

THE DYNAMIC ROLE OF LIBRARIES

How Do Customer and Library Characteristics Drive Houston Public Library Usage?

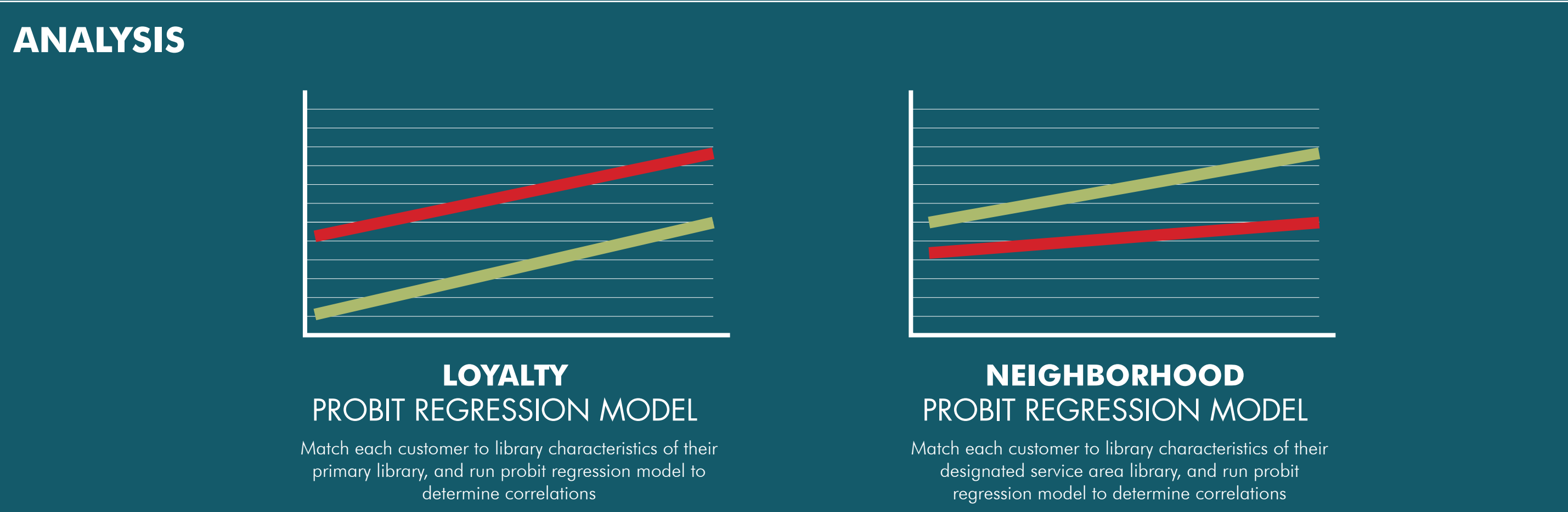
