



DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

PREPARED FOR:

Denver Public Library
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Denver, CO 80204

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DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS

INTRODUCTION

Corona Research is pleased to present this report of findings from focus groups held with Denver residents. The groups were conducted to assess perceptions of a new service delivery model under consideration at Denver Public Library (DPL). Focus groups were held in February and March 2005 and serve as an initial conversation with the community as the library charts its strategic direction.

BACKGROUND

Denver Public Library has experienced a challenging time in its history as the recent economic downturn has resulted in budget cuts for several years running. During this same time, Denver's population changed demographically, culturally and technologically. For example, the city's Hispanic population grew significantly between the 1990 and 2000 Census, and a majority of the city's foreign-born residents came from Mexico. These demographic changes have impacted Denver's neighborhoods, as 21 of 76 neighborhoods are now more than 50% Hispanic.¹ The lifestyles of Denver residents have also changed in recent years with the advent on online search engines, such as Google, and an increased demand for convenience and accessibility. These lifestyle changes have impacted the library as it has seen increased demand for web-based services and both English and Spanish language materials. The Library desires to remain a vital and vibrant component of the City's life. As a vital force, Denver Public Library believes it must be prepared to serve residents in new ways in terms of service delivery, collections, programs, and future locations.

PROJECT GOAL

The goal of the project was to hear directly from a diverse mix of Denver residents as an initial step in shaping the strategic direction of the Denver Public Library. That mix of people was to include communities that are currently underserved, communities that are growing and existing communities served by DPL. The focus groups sought to hear new voices and fresh perspectives not typically engaged in a process such as this. Finally, the groups sought to represent Denver's diverse demographic mix among the city's neighborhoods.

PROJECT APPROACH

A total of 10 focus groups were conducted at libraries across the city's four quadrants (northeast to southwest) at DPL libraries. This structured market research approach allowed for a thorough analysis of findings across focus groups. Seven of the ten groups were conducted in English, one was conducted bilingually for English and Spanish speakers, and two were conducted in Spanish.

¹ The Piton Foundation. Neighborhood Facts: A Data Book on the Status of Denver Neighborhoods from Census 2000, August 2004.

Recruitment and Schedule. Focus group participants were recruited using three strategies: random recruiting at libraries; with assistance of stakeholder organizations with connections to a diverse array of library user groups such as Western History researchers, young adults and monolingual Spanish speakers; and random recruiting via DPL Online. Stakeholders attended training sessions during which the project goals were reviewed as well as the desired number of recruits for the respective groups. The goal was to recruit 12 participants with the hope of seating 10 per group, as people sometimes cannot attend at the last minute.

Participants had to be 18 years of age or older and live in Denver. Only one participant per household was allowed to maximize the number of households represented. DPL staff, their family, the media and market researchers were not allowed to participate as per standard focus group recruiting practices. Lastly, participants were required to register in advance with DPL staff and provide background information on their age range, gender, library usage, whether or not they had children in the home, their self-identified race/ethnicity and contact information. This information was very useful in recruiting a diverse mix of participants.

The only exception to this recruiting strategy was for the focus group that addressed the needs of at-risk children and youth (Group 5). For that group, nonprofit and city staff that have expertise in child and youth development were invited to attend and speak on behalf of the families they serve. These participants were invited to attend and were not paid a stipend.

Group #	Date	Location	Participation
1	2/22/05	Central	11
2	2/23/05	Virginia Village	11
3	2/28/05	Park Hill	12
4	2/28/05	Decker	11
5	3/1/05	Blair-Caldwell	7
6	3/2/05	Bear Valley	11
7	3/3/05	Montbello	11
8	3/8/05	Ross-Barnum	12
9	3/9/05	Ford-Warren	10
10	3/10/05	Woodbury	11

Note: Group 8 was conducted bilingually, while Groups 9 and 10 were conducted in Spanish.

In total 107 people participated in the focus groups, with 100 participants in the community groups (Groups 1-4 and 6-10 on the list above). An analysis of their self-identified race/ethnicity revealed that 46% of the participants were White, 9% African American, 36% Hispanic, 2% Native American, 4% Asian or Pacific Islander and 3% Other, including Biracial. (See Appendix B.)

Snacks and Incentives. Also, in keeping with standard focus group recruiting practices, participants were provided with pizza and drinks during these dinnertime sessions. In addition, group attendees received fifty dollars in cash at the end of their two-hour focus group, except for members of Focus Group 5. Incentives were provided to encourage attendance and also to help ensure a broad representation within the target audiences.

Location. Focus groups were dispersed across the city’s four quadrants, with the goal of hearing from high growth areas, such as the area near Denver International Airport, as well as underserved Spanish speaking populations ranging the southwest to the northeast where significant population growth and demographic change has occurred.



- 1 Central Library
- 2 Virginia Village Branch
- 3 Park Hill Branch
- 4 Decker Branch
- 5 Blair-Caldwell Library
- 6 Bear Valley Branch
- 7 Montbello Branch
- 8 Ross-Barnum Branch
- 9 Ford-Warren Branch
- 10 Woodbury Branch

Focus Group Moderators. Karla Raines, Vice President of Corona Research, is an experienced facilitator and served as lead moderator and project manager. She assembled a team of three experienced facilitators that matched the language and demographics of the groups. All groups were video taped and audio taped for research and reporting purposes. A note taker and cameraperson supported each group.

Focus Group Discussion Guide and Other Materials. A standard set of questions was asked in all the groups, and translated into Spanish for those groups. The questions were modified slightly for the discussion of at-risk children and youth during the group held at Blair-Caldwell, as those participants were asked to speak about the needs of others rather than their own interests. A copy of the guide is included in Appendix C.

Participants also completed a short survey of basic background information such as age, family status, education, and library usage. Another survey was given to participants to identify their media habits and communication preferences. A copy of those surveys can be found in Appendix D.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

The focus groups began with a review of key demographic and lifestyle changes that have taken place in Denver since the 1990s. For example, only 23% of Denver households are families with children as of the early 21st Century.² At the same time that family composition has changed, lifestyles have changed through increased use of cell phones for text messaging and remote email access. Next, participants were informed of the changes in library usage that DPL has observed over the past several years, including increased demand for Spanish-language collections and specialized reference services.

Focus group participants were then asked to share their thoughts, feelings and perceptions about six library service models. Denver Public Library was interested in learning several things from the focus groups, including:

- How did participants respond to the new service delivery models?
- In general, who did they think would be the likely users of each service model? More specifically, which models did the focus group participants prefer for themselves and their families?
- How far were people willing to drive to use their preferred model?
- What were the biggest barriers to using the library?
- How would people respond to change?

The service models were presented with standard descriptions including text and visual images developed by DPL staff.

The key findings from the focus group research have been summarized and are presented on the following pages, followed by a set of recommendations.

² The Piton Foundation. Neighborhood Facts: A Data Book on the Status of Denver Neighborhoods from Census 2000, August 2004.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH

REACTIONS TO THE DIFFERENTIATED SERVICE MODELS

In general, focus group participants recognized whom the service models were designed to serve and understood their highlighted features.

REACTIONS TO THE CENTRAL LIBRARY MODEL

The breadth and depth of the collection, including Western History, and its research capacity with expert staff were pluses of this model, as are the physical presence and the pride residents feel in having a facility of this stature. Participants were mixed in their opinions about who would utilize this library. The “cultural hub” concept, with the addition of programs such as author events and films, received a positive response from central residents. Meanwhile residents outside the central Denver neighborhoods have traveled to the Central Library for a specific item they wanted, and did not want to wait for it to be sent to their local branch; but they did not self-identify as ones likely to partake in the cultural hub activities. A few parents and organizations bring children and youth to this library to expose them to its “wow factor.” Spanish speakers who have used this model had positive comments to share. While some participants identified families and children as users of this model, others noted the barriers for families and children, including transportation issues (i.e. lack of access to a car, parking challenges), and the misperception that this library is for older youth and adults, rather than children and families.

REACTIONS TO THE CONTEMPORARY LIBRARY MODEL

This service model received passionate responses, both positive and negative. For some Denver residents, this model represents a significant shift from the traditional, non-commercial environment that they value highly. It is important to remember that those individuals are not likely users of this model, as they do not demand the services that this model would emphasize. The same is true for low-income households and at-risk children that need a different service mix. In contrast, focus group participants were able to identify the Denver residents that would frequent this model and enjoy it. In many cases, those users would be new, having been attracted by the up-to-date format and offerings. There were a number of positive comments from Spanish speaking Hispanics as well.

The image of the woman with the shopping bag received some negative feedback when people weren’t able to associate the “retail” concept with the image. Interestingly, it received more negative feedback from women than men. The idea of coffee at the library sparked a debate all its own.

REACTIONS TO THE LEARNING AND LANGUAGE LIBRARY MODEL

This model was greatly preferred by the monolingual Spanish speakers and those whose English skills are at a basic level. For these Denver residents, this service model is truly a gateway to an improved quality of life for themselves and their children, especially the classes and computer access. As one Spanish speaker noted, *“If we as adults prepare ourselves, we are going to know how to prepare our children.”* Overall, the English speakers recognize the need for this model, especially given the city’s demographic changes over the past 15 years. In fact, several participants were excited about the idea

of going to these libraries to learn Spanish, thereby improving their own quality of life and ability to speak and build community with Spanish speakers.

Some participants were concerned that this specialized model promoted separation, and they didn't want to see segregation in this much valued community institution. In its efforts to truly serve the greater Denver metro area, the library is challenged to increase services for a growing, under-served population while helping those currently served to understand that distinct service models may in fact better distribute resources so they are made accessible to all Denver residents.

REACTIONS TO THE CLASSIC LIBRARY MODEL

People with young children reacted positively to this model as they saw it as the place that would teach their children how to use the library, a habit that they would have for a lifetime. This family friendly environment was seen as one in which "kids could be kids" and the parents would not have to worry if they were loud or took lots of books off the shelf and left a pile. Interestingly, this "kid friendly" environment seemed more important to English speakers than Spanish speakers in the groups.

People without children wondered what happened to the classic library, as they know it, the traditional neighborhood library with a separate adult section, research section and other features. In fact the majority of the members in the group held at the Virginia Village Branch Library wanted a branch library like they have now.

REACTIONS TO THE YOUTH INSPIRATION LIBRARY MODEL

This model was noted for its ability to build self-esteem in young children while helping them to learn and grow from an early age, all in an environment that is colorful and lively. Several concerns were raised that this model was too much like a daycare center, community center or recreation center – and not enough like a library. In addition, it did not seem distinct enough from the Classic Library and thoughts of merging the two models were offered in a few focus groups. Likely users include young children (0-12 years old approximately) coming with adults or on their own after school. The Youth Inspiration Library would not likely be attractive to teenagers or adults without children, and thus several participants noted that the name did not fit the model.

Community members identified a variety of possible partners for these libraries, including schools and recreation centers, while noting possible physical and cultural barriers to its use. Those barriers include a lack of understanding among adults from Mexico and other countries about the role of a library and the services it offers, as the role is different in the United States. People also wondered if programs would be offered at times that were accessible to working single parents and if help would be available to parents so that they, in turn, could assist their child's learning process.

REACTIONS TO DENVER LIBRARY ONLINE

This service delivery model had fairly broad appeal across the focus groups. Convenience of use and access to a world of library materials within and beyond DPL were highlights of this model. Likely users include a broad range of users, from middle school through adulthood, who will use this model for everything from extensive research to placing books and materials on hold to pick up after

work. The 24/7 availability, downloadable books and music, and research and homework resources were attractive features.

Participants expressed concern that this model would not be available to those without access to computers and the Internet. While access is available in the libraries, focus group participants believed it is not as well known as it needs to be among Denver households that don't have computer and Internet access, and increased access appears to be needed to meet the needs of those that would use it in the libraries. Additionally, its full functionality needs to be available in English and Spanish. While some senior citizens may not be interested in using this model, others expressed interest in learning at their own pace. Maybe the tech savvy teens could help.

