2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

JUNE 27, 2022

2023 - 2025
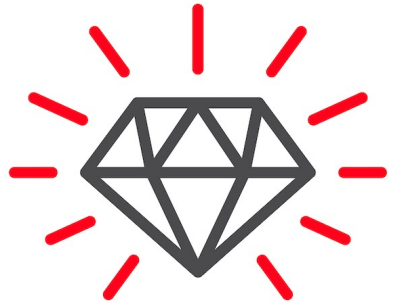**Westwood Public Library**

I. Strategy

- **Core Values**
- **Mission & Vision**
- **6 Strategic Initiatives**
- **18 Objectives & Actions**
- **Financial Partners**
- **Community Partners**
- **Strategy Timeline**

II. Key Findings

- SWOT Analysis
- Summary of Research Findings
- Community Survey Key Findings
- Focus Group Key Findings
- Data & Analytics Key Findings

III. Methodology

- Strategy Leadership Team
- Research Teams
- Workplan & Deliverables
- Friends & Supporters
- Day in the Life

VALUES

We go the extra mile for customers & each other

We're Empowered, Resourceful & Creative

We break barriers to inclusion & success

One Integrated Library System

Consistent high-quality experience across 2 branches, remote, mobile & digital

We take risks to innovate & Be Different

We're One Team. We pivot & adapt together

MISSION

Mission

Why do we exist?

Westwood Public Library provides easy-to-access resources, services and experiences that invite people of all ages, cultures and interests to connect, explore, relax, problem-solve and thrive.

VISION

Vision

Where are we going?

Westwood Public Library will be a destination for Inspiration, Ideas and Information -- the dynamic, responsive, beating heart of community life.

Mission, Vision & 6 Strategic Initiatives

MISSION

Why we exist

Westwood Public Library provides easy-to-access resources, services and experiences that invite people of all ages, cultures and interests to connect, explore, relax, problem-solve and thrive.

VISION

Where we're going

Westwood Public Library will be a destination for Inspiration, Ideas and Information -- the dynamic, responsive, beating heart of community life.

Excellent!

What's Next?

Anytime Anywhere

Better Together

Think Blue

Start here!

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Westwood Public Library

Who We Are (MISSION)

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that invite people of all ages, cultures and interests to connect, explore, relax, problem-solve and thrive.

Where We're Going (VISION)

Westwood Public Library will be a destination for Inspiration, Ideas and Information
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STRATEGY

Start Here!

Think Blue

Better Together

Anytime, Anywhere

What's Next?
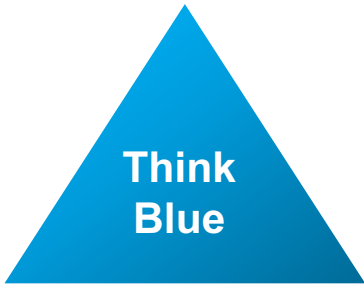
1 **Draw more people in** so they know the library's direct value to their life, and see themselves here

2 **Increase quality of life** for everyone in the community by providing unexpected, inspiring ways to relax, recharge and grow

3 **Connect people and ease divides** by being deliberate about inclusivity and creating safe, inviting spaces

4 **Expand availability, reach & impact** by upgrading our physical presence, and online/ remote accessibility

5 **Surprise, delight and uplift our community** by curating interesting new collections, programs and experiences

Excellent!

6 **Make our processes and organization increasingly efficient and effective** so operations are progressively easier, more fluid and more satisfying for both our team and those we serve

2023 - 2025
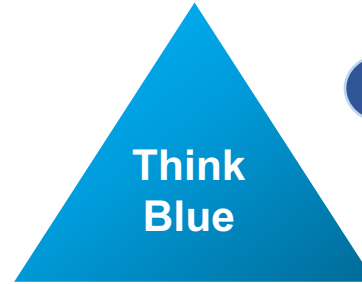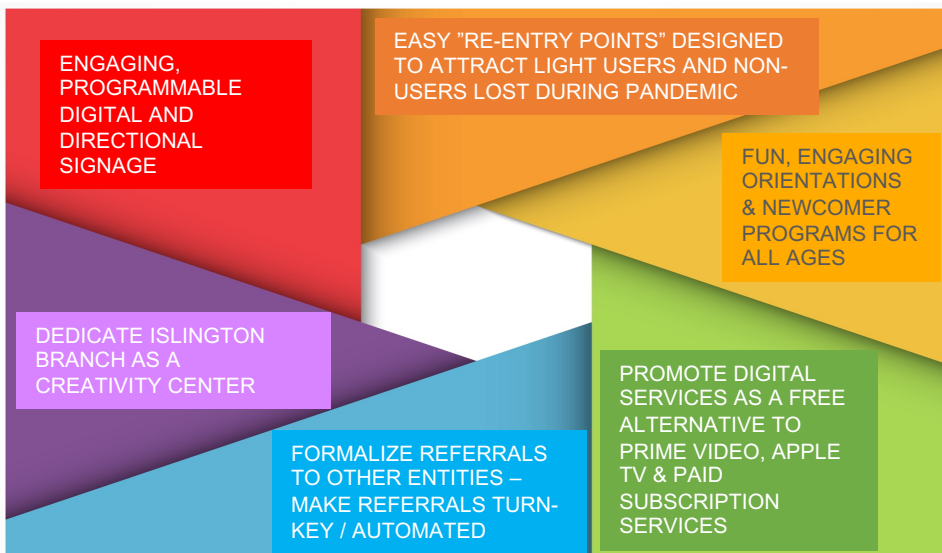**Westwood Public Library**

INITIATIVE:

Start Here!

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Think Blue

② **Increase quality of life** for everyone in the community by providing unexpected, inspiring ways to relax, recharge and grow

Blue Zones are unique regions across the world with the healthiest, happiest, and longest-living people, as identified by author Dan Buettner, National Geographic, and scientists. Social connectedness is a commonality among Blue Zone regions.

OBJECTIVES:

1. **Demonstrate relevance** to increase usage among light-users, non-users and former users who drifted away during pandemic
2. **Re-envision customer service** for the future to meet high-value, emerging community needs and requests
3. **Build powerful referral networks** to position the Library as a hub for accessing many resources and solving many problems

4. **Invite Westwood to become a Blue Zone** through thought-provoking collections, events and experiences
5. **Highlight authors & content creators** that illuminate wellness themes in challenging times
6. **Make the library's entries, galleries, spaces and nooks** more inviting, accessible and comfortable

ACTIONS:

ENGAGING, PROGRAMMABLE DIGITAL AND DIRECTIONAL SIGNAGE

EASY "RE-ENTRY POINTS" DESIGNED TO ATTRACT LIGHT USERS AND NON-USERS LOST DURING PANDEMIC

FUN, ENGAGING ORIENTATIONS & NEWCOMER PROGRAMS FOR ALL AGES

DEDICATE ISLINGTON BRANCH AS A CREATIVITY CENTER

FORMALIZE REFERRALS TO OTHER ENTITIES – MAKE REFERRALS TURN-KEY / AUTOMATED

PROMOTE DIGITAL SERVICES AS A FREE ALTERNATIVE TO PRIME VIDEO, APPLE TV & PAID SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

VIBRANT, ATTENTION-GETTING ENTRANCES WITH BANNERS & PUBLIC ART HIGHLIGHTING VISION THEMES -- INSPIRATION, IDEAS & INFORMATION

INVITING SPACES FOR READING, LIGHT CONVERSATION, COMFORT, FOOD & DRINKS

LIVELY GALLERY WITH ART, MUSIC, POP-UP DISPLAYS / EVENTS & MUSIC

CONCERT SERIES
VIRTUAL TRAVEL TO BLUE ZONES

WATER FEATURES, FISH TANKS, ART, QUOTES, DISPLAYS ON OPTOMISTIC WELLNESS THEMES

OUTDOOR SPACES TO READ & RE-CHARGE

OUTOOR WELLNESS PROGRAMS

INDOOR/OUTDOOR "FLOW"

2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

INITIATIVE:

Better Together

3 **Connect people and ease divides** by being deliberate about inclusivity and creating safe, inviting spaces

Anytime, Anywhere

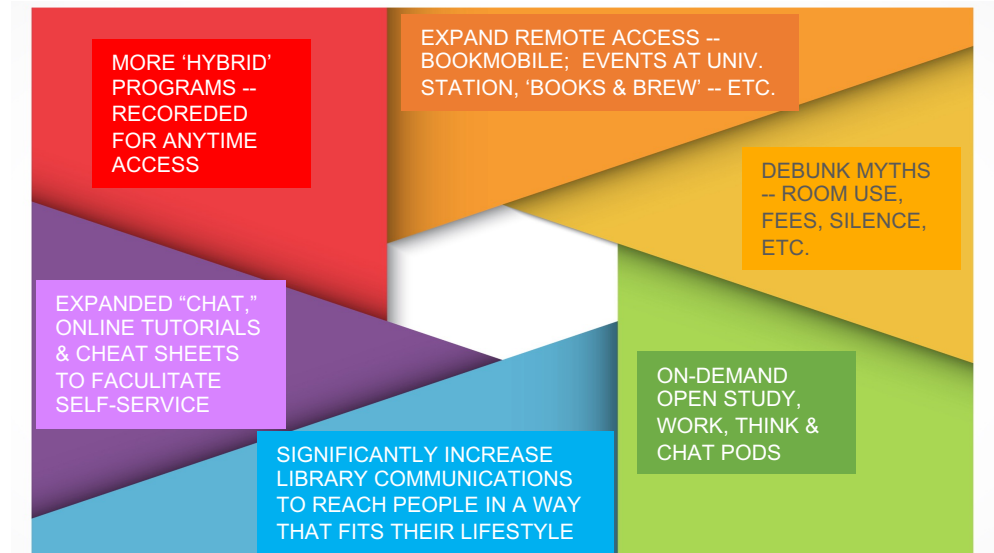**4** **Expand availability, reach & impact** by upgrading our physical presence, and online/ remote accessibility

