Effingham Public Library
Usage Report
Spring 2023

In the Fall of 2021, the Effingham Public Library undertook a comprehensive look at the usage of the library using a variety of data sets. We were in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic and library usage had dramatically shifted and so we wanted to better understand where we were at with serving the community. During that time, patron use was down in several key areas and so we wanted to assess what could be done to better meet the needs of our patrons.

We are now 18 months since the last usage report and several key factors have shifted at the library. First, we shortened some of hours in response to the usage report and now close at 7pm. Second, we have seen our patrons begin to return in more typical numbers, though several key metrics still lag. Through this report, we hope to gain a better understanding of how we can improve in these critical areas.

OVERALL LIBRARY USAGE
You can see in this chart a snapshot of several different months/years representing our prime services and how they have changed and recovered (or not) from the pandemic.

	June 2017	June 2018	June 2019	June 2020	June 2021	June 2022
Circulation	24,088	26,452	26,080	8,893	22,859	20,037
eResources	1,250	1,246	1,739	2,266	2,123	2,109
Library Cards	81	59	65	21	46	76
Adult Programs	9	11	16	3	12	12
Adult Attendance	146	149	489	45	309	295
YS Programs	53	68	69	32	39	32
YS Attendance	2,076	2,645	2,097	1,836	1,442	1,478
Meeting Rooms	11	23	32	0	15	12
Computer Use	1,556	1,571	1,237	128	730	595
Wifi Use	N/A	5,133	5,087	3,775	4,294	5,700

	Oct. 2017	Oct. 2018	Oct. 2019	Oct. 2020	Oct. 2021	Oct. 2022
Circulation	20,826	22,539	23,309	13,734	18,541	17,239
eResources	1,328	1,131	1,728	2,247	1,966	1,980
Library Cards	52	48	38	19	38	35
Adult Programs	13	12	23	18	18	12
Adult Attendance	159	304	480	372	292	171
YS Programs	17	38	50	23	47	38
YS Attendance	777	854	1,040	431	778	994
Meeting Rooms	29	34	41	1	22	11
Computer Use	1,333	1,389	1,240	569	593	584
Wifi Use	N/A	5,189	4,276	2,978	2,410	4,325

	FY2018	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022	FY2023
Circulation	253,454	269,744	254,732	155,917	221,249	213,811
eResources	15,671	16,719	22,179	26,319	24,612	24,091
Library Cards	624	534	474	240	461	531
Adult Programs	132	129	174	101	178	183
Adult Attendance	1,920	2,983	3,567	2,635	3,120	2,727
YS Programs	269	485	456	271	464	399
YS Attendance	9,402	15,879	15,304	8,177	9,328	12,235
Meeting Rooms	233	335	356	14	153	127
Computer Use	16,141	16,237	12,542	5,569	7,583	7,022
Wifi Use	N/A	47,414	47,988	36,253	35,399	77,370

June represents our biggest and most active month—it is when Summer Read kicks off and we by far have the highest attendance. October represents a more "typical" month—there are usually a steady number of programs and attendance with no big events or holidays to impact service schedules.

As you can see above, some areas are recovering well—youth program attendance would be a good example as it is nearly recovered to FY19 levels. Adult programs are also increasing and finished above or near the FY19 levels.

Circulation has been the hardest to predict in our recovery. A couple of factors impacted overall growth for FY23. The largest factors were related to changes in ordering

procedures for physical items. Our main supplier, Baker & Taylor, experienced massive disruptions because of a security breach while they were still trying to climb out of the supply chain disruptions that resulted from the COVID-19 pandemic. In late FY23, both problems resolved and items once again began to flow more regularly. Internally, we also experienced some changes in staffing, resulting in a learning curve around patron preferences and purchase. Again, this has been smoothed out over time and our circulation began to rebound around January 2023.

EResources have also been a confounding service. While we saw a sharp rise in usage in the first few months of the pandemic (getting as high as 3,000/month at one point), by late 2020, our average circulation of eResources dipped to around 2,000/month and has not moved much off of that average.

While usage of our resources is one factor in our overall success and usefulness as a library, it's not the only thing. Below are several different metrics that were gathered to better understand how and when people use our services.

Finally, wifi usage has exploded in the last year. We doubled our count over the previous year, which was already quite strong.