LIKELY USERS

While the likely users of each service delivery model were highlighted above and are discussed in detail in later sections of this report, one finding related to likely users deserves mention here as it relates to the possible needs of Denver's Hispanic households. The focus groups conducted with Spanish speakers (including the bilingual and Spanish language groups), as well as the group held with child and youth development experts, give an indication of the need among Denver's growing Hispanic population, many of whom live with their children in the city's poor and at-risk neighborhoods (See Appendix E). Participants in these groups indicated a preference for Learning and Language Libraries and Classic Libraries as reflected in the comments shared in this report. This collective data provides an initial indication that those two models are appealing to their intended users, namely Hispanics seeking to improve their quality of life and families with children at home.

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

Library users currently travel to their preferred library or libraries on a regular basis, as is the case for many of the focus group participants. For example, a Spanish-speaking woman in the group held at Ford-Warren lives in Green Valley Ranch and drives to the Bear Valley Branch because of the customer service she receives at that particular branch. Other users drive to their favorite branches because they like the look and feel of it inside, and it has a larger array of preferred materials or because they like some variety.

Focus group participants indicated a willingness to drive two (2) to 20 miles (with an approximate average of five to 10 miles) to go to their preferred branch model. As such, a change in library model in their local branch may not impact their usage much, as some indicated they would transition to more online usage to select and request books and materials and manage their accounts.

BARRIERS TO USING DPL

Most of the significant barriers identified by the focus groups fell into three broad categories: infrastructure issues that are not dependent on a particular model; awareness of DPL; and library services and resources. Infrastructure-related barriers included the current hours of operation (i.e. daily, evening and weekend hours) and parking challenges throughout the library system. Focus group participants felt that many Denver residents were simply not aware of DPL services and programs and believed this lack of awareness and knowledge was a barrier. The breadth of customer

service issues, ranging from sufficient staffing to self-serve check out and shorter waits for requested books, were noted as they impact the user's experience while at the library.

Finally, the two groups conducted in Spanish revealed several important language and cultural barriers experienced by Denver's Hispanic population. Those barriers ranged from growing up in a culture in which libraries were for study and not for enjoyment; lack of awareness of DPL services coupled with some fear of government institutions; inability to obtain a library card; and inability of some women to leave the home and go to the library.

Many of these barriers could be overcome with increased public awareness and marketing to particular groups such as teenagers and parents. Other barriers, such as increased hours, more bilingual staff, increased parking and larger branches in high growth neighborhoods, require investment in library infrastructure and customer service. More detailed findings about barriers, as well as ideas about how to increase usage, can be found in a later section of this report.

THE PACE OF CHANGE

The preferred pace of change in a neighborhood branch library appears to be directly related to the users' satisfaction with their current library offerings. Individuals that prefer the current DPL service model are least likely to want change in their neighborhood over the next few months or years and would likely object if unwanted changes were perceived to be forced on them. This was especially true in Southeast Denver and in those areas indicating a preference for the Classic Library model, which some interpreted to be very similar if not identical to today's model. That does not mean they would oppose change in other neighborhoods as some indicated a willingness to support tax increases or other initiatives required to better meet the needs of Denver's Hispanic population.

Focus group participants that indicated a desire for immediate change were primarily the monolingual Spanish speakers and English speakers in the more diverse neighborhoods of Southwest, Northwest, and Northeast Denver. Detailed findings about recommended pace of change can be found in the individual reports for each focus group.

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

A few unexpected findings emerged from the focus group research and are presented below as they provide a segue to the recommendations offered by the consultant.

- Focus group participants shared their belief about the important role that libraries play as community places and in children's lives in particular.
- Participants revealed that their own values and beliefs about libraries are based in large part on past experiences, some stretching back 60 years.
- The discussions illustrated how language barriers and cultural differences impact library usage by Spanish speakers, most notably recent immigrants.
- Several English speakers expressed an interest in learning Spanish through DPL.
- Reactions to the new service model concept suggested that people need to be able to envision themselves using the new model in order to support the change in service model design.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Corona Research offers the following suggestions to the Denver Public Library of possible next steps in its conversations with the Denver community.

PHASE 1 – FURTHER DEVELOP THE MODELS BASED ON INPUT RECEIVED

Retool the descriptions and images of the models. The names, images and descriptions of the various models need fine-tuning, and possibly some additional test marketing, to ensure they are clearly understood by a variety of audiences. The descriptions focused on services that would be emphasized at a particular branch model and made little mention of the core services included in every model. As such, focus group participants were unclear about these basic service offerings. For example, the emphasis on the Central Library’s computer center left some people wondering if the branches would still have computers in the future.

The comments and questions from focus group participants provide some indication of the specific descriptions and images most in need of fine-tuning.

Central Library - The description and images of the Central Library made no reference to the availability of services and materials for children.

Contemporary Library – Some people had difficulty relating one of the images with the model. Upon seeing the images of the Contemporary Library a woman remarked, “*I can’t see myself putting on my boots and mini-skirt and going to it!*” In addition, the comparison to bookstores was confusing to some since people pay for materials at bookstores.

Learning and Language Library - This name caused some people to wonder which other language classes besides Spanish would be offered at these libraries and several groups suggested that Language and Learning Libraries would be ideal environments for English speakers to learn Spanish in classes and conversation groups. Denver Public Library may need to point out that this model has services for English speakers too, as some participants wondered if this branch model would be able to meet their basic library needs. Also, the availability of services for children requires additional detail. It was noted that Hispanic families tend to participate in activities as a family unit, thus requiring a complimentary array of children's services in this library model. As an example, concurrent children's activities need to be highlighted more, as parents participating in computer labs or English language classes will require this service.

Further clarification about service design for segmented audiences would be beneficial when describing the branch models in general and this model in particular. Perceptions that there are no English language services or that Hispanics “get their own library” will need to be addressed, as well as the perception among some people that library users are being somehow segregated from each other. For example, DPL will need to explain that libraries in neighborhoods with large Hispanic populations require some tailored services if Spanish speakers are to access the library’s services. DPL is encouraged to identify the most effective ways to communicate the positive features – and intentions – of the specialized service models.

Classic Library – Several participants suggested it should be named “Family Focused Library” or “Children’s Library” as those names better fit the images and service descriptions of this branch model.

Youth Inspiration Library – Focus group participants were confused by the name “youth” as the model seemed to be aimed at younger children, while the Classic Library appeared to serve the needs of youth more effectively. Additionally, the Classic Library and Youth Inspiration Library need further differentiation as focus group participants found their audiences to be quite similar. There was, however, strong support among parents, and individuals without children at home, to teach children to value books and the library at an early age.

Explore opportunities for addressing the needs of “traditional” users. These users were represented in the focus groups and pointed out that they did not see themselves portrayed in the service models, as they do not have children, are not interested in a retail concept facility, do not need to do research or study and are not going to drive downtown for all of their library needs. Some of these users would prefer that their branch library not change and believed the introduction of new service models might absorb resources that could otherwise fund the re-institution of lost hours and staffing since the budget cuts. DPL will need to address confusion around funding and consider ways to retain and even enhance services for traditional users while redesigning services for those currently underserved.

PHASE 2 - DEVELOP AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Consider an implementation plan that begins by addressing unmet need. There is a clear need for new service model designs to serve specific portions of the Denver population, and an indication that the need is not so great in some neighborhoods. The focus group participants who indicated a change was needed immediately – even yesterday – were those most in need of services due to language barriers and at-risk demographic characteristics. The areas that are happy with the current service delivery model do not require – or want – a rapid change, based upon what was indicated by those focus groups. One can make the case for a phased-in approach that puts resources into underserved neighborhoods, recognized by those residents and their fellow Denver residents across the city that have experienced significant demographic changes since 1990.

Examine and begin implementing enhancements to DPL Online that compliment and augment services in the new branch models. This service model was well received overall and could provide a backbone of service while other models are implemented across the city. Several focus group participants said that they use this model to find books, check them out for on-site pick up, and manage their accounts, including requesting renewals. As suggested in the focus groups, enhancing DPL Online for increased capacity and ease of use may mean library users would use this library if the branch near them were to be transformed into one of their least favorite service models. In essence, they could then customize their use of the branch library through increased use of this model.

Consider use of pilot studies. Focus groups also suggested that the library use pilots to test the service delivery models, much as it has done with the Schlessman Branch at Lowry. Pilot studies could build off the phased-in approach and offer feedback mechanisms for the library as both DPL and Denver residents adjust to the new service delivery model. DPL might consider a pilot study advisory committee to assist in monitoring usage and improvements once the new models have been implemented.

PHASE 3 - DEVELOP A COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The focus groups provided a snapshot of the future efforts required to communicate this new service delivery model to a diverse city. Participants held a strong belief that libraries should reflect a microcosm of the city.

Be prepared for general resistance to change. As was noted in a few focus groups, people do not like change in general. Some segments of Denver’s population will likely resist a change in their beloved DPL if they do not understand why it is needed, and that they will not lose much in the process. Rather than explain the new models as emphasizing some services and offering a minimum of the core, DPL is encouraged to communicate the new models as “and/both” solutions, not “either/or” options. One could expect that significant disapproval for the change in service design would come from those current library users who are satisfied with their services and have not heard a compelling case to change their favorite branch library. Assuming that these users are also likely voters and community meeting attendees, it will be important to engage their support for change.

Other areas of likely opposition from satisfied users of the traditional branch model will be in the area of new or enhanced educational services or activities that some perceive to be the responsibility of public entities such as school districts and recreation centers, or of private entities such as daycare centers. In this time of limited budgets and a slow economic recovery it will be important to emphasize partnerships and collaborations to maximize resources.

Make the case for the need to change. Denver Public Library will need to make background information available, such as the 1990-2000 Census comparison, which supports the need to change service models and let the community know that it will remain responsive to changing needs in the future. Likewise, this case statement should speak to how DPL will maximize its limited resources as it strives to meet growing demand for services while meeting the needs of a more diverse community. Additionally, if the library were to implement new service models in clusters, based on the local needs, it will be important for the local residents to understand each branch’s service model.

Develop a strategy to talk about different as “more and targeted” rather than “less and inequitable.” Denver residents may wonder how the models compare in terms of services and collections, with the underlying assumption and concern that their branch has fewer resources than others, when in fact, the way people actually use libraries indicates they don’t need the exact same resources. DPL has been gathering user information in its efforts to most effectively meet the needs of different customers. These findings will need to be conveyed as DPL explains why models have dissimilar service configurations as “different” may appear to be unequal, whether in the number of books in a collection or in the variety of programs offered at a particular branch.

PHASE 4 - RE-TEST THE CONCEPT WHILE BUILDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Conduct a second round of community input. Once the service models have been revised, an implementation plan developed, and a thoughtful communication strategy has been created, it will be time for a second round of community input on the service models. This next phase of community conversation could be conducted at the neighborhood level, with more detailed descriptions of the proposed service models for a cluster of branch libraries. It will also be important to highlight the enhanced services of the Central Library and Denver Public Library Online, as they provide a strong backbone of service to the community. These sessions would likely require substantial community outreach in some neighborhoods, especially those that are currently under-

served, to ensure a diverse mix of attendees. It may be important to leverage those focus group participants who expressed interest in staying apprised of future DPL initiatives. These sessions could be held across the city, starting with Denver's underserved Hispanic neighborhoods. As positive feedback is generated it can be shared with other neighborhoods so that by the time Southeast Denver is reached those residents will receive additional input on the need to change.

An alternative idea is to invite focus group participants back to review the new materials and confirm that the names, images and descriptions are, in fact, clearly understood by a diverse audience. The library could also preview its implementation plan ideas to determine if the plan is one that Denver residents will likely respond to positively. Invitations could be extended to focus group participants to come back for an evening session with light refreshments and no stipends. People may feel honored to assist the library with this important project. This step could be conducted before the larger neighborhood sessions described above.

