
Wheaton Public Library



Community Needs Assessment

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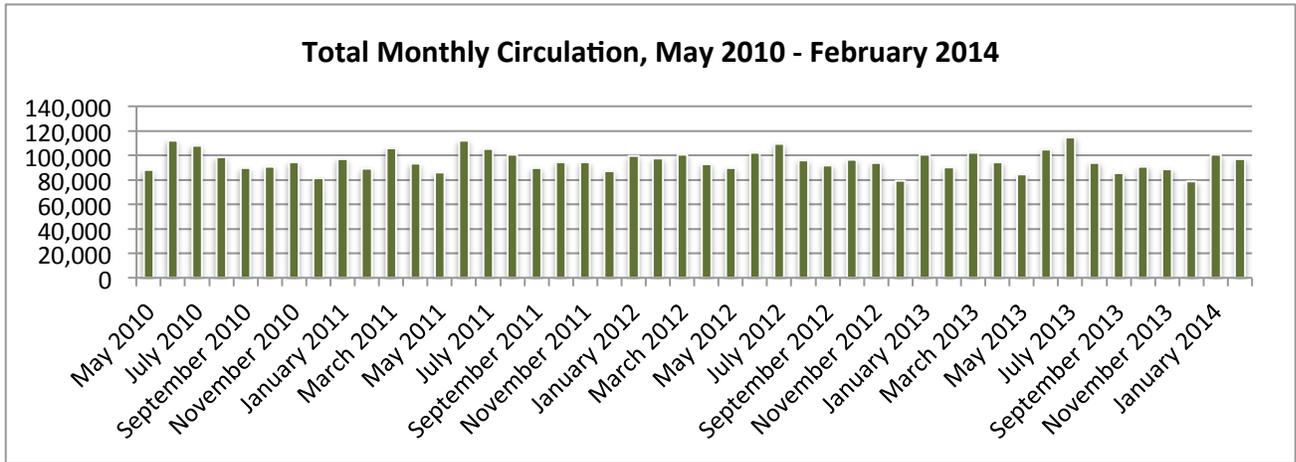
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INTRODUCTION

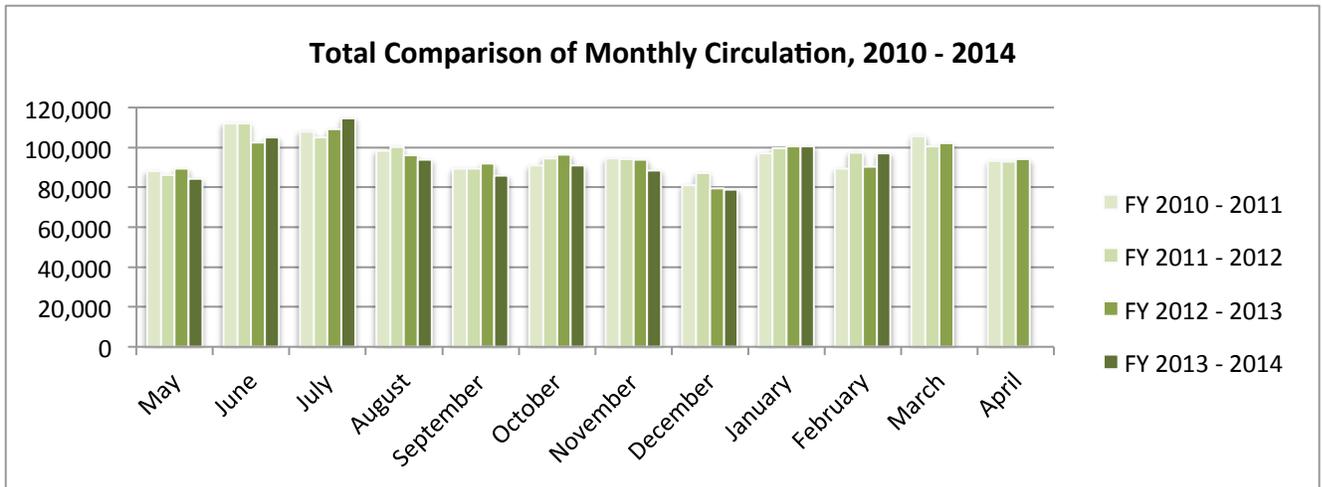
Today's libraries are subject to high levels of scrutiny from their constituent groups pertaining to budgeting, allocation of resources, and response to user needs and desires. As the strategic planning process begins, it is vital to be in tune with the thoughts of all of these groups – users, taxpayers, and community partners. An effective community needs assessment provides a framework for the library to allocate resources most effectively according to the needs of its community, remain relevant to its patrons, and help position it to react to changing trends in the future.

This report will provide information on circulation statistics, use of library services and programs, and district demographics, as well as feedback from patrons, staff members, community leaders, business leaders, board members, and Friends of the Wheaton Public Library.

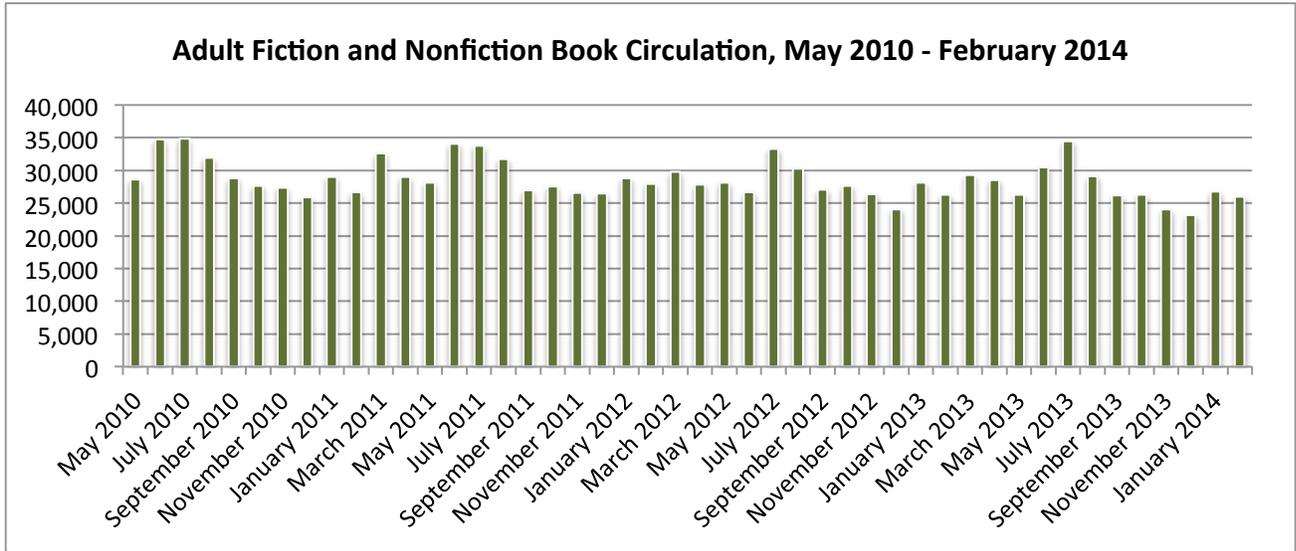
CIRCULATION TRENDS



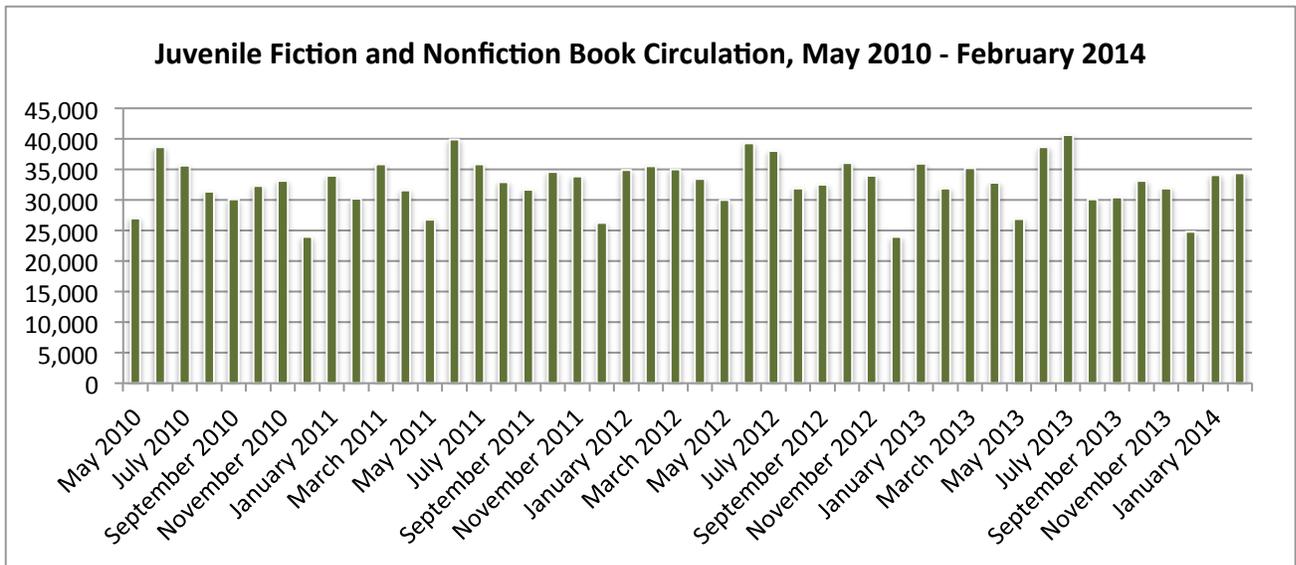
Monthly circulation from May 2010 through February 2014 remained fairly stable, with the summer months of June and July having the highest monthly circulation totals each year. The chart below illustrates a comparison of circulation by month over four years.



