Morton Grove Public Library Strategic Plan for the years 2015 - 2020

Introduction

Early in the summer of 2014 the Morton Grove Public Library Board of Trustees conducted a community needs assessment with the help of Turks Cap Consulting. (see addendum) The community had an opportunity to voice both their praises and their concerns as relates to the Morton Grove Public Library through a series of focus groups and a community wide survey. Not long after this assessment began, engineers assessing the facility identified broken trusses in the library roof. This discovery led to an accelerated timeline for both repairs and upgrades.

By October of 2014 the library had begun extensive asbestos abatement which was followed by needed roof repairs. This left an empty shell on the main floor. With input from the community coupled with the knowledge and expertise of the library staff, plans came together to truly REMAKE the main floor of the library. StudioGC was hired as the architectural firm and together dreams for a better library were realized. Among the changes are the following:

- ADA compliant ramp to the mezzanine
- ADA compliant bathrooms on the main floor
- Teen room
- Study rooms
- Quiet reading room
- Media lab
- Wide ADA compliant aisles for collections
- Streamlined collection size due to reduced footprint for collections
- Energy efficient lighting and HVAC installed in much of the library
- Roof Repairs

The following strategic plan reflects goals and objectives set during the planning stages for these projects and builds on these accomplished goals with planning out through the year 2020.

Vision Statement

Morton Grove Public Library will meet the needs of its growing and increasingly diverse community by providing services and partnering with other community organizations. All will be welcomed to follow their interests, expand their dreams, learn new skills and interact with other members of the community to enhance their quality of life. The Board of Trustees and staff will work together to serve the public and respond to the changing role of libraries.

Mission Statement

The Morton Grove Public Library's Mission Statement guides the selection of materials as it does the development of services and the allocation of resources.

"The Morton Grove Public Library will provide a place offering materials, programs, and services to assist the community in its pursuit of personal growth and lifelong learning."

Strategic Priorities

I.   Secure the library's role as the community's primary information, cultural, and civic destination
II.   Ensure that the library is well supported to meet the needs of current and future generations of Morton Grove residents
III. Build community awareness of and passionate advocacy for the library
IV.   Continue to revitalize the library to fit community needs and 21st century expectations
V.   Continue to provide cutting edge programming that meets the needs of a diverse community

I. Secure the library's role as the community's primary information, cultural, and civic destination.

1. **Introduce and market the library collection, programs and services to the community**
   a. Provide clear and attractive promotional materials
      i. Books & Beyond
      ii. Social Networking
      iii. Handouts
      iv. Scrolling on website and in-house TV
      v. Improved and more visually appealing scheduling tool – via Evanced Technologies software tools
   b. Continue having a presence at community events, and provide offsite programming
   c. Collaborate with the park district and historical society while not duplicating efforts of other taxing bodies

2. **Increase library card holdership**
   a. Hold annual promotions during library card sign up month
   b. Collaborate with schools to pursue making library cards part of school supply lists
   c. Use our new mobile circ technology for remote sign up at public events

3. **Staff Development**
   a. Continue to provide staff development days on a regular basis
   b. Offer staff on-sight webinars as well as opportunities to attend local Laconi / RAILS workshops
   c. Rotate convention opportunities amongst staff, ALA, ILA PLA etc
   d. Revise and update the staff training program for new hires.
   e. Provide all staff with adequate office space and computer workstations

II.   Ensure that the library is well supported to meet the needs of current and future generations of Morton Grove residents.

1. **Connect fund raising goals to specific library goals and needs**
   a. Secure annual funding for Summer Reading prizes and programs
   b. Secure funding for library card promotions during library card sign up month
   c. Secure funding for emerging technologies

2. **Secure corporate and private support to supplement specific library needs.**

3. **Nurture the new MGPL Library Foundation to develop a vision for on-going financial support.**

III. Build community awareness of and passionate advocacy for the library.

1. **"MGPL-On-The-Go" identify and take this program to various organizations**
   a. Mobile library card sign up
   b. Promote Library's digital services and collections
   c. Market and advocate for library programs and services

2. **Continued persistence with local media outlets both in print and online**

3. **Continued use of social networking**

4. **Expand our digital services**
   a. New scheduling/calendar software
   b. Utilize more features of our Enterprise software

IV. Continue to revitalize the library to fit community needs and 21st century expectations.

1. **Right sizing the library collections**

2. **Continue to pursue ADA compliance throughout the entire library**

3. **Provide creative spaces and instruction for 21st century library users**

4. **Continue to upgrade the facility to make it usable and visually appealing**

5. **Relocate the public computer lab (Summer 2015)**

6. **Integrate the 6200 Lincoln Ave building into the service model**

7. **Upgrade the bathrooms in the Youth Services department (2016)**

8. **Integrate appropriate innovative technologies into the adaptive MGPL service model**

   a. Continuous evaluation and appropriate updating of staff resources
   b. Continuous evaluation and introduction of new library services and collections as technologies evolve

