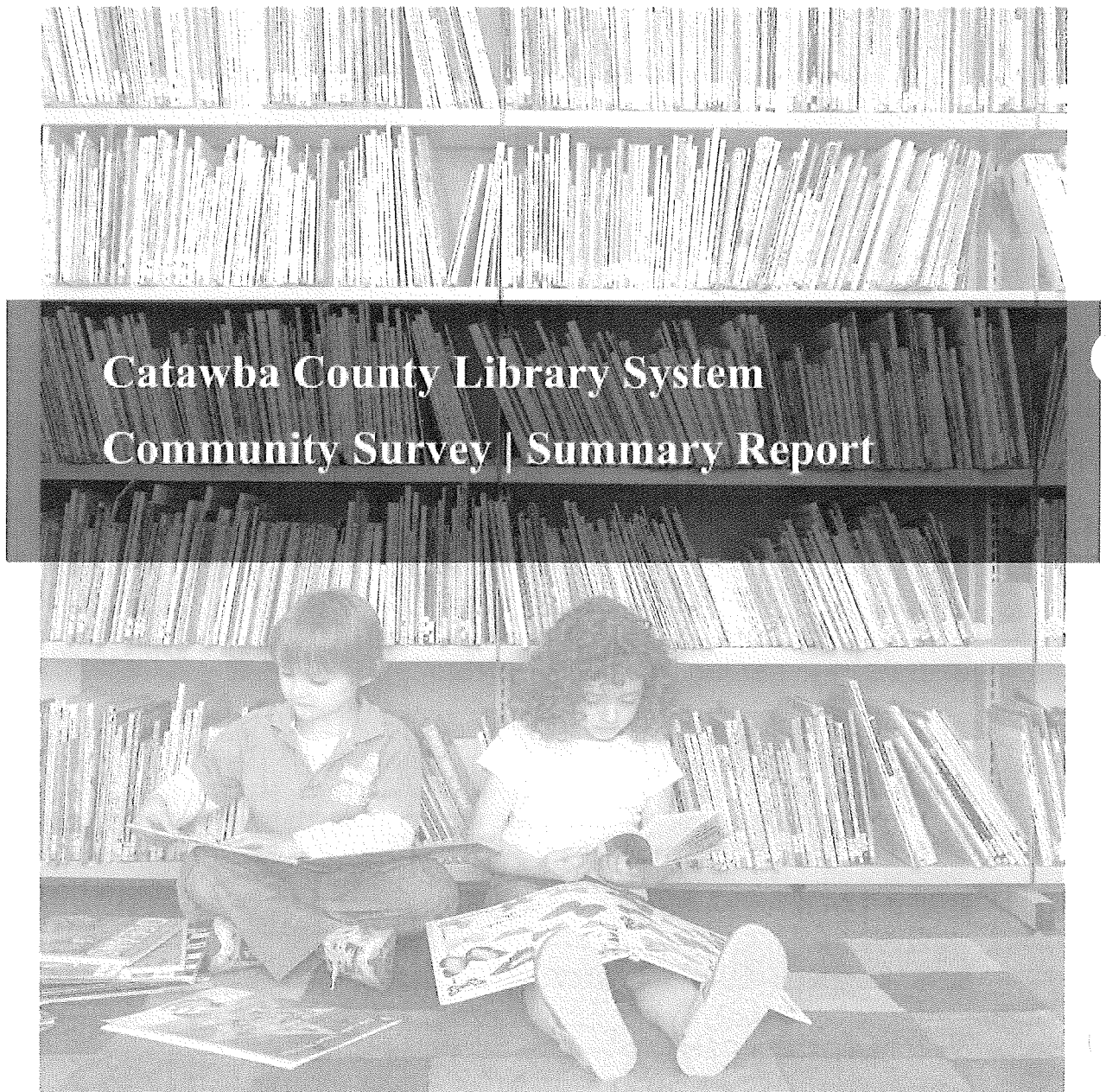
Elizabeth Allen	Amanda Moose
Susan Arrowood	Michelle Orr
John Bailey	Katie Perkins
Rand Brandes	Soraya Place
Anthony Giometti	Beth Rudisill
Tom Hart	Casey Stafford
Anna Hughey	Diana Wilson
Emily Huling	Yulibeth Yanez-Chavez
Jenny Markham	



PREPARED BY
**LIBRARY
STRATEGIES**

A copy of the Community Survey and Summary Report is hereto attached:

LIBRARY STRATEGIES



BACKGROUND

Between September 2025 and May 2026, Library Strategies partnered with Catawba County Library System (CCLS) on a broad-based strategic planning process. As part of a multi-pronged community engagement phase of work, the consulting team crafted and administered an online community survey between December 16 and January 21. Library Strategies subcontracted with well-reputed translation vendor OJ Language Hub for human translation of the survey tool into Spanish – and resulting responses into English for the consultants' analysis.

This questionnaire aimed to capture satisfaction with and perceptions of the public institution as it exists today, as well as to pinpoint unmet or undermet needs. Data shared for – and trends uncovered by – this survey influenced topics probed in the focus group step of community engagement activities. Survey input also directly informs many of the LSCG consulting team's short- and long-term recommendations for CCLS.

In total, **846** residents participated in the 25-question exercise. This number significantly outpaces the consulting team's stated minimum threshold of:

- (#1) 500 completed response sets or
- (#2) 1% of the library's legal service area as defined by IMLS (119,993).

Notes:

- Respondents were ensured anonymity to encourage candor and a high response rate. However, questions and answer sets – including anonymous free-form responses to qualitative questions – can be provided to Catawba County Library Systems' management separately upon request.
- Strong response rates notwithstanding, the broad distribution strategies employed preclude a truly "scientific," statistically generalizable analysis of data.
- Prior to analysis, Library Strategies isolated and removed 66 entries for one or more of the following reasons: duplicate submission; incomplete entry; "straight lining" through matrix questions or other marker of inattention; and/or spam. SurveyMonkey's in-built SurveyMonkey Genius tool streamlined and validated this identification.

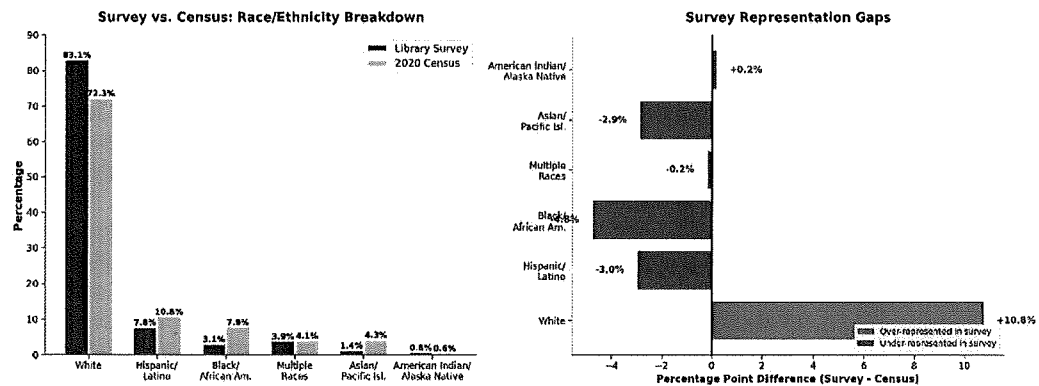
DEMOGRAPHICS / CHARACTERISTICS

Seventy-eight percent of respondents (656 ct.) self-report visiting Catawba County Library System at least once a month, and so can safely be termed *regular users*. In contrast, about 9.4% (79) of survey-takers report that they “Never” or “Rarely” visit the libraries. The remainder fall somewhere in between.