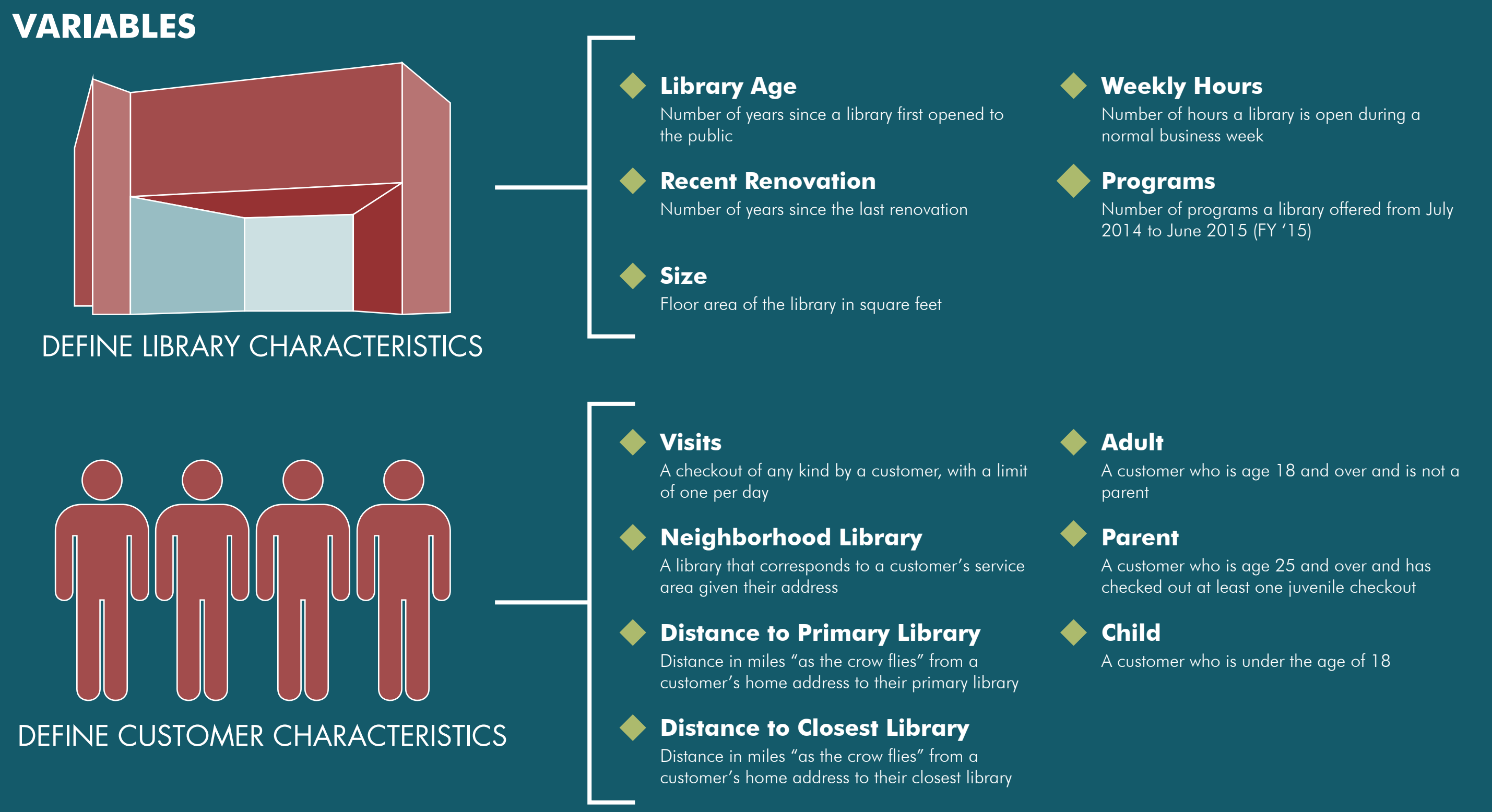
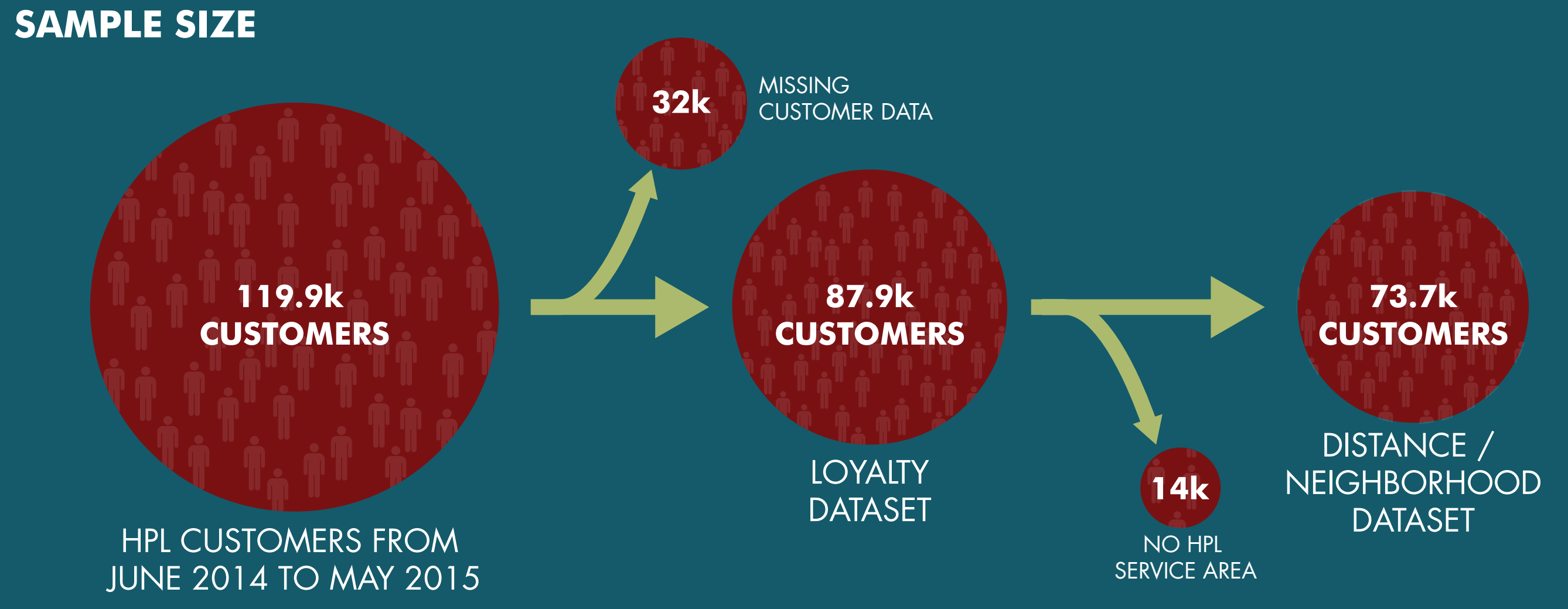
HOUSTON ACTION RESEARCH TEAM
 Shaan Patel, Tiffany Tang,
 Madeleine Tibaldi, and Melanie Zook