V. Continue to provide cutting edge programming that meets the needs of a diverse community.

1. **Continue to follow the dynamics of the community of Morton Grove in order to understand the needs of the community as they change.**

2. **Celebrate American culture with native art, music and historical programming**

3. **Bring the Baxter Auditorium to ADA compliance by installing a lift**

4. **Re-carpet and paint the Baxter Auditorium**

5. **Expanding services and programming for the diverse community**

    a. ELL (English Language Learners) collection
    b. ELL programming offerings

6. **Provide the entire community with multicultural opportunities**

Adopted by the MGPL Board of Trustees on May 14, 2015.

Addendum

Morton Grove Public Library

READ | LEARN
LIVE

Community Feedback

Table of Contents

Submitted by Turks Cap Consulting, LLC

INTRODUCTION

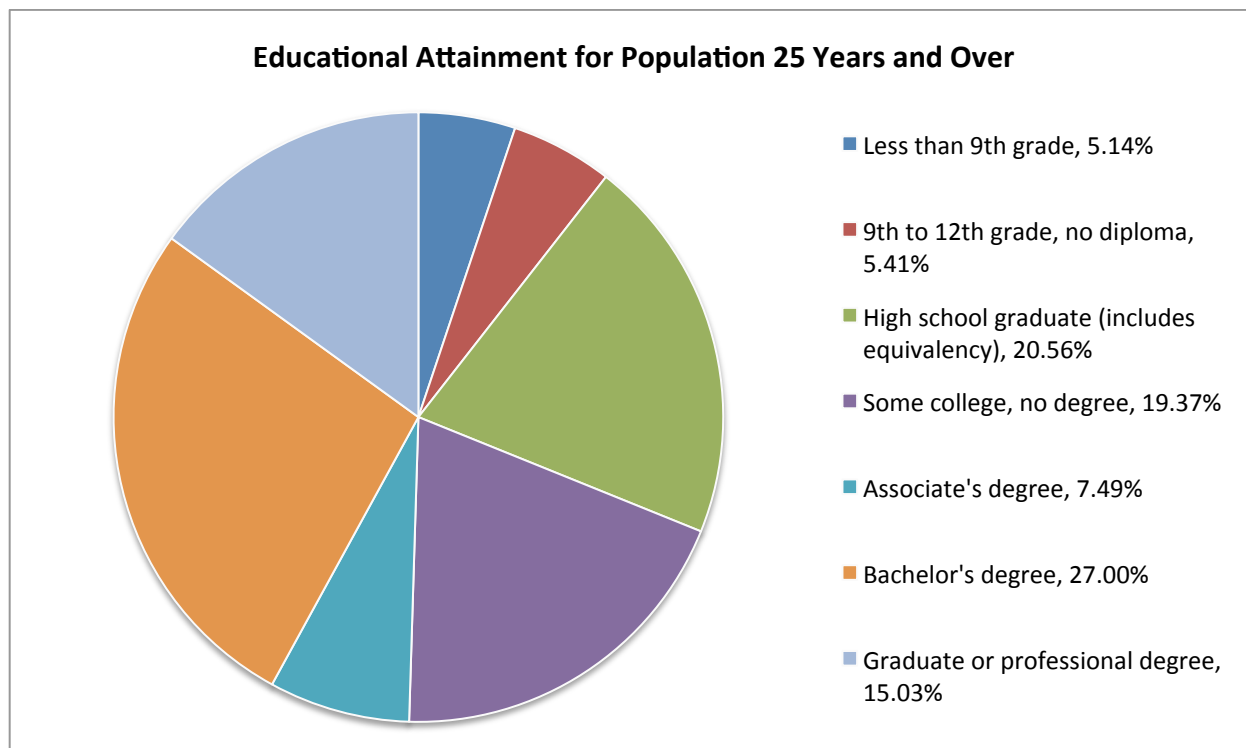Today's libraries are subject to high levels of scrutiny from their constituent groups pertaining to budgeting, allocation of resources, and response to user needs and desires. As the strategic planning process begins, it is vital to be in tune with the thoughts of all of these groups – users, taxpayers,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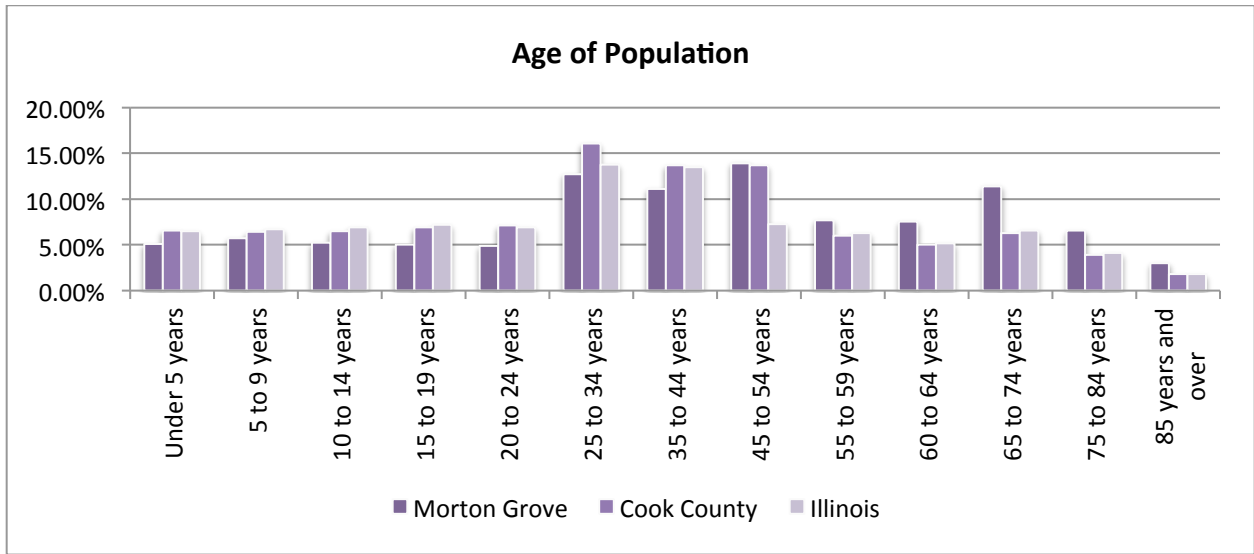
DEMOGRAPHICS

