April Listening Sessions - Older Adults
(Main 4/17, Maze 4/18, Dole 4/22 — notes from in-person conversations, feedback from 10 survey submissions)

HOW DO YOU GET YOUR NEWS?

- Newspaper (online or print):
  - International - BBC, Daily Mail, Daily Mirror (3)
  - National:
    - NYT (18 total, 9 specifically online, 2 specifically print/hard copy)
    - Washington Post (3 total, 1 specifically online)
    - Buzzfeed (1)
    - The Guardian (2, 1 online specific)
    - Scholastic News (1)
    - The Daily Skimm (1)
    - The Atlantic (1, online)
    - The New Yorker (1, online)
    - The Economist (1, online)
    - NPR (3)
  - Local:
    - Chicago Tribune (10 total, 3 specifically online, 3 specifically print/hard copy)
    - Wednesday Journal (8 total, 3 combo of online & print, 3 specifically online, 3 specifically print/hard copy)
    - Block Club Chicago (1)
    - Oak Leaves (2)
- General - no specific sources named (8)
- TV - local news channels, WGN, CNN, MSNBC, PBS, etc. (24 total)
- Internet/online - general, no specific sources mentioned (14)
- Radio - WBEZ, etc. (12)
- Apps - Apple News, Public Square, etc. (7)
- Social media - TikTok, Twitter, YouTube, etc. (8)
- Email (3)
- Word of mouth (4)

HOW DO YOU USE OPPL NOW? WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOU VISIT?

- Physical materials:
  - Books/audiobooks (31)
  - DVDs (11)
  - Music (2)
  - Magazines (1)
  - General, “picking up holds”, ILL (7)
- Digital materials (Libby, Hoopla, etc.) and online resources (7)
Mostly use library virtually/digitally since COVID (1) – “Since covid i seem to be going to the library less frequently. Mostly now I access the library on line and get my library info from news the library emails me”

- Physical spaces:
  - Meetings (4)
  - Study rooms (4)
  - As a destination/space use generally/sitting & reading (17)
    - Resources for and space to do work or schoolwork (6)
  - Exhibits/displays in Art Gallery and Idea Box (8)

- Programs/events (18)

- Technology:
  - Computers/laptops (10)
  - Printing/copying/scanning (8)
  - Wifi (4)
  - Hotspots (1)
  - Learning Labs (1)

- Staff support/conversations/recommendations (3)
- Kids resources (10)
- Job search (2)
- Voting (1)

**WHY DO YOU ATTEND EVENTS AT THE LIBRARY?**

- Don’t attend (20)
  - No time or timing conflicts (8)
  - Don’t know about them (5)
  - Difficult to get out of home to attend, might attend virtual (2)
  - Not interested (3)
  - Might attend in future, dependent on timing, topic, format (4)

- Used to attend but don’t now - e.g., now that no longer have kids, since COVID, etc. (5)

- Attend (35)
  - Enjoy content - entertaining, informative, etc. (12)
    - Movies (2)
    - Authors (2)
    - Lectures (6)
    - Book groups (3)
    - Instructional classes (1)
    - Kids programming (5)
    - Community/local info (2)
    - Political info, candidate forums (4)
    - History (2)
    - Architecture (1)
    - Local interest (1)
    - Cooking (1)
  - Like socializing, seeing people you know, feeling of community at programs (6)
Paper calendar helps, have to remember to pick up (2)
- Staff do a good job (2)
- Like virtual offerings (3)
- Attend in-person (2)
- Like to keep mind active (1)
- Attendance depends on topic (4)
- Come just to see what’s new at the library (1)
- Motivated to attend by food (1)

FUTURE SUGGESTIONS

- Programming & Learning:
  - Book groups (and programs in general) geared toward older adults - focused on aging/end of life/meaning/loneliness (7)
  - More virtual/hybrid events (3)
  - Digital learning - e.g., getting ebooks, learning what’s available at the library online (3)
    - “for seniors like me who are not very internet savvy --I'd like an easy to access on-line session or two on what the library does offer and how to access it on-line and also who at the library to speak with about various question we may have”
  - Movies (2)
  - American history events (2)
  - Music events (1)
  - Teen/youth development programming (2)
  - Offer more programs at Maze, not just Main (1)
  - Library “sleepover” (1)
  - Work with Park District to offer programs for seniors (1)
  - More information provided about ancestry research (1)