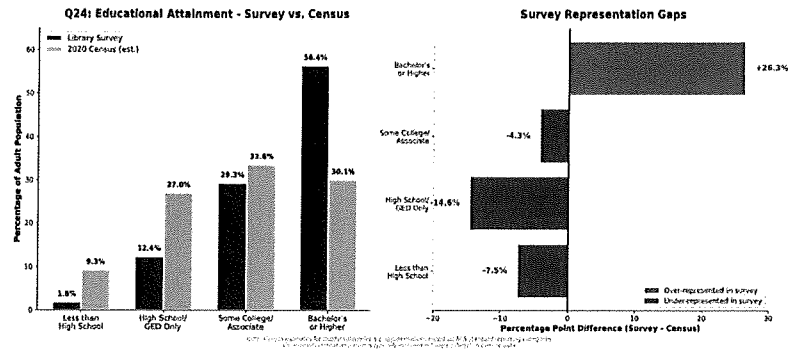
This uneven distribution pattern is not surprising. CCLS’s heaviest users and biggest boosters are almost by definition easier for the Library to reach with an exercise like this one. However, surveying skip logic (see also: Q2) and data tagging allow us to determine if/where opinions meaningfully diverge based on a respondent’s self-reported library usage patterns.

That can also be said for other demographic characteristics. Participation rates were reasonably even among generational cohorts, excepting retirees aged 70+ (who are overrepresented at 23.8% of the total data set) and teenagers (who compose 4.1% of the whole).

The data skews female, with women accounting for 79% of all respondents. The respondent pool also diverges from the demographic composition of Catawba County in two other respects. Black / African American respondents compose only 3.1% of survey-takers but make up 7.9% of the population, according to recent U.S. Census estimates. Conversely, white residents are over-represented by 10.8 percentage points.



Highly educated residents (holding an undergraduate degree or higher) are overrepresented in the sample set at 56.4% of the whole.



Despite those imbalances in the raw data set, we believe that such a large respondent pool still allows us to extrapolate trends and perceptions with reasonable accuracy.

QUESTION-BY-QUESTION BREAKDOWNS

Notes:

1. Question-by-question breakdowns are in some cases reordered, and in others joined together, for best flow and minimal redundancy.
2. Themes and takeaways captured here represent dominant sentiments unless specifically noted otherwise.
3. Direct quotes are used when particularly illustrative and representative of more general sentiments, but always in quotation marks.

Q3/4. Which library location do you visit most often?

Location	Count	Percentage
Main Library (Newton)	222	28.9%
Sherrills Ford-Terrell Branch	130	16.9%
St. Stephens Branch	114	14.8%
Southwest Branch	92	12.0%
Claremont Branch	65	8.5%
Conover Branch	63	8.2%
Malden Branch	45	5.9%
Library to Go (mobile)	34	4.4%
Long View Town Hall	3	0.4%
TOTAL	768	100.0%

****Counts exclude respondents who skipped Q6, as well as surveys ruled to be invalid or incomplete (see pg. 2 – notes section). The same applies to all other question syntheses in this executive summary.***

Q2. You indicated that you rarely or never use CCLS or its online resources. Please share why. Check all that apply.

When asked why they do not visit CCLS, nearly half of nonusers and sporadic visitors (41.7%, 20 ct.) stated that they find all they require through the open internet. In similar fashion, 33.3% (18 ct.) state that they simply don't need a library.

Rounding out the list of reasons cited, 22.9% (11 ct.) prefer to buy and own their own books (and/or other materials), and 14.6% (7 ct.) each a) use another library system, ordinarily Hickory, b) say the nearest CCLS branch is too far away, or c) do not visit because their children have "aged out."

In the open-ended section of this question, a half dozen residents identified a different primary reason for their nonuse: simply being too busy (i.e. a factor that has little to do with the Library and is beyond the organization's direct control).

Q5. How do you find out information about the Library? (Check all that apply.)

When asked how they stay alerted about resources, happenings, and other opportunities offered through CCLS, a majority indicated reliance on the library's own communications channels. Specifically, patrons benefit from a multi-modal messaging strategy blending digital, physical and in-person means, with none necessarily predominating. Survey-takers find information: directly from library staff (22.5%), the County's website (18.1%), flyers at the branches (15.2%), social media (9.4%), print newsletters (8.6%), and weekly email bulletins (8.0%).

Word of mouth from neighbors, local friends, co-workers, etc. is also a vital consideration (9.0%).

Q5 In the last two years, for what reasons have you used the library?

A majority of survey respondents who visit CCLS do so - at least in part - for traditional, transactional reasons. Seventy-six percent (584 ct.) check out physical materials, and 60.3% (464 ct.) enjoy or find value in browsing the available collections.

Also high among the offerings listed on the survey (> 25%), and in descending order, patrons report using the Library:

- for e-books or e-audiobooks (34.6%, 266 ct.)
- for print/copy/fax/scan services (31.6%, 243 ct.)
- to attend an adult program (30.2%, 232 ct.)
- to use WiFi or on-site computers (28.3%, 218 ct.)
- to attend a children's / family program (26.9%, 207 ct.)

In addition, 14 respondents took the opportunity to expand the list provided with free-form answers. Repeated themes include voting/elections (11.8%), fitness/wellness programs (9.2%), and community services like tax assistance or literacy tutoring (9.2%).

Q7. How satisfied are you with the following [operational] aspects of the CCLS branch you use most often? Q8. Share more information about your responses to the previous question.

Feedback on this key question offers a high level but meaningful "report card" on the Library's overall performance as judged by the public. With a survey sample set this size, Library Strategies flags areas that meet or pass the 4% threshold for dissatisfaction, and is *most* interested in areas that exceed the 8% yardstick.

In Q7, survey-takers rated 11 aspects of CCLS operations ranging from physical areas (ex., meeting rooms, study areas), to hours of operation, to building cleanliness and perceived safety. On a system level, four characteristics of the Library surpassed the 4% benchmark.

	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Total Discontent	% Discontent
Restrooms	34	17	51	6.9

Facility (Overall)	28	7	35	4.8
Online Catalog	26	7	33	4.6
Hours of Service	22	9	31	4.1

1. RESTROOMS (overall: 51 people dissatisfied, 23 comments)

Noteworthy: St. Stephens = 42%; Main Library = 38%

Respondents regularly describe restrooms as "dirty," "unkempt," "neglected," and "outdated," with some stating the conditions are so bad they avoid using them (and by extension, do not linger at the Library when avoidable). Family restroom options are a particular pinch point.

2. FACILITY OVERALL (overall: 35 people dissatisfied, 22 comments)

Noteworthy: St. Stephens = 29.4%; Main Library = 23.5%, Sherrills Ford-Terrell = 17.6%, Southwest = 11.8%

The Newton Main Library building is frequently described as well used but well-worn, and therefore in need of capital reinvestments. Comments highlight broken infrastructure (elevators, air conditioning, running toilets), inadequate parking during events, unsafe exterior lighting, and furniture that is dirty, run-down or uncomfortable.