OBJECTIVES:

7. **Position the library as a safe neutral space** -- a wellspring for people in exhausting, challenging, changing times[1]
8. **Illuminate contemporary topics** in a way that encourages civil discourse and deeper consideration
9. **Present themes and programs** that examine our changing world and attract more diverse people as both speakers and participants

10. **Streamlined, efficient, intuitive technology on demand**
11. **Redesign website and streaming services** for easy, fast user experiences
12. **Expand outreach programs** that bring our services to schools, fairs, and hotspots -- rather than waiting for our services to be discovered

ACTIONS:

CIVIC & CULTURAL PROGRAMS, WORLD LANGUAGE DISCUSSIONS & MATERIALS; NEWS & DISCUSSION FORUMS

ONE BOOK, ONE TOWN[2] HUMAN LIBRARY[3] SPEAKERS & DISPLAYS EXPLORING "GRAY AREAS"

NEW PROGRAMS TO INCREASE ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPANT DIVERSITY

TAP THE TALENT AND DIVESITY OF OUR RESIDENTS AS VOLUNTEERS

GAME & TRIVIA NIGHTS, COZY GATHERING SPACES, POETRY SLAMS -- ETC.

FAMILY & MULTI-GENERATIONAL PROGRAMS

PROGRAMS LINKING LOCAL HISTORY TO TODAY

MORE 'HYBRID' PROGRAMS -- RECOREDED FOR ANYTIME ACCESS

EXPAND REMOTE ACCESS -- BOOKMOBILE; EVENTS AT UNIV. STATION, 'BOOKS & BREW' -- ETC.

DEBUNK MYTHS -- ROOM USE, FEES, SILENCE, ETC.

EXPANDED "CHAT," ONLINE TUTORIALS & CHEAT SHEETS TO FACULITATE SELF-SERVICE

SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASE LIBRARY COMMUNICATIONS TO REACH PEOPLE IN A WAY THAT FITS THEIR LIFESTYLE

ON-DEMAND OPEN STUDY, WORK, THINK & CHAT PODS

[1] *Boston.com 12/23/21: *We asked, you answered: Words to describe 2021* [2] Entire town reads & discusses one book. [3] 1:1 conversation with community members who wish to share life experiences such as living in another country, or overcoming challenges
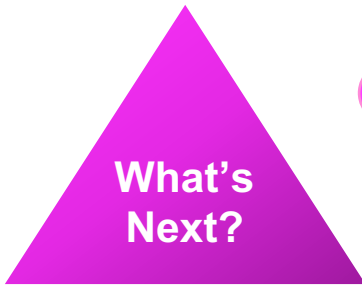
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2023 - 2025
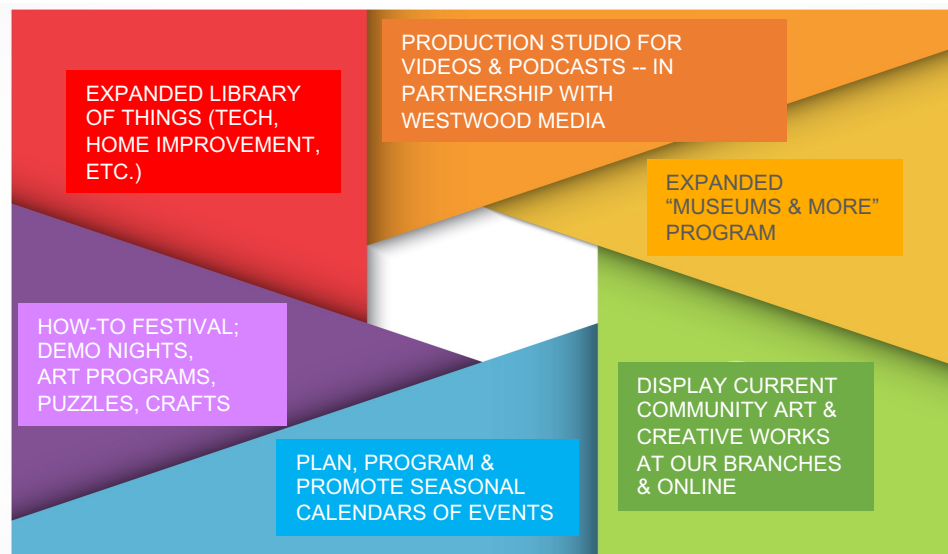**Westwood Public Library**

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What's Next?

5 **Surprise, delight and uplift our community** by curating interesting new collections, programs and experiences

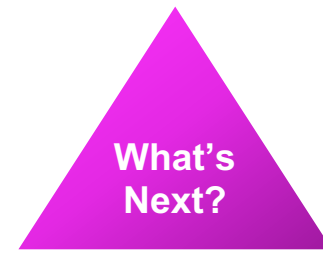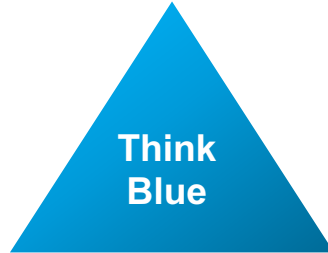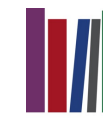Excellent!

6 **Make our processes and organization increasingly efficient and effective** so operations are progressively easier, more fluid and more satisfying for both our team and those we serve

OBJECTIVES:

13. **Expand what's new and cool about the library today**

14. **Build on our strength in personalized services** (Reader Advisory, Book Bundles, notary service, etc.) to include our full range of services – books, programs, events, discussion groups, referrals & more

15. **Increase program focus, quality & attendance**

16. **People:** Develop our people to meet needs post-pandemic & future

17. **Flexibility:** Build an organization and processes specifically designed for flexibility to operate in a fluid pandemic-era that respects personal choice – switching easily from one mode of service to another

18. **Process:** Design streamlined, tech-supported core business processes

ACTIONS:

EXPANDED LIBRARY OF THINGS (TECH, HOME IMPROVEMENT, ETC.)

PRODUCTION STUDIO FOR VIDEOS & PODCASTS -- IN PARTNERSHIP WITH WESTWOOD MEDIA

EXPANDED "MUSEUMS & MORE" PROGRAM

HOW-TO FESTIVAL; DEMO NIGHTS, ART PROGRAMS, PUZZLES, CRAFTS

PLAN, PROGRAM & PROMOTE SEASONAL CALENDARS OF EVENTS

DISPLAY CURRENT COMMUNITY ART & CREATIVE WORKS AT OUR BRANCHES & ONLINE

BUSINESS PROCESS ASSESSMENT & REDESIGN

BETTER UTILIZATION OF DATA & ANALYTICS

QUARTERLY LEADERSTHIP TEAM MEETINGS TO PLAN & TRACK STRATEGY PROGRESS

LINK STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES TO JOB DESCRIPTIONS & PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

TRAINING & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WPL UNIVERSITY[1]

IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING SUMMER 2022 SO STRATEGY TAKES FLIGHT 1/1/23

MORE STAFF RECOGNITION -- SERVICE MILESTONES & SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

[1] On-gong, in-house peer-to-peer training

Strategic Plan "At-A-Glance"

Goals / Objectives / Actions

	Start Here!	Think Blue	Better Together	Anytime, Anywhere	What's Next?	Excellent!
GOALS	**Draw more people in** so they know the library's direct value to their life, and see themselves here	**Increase quality of life** for everyone in the community by providing unexpected, inspiring ways to relax, recharge and grow	**Connect people and ease divides** by being deliberate about inclusivity and creating safe, inviting spaces	**Expand availability, reach & impact** by upgrading our physical presence, and online/ remote accessibility	**Surprise, delight and uplift our community** by curating interesting new collections, programs and experiences	**Make our processes and organization increasingly efficient and effective** so operations are progressively easier, more fluid and more satisfying for our team and those we serve

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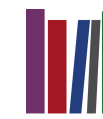
PARTNERS

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2025
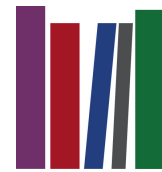
Westwood Public Library

The Westwood Public Library 21st Century Fund is a 501c3 nonprofit charity that, through its endowment, funds major expenditures that anticipate and meet the evolving needs of Westwood Public Library and the community it serves.

WESTWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY
21ST CENTURY FUND

It pays for:

- Improvements, Upgrades & Enhancements
- Special Collections, Equipment & Technology
- Civic, Art & Cultural Initiatives
- Creating the Library Staff & Services of the Future
- Community Marketing & Communications

Town of Westwood is the primary financial support of the library.