- Materials:
  - Return of hard copy newspapers/magazines (6)
    - “I'm very upset that you did away with print newspapers. Especially older adults, and people with difficulty using and/or looking into a backlit computer need print copies. Some of us just prefer it.”
    - One also said harder to hold electronic device with their hands for online viewing vs. paper copies
  - More books & book recommendations (4)
  - More materials on display (2)
  - More materials for browsing at Dole (1)
  - More books on medical topics/wellness, non-fiction, history, mystery at Dole (1)
  - More added to Library of Things (1)
  - Return of large print books to the 2nd floor, so they are near the regular fiction (1)
  - Move multicultural collection to Main - takes up too much space at Dole (1)

- Staffing:
○ Tech & digital learning support - e.g., staff always stationed at computer lab (1)
○ Staff/volunteers with disabilities to help with simple questions (1)
○ More staff on 3rd floor, to avoid long lines (1)
○ Creative leadership at the library to think about how to address ageism (1)

● Physical spaces:
  ○ Ceiling repair in 1st floor men’s bathroom (1)
  ○ More info on reserving meeting rooms (1)
  ○ More comfortable seating (1)
  ○ More power outlets (1)
  ○ More parking (2)
  ○ Activate Dole in a different way (1)

● Communication:
  ○ Need more communication (1)
  ○ Calendar could be easier to navigate (1)

GENERAL COMMENTS

● Staff:
  ○ Great people working at library - welcoming, caring, helpful (12)

● Space:
  ○ Safe space (3)
  ○ Library architecture is great (1)
  ○ Easy access, long hours (3)
  ○ Like kids space (2)
    ■ Miss pre-COVID toys (1)
  ○ Like quiet spaces (2)
  ○ Like reading spaces outside (1)

● Physical Materials:
  ○ SWAN/ILL is great (3)
  ○ Love hold system for getting materials (3)
  ○ Appreciates Home Delivery (1)

● Technology:
  ○ Printing/copying - useful, keep it free (5)
  ○ Excited about 3D printer (1)

● Communication:
  ○ Not great communication with public but getting better (1)
  ○ Email newsletters are helpful (1)

● Mission:
  ○ Focus should be more on books and less on social services and multicultural work (2)
  ○ Not focusing on older/aging people enough, not a priority in the DEI work (2)
    ■ Want more comprehensive listing of OP services for seniors (1)
    ■ “I love the OPPL but feel it is not serving seniors as well as it could/should.”
  ○ Library is focusing more on seniors now (1)
- Appreciate respectful treatment of people experiencing homelessness & teens (2)
- Teens are loud (1)
  - “I appreciate being able to find and place holds on books via Swann system. I was driven away from using the library as a place to read, research, study sometime around fall 2019 when acting-out teens and homeless made it tough to feel comfortable and concentrate. My purse was stolen. I've not returned except to borrow and return books or attend scheduled events.”
- Inclusive library, reaching out to all community members (2)
- Appreciate anti-racism commitment (1)
- Like that it is more of a community center and not just a quiet space (1)
- Provides resources for all ages/whole family (1)
- Innovative (1)
- Embraces environmentalism (1)
- Love smaller branches, keep them open (4)

- General positive comments:
  - “The library is my second home”
  - “Every library should be like this”
  - “What you do is so wonderful and important”
  - “I think Oak Park Library is doing a great job with all your offerings!! I think you have great offerings for all ages and many programs for all ages together too.”

SURVEY RESPONDENTS
- Total: 10
- Library cardholder?
  - No: 0
  - Yes: 10
- ZIP:
  - 60302: 8
  - 60304: 2

May Listening Sessions - Library Spaces
(Main 5/1, Dole 5/10, What's Blooming on Harrison 5/20) — notes from in-person conversations, feedback from 17 survey submissions

WHICH LIBRARY SPACES DO YOU USE?
- Main (48)
  - Children’s (13)
  - Quiet study space, study rooms (5)
○ Meeting spaces (4)
○ 2nd or 3rd floor generally (5)
○ Programming (2)
○ Printing (2)
○ Computers (1)
○ Middle school resources (1)
○ Get books more quickly (1)
○ Art gallery (1)
○ New releases (1)
○ Browsing (1)

• Maze (28)
  ○ Pick-up/holds (11)
  ○ Maze has better fiction collection than Main, new books (3)
  ○ Browsing (3)
  ○ Newspapers (3)
  ○ Printing (2)
  ○ Studying (2)
  ○ Sitting & reading (1)
  ○ Large tables (1)
  ○ Kids (1)