Whichever approach is taken, it will be important to tailor it to ensure active participation among monolingual Spanish speakers.

CENTRAL LIBRARY MODEL



Highlighted Features

Western History

Book Collection

Experts

Computing Center

Cultural Programs

The Central Library model offers an in-depth and historical collection along with experts who know how to answer the most challenging reference questions.

The Central Library will remain the flagship library. It will hold the core collections and specialized in-depth reference and expert staff. Since it has the largest physical space, there is room for more depth in collections and specialized services. The Central Library is a cultural hub and features a variety of programs that draw people to downtown Denver, similar to the experience people have going to an art museum or play. The Central Library draws customers from as close as the downtown neighborhoods and as far away as other states and nations. The world class book collection along with rare research materials on the American West will be further enhanced with expert staff, more computers and exciting author and film programs.

Reactions to the Central Library Model

The breadth and depth of the collection, including Western History, and its research capacity with expert staff were pluses of this model, as are the physical presence and the pride residents feel in having a facility of this stature. Participants were mixed in their opinions about “who” would utilize this library. The “cultural hub” concept, with the addition of programs such as author events and films, received a positive response from central residents. While residents outside the central Denver neighborhoods have traveled to the Central Library for a specific item they wanted, and didn’t want to wait for it to arrive at their local branch, they did not self-identify as ones likely to partake in the cultural hub activities. A few parents and organizations bring children and youth to this library to expose them to its “wow factor.” Spanish speakers who have used this model had positive comments to share. While some participants identified families and children as users of this model, others noted the barriers for families and children, including transportation issues (i.e. lack of access to a car, parking challenges), and the misperception that this library is for older youth and adults, rather than children and families.

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

Members of the group held at the Central Library indicated that they already experience the model as described with the enhancements.

- *“I can already see the library like that. One person I know came from Nova Scotia for the History. I’m really impressed that people come here from all over the world to visit our library.”*
- *“Central Library has always been like this. We make a family day and we browse.”*
- *“I feel great. It’s free and that’s a bonus.”*
- *“Yeah, I’ve been really happy with where the Library has been going. We like the extra resources.”*
- *“This sounds awesome.”*

“Seems like it’s not going to change drastically,” noted a member of the group held at Decker. One member of the group held at Blair-Caldwell said, *“The ideas sound great,”* and another member of the same group noted that it is a *“sad commentary on our society today that it’s closed on Wednesday.”*

LIKELY USERS

Focus group participants identified a variety of Central Library users, with the most commonly recognized users being students, researchers, historians and people that live or work in the downtown area. Participants in the group held at the Central library identified 20-somethings to 40-somethings as likely users. *“It may not attract people in the bar scene, but a little more wholesome,”* noted a younger single man in the group held at Central. In contrast, the Ford-Warren group noted that *“our children - Latinos”* were likely to use this model.

Central Library users are envisioned to be professionals and “people and businesses downtown” as suggested by the Montbello group. *“The [Central Library] is more attractive to downtown crowd because of convenience. It could draw people from suburbs if you do lectures and this has things that other libraries don’t,”* suggested a participant in the group held at that library. *“[It] does appeal to more affluent people. It will meet a broad spectrum because it’s not as tailored to the neighborhoods. [It] has a draw,”* said a participant in the group held at Blair-Caldwell. Another participant in that group was concerned that, *“If you don’t come downtown on a regular basis – you aren’t going to come down.”*

Students, ranging in age from high school through college, were identified in seven of the 10 groups held across the city. Researchers, *“People who are looking for something very specialized; or something not studied in school”* (Woodbury, Montbello, Park Hill, and Decker) as well as historians are known to be users of the Central Library. *“That place is packed,”* said a member of the group held at Blair-Caldwell. *“We can find history on other cultures there,”* said a Spanish speaker at Woodbury. Other people that find themselves downtown, including the homeless, tourists and branch library users in search of something specific were also suggested as likely users of this library.

LIKELY NON-USERS

Participants had mixed opinions about usage by children and families. While some participants have had very positive experiences bringing children to the Central Library, others did not perceive it to be accessible, especially for lower-income households. A few regular users of the Central Library had positive comments about children's experiences there.

- *“It fun just to go down and look around – [it has the] wow effect [for kids]. When I take my children to the Central Library it is much more academic. They walk in and go ‘wow’ (wow factor), it’s way beyond what the kids are used to and it’s a good thing, it’s good to have the kids see people studying not just checking out books ... someplace that close...even the children’s area is more academic.”* (Mother of three that home schools her children and an attendee of the Bear Valley focus group)
- *“Diversity. You can go with family, friends or business partners and everyone can find what they need. It’s a family outing. Everybody can be together and enjoy being together in the same building.”* (English speaking father in the Ross-Barnum group)
- *“We take our kids there a couple of times a year to take a tour. It is such a phenomenal experience for them to see what other things out there. The 2nd graders like the statues and the computers that only children can use. The 4th graders go for the Colorado history and the old photos upstairs. The children’s area is separate so the kids feel safer.”* (DPS elementary school librarian in the Blair-Caldwell group)
- *“[The] Glenarm Recreation Center has an after-school program and provides transportation for our kids to the library a couple times a year. They meet people that work at the library and the kids will get more comfortable because they will be able to recognize someone when they go down there. Expose them. They really like it. They ask when will we go again?”* (Denver Parks & Recreation employee, Blair-Caldwell group)

While those participants noted the Central Library's appeal to children, other comments implied barriers to usage by children and low-income families. A father with two young children in the Bear Valley group said, *“Not necessarily families. I used to go a lot but since I’ve had kids I’ve gone once. Kinda thinking that families wouldn’t or don’t [use it] unless they live in proximity to it.”* A participant in the group held at the Central Library said, *“I don’t think it’s for kids; it’s not geared towards kids too.”*

A variety of positive opinions and perspectives were shared in the bilingual and Spanish language focus groups regarding the Central Library model and its new direction, with only four individuals sharing their direct experiences, observations and assumptions about this model as illustrated in the comments on the next page.

- *“We go the Central with our children. The older ones can find what they need, the younger ones can too. The whole family can go and it’s free. I like the order of things there. The children are taught to be quiet and not scream. I feel privileged.”* (Spanish speaking mother in the Woodbury group)

- *“What I notice is that there is an area for youth. Many young boys come to this library (Woodbury), but they only come to play, not to study. They use the library for entertainment. What I have noticed at Central is that they are a little older and go there to learn. In Mexico there is a museum called, ‘El Papalote.’ It’s for children and the signs say, ‘Touch, play and learn.’ I think that several models are good things.”* (Young Spanish-speaking man in the Woodbury group)
- *“It has more of everything and you can find things easier. I often call ahead of time, but I can feel certain that what I need will be there. I love to study there! It’s more ample and comfortable and quiet.”* (Mother of two young children in the Ford-Warren group)

A Latina that had not taken her children to this model shared concerns when she said,

- *“I haven’t gone because I have an infant and I probably would be thrown out! I would think that I could find cultural programs and especially for my older daughter. I haven’t gone also because of the language barrier and I feel that I might feel restrained.”* (Mother of two in the Woodbury group)

HIGHLIGHTED FEATURES

The highlighted features of this model – its book collection, Western History, experts, computing center and cultural programs – received overwhelming positive feedback from focus group participants as detailed below.

LIBRARY COLLECTION

The Central Library is *“the best for research purposes,”* said a participant in the group held at Ross-Barnum. He also mentioned that he contacts the library regularly for his research. Likewise, needs such as *“study[ing] and do[ing] research”* were identified in the Spanish-speaking group held at Ford-Warren.

This library is known for its *“extensive collection”* and ability to recommend books as noted a Decker group member. People doing research and looking for specialized research would have needs for the Central Library’s services and collections. Individuals with an interest in Western History were also recognized as having needs met by this model, as identified by groups from various neighborhoods ranging from Montbello to Virginia Village, Decker and Ross-Barnum. Art fans were also identified as beneficiaries of this model. *“People interested in the arts. You used to be able to check out paintings for three to four weeks at a time,”* noted an older man that attended the Decker group. Other comments and expectations shared about its collection are listed below.

- *“Everything! It’s a monster that knows everything.”* (Woodbury)
- *“It’s the ideal. If you can’t find what you need in other libraries, you can know that it will be at the Central – that makes it ideal.”* (Woodbury)
- *“Everything you ever expected.”* (Park Hill)

- *“Foreign-language books, not just Spanish ... only place in Denver [with this].”* (Decker)
- *“Go down to get references that you can’t get at branches or at university libraries.”* (Bear Valley)
- *“I’m thinking like the Library of Congress, all sorts of books and information and cultural programs.”* (Park Hill)
- *“[The name] Central Library is deceiving, the collection is so dispersed through out the branches, it’s not really centralized, it’s more de-centered if it is so dispersed through the system. May have to travel or wait if book isn’t there.”* (Park Hill)

This feature received the most comments, as revealed by the long list, and fewer thoughts and feelings were shared about the other features of the enhanced Central Library.

EXPERTS

Having expert staff at the Central Library was noted as a positive in a few groups.

- *“[The] positive that sticks in my mind is ‘expert staff.’ There again I go back into teaching arena. You want to have expert staff. Don’t want’ to hear, ‘I don’t really know.’ Only thing that appealed to me.”* (Montbello)
- *“Experts that can help them find exactly what they are looking for.”* (Woodbury)
- *“It feels good to me, because I can find help from experts.”* (Ross-Barnum)

WESTERN HISTORY

The Western History feature of this model received positive remarks from White participants in the groups, whose comments included *“I think it’s great with the Western History”* (Central) to *“Western History lets you go back and see how it [the area] started”* and provides an *“opportunity to collect rare books specifically on the history of the area that most of the universities might not have. [It is] a seat for cultural history of the area.”* (Bear Valley) In contrast, a Latina in the Bear Valley group wondered, *“How representative is the collection of the true cultural history? Does it include the development of the area in the African American, Hispanic, and Native American communities or is just texts on Western European history? Culturally too. I think that is important.”*

COMPUTING CENTER

A member of the Central Library focus group who noted, *“Usually you have a line,”* favored the expanded computing center. A member of the Decker group questioned the name when he said, *“I don’t know what ‘computing center’ means.”* He was confused and concerned about possible consolidation of all computers at the Central Library.

CULTURAL HUB

The idea of the Central Library as a cultural hub had the biggest appeal for those that live in the downtown area. In particular, movies and films, art shows, and local events such as Rotary Clubs were identified as possible attractions for Central Library focus group participants. Another noted, *“It would fill a niche for Internet cafes.”* Others envision this new cultural hub serving as a magnet to draw people downtown. *“I’d like to see expert conferences or discussions offered by the library, maybe the central library could help offer this throughout the area,”* suggested a participant in the Park Hill group. *“Families could come in to make a day of it because it’s close to the Museum. This would attract people to downtown,”* said a member of the group held at the Central Library. *“Hosting authors...that would be a big draw...cultural hub is a draw...”* stated a youth development expert in the Blair-Caldwell group. In contrast, none of the participants in the outlying neighborhoods – from northeast to southwest - identified this as a draw for themselves personally. Rather, they spoke of current barriers – parking and hours.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

These enhanced services would be provided in an environment that focus group participants described as quiet, providing lots of space to work and enjoyable to spend time in, as illustrated by the comments below.

- *“I love it. It is the flagship, and the architecture is beautiful.”* (Blair-Caldwell)
- *“[Users have] quietness and their own space... Do what they need to do.”* (Montbello)
- *“I like to hang out at the Central Library; it’s comfortable.”* (Ross-Barnum)
- *“It’s large and diverse with lots of space.”* (Ross-Barnum)
- *“Downtown location is great for activities.”* (Montbello)
- *“Wonderful, beautiful place. Thought it was great for the city. Get materials we need.”* (Montbello)
- *“Sucks. It is a resource. So are museums and other things. Built it for show. I go into this library and it looks like an empty mall. Book collection is put off to the side.”* (Montbello member that used to live in New York City)
- *“It is a special building, it’s nice for it to have its own special collection as different from the branch libraries it’s a nice dovetail there.”* (Bear Valley)

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

Users of the Central Library have a range of interests and needs. Several focus group participants noted that they visit the main library when they do not want to wait for a book to be delivered to their local branch library.

