

**Wyomissing Public Library
Board Meeting
September 16, 2024**

Call to Order
Roll Call

Approval of Minutes – May and June

President's Report

Summer fundraiser totals; looking ahead

Treasurer's Report

Librarian's Report:

Usage stats, program highlights

Committee Reports

Fundraising

Raffle baskets, raffle baskets, raffle baskets

Strategic Planning

Final review, discussion of draft plan

Nominating Committee

board vacancy

Old Business:

Final review, discuss of draft investment policy

New Business:

Next Board Meeting: Monday October 21, 2024 at 7 PM

Wyomissing Public Library 2024 Strategic Plan—*Draft*

Mission: The Wyomissing Public Library’s mission is to inspire learning, expand opportunity, and strengthen community by providing information services and innovative programming to everyone.

Vision: A stronger community through curiosity, creativity and connection

Values: The library is a welcoming, trusted, and inclusive non-profit organization offering open access to diverse resources and experiences.

The Wyomissing Public Library board of trustees, in conjunction with the library staff, began the process of developing a new strategic plan in January 2024. The board’s decision to undertake this effort resulted from questions raised in September 2023 about how to address the decline of some key user statistics (see appendices). The following is the library’s first new strategic plan in 20 years.

The purpose of this plan is first and foremost to provide the library board and staff with a roadmap for meeting the ever-changing needs of library patrons and the community at large over the next three to five years. As it stands, the library continues to enjoy an abundance of goodwill in the community. People love the library for its friendly and knowledgeable staff, its programs, materials and amenities, and its beautiful building and grounds. At the same time, the needs and aspirations of the community are evolving, along with people’s expectations of and relationships with the library. The strategic plan is meant to provide the board and staff with a clear set of goals and objectives for maintaining the community’s connections to the library and building on the library’s strengths as we move forward.

The strategic plan is also vital to the library’s financial health over the medium and long term. The plan will convey our mission and goals to individual and corporate donors, grant providers, and state and local agencies we depend on to meet our growing annual budgets. By “planning our work and working our plan” we can use our financial resources more efficiently, demonstrate the impact of the money we receive, and thus appeal convincingly for continuing support.

This strategic plan was developed following a process outlined by Joy L. Fuller in *Strategic Planning for Public Libraries* (Public Library Association, 2021). Central to the process was a community needs assessment. The committee interviewed more than a dozen leaders in education, business, the non-profit sector, and local and state government about

community needs and aspirations. We supplemented those interviews with information from community surveys, studies and strategic plans provided by school officials, Tower Health, the Borough of Wyomissing, the Wyomissing Area School District and Centro Hispano. We ascertained local demographic trends from American Community Survey data provided by the US Census Bureau. Finally, we conducted an online patron survey and two focus groups—one with a group of 14 Wyomissing and West Reading residents, and another with a group of 10 high school students—to hear directly from citizens about how they use the library, what they like most about it, and what suggestions they had for improvement.

The library staff met to consider and enumerate the library's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. In a joint meeting, board and staff began to develop mission and vision statements for the library by asking questions such as who we are, what we do and why, and who we serve. Finally, the committee considered where the needs and aspirations of the community intersect with library's strengths, opportunities, and aspirations, as determined by the staff and the board.

Community needs and aspirations that the strategic plan could address include things such as lifelong learning, digital literacy, civic engagement at all stages of life, college and career preparation and support, sources of local news and information, and the bridging of cultural divides. In our patron survey, focus groups and interviews with community leaders, people offered many suggestions for the library: more programs for middle school and high school students, easier access to the county library system, better communications about library programs and services, and more ebook and audiobook offerings, to name just a few.

From all the research and community input, the strategic planning committee has developed the following list of five primary goals and related objectives. The goals and objectives are purposely ambitious to challenge and inspire both the board and the staff. But they are also achievable and practical, meant to focus our efforts, guide our decision-making, and ultimately strengthen the library as an institution for years to come.

Finally, it is important to note that the strategic plan is merely a guide. *Implementation requires specific action plans every year (or less)*, with a team to design and execute those plans, milestones to track progress, and oversight by the board to ensure sufficient resources and accountability.