Daily door counts

One of our most basic indicators of usage is our daily door counts. This counts how many people come into our building each day. We are seeing the trend of door counts improve each month. We only have monthly data going back to 2019, but during September and October of 2019, we averaged at least 400 people per day. In 2023, we were back to at least 200 per day, so we are at 50% of our previous capacity. Some of this fluctuation can be attributed to our new security gates/people counters that were installed about 18 months ago. It has caused our reporting to be more accurate, though the gates were also down for a period of time last summer.

	Total Door Count
March 2019	11,853
March 2020	5,502
March 2021	5,881
March 2022	7,125
March 2023	6,423

	Total Door Count
April 2019	10,310
April 2020	0
April 2021	5,442
April 2022	5,426
April 2023	5,487

Heat/Usage Mapping

Appendix A shows the daily counts for each of the 6 days we did heat mapping. This represents the different types of usage throughout each day, based on the hour that we observed people. We have more detailed data, down to where specifically the usage

was, but these charts will give a sense of when the most activity was happening in the building.

Heat mapping was used for only one week this time from April 17 through April 22, 2023. Staff were to mark at least once every 30 minutes where all non-employees were located in the building. If possible, they were asked to record each time they saw someone move to a new area during that 30 minute period. This provides us with real time information about how much use is happening during a given time period.

Peak usage times were definitely noted. On most days, there's a steady rise until lunch time (with a spike at lunch nearly every day), a decline during the afternoon hours, a sharp rise after school and then a steady decline until closing.

Of note is the poor response on Tuesday, April 18. We believe that this anomaly is attributed to it being Tax Day. Typically, Tuesdays are a very busy day with our storytime welcoming many patrons; however, this particular Tuesday was a low turnout for most of the day.
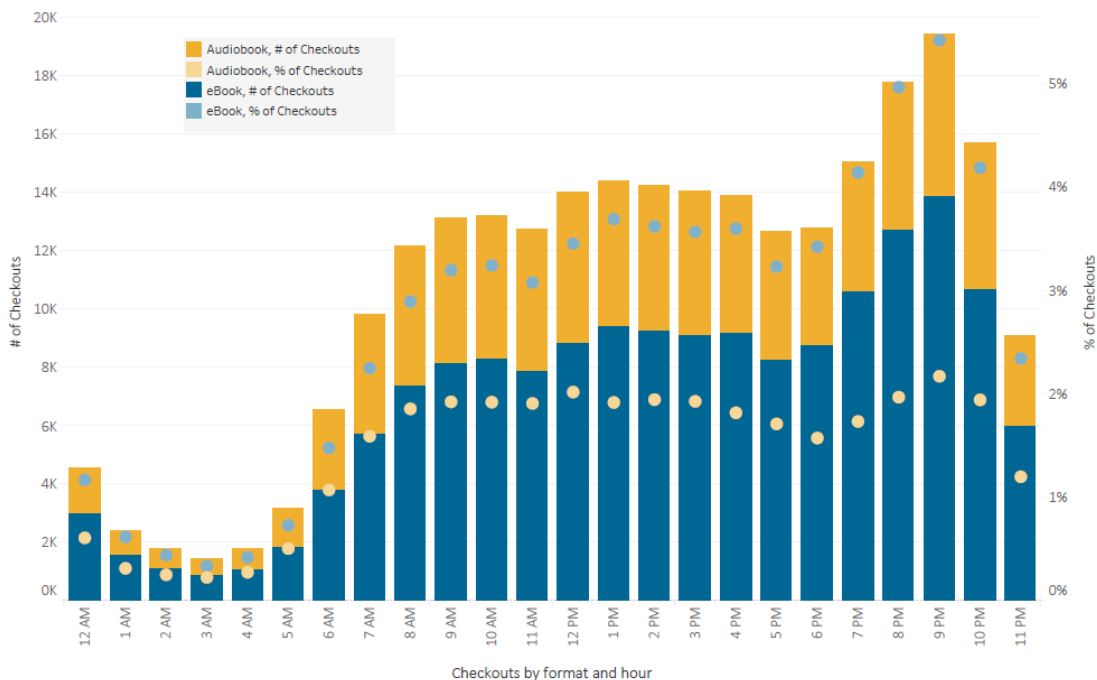
Circulation By Hour

Appendix B shows times circulation is occurring. Consistently, the last hour of operation Monday – Thursday is low circulation. Additionally, having programs during this time does not seem to correlate into additional circulations. Daytime circulations continue to improve, though these can still vary from week to week.

eResources usage

As was expected, eResource usage increases as the evening progresses and experiences a major rise between 7 and 10pm.