- “[*When I*] don’t want to wait for a book to be delivered to their branch. Sometimes I’ve driven down to central just to get a book ... I didn’t want to wait.” (Montbello)
- “*When I go to the Main it’s because they have materials there that I can’t find at the branches.*” (Virginia Village)
- “*When I’m in a hurry.*” (Decker)

BARRIERS

Focus group participants identified common barriers to using the Central Library, such as hours and parking. More specific barriers for Hispanics and low-income households include their inability to get a library card and transportation. This was of particular concern to the Blair-Caldwell focus group participants that work with at-risk children and youth in their nonprofit and city agencies.

- “*As far as us and the kids ... That’s a hard thing ... Activities that are down there...Can’t get the kids down there. Parents that are single, doing whatever they are doing in the household. They miss out. Wom...look at all this stuff you can get down there. Transportation and parking. I believe the only people going down there are older people, business people, people that are right there in that area besides adults that can drive and can go down there.*” (Elementary teacher that attended the group in Montbello)
- “*It’s beautiful, but how inviting does it look to them? Why would they go there? How inviting and accessible is it? Many of our families are not here with legal status. The families we serve our very suspicious of institutions. [There is] great concern for getting deported if they give their information to get a library card. That is a concern for many of our families.*” (Blair-Caldwell)
- “*Even the information we gather at our organization (Bright Beginnings)...there is a fear of ‘why do you need my information, what’s it being used for?’*” (Blair-Caldwell)
- “*Getting people there, if they don’t have transportation. What about driving downtown and traffic?*” (Blair-Caldwell)

Additional findings related to barriers are addressed in more detail in a later section.

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

The discussion revealed two unexpected findings. First, there was some concern about the Central Library becoming more attractive to the homeless. This was a particular concern to two members of the group held at Decker, who said, “*If they enhance the services downtown (i.e., more computers and comfy chairs), you’ll attract more homeless.*” Secondly, if the Central Library wants to attract more children and families it will need to modify the description of this enhanced model. As pointed out by a member of the group held at Bear Valley, children are neither mentioned in the description nor are they pictured in the images of this model.

CONTEMPORARY LIBRARY MODEL



Highlighted Features

- Stacks of new books and A/V
- Comfortable Seating
- Wireless access for your laptop
- Express check out
- Coffee

Contemporary Libraries are for customers who see the Library as a place to check out lots and lots of materials, especially the newest and most popular.

Contemporary libraries could have a similar look and feel to a bookstore with their primary emphasis on merchandized, face-out, multiple copies of bestselling books and A/V, comfortable seating, Wi-Fi and coffee. While children's collections are still highlighted as a strong part of the overall circulation, adult materials may have more emphasis at this branch than at others. Quick visits, express services and self-serve options are being discussed for these branches. While a library model, such as the Contemporary Library, may feature or highlight certain services, all libraries will have at least some adult books, audiovisual materials, children's materials and computers.

Reactions to the Contemporary Library Model

This service model received passionate responses, both positive and negative. For some Denver residents, this model represents a significant shift from the traditional, non-commercial environment that they value highly. It is important to remember that those individuals are not likely users of this model, as they do not demand the services that this model would emphasize. The same is true for low-income households and at-risk children that need a different service mix. In contrast, focus group participants were able to identify the Denver residents that would frequent this model and enjoy it. In many cases, those users would be new, having been attracted by the up-to-date format and offerings. There were a number of positive comments from Spanish speaking Hispanics as well.

The image of the woman with the shopping bag received some negative feedback when people weren't able to associate the "retail" concept with the image. Interestingly, it received more negative feedback from women than men. The idea of coffee at the library sparked a debate all its own.

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

The overall impressions of this model reflected those in support of this new service delivery model and those for whom it doesn't meet their needs. Overall, the participants in the group held at the Central Library liked this model, especially for its more *"recreational use."* As one participant stated, *"It's a very good lay out, it's Barnes & Noble-ish kind of feel, open and relaxed. I see a lot of people hanging out. There are a lot of windows and sun."* Others in that group said it *"was good"* and *"I like it."* The mother of a school-age student in the Virginia Village group said, *"I love it. Because I went to Schlessman on opening day and my jaw dropped. It's like a bookstore. I absolutely loved it."* A retiree in the group held at Park Hill noted, *"It sounds like Schlessman, I love it but you can't get a parking spot because everyone else loves it too."* Another member of the group held at the Park Hill branch summed it up by saying, *"It's fast and quick, you can get in and out if you don't want to sit around."*

Comments about this model's relevance to Denver's changing demographic and appeal to new users are listed below.

- *"When you look at the demographics – 23% have children - it makes sense to have more offerings that appeal to adults."* (Early childhood expert in the Blair-Caldwell group)
- *"I go to bookstores. I pass by this library almost every day. Had I known it was more like a bookstore, I would have probably have stopped and used it [for myself]. If it encourages people to read and check out book, I think we should have that option."* (Parks & Recreation employee in the Blair-Caldwell)
- *"If it makes it more fun or a little bit easier for kids to come in, middle school age, it might be an asset to a community, because they don't normally even use a library."* (Youth development professional in the Blair-Caldwell group)
- *"I like it. It appeals to the college crowd and it appeals to the business masses because a lot of people come and go. If you need to research something you have wireless access. Like comfortable atmosphere. A lot of people are doing their research at Starbucks. If you could have that feel and the resource. Expect to find more technical stuff, like class materials, business research materials and wireless access."* (Father of young son in the Montbello group)
- *"[I] Like it. Would probably frequent the library more often if they had this availability. It wouldn't be a place where I would probably take my child. Instead of just checking something out and leaving maybe [I would] take my laptop and stay."* (Mother of teenager in the Montbello group)
- *"As a parent it's nice that everything is there because the kids are always taking off in 10 different directions when we get to the library - express checkout, new books, DVDs at Bear Valley."* (Bear Valley father)

This model's comparison to a bookstore caused some confusion. *"I like the Contemporary. It probably offers more current books and materials. I like the way it looks. I like the way they display things. Although, I guess sometimes one may wonder if the books can be checked out or if they are for sale,"*

wondered a married Latina with no children at home and participant in the Ford-Warren group. Two other participants expressed similar confusion. “*I don’t understand are they selling books?*” asked a member of the group held at the Central Library. A participant in the group held at Ross-Barnum wondered, “*Is it free? Or is it a bookstore where you buy books?*”

LIKELY USERS

Focus groups across the city, from Woodbury and Montbello to Bear Valley, identified a variety of Contemporary Library users, with the most commonly recognized users being adults, including those that might not typically frequent a library today. This was the preferred branch model of the majority of the participants in the group held at the Central Library. The groups envisioned the Contemporary Library would be frequented by young adults (20 to 30 year olds), high school students, middle school students, “*average adults*” and seniors. Seven members of the group held in Montbello agreed that the Contemporary Library would “*attract folks that otherwise would not go.*” “[*This model*] *brings people in but not for the traditional reasons people come to the library,*” said a member in the group held at Park Hill. Some of those adults may be coming for continuing education as envisioned by a participant in Montbello, “*In today’s day and age...it is probably more focused on the average adult...than on children. You are looking at continuing-ed. Whether you’re a teacher or professional.*”

“When I saw this I thought good, my husband would actually go to the library with us. [It] accommodates more of a variety of people.” (Home school mother and frequent library user in the Montbello group)

These comments speak to the changing lifestyles that the library has observed as it identified these possible models. “*People expect to find comfort...look for convenience, getting what they need to get done and move on*” as described by a participant in the group at the Montbello library. While adults may be attracted to the continuing opportunities to learn as identified in the group held in Montbello, “*tweeners’ and high schoolers will come to these libraries in part to get the music,*” as noted a man that works with youth of all ages at a local recreation center. A single woman in the Bear Valley group suggested that teenagers and college students would be attracted to this model since “*they’re getting trendy with their coffee and books.*” This line of thought was echoed by a member of the group held at Virginia Village, “*I think it appeals to the younger population. The wireless access and the express check out. Some people just want to get in and out of the library, they don’t want to stay.*”

Adult users may be busy professionals (Central, Decker), people who work from home (Central), or small business owners that have a home office (Bear Valley). They are also likely to be middle class and upper middle class families in Lowry neighborhood (Blair-Caldwell) and people who want to find new books (Central).

The reader may be wondering, what about Spanish speaking and bilingual Hispanics? What kind of feedback did they provide? Overall, the feedback from the Spanish and bilingual Hispanics in the groups held at Ford-Warren and Woodbury was positive, revealing that this model may be valuable in their communities as well. Participants in the group at the Woodbury Branch Library said that “*everyone*” would use this library when asked by the moderator.

- *“To get a job, you have everything via Internet. I like technology a lot that’s why I like this one.”* (Married Latino with young children)
- *“It looks very interesting. I like the Internet connectivity. This is good.”* (Latina with school-age children)
- *“I would like this model very much for my daughters. They’re actually my nieces, but I call them my daughters. I could take them so they can use the library and I could do my work on my laptop in the meantime. And, I love the idea of comfortable seats!”* (Latina with school-age children and teens)
- *“One could be there with pleasure. We could enjoy the moment to read. We would go more often.”* (Latino with two young children)
- *“I like the way they are displayed. Usually you can’t see the books very easily. This is more attractive and gets your attention to read them.”* (Latina with school age children)
- *“The latest things that have been released.”* (Latino with two children)

Other comments reflect the diversity of need within the Hispanic community in Denver, when compared to the comments above.

- *“Too noisy. This is not good for studying.”* (Single Latino)
- *“This is certainly in the right direction in terms of the Internet, but I don’t think most Latinos have the resources to buy a laptop. We need PCs available to us. Yes, this one is technologically advanced, but it is out of our reach.”* (Single Latino)

There was recognition that the Contemporary Library model was geared toward adults and older youth, with less emphasis on children. As such, participants had mixed opinions about usage by children as illustrated in the table below.

Is the Contemporary Model “Kid Friendly”?

Yes	No
<i>“Comfort that they (kids) can find something that’s not attached to a television.” (Mother in the Bear Valley group)</i>	<i>“Seems like kids are being left out, doesn’t seem right for a public library, but as a single person I love it.” (Single man in the group at Bear Valley Branch Library)</i>
<i>“It’s great for children; there is plenty of places to sit and the express check out services.” (Park Hill)</i>	<i>“I don’t know if I had kids and this was my closest library...if I’d want to bring my kids here. I don’t think it would be inviting for children.” (Decker)</i>
<i>“A combo seems to be there of adult and kid enjoyment.” (Bear Valley)</i>	<i>“Doesn’t seem kid friendly. Want kids to go ... be learning.” (Montbello)</i>
	<i>“As a home school mom it just doesn’t seem kid friendly. Sure I don’t want my kids running around and making noise ... I want it to be a place where for them to grow up and enjoy a library and to go to and understand we are learning from this and to not feel that this isn’t for me.” (Mother in the Montbello group)</i>

The Montbello group concluded that the Contemporary Library *“doesn’t meet the needs of the masses. Most of us have children, did not look to me like contemporary would meet the needs of the children. Love the contemporary ...add a children’s area.”* This comment speaks to the inherent challenge in changing from a standard branch library concept to one with multiple models designed for different user groups.

This challenge is also reflected in comments made by the youth development professionals that gathered for a discussion of needs of at-risk children, youth and their families. While the participants who work with older youth (middle school and high school) thought this model would be more attractive to the youth they serve, as noted in comments above, those who work with young children and their families were concerned that this model would not do enough to teach children and their parents about the value of books and the role that libraries can play in a person’s life. These professionals work extensively with low-income communities and immigrants for whom the library is a foreign concept. Their comments are listed below.