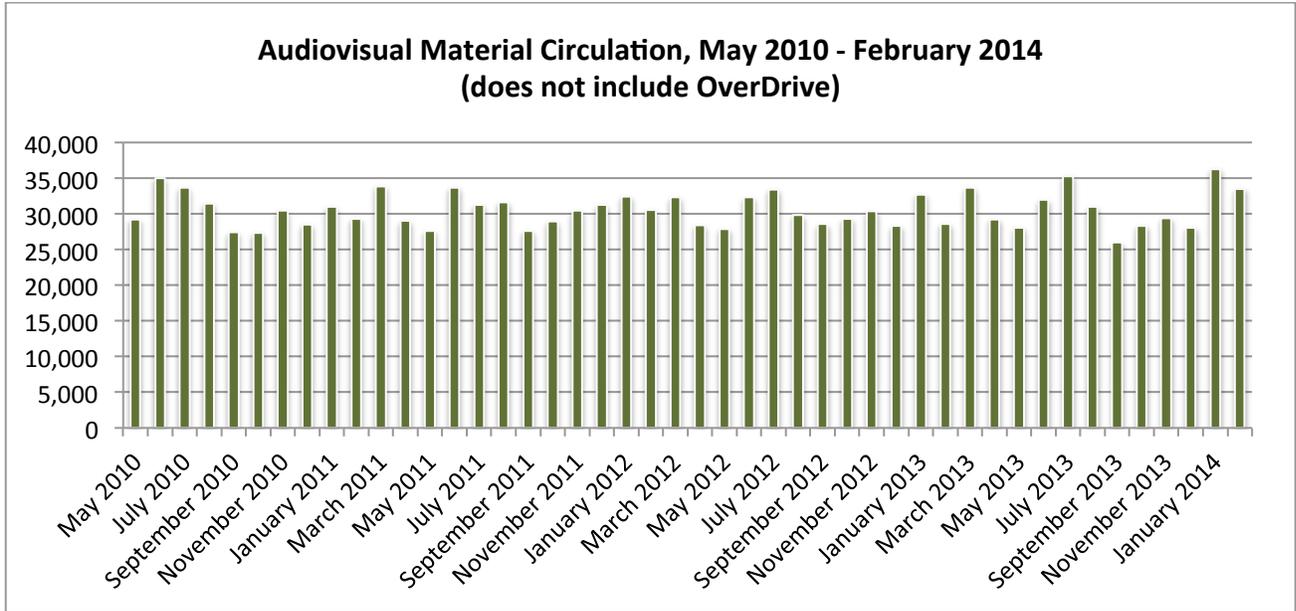
As displayed in the chart above, circulation has remained consistent during the past four years, although the only month in which circulation for FY 2013-2014 exceeded previous years' totals was July 2013.



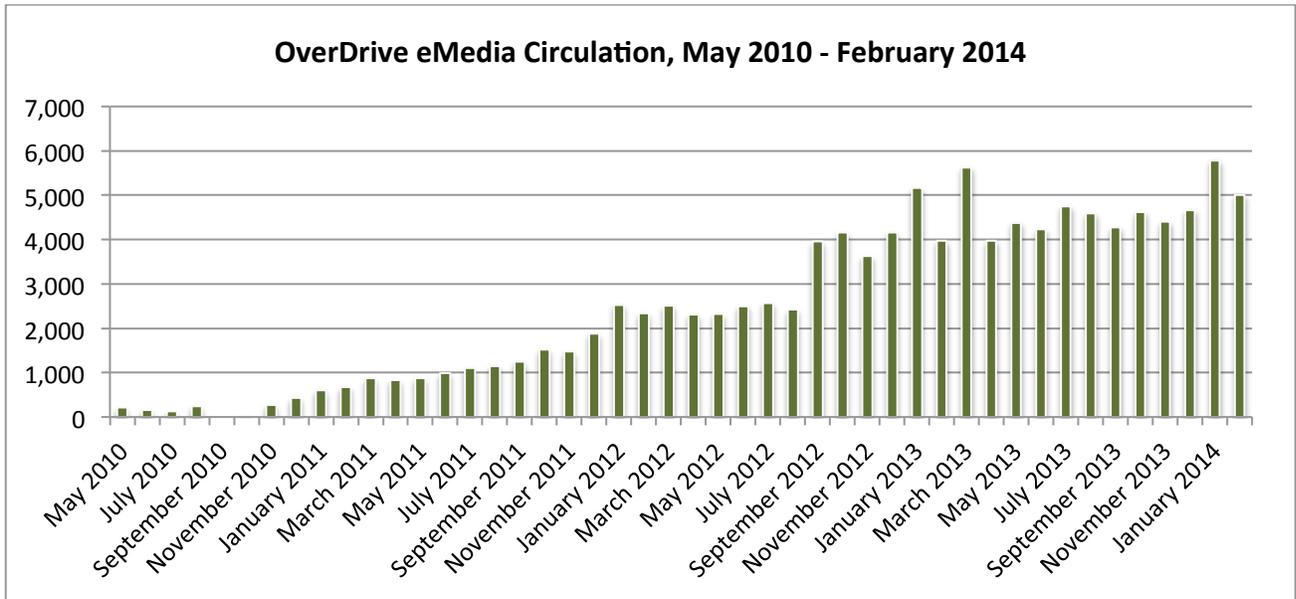
Like total circulation, adult fiction and nonfiction, as well as juvenile fiction and nonfiction circulation, has remained consistent during the past four years, with increases during summer months.



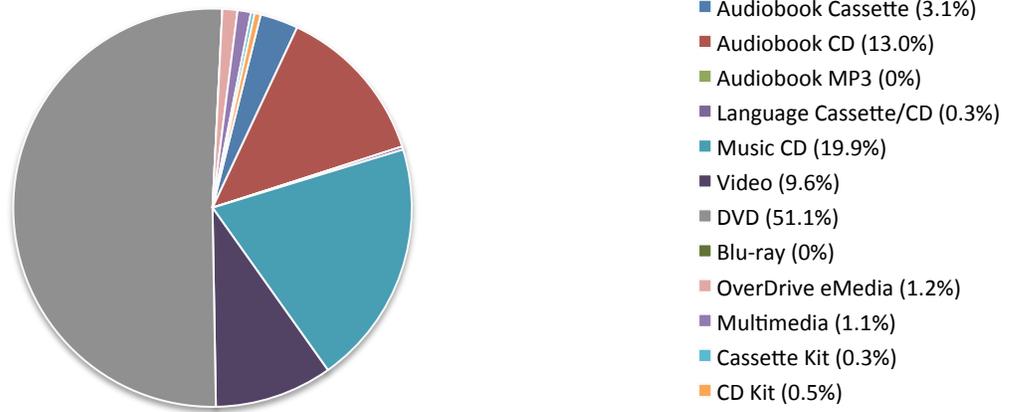
Audiovisual material circulation has remained consistent during the past four years and saw its highest monthly circulation during this time frame in January 2014.



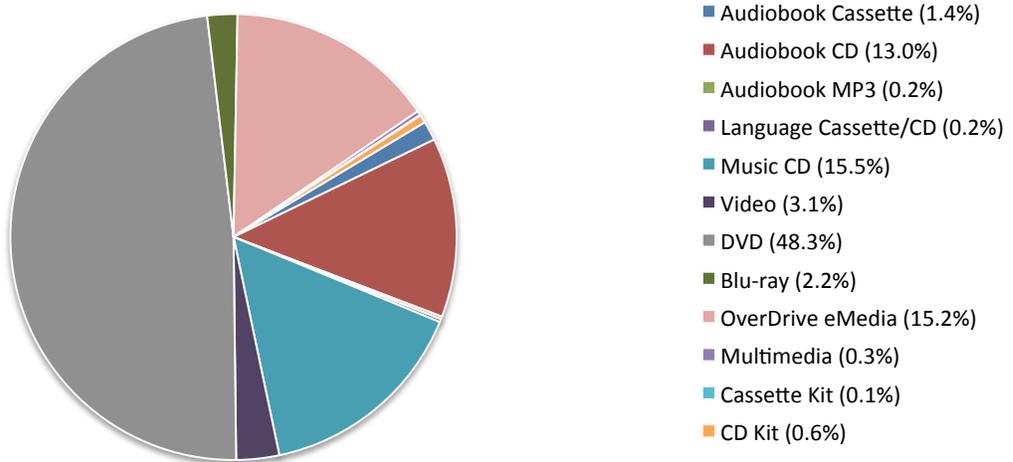
As the chart below illustrates, the use of OverDrive eMedia has increased substantially from early 2011 through 2014.