Respectfully submitted June 2024

Wyomissing Public Library Strategic Planning Committee

David Walker (chair), Mary Zervanos Dialectos, Jennafer Reilly, Lindsay Sakmann Rafer, Colleen Stamm (library director), Ann Sheehan, Jonathan Moore, Daniella Yacono

Goals & Objectives:

1. Enhance programming to meet a broader range of educational and recreational needs/interests
 - a. Technology education and training
 - b. Bi-lingual story hours, tutoring
 - c. College and career support: scholarships, FAFSA, personal finance, essay writing
 - d. Support early literacy programming and materials (ages 0-12 years)
 - e. Enable and encourage programming suggestions from the public
2. Improve and expand collections and accessibility of materials and services
 - a. Enhance access to county library system
 - b. Increase e-material offerings: books, audiobooks etc
 - c. Set up system for delivering materials to homebound residents
 - d. Evaluate and expand "library of things"
3. Improve use & comfort of library space
 - a. Make teen space more comfortable and inviting
 - b. Optimize use of Franklin Street foyer
 - c. More quiet reading spaces
 - d. Enhance public computer space
 - e. Re-evaluate books sale space and model
 - f. Expand space through outreach: library programs in other locations
4. Develop, support and diversify staff
 - a. Provide ongoing professional development & technology training
 - b. Build more robust and diverse volunteer network
 - c. More diversity in hiring: age, ethnicity, bilingual skills
5. Increase community awareness of library programs and services
 - a. Hire part-time publicist
 - b. Consistent branding: unify "look & feel" of all communications
 - c. Improve and expand social media presence (look to other libraries)
 - d. Improve newsletter content & distribution
 - e. Promote library programs in all of Wyomissing Area School District
 - f. Participate in Wyomissing borough mailers, calendar, new resident packet
 - g. Cross-promote with selected civic, cultural organizations
 - h. Raise library's profile by hosting more programs, events outside library
 - i. Counter misperceptions of exclusivity (ie, for Wyo residents only)
6. Strengthen the library's financial position
 - a. implement long-term investment strategy balancing growth and risk
 - b. diversify donor base and develop "sustaining" donor relationships
 - c. plan and execute capital campaign

Appendices

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|--|-----------|
| 1. Strategic planning committee findings (summary) | pp. 4-7 |
| 2. Library staff SWOT analysis | pp.8-9 |
| 3. Library user statistics charts 2015-2023 | pp. 10-13 |

Appendix 1: Strategic Planning Committee Findings (Summary)

Library usage trends

1. increases: digital materials borrowing (Overdrive increased 400% since 2017)
2. decreases: Materials circ (-43% since 2015), People (-35%); children's programming (-19%)

2024 Patron survey

1. 97% of respondents highly satisfied (61.5) or satisfied (35.5)
2. 42% borrow online materials; 52.5 borrow only physical materials; 8.5% borrow both
3. 37% borrow online materials frequently (3 or more times per month)
4. 82.5% visit library as often or more often than they did one year ago
5. Top reasons why patrons visit: 1. Check out materials (73.5%) 2. Adult programs (37%) 3. Story time (20%)
6. Other reasons: use computers (12.5%); use printer/scanner (10.5%); use wifi (9.5%); read newspapers (8%)
7. Age of respondents: 65+ (47.5%); 56-65 (13.1%); 46-55 (14.6%); 36-45 (16.2%) 26-35 (7.6%)
8. Location of respondents: Wyo (64.3%); West Reading (9.7%)
9. Open-ended question: How can library improve?

- a. expand ebook, audiobook offerings
- b. join county library system
- c. more programs for elementary kids and teens
- d. more adult programs (w/ many suggestions) and more book clubs
- e. better communications: about programs, new books, etc
- f. less liberal bias in programming
- g. Other: culling/improving book sale, improving the AV system, scheduling some kids programming (story times, eg) with working parents in mind; tech help for seniors

2019 survey responses

If you could design a library for the future, what would it have that we don't have now?

- 1. quieter reading space(s) with more comfortable seating
- 2. join county library system
- 3. wider selection of books, ebooks, audiobooks
- 4. more public meeting space
- 5. book clubs, game nights, art exhibits, lectures and other adult programs
- 6. a café
- 7. more programming for tweens and teens, including tutoring nights/weekends kids programming including story time, tech help/tutoring for seniors

2024 Patron focus group results

Main takeaways: WPL's strengths are the children's programming and its building and grounds. Areas we need to improve are communications, programming for middle school and high school kids, and the perception that the library is too exclusive.