- *“It’s a way to get them in the door, that’s not a bad thing, at least they are hanging out at libraries, could be hanging out at worse places...but does it get them or Mom and Dad in the door?”*
- *“I use this library a lot (Schlessman). As a children’s librarian, this library is annoying to me because the children’s library is back around the corner and it’s really tiny and all the comfortable chairs are out in the adult area and all the books that face out are for*

adults. The whole thing is adult, adult, adult; it's not kid friendly. Absolutely jammed with kids. Libraries are becoming a drop off point [until Mom and Dad get off work]."

- *"It's too book store-y – it's all organized by subject and they aren't learning how to use a library properly. It's not a library any longer, it's a book store."*
- *"Some kids don't even know what a book store is. I had a child from my program ask me where they could get the latest Harry Potter book, I asked if they went to the book store and they said that Wal-Mart didn't have it."*
- *"Our kids need to know how to open the book, how to treat a book."*
- *"Needs quiet cozy corners – the librarian is supposed to 'schuss' you."*
- *"Parents are working [in neighborhoods like Cole]. Having the luxury of reading a book on the Top 10 List is a luxury."*

Upon reflection, these comments validate the need for different models for different users, such as recent immigrants with language barriers and no library experience and middle class families who grew up with libraries in the United States. The focus group research also reveals other likely non-users of this model are described below.

LIKELY NON-USERS

Participants whose needs are being met by the current "traditional" library branch model are not likely users of the Contemporary Library model, whether they are in their 20s or 70s. Some participants were self-identified as not likely users of this model. A member of the group held at the Park Hill Branch had mixed feelings and said, *"I'd go to the coffee shop not the library."* Similarly, a participant in the group held in Montbello said, *"If I want that I'll go to Barnes & Noble."* A few members of the group held at the Decker Branch Library shared their concerns about a changing emphasis from a traditional branch library.

- *"I don't like the idea of losing the feel of a library. It's a very special place. I don't get that going to a bookstore." (Decker)*
- *"Schlessman doesn't seem like a library anymore. It is overloaded with DVDs, CDs and videos and only bestsellers. The novelty might wear off." (Decker)*
- *"There is an overemphasis on technology. Doesn't appeal to me or I don't think it would appeal to families either." (Retiree in the Decker group)*

HIGHLIGHTED FEATURES

Of the six highlighted features of this service model, a few generated lively commentary while express check out elicited less discussion as detailed in this section.

STACKS OF NEW BOOKS AND A/V

This feature received the most comments, as revealed by the long list, and fewer thoughts and feelings were shared about the other features of the enhanced Central Library.

- *“You can go in and go out. It’s easy access like Barnes & Noble.”* (Central) and *“Quick access to popular materials.”* (Central)
- *“This sounds awesome because I do well with displays. It’s much easier than looking for it in the stacks.* (Central) and *“[This is] easy – not overwhelming to look for things [on a table versus in the stacks].”* (Mom in the group at Bear Valley)
- *“The latest and greatest in enough volume that you could walk out with it.”* (Bear Valley)
- *“The audio visual aspect might appeal to the younger groups.”* (Virginia Village)
- *“[Youth would like] music and DVD’s.”* (Blair-Caldwell)
- *“As much as I like having the DVD’s they should get rid of them, it’s distracting.”* (Single man in Bear Valley group)
- *“Latest releases, more media, comfortable.”* (Montbello)

COMFORTABLE SEATING

Focus group participants are also looking forward to more comfortable seating, as emphasized in this service model. They are expecting to *find “plenty of seating, so you can sit down and look at the books (Bear Valley)”* in nice, comfortable chairs (Central, Ross-Barnum).

WIRELESS ACCESS FOR YOUR LAPTOP

Wireless Internet access was very attractive to several participants in the focus groups held in the Central, Park Hill, Decker and Montbello libraries. One of the most attractive elements of this feature is that it would be free. It would also allow people to search the web, utilize DPL Online and save files directly to their computers, thus saving time when researching or writing a paper.

- *“I especially like the wireless access.”* (Two participants at Central)
- *“Wireless is huge – kids need that access.”* (Park Hill)
- *“Would be a big service. It would alleviate the use of computers [at the library].”* (Decker)
- *“You could scan things into your own computer.”* (Decker)

A participant in the group at the Park Hill Branch Library reminded everyone, *“It’s useless unless you are rich enough to have a laptop.”*

EXPRESS CHECK-OUT SERVICES

The express checkout services received positive comments in conjunction with the other services. A member of the focus group held at Bear Valley noted appreciation for this service.

COFFEE

Some people would like having it in the library and others would not as outlined in the table below.

Should Denver Public Library feature coffee in the Contemporary Library?

Point	Counterpoint
<i>"I'd like snacks, something to drink."</i> (Central)	<i>"I have one complaint about Schlessman. People can eat there. It's amazing that it's allowed. I see kids eating and licking their fingers and using the computers."</i> (Father of teenager in Virginia Village group)
<i>"I'd like coffee."</i> (Central, Bear Valley)	<i>"At Schlessman, books are stained."</i> (Older man in Virginia Village Group)
<i>"I would spend more time there because of coffee. I could hang out there for hours. I can see that people who get there by 11 am wouldn't have a place to sit."</i> (Decker)	<i>"People are not good with coffee, they might spill it, as a volunteer at the library I can see coffee being a disaster."</i> (Park Hill retiree)
	<i>"There is something wrong with having a drink the in the library. It just feels wrong."</i> (Bear Valley Mom)

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

These enhanced services would be provided in an environment that focus group participants described as one that is comfortable and a fun place to hang out.

- *"It's new and refreshing."* (Park Hill)
- *"It would have a social atmosphere with a so-called 'hipness'."* (Ross-Barnum)
- *"Quick paced and the latest updated kind of library."* (Ross-Barnum)
- *"Fun place to hang out; meet up with friends and family."* (Central)
- *"No kids, to relax and hang out."* (Central)
- *"[At Schlessman] I've never had to wait for a computer and the children's section is good enough."* (Central)

- *“It’s aesthetically pleasing if you are just walking around but it’s like Christmas rush, it’s over stimulating and you can’t get any work done.”* (Park Hill)
- *“I like the displays. I always came for the kids but now that [Bear Valley has an outward facing display] that is right there out front I check more books out now than I did before.”* (Two Mothers in the Bear Valley group)
- *“I’d use it more recreationally, I’m not doing research.”* (Central)

An environment that is designed for “customers who see the library as a place to check out lots and lots of materials” is not necessarily conducive to research or study.

- *“The atmosphere encourages socializing, but if you are trying to study or work it could be distracting, the atmosphere is not going to be the same.”* (Park Hill)
- *“Noise. There wasn’t a place where you could sit and be quiet.”* (Central)
- *“There isn’t really any good workspaces.”* (Park Hill)

BARRIERS

Possible barriers to using this library would include not being able to find parking because it is so popular (i.e. Schlessman), not owning a laptop (or the misunderstanding that you might need one in this model) or thinking that this model is only for people without children, middle-to-high income groups.

Additional findings related to barriers are addressed in more detail in a later section.

POSSIBLE MISPERCEPTIONS OF THIS MODEL

Focus group participants revealed a few possible misperceptions of this model as identified during the discussion held at the Montbello Branch Library. These expectations indicate that the model’s description needs to be modified so as to portray the correct image of the Contemporary Library model.

I’m expecting ...

- Experts
- Research
- Quietness. More controlled. Quiet. Get done, move on
- Technical stuff. Business research
- More space

“I like it, I’d love to spend an afternoon in a quiet area, I could spend a whole afternoon in Barnes & Noble and this would have a similar feel. It’s very attractive to me.” (Single woman in the group held at Bear Valley)

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

The discussion revealed a few unexpected findings. This model elicited a concern about “class segregation” in the focus group held in Montbello. One participant likened it to a market place and expressed his concerns as follows. *“When I see this I see the market place. I thought that libraries were supposed to be public libraries, which meant the public can use them. I see, I’m not objecting to it, but I see B&N and Starbucks. Why have them? You already have them. You go there and you don’t see kids, don’t see all people. Basically what you see very often is segregation - class segregation, racial segregation. Why use a marketplace model for a public library? I can understand that with evolving needs those are things that people might want.”*

LEARNING AND LANGUAGE LIBRARY MODEL



Highlighted Features

- Spanish and English Collections
- English Language Classes
- GED and Computer Instruction
- Children's Activities
- After Hours Computer Labs

Learning and Language Libraries are for customers who see the Library as a gateway to improved quality of life with bilingual classes, collections and staff.

These Libraries would emphasize Spanish language materials, adult nonfiction and children's books aimed at improving the individual and family's quality of life. In addition, a strong emphasis on adult programming especially in the areas of computer instruction, English language acquisition and completing the GED may create a great deal of early evening activity. Spanish-speaking staff would be recruited to support these collections and services. An option for this branch grouping may be after hour's computer labs for additional access to computing.

Reactions to the Learning and Language Library Model

This model was greatly preferred by the monolingual Spanish speakers and those whose English skills are at more of a basic level. For these Denver residents, this service model is truly a gateway to an improved quality of life for themselves and their children, especially the classes and computer access. As one Spanish speaker noted, "If we as adults prepare ourselves, we are going to know how to prepare our children." Overall, the English speakers recognize the need for this model, especially given the city's demographic changes over the past 15 years. In fact, several participants were excited about the idea of using these models to learn Spanish, thereby improving their own quality of life and ability to speak and build community with Spanish speakers.

Some participants were concerned that this specialized model promoted separation, and they didn't want to see segregation in this much valued community institution. In its efforts to truly serve all Denver residents, the library is challenged to increase services for a growing, underserved population while helping those currently served to understand that distinct service models might in fact better distribute resources to ensure access for all Denver residents

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

The Learning and Language Library model received very positive feedback across the city from Spanish and English speakers alike. Some concerns were raised about specialized libraries and possible segregation by class or language and are addressed later in this section.

Overall, Denver residents recognize the significant demographic change that the city has experienced over the past 15 years, as reflected in the Census data shared with the group. Demographics make the case for change as illustrated by the comments shared during the focus groups.

- *“If Denver population is 54% Hispanic and only 8% have a college degree I think the City of Denver has a duty to serve people and to build up a literate population that is interested in the library and will support it [the library].”* (Central)
- *“From the demographics that you presented it looks like it would be in demand.”* (Bear Valley)
- *“I think it would be helpful since we already have got over 50% of the Spanish in the community.”* (Montbello)
- *“According to the statistics you shared with us, this model would be the perfect one for the Hispanics who are the largest group.”* (Latina in Woodbury group)

Two participants cautioned that Denver Public Library will need to remain current as demographic changes continue at the neighborhood level. A manager with the Head Start program said, *“Neighborhoods are changing very quickly, what works one year doesn’t work the next, how would you keep up with and change with the neighborhood; we have to do annual assessments.”*

Recognizing the importance of catching up with the increase in Denver’s Hispanic population and the large number of recent immigrants who have come from Mexico, several participants in the English language groups confirmed the need for this type of model.

- *“Now, I would support a tax-increase for this because of what is happening in Denver County. This type of branch would be necessary if they would use it.”* (Older man in Virginia Village)
- *“This type of library is exactly what we need in Denver, especially in the minority areas to increase participation and encourage participation of children. Get them into a library. This attracts kids, attracts parents that need to get involved with their kids in a learning situation. Tremendous addition.”* (Older man in Park Hill)
- *“I’m a bilingual kindergarten teacher; it is definitely something very exciting for me to see in the neighborhoods I work in. Very exciting for the kids. Already the book mobile comes by our school ... and the kids use it a lot and the parents are interested too.”* (Mother in Bear Valley)

- *“I think it is great. It would teach us a lot of things ... how to get along better with each other. I would really like to see this happen.”* (Single man in Bear Valley)

Hispanic participants were especially excited about this new service model.