Total Household Income

Chart: Total Household Income (number of households by income bracket)
- Less than $10,000: ~390
- $10,000 to $14,999: ~190
- $15,000 to $24,999: ~620
- $25,000 to $34,999: ~660
- $35,000 to $49,999: ~880
- $50,000 to $74,999: ~1600
- $75,000 to $99,999: ~1170
- $100,000 to $149,999: ~1880
- $150,000 to $199,999: ~530
- $200,000 or more: ~500

Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

Educational Attainment for Population 25 Years and Over

Pie chart:
- Less than 9th grade, 5.14%
- 9th to 12th grade, no diploma, 5.41%
- High school graduate (includes equivalency), 20.56%
- Some college, no degree, 19.37%
- Associate's degree, 7.49%
- Bachelor's degree, 27.00%
- Graduate or professional degree, 15.03%

Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

Submitted by Turks Cap Consulting, LLC

Age of Population

Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

Morton Grove is not only culturally diverse, but it is also heterogeneous across income levels and educational attainment. The median annual household income for Morton Grove residents is $72,204. More than 42% of Morton Grove adults over age 25 hold a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to only 31% of all Illinois residents. However, more than 10% of adults 25 and over do not hold a high school diploma. Of Morton Grove's 23,194 residents, nearly four in ten residents is foreign-born (38.8%), with half of all residents speaking a language other than English at home (49.8%):

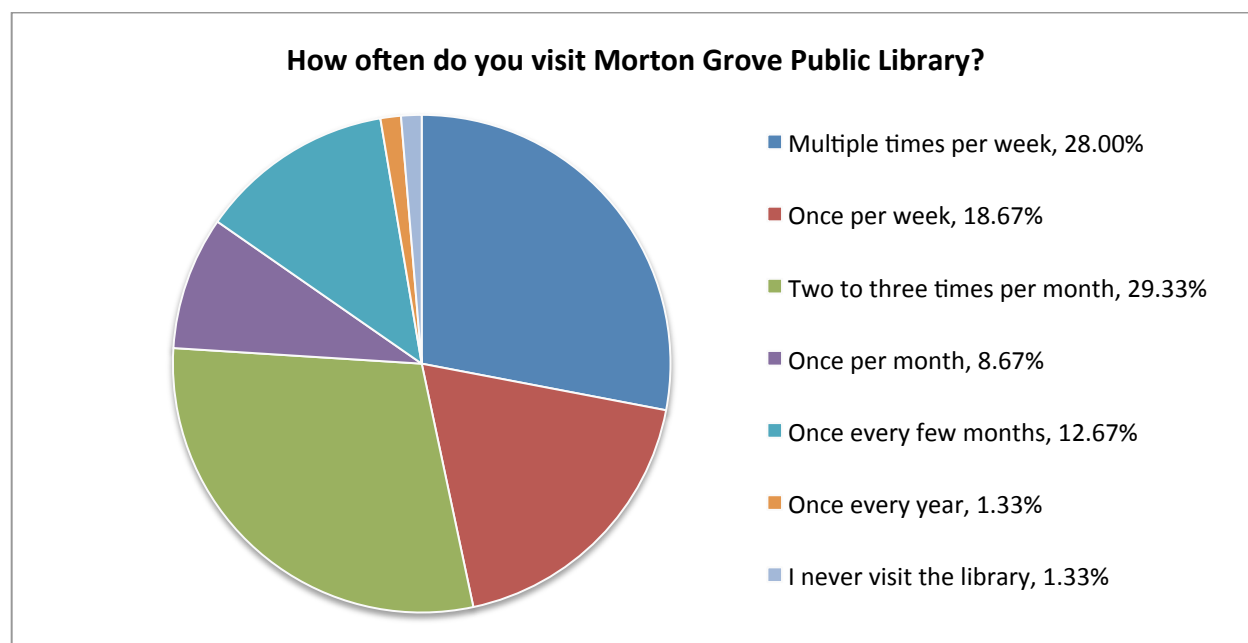| Language Spoken for Population 5 Years and Over	Number of Residents
Population 5 years and over	22,010
English only	11,034
Language other than English	10,976
Speak English less than "very well"	4,355
Spanish	1,386
Speak English less than "very well"	350
Other Indo-European languages	4,830
Speak English less than "very well"	2,053
Asian and Pacific Islander languages	3,830
Speak English less than "very well"	1,669
Other languages	930
Speak English less than "very well"	283