• Dole (21)
  ○ Use because of dance class, PDOP programs in building (6)
  ○ Children's resources mainly (5)
  ○ Pick up holds here because parking difficult at Main (2)

• General, comments about space usage that are not location-specific:
  ○ Love digital library, Libby, Hoopla (5)
    ■ “Since the pandemic started I mostly use Hoopla Digital/ebooks.”
  ○ Kids section, storytimes (4)
  ○ Holds pickup (3)
  ○ Books (1)
  ○ ILL (1)
  ○ Study rooms cold in winter (1)
  ○ New releases (1)
  ○ Study rooms / study space (2)
  ○ Meeting rooms (1)
  ○ Use printers a lot (1)

HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHAT TO BORROW NEXT?
• Browsing at library, displays (25)
• Recommendations from people:
  ○ Librarian/library staff recommendations (5)
  ○ Friend/family/coworker recommendation, word of mouth (16)
  ○ Book group/club recommendation (6)
• Online reviews/articles/blogs - NYT, etc. (16)
• Aspen online catalog (15)
• Good Reads (3)
• Book review magazines (1)
• Book stores (5)
• Amazon (1)
• Library digital collection apps - Libby, Overdrive (2)
• Email recommendations from libraries, bookstores, etc. (3)
• Book lists (3)
• Social media - e.g., TikTok (2)

WHAT IMPROVEMENTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE?

• Spaces:
  o Free and expanded parking at Main - hard to find spot (4)
    ■ “Better drop off space and free parking in your parking garage! Libraries are a free public space, parking should not be the exception.”
  o Furniture:
    ■ More seating (1)
    ■ Better tables and better/more comfortable chairs (3)
      ● “used to use third floor but stopped because comfortable chairs are gone”
      ● “any chance of bringing back comfrotable chairs for older folks? I am 86.”
    ■ More tables with power outlets built in (1)
  o Spaces/Zones for Specific Uses:
    ■ More room to relax, “stretch out”/cozy reading spots (2)
    ■ More spaces for adults to work (1)
    ■ Need zones for conversation and for silence (2)
  o Hours:
    ■ Open Maze on Fridays (3)
    ■ Later closing time on Sundays (1)
  o Study/Meeting Rooms:
    ■ Upgrades or better maintained study rooms (1)
    ■ Improved reservation system for study rooms and meeting rooms (2)
    ■ Sound proofing (1)
  o Different service desk area (1)
  o Coffee pot, beverages for patrons (2)
  o Improve bathrooms (1)
  o Better airflow in quiet room at Main - gets stuffy & hot (1)

• Communications:
  o More yard signs promoting library (1)
  o Better notification about programs (1)

• Materials:
  o Library of Things (3)
    ■ Tools (1)
- Want model train checkout (1)
- More 3D puzzles (1)
  - More books onsite in general - greater variety and increased volume to decrease wait time (3)
    - More fantasy fiction (1)
    - More sci-fi, esp. new (2)
    - More bestsellers (1)
    - More current books (1)
    - More fiction (1)
    - Increased diversity of characters in children’s books (1)
  - More DVDs (1)
  - More academic articles via ILL (1)
  - Print newspapers (1)
  - More book displays - more than just new titles, recommendations from librarians like in bookstores (1)
    - “The fiction floor has been so boring since the pandemic. Before the pandemic, there was a table with monthly themed suggestions. The shelves on the walls had themed suggestions, too. Now? NOTHING. [...] It's overwhelming to just browse the stacks and I'm often at a loss. I think the floor could host a lot of different ideas for people who are looking for a new or different genre to get them out of their reading ruts.”
  - Arrange stacks by genre instead of author (1)
  - Make collection face-out like at a bookstore (1)
  - More access to book reading lists/recs (1)

- Technology:
  - Faster computer speed (1)
  - Longer reservation times for computers - longer than 2 hours, all day? (3)
  - Improve printing at Maze (1)
  - Provide access to digital tools like Adobe suite, Tableau, etc. (1)

- Programs:
  - Psychology workshops (1)
  - Technology workshops (1)
  - More tutoring (1)
  - More activities (1)
  - More art shows (1)
  - More movies (1)
  - More photography classes (1)
  - Night school for HS equivalency (1)
  - More daytime programs, esp. author visits (1)
  - More programs at times when people with 9-5 jobs could attend (1)
    - “As a 27 year old, I do not see much on the calendar for my age range. I’m excited for the summer reading challenge, but many of your events take place during the work day. I work 9-5, so I’m not able to attend most of the programs that interest me (sound bath/ yoga). I’d love to see like an
“after work” relaxing/unwind series for adults that could include crafts, talks, or physical fitness. I love the library, so I’d be excited to participate in your programs. :)