- *“This one interests me more than the [Contemporary] model because it offers more learning programs to our community, like the courses in Spanish and English, GED, computer usage. This is more interesting and better.”* (Mother of two young children in Woodbury)
- *“This gives priority to the community. We need more education.”* (Mother of two young children in Woodbury)

Woodbury Focus Group Moderator: *How do you feel about this model?*

Young single man: *Like we are important, and that they are thinking about our community.*

This model was designed with the goal of improving quality of life for individuals and families in Denver. That underlying principle was well understood and recognized as important.

- *“Families that have moved here from Mexico for a better life, they can come to improve their language for a better job and help get their foot in the door for something they might not otherwise be able to do.”* (Older man in Park Hill)
- *“Opportunity for growth. Opportunity to better their lives. To better their families lives. Opportunity to be in a safe, clean environment.”* (Married man in Montbello)
- *“I think this is a great idea. Kids need this because we are all better off as a community if children are better educated.”* (Decker)
- *“This is especially needed by recent immigrants and bilingual children.”* (Ross-Barnum)

Ford-Warren Focus Group Moderator: *What do you feel about this service delivery model?*

Mother of teenager: *We would love it!*

Group: *Yes!*

Mother of two young children: *I think it will serve our children best.*

Married woman without children: *Once you have your GED, you can pursue a career.*

Mother of elementary age daughter: *We would have a place to go.*

Father of teenager: *We are just stuck in our homes and I would love to get out and go to one like this! Learn to use the Internet!*

LIKELY USERS

This model was the preferred model of focus group participants who were monolingual Spanish speakers and those whose English skills were more basic, as they saw it meeting their needs and those of their families. They recognized that Learning and Language Libraries would draw children, youth and adults to a positive, safe place where all could learn and grow.

Members of the focus group held in Park Hill recognized the importance of getting children involved with reading early. This model is envisioned as bridging “*the gap between parents and kids, especially where education is involved,*” as noted another member of that group.

- *“It’s proactive with kids and parents, you could show the differences between various languages and get kids excited, and their enthusiasm will bring the parents in.”* (Park Hill)
- *“In Spanish families they often can’t help with reading, so this would give parents and kids an opportunity to learn together.”* (Park Hill)

Spanish speakers in the group held at the Woodbury Branch Library shared their own perspectives on this issue.

- *“This would help change the stereotype of our people. People think that we are dirty, lazy and call us things I can’t repeat. I have lived here a long time and when you go to public schools you find out about a lot of things. We are the ones that dropout early. This would give our people the chance to study so as not to dropout or if they do dropout, they could continue studying like getting the GED.”* (Single Latina)
- *“Sometimes it’s very hard. Kids don’t speak enough English and it seems overwhelming, or they don’t have support, or their parents can’t help them. [This would be] a place to come to learn and find help.”* (Single Latino)
- *“We need help for our children.”* (Non-user)

Students from middle school years through college were identified as users of this service model in four of the groups. In addition, it was identified as one that could help address the high dropout rate among Hispanic high school students in Denver and would serve low-income and immigrant communities especially well.

- *“Kids from bilingual or Spanish speaking families – kids are learning the language in school but parents don’t so you see it in their homework (because the parents can’t help them) and a lot of those kids end up in special classes.”* (Park Hill)
- *“I think this would be inviting to school drop outs. They might feel more comfortable here than in school.”* (Decker)

This library was likened to *“an entry point to information and learning English”* for new immigrants (Blair-Caldwell). Beginner to intermediate language acquisition parents, were seen as benefiting from its programs. Other likely users who were identified include: adults who need GED and general adult literacy classes (Ross-Barnum), older adults who want to learn more about computers (Central), young professionals and working adults (Blair-Caldwell) and women (Montbello). Overall, the users would *“be a good mix. Adults coming after hours for classes, computers and regular library use. Families bringing their kids, kids coming on the weekend to browse,”* suggested a member of the group held at the Central Library.

LIKELY NON-USERS

Denver residents who are unlikely to use this branch model are those who *“wouldn’t feel comfortable going there because it’s not geared for me. Afraid I wouldn’t find what I’m looking for,”* as shared by a member of the focus group held at the Decker Branch Library.

HIGHLIGHTED FEATURES

Focus group participants had many positive comments to share about the highlighted features of this library model. Each feature is discussed in greater detail below.

SPANISH AND ENGLISH COLLECTIONS

An *“emphasis on a collection relevant to the neighborhood ... having in ‘Spanish neighborhoods’ with Spanish books makes a heck of a lot of sense,”* remarked a participant in the group held in Park Hill. A participant in the group held at Blair-Caldwell suggested that all collections should be in both languages “DVD’s, CD’s, books, everything” and that “Spanish and English collections need to be intermixed. A child shouldn’t be segregated; you shouldn’t have to “go over there” to get your books. All the books on badgers [for example] are over here.”

- *“My daughter always ends up in the Spanish kid’s book section. She brings it home, doesn’t realize it; I fumble through trying to read it. She thinks it’s great. She has Spanish speakers in her class.”* (Father of young daughters in Bear Valley)
- *“I like the idea of community in general, merging of cultures, it is important to have opportunity for both learning Spanish and English and services are available for both. Get*

to merge and socialize. Make it more people friendly.” (Bilingual teacher and mother in Bear Valley)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

As a member of the group held in Park Hill said, *“Providing classes that the community is interested in is a great thing.”* Those comments were echoed in the group held at the Virginia Village Branch Library when a participant said, *“English-language classes would be great.”* These classes would likely serve very beginner ESL learners up to an intermediate level. It was also suggested that the library offer English classes for mothers. *“They do this here at Barnum now, which is important because the local middle school stopped giving ESL classes,”* remarked a member of the bilingual group held at the Ross-Barnum Branch Library.

GED AND COMPUTER INSTRUCTION

“GED classes are an awesome resource. Free or low cost. I’m sure it would be well used,” remarked a member of the group held at the Central Library when asked to comment on the features of this library. *“There aren’t enough places to take the GED, it would be really utilized,”* said a woman in the group held in Bear Valley. It was suggested that these classes include staff guidance and someone to help get you on track with pursuing your GED. *“I think it is important to have GED here in our community,”* said a member of the bilingual group held at the Ross-Barnum Branch Library. It was also recognized that young people are in need of these classes, in addition to adults. *“There are kids that are embarrassed to take the GED, they might be more likely to follow through if they can come to the library where they would be less likely to see someone they know,”* noted a member of the group held in Park Hill.

“I see all of my parents that I work going to this library. The thing that is attracting them to this library is they’re giving them English classes. Majority of the parents that I work with do not have a high school degree. See them going to get their GED and learn how to use the computer. Especially the women. See it attracting a large number of Hispanics. Don’t see it as something that everyone would be using.” (Elementary school teacher in the Montbello group)

It is anticipated that the computer classes will be well attended also as many people want to learn more. A Spanish speaker in the Ford-Warren group said, *“The Internet is a beautiful thing and I would love to learn more about using it.”* Similarly, a member of the group held at the Ross-Barnum Branch Library remarked, *“It would be a place to get help with computer instruction.”* *“My parents may like the computer classes,”* commented a participant in the group held at Central. *“There would be more computer instruction and kids that won’t touch books might be more open to opportunities,”* suggest a member of the group in Park Hill. A youth development professional in the Blair-Caldwell group noted that these classes would need to encompass typing instruction, help with computers, and

software. A participant in another group commented that a similar program at Sheridan Public Library works well.

A few participants suggested that course offerings include science and math classes as well as help preparing for the SAT and or GRE entrance exams.

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

While the parents and older siblings are busy with ESL classes and computer instruction, children will be using the summer reading programs, children's activities and computer labs with their parents. It was suggested that children should get involved and needed "*someplace to go, something to do ... and have fun,*" as noted in the Bear Valley group.

AFTER HOURS COMPUTER LABS

Much like the computer classes, the after hours computer labs are a necessary feature as they provide an "*opportunity to have Internet access for people that might not otherwise.*" (Bear Valley)

- "*Everyone here (in the USA) works. I see that it says they would offer a computer lab after work hours. We could use this benefit. After work instead of sitting down to watch a little TV, we could come to the library and learn English or computers, something extracurricular after work hours. I, personally, feel this is productive. I don't typically have time after work to study, as I have to prepare my classes for the next day. But many Latinos do have time after work. This would be productive.*" (Latino teacher in the Woodbury group)

It was suggested that computer lab time would have to be structured for longer usage by each person (Ross-Barnum).

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

These libraries are envisioned to be teaching communities that are accessible and comfortable (Bear Valley, Central). These libraries would move "*more towards a school and more away from an old fashioned library. Pushing learning, rather than research. More teaching people rather than people doing their own research. If you were out to learn something, then this would be a good opportunity,*" stated a member of the group held at the Central Library. It may also be a noisier environment than the traditional library, more akin to a community or activity center, with a higher level of activity by adults, children and teenagers (Virginia Village, Decker). As such, it needs to be "*Very youth friendly. The younger you pick it up the easier it is. It's easier to learn as a child as opposed to now as an adult,*" noted a White/Hispanic Mother in the Bear Valley group.

"It gives us a place we can trust. We can feel comfortable to go in and ask for things, getting classes in English and in computers. A model like this would be of benefit to the Hispanic community, especially the recent immigrant." (Mother in the Woodbury group)

The Ross-Barnum and Central Library groups recognized that events and classes would need to be clearly posted or advertised, thus requiring good marketing and clear communication.

STAFFING

It is important that these branches have Spanish-speaking staff, such as those identified in the description of this model. The groups held at Central, Park Hill, Blair-Caldwell and Bear Valley concurred with this. It was also noted that bilingual staff could be hard to find and retain due to the large number of employment opportunities for them (Blair-Caldwell). Most likely, these branches will have a larger number of staff to help parents figure out how to use the computers and software and help get you on track with pursuing your GED (Blair-Caldwell, Bear Valley).

This model may attract volunteers to assist in the classroom and computer lab to provide assistance while keeping costs down (Central).

- *“Volunteers from non-profits would be likely to help – they would like the access to having a facility to offer their programs.”* (Blair-Caldwell)
- *“How neat would it be to have a Latino high schooler teaching Caucasian kids Spanish or vice versa, it would really boost everyone’s ego boost.”* (Bear Valley)
- *“ESL teachers would like opportunities to volunteer; they would feel accomplishment and fulfillment.”* (Park Hill)
- *“I’d like to see Barnum have a mentoring program to help people in the community learn how to use a computer.”* (Ross-Barnum)
- *“Retirees who are ex-teachers that would love to work with kids.”* (Park Hill)

BARRIERS

Possible barriers to using this service model include the following.

- Lack of awareness. *“Above all, the Latinos. They don’t know that this is free. They ask me and I tell them. I lived in California and there it was so crowded because the libraries were so few.”* (Woodbury)
- Lack of bilingual staff, services and signage. One woman commented in the bilingual group held at Ross-Barnum that she can’t renew books on the phone because of the language barrier and that when she comes into the library, there usually isn’t anyone to help her. One of the English speakers commented, *“That would be hard.”* In this discussion, it became apparent that she could not read English and didn’t know that she could use the drop box to return books.
- Lack of accessible hours. *“Do you have it when I need it?”* (Blair-Caldwell)

- Book fines. *“Really big deal. Stops some of my families. Fines should be adapted to these families so they can afford them - a sliding scale.”* (Blair-Caldwell)
- Childcare. *“We need childcare, but it can’t be a ‘dumping ground.’ I want childcare but just for those who are taking the classes.”* (Ross-Barnum)
- Library cards. *“It should be easy to apply for library cards.”* (Blair-Caldwell)
- Cost. *“Are the services offered for free? We constantly get these questions.”* (Blair-Caldwell) *“We can get a lot of information and it’s free!”* (Ford-Warren)
- Distance. *“They are not going to travel. 2 to 3 miles, not very far. Walking distance – pretty small area. My community isn’t going to travel.”* (Blair-Caldwell)

“The library will always exist. It has to be taken into consideration that in 10 years we are going to be a very, very important segment of the population. Well, we already are, but this will continue to grow. So if we can work jointly with the library, it would benefit society.” (Latino in the Woodbury focus group)

Additional findings related to barriers are addressed in more detail in a later section.