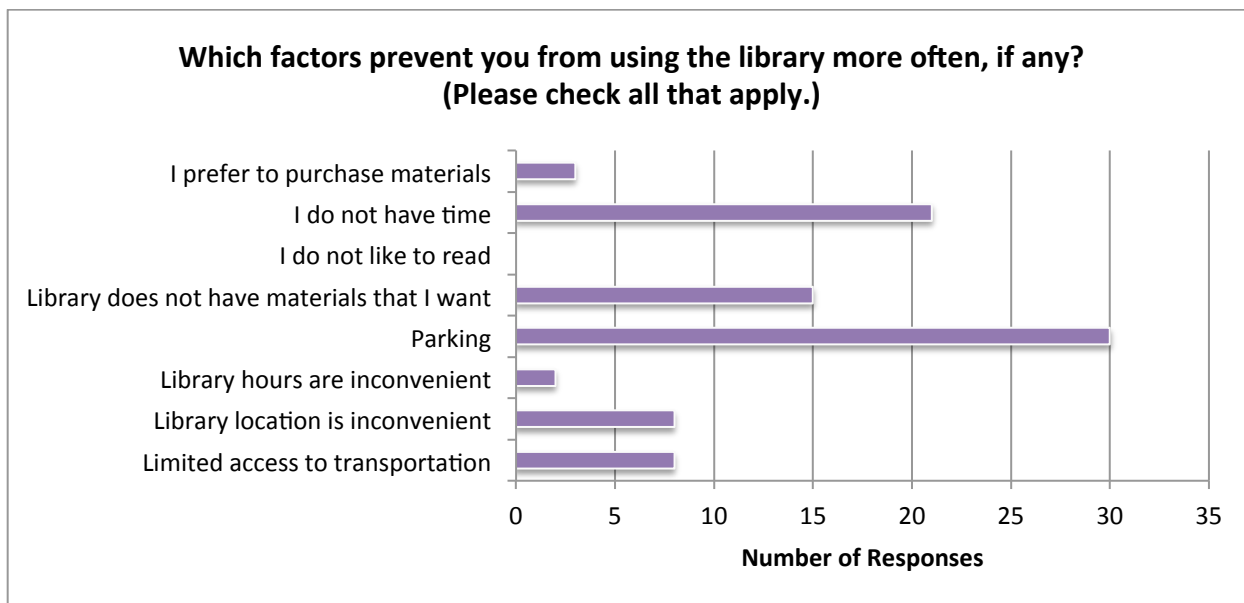Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012 Five-Year Estimates

