# REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WATERLOO
# LIBRARY COMMITTEE
# AGENDA

Tuesday, November 6, 2012
3:00 p.m. (*Time is approximate*)
Waterloo County Room
150 Frederick Street, Kitchener, Ontario

1. **DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST UNDER THE *MUNICIPAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST ACT***

2. **PRESENTATIONS**

a) Region of Waterloo Library Service Review and Forward Look Research Report, Kasia Seydegart, George Spears and Pat Zulinov, ERIN Research

   *Guided Discussion on Implementing the Research Results, Lori Sims, Kestrel Information Services

3. **REPORTS**

4. **INFORMATION/CORRESPONDENCE**

a) Memo: Region of Waterloo Library Service Review - Primary Research Results        1

5. **OTHER BUSINESS**

6. **NEXT MEETING – November 27, 2012**

7. **ADJOURN**

1304389

PLANNING, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

Community Services

November 6, 2012

## MEMORANDUM

To:         Chair Todd Cowan and Members of the Library Committee

From:       Lucille Bish, Director, Community Services

Subject:    Region of Waterloo Library Service Review - Primary Research Results

File No:     A34-30

The Region of Waterloo Library Service Review has reached the mid-point, with the completion of the primary research report. As noted in the September 25, 2012 memo to Library Committee, ERIN Research conducted almost 1,300 household surveys in August and September. Response rates were very good, and results demonstrate a high degree of satisfaction with RWL services. Satisfaction ratings of 9.0 or higher out of 10 were received for:

- Borrowing a book or other library material

- Interlibrary loan

- Children's and family reading, parent + child materials

- Information & Reference Services

- Free Wi-Fi at main branches

- Reading recommendations

The direct drivers of customer satisfaction with RWL were found to be: services and programs that meet patron needs, sense of community, and physical structure. Staff play a critical role by creating conditions that lead to overall satisfaction; in fact, staff performance is the largest driver.

The results are documented in the report "Region of Waterloo Library Service Review and Forward Look" by ERIN Research Inc., which will be distributed at the Library Committee meeting. The Executive Summary from this report is attached.

The second phase of the project is to focus on the key areas for improvement identified in the broad research, to develop specific recommendations for service, program and branch hour improvements. Kestrel Info Services in undertaking this phase of work. Data on current operations of RWL and other library systems has been compiled, and now focus groups and a web survey will be used to help define details.

At the November 6, 2012 Library Committee meeting, consultants from ERIN Research will present key findings from the household survey. Following this, Lori Sims from Kestrel Info Services will lead Committee in a guided discussion of your perspectives of how RWL can best serve your growing communities.

Attachment

# REGION OF WATERLOO LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW and FORWARD LOOK

## Executive summary

## *Introduction*

The Region of Waterloo Library (RWL) serves 63,800 residents of the Townships of North Dumfries, Wellesley, Wilmot and Woolwich. through ten library branches and a library headquarters.

The Service Review Project provides an evidence-based foundation for a comprehensive service improvement plan for these Regional libraries. The rural communities are diverse, varying in size, demographic characteristics, library use and needs.

The Region of Waterloo commissioned ERIN Research to conduct a comprehensive survey of both library users and residents who do not use the libraries.

While striving to improve services, it is important to note that libraries consistently rate among the highest in client satisfaction of all public sector services. In *Citizens First 5*, a survey of more than 6,000 Canadians, libraries were rated 8.0 out of 10 in overall satisfaction. In the current survey, Region of Waterloo libraries score 9.0 out of 10.