It pays for:

- Salaries & Benefits
- Capital Expenditures
- Collections
- Materials
- Utilities
- Technology
- Maintenance

Through steadfast dedication to fundraising and volunteer efforts, **Friends of the Westwood Library** ensures the library remains Westwood's community center for education and growth.

Friends of the Westwood Library
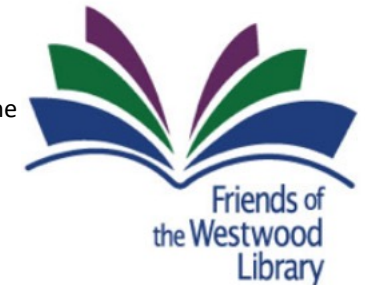
It pays for:

- New Programs
- Educational Events
- Community Outreach
- Museums & More

Taxpayers & Donors

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2023 - 2025

Westwood Public Library
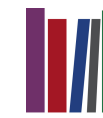
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Westwood Public Library

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PARTNERS

Westwood Early Childhood Department is resource hub that strengthens Westwood families with children from birth through age eight with free family programs and services that enhance growth and learning.

SHARED MISSION:

We connect the Westwood community to services and resource -- to one another -- and to learning and health at every age and stage

SHARED VISION:

We will work together to maximize our resources, engage our community, and create a more inclusive, healthy, resilient Westwood

Westwood Youth & Family Services provides free short-term counseling, mentoring programs, and community engagement to foster support the healthy growth of children ages 4-18.
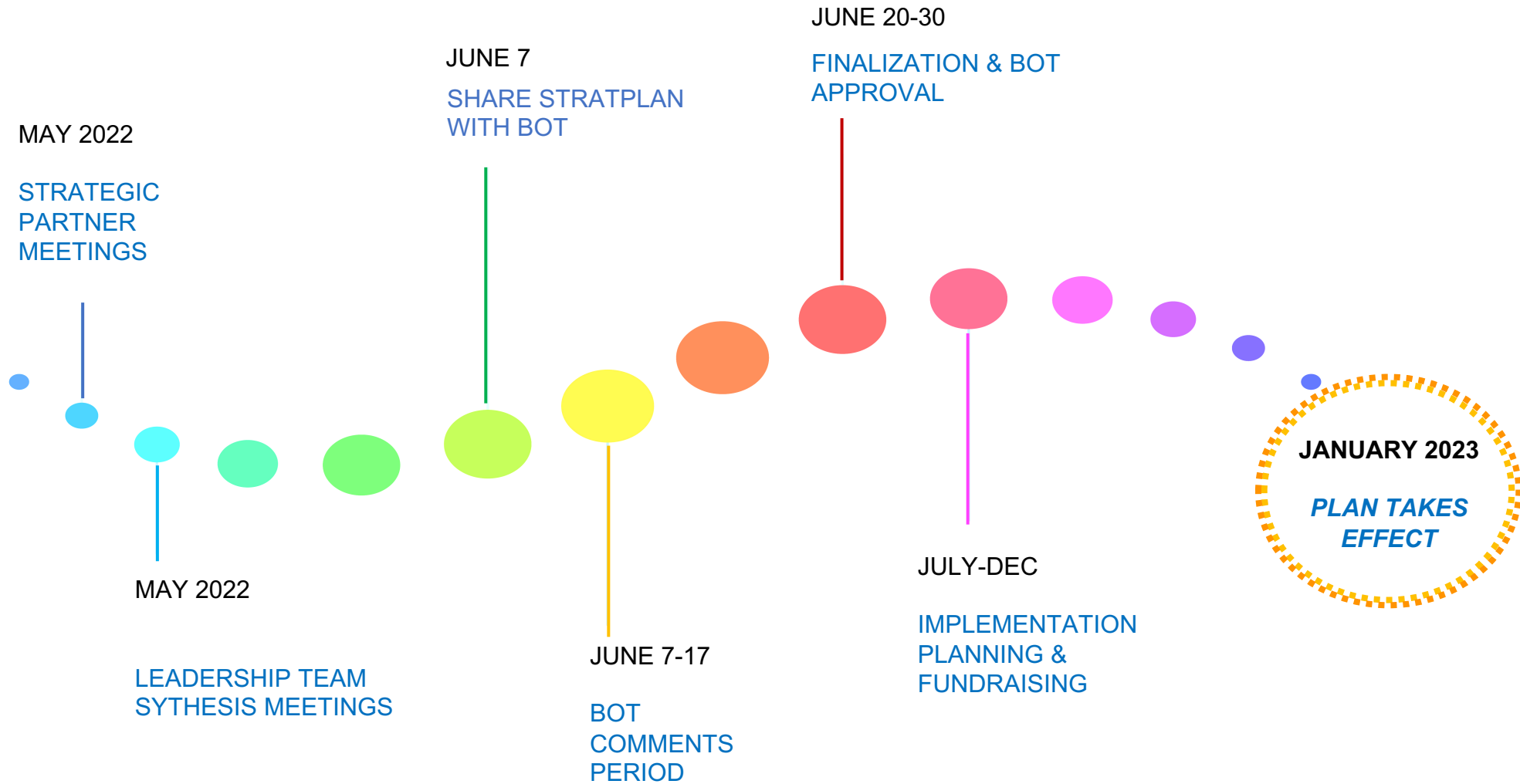
Westwood Media Center provides cable and online channels to support an informed and active citizenry, increase transparency and quality of civic decision-making, deepen understanding of local issues, and promote civility in public dialogue while respecting free speech and creative expression.

The Westwood Council on Aging identifies and serves the diverse needs of Westwood citizens 60 and older and disabled adults, through programs that impact the mind, body and spirit.

Westwood Recreation Department provides a broad variety of safe, exciting, fun, and high quality programs and events to participants of all ages, interests and abilities.

A Partnership with Westwood Public Schools will be also developed in Summer 2022

2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

MAY 2022

STRATEGIC
PARTNER
MEETINGS

MAY 2022

LEADERSHIP TEAM
SYTHESIS MEETINGS

JUNE 7

SHARE STRATPLAN
WITH BOT

JUNE 7-17

BOT
COMMENTS
PERIOD

JUNE 20-30

FINALIZATION & BOT
APPROVAL

JULY-DEC

IMPLEMENTATION
PLANNING &
FUNDRAISING

JANUARY 2023

*PLAN TAKES
EFFECT*

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Strengths

- We're book whisperers
- Book recommendation Podcast
- We're here / show up
  - institutional survival
  - leadership team shows up
- Supportive Town, 21 CF, FOL
- Beautiful facilities
- We offer free stuff
- Successfully pivoted, implemented hybrid operations during pandemic
- Financial stability
- Excellent Board & Staff
- New Library Director & DHs

Weaknesses

- We lack time, like all public services
- We bite off too much
- On-boarding new staff efficiently
- FOL requests
- Business processes
- Red tape
- Finding space for programs
- DH overwhelm
- Silos
- Half day Wednesdays/ Simultaneous Use

Opportunities

- Be a neutral zone
- Be a comfortable, welcoming "3rd space"
- Be a destination
- Fill the gap bookstores left
  - people come just to experience being here
  - WPL a Town treasure & valuable amenity
- Be fine-free (removes a barrier to access)
- Educate customers of all that's available
- Be flexible to interact with / serve customers how *they* want it (chat, in person, phone, email)
- Can transactions be smoother & stress-free, for customers and staff?
- Collaborate more with other Town depts.
- Virtual author programs
- Virtual late night programs
- Virtual Food & alcohol programs
- More professional staff training
- On-boarding new staff efficiently
- Half day Wednesdays/Simultaneous Use

Threats

- Declines in usage post-pandemic
- Losing customers from a sustained pandemic Omicron
- Operating in an ongoing pandemic
- Barriers to access - fees, transportation, health concerns, customer urgency (want it *now*), privacy / anti-government concerns
- Lack of Differentiation - Other libraries offer same stuff
- Rapid Technology Advancement
- Obsolescence due to litany of options: Amazon, streaming services
- Censorship advocates
- Staff burnout
- Funding cuts?
- Half day Wednesdays/Simultaneous Use

2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

COMMUNITY SURVEY	FOCUS GROUPS	DATA & ANALYTICS

Research Objectives:

COMMUNITY SURVEY:
Get broad community input on specific changes WPL can make in the next 3 years to serve more Westwood residents in ways they say they need, want and welcome

1. **Services, Programs & Experiences**
2. **Technology**
3. **Spaces to add or remove**
4. **Customer service preferences**

FOCUS GROUPS:
Get direct input from four prioritized customer segments that are growing and/or underserved according to WPL's data and analytics

1. **Men**
2. **Chinese Residents**
3. **Westwood Newcomers**
4. **Non & Light Users**

DATA & ANALYTICS:
Dig into WPL's software & systems to gain new insights on 9 topics:

Digital Services:
1. Digital Service Usage
2. Museum Pass Usage
3. Website Usage

On-Site Services:
4. Patron Usage
5. Circulation Trends
6. Geo Data
7. Traffic Patterns
8. Program Trends
9. Customer Service

Key Findings:

COMMUNITY SURVEY:

- **Respondents want programs, services & spaces that encourage creativity and hands-on exploration**
  - Expanded Library of Things
  - Hands-on programs & Arts/Crafts tutorials
  - Spaces for small groups & quiet conversation