COMMUNITY INPUT

Community feedback regarding use of the library and opportunities for improvement was collected via a mailed survey and a series of focus groups and staff meetings.
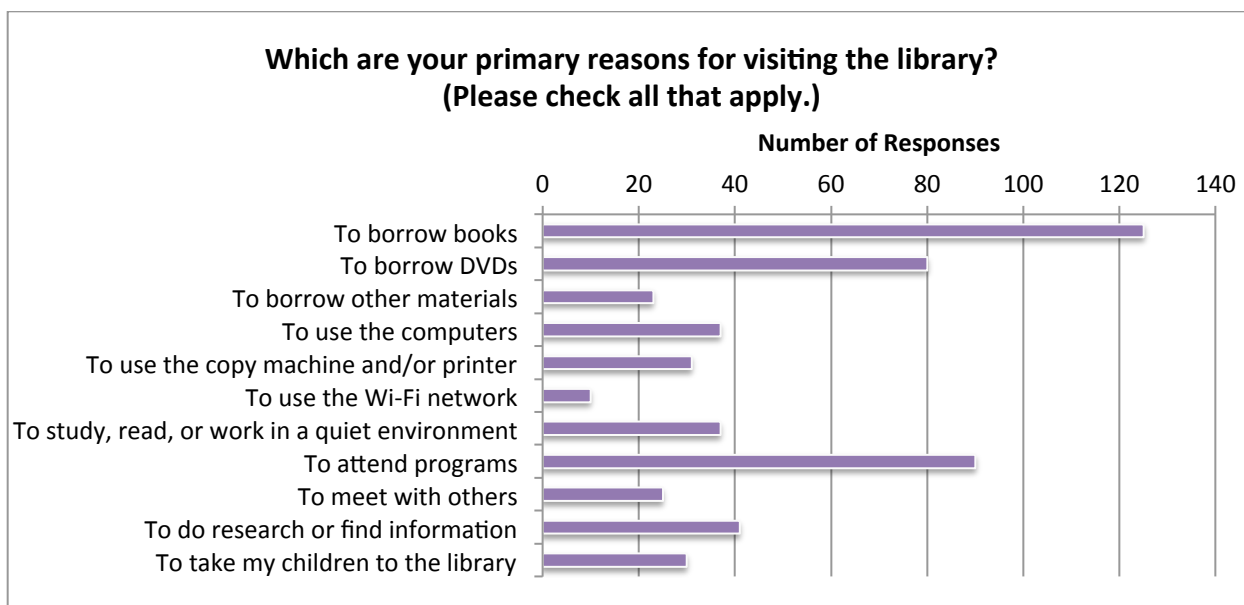
Community Survey

A survey was included in the June *Books & Beyond* newsletter and was completed and returned by 150 patrons. A copy of the survey text is included as an appendix.

How often do you visit Morton Grove Public Library?

- Multiple times per week, 28.00%
- Once per week, 18.67%
- Two to three times per month, 29.33%
- Once per month, 8.67%
- Once every few months, 12.67%
- Once every year, 1.33%
- I never visit the library, 1.33%

The majority of survey respondents were regular library users, although 24% of respondents reported visiting the library once per month or less frequently, with more than 15% of respondents reporting visiting the library only once every few months or less frequently. The most common reasons for not visiting the library more frequently, as illustrated on the next page, included parking constraints, not having enough time, and a feeling that the library does not have materials that the respondent wanted.

Which factors prevent you from using the library more often, if any?
(Please check all that apply.)

Category	
I prefer to purchase materials	
I do not have time	
I do not like to read	
Library does not have materials that I want	
Parking	
Library hours are inconvenient	
Library location is inconvenient	
Limited access to transportation	

Number of Responses

The most frequent reasons for visiting the library, as shown below, were to borrow materials, including books and DVDs. In addition, 60% of respondents reported visiting the library to attend programs, and many others cited reasons for visiting the library to use the physical space: to research or find information (27.3%); to study, read, or work in a quiet environment (24.7%); and to use the computers (24.7%).

Which are your primary reasons for visiting the library?
(Please check all that apply.)

Number of Responses

Category	
To borrow books	
To borrow DVDs	
To borrow other materials	
To use the computers	
To use the copy machine and/or printer	
To use the Wi-Fi network	
To study, read, or work in a quiet environment	
To attend programs	
To meet with others	
To do research or find information	
To take my children to the library	

Participants were asked whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, strongly disagreed, or were neutral regarding several statements regarding their opinions of the library. Responses are shown on the following page.

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
The library's physical facilities meet my needs.	37.24%	42.07%	11.03%	6.90%	2.76%	145
I find the programs offered through the library to be interesting and appealing to attend.	35.21%	44.37%	16.20%	3.52%	0.70%	142
The library's collection meets my interests and needs.	31.51%	41.10%	19.18%	6.16%	2.05%	146
I find the staff to be useful when I ask for assistance.	69.86%	23.97%	5.48%	0.68%	0.00%	146
The library's hours are conducive to my schedule.	49.32%	40.41%	7.53%	2.05%	0.68%	146
My usage of electronic materials (e.g. e-books, downloadable audiobooks, hoopla) has increased during the past year.	19.08%	16.79%	36.64%	14.50%	12.98%	131

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements:

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total Responses
The library is relevant to the Morton Grove community.	71.23%	18.49%	7.53%	2.74%	0.00%	146
I would recommend the library to my neighbors.	69.59%	21.62%	6.08%	1.35%	1.35%	148
The library meets all of my expectations.	44.76%	34.27%	11.89%	8.39%	0.70%	143

Approximately 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the library is relevant to the Morton Grove community, and more than 91% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the library to their neighbors. Fewer respondents (79%) agreed or strongly agreed that the library meets all of their expectations. Respondents' open-ended comments are included in the focus group analysis on the following pages.