Rice Undergraduate Research Symposium | April 13th, 2016
 Center for Civic Leadership & Houston Public Libraries

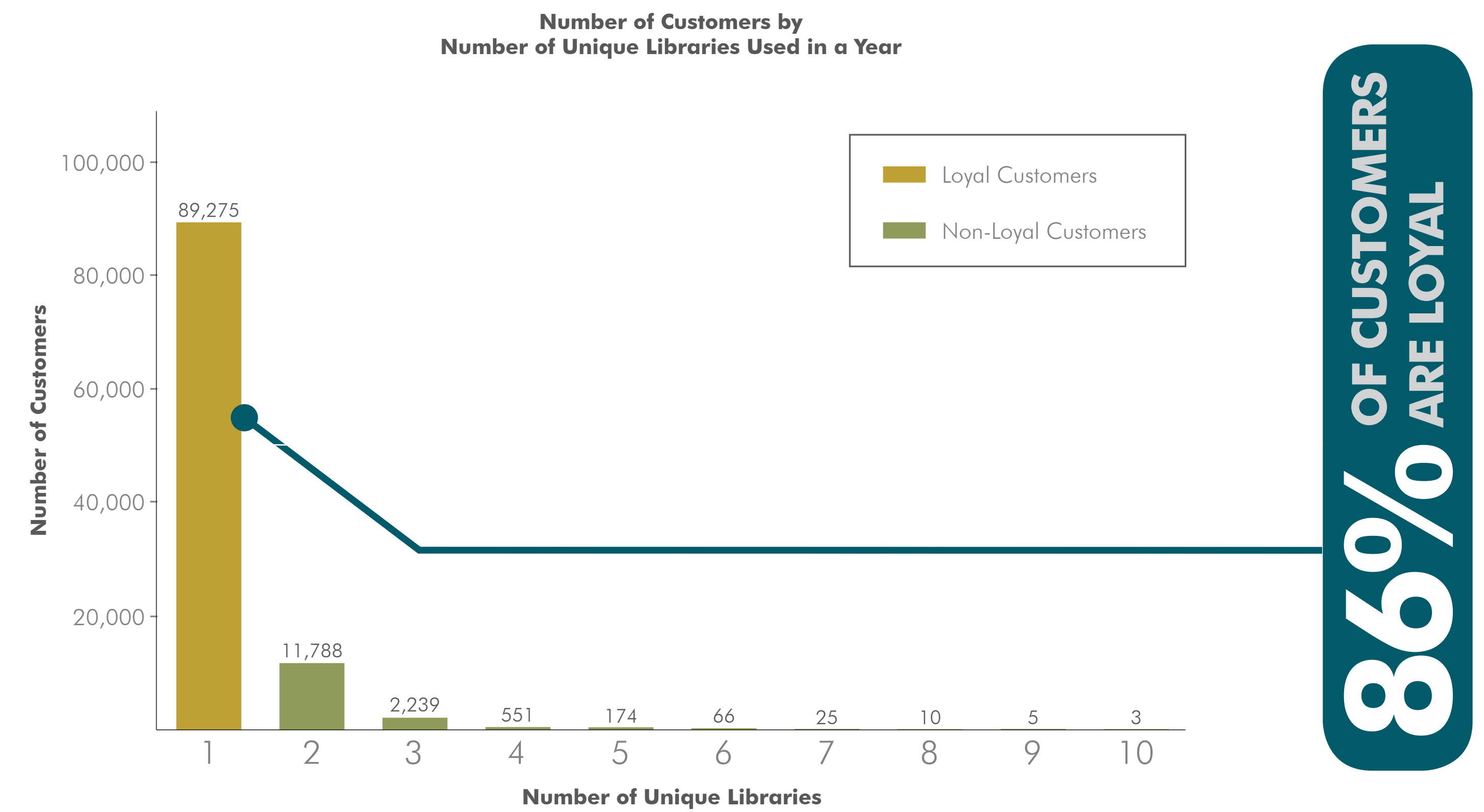
KEY FINDINGS

- While libraries no longer fit the traditional neighborhood usage model, customers are still overwhelmingly loyal to individual libraries in the HPL system.
- Certain customer characteristics influence loyalty and neighborhood vs. non-neighborhood usage.
- Internal library characteristics drive customers' library choices.

METHOD



1 While libraries no longer fit the traditional neighborhood usage model, customers are still overwhelmingly loyal to individual libraries in the HPL system.



Loyalty vs. Neighborhood Matrix

	Neighborhood Customers (56.2%)	Non-Neighborhood Customers (43.8%)
Loyal Customers (85.7%)	50.0% (48,128 customers)	35.7% (34,340 customers)
Non-Loyal Customers (14.3%)	6.2% (5,985 customers)	8.1% (7,774 customers)