Rolling Prairie Digital Consortium (IL)
Checkouts by format and hour in the last 12 months

Legend:
- Audiobook, # of Checkouts
- Audiobook, % of Checkouts
- eBook, # of Checkouts
- eBook, % of Checkouts

Checkouts by format and hour

The orange and blue bars, ebooks and audiobooks respectively, represent the number of checkouts which occurred in the hour denoted.
The orange and blue circles, ebooks and audiobooks respectively, represent the percent of total checkouts which occurred in the hour denoted.

OverDrive

Business Systems and Analytics // May 5, 2023

When Patrons Borrow by Day of Week and Hour

Library Hours:

When Patrons Borrow (Day & Hour)

LOW   HIGH
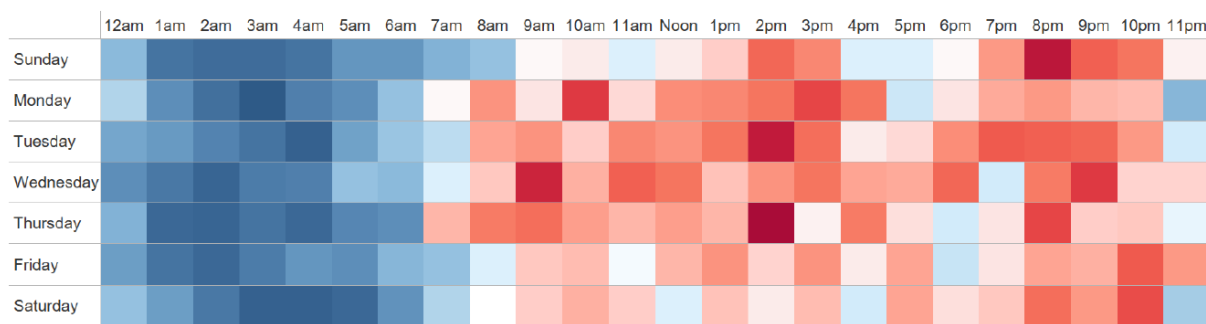
**Most Popular Time to Borrow:
2 PM on Thursday**

hoopla

Library Computer Usage for April 2023

This chart shows total computer usage for the month of April by days, which shows rather consistent usage across the days.

Weekday	Total Uses	Total Time	Average Session
Monday	105	58:09:00	33.229
Tuesday	74	44:36:00	36.162
Wednesday	96	55:37:00	34.76
Thursday	91	51:39:00	34.055
Friday	97	55:05:00	34.072
Saturday	46	25:04:00	32.696
TOTALS	509	290:10:00	34.204