Focus Groups and Staff Meetings

Three focus groups and six staff meetings were held with 48 individuals including patrons, library staff, community officials, and business leaders. The following community organizations were represented in the focus groups and interviews:

- East Maine School District 63
- Golf School District 67
- Maine Township High School District 207
- Morton Grove Chamber of Commerce
- Morton Grove Park District
- Morton Grove School District 70
- Niles Township District for Special Education #07
- Village of Morton Grove

Focus groups were held at the library. Each focus group was conducted in a discussion-style format and lasted for approximately one hour.

Strengths of the Library

Staff

Participants frequently praised the staff of the library, often calling them "friendly," "welcoming," and "able to help with anything you could think of." Focus group participants suggested that the staff make the building "feel like a community library," and the personal interactions between staff and patrons were frequently cited as unique benefits to using the Morton Grove Public Library. Education officials felt that the staff knowledge of materials was exemplary, noting that they "make books so interesting it makes kids want to read them." Staff noted that many library users from neighboring communities, including Chicago, utilized Morton Grove Public Library due to the "personalized service." Other focus group participants felt that the library is "like a lifeline for some people and families."

Programming

Staff, patrons, and community leaders all cited the library's quantity and quality of programs as appealing and relevant to the community. In particular, youth services programs, as well as movies and speakers for adults, were often recognized as not only popular, but serving as a

benefit to the greater community. Focus group participants encouraged the library to increase the number of cultural programs to attract wider audiences and serve the interests of community residents.

Survey Comments

Survey respondents provided the following positive feedback:

- "So glad you will now use Lincoln Avenue doors to enter and exit!!! :)"
- "Reference staff is excellent."
- "Staff always helpful!"
- "MG Library goes out of its way to obtain items for me via purchase or interlibrary loan - love it!!"
- "The lower level kids library is fantastic, as are the many programs for kids. No complaints, just please keep these going. Thanks to all the great librarians."
- "No problems staff is always very helpful and have good attitude."
- "Staff is super helpful, always pleasant and knowledgeable. Library meets my needs. I like the small, homey atmosphere very much."
- "I like this library and its staff."
- "I don't know a lot of understanding computers. Yet, the ladies always help me with printing from my email."
- "I really like our little library more than Skokie, Niles. Much more people friendly, especially for kids."
- "You are doing an excellent job of providing services for this community. I very much appreciate all you do and want you to continue your efforts. I couldn't function without MGPL!"
- "I appreciate all the nice innovations."
- "The library is a comfort and joy!"
- "It feels welcoming and unpretentious."
- "I am impressed with the changes that have been made. The size of the library presents many challenges that have successfully been met with ingenuity. I use audio and books frequently and enjoy the book discussion group. I also enjoy the movies and Sunday programs."
- "I think the library staff is doing great job and I love this library."
- "I am from Skokie and come especially for programs."

- "Given the confines of a relatively small library building, I think the library is doing the best it could under this physical limitation."
- "Glad to see more DVDs (movie and TV shows). Would like to see more foreign films offered please!"
- "Love the recent makeover inside. Would love to see a few more 'accent' plants in the study/reading area, which looks somewhat sterile to my eye."

Opportunities for Improvement

Library Facility

While some patrons referred to the library building as "quaint," "homey," and "cozy," the condition and size of the library facility were often regarded as weaknesses. The presence of stairs throughout the library makes a significant portion of the collection inaccessible to patrons with mobility challenges, and safety issues, such as those regarding asbestos and an aging electrical system are of concern to staff. Staff participants also noted lack of staff office space and limited availability of space to have conversations and meetings.

In addition, patrons and community leaders cited characteristics of other neighboring popular libraries that are absent from the Morton Grove facility, which they suggested patrons would use regularly, including private study rooms, more meeting space, computer work spaces, and areas to work collaboratively. Creation of these spaces could alleviate much of the noise that patrons and staff cited as a deterrent from current use of the library as a place to read, work, or study in a quiet environment.

Library Location

In addition, the library's location was considered to be a deterrent to increased library usage, particularly among patrons living in more distant areas of Morton Grove. Similarly, some focus group participants suggested that the minimal foot and auto traffic near the library made the library "out of the minds" of residents and "easy to forget."