3 Internal library characteristics drive customers' library choices.

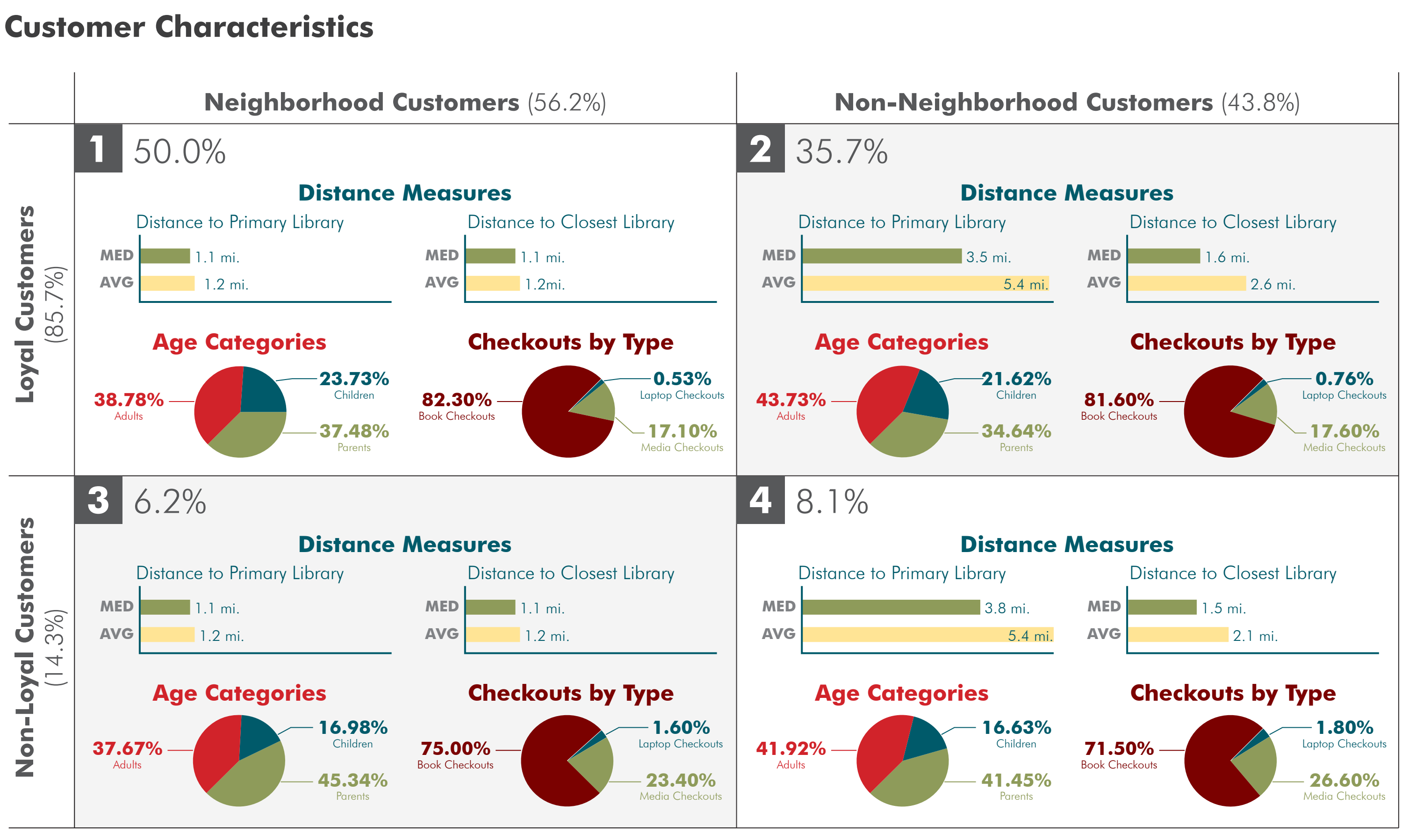