**Types of Audiovisual and Electronic Materials Circulated,
FY 2010 - 2011**



**Types of Audiovisual and Electronic Materials Circulated,
FY 2013 - 2014**



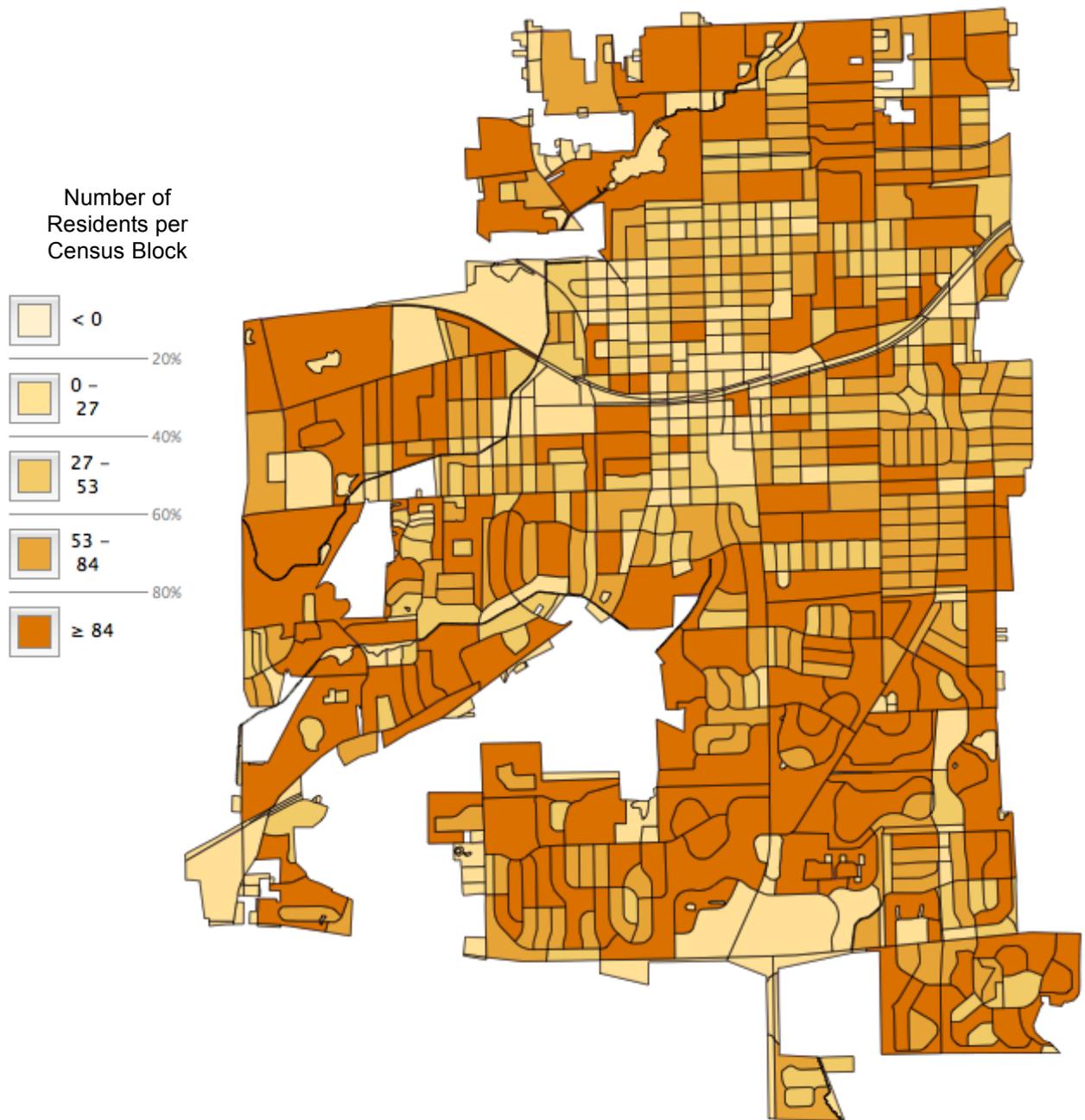
The two charts above show the percentages of audiovisual and electronic materials represented by specific types of materials. DVDs remain the most popular type of audiovisual material to check out. As the charts demonstrate, patron use of eMedia has increased substantially during this time period, from 1.2% of the total audiovisual/electronic circulation in FY 2010-2011 to 15.2% in FY 2013-2014. The popularity of audiobooks has remained consistent.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Wheaton Population

Wheaton Population by Block

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census, 2010 U.S. Census, U.S. Census Bureau.



Race alone or in combination with one or more other races

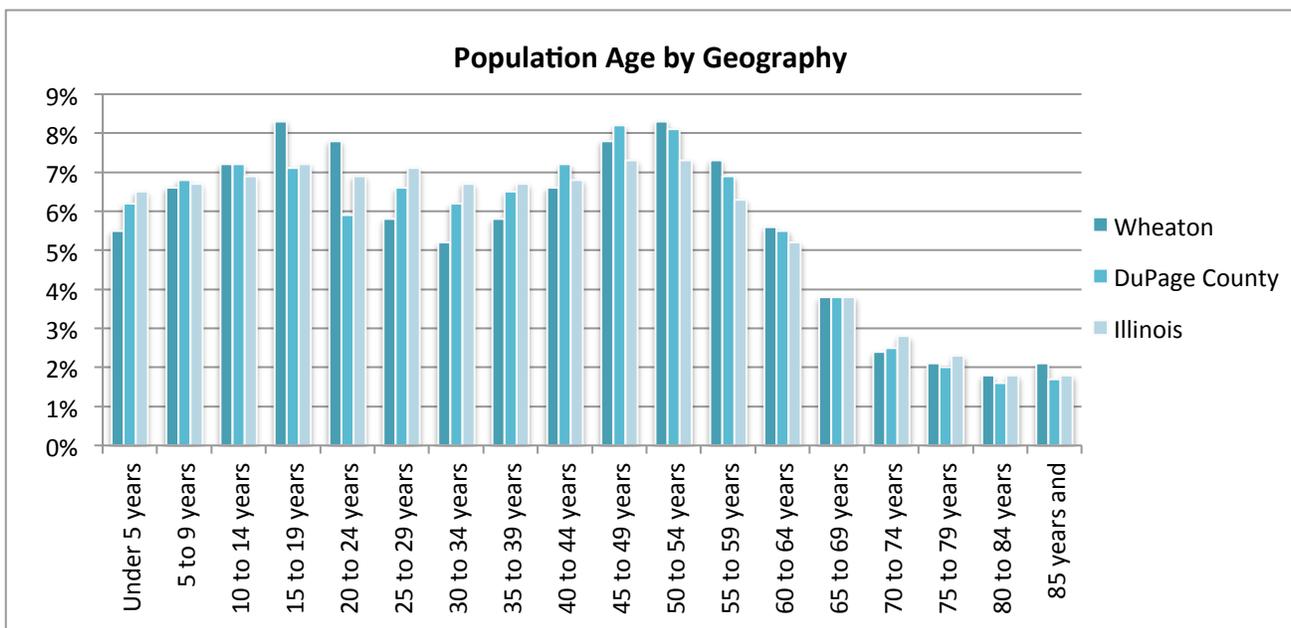
Race	2000 Population	2010 Population
White	50,431	47,131
Black or African American	1,735	2,644
American Indian and Alaska Native	176	268
Asian	3,010	3,313
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	34	57
Some Other Race	805	623
Total*	55,416	52,894

*Please note some individuals identifying as more than one race may be counted more than once.

Source: 2000 U.S. Census, 2010 U.S. Census, U.S. Census Bureau.

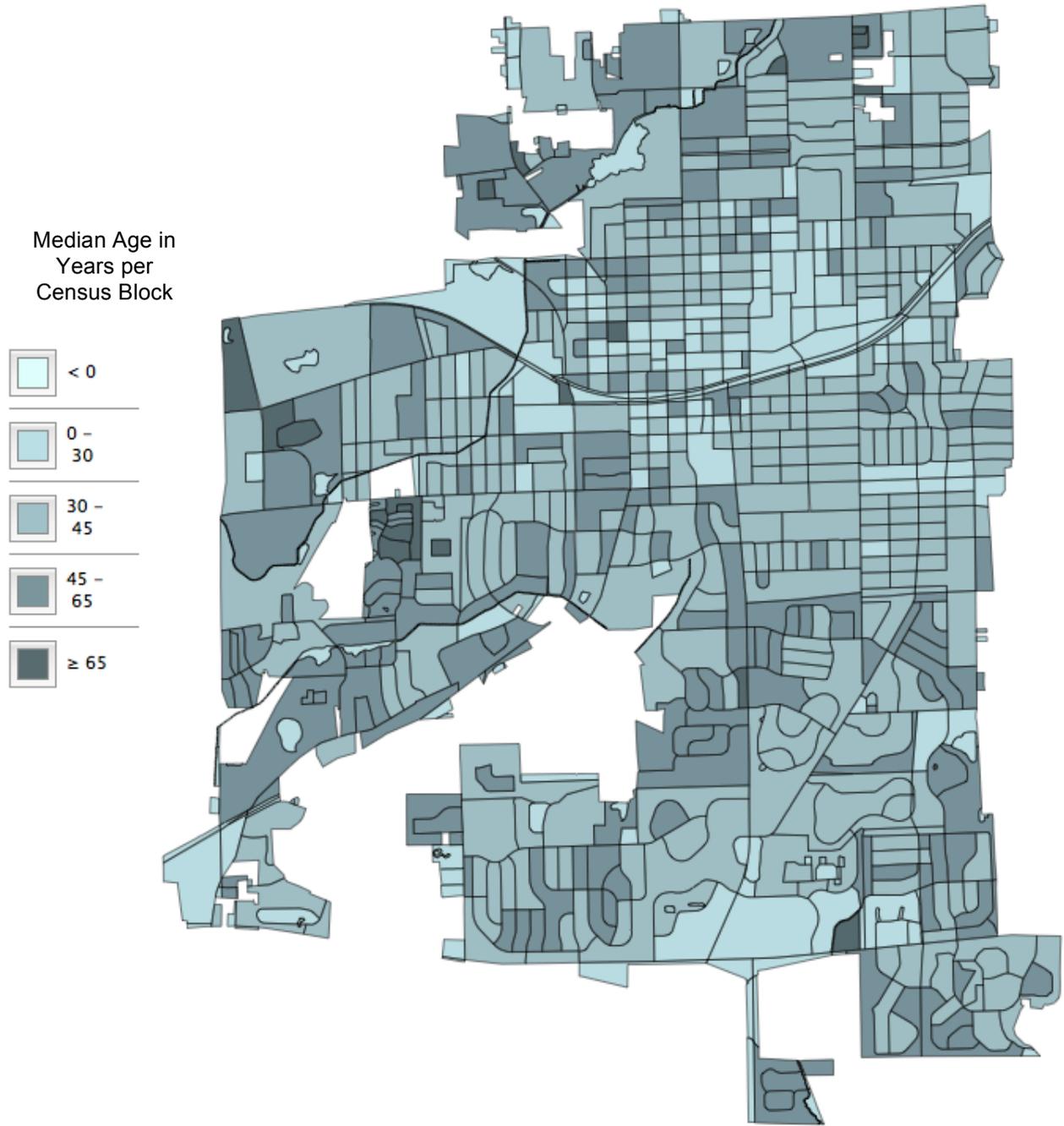
While Wheaton’s racial composition is primarily white (89.1%), the city is becoming more diverse, with the number of Asian residents increasing by 10% between 2000 and 2010 and the number of black or African American residents increasing by more than 52% during the same time frame. Similarly, the number of residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino increased by more than 29% from 2,023 in 2000 to 2,617 in 2010.