Communications are spotty: some participants receive the newsletter, and follow the library's social media. Others said they were unaware of any channels of information, or how to learn about what's going on at the library. One participant said, "So many things are going on in the community, and the library not rising above that consciousness. You're sitting back and expecting people to know you're here and come and enjoy the activities. You need to push out into the sphere and advertise."

Another participant said communications should be a priority. Others agreed the library should use all channels—social media, newsletter, website, newspaper advertising, word of mouth, etc. A participant said communications have to be coordinated (look, feel and message) across all the platforms we use—it shouldn't be haphazard.

Participants had praise for the facility ("It's a beautiful, beautiful space. That's a special feature here") and the kids' programming, which engenders a strong connection and appreciation among parents of young kids: "the library does a good job at being present at

community events. The Earth Day story walk, for example. The fact that the staff is part of that is great. Children recognize the faces (of library staff). There are places where there's personal connection, that's really important."

But people drift away as their kids "age out" of the kids programming. One participant said, "I've been here 38 years. I was well-connected to the library when kids were little. But I floated away, and floated back a little bit now, with grandkids."

There was a consensus among participants that the library is not doing enough to engage middle schoolers and teenagers. "I would like to see more civic engagement opportunities for high school students" one participant said, and others concurred. Participants suggested book clubs, current events discussions, and other kinds of clubs and activities to get kids involved with each other and the community. One participant suggested more experiential learning opportunities for middle school kids, and "tactile" activities such as a crocheting club, a writing club or other activities that get kids off their screens and interacting with each other. "Make getting a library card a big deal" for all 4th graders, one participant suggested. Several participants suggested tech-oriented programs to teach kids to have healthier relationships with tech: digital literacy, how to interact with AI and virtual reality.

One participant mentioned a "library of things", an idea that animated the group and led to a lot of discussion and suggestions for the kinds of things the library might offer for loan— games, tools, toys, kitchenware. The discussion culminated with a suggestion for a "library of people": volunteers with expertise they'd be willing to share with other patrons one-on-one or in workshops, such as help with technology, help navigating college applications and financial aid, or adult ed enrichment (photography, book publishing, etc)

Asked about the perception that WPL was exclusive, one participant said our lack of involvement in the county library system contributes to a perception that we're exclusive. Another participant suggested we do more outreach with WREC to make WR residents aware of the library and to attract them. Another said, "The perception is that the library is just for Wyomissing, that it's very white, very upper middle class, old Wyomissing. You have to proactively counteract that and make that not true. At the same time, keep the intimacy."

Asked what the library is doing well that we should keep doing, participants responded: (good selections of) books and movies, Great Decisions program, kids' art program, the library's engagement with the community.

Asked what do we need to work on, one participant said, "Keep working on [communications]." Another suggested we figure out a way to stay open on holidays because those are days when people can and want to use the library. There was also a recommendation that the library build a stronger, more active volunteer network. "That's a way to bolster communication. People will talk about the library. Word gets around."

High school focus group feedback

Positive: staff is friendly, good place to study with friends

Criticisms:

1. library doesn't have much to offer teens,
2. YA collection weak, & not as easy as JSLS library collection to navigate;
3. lighting & seating are uninviting, not cozy

Suggestions

1. better lighting and more comfortable seating.
2. genre-based book clubs,
3. more culturally inclusive books (minority authors),
4. computers and more resources for older kids
5. practical programs (finance & budgeting, college/career advice, interviewing etc);

Demographic data and trends

(source: US Census community survey, 2022)

Age of population: *percentage of residents under 18 increasing in both Wyo and WR*

1. Median Age: Wyo-46.5; WR-35.4 (both stable)
2. % under 18: Wyo-16.7; WR-23.1 (both up 3-4% since 2011)

Race: *residents identifying as Hispanic/Latino increasing in both Wyo and WR*

1. Wyo: 91.3% white; 2.5% black; 9.9% Hispanic/latino any race (2.8% in 2011)
2. W-R: 55.9% white (66.5% in 2011); 9.2% black, 42.8% hisp/lat (32% in 2022)