3. ONLINE CATALOG (overall: 33 people dissatisfied, 21 comments)

Noteworthy: Sherrills Ford-Terrell = 28.1%, Main Library = 25%, Claremont = 12.5%, Southwest = 12.5%

Users find the online catalog and website "not user friendly," "hard to navigate," and lacking basic features like category browsing, searchable calendars, and mobile app functionality. Multiple respondents report persistent technical problems including inability to access accounts, difficulty changing usernames, broken/circular search functions, and a catalog interface that is frustratingly "basic" compared with other library systems.

4. HOURS OF SERVICE (overall: 31 people dissatisfied, 37 comments)

Noteworthy: Claremont = 43.3%, Main Library = 23.3%, Sherrills Ford-Terrell = 13.3%

Patrons desire earlier opening times (i.e. before noon), later closing (past 5-6 p.m. for the benefit of residents with '9-5' jobs), Monday availability at branches currently closed, and Sunday hours systemwide. The most common frustration is inconsistent branch hours, making it difficult to remember when locations are open.

Q9. How would you rate overall customer service at the branch you visit most often?

Q10. In particular, how satisfied with their friendliness, helpfulness, expertise and availability?

On balance, patrons are extremely pleased with the customer service they receive from front-line staff, with more than 85% of those who expressed an opinion judging it "excellent." Only two respondents out of 760 rate their experiences as poor.

Survey-takers are likewise highly satisfied with the four “components” of customer service – though availability trails modestly behind the rest.

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral Opinion	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Friendliness	633 (86.5%)	76 (10.4%)	14 (1.9%)	6 (0.8%)	3 (0.4%)
Helpfulness	643 (88.2%)	72 (9.9%)	8 (1.1%)	4 (0.5%)	2 (0.3%)
Expertise	609 (84.9%)	85 (11.9%)	14 (2.0%)	6 (0.8%)	3 (0.4%)
Availability	601 (82.7%)	92 (12.7%)	19 (2.6%)	12 (1.7%) *	3 (0.4%) *

** For the most part, dissatisfaction is localized to Sherrills Ford-Terrell and Main (Newton), representing 42.9% and 21.4% respectively. For every other branch, no more than one self-identified user marked themselves as dissatisfied.*

[CONTINUED]

Q12. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of Catawba County Library's collections and resources?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Use / NA
Books for Adults	364 (56.2%)	221 (34.1%)	40 (6.2%)	19 (2.9%)	4 (0.6%)	76 (10.5%)
Books for Teens	148 (50.5%)	77 (26.3%)	49 (16.7%)	12 (4.1%)	7 (2.4%)	383 (56.7%)
Books for Children	218 (59.2%)	99 (26.9%)	38 (10.3%)	7 (1.9%)	6 (1.6%)	316 (46.2%)
Large Print Items	171 (47.1%)	113 (31.1%)	65 (17.9%)	10 (2.8%)	4 (1.1%)	323 (47.1%)
Magazines/Newspapers	158 (46.5%)	103 (30.3%)	66 (19.4%)	9 (2.6%)	4 (1.2%)	341 (50.1%)
Audiobooks	163 (44.7%)	118 (32.3%)	62 (17.0%)	15 (4.1%)	7 (1.9%)	314 (46.2%)
Movies	187 (50.5%)	124 (33.5%)	47 (12.7%)	7 (1.9%)	5 (1.4%)	309 (45.5%)
eBooks / eAudiobooks	196 (45.0%)	155 (35.6%)	53 (12.2%)	26 (6.0%)	6 (1.4%)	240 (35.5%)
Databases	209 (49.1%)	134 (31.5%)	72 (16.9%)	6 (1.4%)	5 (1.2%)	257 (37.6%)
Technology for Checkout	178 (56.2%)	71 (22.4%)	61 (19.2%)	6 (1.9%)	1 (0.3%)	364 (53.5%)
Other Items for Checkout	127 (50.4%)	54 (21.4%)	63 (25.0%)	7 (2.8%)	1 (0.4%)	422 (62.6%)
Resources – Not English	102 (43.6%)	59 (25.2%)	54 (23.1%)	15 (6.4%)	4 (1.7%)	438 (65.2%)
Reference Materials	119 (47.8%)	61 (24.5%)	61 (24.5%)	4 (1.6%)	4 (1.6%)	429 (63.3%)

As noted above, Library Strategies concentrates attention on areas that meet or pass the 4% threshold for dissatisfaction – and is *most* interested in areas that exceed the 8% yardstick. Once again, CCLS scored generally high marks. Out of thirteen areas, none hits the 8% threshold and only four surpass the 4% marker. Those are as follows:

1. Resources In Languages Other Than English: 8.1% (19 people)

Catawba County's increasingly multiethnic and multicultural character is not proportionately / satisfactorily reflected in the Library's collections, according to these respondents.

2. eBooks & e-Audiobooks: 7.3% (32 people)

Where it exists, dissatisfaction with e-resources is often more nuanced but generally traceable to one or several of the following factors:

A. Long wait times for popular titles

Representative Comment: "I am not excited about the discontinuation of hoopla. I can never find the books I wanna read on Libby and when I can they are generally on a 15-week waiting list. By the time I get off the waiting list I'm not interested anymore."

B. Hoopla discontinuation

Representative Comment: "It is a disservice that Hoopla is being taken away from us taxpayers without any input on our preferences. The way it was announced during Christmas holidays was terrible- almost like you are avoiding angry people. This is just downright dirty of this town."

C. Limited selection/availability

Representative Comment: "I have found the digital resources lacking, as compared to my experience at my previous library. There are not as many titles available. And what titles are available have few copies, resulting in months-long wait times."

D. Technical difficulties

Representative Comment: "Online catalog needs a category search. It's hard to just browse without already knowing what you are looking for."

3. Books for Teens: 6.5% (19 people)

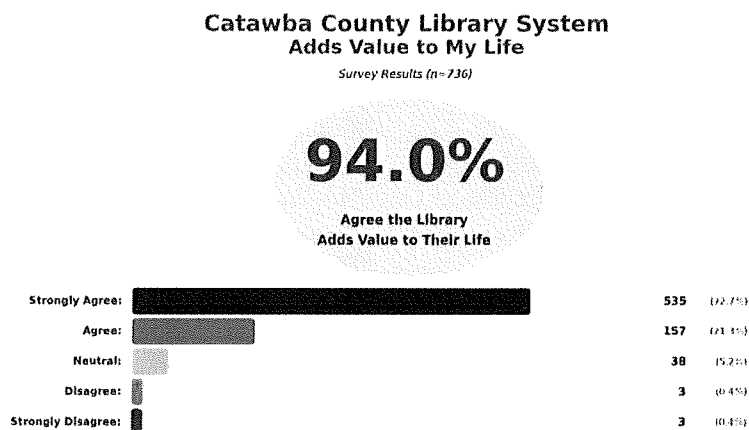
Open-ended comments offer little elaboration on this point, but qualitative feedback provided elsewhere in the survey strongly suggests that limited selection and comparatively modest ebook offerings are likely contributing factors.