Focus group participants expressed a perception that Wheaton’s population is significantly older than neighboring communities. However, as displayed by the chart below, while Wheaton does have slightly higher percentages of residents between 50 and 64 compared to DuPage County and Illinois, it also has a higher percentage of residents between 15 and 24 than both DuPage County and Illinois.

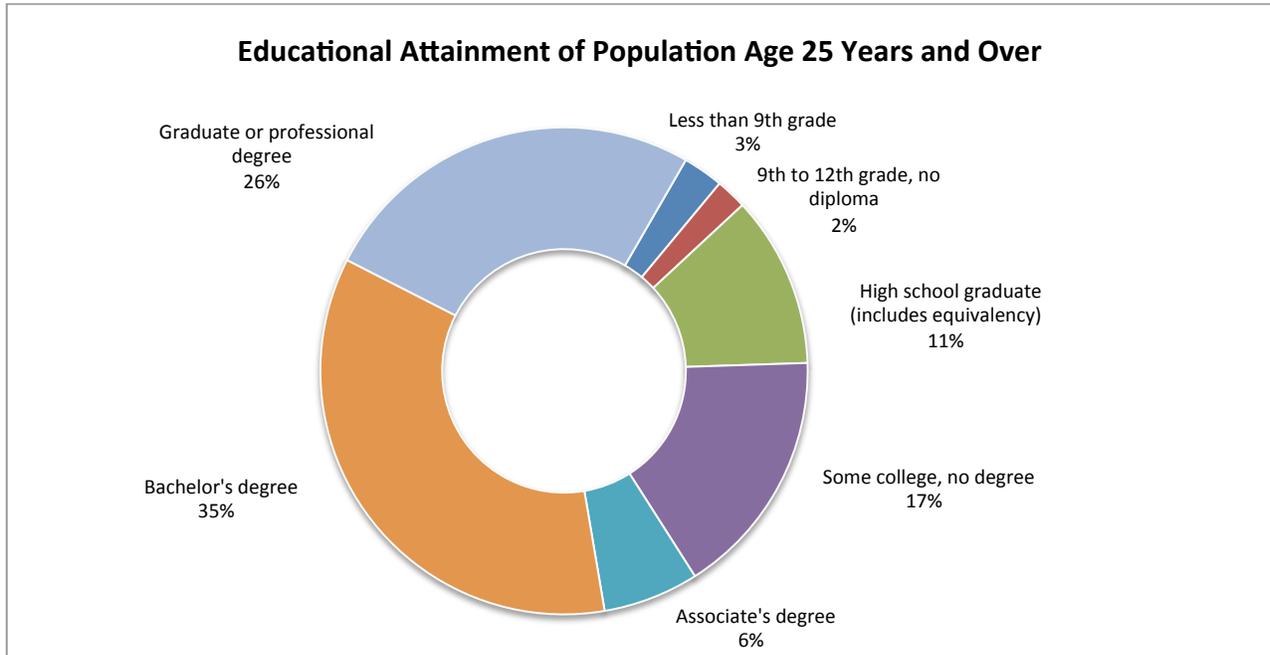


Wheaton Median Age by Block

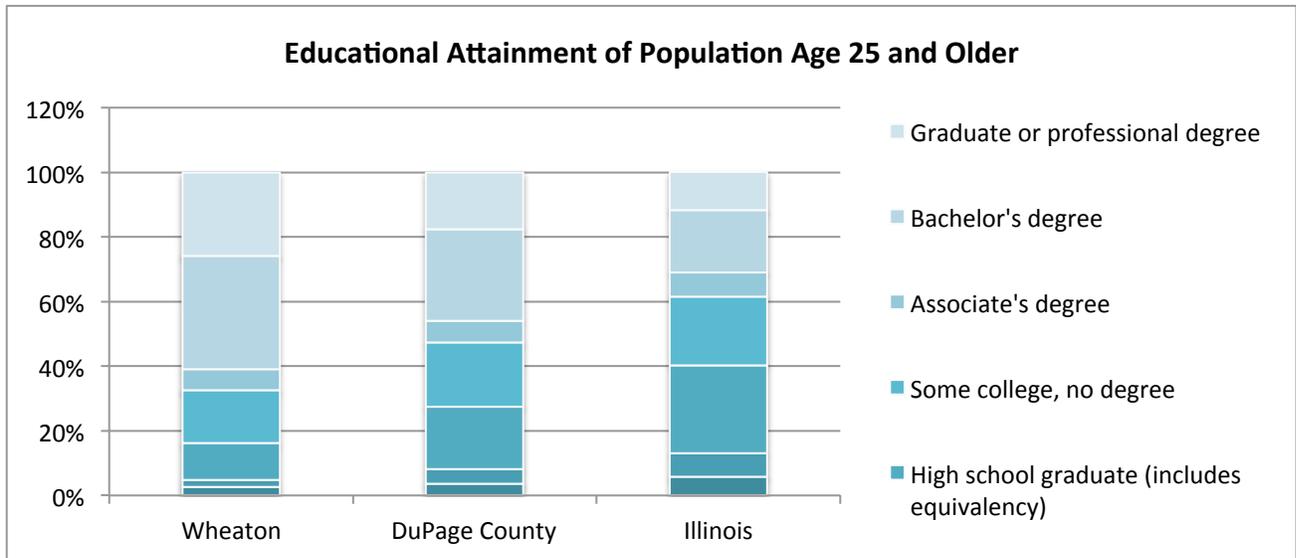
Sources: 2000 U.S. Census, 2010 U.S. Census, U.S. Census Bureau.



Social Demographic Profile of Wheaton



Source: 2008 – 2012 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.



Source: 2008 – 2012 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.

As illustrated the charts above, Wheaton is a well-educated city, with 61.0% of its population over 25 holding a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 45.9% of DuPage County and 31.1% of Illinois.

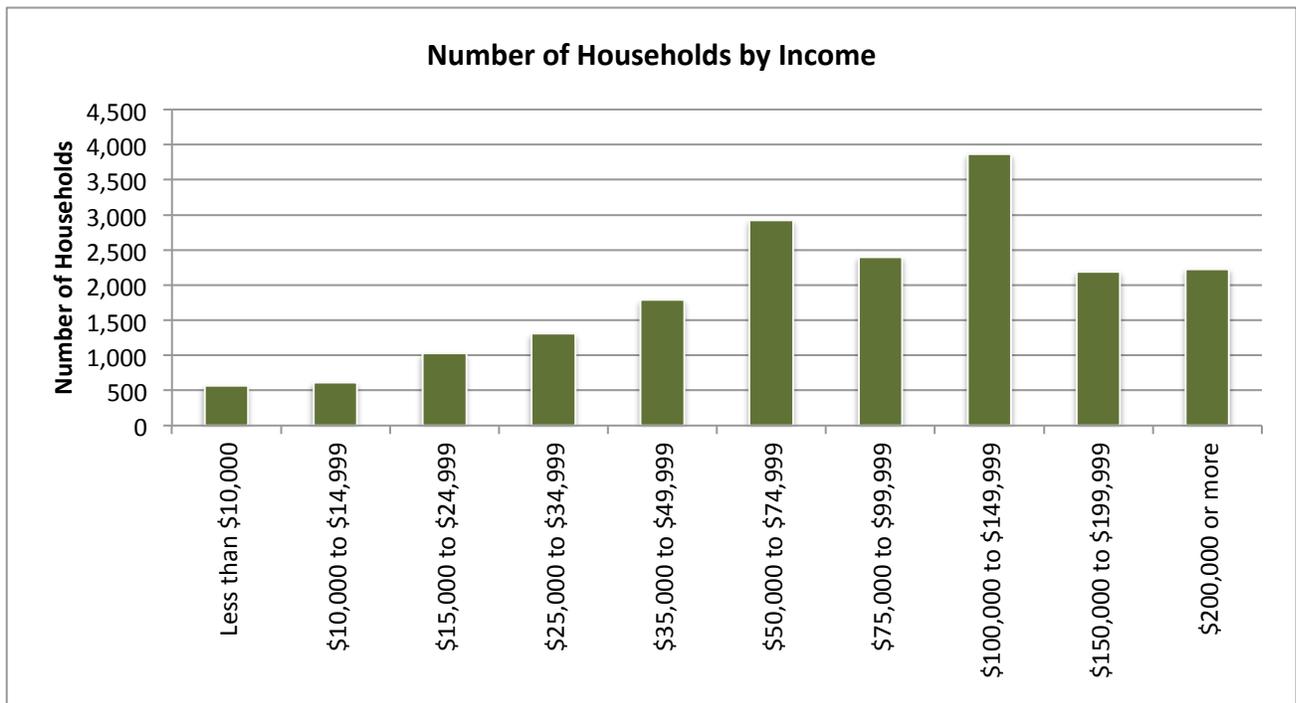
Language Spoken at Home and Ability to Speak English for Population 5 Years and Over