## *Method and sample*

Two surveys were conducted by telephone between August 15 and September 13, 2012:

- **The Library User Survey** was administered to a randomly selected sample of 870 Township residents who had used a Regional library in the past year.
- **The Non-User Survey** was administered to a randomly selected sample of 400 residents who had not used a Regional library in the past year.
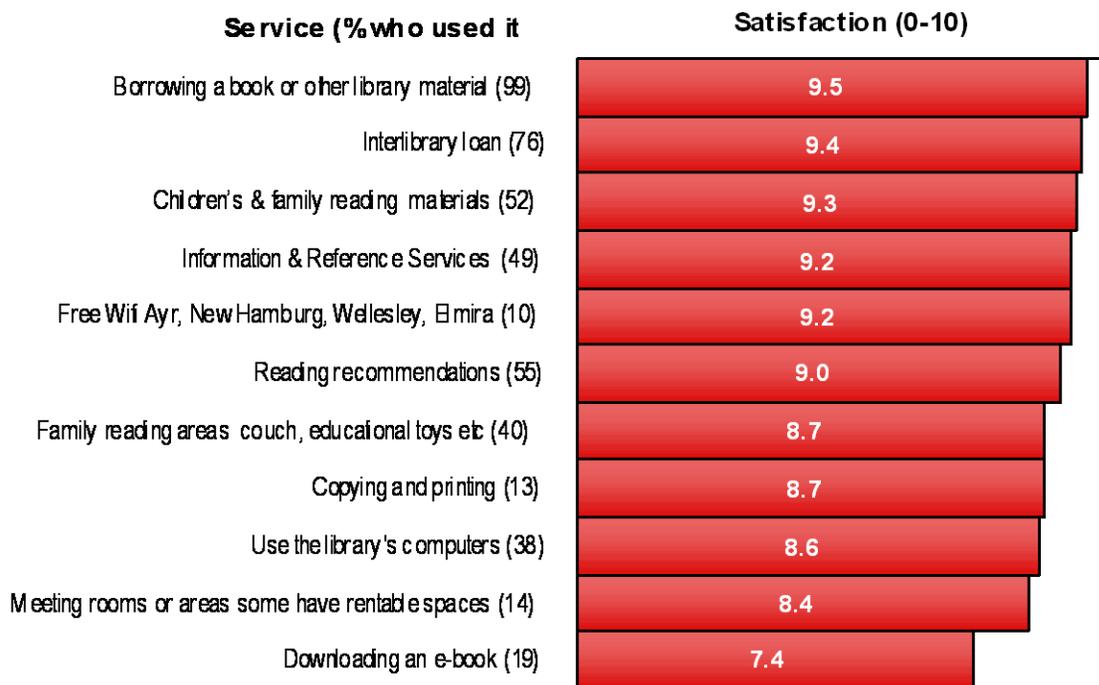
Response rates were very positive: 48% for library users and 40% for non-users. Response rates are about twice what one might expect for a typical telephone survey, reflecting both advance communications about the survey done by the libraries and a high level of interest by residents.

# PART 1: LIBRARY USERS

## *Satisfaction with library services*

The ten branch libraries in the system range from small to large, and from aging structures to new buildings with the latest technology. The individual branches each have their own character and strengths. Given this, there is a high degree of satisfaction with the services, as the following figure demonstrates.

## Figure 1. Satisfaction with library services



| Service (% who used it | Satisfaction (0-10) |
|---|---|
| Borrowing a book or other library material (99) | 9.5 |
| Interlibrary loan (76) | 9.4 |
| Children's & family reading materials (52) | 9.3 |
| Information & Reference Services (49) | 9.2 |
| Free Wifi Ayr, New Hamburg, Wellesley, Elmira (10) | 9.2 |
| Reading recommendations (55) | 9.0 |
| Family reading areas couch, educational toys etc (40) | 8.7 |
| Copying and printing (13) | 8.7 |
| Use the library's computers (38) | 8.6 |
| Meeting rooms or areas some have rentable spaces (14) | 8.4 |
| Downloading an e-book (19) | 7.4 |

There is a statistically significant difference among Townships for the item on Family reading areas. North Dumfries rates this at 9.3, followed by Wellesley, 9,0; Wilmot, 8.5; and Woolwich, 8.4.

## *Online services*

Fifty-two per cent of library users reported that they had used the library website during the past year. There is noticeable variation on the basis of age. One-third of those over age 65 use online resources compared to one-half of the younger patrons.

The most common online activities are to access the catalogue, renew a book, place a book on hold, and get information about the library. The range of satisfaction ratings for web services is similar to that for non-electronic services.