4. Audiobooks (Physical): 6.0% (22 people)

Where audiobooks (excluding e-audiobook loans) are mentioned, users point to a limited selection, acquisition that trails behind popular trends / public expectations, and occasionally

damaged items. Where it is felt, this pinch point may be exacerbated by the removal of Hoopla services.

Q14. Please indicate the level to which you agree with this statement: Catawba County Library System adds value to my life.



Ninety-four percent of survey takers agree that CCLS adds value to their lives, and nearly three quarters (72.7%) "strongly agree" with that assertion. Less than 1% of survey takers disagree with the sentiment.

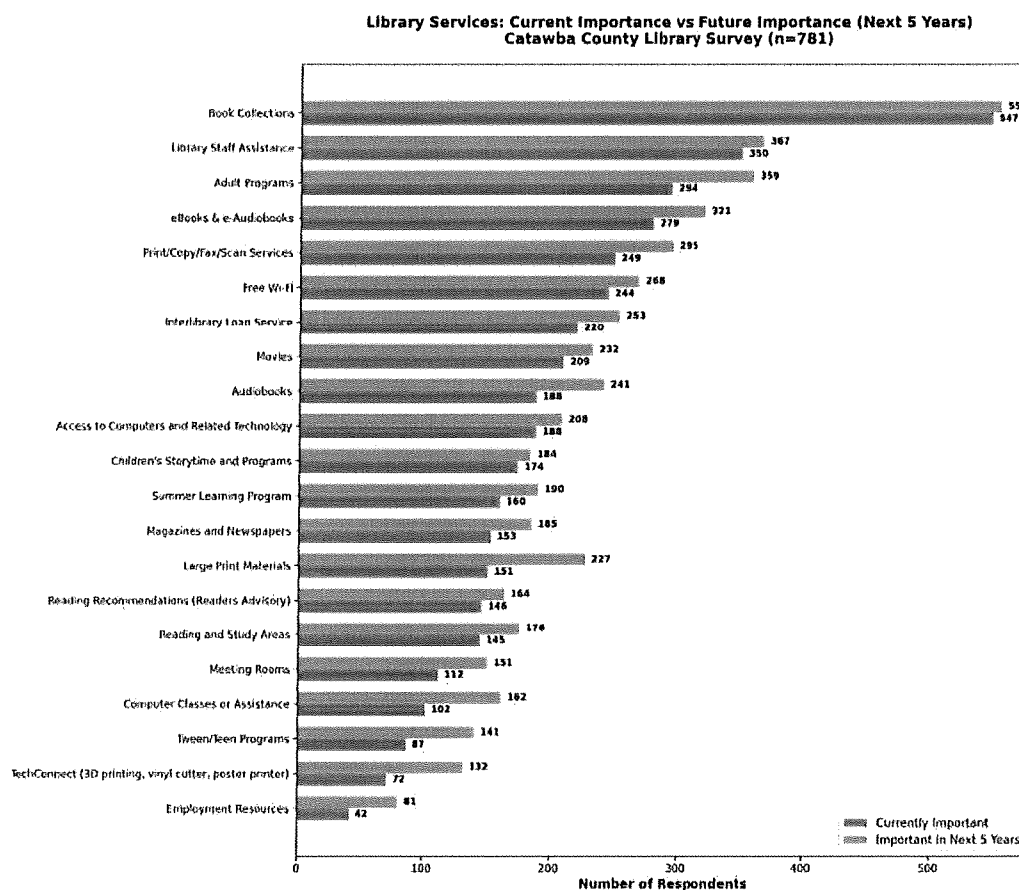
Q11 Please indicate which of the following library services are CURRENTLY important to you or your family.

Q15. Please indicate which of the following Library services you expect to be important to you or your family in the NEXT FIVE YEARS. (Check as many as apply.)

It is instructive to compare and contrast these two questions. The first is reasonably straightforward, assessing what resources and services patrons value *today*. However, the second asks the respondent to forecast their needs into the future based on any variables or rationale that occurs to them. While future predictions and aspirations are not an ironclad bellwether for future usage, this is a useful exercise for gauging general patterns.

In total, these paired questions ask after 21 markers of library service. **Notably, interest in NONE is anticipated to slacken between 2026 and 2031. Variability is only in the *rate* of aggregate anticipated *increase*.**

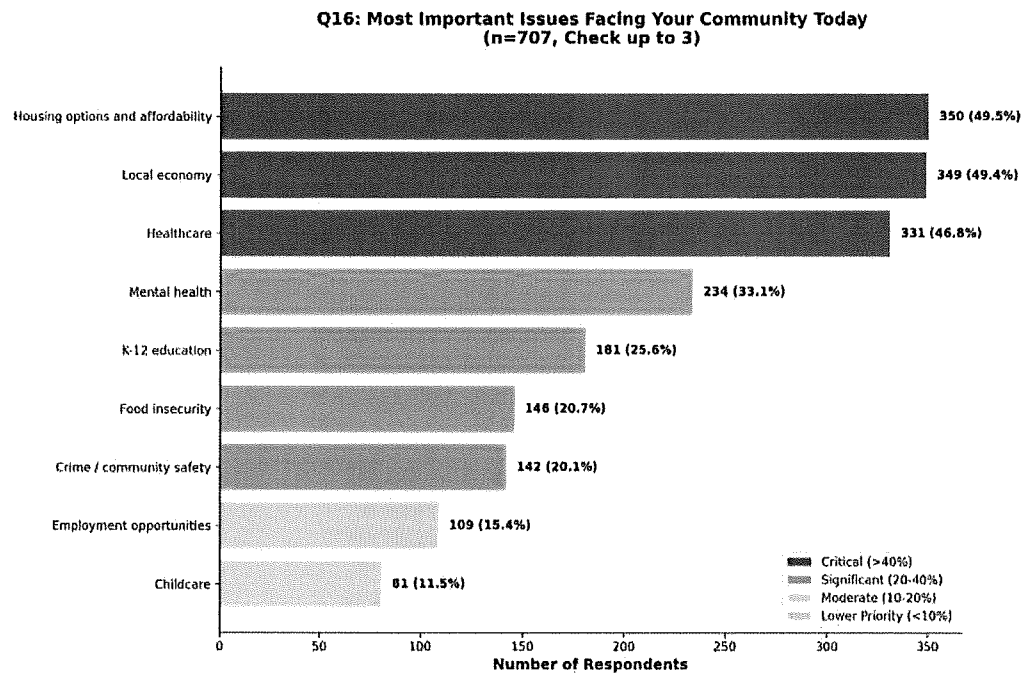
Ran k	Service	Current Importance (Q11)	Future Importance (Q15)	Absolute Change	Percent Change
1	Employment Resources	42	81	39	92.9%
2	TechConnect	72	132	60	83.3%
3	Tween / Teen Programs	87	141	54	62.1%
4	Computer Classes / Assistance	102	162	60	58.8%
5	Large Print Materials	151	227	76	50.3%
6	Meeting Rooms	112	151	39	34.8%
7	Audiobooks	188	241	53	28.2%
8	Adult Programs	294	359	65	22.1%
9	Reading and Study Areas	145	176	31	21.4%
10	Magazines and Newspapers	153	185	32	20.9%
11	Summer Learning Program	160	190	30	18.8%
12	Print /Copy/Fax/Scan Services	249	295	46	18.5%
13	eBooks & e-Audiobooks	279	321	42	15.1%
14	Interlibrary Loan Service	220	253	33	15.0%
15	Reading Recommendations	146	164	18	12.3%
16	Movies	209	232	23	11.0%
17	Computers + Tech Access	188	208	20	10.6%
18	Free WI-Fi	244	268	24	9.8%
19	Children's Programs	174	184	10	5.7%
20	Library Staff Assistance	350	367	17	4.9%
21	Book Collections	547	554	7	1.3%



As the graph and chart representations illustrate, survey-takers anticipate a nearly two-fold increase in their need for employment resources. If the data is taken at face value, CCLS can also expect a 50%+ increase in demand and usage for TechConnect, tween/teen programs, computer assistance, and large print materials. Two additional resource categories may see a 25%+ uptick, according to the questionnaire: meeting rooms (34.8%) and audiobooks (28.2%).