Program Attendance

While we don't track programs by time, we do track attendance age range. Below are two charts representing the ages of our program attendees in April 2023. As you can see, youth makes up the overwhelming majority of attendees, though number of programs is actually pretty evenly split between youth, teen, and adult. Typically, these programs occur in the morning or afternoon.
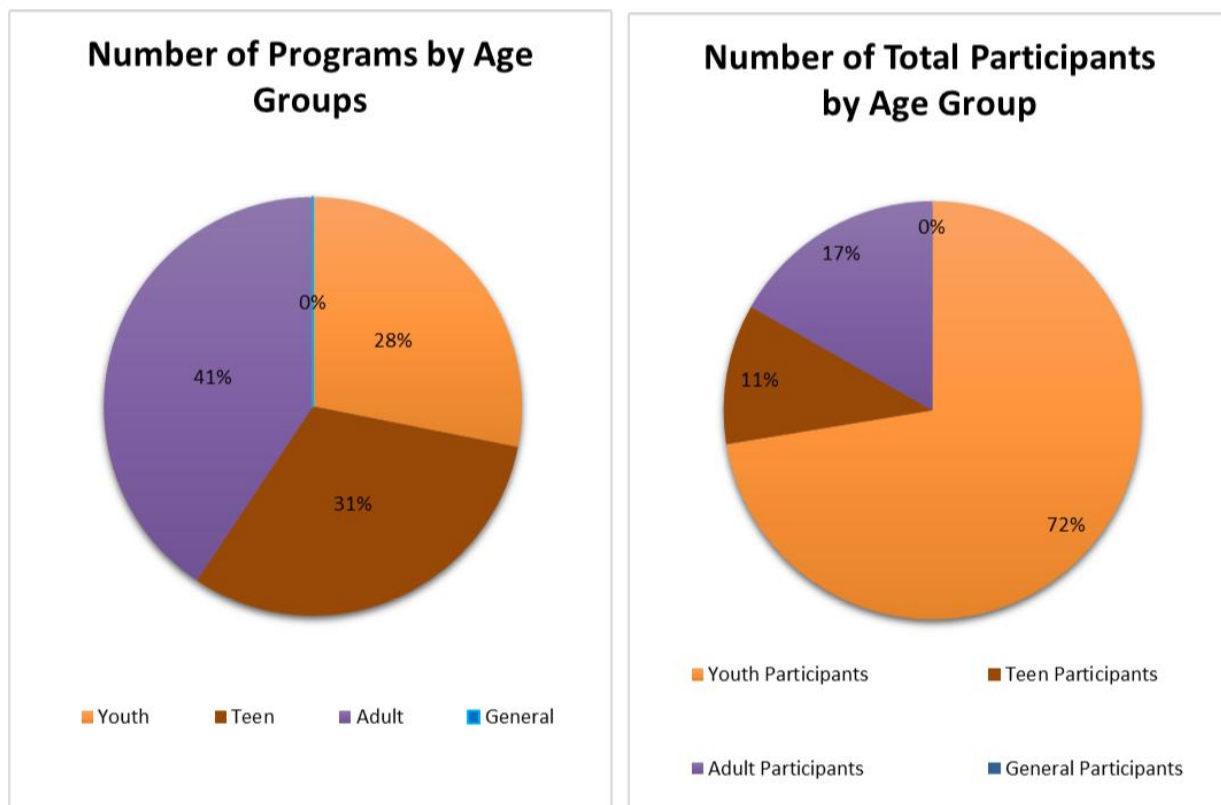
CONSIDERATIONS/DISCUSSION TOPICS
In an effort to be good stewards of our community's tax resources, we need to determine where to focus our efforts—where can we focus our resources (both monetary and staff) to have the largest impact?

One clear area of focus would be maximizing patron interactions during the lunch hour. Another area for discussion is what to do about our declining circulation and how that can be improved.

Some possible ideas for implementation include:
1. Work on methods to better connect circulations with the users that are coming into our library. This includes improved marketing efforts and connecting with the users that come in briefly on their lunch hours or after work to quickly pick up items.
2. Concentrate on in-person lunch hour and after school programming. Evening programming would largely be for higher impact events, typically targeted at adults.
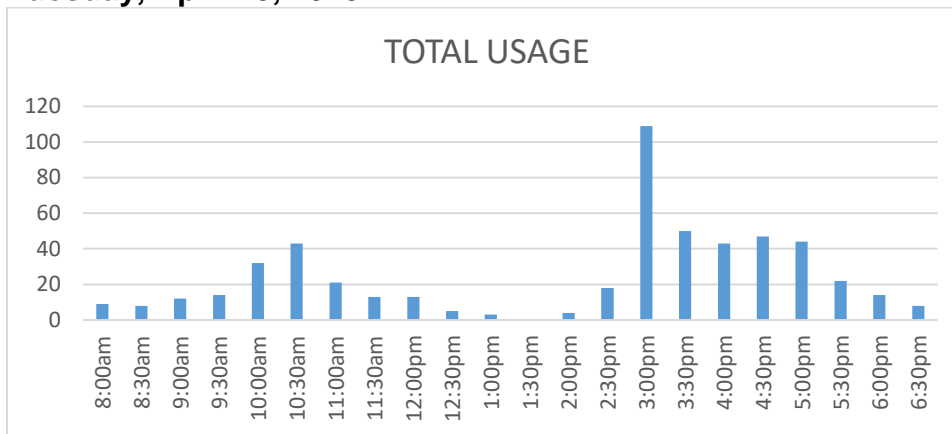3. Increase overall foot traffic, either through new users or through returning users.