While users are overall very positive about web services, there were a number of recurring complaints and suggestions, focused on navigation and searches.

## Satisfaction with children's programs

Forty-eight percent of library users had children under age 18 living in the home. This is the potential audience for children's programs. Of this group, 43% had used one or more children's programs in the past year.

Residents give uniformly high ratings of children's programs across age groups, from 9.1 to 10 out 10 for 14 age-related library programs. Usage of programs peaks in the 4- to 7-year age range, where more than half of families with children make use of programs. In the open-ended comments, a number of respondents recommended the provision of more programs to attract Tweens and Teens, who appear to lose contact with the library during those years.

## Satisfaction with adult programs

While parents and children are the focus of programming efforts in the Regional library system, three adult programs have been offered recently. Computer training emphasizes basics for those with little computer background. Scores for the "One book, one community" program where a Canadian book is identified and which members are invited to read, received an 8.5 out of 10 rating, and general interest and special events received an 8.1 rating. The one outlier, Computer Training received a 6.8 out of 10.

## Getting to the rural libraries

On foot and by car are the two main modes of transport, accounting for 96% of library users. Those who walk tend to spend slightly longer getting to the branch than those who drive, but the difference is slight. The majority of residents get to their library in less than 10 minutes.

## Communications

Library users were asked to rate each of 5 communications channels as a means of getting information about their library.

Approximately 82% of Ontario's population has Internet, so it not surprising that library users rate email high among preferred communications channels. From a practical perspective, Internet has the advantage of low cost compared to radio, television or print. A balanced strategy of building email capability while continuing to communicate through community newspapers and posters would reach a wide audience. Channel preferences do not vary by Township, with one exception. Community newspapers score a relatively high 7.1 out of 10 in both North Dumfries and Woolwich, and lower in Wilmot (6.3) and Wellesley (5.8).

Thirty-eight percent of respondents have a smart phone, and 69% of these expressed interest in a library app that would enable them to reserve and renew items, and perform other library tasks.

## Hours of service

Overall, 78% of library users said that current hours of service meet their needs. This pattern varies across Townships, North Dumfries and Wilmot being more satisfied with current hours of service than the others.

**Figure 2. "Do current library hours meet your needs?": results by Township**

**Percent of responder**

| Township | Yes | No |
|----------|-----|-----|
| North Dumfries | 86 | 14 |
| Wellesley | 73 | 27 |
| Wilmot | 83 | 17 |
| Woolwich | 74 | 26 |

■ Yes    ■ No
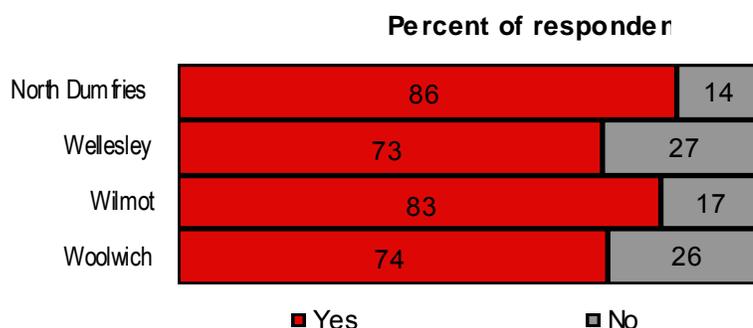
Those who said that current hours did not meet their needs were asked whether extra hours should be added in the morning, afternoon or evening. There is a slight preference for additional morning hours, with evening hours also popular:

- 54% would welcome additional morning hours
- 33% checked additional afternoon hours
- 46% checked additional evening hours.

Libraries are currently closed on Sunday and Monday. Asked whether they would like to use the library on these days, respondents prefer opening Mondays over Sundays. Still, only about 30% are "Very likely" to use the Monday option. This echoes the result reported earlier, where 78% stated that current hours meet their needs.

## Components of the library experience

A higher level view of library services focuses on library staff and the place of the library in the community. Library users assessed their library on six components. Several questionnaire items are used to measure each component (Figure 3).