Language	Speak English “Very Well”	Speak English Less Than “Very Well”	Total
Speak only English	n/a	n/a	42,557
Spanish or Spanish Creole	1,337 (67.3%)	651 (32.7%)	1,988
Other Asian languages	215 (29.6%)	511 (70.4%)	726
Russian	485 (67.6%)	232 (32.4%)	717
Chinese	224 (57.2%)	167 (42.7%)	391
German	291 (82.7%)	61 (17.3%)	352
Other Indic languages	86 (24.8%)	261 (75.2%)	347
Polish	216 (67.7%)	103 (32.3%)	319
Hindi	225 (73.1%)	83 (26.9%)	308
Vietnamese	80 (30.3%)	184 (69.7%)	264
Italian	226 (87.3%)	33 (12.7%)	259
Tagalog	194 (78.2%)	54 (21.8%)	248
French (incl. Patois, Cajun)	163 (82.3%)	35 (17.7%)	198
Korean	135 (68.2%)	63 (31.8%)	198
Other Indo-European languages	107 (57.2%)	80 (42.8%)	187
Arabic	150 (83.8%)	29 (16.2%)	179
Serbo-Croatian	99 (57.9%)	72 (42.1%)	171
Other Slavic languages	56 (40.6%)	82 (59.4%)	138
Urdu	98 (73.7%)	35 (26.3%)	133
Greek	119 (92.2%)	10 (7.8%)	129
African languages	81 (77.9%)	23 (22.1%)	104
Gujarati	71 (74.0%)	25 (26.0%)	96
Scandinavian languages	74 (100%)	0 (0%)	74
Persian	49 (83.1%)	10 (16.9%)	59
Japanese	20 (35.7%)	36 (64.3%)	56
Portuguese or Portuguese Creole	49 (100%)	0 (0%)	49
Thai	46 (100%)	0 (0%)	46
Mon-Khmer, Cambodian	19 (54.3%)	16 (45.7%)	35
Hungarian	28 (100%)	0 (0%)	28
Other West Germanic languages	21 (100%)	0 (0%)	21
Laotian	0 (0%)	21 (100%)	21
French Creole	19 (100%)	0 (0%)	19
Yiddish	11 (100%)	0 (0%)	11
Other Pacific Island languages	6 (100%)	0 (0%)	6

Source: 2008 – 2012 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.

Over 30 different languages are spoken by Wheaton residents at home. In addition, 8.5% of students in Consolidated Unit School District 200 are considered “English learners” who are eligible for transitional bilingual education and other language services.

Economic Demographic Profile of Wheaton



Source: 2008 – 2012 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.

The median household annual income of Wheaton residents, according to the 2008-2012 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates, was \$86,074. In comparison, the median household annual income was \$78,538 for DuPage County and \$56,853 for Illinois.

Despite Wheaton’s overall affluence, nearly one in four students enrolled in Consolidated Unit School District 200 (24.9%) is considered low-income. According to the Illinois State Board of Education, students ages 3 to 17 are considered low-income if their family receives public aid, they live in institutions for neglected or delinquent children or foster homes, or they are eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program. During the focus groups, which will be discussed later in this report, school officials added that many of their low-income students lack access to internet at home, as well as technology that is more frequently used in schools.

CITY OF WHEATON MUNICIPAL SURVEY

In 2014, the City of Wheaton contracted with ETC Institute to conduct a comprehensive survey asking Wheaton residents about various city services, including Wheaton Public Library. A summary of these results, as well as map data, is included with this report. The following information is included in ETC Institute's report:

Residents were generally satisfied with the overall quality of library services provided. The highest levels of satisfaction with library services, based upon the combined percentage of "very satisfied" and "satisfied" responses among residents who had an opinion, were: the overall quality of the City library (94%), the overall quality of available materials (93%) and the overall helpfulness of library staff (90%).

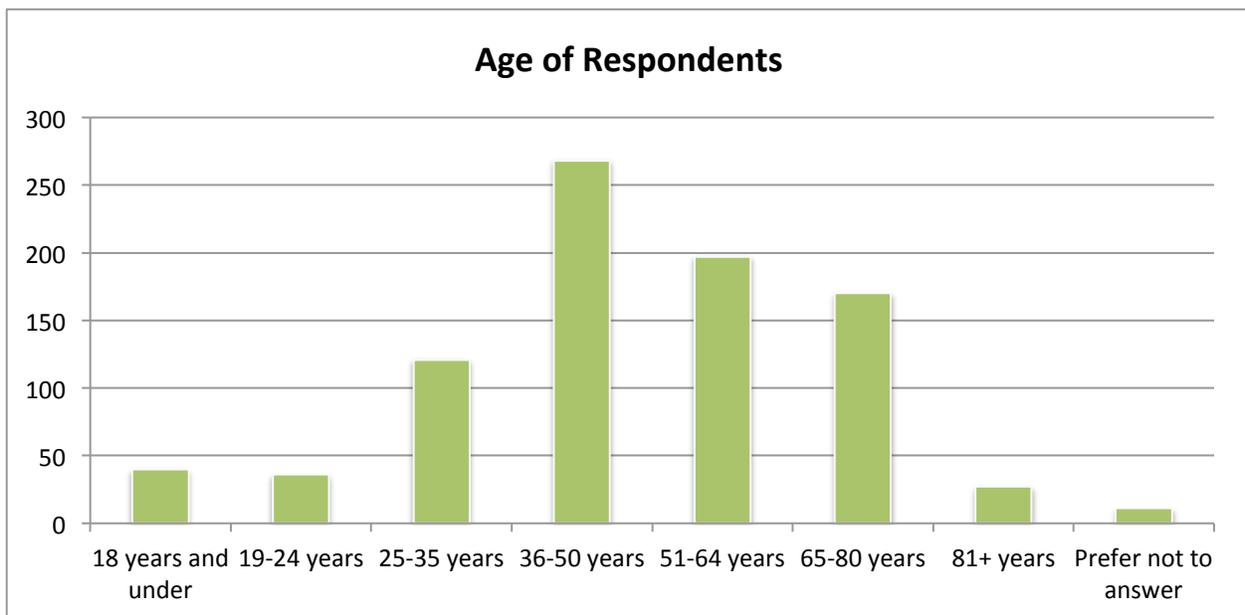
To help the City identify investment priorities for the next two years, ETC Institute conducted an Importance-Satisfaction (I-S) analysis. This analysis examined the importance that residents placed on each City service and the level of satisfaction with each service. By identifying services of high importance and low satisfaction, the analysis identified which services will have the most impact on overall satisfaction with City services over the next two years.

COMMUNITY INPUT

In-Library Survey

A survey was made available to library visitors from April 1, 2014 through April 25, 2014. The survey was completed by 882 individuals. A copy of the survey is included at the conclusion of this report.

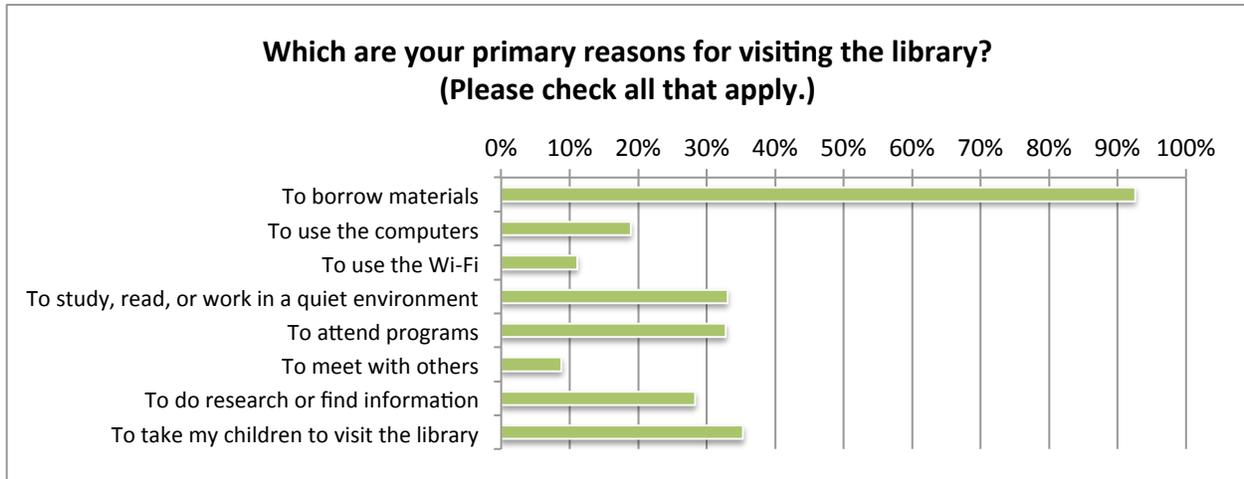
Overall, responses to the survey were positive, with open-ended answers indicating general satisfaction with Wheaton Public Library, with the hope of continued attention to the needs of the community.