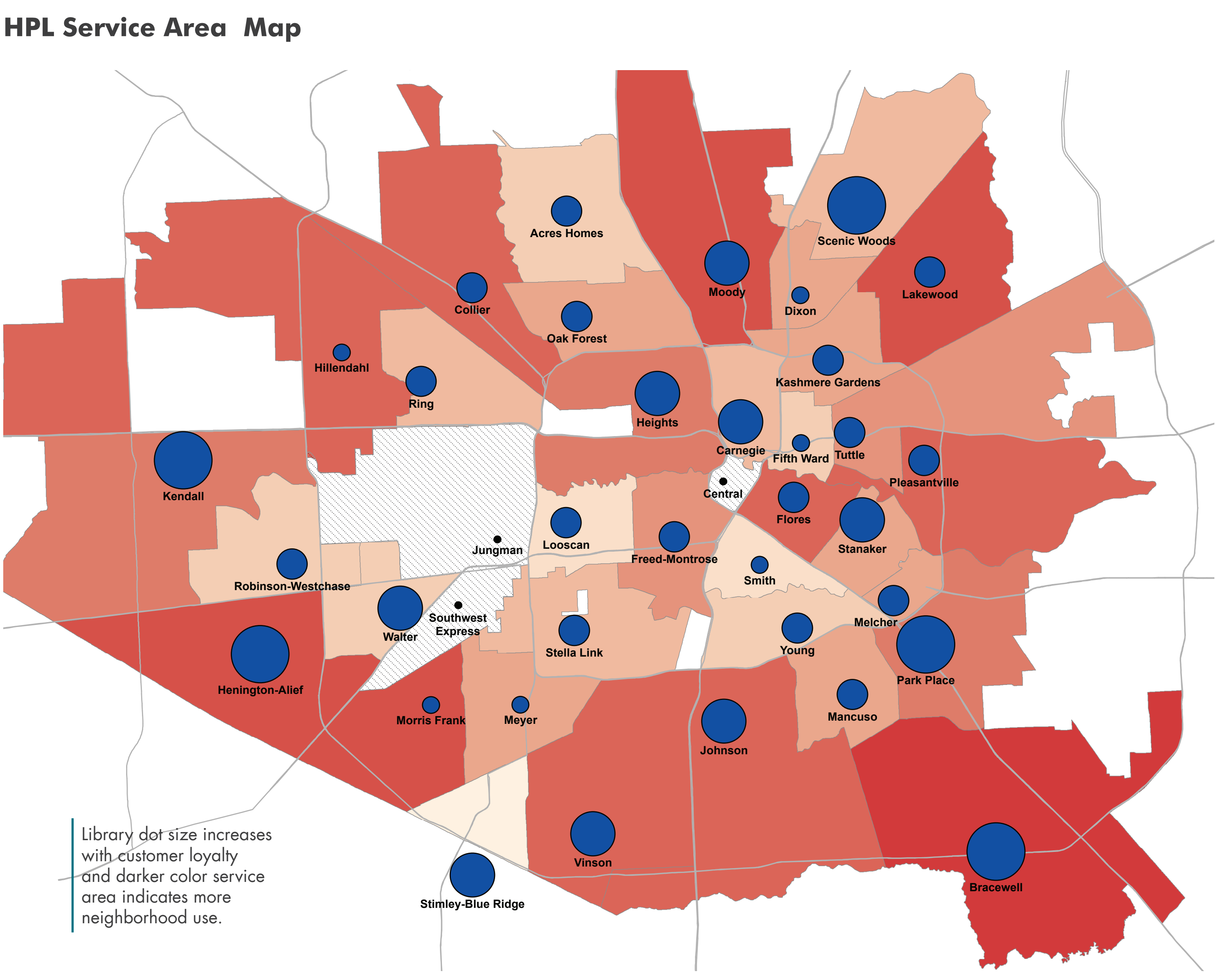
Library Characteristics: Loyal vs. Non-Loyal Usage