## Figure 3. Components of the library experience

**Component (average agreement)**

| Component | Agreement (0-10) |
|---|---|
| **Programs and services** | |
| Programs & services are inclusive & accessible | 8.6 |
| The technology available meets my needs | 8.6 |
| The librarys programs meet my needs | 8.5 |
| I can usually find what I want | 8.4 |
| The books and other materials meet my needs | 7.9 |
| The collection of ebooks meets my needs | 6.3 |
| **Staff** | |
| Staff treat me with respect | 9.8 |
| I don't hesitate to ask library staff for help | 9.7 |
| Staff are friendly and helpful | 9.7 |
| Staff are knowledgeable and competent | 9.5 |
| There are enough staff to serve customers well | 9.5 |
| **Business processes** | |
| It is easy to check out and return material | 9.7 |
| Rules and policies are clear | 9.3 |
| It is easy to register for programs | 9.3 |
| **Sense of community** | |
| The library has a welcoming atmosphere | 9.4 |
| The library is an important hub in our community | 9.3 |
| It is in touch with the needs of our community | 8.9 |
| The library supports ethnic and cultural groups | 8.4 |
| It gives me an opportunity to connect with friends | 7.4 |
| **The physical structure** | |
| The library building is accessible | 8.5 |
| The library is well laid out | 8.5 |
| The library building is attractive | 8.2 |
| The library has adequate seating and study areas | 7.8 |
| The library has adequate parking | 7.0 |
| **Resource to residents** | |
| The library is an important resource for children | 9.5 |
| The library is an important resource for adults | 9.2 |
| The library is an important resource for teens | 8.6 |
| **Other** | |
| The library provides good value for tax dollars | 9.3 |
| The library is forward-looking, it tries out new ideas | 8.4 |
| It receives funding to serve the community well | 7.6 |

## *Drivers of customer satisfaction*

Drivers of satisfaction fall into two groups: direct drivers (arrows that touch Overall Satisfaction) and indirect drivers (arrows one or two steps removed).

 Staff play a critical part in the drivers of satisfaction of libraries in the four Region of Waterloo townships. Their  contribution is mainly as enablers: they help to create the conditions that lead to overall satisfaction. The logic of the library user is not so much, "I am satisfied with the library because I like the staff". but rather, "I am satisfied with the library because its services and programs meet my needs, and this is due in large part to library staff".

Staff contribute to the other direct drivers as well, to the sense of community that users feel and to users' appreciation of the physical structure. When one adds up the total effect that staff have on satisfaction (i.e. by following each of the pathways from staff to satisfaction) staff performance is the largest driver. Satisfaction with the library is a complex interaction among the six drivers. To the extent that improvements are made in any of them, overall satisfaction can be expected to increase.