PARTNERSHIPS

This service model provides opportunities to partner with other city agencies and nonprofit organizations in delivering these services to the same user group in the same neighborhoods.

- *“I’d love to see and would love to partner with libraries in high risk neighborhoods where we have [Head Start] sites because these are services we find very difficult to offer in the number’s we’d like to serve because we aren’t serving anywhere the number’s we need to.”* (Head Start)
- *“Collaboration with the closest recreation center, closest school to help them expand their programs, the collaboration is key on helping kids see what all the library has to offer.”* (Parks and Recreation)

It was suggested that the library begin by mapping the neighborhood assets and determining who the players are in the local area.

POSSIBLE MISPERCEPTIONS OF THIS MODEL

This model’s emphasized services rest largely in classes, activities and computer labs to compliment the Spanish and English collections they hold. As such, a possible misperception would be that this is a community center or activity center, and not a library. This may not be a

misperception for the underserved markets for which this is intended. Rather, it may be a challenge for traditional library users to rethink what a library could be (and needs to be) to serve a changing population in the 21st century. The misperception to overcome with the Spanish speaking Hispanics who are the intended users is that the library is a welcoming place that is retooling to meet their needs, and not a foreign concept. A member of the focus group held in Park Hill stated that the name *“is misleading too because it’s more for the Hispanic community, as opposed to a true language resource, why not just call it a Spanish Library.”*

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

Learning and Language Libraries revealed two unexpected findings, both of which are centered in the library’s role as a community institution. In part, the appeal of this service model was its ability to break down language barriers across the community. Surprisingly, six of the focus groups suggested that the Learning and Language Libraries offer Spanish classes, with some participants hoping it would focus on other languages as well, in keeping with its rather broad name (See Appendix F). In essence, these focus group participants saw the bilingual or multilingual class offerings as a means to build bridges across cultures and languages. As a participant in the group held in Montbello said, *“[This would be] helpful. Break down some barriers. Can’t see this over there as their library because then you are.... Why would you want to do that?”* referring to the concern about segregation raised earlier.

As noted above, some participants expressed concerns about specialized libraries in general and possible segregation of library users by language and culture with this service model in particular. The concern about segregation appears to be rooted in two fundamental beliefs. First, a belief that the library is a community place and accessible to all, and secondly, that “separate but equal” has been problematic in this country. This issue is important as it affects the way DPL communicates the need for change and finds opportunities to build connections across barriers.

- *“A library should be a microcosm of the world.”* (Decker)
- *“I think the Hispanic population could really benefit from this model. My concern is that it would look and feel below standard. I work with this population around civil rights and I wouldn’t want this model to be second rate just because of this population. I would hope that it would be inviting to the Hispanic Community and that Denver cared enough to give this population a comfortable, inviting place to come. It would be important for the population to know that we care.”* (Virginia Village)

Interestingly, Hispanics did not share this same concern as evidenced by their recognition of this opportunity to learn and feel valued by the community. This issue is further discussed later in the report.

CLASSIC LIBRARY MODEL



Highlighted Features

Children's Books

Family Video and DVDs

Homework Help

Fun Family Programs

Book Babies and Toddler Storytime

Classic customers usually go to the Library to meet the needs of their child for programs, events, storytimes, homework help and children's materials.

Aimed at children and families, these branches would emphasize children's materials and family programming. Library staff with experience working with children would develop programming and assist families in using the libraries full menu of resources for family learning, exploration and recreation. Popular adult materials will also be available.

Reactions to the Classic Library Model

People with young children reacted positively to this model as they saw it as the place that would teach their children how to use the library, a habit that they would have for a lifetime. This family friendly environment was seen as one in which "kids could be kids" and the parents wouldn't have to worry if they were loud or took lots of books off the shelf and left a pile. Interestingly, this "kid friendly" environment seemed more important to English speakers than Spanish speakers in the groups.

People without children wondered what happened to the classic library, as they know it, the traditional neighborhood library with a separate adults sections, research section and other features. In fact the majority of the members in the group held at the Virginia Village Branch Library wanted a branch library like they have now. As one participant said, *"I don't have children and I'm not Hispanic and I'm not a youth anymore so..."*

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

The overall impression was that this delivery model is more family-oriented than the others. Many of the English speaking groups also described it as being a more child friendly model. A participant in the group held in Park Hill suggested that *“it promotes family time.”* Members of the group held in Bear Valley remarked, *“This is the balance. Need to have this in the community. A balance, every neighborhood should have this.”*

The Classic Library *“builds the foundation for future library users (Central)”* and *“teaches children where you go later in life,”* noted members of the focus groups held in the Central Library and Montbello branch. It appealed to the bilingual group, held at the Ross-Barnum library, which said, *“A library to bring toddlers to and teach them to read at an early age, and to have respect for books and others who are using the library.”*

Participants in the groups held in the central and eastside neighborhoods (Central, Decker, Montbello, Park Hill and Virginia Village) did not think the name matched the featured services and pictures. Excerpts of their comments are listed below.

- *“I see the Central Library as the classic model.”* (Central)
- *“I don’t see how that’s called a ‘classic library.’ Well, I mean it looks like it is slanted more toward children and families. Why is it called ‘classic’? Well that’s what they should call it then. Like ‘The Family Focused Library’ instead of ‘Classic.’”* (Older man in Virginia Village group)
- *“This is a family model, not a true ‘classic’. That’s Blair-Caldwell where kids have a dedicated area, they do have a separate children’s section, with a bank of computers specifically for kids but they will take over adult sections as well.”* (Park Hill)
- *“I think this is a Children’s Library, it’s misnamed.”* (Decker)
- *“This is a children’s library, family library one that’s close to your home, more like local library.”* (Decker)

While the majority of participants could see the value of this model and understood whom it was designed to serve, they were concerned that the traditional or classic library that they use today would go away. This may be due to the fact that adult services were not emphasized in this model and they did not see themselves represented in the branch models under discussion.

- *“The description does not say a word about adult books. Everything up there is geared toward families and children, right?”* (Virginia Village)

This library was the preferred model of a number of participants in the focus groups held in six groups (Blair-Caldwell, Ross-Barnum, Park Hill, Bear Valley, Ford-Warren and Montbello). Those who preferred this model assumed it had something for adults, children and families. For example, the four youth development experts who gathered for the group at Blair-Caldwell thought kids would want to use this library. They also noted that it seemed the most familiar and had a broader menu that *“kids, seniors, adults and youth can use.”* The others models, in their minds were more specific.

They also felt the classic was the better option for younger African American children as it was the most familiar and had lots of resources for families.

Several of the participants in the group held in Park Hill liked the homework help and envisioned that it had old and new books, with a *“kids section over here, adults over here. I can find new ... and old stuff I might have missed. I’m old school.”* The majority of participants in the group held in Bear Valley also preferred this model as it appealed to all ages and had the widest variety of services. A father in that group said, *“I’m still interested in visiting the models but day in day out, week in week out the Classic fits my needs, my family needs.”* This model was the favorite of three mothers in the Montbello group, one of whom had a toddler and two who home schooled their children.

Two of the Spanish speakers in the Ford-Warren group also preferred this model. *“I liked the Classic because I think it would be best for my children. I didn’t have the opportunity to get a good education so this is the most important thing to me,”* said one mother in that group. Nine members of the group held at the Ross-Barnum Branch Library (all but the monolingual Spanish speakers) felt it would meet the whole family’s needs and not leave anyone out.

“I don’t think the library as we knew the library when we were growing up can draw kids today, can draw anybody but us. We’ve got to do things to the library to make it attractive to kids. Start using it, then use it throughout life. We didn’t have as much to distract us when I was growing up. Only place I could go besides playing outside with my buddies. Get them used to it, involved in it and graduate from this type of library to another”
(Older man in the Park Hill group)

“My point is close to Enrique’s. The classic library, well, I always thought that a library was a place to sleep. So to me that’s the image of a classic library. We need to attract the young people and offer new things and activities. It has to be more than for them to come get a book and fall asleep on the chair. I think it has to be combined with aspects of other models.” (Latina with teenagers in the Woodbury group)

LIKELY USERS

The likely users of this Classic Library were considered to be families with toddlers or school-age children, single parents, new mothers, stay-at-home moms, children coming after school, home day care, childcare centers and nannies. Participants gave insights as to who would use this library model.

- *“Great place for 3rd, 4th and 5th graders to go – missing piece is computers for games and Internet to get an older kid in the door. 5th and 6th graders – starting to become more independent and hanging with the family isn’t cool anymore, gives them a new place to hang out.”* (Blair-Caldwell)

- *“People looking for a place where kids can run around and they can explore and not be ‘no you can’t touch that’...Pull books off the shelf.”* (Dad with young children in Bear Valley)
- *“It would feel good for young mothers to get out and interact with other young mothers.”* (Ross-Barnum)
- *“Love it. My needs at this time of my life this is perfect for me. This is exactly up my alley.”* (Home schooler with children in Montbello)
- *“It would be great place for grandparents to take their grandchildren. Many of them don’t remember how to use the library or aren’t familiar with the new methods.”* (Ross-Barnum)

A few participants spoke of the importance of exposing children to the library early in life as a reason for supporting of this model.

- *“Our children are our future. Need the opportunity to touch stuff, go explore, go learn but with parental supervision (good point was made by others). Teach children this is where you go later in life.”* (Montbello)
- *“When you teach your children you enrich your community. You cannot place too much emphasis on the children.”* (Ross-Barnum)

LIKELY NON-USERS

Denver residents who are unlikely to use this branch model are adults without children and older teenagers. Several adults indicated that it was not as appealing to them as this library was not designed with them in mind and they were concerned that it would probably be loud. Not surprisingly, this model was not popular among those gathered for the focus group held at the Central Library, and only one of the attendees had school age children at home.

- *“In looking at this model, I would go to this library with my son who’s six, but if it was just me or if I didn’t have a young child, I would probably never go to this kind of library. The Contemporary Library is so much more attractive to me and I would not want to be around a noisy, chaotic environment. ...to have my own personal, library-time, personal experience.”* (Mother of school age child in Virginia Village group)
- *“I don’t like it because I don’t have a family.”* (Central)
- *“Very family. When I become a mother, great. This is not as appealing to me.”* (Single woman in the Bear Valley group)
- *“For me, this model would be a minus. I wouldn’t go to this library because of the noise.”* (Senior citizen in the Virginia Village group)
- *“I wouldn’t go there unless I was babysitting.”* (Young man in the focus group at Decker)

HIGHLIGHTED FEATURES

Focus group participants shared their comments about the highlighted features of this library model. Each feature is discussed in greater detail below.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

A parent in the Montbello group hoped that s/he would find *"books that interest my kids. Books that my kids can easily go and find."* A member of the Central Library groups wondered if toys would be available for check out while a different member of that group stated that she'd *"like to see perceptions changing from books to 'information'"* and other ways to access information. Book-focus is too limiting," implying a desire for children's videos and DVDs.

FAMILY VIDEOS AND DVDS

Parents and other adults recognized the value in offering these materials and some parents expressed some concerns about this feature, particularly the potential lack of parental or adult supervision in the selection process. There was some conversation in the Spanish-speaking group held at the Woodbury Branch regarding the educational value of videos and DVDs. They were in favor of those that had an educational component for their children. They also stated that videos are valuable when learning English to hear true spoken word.