Characteristic	Loyal Customers relative to their Primary Library (85.7%)	Non-Loyal Customers relative to their Primary Library (14.3%)
Library Age	Not a significant measure	Not a significant measure
Recent Renovation	Customers are more likely to go to libraries that have been more recently renovated.	Customers are less likely to go to libraries that have not been recently renovated.
Size	Not a significant measure	Not a significant measure
Programs	Not a significant measure	Not a significant measure
Weekly Hours	Customers are more likely to go to libraries that are open more hours.	Customers are less likely to go to libraries that are open fewer hours.

Library Characteristics: Neighborhood vs. Non-Neighborhood Usage

Characteristic	Neighborhood Customers relative to their Neighborhood Library (56.2%)	Non-Neighborhood Customers relative to their Neighborhood Library (43.8%)
Library Age	Customers are more likely to go to their neighborhood library if it is older.	Customers are less likely to go to their neighborhood library if it is newer.
Recent Renovation	Customers are more likely to go to their neighborhood library if it has been recently renovated.	Customers are less likely to go to their neighborhood library if it has not been recently renovated.
Size	Customers are more likely to go to their neighborhood library if it is larger in size.	Customers are less likely to go to their neighborhood library if it is smaller in size.
Programs	Customers are more likely to go to their neighborhood library if it offers more programs.	Customers are less likely to go to their neighborhood library if it offers fewer programs.
Weekly Hours	Not a significant measure	Not a significant measure

2 Certain customer characteristics influence loyalty and neighborhood vs. non-neighborhood usage.



POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- Our strong loyalty finding indicates that people's connections to individual libraries have not wavered, even though the way they use these libraries has changed.
- Given that every library does not need to provide every service, customers can be sorted within this interconnected network of specialized libraries.
- Libraries can utilize the "better product" model to invest resources in the aspects of libraries that attract users: renovations, space, and programs.
- Because customers travel to libraries throughout the system, policymakers need to understand that their constituents benefit from improvements to the whole system, not just libraries in their district.
- Understanding the "better product" model and drivers of usage allows libraries to allocate resources more efficiently and effectively to benefit the entire system.