**Figure 4. Direct and indirect drivers of customer satisfaction**
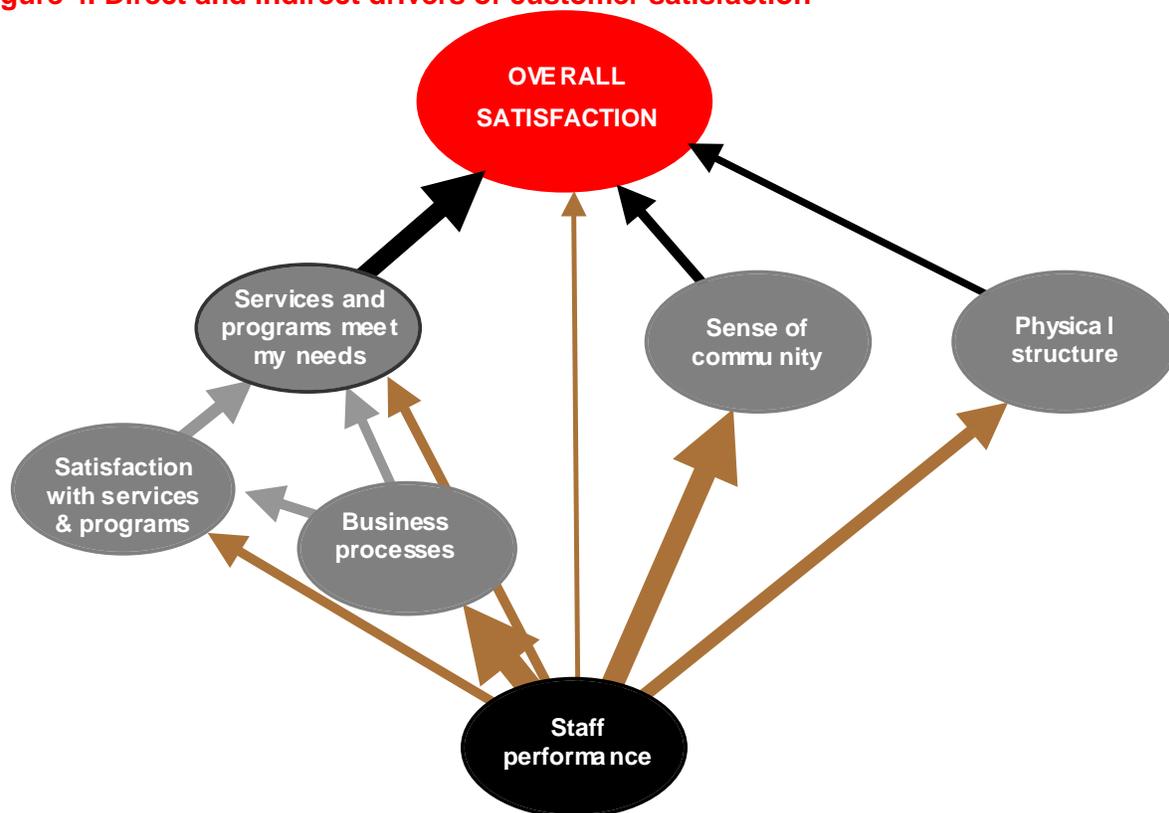


**The drivers account for 50% of the variance in overall satisfaction.**

Note: Each arrow denotes a statistically significant impact from one element to another; heavier arrows reflect stronger influences.
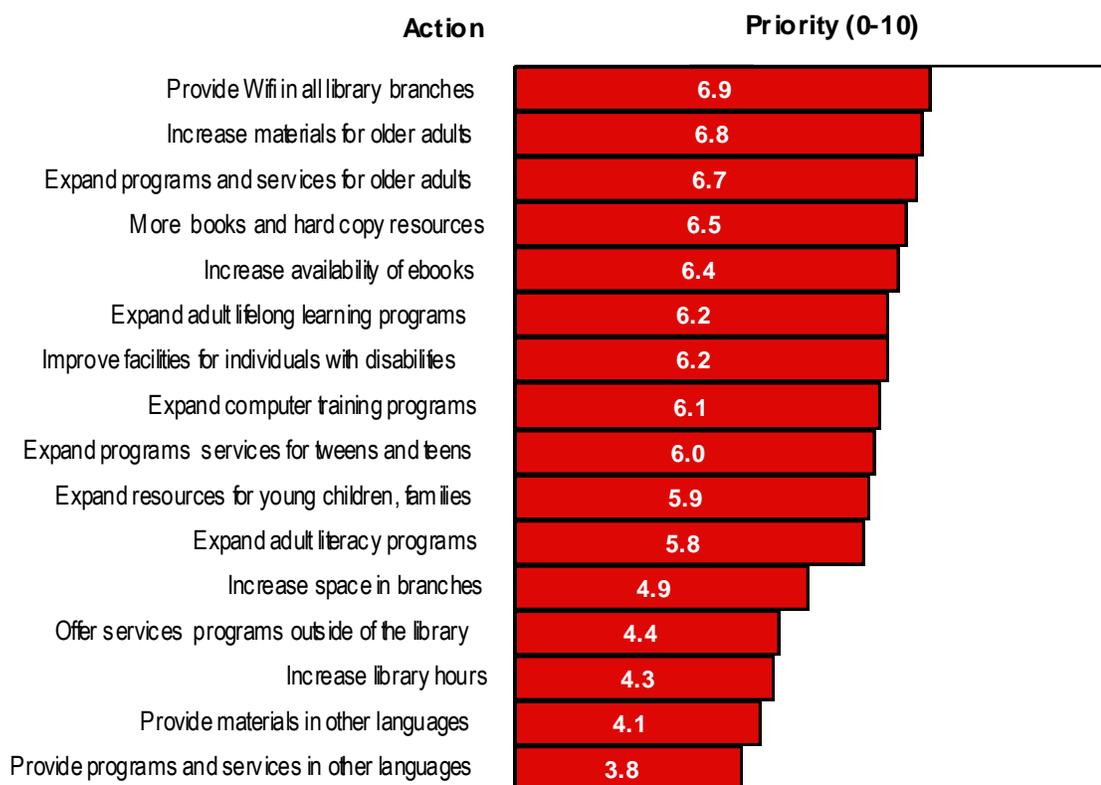
# *Priorities for improvement*