Note: Both Q11 and Q15 were structured as optional. Q11 netted 727 responses while Q15 saw 706 (a drop from 93.1% to 90.4% of the data set). This is likely due to 'survey fatigue' experienced by a subset of respondents as they encountered the final questions. While the difference is not statistically problematic, it bears noting that this 2.7% difference means that the projections for library needs "IN FIVE YEARS" are, if anything, slightly underrepresented.

Q16. In your opinion, what are the most important issues facing your community today? (Check up to 3 options.)



Analysis of need areas selected by ≥ 20% of survey takers:

1. HOUSING CRISIS - 350 people (49.5%) | Residents regularly struggle with housing affordability and availability.

Library Intersections: Housing resources, rental assistance information, homebuyer education programs, connecting people to social services.

2. ECONOMIC ANXIETY - 349 people (49.4%) | General economic uncertainty pervades the County's communities. Specifics range from job security to the rising cost of groceries and utilities.

Library Intersections: Financial literacy programs, employment resources, small business support, free access to economic opportunity tools.

3. HEALTHCARE ACCESS - 331 people (46.8%) | Nearly half of residents reporting express concern about healthcare availability, affordability, and quality.

Library Intersections: Health information resources, insurance navigation assistance, telehealth access points, medical database access.

4. MENTAL HEALTH - 234 people (33.1%) | One third of questionnaire respondents recognize growing mental health needs in the community (for self, family or others).

Library Intersections: Mental health resources, support group meeting spaces, wellness programs, reducing stigma through education.

5. K-12 EDUCATION - 181 people (25.6%) | One in four respondents are concerned about school quality, resources, and outcomes.

Library Intersections: Homework help, tutoring programs, after-school activities, summer learning to prevent "seasonal slide."

6. FOOD INSECURITY - 146 people (20.7%) | One in five survey takers are concerned about access to nutritious, affordable food (for self, family or others).

Library Intersections: Food resource information, nutrition programs, community fridge partnerships, eliminating fines that create barriers.

7. CRIME/COMMUNITY SAFETY - 142 people (20.1%) | Public safety concerns (real and perceived) affect community character, connectedness, and quality of life.

Library Role: Safe community gathering space, positive youth programs, neighborhood watch information, security presence.

[CONTINUED]

Note: CCLS's concluding questions, Q17-19, are open ended in their format. Qualitative, "write in" prompts like this almost uniformly generate fewer responses than do checkbox, rating, ranking, or other closed-ended question types. Consequently, the response syntheses below reflect fewer participants:

- Q17: 233 responses (29.8%)
- Q18: 345 responses (44.2%)
- Q19: 232 responses (29.7%)

Q17 What Library services, programs, or resources do you want that are not currently offered?

Top Five Themes:

1. CLASSES / WORKSHOPS (32 mentions, 13.7%)

Key Need: Language learning (especially English/ESL) and computer literacy training

2. MORE PROGRAMS (GENERAL/ADULT) (29 mentions, 12.4%)

Key Need: Adult programs on health/wellness + timely topics beyond current portfolio

4. MORE eBOOKS / DIGITAL RESOURCES (20 mentions, 8.6%)

Key Need: More digital titles, shorter wait times, broader ebook selection

5. EXTENDED HOURS / SUNDAY HOURS (18 mentions, 7.7%)

Key Need: Evening hours for working people, Sunday hours, extended weekday hours

6. CHILDREN/YOUTH SERVICES (9 mentions, 3.9%)

Key Need: Homework help, tutoring, expanded youth programming

[CONTINUED]

Q18. What do you think the Library's top two or three priorities should be over the next few years?

Rank	Theme	Count	% of Q18 Responses	Priority Tier
1	Books / Collections	122	35.4%	Top Tier
2	Community Space / Engagement	72	20.9%	High Priority
3	Children / Youth Services	66	19.1%	Priority
4	Programs / Activities	64	18.6%	Priority
5	Staff / Customer Service	60	17.4%	Priority
6	Classes / Education / Training	58	16.8%	Priority
7	Technology / Digital Access	53	15.4%	Priority
8	Hours / Accessibility	47	13.6%	Priority
9	Facilities / Physical Space	46	13.3%	Priority
10	eBooks / Digital Resources	35	10.1%	Priority
11	Employment / Workforce Services	25	7.2%	
12	Diversity / Intellectual Freedom	16	4.6%	
13	Large Print / Senior Services	4	1.2%	
14	Spanish Language Services	4	1.2%	

Details:

1. Books / Collections (122, 35.4%) - Maintain and expand physical book collections with current bestsellers, award winners, large print for seniors, and Spanish-language materials while resisting book bans and censorship.

2. Community Space / Engagement (72, 20.9%) - Transform the library into a safe community gathering place that connects people to social services, fosters civic engagement, and serves as neutral common ground.

3. Children / Youth Services (66, 19.1%) - Expand early literacy programs, storytimes, supplemental education resources, and parent engagement initiatives while extending programming to underserved middle and high school students.

4. Programs / Activities (64, 18.6%) - Offer diverse educational and entertaining community programs including Holocaust-style educational programming, live animal events, and conservation/climate change topics.

5. Staff / Customer Service (60, 17.4%) - Maintain and celebrate the excellent, friendly, helpful staff who create welcoming atmospheres and provide the human connections that make libraries "a place you want to be."

6. Classes / Education / Training (58, 16.8%) - Provide English language classes for adults, computer literacy training, financial education, and workforce development workshops to build community skills and economic opportunity.

7. Technology / Digital Access (53, 15.4%) - Ensure free WiFi and computer access for those without home internet, provide technology education to navigate the digital world, and maintain cutting-edge equipment as economic survival tools.

8. Hours / Accessibility (47, 13.6%) - Expand operating hours to evenings and weekends to serve working families and ensure equitable access for those with non-traditional schedules.

9. Facilities / Physical Space (46, 13.3%) - Address building maintenance needs, create more meeting rooms and study spaces, improve accessibility (especially Conover's third-floor location), and consider new facilities where needed (Southwest).

10. eBooks / Digital Resources (35, 10.1%) - Increase digital collection budgets to reduce wait times, add more copies of popular titles, expand selection breadth, and find alternatives to compensate for Hoopla's discontinuation.

11. Employment / Workforce Services (25, 7.2%) - Provide job search assistance, resume help, career counseling, and skill training to support community members navigating economic challenges and career transitions.