Household makeup: *more Wyo residents aging in their homes since 2011*

1. Wyo: 2.23 (avg hshld); 2.91 (avg family); w/1+<=18 (19.5%); w/1+>65(47.8%)
2. WR: 2.37 (avg hshld);2.89(avg family); w/1+<=18(38.7%); w/1+>65(20.8%)

Poverty: *poverty levels are dropping in WR*

1. Wyo: below 100% of poverty level: 4.3%; at or above 150%: 90.6% (stable since 2011)
2. W-R: below 100% of poverty level: 24.2% (2017: 33.3%); at or above 150%: 65.6% (2017: 57.3%)

Education: *a pronounced gap persists between Wyo and WR*

1. Wyo: <HS(2.1%); HS(24.1);some college(21.4); bachelors(28.9);advanced (23.5)
2. W-R:<HS(13.8%);HS(34.6);some college(14.7);bachelors(16.9);advanced(10.1)

Access to tech: *Wyo-WR digital divide is closing, but ~15% still without broadband*

1. With computer: Wyo (92.3%) (2017: 88.2%) ; W-R (93.6%) (2017: 83.3%)
2. With broadband: Wyo (87.2%) (2017-83.3%); W-R (84.1) (2017 68.1%)

Appendix 2: Wyomissing Public Library Staff SWOT Analysis

April 5, 2024

Strengths

- Staff – team work, welcoming, good customer service, sense of humor
- Programming – children and adult
- Knowledgeable staff
- Staff go the extra mile for all patrons
- Longevity with staff
- Presence in the community
 - Borough events
 - Highlands
- Building – beautiful
 - Big meeting room
 - Places to sit and read, study
- Trusted place/educated
- Seasoned employees

Weaknesses

- Understaffed
 - Finding materials checked out to patrons but on shelf
- Technology
 - Staff aren't tech savvy
 - Staff need to know how to do it
 - Jonathan offered to do 1 on 1 training
- Cumbersome system to borrow books from other libraries
- Parking
- We don't get together as a staff (staff meetings)
- Short staffed
 - Need extra desk person
 - Don't have a maintenance person
 - Dusting?
 - Light bulbs?
- Lack of funding

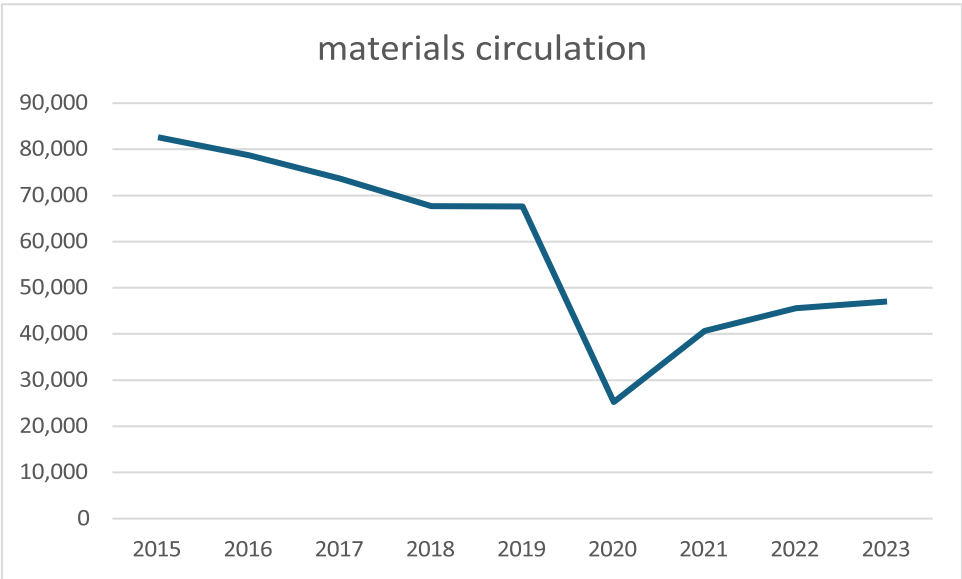
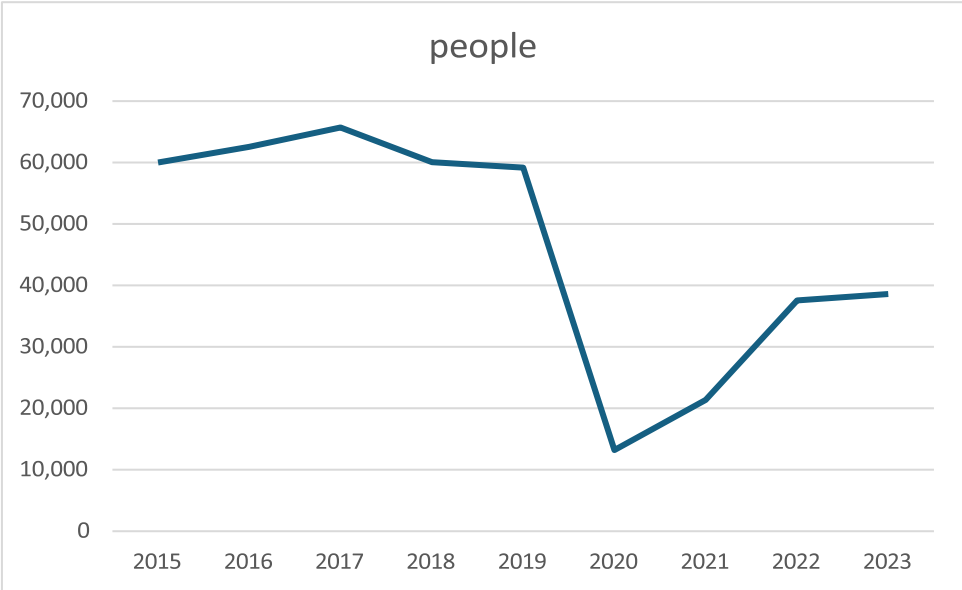
Opportunities

