



## Benning Library Dynamo Survey Results 2007 - 2008

### *Introduction*

Benning is one of four libraries closed in 2004 for rebuilding. The four, together with the Georgetown Branch library destroyed by fire in 2007, will represent the first phase of the promised “transformation” of the DC Library system outlined in the Blue Ribbon Task Force Report on the Future of the DC Public Library, commissioned by former Mayor Anthony Williams in 2005.

The Benning Library Dynamo is a community-based oversight group whose participants reside in DC's Ward 7 and are interested in the fate of their library. The Dynamo is focused on ensuring meaningful community participation and oversight in the library transformation process and knowing that most residents have a limited amount of time available to attend meetings like the DCPL Community Design Sessions, Benning Dynamo participants collectively drew up a survey (Attachment A) to be taken out to the neighborhood to get more feedback on issues raised at the scantily attended community design meetings.

**Over the fall of 2007, the Benning Dynamo collected or received a total of 218 surveys distributed by Dynamo volunteers. Of these, 197 survey respondents can be confirmed as Ward 7 residents equating to 90% of the respondents. The others did not include a name and number to confirm or may not be confirmed by the survey collector.**

A substantial effort was made to be representative by seeking to reach actual and potential library patrons from a variety of backgrounds. To do so, volunteers distributed surveys at ANC meetings, civic association meetings, and church gatherings in Ward 7. Volunteers also went door-to-door in residential neighborhoods and even visited businesses like laundromats and supermarkets in commercial Ward 7 areas.

---

### *Data Sought*

The Benning Dynamo survey spells out demographics of those surveyed and opinions about future library services. It also surveyed people on issues like how the closure of the library with no interim services affected people's lives and how people felt about discussions on moving the location of the library.

---

### *Age Statistics*

The Benning Dynamo sought to diversify the voices involved in the transformation of the library across all ages. Many seniors can't come out to evening meetings and this is also true of many younger Ward 7 residents.

age 65 and older	13.50%
age 50 to 65	28.50%
age 40 to 50	22.50%
age 30 to 40	10.50%
age 21 to 30	13.00%
age 21 and younger	9.00%

---

**Contact the Benning Library Dynamo with any questions about this survey:  
Willette S., 202-397-2028, [wseaward@yahoo.com](mailto:wseaward@yahoo.com)**

## **Major Findings**

There were some striking findings among the 218 surveys collected by the Benning Dynamo. Of those surveyed:

- \* 72.02% have visited the interim library at least once.
  - \* 54.13% felt the closure of the library affected their families lives.
  - \* respondents rated general DCPL system services and facilities with an average of 2.8 out of 5.
- 

## **Library programming/facility needs:**

- \* 70.43% want library space dedicated to classrooms for continuing education classes for adults.
  - \* 68.82% want library space dedicated to an adult literacy training center.
  - \* 61.11% want library space dedicated to a computer training laboratory.
  - \* 55.91% want library space to offer basic childcare services for parents using library services.
  - \* 50.00% want a bookstore at their library. [revenue stream]
  - \* 47.85% want library space dedicated to a media room with sound/video production capabilities.
  - \* 47.85% want library space dedicated to a business center (like a Kinkos). [revenue stream].
  - \* 44.09% want library space dedicated to a small cafe. [revenue stream]
  - \* 40.32% want library space dedicated to an exhibition center for performing arts/visual arts.
- 

## **Library location:**

- \* 69.27% would *consider* moving the library location if it meant getting a bigger, better library and there was no loss of public property, although
  - \* 50.54% said they would not move the library if it extended the construction timeline beyond what is already scheduled.
- 

## **Basic Conclusions:**

The survey identifies the Benning community's hope for programming that is entirely in keeping with recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Task Force Report on the Future of Libraries: an adult literacy center (literacy), university level continuing education classes (life long learning), and computer training (technology).

The survey also shows people are interested in businesses being incorporated into a library complex. Examples of suggested services included a cafe, bookstore, business center, and media/sound room.

---

## **WRITE TO PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP FIND ADDITIONAL FUNDING**

Libraries & Park Committee

**Harry Thomas**, Chair

202-724-8028

[hthomas@dccouncil.us](mailto:hthomas@dccouncil.us)

Ward 7 Councilmember

**Yvette Alexander**

202-724-8068

[yalexander@dccouncil.us](mailto:yalexander@dccouncil.us)

### **Benning Library Dynamo Mission Statement**

The mission of the Benning Library Dynamo is to promote the public interest in the Benning Branch Public Library and ensure adequate community oversight of the proposed transformation of the Benning Branch Public Library, located in Ward 7.

The Dynamo will research and disseminate information, as well as convene meetings to foster community consultation, discuss findings, identify concerns, and take action as participants so direct.