12. Diversity / Intellectual Freedom (16, 4.6%) - Actively resist book bans and censorship, maintain diverse collections despite political pressure, and defend the democratic principle that *"a few shouldn't determine what everyone reads."*

13. Large Print / Senior Services (4, 1.2%) - Expand large print book collections and senior-specific programming to serve the aging population's growing needs.

14. Spanish Language Services (4, 1.2%) - Hire bilingual staff, expand Spanish-language collections, and offer Spanish-language programs to serve the county's growing Hispanic/Latino community.

Q19. Please share any other comments that will help plan the future of Catawba County Library System. What else would you like to tell us about the Library?

Q19 offered survey-takers a final chance to introduce ideas, concerns or other feedback that was not contributed in response to an earlier, more targeted prompt. Most survey-takers took it as an opportunity to rearticulate pain points or ambitions already mentioned elsewhere. Still more used Q19 as a platform to express gratitude to CCLS and its staff for all they *already* do and offer.

Rank	Theme	Count	% of Responses	Theme Type
1	General Satisfaction	92	39.7%	Positive/Gratitude
2	Staff Excellence	51	22.0%	Positive/Gratitude
3	Request for Services	48	20.7%	Request/Suggestion
4	Gratitude / Praise	40	17.2%	Positive/Gratitude
5	Branch-Specific Issues	36	15.5%	Mixed/Other
6	Collections	29	12.5%	Request/Suggestion
7	Programs / Classes	28	12.1%	Request/Suggestion
8	Hoopla / Digital Concerns	16	6.9%	Concern/Issue
9	Specific Staff Member Praise	15	6.5%	Positive/Gratitude
10	Facilities / Building Issues	11	4.7%	Concern/Issue
11	Hours / Access	9	3.9%	Mixed/Other
12	Genealogy / Local History	3	1.3%	Mixed/Other
13	Noise / Quiet Space Issues	2	0.9%	Concern/Issue

d. Opioid SUD Program Coordinator Jamie Todd and REACH Crew Chief Jason Powell presented to the Board the Healthy Safe Community: Opioid Update. No action was requested.

9. Public Hearings.

Social Services Adult Services Program Manager Heather Ball requested the Board of Commissioners hold a public hearing to consider submittal of the Federal 5310 Enhanced Mobility grant for seniors and individuals with disabilities residing in rural areas and urban areas, adopt a resolution authorizing submittal of the grant, and adopt the required 5310 Title VI Program Plan for FY26-27.

The goal of the Section 5310 program is to improve mobility for seniors and individuals with disabilities by removing barriers to transportation services. Catawba County has received 5310 Grant funds since FY 2013.

The 5310 program requires submission of two separate grants, one for trips originating in urban areas and one for trips originating in rural areas. The grant application for trips originating from rural areas is submitted to the Department of Transportation annually, and the grant for trips originating from urban areas is submitted to the Western Piedmont Council of Governments every two years.

Catawba County will continue to contract with Western Piedmont Regional Transportation Authority (WPRTA aka Greenway) to provide transportation funded by Section 5310. The transportation funds typically allow seniors and individuals with disabilities to attend Congregate Nutrition Programs (Seniors Morning Out) and have access to essential shopping, pharmacies, banking, medical appointments and other services. Additionally, as funds allow, transportation is provided for individuals to access educational and employment opportunities, volunteer activities, senior centers, and Adult Day Care/Day Health programs when no other transportation is available.

Catawba County is once again requesting a total of \$250,000 for transportation originating in rural areas in FY 28 and \$300,00 for transportation originating from urban areas across FY28 and FY29 (\$150,00 each year).

The Department anticipates approximately 10,000 one-way trips will be provided to an estimated 60-115 individuals for the grant year. Many of our seniors will utilize transportation for multiple purposes and a large percentage of the target population will utilize transportation daily. Providing transportation will continue to allow older adults the opportunity and the choice to remain active and involved in the community.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in any program or activity that received federal financial assistance. The Title VI Program Plan for Catawba County, included in your packet for review, is required to be updated and adopted at least every three years in order to receive 5310 federal transportation funds. This plan is in place to protect the civil rights of citizens served by 5310 funds.

If the Federal 5310 Grant funding is not available, the Catawba County Senior Nutrition Program would not, for example, be able to transport seniors to Congregate Meal Sites (Seniors Morning Out), which provide a lunch meal Monday through Thursday, along with health and wellness activities, education, and fellowship. The Seniors Morning Out programs rely on the transportation provided by WPTA (Greenway), funded by the Federal 5310 Grant. Additionally, transportation for seniors or adults with disabilities for other essential activities would not be available.

Last year, of the seniors who attended Seniors Morning Out, over 28% relied on the transportation this grant provided to get to and from the site locations and programs. In addition, 28% of seniors who attend Seniors Morning Out are living below the Federal poverty level, and 51% currently live alone. Last year, approximately 279 seniors participated in the program, and 18,957 meals were served.

Catawba County Social Services does not currently have an alternative way to keep the Seniors Morning Out programs active without the Federal 5310 Grant funding providing trips from both urban and rural areas.

After Ms. Ball's presentation, there were no questions. Chair Isenhower opened the public hearing. With no one coming forward the Chair closed the public hearing. Vice Chair Allran made a motion to adopt a resolution authorizing submittal of the grant and adopt the required 5310 Title VI Program Plan for FY26-27. The motion carried unanimously.

The following resolution applies:

RESOLUTION No. 2026 - 18
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM RESOLUTION
FY 2028 RESOLUTION

Section 5311 (including ADTAP), 5310, 5339, 5307 and applicable State funding, or combination thereof.

Applicant seeking permission to apply for Public Transportation Program funding, enter into agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, provide the necessary assurances and the required local match.

A motion was made by Commissioner Austin Allran and a second was not required for the adoption of the following resolution, and upon being put to a vote was duly adopted.

WHEREAS, Article 2B of Chapter 136 of the North Carolina General Statutes and the Governor of North Carolina have designated the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) as the agency responsible for administering federal and state public transportation funds; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation will apply for a grant from the US Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration and receives funds from the North Carolina General Assembly to provide assistance for rural public transportation projects; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of these transportation funds is to provide grant monies to local agencies for the provision of rural, small urban, and urban public transportation services consistent with the policy requirements of each funding source for planning, community and agency involvement, service design, service alternatives, training and conference participation, reporting and other requirements (drug and alcohol testing policy and program, disadvantaged business enterprise program, and fully allocated costs analysis); and

WHEREAS, the funds applied for may be Administrative, Operating, Planning, or Capital funds and will have different percentages of federal, state, and local funds.

WHEREAS, non-Community Transportation applicants may apply for funding for "purchase-of-service" projects under the Capital Purchase of Service budget, Section 5310 program.

WHEREAS, Catawba County Government hereby assures and certifies that it will provide the required local matching funds; that its staff has the technical capacity to implement and manage the project(s), prepare required reports, obtain required training, attend meetings and conferences; and agrees to comply with the federal and state statutes, regulations, executive orders, Section 5333 (b) Warranty, and all administrative requirements related to the applications made to and grants received from the Federal Transit Administration, as well as the provisions of Section 1001 of Title 18, U. S. C.