- **They look at WPL as their place for:**
  - Lifelong learning
  - Improving quality of life
  - Opening minds to new concepts, fresh ideas & information

- **Islington Branch holds the most appeal as a:**
  - Creativity Center
  - Community Center
  - Reader's Advisory Center

- **What respondents want is changing:**
  - *Less demand:* Professional development, co-working, & career info
  - *More demand:* Fulfilling unmet community & social needs (programs, events, concerts, social and chill out spaces)

FOCUS GROUPS:

- **Men are off the library's radar for programming and conversely - the library is off men's radar, for things other than books. Getting them engaged will take:**
  - Active/ challenge/ hands-on programs
  - Rebranding services to appeal to men
  - Family programs that don't exist today

- **Westwood Newcomers bring fresh ideas (& expectations) from their previous libraries and see WPL as a welcoming place that's full of potential for:**
  - Meeting other adults in town
  - Becoming a community center
  - Novel unexpected programs

- **Chinese residents see the library connecting community:**
  - Foreign Language books, media & programs
  - Education about overcoming hate
  - A place to meet the neighbors

- **Non and Light Users need to be pulled back in, and WPL needs to be easily accessible to them at home, too...**
  - Not one, but many reasons keep them from the library – a big one is lack of clarity about what is and isn't allowed; They think the library is more restrictive than it actually is

DATA & ANALYTICS:

- **WPL has more data at its fingertips than previously understood – vital information that will allow it to:**
  - Mange the collection differently & better
  - Configure the library differently by month, day of week & time of day
  - Relocate, update & reframe its collections
  - Welcome non-readers
  - Change how physical space is utilized

- **Both total and active cardholders are declining -- WPL needs to reconnect with people post-pandemic - especially:**
  - Non Users, Light Users, and Non-readers
  - Men
  - Millennials

- **Staff respond to basic inquiries that may prevent them from working on higher value added services & innovating:**
  - Where is… ? and How do I…? questions
  - Individual, on-demand tech support
  - Self-checkout & regular checkout help

- **Software / system utilization is fragmented and inconsistent**
  - Staff need training to mine WPL's extensive data for deeper insights that facilitate decisions
  - Skills should be developed across the staff

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About the Participants:

- ✓ 1500+ responses (9+% of Westwood population)

- ✓ WPL reached a wide range of ages with most respondents falling between 40 and 69

- ✓ Primary language spoken at home is English; 14% noted a very wide mix of other languages (including Mandarin, Spanish, Cantonese, and French)

- ✓ 74% of respondents were female

- ✓ Of respondents who selected "*I do not use the library*" their top reason was: "*I don't see myself as a library user*" (25%)

About their interests and needs in the next 3 years:

Services, Programs & Experiences:

Services most frequently ranked "**important to me**":
- A diverse, interesting collection of books to browse
- Recent and bestselling books
- Reliable WiFi throughout the library

Services most frequently ranked "**not important to me**":
- On-site collection of newspapers and magazines
- Programs for Teens (note: Only 5% of respondents were age 11-17)
- CDs, DVDs, Books on CD

Programs with the most interest:
- Concerts, indoors or outdoors (54%)
- Hands on programs (cooking, crafts, etc.) (54%)
- Civic events ("meet the candidates," voter forums, etc.) (40%)

Programs with some interest:
- Art exhibitions with a speaker or discussion component (38%)
- World affairs presentations with a speaker or discussion component (35%)
- ReadNext (handpicked book selection service by librarians) (35%)

Islington Branch holds the most appeal as:
- Creativity Center (a space that encourages creativity for all ages) (45%)
- Community Center (a space for meeting and interacting with others) (43%)
- Reader's Advisory Center (a "bookstore-type" space with new books & author talks) (41%)
- Family Center and Business Center ranked lower

Technology:

Technology with the **most demand:**
- Expanded Library of Things (43%)
- CreativeBug (online arts and crafts video tutorials) (38%)
- Online access to local history collection (33%)
- Media lab (podcasting / vlogging production studio) (28%)

Spaces to add or remove:

Spaces with the **most demand:**
- Cozy reading chairs / spaces (63%)
- Outdoors spaces to relax, read, or gather (60.47%)

Spaces with **moderate demand:**
- Spaces for quiet conversation (39%)
- Independent work / study rooms (36%)
- Mobile services / bookmobile (29%)
- Individual work pods for phone or video calls (28%)

Spaces with the **least demand:**
- Rooms to reserve for 5+ people (21%)
- Rooms to reserve for 25+ people (21%)

Customer Service Preferences:

73.74% of respondents said they prefer when **staff are there if they need them, but do not approach** patrons

Group 1 - Men

- **Programs:** They could not name an existing library program that appeals to them – and provided suggestions for what they want to see, such as how-to's, trivia nights, and DIY demos

- **Perceptions** of libraries include: libraries are for readers; book groups are for women

- **Book Groups:** They would attend a book group if marketed differently and book selection generates talk. Food and beverages are important.

- **Family Time:** Due to WFH, men are spending more time around the kids / grandkids than in the past. There's a real opportunity for libraries to expand programming both for men, and for men to do with their kids.

- **WFH:** Zero interest in working from the library – they're fully dug in at home

- **Social:** Library is not at all on their radar as a place to meet friends or gather with groups they belong to

- **Advanced Reader Advisory:** Interested in predictive technology (AI) for book recs *"If Amazon can do this, why can't the local library – we're ready for it."*

Group 2 – Westwood Newcomers

- **Community:** Newcomers like the idea of the library as a community center and a way to meet and connect with others in town; Also liked the idea of a "newcomer" group

- **Browsing:** They value browsing the library, checking out WPL's book displays, and hanging out in the gallery

- **Programs:** For adult programs, they want interactive programs; For children – STEM & music; For both: parent/child craft programs. Again we see an interest in family programs, here.

- **Media Preferences**: Newcomers want WPL's services/programs posted on social media

- **New Services:** An expanded Library of Things generated interest (puzzles, costumes, and original items to interest / entertain kids with novelty)

- **Islington:** They mentioned the need to promote Islington's reopening – were not aware of it. One person who visited found it "too quiet" *(Can I come in?)* and "tiny"

- **Main Branch**: As newcomers they noticed and appreciate the warm, welcoming feel of the main library, the airy space, good light and friendly staff

- **Accommodations:** More adult-size seating is needed and and amenities would be appreciated for parents while kids are in programs, so parents have freedom and space to multi-task and chill out

Group 3 – Chinese Residents

- **Programs:** They attend and enjoy programs for kids - but have not attended (nor were aware of) adult programs

- **Streaming Services:** Many take advantage of Libby for ebooks and audiobooks, but didn't know about Kanopy or Flipster -- More promotion is needed.

- **Foreign Language Books & Media**: Strong interest in Mandarin collection. Willing to contribute books to get it going. Interested not just in books in Mandarin, but media and other formats – movies, TV series, magazines. Interested in entry-level Spanish books.

- **ELL Classes:** Interested in ELL classes/resources for older parents at home, who they say are isolated and have nowhere to go. They also expressed interest in offering Chinese instruction for English speakers, but not just kids like Chinese Story Hour – for adults and other community members, too

- **Community:** There was expressed desire to "meet my neighbors and community" – the library as a place to do that was enthusiastically welcomed. One participant expressed desire to book a room and gather at library for spiritual growth and community.

- **Overcoming Hate:** One participant said resources could be offered at the library both for victims of hate, and also to educate the community about recognizing and overcoming hate

- **Navigating the Library:** Interested in a program for young kids to introduce them to how to use / navigate the library

Group 4 – Non & Light Users

- **Reasons for low use include:**

  - Children shifting to school library, therefore not in need of what WPL offers
  - Schools making more resources available online during pandemic
  - Kids attached to another library
  - Streaming services aren't user friendly enough
  - Covid concerns /preference to work comfortably from home during pandemic
  - "I need a quiet workplace"

- **Programs:** Desire for programs to be recorded for anytime access

- **Spaces:** Lack of clarity about whether certain spaces are on or off-limits. Non users may perceive WPL as more restrictive than it actually is…

  - *"Can I get a book and read on the rocking chairs out front?"*
  - *"What is allowed -- what's not?"*
  - *"I'm in a small group but we meet at home. Can we meet at the library?"*

- **Food & Drinks:** Like with the men's group, food and beverage came up again as important; They would pay a clean up fee to have food & beverages at their gatherings

- **Resurfacing:** Light and non-users have self-isolated during pandemic but mentioned past community involvement (Neighbors in Action; political events) wistfully with the desire to do it again

- **Interests** include movie nights, cultural experiences, foreign language books, hands-on instructional experiences (e.g., how to operate a drone, 3D printer)

2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

Findings:

Digital Services

- Digital services are up significantly from pre-pandemic to pandemic (FY19-FY21): Kanopy (184%), Overdrive (120%), Hoopla (39%). Flipster was first offered in FY20 and is up 31% (FY20-21).

- Digital content software was found to provide timely, actionable data such as usage by device type & trending titles, that can be used to manage the collection

Museum Passes

- WPL offers 22 discounted museum passes at total annual cost of ~$7K. Museum pass usage declined 40% from pre-pandemic (calendar year 2019) to post (CY 2021).