Appendix A
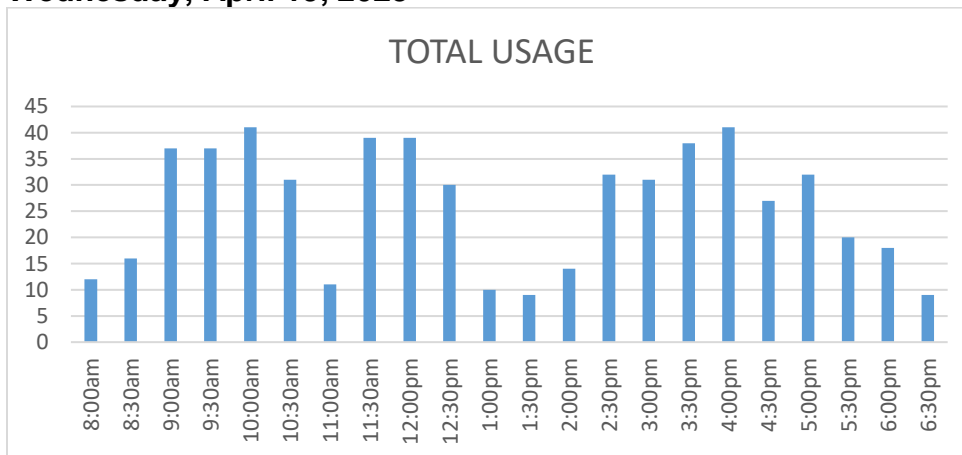**April 2023 Heat Map Data**

Monday, April 17, 2023

TOTAL USAGE
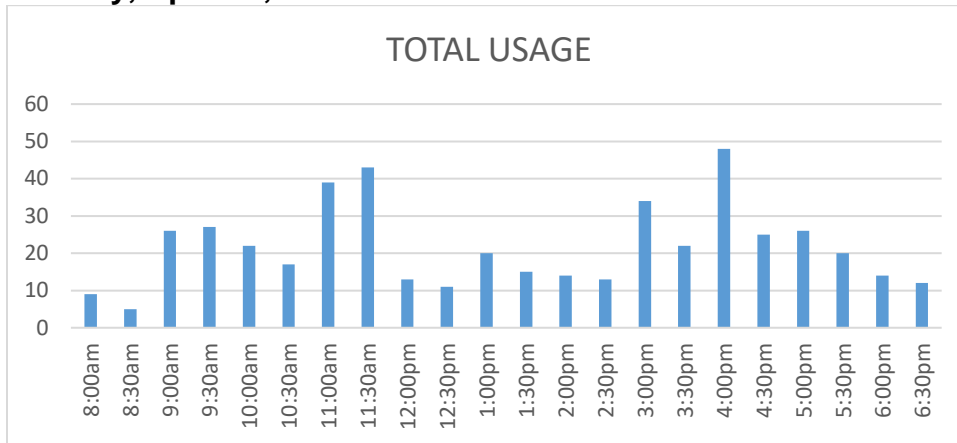
*Luttrell Room—Board Meeting 6-7pm