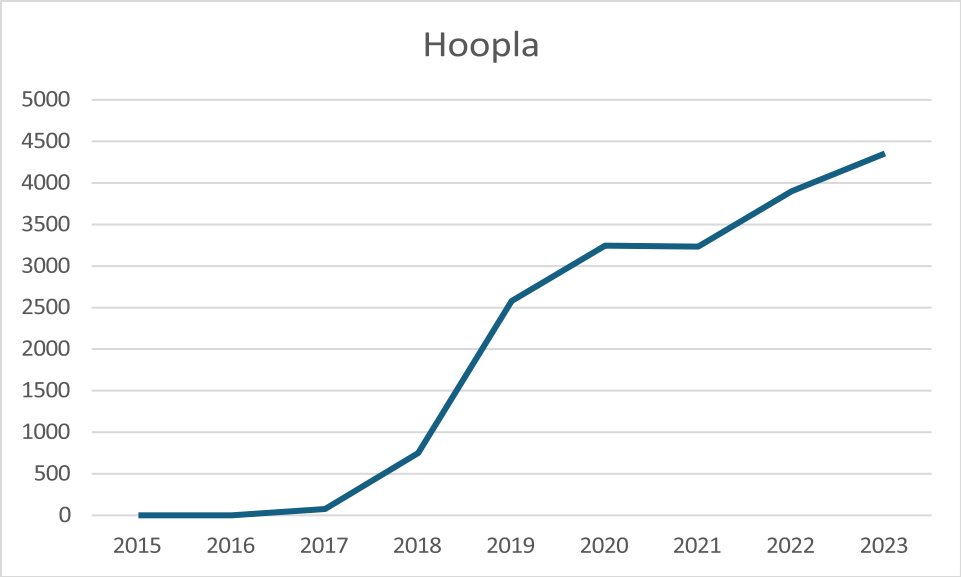
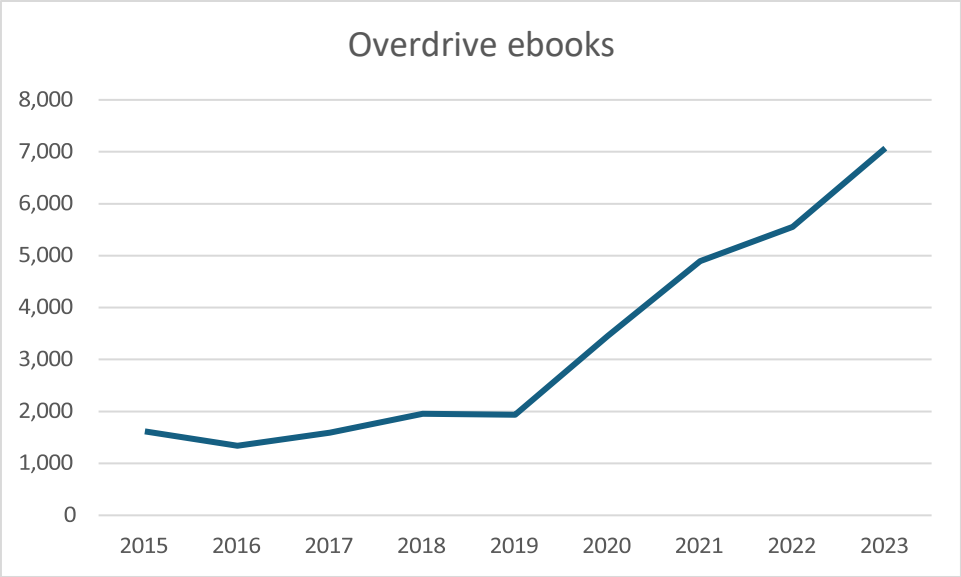
- Shelf read – shelf maintenance
- More programs
- Tidy up – organize/clean
- Utilize space more efficiently
- Self check out
 - Get more people to use it
 - Model behavior – show people how to use when 2 people are at the desk
- Turn space in Franklin Street entrance into welcoming space for kids with special needs
- Teen volunteers to help with things during the summer
- WASD summer reading books (display during the summer w/ info)
- More things at the Highlands
- Delivery for homebound patrons