In addition, patrons routinely said that parking was preventive from them using the library. Twenty percent of survey respondents said parking was at least one reason they do not visit the library more frequently.
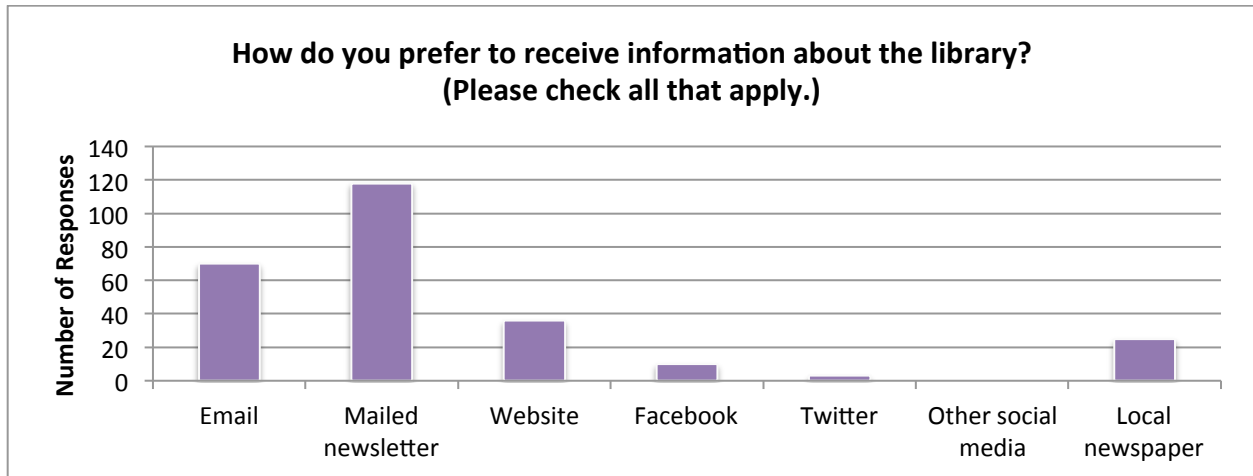
Submitted by Turks Cap Consulting, LLC

Community Engagement

Many potential partnerships and opportunities for stronger community relationships and engagement with Morton Grove residents exist of which the library is not currently taking full advantage. For example, one focus group participant suggested interest within the business community in sponsoring a business-related program at the library to better serve Morton Grove's small business community. Several education and parks officials suggested ideas for community-wide partnerships that could involve the library, including but not limited to shared outreach events, a community-wide coordinated events calendar, library card sign-up promotions, and tours of the library for new residents. These opportunities provide an increase presence of the library within the community while maximizing the benefit of shared resources.

To develop strong relationships with residents and community organizations, the library must be increasingly visible throughout Morton Grove. Many focus group participants noted that there is limited signage for the library in the village, and they could not recall library staff being present at community events such as the farmers market or Morton Grove Days. Collaboration with other community groups, such as the Morton Grove Park District and area schools, as well as local businesses, and emphasizing the variety and lack of cost to the patron for materials, services, and programs, will increase awareness of the what the library has to offer the Morton Grove community.

Marketing and Outreach

There is a common misperception of the library as being merely an archive of books. While the *Books & Beyond* newsletter is popular among regular library users, it is not sufficient to communicate what the library has to offer to all residents. As shown on the next page, more than 46% of survey respondents said that they prefer to receive information about the library via email. Developing an e-newsletter or brief regular email blasts about upcoming events or new materials may generate not only increase awareness of the library, but also deliver an introduction of the library to non-users. A more targeted marketing and outreach effort, including physically visiting other sites throughout Morton Grove to promote events, hold library card sign-ups, and interact with a wider audience of residents will better promote the library than merely the existing newsletter and website.

How do you prefer to receive information about the library?
(Please check all that apply.)

Number of Responses

| | Email | Mailed newsletter | Website | Facebook | Twitter | Other social media | Local newspaper |

Survey Comments

Survey respondents provided the following comments regarding the question, "What problems or difficulties have you encountered while using the library, if any?":

- "Parking is sometimes a problem."
- "Many books are not available to my Nook."
- "There are very few videos that are educational that I can use with my middle school math and science students (unlike Skokie Library's large educational video selection)."
- "New books on bottom shelf."
- "It was difficult to use the library while I was using crutches, so I would guess people with physical disabilities might have trouble accessing the library, especially the second floor nonfiction."
- "I usually walk to the library, but on occasion when I have drive it is sometimes hard to find parking."
- "Limited space - limited selection. Many times books are sent from surrounding libraries because we don't have shelf space. We need a larger library."
- "Classes are only offered once a week and on the same day each session. Some options would be helpful since there are other classes and school the kids attend."
- "Parking is very limited."
- "Overall the library space is too small."
- "There are no quiet areas for study or reading, or a computer room or private study rooms."
- "Periodically, books I'd like to read are not in the system."
- "Wish weekend hours were later, longer."

- "The software classes were not helpful, not detailed enough."
- "The shelving for books is getting tight - we need a mezzanine over the mezzanine!"
- "Where I live in MG it's more convenient for me to use Niles or Glenview libraries."
- "The interior just looks 'tired' and old. I tend to go to Niles instead. It was a very nice library but their remodeling recently is amazing. It's a much more welcoming place."
- "Relatively small selection when compared with other libraries."
- "Prefer more space for books, less for DVDs, but realize there are extreme space constraints at MGPL."
- "Lack of books I would like to check out, especially new titles."
- "The board needs to put money into improving the library!"
- "Computers, very slow, don't work as well as computers at Niles and Skokie libraries."
- "Getting materials through MG library from other local libraries (interlibrary loans) isn't as easy a process as it is through Niles library (I can do it myself there; at MG I have to have a reference staff person do it for me)."
- "The 3-day loan for new DVDs is too short for my work schedule."
- "Need special chairs for handicapped while working on computer labs."
- "Parking is abysmal."