Respondents represented all age groups. Nearly one-third of respondents reported being 36 to 50 years old; over 22% reported being 65 years or older; and 8.7% reported being 24 years or younger.

Participants were asked what their primary reasons were for visiting the library. While the majority of respondents indicated borrowing materials as a primary reason why they visit the library, several other patrons reported that they visit the library for other reasons, including taking their children to visit, to study, read, or work in a quiet environment, to attend programs, to do research or find information, and to use the computers. Many reasons for visiting the

library included activities specific to the library’s space but not necessarily materials offered; nearly one-third of respondents said they go to the library to study, read, or work in quiet environment (33.03%), and 8.83% of respondents said they visit the library to meet with others.



Participants were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed, or were neutral regarding five statements regarding their opinions of the library. Responses were predominantly positive regarding all three statements:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I find the programs offered through the library to be interesting and relevant.	357 (42.70%)	304 (36.36%)	162 (19.38%)	9 (1.08%)	4 (0.48%)
I would recommend the library to my neighbors.	706 (81.52%)	140 (16.17%)	14 (1.62%)	2 (0.23%)	4 (0.46%)
The library’s physical facilities meet my needs.	665 (77.33%)	167 (19.42%)	19 (2.21%)	4 (0.47%)	5 (0.58%)

Approximately 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they found the programs offered through the library to be interesting and relevant, and more than 97% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the library to their neighbors. Approximately 96% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the library’s physical facilities meet their needs. Respondents’ open-ended responses are included in the focus group analysis on the following pages.

Focus Groups

Ten focus groups and two individual interviews were held with 92 individuals including patrons, high school students, library staff, Friends of the Wheaton Public Library, community officials, and business leaders. The following community organizations were represented in the focus groups and interviews:

- City of Wheaton
- Community Unit School District 200 (elementary, middle, and high school staff, board members, and administration)
- Downtown Wheaton Association
- Friends of the Wheaton Public Library
- Local Wheaton businesses
- Wheaton Chamber of Commerce
- Wheaton College
- Wheaton Public Library (staff)

Focus groups were held at the library and other community locations, including the Wheaton Park District Community Center, City Hall, Wheaton North High School, and the Wheaton Chamber of Commerce/Downtown Wheaton Association. Each focus group was conducted in a discussion-style format and lasted for approximately one hour.

Non-Users

Focus group participants suggested that some residents do not use the library for the following reasons: preference to purchase materials, especially via an online vendor such as Amazon, and a perception that the library is solely a place for books, coupled with a dislike of reading. One participant said, “If you’ve been here, then you know” what library has to offer, and another noted, “People don’t use the library because they just don’t know about it.” Some focus group participants were non-users themselves, stating that they were “unaware of the library in general.” Others said they were unacquainted with many of the library’s services and offerings, saying they “didn’t realize they can get assistance with electronic devices” and were not aware of many types of items available in the library’s collection.

Strengths of the Library

Patrons, staff, and community and business leaders were very supportive of the library, with one respondent saying that it “brings a cultural and literary presence where you can go and make use of it either actively or passively.” The library is clearly a valued asset to the Wheaton community; one respondent referred to the library as the “crown jewel of Wheaton.” Both the City of Wheaton’s municipal survey and in-library survey results indicate that Wheaton residents have a high level of satisfaction with the library. However, many patrons expressed hope that the library will embrace a greater role as a “community hub” and will grow to match the current technological environment and library trends with which neighboring municipalities have become accustomed. Comments praising library services included: (*Note: Survey responses are reproduced without alteration unless denoted by bracketed additions for clarity.*)

- “At a nearby apartment complex, residents talk about the library and go to the library a lot. Never heard anything but favorable things about the library in the past three years.”
- "Kudos - thanks for removing the fee on movies!"
- "Everything I have ever thought I needed from WPL, I have found. I love this place!"
- "Excellent services now - keep up the good work!"
- "Happy all videos are free again!"
- "I enjoy the library and find it's a good asset for Wheaton"
- "I like the recent changes"
- "I love coming here and greatly enjoy the services."
- "I love the Great Beginnings program. It's the perfect mix of reading, activity (the songs with motions), and socializing for that age group."
- "I love the library programs offered for kids, great variety"
- "I love the new enhanced borrowing time for DVDs, the online notifications are wonderful, I use the weekend programs as often as possible."
- "It's been good. I like the switch to no DVD rental fee and self pick-up holds as well as the addition of more self checkout stations."
- "Keep hiring wonderful people especially in the children's department!"
- "Keep the DVDs (movies) free! Love that :)"
- "Keep up the wonderful and dedicated work. Thank you."
- "Librarians are great! They are helpful with suggestions, guiding children towards great literature! They need more vacation time :)"
- "Like new improvements i.e., self checkout, self pickup for holds"

- "Love the free movies!"
- "Loved the bubble and puppet show! More of that!!"
- "Thank you for [the] 1,000 books before kindergarten challenge - love it!"
- "Thank you for making the DVDs free again!"
- "The library is meeting all of my current needs, you're doing a great job!"
- "The new director is doing a wonderful job. Thanks for improving the library. It is also nice to rent without charges and for a week instead of 5 days."
- "The people upstairs are splendiferous!"
- "We love the children's department!"
- "We love the free movie rental! Great job."
- "What makes this library GREAT are the folks"
- "With the new "Link" service, I think things are pretty set!"
- "Hold process and online catalogue search are great"
- "We love the library, the services, and programs, and the employees. I especially love interlibrary loan!"
- "It is great that DVDs are now free."
- "Library and its staff are great. Really like e-book availability."
- "Love the new DVD policy!"
- "Love this library - continue to upgrade by checking out other libraries and their offerings! Love the therapy dogs, Battle of the Books, and would love more reading programs."
- "The changes have been a big improvement like the longer time for checkout out DVDs. I can return them while running weekly errands."
- "We really like the new changes that were made. Especially for no charges for DVD movies. We enjoy your programs, e.g. speakers on specific topics. My college daughter loves to study here - it's quiet."

Library Staff

One focus group participant noted that “a lot of people overestimate the power of the internet and underestimate the power of a reference librarian.” Many focus group participants and survey respondents alike highly valued the staff and cited specific examples of assistance they had received in the past. Staff members from the children’s department were universally praised, particularly by parents of young children. Surveys responses included:

- "It's excellent! Librarians always helpful - especially in children's section"
- "My son is 3 and can be loud and wild. The staff is very kind with him."

- "Librarians are always helpful if I should have difficulty"
- "The staff are always helpful and children's materials (our primary use of the library) are top notch"
- "The librarians in the children's department are amazing! They make it a point to learn everyone's names, so warm, friendly, and super helpful!"
- "The staff is awesome! Friendly and kind. My kids love the library and I think a lot of that has to do with the staff."
- "What is the library's greatest asset? The wonderful people who work here. There is a great culture of customer service and the service desk personnel actually remember frequent fliers!"
- "Be sure to keep all the children's librarians (pay them well, treat them wonderfully). They are super helpful and friendly, very patient with the kids' (and moms') questions."
- "Everyone is always helpful and friendly - we value that and would always want it to continue"
- "I have appreciated all the helpful employees. They have been very gracious in helping me find materials and in accommodating my requests. I particularly appreciate as well all I can access from home."
- "I love the children's librarians!"
- "I love this library!! Especially staff. Even on the phone they are so accommodating and pleasant."
- "Wonderful staff! Helpful and friendly."

However, some focus group participants noted previous difficulty interacting with staff, and others noted that on some occasions, they found the staff to be "not helpful." Another participant felt that by asking a question, she was interrupting a staff member. Survey responses to the question "Do you have any suggestions for improving library services?" included:

- "Employees should smile more"
- "More friendly library staff"
- "Not being so mean"
- "Staff more open, more friendly! I feel the library is well on its way to improvement!"

In addition, when asked what barriers or difficulties patrons have experienced when using the library, responses included:

- "Grouchy librarians"
- "Have not found reference staff to be very pleasant - bit of an attitude. Having lived and used libraries in other cities they need an improvement."
- "Occasionally I feel that the staff does not want to be bothered with questions. Many of them do not seem very approachable."
- "Sometimes (often) I am left with the feeling that my requests are interrupting the staff. Smile more often."
- "Sometimes I need help, and when I ask a question I feel belittled and my question is not answered."
- "Sometimes WPL employees have been rude and unhelpful. Since the big remodeling of the library I've noticed that many books that say they should be on the shelf aren't there. I've mostly notice that problem in the nonfiction section."
- "There are times when the library workers upstairs (not children's department) are a bit short with customers."
- "Unfriendly people in the adult section - 1st floor. Friendly, helpful people in the children's section downstairs."

While these experiences occurred less frequently than positive ones, it is possible that staff members would benefit from increased professional development and other training opportunities.

Facility and Location

Participants agreed that the library facility is well-suited to serve the community and to meet the library's needs, often calling it "beautiful" and "easily accessible." Another participant called the facility "attractive, with great space." Focus group participants encouraged the library to more frequently utilize the plaza space overlooking the adjacent park and to become more integrated into the downtown Wheaton area to "bring people downtown."