WHEREAS, the applicant has or will provide all annual certifications and assurances to the State of North Carolina required for the project;

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that Director of Social Services of Catawba County Government is hereby authorized to submit grant application(s) for federal and state funding in response to NCDOT's calls for projects, make the necessary assurances and certifications and be empowered to enter into an agreement with the NCDOT to provide rural, small urban, and urban public transportation services.

Adopted the 3rd day of August, 2026.

C. Randall Isenhower, Chairman

I, Dale R. Stiles, Catawba County Clerk to the Board, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of an excerpt from the minutes of a meeting of the Catawba County Board of Commissioners duly held on the 3rd day of August, 2026.

Dale R. Stiles, County Clerk

10. Consent Agenda.

County Manager Mary Furtado presented the following item under the consent agenda. Chair Isenhower asked if any commissioner wished for the item to be broken out of the consent agenda for individual consideration. None was requested.

a. The Finance and Personnel Subcommittee recommended the Board of Commissioners accept and appropriate grant funds in the amount of \$10,075 to the Catawba County Library from a Federal IMLS Library Services Technology Act (LSTA) EZ Grant.

In May 2021, the Board of Commissioners adopted the Catawba County Library Strategic Plan that lays out priorities for 2021 through 2025. The three major goals embedded in the strategic plan, which were driven by the results of a comprehensive community needs assessment and intensive input process, include:

- Connect: bringing people together with empowering high-quality resources.
- Explore: fostering the community's passions for discovery, knowledge, and personal growth.
- Grow: collaboratively addressing critical challenges facing the community by providing equitable access to the tools, resources, and spaces people need to succeed and thrive.

The need for this project stems from the growing shift from physical media to streaming-only content, leaving many library patrons without affordable access to popular educational, cultural, and entertainment resources. By providing Roku streaming devices and Wi-Fi hotspots for checkout, the library will help bridge the digital divide and ensure all residents can participate in today's increasing digital media environment.

With this grant the library will establish a circulating collection of 135 Roku streaming devices and 33 additional Wi-Fi hotspots to expand equitable access to digital media for Catawba County residents. The collection will provide access to premium streaming services and educational content for individuals and families who may not be able to afford subscriptions, streaming equipment, or reliable internet service. Developed in response to the loss of Hoopla video streaming and the ongoing decline of DVD availability, the project will help promote digital inclusion by increasing access to news, weather, information, and entertainment.

This grant requires a 25 percent local match of \$3,359 to be facilitated through library reinventing funding.

Revenue

110-810050-631916	\$10,075	LSTA Grant Scholarship
-------------------	----------	------------------------

Expenditure

110-810050-841051	\$10,075	LSTA Grant Scholarship
-------------------	----------	------------------------

The consent agenda items came in the form of a motion by Chair Isenhower, which carried unanimously.

11. Other Items of Business. None.

12. Manager's Report. None.

a. Staff requested the Board of Commissioners acknowledge receipt and review of Department of Public Instruction-required Facility Needs Surveys for each school system in the county.

This action does not endorse or commit to fund the proposed projects.

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI) requires each school system to perform a survey of school facility needs every five (5) years, pursuant to North Carolina G.S 115C-521(a). The survey reflects the capital construction needs for the next five-year period. Each of the 3 local school systems initiated these Facility Needs Surveys in 2025-26, and the studies are intended to cover the upcoming 5-year period spanning 2026 through 2031.

Surveys for each of the LEAs in Catawba County have been certified by its respective school board.

The cost summary for each LEA survey is based on a statewide methodology prescribed by DPI, to ensure uniformity in information submitted by all LEAs statewide in determining estimated costs for each project.

- Catawba County Schools: \$177.6M in facility needs over first 5-year period, with \$11.2M in additional needs over the following 5-year period, and \$5.9M in non-instructional facility needs, for a grand total of \$194.8M in needs over 10 years.
- Hickory City Schools: \$107.1M in facility needs over first 5-year period, with \$34.3M in additional needs over the following 5-year period, and \$7M in non-instructional facility needs, for a grand total of \$148.3M in needs over 10 years.
- Newton-Conover City Schools: **information forthcoming - tbd*

These Facility Needs Surveys will be incorporated into future analysis regarding county-wide school construction priorities, timing, and sequencing.

Commissioner Beatty made a motion to acknowledged receipt and review of Department of Public Instruction-required Facility Needs Surveys for each school system in the county. This action does not endorse or commit to fund the proposed projects. The motion carried unanimously.

b. ABC Store Request to Retain Receipts.

This item was removed from the agenda; no action was taken.

c. Budget Transfers.

County Manger Mary Furtado reported the completing following budget transfers to the Board, pursuant to Board authority granted to her:

Special Contingency Transfers:

K9 Operating Donation

Transfer

From:

110-190100-691500	Special Contingency	\$11,000
110-190100-994200	Special Contingency	\$11,000

To:

110-210050-681900	Donations/Grants	\$11,000
110-210050-985000	Other Equipment	\$11,000

The Sheriff's Office received a donation from a local company to purchase a K9. Special contingency transfer is needed to bring the donation into the budget.

Sheriff Vehicle Replacement

Transfer

From:

115-150120-691500	Special Contingency	\$124,669
115-150120-994200	Special Contingency	\$124,669

To:

115-150120-680800	Insurance Settlements	\$124,669
115-150120-995110	To General Fund	\$124,669

Supplemental Appropriation:

Revenue:

110-190900-695115	From Self Insurance Fund	\$124,669
-------------------	--------------------------	-----------

Appropriation:

110-210050-984000	Motor Vehicles	\$85,890
110-210050-842530	Repair & Maintenance Other Equipment	\$38,779

Transfer from Special Contingency to move funding received from an insurance payout to the General Fund to purchase a replacement vehicle and equipment.

Sheriff Vehicle Replacement Upfit

Transfer

From:

115-150120-691500	Special Contingency	\$10,000
115-150120-994200	Special Contingency	\$10,000

To:

115-150120-680800	Insurance Settlements	\$10,000
115-150120-995110	To General Fund	\$10,000

Supplemental Appropriation:

Revenue:

110-190900-695115	From Self Insurance Fund	\$10,000
-------------------	--------------------------	----------

Appropriation:

110-210050-835025	Motor Vehicles	\$10,000
-------------------	----------------	----------

Transfer from Special Contingency to move funding received from an insurance payout to the General Fund to upfit a replacement vehicle purchased.

12. Attorney's Report.

County Attorney requested the Board approve a termination agreement with Microsoft Corporation in substantially the form presented and authorize the Chair to execute the agreement, with such non-material revisions as are approved by the Chair and County Attorney, provided that no revision materially alters the Agreement as approved by the Board.

In 2002 Catawba County, along with the Town of Maide, City of Conover and City of Hickory entered into Economic Development Agreements with Microsoft related to the construction of data centers.

Earlier this year, Microsoft launched their Community First AI Infrastructure Plan and the company has stated it is committed to take steps to be a good neighbor in the communities where they build, own and operate datacenters. This includes, among other things plans to add to the tax base that funds local government services. Microsoft has now decided to forego economic development incentives in Catawba County by terminating the 2022 economic development agreements.

Commissioner Beatty made a motion to approve the termination agreement in substantially the form presented and authorize the Chair to execute the agreement, with such non-material revisions as are approved by the Chair and County Attorney, provided that no revision materially alters the Agreement as approved by the Board. The motion carried unanimously carried.