In addition to the answers included in the previous question, when asked, "Do you have any suggestions for improving library services?" respondents said the following:

- "More programs that connect the community cross-culturally - things like food cultural programs. Korea program was great, but what about all the other cultures in town."
- "Overall, build a new library! My family and I tend to go to Glenview and Niles Library. The space is new and fresh. Lots of material available. Programs area better. We live in Morton Grove and sad to see that we go to the other libraries more."
- "I'd like to see a better or more seating area for enjoying books upstairs. An area like the kids have downstairs where you could study even, but that is more quiet than downstairs."
- "More computers; should be quiet zone."
- "Need snack machine and eating area."

MOVING FORWARD

Overall, focus group participants and survey respondents felt that the library currently meets their needs. Patrons value the traditional services the library offers, as well as more modern amenities such as Wi-Fi access and youth use of iPads. However, participants revealed several inconveniences with using the library more, as well as mentions of facility constraints and lack of awareness of what the library has to offer. In addition, many focus group participants felt that a mindset exists of referring Morton Grove residents to neighboring libraries, including Niles Public Library and Skokie Public Library to receive the materials and use space that may not be available at Morton Grove Public Library. This mindset is detrimental to the library's long-term success and community identification with the Morton Grove Public Library as Morton Grove residents' own community library. In the future, stronger community partnerships and increased cooperation between the library, local businesses, and community organizations will improve visibility of the benefits the library offers the Morton Grove community. To ensure sustainability of the library in the future, the library must increase outreach to specific segments of the population, including the business community and teens. As technology, collaborative space, and instant access to information become everyday expectations of users, the library must act now to position itself as a leader in these fields or risk losing patronage to competing businesses and institutions.

Morton Grove Public Library wants to hear your opinions! Tell us why you use – or don't use – the library, and help us improve to serve you better.

This survey may take 5 to 15 minutes to complete and can be mailed back to the library in the provided envelope or returned to the library's check out desk.

Please return your completed survey to the library no later than Monday, July 14, 2014. Thank you!

How often do you visit Morton Grove Public Library?

□ Multiple times per week

□ Once per week

□ Two to three times per month

□ Once per month

□ Once every few months

□ Once every year

□ I never visit the library

Which factors prevent you from using the library more often, if any? (Please check all that apply.)

□ Limited access to transportation

□ Library location is inconvenient

□ Library hours are inconvenient

□ Library does not have materials that I want

□ None

□ I do not like to read

□ I do not have time

□ I prefer to purchase materials

□ Other (please specify): _____

Which are your primary reasons for visiting the library? (Please check all that apply.)

□ To borrow books

□ To borrow DVDs

□ To borrow other materials

□ To use the computers

□ To use the copy machine and/or printer

□ To use the Wi-Fi

□ To study, read, or work in a quiet environment

□ To attend programs

□ To meet with others

□ To do research or find information

□ To take my children to visit the library

□ Other (please specify): _____

How do you prefer to receive information about the library? (Please check all that apply.)

□ Email

□ Mailed newsletter

□ Website

□ Facebook

□ Twitter

□ Other social media

□ Local newspaper

□ Other (please specify):

_____

(please turn page over)

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The library's physical facilities meet my needs.	□	□	□	□	□
I find the programs offered through the library to be interesting and appealing to attend.	□	□	□	□	□
The library's collection meets my interests and needs.	□	□	□	□	□
I find the staff to be useful when I ask for assistance.	□	□	□	□	□
The library's hours are conducive to my schedule.	□	□	□	□	□
My usage of electronic materials (e.g. e-books, downloadable audiobooks, hoopla) has increased during the past year.	□	□	□	□	□

What problems or difficulties have you encountered while using the library, if any?

Do you have any suggestions for improving library services?

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The library is relevant to the Morton Grove community.	□	□	□	□	□
I would recommend the library to my neighbors.	□	□	□	□	□
The library meets all of my expectations.	□	□	□	□	□

Please select your age range.

□ 18 years and under   □ 25 – 35 years   □ 51 – 64 years   □ 81+ years

□ 19 – 24 years   □ 36 – 50 years   □ 65 – 80 years   □ Prefer not to answer

Do you want to share more feedback to help us better serve you? Participate in a focus group this summer! Focus groups will be available in both daytime and evening hours. If you are interested, please list your email address and daytime phone number:

Email Address: _____

Daytime Phone Number: _____

Thank you for completing the survey!