- Mission:
  - More focus on Latinx community (1)

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

- Positive feedback:
  - Love the offerings, children’s and multicultural (1)
  - Likes library return process (1)
  - Love activities, programs (2)
  - Fun collections (1)
  - So glad you have an area for teens, so great for them to have a space (1)
  - Friendly/welcoming staff (1)
  - Loves the library (7)
  - Loves Libby/digital library (1)
  - Loves displays (1)
  - Likes social service focus (1)
  - “OPPL is a five-star library in so many ways!! You all are doing so much! It’s really exciting. I’m very proud that OPPL continues to offer such amazing services.”
  - “We love the library and all the events.”

**SURVEY RESPONDENTS**

- Total: 17
- Library cardholder?
  - No: 0
  - Yes: 17
- ZIP:
  - 60301: 3
  - 60302: 9
  - 60304: 4
  - 60126: 1

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**June Listening Sessions - Library Programs**

(A Day in Our Village 6/4, Dole 6/8, Maze 6/17) — notes from in-person conversations, feedback from [54 survey submissions](#)

**HOW DO PATRONS FIND OUT ABOUT PROGRAMS?**

- Library emails (7)
WHEN DO PATRONS PREFER TO ATTEND PROGRAMS?

- Day of Week:
  - Any day - no preference (5)
  - Weekends only (14)
  - Weekdays only (14)
  - Sun: 28
  - Mon: 15
  - Tue: 17
  - Wed: 18
  - Thu: 20
  - Fri: 20
  - Sat: 30

- Time of Day:
  - Any time - no preference (2)
  - Late morning (24)
  - Early afternoon (25)
  - Late afternoon (21)
  - Evening (26)
  - Other (4)

WHAT FORMAT DO YOU PREFER FOR PROGRAMS?

- In-person (28)
- Virtual (3)
- Hybrid (23)

WHAT TYPES OF PROGRAMS ARE YOU MOST INTERESTED IN?

- SRP - broadly (3)
  - Adult SRP (1)
  - Teen Summer Challenge (1)
- Tech programs - 3D printing, etc. (3)
- Gaming - Pokémon, board games, chess, etc. (2)
- Storytimes (1)
- STEAM Fest (1)
- Latinx Book Group (1)
- Noche de Loteria (1)
- Open mic (1)
- Language classes (1)
- Sewing (1)
- DIY (1)

**WHAT LIBRARY PROGRAMS HAVE YOU ATTENDED IN THE LAST YEAR?**
- None (32) – 59% of survey respondents said they hadn’t attended any library programs in the last year (32/54). Reasons why below (responses from people who said “none” only):
  - I do not know what kinds of programs the library offers (19)
  - I have no time to attend library-led programs (2)
  - I have no interest in attending library-led programs (1)
  - Other (10)
- Storytime (4)
- Book club (3)
- Wellness:
  - Yoga (1)
  - Breathing techniques (1)
  - Meditation, sound healing (2)
- STEAM Fest (2)
- Movies (2)
- Musical performance (2)
- Arts:
  - Craft classes (1)
  - Watercolor (1)
- Author talk (1)
- Lecture (1)
- ILP programs (1)
- Anti-racism (1)
- Day of the Dead event (1)
- Decluttering event (1)
- Cooking class (1)
- Recycling presentation (1)
- Book sale (1)
- Spanish conversation group (1)
- Attended genealogy prior to COVID (1)

**OTHER LIBRARY RESOURCES THAT PATRONS LIKE:**
- Art Gallery (1)
- Library of Things (1)
- Seed Bank (1)
- Teen volunteer program (1)
• Book Swaps (1)
• Use of meeting rooms (1)
• Online zoom workshop (1)
• Voter registration (1)

SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS:
• “please make kid events that working parents can utilize”

SURVEY RESPONDENTS
• Total: 54
  • Library cardholder?
    o No: 1
    o Yes: 52
    o Unknown: 1
  • ZIP:
    o 60301: 3
    o 60302: 34
    o 60304: 15
    o Unknown: 2

*NOTE: Data in this document compiled from the following raw data sources: Listening Session Flip Chart Notes, Listening Session Google Form Responses