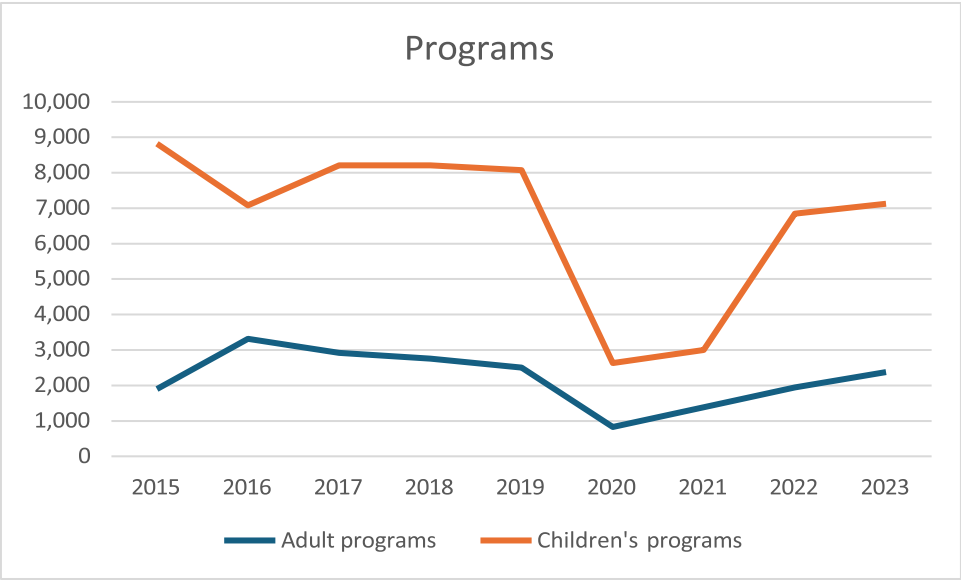
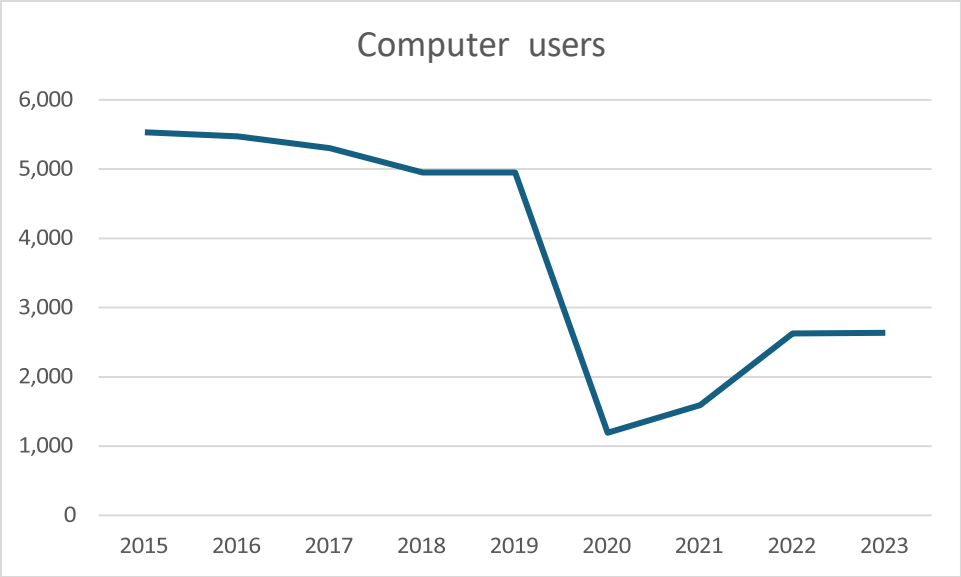
Threats