- Today, 10 of the library's 22 passes are digital and can be checked out without visiting the library. WPL is choosing digital vs. physical passes at renewal, in all instances where digital is an option.

- In 2021, 8 passes accounted for 80% of checkouts. 15% of the total budget was spent on passes checked out less than once a month.

- In 2021, outdoor / active pass checkouts spiked (Hale, Zoo, DCR) - likely due to COVID concerns and people itching to get outdoors

Website Usage

- In 2021, 76% of site visitors viewed just one page of the website and went no further. Top landing pages, in descending order, were: homepage, error page, event calendar, news, and museum passes page.
- In 2021, ~2K sessions were visits to error page. Some got to this page from a Google search. It can also happen when there are broken links on the site.

Implications:

- Grow & tailor streaming collections to fit patron interests / topics
- Launch campaign in Jan 2023 promoting WPL's robust streaming services menu, highlighting known patron interests / topics
- Link programs to content, to connect people and inspire community around content streamed at home (e.g., meet to discuss a film viewed on Kanopy with others who also viewed it)
- Train 1-2 staff to link analytics to collection management quarterly

- Rebrand the program to **Museums & More** to emphasize outdoor / adventure experiences are included, not just museums, in this post-pandemic, socially distanced time when people are seeking adventure and the outdoors
- Discontinue at least 6 low-or-no-use passes; monitor other poor performers closely and discontinue them in 2023 if usage doesn't improve
- Reallocate budget from discontinued passes to pilot 10 new passes in 2023, with more outdoor experiences, gardens, outdoor sites, and activities
- If the top 8 passes consistently have waitlists; consider offering more than one of those passes to accommodate demand & use budget better
- Conduct a campaign to promote WPLs' pass program under its new branding and increase usage 10-15% annually
- Conduct a deeper study to see what % of active cardholders are taking advantage of this program – is it a few heavy users, or spread out?

- Ensure current, most important information is easy to find on the homepage
- In 2022, prioritize finding and fix broken links and upgrading the most-visited pages so they are visual, user-friendly, functional & fast ('VUFF')
- In 2023, WPL is due for web re-design which could debut with releasing new initiatives & programs coming out of its 2023-2025 strategic plan

2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

Findings:

Implications:

Patron Usage

- WPL had 9,552 total cardholders for FY 21, 9,871 for FY20, and 9,752 for FY19 -- a net loss of 2% from FY19-2021
- In FY21, only 43% of total cardholders were active cardholders (defined as those who checked out an item - physical or digital - at least once in the past year.) This compares with 55% in 2020 and 56% in 2021 -- indicating reduced library usage corresponding with the pandemic
- New card issuance has been a roller coaster the past three years, but overall is up, with a 3-year average of 6% annual growth, perhaps fueled by pandemic home sales
- Among active cardholders, women outnumber men by a ratio of approximately 2:1
- Seniors are the biggest users followed by those age 44-54. The least-penetrated customer segments are age 55-65 and 23-33.

- Use focus group insights to understand men's needs and interests and develop innovative new programs targeting men and boys
- Conduct a focus group with younger Westwood residents age 22-30 to understand their perceptions of the library as well as interests and needs
- Head off the declines in younger customer segments with programs targeting millennials (age 26-41) starting in 2023

Circulation Trends

- FY21 total circulation (not including the branch or streaming services) declined 16% from pre-pandemic in FY19
- Self-checkouts represented 49% of total checkouts in FY19 and for the first time, took over as the *preferred method* of checkout in FY21 (52% of total checkouts.)
- Books are the highest circulation items
- Books on CD and music CDs continue to decline

- Continue reader's advisory services and new book displays, and find innovative ways to promote new titles online targeting those who don't visit
- WPL's collection of DVD and AV materials consumes prime real estate on the 1st floor; weed it out and move it to the 2nd floor
- Launch campaign to highlight / make WPL's *offerings for nonreaders* more visible both in the library and online (Library of Things, etc.)

Geo Data

- The precinct with the highest number of library cardholders is not the precinct the main library is located in
- Precincts with the most active cardholders are those closest to the library
- 2020 Geo-Data just arrived and will be analyzed in greater detail this summer. WPL is especially interested to see if proximity drives on-site visits and distance correlates with increased use of digital services, or if visitations and digital usage stats are similar regardless of the customer's precinct.

- When active cardholders are confirmed by precinct this summer, WPL will have the data it needs to target residents by zip code (geo-marketing0
- These findings will provide have valuable implications for outreach, for example what areas a bookmobile should target, and what services it would promote in the areas it travels to (e.g., mobile reader's advisory, mobile book groups, mobile children's programs, mobile LOT checkout)

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2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

Findings:

Implications:

Traffic Patterns

- Wednesday is the busiest day of the week
- Early morning & late afternoon are the busiest times of the day
- The library sees consistent low usage in the evenings
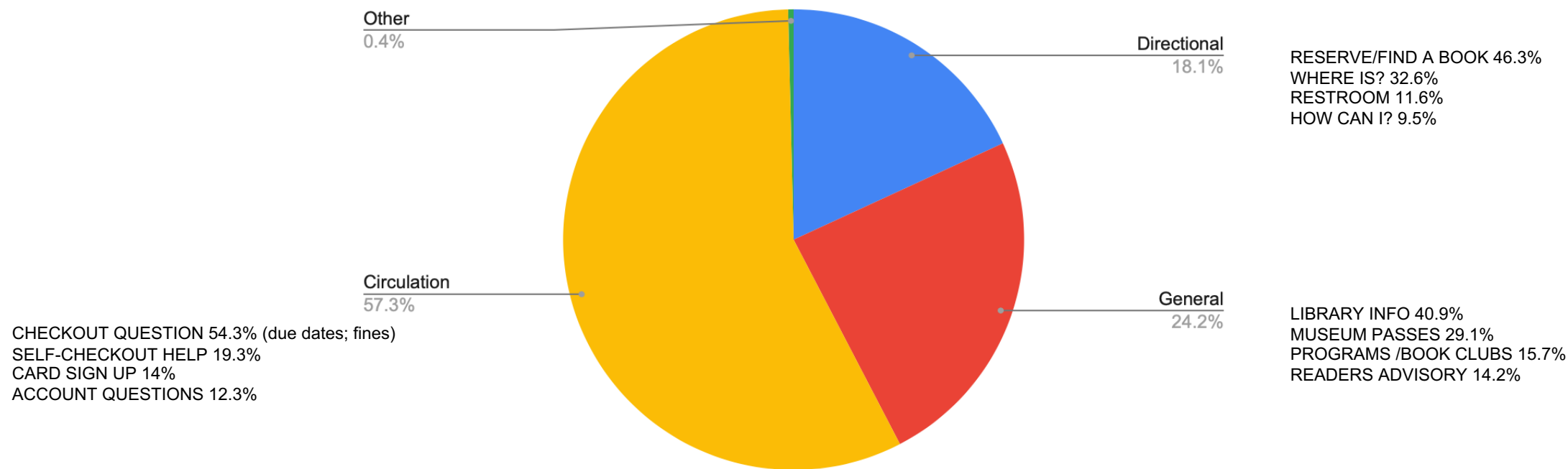- The library is busier on weekends -- especially children's

- WPL has historically reported gate traffic monthly, vs. studying ebbs and flows in detail. These new findings will allow the library to make much more informed decisions about:
  - What hours the library is open, to reduce staffing costs for times it is not being used
  - How the library schedules programs and events to fit expected traffic based on month of year, day of week, and time of day
  - Moving from fixed displays (displays stay up for weeks) to modular (displays are rolled at certain times of day)
  - Promoting quiet times for patrons who wish to avoid busy times for health or other reasons
  - Services like notary and tech support can be scheduled during hours when the library is quiet and staff have more time to service customers without distractions
  - Rethinking how the gallery space is used as it relates to lobby traffic
  - Refining staff scheduling and placement to improve customer experience and optimize the annual operating budget

Program Trends

- Program attendance declined significantly from pre-pandemic (FY19) to pandemic timeframes (FY21). While attendance has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, WPL experienced a rebound FY20-FY21 in both Adult (39%) and Children's (41%) program attendance
- In 2022, WPL observed increased demand for on-site programs with many programs enrolled to capacity despite COVID variants
- Virtual programs for adults are popular but more people are seeking in-person programs – this is especially true for Children's programs

- Library programs have historically been created based on staff suggestions, interests, and talents, and popular events. A Fall cardholder survey is recommended to identify a wider range of programs WPL could develop to expand programs and reach more people with timely programs of interest. This could include multi-session programs and educational courses vs. single-visit programs to increase customer engagement and connection to WPL
- New programs are especially relevant for the Young Adult community, Men and Boys, and Language, Culture and Multi-Generational program participants who do not use the library today
- A detailed program analysis (similar to was done for museums) is recommended to look at utilization and ROI by program

Customer Service

- In 2022, directional questions made up the majority of customer inquiries at both branches and all service desks, with most questions related to finding or reserving items
- At checkout WPL found that patrons often ask about due dates & fines (54%), self check-out help (19%), card sign-up (14%) and account questions (12%)

- The findings of the Desk Inquiry Study, conducted over 6 weeks in Jan/Feb 2022, are significant and suggest the opportunity for desk rebranding, customer tutorials, FAQ signage and much more. See full report for detailed findings by Service Desk and Branch location.