The following Mutual Termination and Release Agreement applies:

**MUTUAL TERMINATION AND RELEASE AGREEMENT
(for Economic Development Agreement)**

This **MUTUAL TERMINATION AND RELEASE AGREEMENT** (this "Agreement") is made as of _____, 2026 (the "Effective Date"), by and between **CATAWBA COUNTY** ("County"), a North Carolina body politic corporate in nature and **MICROSOFT CORPORATION**, a Washington state corporation ("Company") (together, the "Parties", and each a "Party").

RECITALS

WHEREAS, North Carolina General Statute ("NCGS") §158-7.1 authorizes each county and city in the State to make appropriations for economic development purposes, including for the purpose of aiding and encouraging the location of business enterprises and industrial and commercial facilities in or near its boundaries; and

WHEREAS, Company is engaged in developing technology-based facilities and intends to continue developing technology-based facilities in Catawba County; and

WHEREAS, the Parties entered into an Economic Development Agreement (the "EDA") dated November 9, 2022, wherein Company agreed to create jobs and make improvements to property located in Catawba County in return for certain economic incentives offered by the County; and

WHEREAS, Company has not requested and County has not paid any incentives pursuant to the terms of the EDA (including any incentives under Section 5 of the EDA for the annual economic development incentives grant); and

WHEREAS, subsequent to the EDA, Company approved its Community-First AI Infrastructure Plan, and in furtherance thereof, Company now desires to forego the incentives that would otherwise have been available to the Company under the EDA; and

WHEREAS, the Parties now desire to mutually terminate the EDA, subject to the following terms and conditions, and have reached a mutual understanding and agreement of all things and matters in controversy arising out of or concerning the EDA and the termination thereof.

NOW, THEREFORE, with the foregoing recitals being incorporated herein by reference thereto, in consideration of the mutual promises and agreements set forth herein, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, and intending to be legally bound hereby, the Parties agree as follows:

1. **Recitals.** The foregoing recitals are incorporated herein by reference.
2. **Termination of Agreement.** Upon the Effective Date of this Agreement, the EDA shall be terminated and shall be of no further force or effect, with County and Company each being completely and finally released from any obligation of performance, past, present or future, under the EDA.

3. **Releases.** In consideration of the covenants, agreements, and undertakings of the Parties under this Agreement, effective upon the execution of this Agreement, the Parties, on behalf of themselves, their present and former parents, subsidiaries, affiliates, predecessors, successors, assigns, and other related persons or entities (collectively, "Releasors"), hereby release, waive, and forever discharge each other and each other's respective present and former, direct and indirect, parents, subsidiaries, affiliates, predecessors, successors, assigns, and other related persons or entities (collectively, "Releasees") of and from any and all claims, demands, actions, causes of action, judgments, rights, fees, damages, debts, obligations, liabilities, and expenses (inclusive of attorneys' fees) of any kind whatsoever, whether known or unknown, that Releasors may have or have ever had against the Releasees, for, upon, or by reason of any matter, cause, or thing whatsoever from the beginning of time through the date of this release arising out of or relating to the EDA, except for any obligations and/or claims relating to rights and obligations preserved by, created by, or otherwise arising out of this Agreement.

4. **Acknowledgment of General Release.** The Parties acknowledge that the releases set forth above are general releases. Each Party acknowledges that it may have claims which exist as of the Effective Date about which the Party is unaware, whether through ignorance, oversight, error, negligence, or otherwise, and that such claims, if known, would materially affect the Party's decision to enter this Agreement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, each Party acknowledges that it intends to fully and finally release the other Party of and from any such claims, except for any obligations and/or claims relating to rights and obligations preserved by, created by, or otherwise arising out of this Agreement.

5. **Effect on Other Agreements.** Except for the termination of the EDA as set forth herein, nothing in this Agreement modifies or amends any other agreement between the Parties.

6. **Amendments.** The provisions of this Agreement may be modified or amended only by written instrument signed by the Parties.

7. **Headings.** The headings contained in this Agreement are for convenience only and shall in no way expand or limit the scope of meaning of the various sections and paragraphs hereof.

8. **Waiver.** A Party's waiver of any covenant or condition contained in this Agreement shall not be construed as a waiver of a subsequent breach hereof. The consent or approval by a Party to or of any act by the other Party requiring such consent or approval shall not be deemed to render unnecessary the consenting Party's consent or approval to or of any subsequent act. No breach of a covenant or condition of this Agreement shall be deemed to have been waived unless such waiver is in writing and signed by the waiving Party.

9. **Severability.** If any provision of this Agreement or the application thereof to any person or circumstance shall, to any extent, be declared invalid or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, the remainder of this Agreement shall not be affected thereby and each provision of this Agreement shall be valid and enforceable to the fullest extent permitted by law.

10. **Counterparts and Electronic Signatures.** This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original and all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument. A scanned, photocopy, or electronic signature on this Agreement (such as DocuSign), any amendment hereto or any notice delivered hereunder shall have the same legal effect as an original signature.

11. **Authority.** Each Party hereby represents and warrants to the other Party that it has obtained any and all consents or approvals necessary for it to enter into this Agreement, and that the individual(s) executing this Agreement on such Party's behalf are authorized to do so and to bind such Party to the terms and conditions hereof.

12. **Governing Law/Forum Selection/Construction.** This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of North Carolina, without reference to its choice of law provisions. If legal action is brought by either Party in connection with this Agreement, either the appropriate state court serving Catawba County, North Carolina, or the United States District Court for the Western District of North Carolina shall have the sole and exclusive jurisdiction over the proceeding. This Agreement is entirely the product of the collective joint drafting efforts of the Parties hereto and their counsel. In the event of a dispute concerning the meaning, construction, or interpretation of this Agreement, should any Party assert any claim of ambiguity, this Agreement shall not be construed against any Party as a result of the Parties', or any Party's, particular contribution to this joint drafting effort.

13. **Relationship of the Parties.** Nothing in this Agreement shall be deemed or construed to create the relationship of principal and agent, or of limited or general partners, or of joint venturers or of any other association between the Parties.

14. **Entire Agreement.** Except as provided herein, this Agreement supersedes all prior agreements and understandings between the Parties relating to the subject matter hereof.

This Space was Intentionally Left Blank. Signatures and Acknowledgments Appear on the Following Pages

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties hereto have executed, or caused this Agreement to be executed, to be effective as of the Effective Date.

CATAWBA COUNTY,
a North Carolina Body Politic

ATTEST:
(SEAL)

By: _____ (Seal)
C. Randall Isenhower, Chair
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Dale R. Stiles, Clerk

THIS INSTRUMENT has been pre-audited in the manner required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act as amended.

Date: _____
Mary Morrison, Chief Financial Officer

Approved as to form on behalf of Catawba County only:

Date: _____
Jodi Stewart, County Attorney

MICROSOFT CORPORATION
a Washington State Corporation

By: _____
Its: _____

13. Adjournment. No further action was taken. Upon a motion by Commissioner Beatty which unanimously carried, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randy Isenhower", written over a horizontal line.

Randy Isenhower, Chair
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dale R. Stiles", written over a horizontal line.

Dale R. Stiles
County Clerk