- Staff is older - subject to unforeseen events
- Wyomissing Borough funding
- Community more likely to use BCPL libraries because they are interconnected
- Patrons – library is missing community members who are between age 18-50 years old (very young/parents and senior use the library)
- Technology
- Communication
- Relevance in the community
- Public perception of library
- Lack of marketing budget

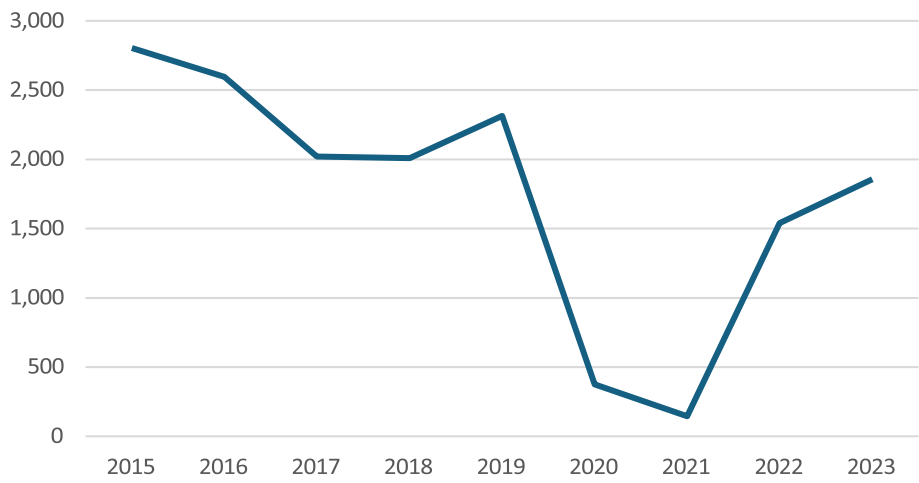
Appendix 3: Library User Statistics Charts (2015-2023)