Tuesday, April 18, 2023 TAX DAY

TOTAL USAGE

*Workman—Intro to Composting 5:30-6:30pm

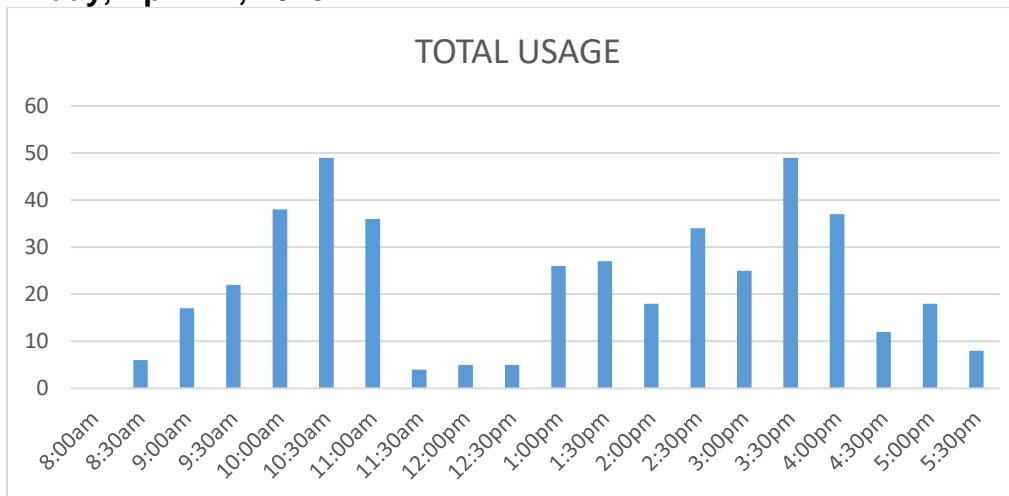### Wednesday, April 19, 2023

TOTAL USAGE

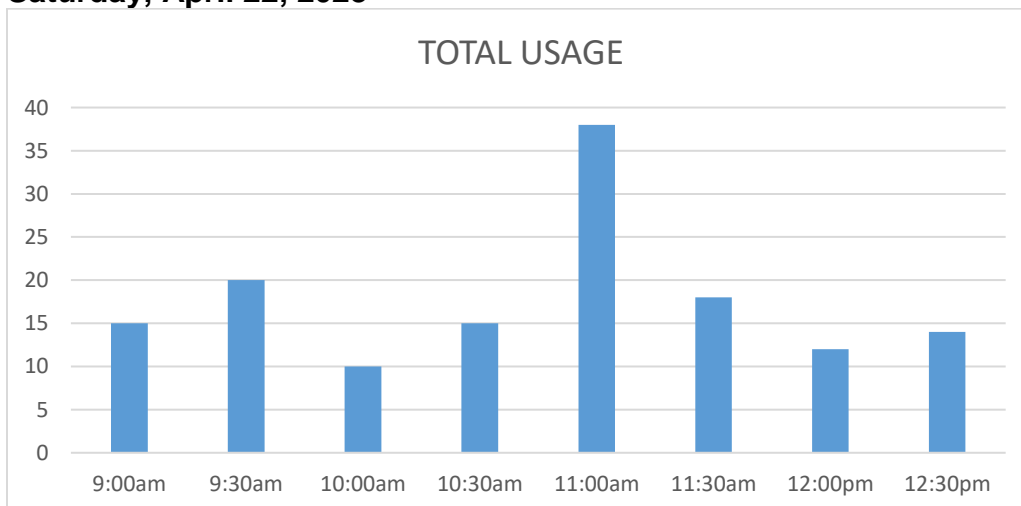*Workman—Murders and Mysteries 5:30-6:30pm

Thursday, April 20, 2023
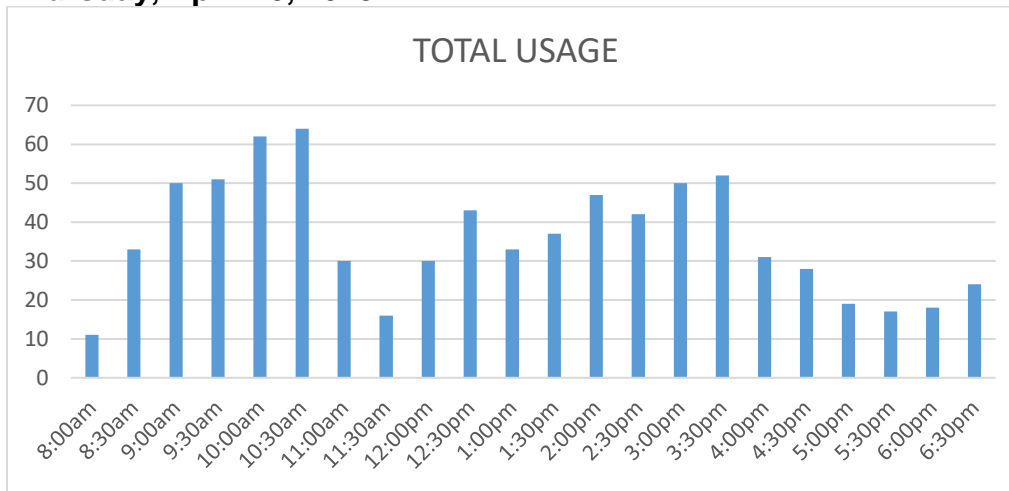
Friday, April 21, 2023

Saturday, April 22, 2023

Appendix B
Circulation By Hour

Week of April 17 – April 22, 2023

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
8AM-9AM	13	78	36	152	12	
9AM-10AM	49	18	3	44	26	35
10AM-11AM	27	44	29	34	70	26
11AM-12PM	27	72	40	48	69	35
12PM-1PM	87	14	21	44	43	53
1PM-2PM	36	19	5	65	26	3
2PM-3PM	33	41	15	72	32	
3PM-4PM	43	150	53	47	62	
4PM-5PM	52	87	61	38	32	
5PM-6PM	44	18	60	13	13	
6PM-7PM	11	24	17	28		