Weaknesses of the Library

Business Services

There was an overarching feeling that the business community in Wheaton had previously been “shut out” of the library. One business leader was unaware that the library offers meeting space. Business leaders appreciated the availability of a business library card but were discouraged by what they considered to be an insufficient and outdated collection of business materials, including popular business-related bestsellers. One participant said, “Wheaton Public Library is in kindergarten with respect to business services.” A survey respondent wrote, “Sometimes the most current (“hot”) business books aren't available.” Another respondent said, “I wish for more business books. I've recently had to go to Glen Ellyn and West Chicago to take out books that WPL doesn't have or the wait list is too long/slow.” Overall, participants strongly expressed a renewed interest in collaboration between the business community and the library.

Marketing

There was satisfaction with the printed newsletter among active library users, but community leaders, business leaders, and patrons alike said they would like to receive regular updates from the library electronically, either through email, social media, or both. One participant noted, “The library can do a better job of communicating and promoting its hidden gems,” and another said, “The print newsletter is not enough.” Another focus group participant said that the library is “in a black hole when it comes to social media.” While participants agreed that the library website, print newsletter, and flyers throughout the library contain valuable information, they disliked that they have to seek out the information themselves rather than having the information “pushed out” to them. Another participant said, “You can never communicate too much.”

Survey responses included:

- "Better website - fresher - easier to use"
- "Email programs offered. I often do not find out about the programs unless I visit the library."
- "Glen Ellyn sends monthly emails about special activities. While things are on Wheaton Public Library website - people need to seek the information rather than Wheaton Public Library presenting it. We may not know to look."

- "Maybe an email with what's new at library? Relevant new books and movies and programs. If this [already exists] than a way to make this more apparent."
- "Send out a weekly email listing library events and activities for all ages - I have little time to visit the website"
- "The website could be streamlined and develop more front page categories. Front page can be a bit overwhelming with all the events. Page on website for recommended books like great classics or great mysteries."
- "Website functionality/services. Not sure what exists or how to access I think there is more but when I visit the site it's not evident now? Thank you for library and all your great staff!"
- "Website could be more user friendly"

There is also a common misperception of the library as being merely an archive of books. One community leader said, "It never dawned on me that they had bestsellers there." Another focus group participant wanted the library to "broaden the perception about what the library is" to the community. Participants who preferred to purchase books and other materials did not see the role the library could play in their lives. As one participant noted, "If I didn't go there for materials for my job, I wouldn't have gone for the past ten years."

Outdated Materials

While focus group participants felt that the size of the library's collection was large, some areas of the collection, including business and reference, were too out-of-date to be useful. Overall, participants felt that a more up-to-date collection, even if smaller, would be more beneficial. One business leader noted that they had not found any relevant popular business books at the library during the past ten years. A survey respondent wrote, "Too many old materials, especially [in the] nonfiction collection, needs to be weeded." Another respondent said, "Most research books are terribly outdated."

While there is certainly demand for traditional library services, patrons and community leaders expressed a desire for more modern amenities, such as improved Wi-Fi access and new technology that may not be feasible for home purchase. Many patrons appreciated the availability of computers at the library. One commented, "The computers are accessible, clean, and fast. Better than what I had at home." Others encouraged the library to continue to update their existing computers to respond to current technology needs. Both survey and focus groups

respondents urged the library to improve the existing Wi-Fi service, noting that it is unreliable, slow, and inaccessible in certain areas of the library building. Patrons also expressed desire for greater access to e-books. Survey responses to the question, "Do you have any suggestions for improving library services?" included:

Wi-Fi Accessibility

- "Wi-Fi could be more consistent"
- "Internet needs to be stronger"
- "Improve Wi-Fi"
- "Yes, Wi-Fi"
- "On occasion I've wanted to use Wi-Fi. It didn't always work."
- "Primarily issues with unavailable Wi-Fi"
- "Sometimes the Wi-Fi is overloaded."
- "The Wi-Fi is so slow, my iPod says the internet connection is lost."
- "Wi-Fi doesn't work reliably Loud environment not very conducive to studying difficult material"
- "Wi-Fi has lag sometimes. More desks by the windows would be nice."
- "Wi-Fi in the basement!"

E-Book Usage

- "Even more e-books and audiobooks on website"
- "Have more e-book copies available, reducing wait time"
- "Have more e-books available"
- "I enjoy borrowing e-books, but have noticed that the selections of children's books can be limited."
- "More e-books available"
- "More e-books would be nicer"
- "More e-downloadable materials and classes on this (Glen Ellyn Public Library has this)"
- "More ebooks"
- "More ebooks selections. Example: I'm reading Lord of the Rings right now and can only find #1, #2, not #3."
- "More online books available"
- "My only suggestion would be more current offerings for e-book (Kindle) users!"
- "Limited Kindle selections for particular authors"

Technology Instruction

- "More explanation of LinkedIn Library - procedures for requesting a book"
- "More learning computers for children!"
- "More possible programs - or one short one - on how to use my Kindle Fire"
- "More technology classes"
- "A broader range of computer classes and class times."
- "I haven't had a chance to learn about the Zinio service. Looking for the next classes"
- "More classes (computer) and all electronics"
- "More classes on how to download e-books"
- "More computer classes and drop-in times for help"
- "Checking out magazines using Zinio and books using Overdrive is sometimes confusing. I could probably benefit from more training."
- "I found getting setup for e-library loaning on my Kindle was tricky. I gave up, the reference library seemed confused too."
- "I have not been able to figure out how to download books onto my e-reader."
- "I listen to lots of audiobooks, mostly playaways. I'd like to use the audio download systems but don't know how. I know there are instructional times offered but I haven't been able to do that yet - really my fault, not yours."

Available Technology

- "Updated equipment"
- "VHS to DVD transfer slides to DVD transfer (self-serve)"
- "3-D printer like Glen Ellyn and Chicago"
- "Continue modernization plan in place to remain relevant to the city. (Long-term cutting edge library/leadership)"
- "Can you do a program on saving VHS home movies to DVD and what equipment you need etc.?"
- "There are times I've had difficulty using certain web apps for work-related training on the public access PCs"

Suggestions for Improvement

When asked if they had any suggestions for improvement of the library, respondents primarily proposed minor changes to library services. The following suggestions were provided most frequently:

“Coffee Shop” Atmosphere

Patrons of all ages were supportive of allowing consumption of coffee in the library and developing a space for a coffee vendor. When discussing the merits of on-site coffee availability, one participant said, “We have to accommodate that people want a more relaxed atmosphere.” School officials suggested that their students would enjoy the additional social component that availability of coffee could offer. Survey responses to the question “Do you have any suggestions for improving library services?” included:

- "A place to get coffee, water, soda would be very nice."
- "Bring in a cafe to better attract users - and then serve them, visit the Elmhurst Library to see the children's section and cafe/reading area."
- "Coffee bar!"
- "I would use a coffee vending machine if there were one"
- "I'd love some better choices in the vending machines and bottled water. For a while, my daughter and I were coming once to twice weekly after school. Occasionally, we'd like a snack from vending - yucky choices. Not healthy and gross."
- "It would seem a coffee service would be great. Learning and educational seminars - more."
- "Possibly expand coffee area"
- "Would love a coffee counter though the services are awesome without it"
- "Would love a coffee shop!"

One focus group participant encouraged the library to become a destination to visit rather than as a place to simply run an errand, noting, “Why do people go to Starbucks to study? What is it about the atmosphere that they don’t go to the library instead?”

Expanded Hours

Many focus group participants desired longer Friday hours as well as Sunday hours during the summer. Some participants said that they felt “frustrated” on Friday evenings when they attempted to use the library after work. Survey respondents also shared a desire for longer hours:

- "Friday and Saturday open until 9 pm would be sweet"
- "I would like to see the Friday evening hours (5:30 to 9:00 pm) restored."
- "I would like to see the library return to Friday evening hours."
- "Improved hours! Library should be open on Friday evening"
- "Improving hours open - like Glen Ellyn"
- "Later hours on Fridays."
- "Later hours on weekends would be nifty."
- "Later Sunday hours"
- "Longer Friday hours"
- "Longer hours"
- "Longer hours :) Thank you for making Wheaton Public Library a great one to use."
- "Longer weekend hours."
- "Sunday hours during summer"
- "Sunday hours through the summer would be nice!"

When asked what barriers or difficulties patrons experienced when using the library, responses included:

- "Extended hours on Sundays and holidays would be great, but we realize it's a budget issue."
- "Hours (need more open hours)"
- "Hours on the weekends, especially Friday nights"
- "I believe Friday closing is at 6:00. One more hour (till 7:00) would help."
- "I forget to return my books. The closing times of 5:00 come too soon"
- "I wish the library was open earlier on Sundays"
- "Library hours. Would really like it open later on Fridays and especially on Sundays in the summer. My husband and I often wish to take a walk to library on Sunday and the summer is only time we really have the free time."
- "Miss Sundays in summer"
- "Shorter hours on Fridays - but not the end of the world"

- "Sundays not being open at least for a shorter period."
- "The hours and days open/closed are inconvenient. I think the library should be open later on Fridays and open on Sunday (including Mother's Day)"
- "Weekend hours need to be expanded"
- "Wish they were open longer on the weekends!"

Signage within Facility

Focus group participants reported being confused by “too much small signage” at the main entrance of the library and feeling “intimidated” by the layout of different areas of the building. One participant said, “I get lost the minute I go in there.” Others said they frequently needed to ask for assistance to find materials for which they were looking, often citing the separate shelving of paperback and hardcover fiction, as well as the combination of playaways and audiobooks, as challenging to navigate.