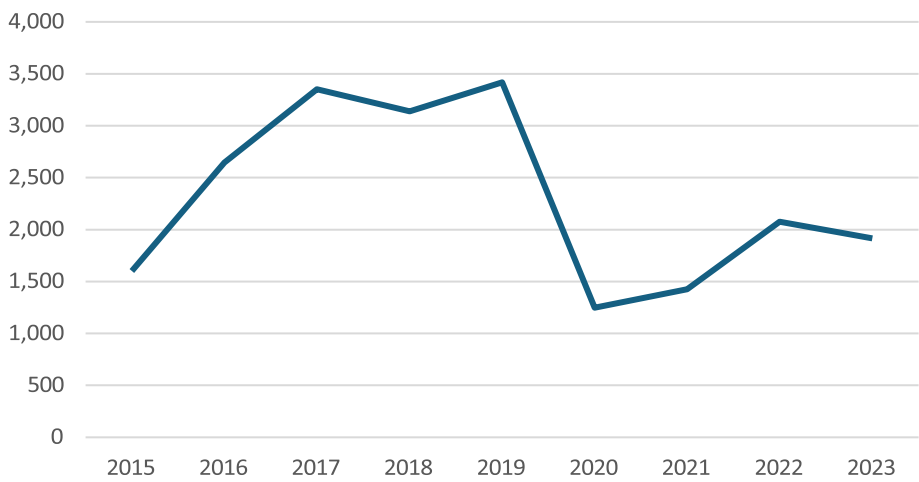




AWE Early Literacy stations



Wireless internet users



Wyomissing Public Library Investment Policy Statement

DRAFT

I. Introduction

The Wyomissing Public Library Finance Committee (hereafter referred to as the “Committee”) is responsible for overseeing and managing the investments of the Wyomissing Public Library. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the Library’s investment portfolio (the “Portfolio”).

II. Role of the Finance Committee

The Committee is acting in a fiduciary capacity with respect to the portfolio and is accountable to the Wyomissing Public Library and the Library’s Board of Trustees for overseeing the investment of all assets contained in the Portfolio.

A. This investment policy statement sets forth the investment objectives, distribution policy and investment guidelines that govern the activities of the Committee and any other parties to whom the Committee has delegated investment management responsibility for portfolio assets.

B. Policies contained in this statement are intended to provide guidelines, where necessary, for ensuring that the Portfolio’s investments are management consistent with the short-term and long-term financial goals of the Library.

C. The Committee will review this investment policy statement at least once per year. Changes to this investment policy statement can be made only by affirmation of a majority of the Committee and approval of the Board of Trustees. Written confirmation of the changes of the portfolio will be provided to all Committee members, Board of Trustees, and to any other parties hired in relation to the Portfolio as soon as thereafter as is practical.

D. With approval of the Board of Trustees, the Committee may appoint an investment advisor. If, appointed the advisor may have custody of the assets for which it is acting as advisor and shall make investment recommendations in keeping with policies specified by the Committee and the Investment Policy Statement. The Committee may remove its investment advisor and appoint a successor at any time without cause.

III. Investment objective and spending policy

A. The investments are to be invested with the objective of preserving the long-term, real purchasing power of the assets while providing a relatively predictable and growing stream of annual distributions in support of the Wyomissing Public Library.

B. Any distribution or withdrawal of the investments will require Board of Trustees approval. To protect the investment assets from eroding over time, distributions or withdrawals shall not exceed 2 percent of the investment asset total during any 6-month period, as calculated by the total value of those assets at the beginning of the 6-month period, except by 2/3 vote of board members.

IV. Portfolio Investment Policies

A. The committee expects that actual returns and return volatility may vary from expectations and return objectives across short periods of time. While the Committee wishes to retain flexibility with respect to making periodic changes to the Investments' allocations, it expects to do so only in the event of material changes to the investments and/or to the capital markets and investment classes in which the Portfolio invests.

B. Investment assets will be composed of two major components: an equity portion and a fixed income portion. The expected role of the equity investments will be to maximize the long-term growth of the Portfolio assets, while the role of the fixed assets investments will be as of fixed income investments that generate current income, provide for more stable periodic returns, and offer some protection against a prolonged decline in the market value of equity investments.

C. Cash investments will, under normal circumstances, only be considered as temporary Portfolio holdings and will be used for investment liquidity purposes.

E. Outlined below are the long-term strategic asset allocation guidelines determined by the Committee to be the most appropriate, given the Investments' long-term objectives. Portfolio assets will, under normal circumstances, be allocated across broad assets and sub-asset classes in accordance with the following guidelines:

Asset Allocation:

	<u>Target Allocation</u>	<u>Range</u>
Equity	60%	55%-65%
Fixed Income	40%	30%-50%
Cash	0%	0%-10%

Sub-Asset Class Target Allocation - Equity

	<u>Target Allocation</u>	<u>Range</u>
Large Cap Equity	50%	45%-55%
Mid/Small Cap Equity	35%	30%-40%
International Equity	15%	10%-20%

Sub-Asset Class Target Allocation – Fixed Income

	<u>Target Allocation</u>	<u>Range</u>
Intermediate Fixed Income	75%	70%-80%
Short-term Fixed Income	25%	20%-30%