2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

Customer Inquiries - Circulation

524 questions / 6 wks. (avg 13/day)

Other
0.4%

Directional
18.1%

RESERVE/FIND A BOOK 46.3%
WHERE IS? 32.6%
RESTROOM 11.6%
HOW CAN I? 9.5%

Circulation
57.3%

CHECKOUT QUESTION 54.3% (due dates; fines)
SELF-CHECKOUT HELP 19.3%
CARD SIGN UP 14%
ACCOUNT QUESTIONS 12.3%

General
24.2%

LIBRARY INFO 40.9%
MUSEUM PASSES 29.1%
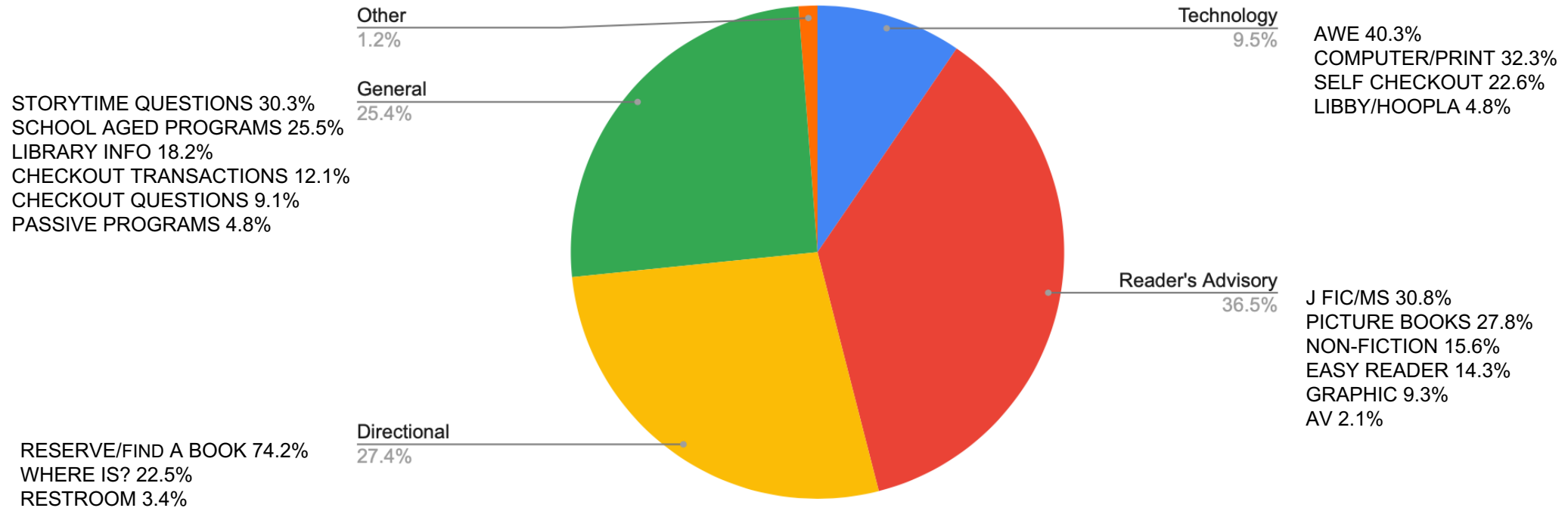PROGRAMS /BOOK CLUBS 15.7%
READERS ADVISORY 14.2%

Potential Solutions:

- Refer Reader's Advisory questions to 2nd floor to focus front desk specifically on *transactions*: card sign-up, assisted checkout & event/program sign-ups
- Consider ways to inform customers about recommended borrow period for various parts of WPL's large selection of times, so they know before checkout to reduce those questions
- Increase awareness that WPL is a fee-free environment and what that means in terms of both flexibility and responsibility
- Conduct closer observation (5 days?) of self-checkout to understand and solve the issues and make it turnkey - *What are we missing, here?*
- Improve directional signage at library entrance / lobby
- Move info screen to more visible location upon entry. Purchase software so it can be programed to highlight what's happening today, when & where

2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

Customer Inquiries – Children

650 questions / 6 wks. (avg 16/day)

Other
1.2%

General
25.4%

STORYTIME QUESTIONS 30.3%
SCHOOL AGED PROGRAMS 25.5%
LIBRARY INFO 18.2%
CHECKOUT TRANSACTIONS 12.1%
CHECKOUT QUESTIONS 9.1%
PASSIVE PROGRAMS 4.8%

Technology
9.5%

AWE 40.3%
COMPUTER/PRINT 32.3%
SELF CHECKOUT 22.6%
LIBBY/HOOPLA 4.8%

Reader's Advisory
36.5%

J FIC/MS 30.8%
PICTURE BOOKS 27.8%
NON-FICTION 15.6%
EASY READER 14.3%
GRAPHIC 9.3%
AV 2.1%

Directional
27.4%

RESERVE/FIND A BOOK 74.2%
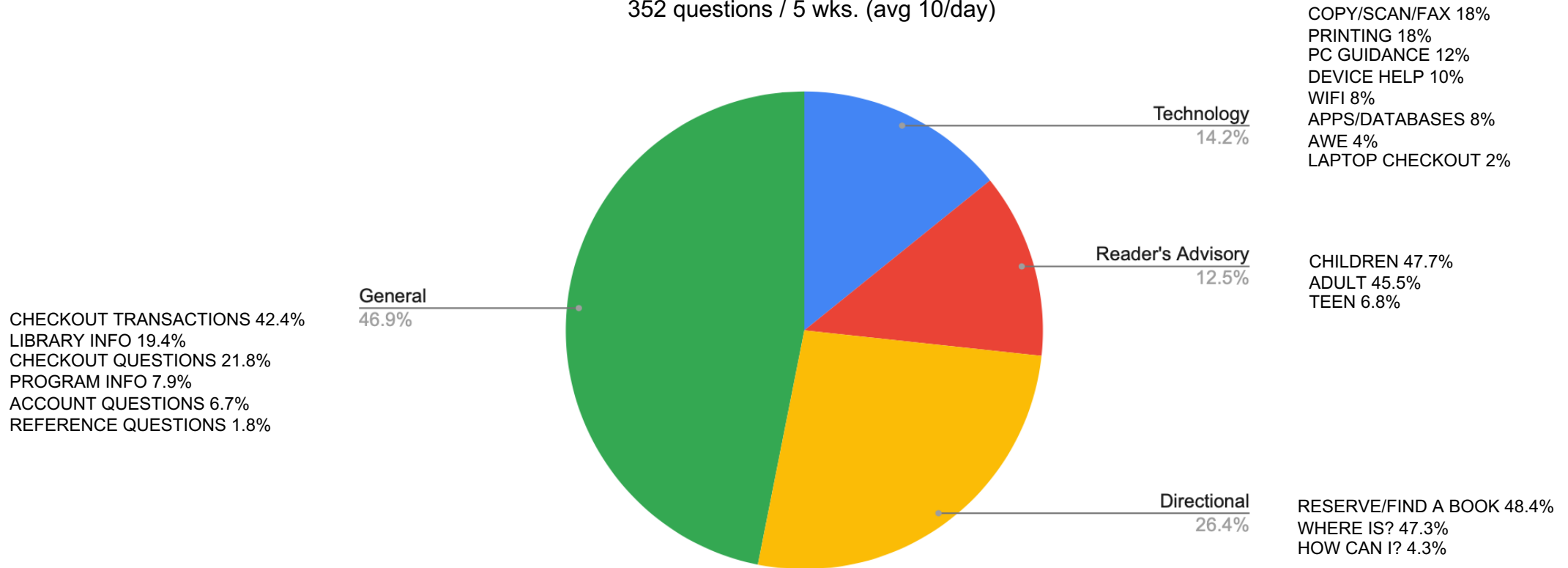WHERE IS? 22.5%
RESTROOM 3.4%

Potential Solutions:

- To help with RESERVE/FIND A BOOK, consider improving signage on catalog computer and posting a "cheat sheet" nearby
- Consider workshops to teach children and teens how to find materials of interest of all types on their own
- "Library welcome & intro" events for children, teens and families that cover exploring a personal interest across all parts of the collection / facilities
- Rebrand the "catalog computer" with a kid-friendly name that speaks more to what the technology provides
- Staff conducting this study noted that Children's programs are on the rise despite COVID. In light of this, re-consider pre-registration and other policies from the customer's POV – *What would remove barriers and make it even easier to jump into a program of interest?*

2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

Customer Inquiries – Branch

352 questions / 5 wks. (avg 10/day)

COPY/SCAN/FAX 18%
PRINTING 18%
PC GUIDANCE 12%
DEVICE HELP 10%
WIFI 8%
APPS/DATABASES 8%
AWE 4%
LAPTOP CHECKOUT 2%

Technology
14.2%

Reader's Advisory
12.5%

CHILDREN 47.7%
ADULT 45.5%
TEEN 6.8%

General
46.9%

CHECKOUT TRANSACTIONS 42.4%
LIBRARY INFO 19.4%
CHECKOUT QUESTIONS 21.8%
PROGRAM INFO 7.9%
ACCOUNT QUESTIONS 6.7%
REFERENCE QUESTIONS 1.8%

