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)
- 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:**
  - 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.”
  - 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 comroftable chairs for older folks? I am 86.”
    - More tables with power outlets built in (1)
  - 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)
  - Hours:
    - Open Maze on Fridays (3)
    - Later closing time on Sundays (1)
  - Study/Meeting Rooms:
    - Upgrades or better maintained study rooms (1)
    - Improved reservation system for study rooms and meeting rooms (2)
    - Sound proofing (1)
  - Different service desk area (1)
  - Coffee pot, beverages for patrons (2)
  - Improve bathrooms (1)
  - Better airflow in quiet room at Main - gets stuffy & hot (1)

- **Communications:**
  - More yard signs promoting library (1)
  - Better notification about programs (1)

- **Materials:**
  - 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)
- Library website (3)
- Library staff (1)
- Library calendar (2 total, 1 specifically hard copy)
- Online - source unknown (2)
- Newsletter - source unknown (2)
- Mom mail (2)
- Library flyer (1)
- From D97 (1)
- Word of mouth (1)
- Wednesday Journal (1)

**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?
  - No: 1
  - Yes: 52
  - Unknown: 1
- ZIP:
  - 60301: 3
  - 60302: 34
  - 60304: 15
  - Unknown: 2

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