The survey presented a set of 16 possible initiatives that the libraries might pursue and library users indicated their interest in each one on a scale from "Not a priority" to "A major priority".

Wifi in all branches tops the list by a slight margin. Priorities two and three focus on "older adults". Individuals age 50-plus constitute 48% of the sample, and those age 35 to 49 make up another third of the sample, so the focus on "older adults" would seem to come down to "programs and materials for people like me".

In general, priorities whose ratings differ by .5 or more differ to a statistically significant degree. Thus, providing Wifi (6.9) is a significantly higher priority than expanding adult lifelong learning programs (6.2).

## Figure 5. Priorities for action

| Action | Priority (0-10) |
| --- | --- |
| Provide Wifi in all library branches | 6.9 |
| Increase materials for older adults | 6.8 |
| Expand programs and services for older adults | 6.7 |
| More books and hard copy resources | 6.5 |
| Increase availability of ebooks | 6.4 |
| Expand adult lifelong learning programs | 6.2 |
| Improve facilities for individuals with disabilities | 6.2 |
| Expand computer training programs | 6.1 |
| Expand programs services for tweens and teens | 6.0 |
| Expand resources for young children, families | 5.9 |
| Expand adult literacy programs | 5.8 |
| Increase space in branches | 4.9 |
| Offer services programs outside of the library | 4.4 |
| Increase library hours | 4.3 |
| Provide materials in other languages | 4.1 |
| Provide programs and services in other languages | 3.8 |

## PART 2: NON-USERS

The non-user sample consists of 400 respondents and was structured to reflect the composition of the four Townships with respect to age and gender. The survey of non-users had two main objectives:

- To understand why this group does not use library services
- To compare perceptions of users and non-users on the role of the library in their community.

While this group is referred to as "non-users" for convenience, many of them frequent other libraries and have used Regional libraries in the past:

- 29% use other libraries in the area. The Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and university/college libraries are all used by similar numbers. This figure also includes some who use church libraries,
- 60% have used Regional libraries in the past.

The 60% of respondents who were former users were asked why they stopped. Two thirds of this group gave one or more specific reasons for stopping, primarily, a) using the Internet to get information, b) preferring to buy books, and c) using other nearby libraries. The other third gave very general answers such as "I'm too busy" or "I'm just not into reading" or, "I don't need the library".

## PART 3: SEVEN KEY RECOMMENDATIONS GOING FORWARD

Seven recommendations are made based on both quantitative and qualitative results for users and non-users. The context is important: library users think very well of the Regional Library system and its branch libraries. Their overall satisfaction score of 9.0 out of 10 attests to this. The recommendations that follow should be read in this context – building for the future on a highly successful institution.

**1** Maintain current staffing levels and expertise.
**2** Continuously improve RWL website functionality and increase opportunities for use of online applications.
**3** Use online offerings to enhance users' experience and to attract non-users who are already technology-based.
**4** Build on the use of inexpensive online and community outreach strategies to sustain existing users and attract new users.
**5** Make library hours consistent each day library is open.
**6** Focus on retaining teens and tweens with innovative, age-relevant initiatives.
**7** Replicate library review survey in 2014, using an arms-length expert, to measure progress against the baseline results.