Directional
26.4%

RESERVE/FIND A BOOK 48.4%
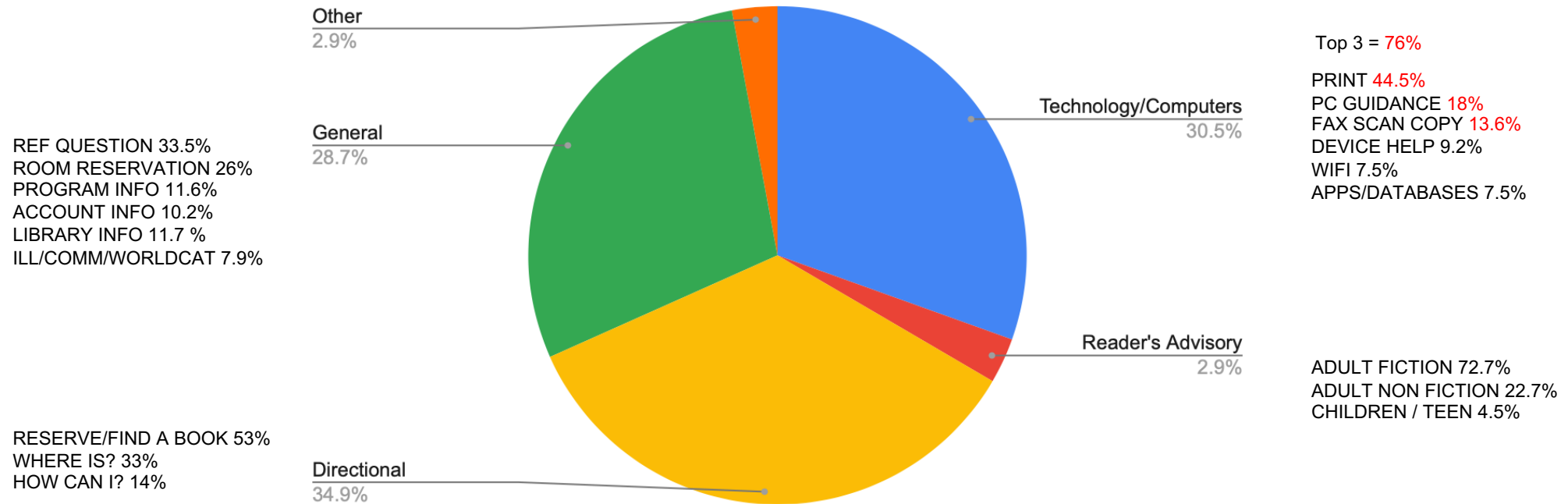WHERE IS? 47.3%
HOW CAN I? 4.3%

Potential Solutions:

- The majority of Branch questions were checkout-related followed by general library info (branch hours, etc.)
- Branch customers either still prefer the personal touch of assisted check-out or haven't gotten used to self check-out yet
- Consider placement and signage of checkout and self-checkout – *What does the current positioning encourage, and what is secondary?*
- Reserve/Find a Book: Marking a catalog computer clearly could help mitigate this. Also, putting up a sign with quick info on how to search catalog (like what a call number means)
- Where is…: All areas are clearly marked, so this is most likely due to the new space. – *Do customers prefer to ask for / get right to what they want, instead of exploring and discovering the new space for themselves? If so, what does that suggest about changing the physical configuration?*

2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

Customer Inquiries – Reference

748 questions / 6 wks. (avg 18/day)

Other
2.9%

General
28.7%

REF QUESTION 33.5%
ROOM RESERVATION 26%
PROGRAM INFO 11.6%
ACCOUNT INFO 10.2%
LIBRARY INFO 11.7 %
ILL/COMM/WORLDCAT 7.9%

Technology/Computers
30.5%

Top 3 = 76%

PRINT 44.5%
PC GUIDANCE 18%
FAX SCAN COPY 13.6%
DEVICE HELP 9.2%
WIFI 7.5%
APPS/DATABASES 7.5%

Reader's Advisory
2.9%

ADULT FICTION 72.7%
ADULT NON FICTION 22.7%
CHILDREN / TEEN 4.5%

RESERVE/FIND A BOOK 53%
WHERE IS? 33%
HOW CAN I? 14%

Directional
34.9%

Potential Solutions:

- Rebrand Dept. to fit how customers use it -- *Technology & Getting things of interest to them* – whether that's a book, a LOT item, or a room
- Consider replacing abstract, limiting terms (e.g., "reference librarian") with descriptive, consumer-friendly terms (e.g., advocate, navigator, specialist)
- Improve computer / print / business services location, configuration & defaults to significantly reduce current 76% tech assistance & problem inquiries
- Improve directional signage throughout second floor – especially at top of stairwell. Consider self-checkout on 2nd floor if not already there.
- Put :30 sec tutorials on computers targeting first-time or infrequent users
- Clarify what device questions are appropriate for WPL (vs. the customer's wireless carrier) & offer device help at pre-determined hours vs. all the time
- Focus WPL talent on higher value-added services so staff become less desk-bound so they can create, market and conduct needed programs and events

I. Strategy

- Core Values
- Mission & Vision
- 6 Strategic Initiatives
- 18 Objectives & Actions
- Financial Partners
- Community Partners
- Strategy Timeline

II. Key Findings

- SWOT Analysis
- Summary of Research Findings
- Community Survey Key Findings
- Focus Group Key Findings
- Data & Analytics Key Findings

III. Methodology

- **Strategy Leadership Team**
- **Workplan & Deliverables**
- **Day in the Life**
- **Friends & Supporters**

2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

Strategy Team

Elizabeth McGovern

Theresa Duane   Kristy Pasquariello

Claire Connors   June Tulikangas

Karen Gallagher   Abby Walsh

Data & Analytics Team   Surveys & Reports Team   Focus Groups & Interviews Team   Communications & Outreach Team

2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

Surveys & Reports Team

Leaders: Abby & Kristy, Claire*

Kristen Barenthaler - CS
Karen Cagan - YS
Suzie Canale - AS
Corinne Coveney - AS
Liz Keefe - TS
Caitlyn Moore - YS
Felicia O'Keefe - YS
Linda Skerry - CS
Caroline Tighe - CS

Focus Groups & Interviews Team

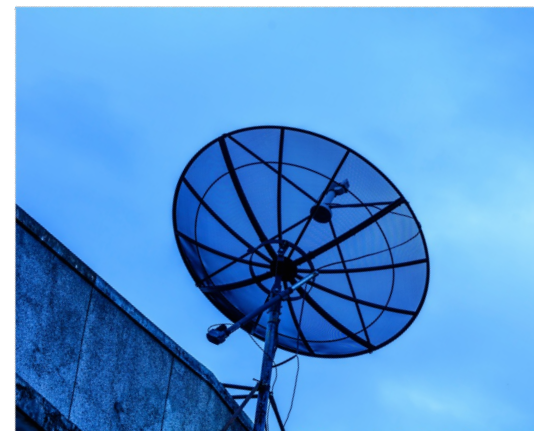Leaders: Claire & Karen, *June

Corinne Coveney - AS
Tina McCusker - AS

Data & Analytics Team

Leaders: June & Terri, *Karen
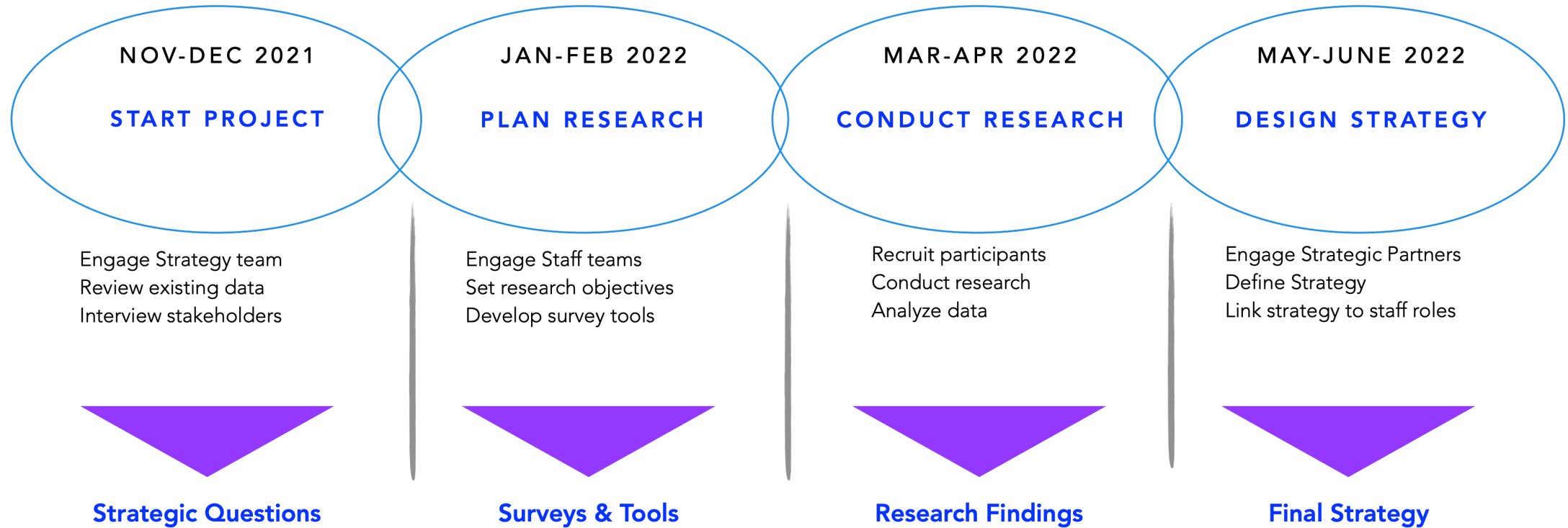
Corinne Coveney - AS
Annabel Ho - CS
Tricia London - AS
Caitlyn Moore - YS
Felicia O'Keefe - YS
Pat Scannell - TS
Andrea Varkas - CS