Many survey respondents cited confusion when finding materials as something to alleviate:

- "Arrange videos by drama, comedy, documentary, family, musical. Stop alphabetizing."
- "Audiobook series - could be identified more easily. The number the book is in the series."
- "Bigger signs - or a larger map on each floor, i.e. "you are here" to the main areas listed on map"
- "Display DVDs, CDs in a way easy to see and read titles."
- "I wish they would have more current videos and showcase them in an easier way to see the titles."
- "It would be quite helpful if the movies were filed according to ratings. So people wouldn't have to comb through every movie to find out it's not rated G or PG, etc."
- "Map with labeled areas"
- "Please either move the audiobooks on tape to a separate location or remove them entirely. They occupy a lot of shelf space especially now that playaways and CDs are shelved together (which is fine), but the tapes are really old and likely that very few people use them."
- "Put CDs separate from VCR etc."
- "Put playaways back where they were - worked just fine!"
- "Return the playaways to their own bookcase. Many times my husband and I searched those shelves because they are playaways (because the format is so convenient), not

because we are searching for that title. We simply don't have enough playaways to search another way. I also would like more playaways of the first books in a series. I've tried new authors because they were playaways."

- "Would prefer playaways be housed separately from rest of audio materials"
- "Better bathroom signage please!"
- "DVD filing confusing"
- "Finding playaways now that they are comingled with the CDs and cassettes."
- "Hard to find DVDs one might like due to the way they are displayed. Floor plan could be better communicated."
- "I always find the rack/paperback sections difficult to navigate. Rarely find what I was looking for so I give up."
- "I hate that the playaways are now mixed in with the other audiobooks! Bad move!"
- "It's SO big sometimes I don't know where to find things."
- "Moving the playaways and combining them with books on tape is very inconvenient."
- "Not always sure where to find certain groups of books, such as young adult, biography, etc."
- "Stack layout on 2nd floor at north end is confusing. I had to get help to find continuation of numbers."
- "The elevator signs do not make sense. Especially the west one. Example: it says LL on the sign but the buttons don't say LL."

Survey respondents also reported needing designated areas in the library for both quietness and collaborative work and meetings, as well as a desire for a drive-up exterior drop box and increased parking. When asked what barriers or difficulties patrons encountered when using the library, responses included:

Exterior Drop Box

- "I feel vulnerable getting out of my car to drop off books especially when library is closed - It would be possible to reconfigure the entrance and pavement to allow the driver to access the existing drop boxes. Especially need for our aging population."
- "Outside book drop off is awkward"
- "Wish you had a true drive-up deposit where you don't have to get out of the car like Naperville"
- "Drive in drop - where you don't have to get out of car in bad weather"

- "I would like to have a "drive-through" return for library materials"
- "Have a drive-up book return"

Noise

- "Increasingly noisy. Being a community center doesn't mean people can't be reminded it's a library"
- "Loud talking, phone use"
- "More quiet zones other than the reading room 2nd floor"
- "I struggle with how noisy the library has become - patrons, staff at desks, tutoring on the main level - I long for the days of quiet libraries"
- "Second floor is often noisy"
- "There is entirely too much talking and noise throughout much of the library! Too much meeting and talking, even on cell phones, which are supposed to be prohibited."
- "There were rowdy teenagers yelling and disturbing my studying/reading outside the library while I was upstairs"
- "Designate certain areas of the library for social interaction, where talking is necessary. Maybe have a roaming monitor to enforce quiet and cell phone use."

Parking

- "No parking - I was just coming to get books but a popular program took all the spaces"
- "More parking"
- "Parking during special events/programs can be difficult"
- "Sometimes it's hard to find a parking spot."
- "Parking lot sometimes full"

Work Space

- "Lack of seating near outlets for computers"
- "Limited space for creative or collaborative work. Limited areas/availability to not be quiet."
- "Finding a place to talk and work, except having to sign up for a study room"
- "Finding a quiet place for children to study for extended time"
- "Occasional difficulty finding a table/desk near an outlet for laptop"
- "Add more outlets for electronics"
- "Maybe more and quieter small group rooms?"

- "Maybe set up some screens or curtains to help create work areas when two people can discuss their work"
- "More tables/desks in quiet zones"
- "Provide more options for parents who work [at] home - sometimes we could use a room to do work"
- "It would help to make study rooms available to those who are not regulars at library. I meet clients for meetings and am unable to use those facilities for privacy."
- "I used the conference room several times with my kids (2nd floor) and felt this was frowned upon by some staff"
- "I was denied use of a study room. My daughter's Brownie/Girl Scout troop needed a place to meet, since her school had closed. We asked if we could use a room in the lower level for their meetings once a month (talking, making a craft, eating a snack). We were told the children might be too loud, etc."

More Robust Teen Space

The majority of teenage students in the local high school class that participated in a focus group held library cards, yet almost none claimed to be active users of the library. Their responses showed a strong disconnect between today's modern library and the group's perception of it. Most students associated the library with images of old books, quiet rooms, and "being shushed by librarians." When asked about their interest in using the library to access digital media tools or collaborative meeting spaces, one student responded, "What does that have to do with libraries?"

These responses strongly indicate a need to reach out to teens in new ways to change their perception of the library and inform them about services available. One adult focus group participant said that the library "is failing to connect with the next generation of patrons." In addition, teens expressed ideas for new features and services that would attract them to use the library. These included increased hours that better suit their schedules during the week preceding final exams, a dedicated teen space that does not conform to the traditional "quiet, imposing" image of the traditional library, and digital media equipment and/or a lab that would provide access to sophisticated tools and software that they do not have access to at home or on their phones. In general, teens sought an environment in which they can speak, collaborate, "hang out," and enjoy new technologies and collaborative activities without being closed in by physical books.

Noting that students now use more digital resources and that space needs have changed, one school official said, “Kids need a collaborative space, they don’t need a quiet space.” High school students and school officials alike said they would like to see more study rooms and areas of the library where teens would “not be shushed.” Teens also expressed that these spaces should not necessarily also house the library’s teen collection.

Programming Suggestions

Survey respondents provided the following comments regarding programming:

Children’s Programs

- "Children's programs outside the weekday work schedule. As a working parent, it is near impossible to attend activities with my preschooler."
- "Children’s drop in storytime"
- "I was impressed by the child's craft show. That's a good thing to do. Thanks for that!"
- "Love nature telling, and my son loves it. Wish there were more openings"
- "More activities for preschool age children to do during visits"
- "More activities/programs for 1st graders - 5th graders like the healthy snack class (especially 1st-2nd grade age seems limited)"
- "More drop in story times for young kids (5 and under). Love the new storytime registration via website!"
- "More drop-in storytime in summer"
- "More family programming evenings and weekends"
- "Reserve spots in storytime for ESL families or provide special storytimes for ESL families"
- "Limited space for children's programs (caps on number of kids in popular events and storytimes), my kids have food allergies - kids eating in library"
- "More children story times. I find that the story time sessions fill up quickly - possibly online registration would also help to lessen time waiting on phone."
- "Not much for older readers 8-10. Great for storytime but then not much."
- "Timing of children's programs not useful for working parents"

Other Programs

- "Community movie nights and activities"

- "I think the library might offer more younger adult oriented programs. Perhaps concerts with local musicians, local artists, and events with ethnic communities inside Wheaton."
- "Institute a current events program once every two weeks, during the day for an hour and a half (discussion)"
- "More adult book/movie discussions"
- "More music/concerts"
- "Start a mystery book club"
- "Weekly class - Discuss the news of the week. Interesting facts or programs on special deals participants have heard about."
- "Would love to see more concerts in the back patio by Adams Park."
- "As I get older, there seems to be fewer and fewer programs I can go to"
- "Hard to get into some classes (they are popular!)"
- "I didn't know they had programs."
- "I don't really know what programming is offered."
- "Young Adult/Teen programming lacking. Would like to see Lego programs for teens/young adults"

Community Partnerships

Patrons and community leaders alike thought the library could better incorporate its services with other organizations in Wheaton. Participants wanted to “bring the library to the community” and “pull in populations [the library is] not getting now.” Other participants suggested the library team up with organizations from the DuPage Housing Authority for homebound services to nursing homes and preschools. One patron noted, “If you want it to be a community center, you need to offer more,” adding, “It doesn’t feel the library is up-to-date.”

While school officials noted that they appreciated the increased dialogue between the library and the school districts, they also invited library staff to attend regular meetings of school librarians to become more engaged with the needs of students. School officials also said that parents would be interested in using the library for video/multimedia resources, as well as educational programs such as cyber safety, social media, and other parent education. In addition, Wheaton College staff members expressed interest in developing a stronger relationship with Wheaton Public Library.

MOVING FORWARD

When initially asked about the library, focus group participants said they had the perception that Wheaton Public Library was serving their needs; when asked to be more specific, however, participants revealed many ideas they would like to see implemented at the library. As one focus group participant said, “The library has to have a future besides being a collection.” Participants encouraged the library to “be bold and try things out” and “truly bring the library into the 21st century.”

The current community of users was generally happy with the library. Regular patrons value and use traditional library services and materials. They are not, however, opposed to new ideas and do have an expectation that the library will evolve along with society and the needs of the community. To ensure sustainability of the library in the future, the library must increase outreach to specific segments of the population, including the business community and teens. As technology, digital media, and instant access to information become everyday expectations of users, the library must act now to position itself as a leader in these fields or risk losing patronage to competing businesses and institutions.