Communications & Outreach Team

Leaders: Abby & Kristy

Kristen Barenthaler - CS
Felicia O'Keefe - YS
Caitlyn Moore - YS
Caroline Tighe - CS
Patti Wade - CS

* Supporting Leader. AS - Adult Services, YS - Youth Services, CS - Circulation Services, TS - Technology Services

NOV-DEC 2021

START PROJECT

Engage Strategy team
Review existing data
Interview stakeholders

Strategic Questions

JAN-FEB 2022

PLAN RESEARCH

Engage Staff teams
Set research objectives
Develop survey tools

Surveys & Tools

MAR-APR 2022

CONDUCT RESEARCH

Recruit participants
Conduct research
Analyze data

Research Findings

MAY-JUNE 2022

DESIGN STRATEGY

Engage Strategic Partners
Define Strategy
Link strategy to staff roles

Final Strategy

2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

Dashboard Community Survey

RESPONSES RESPONSES RESPONSES RESPONSES
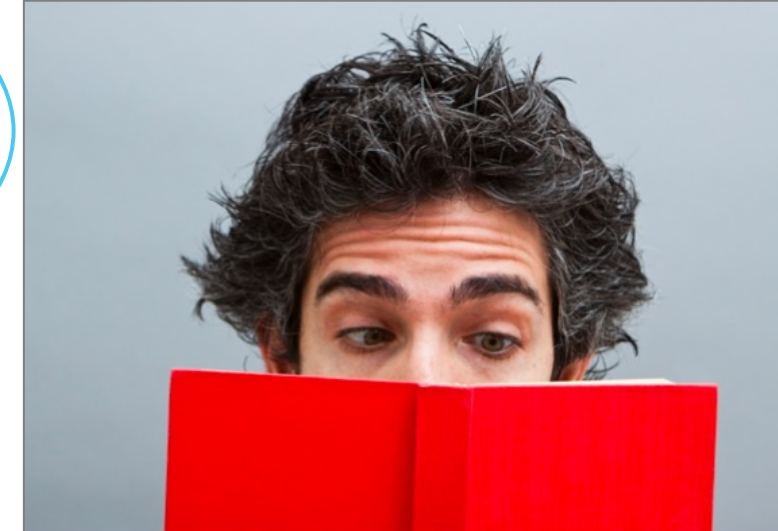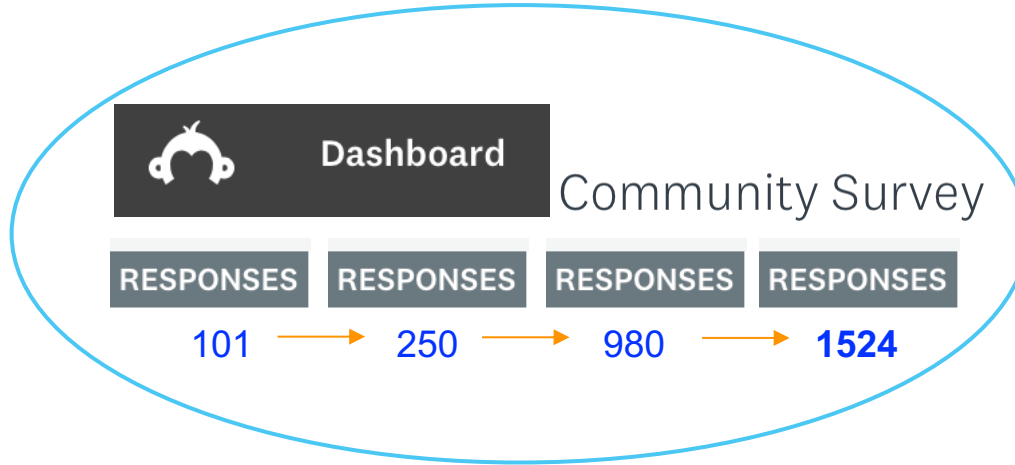
101 → 250 → 980 → **1524**

HELP SHAPE OUR FUTURE!

The library seeks volunteers to join small group discussions to help shape our strategy plan. Interested? Scan the QR code below or fill out a form at one of the public service desks.

📱 SCAN ME

Westwood Public Library

The Library wants to hear from you!

Take our 5 minute survey to share what the library can do for YOU in the next 5 years!

VISIT WWW.WESTWOODLIBRARY.ORG TO RESPOND

Westwood Public Library

NOT A LIBRARY USER?
We'd like to talk to you...

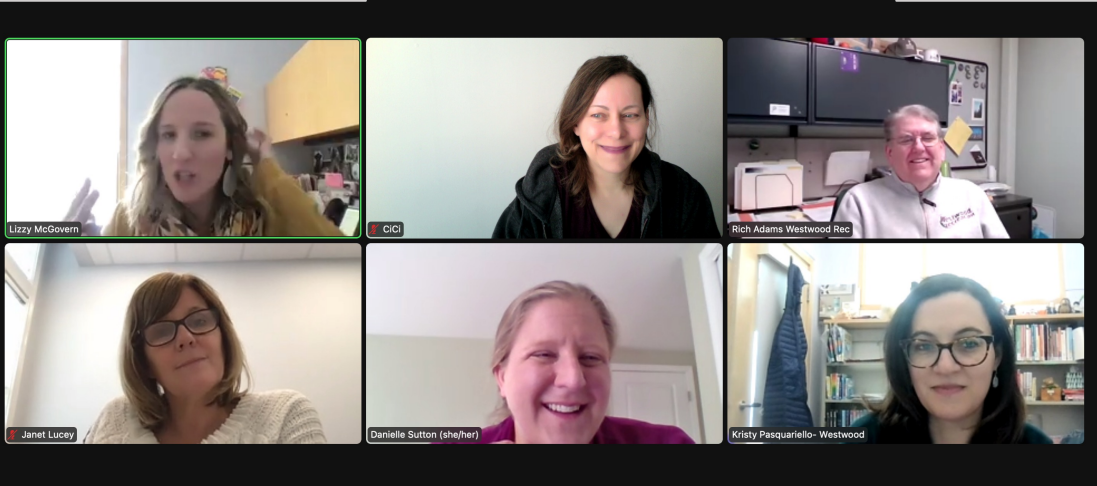The library seeks research volunteers to inform its future. Want to participate?

Scan the QR code to fill out a brief form.

📱 SCAN ME

Westwood Public Library

2023 - 2025
Westwood Public Library

Strategy Steering Committee

Lizzy McGovern, *WPL Director*
Conni Cranos, *Strategy Partner to Lizzy McGovern & WPL*
Chris Coleman, *Westwood Town Administrator*
Mary Masi-Phelps, *Trustee Advisor*
Maureen Von Euw, *Trustee Advisor*

Board of Trustees

Maureen Von Euw, *Chair*

Nancy T. Donahue
Paul Fitzgerald
Mary Masi-Phelps
Mary Beth Persons
Maria Ryan

Special thanks to…

Our Leaders & Staff
1500+ survey respondents
30 focus group participants
Pam Dukeman & Laura Bucari, *Westwood Finance Dept.*
Jieping Li & Team, *Westwood Chinese School*
Nora Loughnane, *Westwood Director of Community & Economic Development*
Joan Murray, *Town of Westwood Human Resources*
Dotti Powers, *Westwood Town Clerk*
Jack Wiggin & Steve Olanoff, *Westwood Comprehensive Planning Committee*
Ada Zhong, *Friend of the Library*

Community Service Partners

Rich Adams, *Westwood Recreation*
Lina Arena-DeRosa, *Westwood Council on Aging*
Melinda Garfield, *Westwood Media Center*
Janet Lucey, *Westwood Early Childhood Dept.*
Emily Parks & Allison Borchers, *Westwood Public Schools*
Danielle Sutton& her team at *Westwood Youth & Family Services*

Financial Partners

Tina Bronkhorst & her team at *Friends of Westwood Public Library*

The Westwood Public Library 21st Century Fund, Inc. team:

Mary Masi-Phelps, Chair

Paul Fitzgerald
Thorston Becker
Mary Beth Persons
Brian Mulvey

Other Community Partners

Coldwell Banker
Encounter Church
First Baptist Church of Westwood
First Parish of Westwood
Fox Hill Village
Hale Education
Raveis Realty
Shea Realty
St. Denis Parish of Westwood
St. John's Episcopal Church
Temple Beth David
University Station
Westwood Community Chest
Westwood Food Pantry
Westwood Glen
Westwood Rotary