- *"I don't care about videos and DVDs. Yes, if they are educational and for learning they are good. But other than that, they are a waste of time. They don't have DVDs and videos in the libraries in California."* (Mother of school age children in the Woodbury group)
- *"DVDs and videos are good if they are educational like those on the Discovery Channel or National Geographic. They help the children learn and even me. This is important."* (Father of two young children in the Woodbury group)
- *"An important thing about that is that you learn "real" English. If you just learn from books, then you are not learning English as it is commonly spoken. No one speaks like this. The movies reflect real English."* (Single man in the Woodbury group)
- *"I like talking books for this reason because I can hear the English. The children learn to speak quicker, but we can learn little by little."* (Mother in the Woodbury group)

The comments shared about the valuable role that movies and talking books play in adult education for English language learners is something to consider for the Learning and Language Library model.

HOMEWORK HELP

Homework Help was recognized as a positive in the groups held at Central, Bear Valley and Montbello. The woman in the Central group remarked that she had benefited from this service when she was younger. An elementary teacher in Montbello was excited when she saw this feature

and said, *“The thing that stands out is that homework help. Homework help attracts families. A lot of the things we’re teaching now ... is a new way of teaching. Parents don’t understand how to do that homework. See families going there and ‘oh, can you help me with this homework part too’.”*

FUN FAMILY PROGRAMS

Focus group participants envisioned a variety of fun family programs designed to meet local community needs. Family activities and summer programs were noted. Field trips and on-site collaborations with local museums were suggested for at-risk children who may not otherwise have those hands-on learning experiences.

A possible missing piece of these programs are after-school activities or summer programs, out for latch key kids. A member of the group held at Blair-Caldwell noted, *“There has to be something for them to do in the summer. The librarians become babysitter is becoming a reality.”*

BOOK BABIES AND TODDLER STORYTIME

A single woman in the Bear Valley group had a fond recollection of “being little and going as a kid for story time with the librarians, the other models do not seem like they do that any more.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

These libraries would have *“lots of kids”* and parents wouldn’t *“have to worry that their kids are bothering other people”* according to the group held at the Central Library. That atmosphere was seen as a positive for parents.

- *“Find an interest in something and come find 50 books on that topic.”* (Mother in Bear Valley)
- *“Comfortable to go there. Don’t have to tell my children to be quiet. I’m kind of mixed on that; that is the way I was raised, the classic, quiet library. The way things have changed it is nice to go and take your kids and look at books together. An outing. A free activity for families.”* (Home school mother in Montbello)
- *“This is familiar. This pretty much what we have all been brought up with. This has worked for all of us.”* (Father of young child in Montbello)
- *“They don’t have to worry that their kids are bothering other people.”* (Mother in the Ross-Barnum group)

These libraries are envisioned as being colorful, fun and friendly to children and families. They would feature postings of what else is going on in the community for families. Parents are also expecting *“that it is safe – materials and environment will be safe because of the number of kids and the fact that it is geared towards kids,”* as commented a person in the Park Hill group.

STAFFING

It was recognized that the library staff would need to be kid-friendly and not get annoyed when kids pull books off the shelf. A children's librarian would help the children check out books.

BARRIERS

A possible barrier to using this library model is distance. A participant in the group held at the Virginia Village Branch Library said, "*The problem I see, is if you have a library like that, where is it going to be, what part of town? How far are kids going to go to do homework? If its here, are people going to travel 10 miles to get kids after school? It just doesn't make any sense.*" A father with young children in the Bear Valley group noted, "*It would be difficult to make the time to take a trip to this model.*"

POSSIBLE MISPERCEPTIONS OF THIS MODEL

A possible misperception of this model is its inclusion of adult-only spaces and other core services, such as reference, to meet the needs of children and adults.

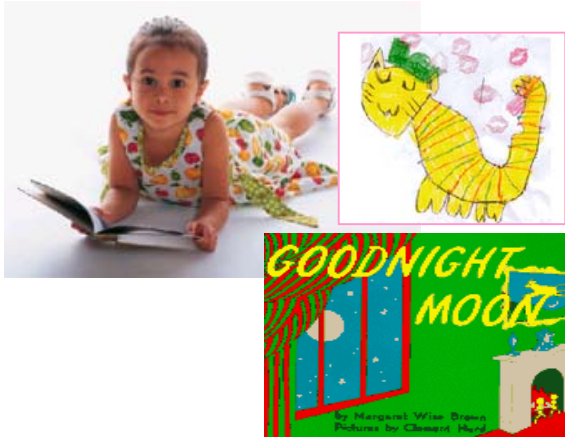
- "*I know a lot of libraries that have tried this model and you end up with kids everywhere, if you can really keep the sections separate without kids going into the adult section, great, but I don't know if you can really do it.*" (Park Hill)
- "*Where's the reference section?*" (Park Hill)

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

Several Spanish speakers in the Ford-Warren group worried that their children are watching too many videos and DVDs currently and were concerned about the emphasis placed on those features in this branch. They spoke of the challenge in guiding their children to select the appropriate materials when "*kids can have their one library card and go on their own,*" as noted one father.

"But that is what a library is for. The children don't get to do only what they want. Yes, they are going to spend time in front of the TV at home, but that's why there is a library. To have a place where they can go and read and learn." (Father in the Ford-Warren group)

YOUTH INSPIRATION LIBRARY MODEL



Highlighted Features

- Children's Materials
- Self-Directed Children's Activities
- Arts and Crafts
- Kid's Book Clubs
- Community Outreach

Youth Inspiration customers are neighborhood children who seek out the Library as a place to learn and create with other children.

Environments that are accessible to children and intuitively used by them will be emphasized at these branches. Children's books along with self-directed activity stations could be a hallmark of these branches.

Reactions to the Youth Inspiration Library Model

This model was noted for its ability to build self-esteem in young children while helping them to learn and grow from an early age, all in an environment that is colorful and lively. Several concerns were raised that this model was too much like a daycare center, community center or recreation center – and not enough like a library. In addition, it did not seem distinct enough from the Classic Library and thoughts of merging the two models were offered in a few focus groups. Likely users include young children (0-12 years old approximately) coming with adults or on their own, as they get older. The Youth Inspiration Library would not likely be attractive to teenagers or adults without children.

Community members identified a variety of possible partners for these libraries, including schools and recreation centers, while noting possible physical and cultural barriers to its use. Those barriers include a lack of understanding among adults from Mexico and other countries about the role of a library and the services it offers, as it is different in the United States. People also wondered if programs would be offered at times accessible to working single parents and if help would be available to parents so that they, in turn, could assist their child's learning process.

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

The overall impressions of the Youth Inspiration Library model were mixed. Those with favorable impressions of this model liked that it would teach children about the library at a young age and build their self-esteem along the way as they learn in a self-directed manner. These positive impressions crossed language barriers from English to Spanish.

- *“I see this as a good way to introduce kids to the library as a fun place and a place where you want to go.”* (Decker)
- *“Like the emphasis of starting early. Make it a lifelong process. Book club, stuff like that.”* (Single woman in Bear Valley group)
- *“Children learning to figure out things for themselves – great!”* (Ross-Barnum)
- *“It would be better for children and they wouldn’t be afraid to knock things over or anything.”* (Ross-Barnum)
- *“They would learn on their own.”* (Ross-Barnum)
- *“It would build the habit of enjoying things that are more cultural at a very young age. This is a habit that they will stay with for life.”* (Mother of teenagers in Woodbury group)
- *“I like this one. I feel emotional about it. Some families work too much and don’t have time for the children. When the children come and are told they can’t talk, make noise or do anything, it’s hard. This model would address these two obstacles. I don’t know about your families, but in mine, children can’t say much because they are children. If they have ideas or something to say, this would be a place they could have the freedom to express themselves.”* (Single woman in Woodbury focus group)

“The more you teach a child the more you build your tomorrow. We want them to be successful and for things to go well for them. When they can learn to help themselves, they will develop more.” (Single man in Woodbury group)

“I think that anything that, especially this model, anything that can really assist a child’s development of their self-esteem is going to be positive for the community and, therefore, if the library can play a part in that, even if it’s not book related, specifically book related, I’m totally in favor of that.” (Parent in Virginia Village group)

“Looks like a lot of fun.” (Mother in Bear Valley group)

Similarly, concerns that this was more of a day care center or community center than a library spanned language barriers and geographic regions of the city, as illustrated by the comments below.

- *“This is nothing more than a day care. It helps them grow and develop their ideas.”* (Single man in the Ford-Warren group)
- *“It’s a babysitting type of library geared to single parents, I don’t want my tax dollars paying to care for kids.”* (Father in the Park Hill group)
- *“Parents who need a break and can drop their kids off.”* (Central)
- *“How many parents are going to use this as a babysitting service?”* (Decker)
- *“More of a day care center. It seems like a lot more responsibility (followed by comments about librarians as babysitters and security issues.”* (Ross-Barnum)
- *“It’s the YMCA of libraries – it could help get kids physically active and help with the obesity epidemic.”* (Park Hill)
- *“That’s a community center. I think that a library is actually be invigorated to becoming more of a community center than it used to be.”* (Virginia Village)
- *“Like Parks & Rec Center with books added.”* (Park Hill)

There was also some confusion about the specific age group that this model was targeting, be it young children or older youth. *“The title is misleading. I think of youth as 12 and above. Name doesn’t quite fit,”* noted a Latina mother in the Bear Valley group. A focus group participant in the Montbello group stated that s/he *“expected to see it geared more towards young adults, teens [given the name] 13 to 18 or 13 to 21 year olds.”* Along the same line, a Virginia Village participant remarked that he could not see too many teens going to this library model, given its visual images and highlighted services. Older kids may feel inhibited, *“might not want to come since it’s too focused on one age,”* remarked a member of the group held at Blair-Caldwell. Members of that group work with teenagers as well as young children.

Some participants in the Montbello and Park Hill locations also questioned this model’s distinction from the Classic Library model discussed earlier. *“How come those two aren’t together? I’m trying to figure out what’s the difference [from Classic]?”* asked a participant in the Montbello group. When asked by the moderator if they would like to see the Youth Inspiration model combined with the Classic model, nine participants raised their hands. One participant in both the Park Hill and Blair-Caldwell hosted groups suggested that this model be a book mobile rather than a stand-alone facility. It was suggested that a book mobile format would *“encourage kids to go read under a tree, get them outside”* and *“bring the books to them ... go to sites.”*

“I think that this is better for children. It’s more educational than being at home watching videos, DVDs and cartoons.” (Single man in the Ford-Warren group)

LIKELY USERS

Users of the Youth Inspiration Library model will likely be toddlers, preschoolers, elementary-age children, after-school kids and parents coming in with their kids. There were mixed opinions about whether this model would serve 12 to 14 year olds or not, with some thinking that particular age group would be more interested in something for young adults, such as was discussed with the Contemporary Library. Others thought the teens might come after school to use the computers for homework or playing games. Elementary age children who live nearby might come on their own, as was suggested in the group held at the Central Library. This was confirmed by a participant in the Ford-Warren group when she said, *“We don’t always have time to take our children. With this model, they could help themselves and let loose. They can explore, be loud...”*

Other likely users of this library model are day care centers and home school parents. *“Day cares would probably use that a lot. Early childhood education might use it because of the fact that they are offering arts and crafts and activities,”* noted a member of the Montbello focus group. Another member of the group commented that this model was *“excellent for home schoolers. Kids book clubs give home school children the opportunity to meet with other home school children to discuss books.”*

LIKELY NON-USERS

Denver residents who are unlikely to use this branch model include adults without children at home and older youth. A parent in the group held at Bear Valley expressed concern that this library would cater so extensively to children that young scholars and grandparents would not want to visit it. A father in the Spanish language focus group held at Ford-Warren noted that he liked the model because he had children and wondered if those without children would go.

The youth development experts who gathered for a focus group at Blair-Caldwell wondered if this branch would serve Spanish-speaking families with young children. It was also noted that Hispanic families usually go places as a family unit and would thus need services for multiple ages and generations.

HIGHLIGHTED FEATURES

Focus group participants offered comments on this library’s highlighted features as described below.

“This will help the children with their interpersonal skills. There are some children that don’t have these skills. This would help them to socialize.” (Spanish speaking father in the Woodbury group)

CHILDREN'S MATERIALS

A father in the Bear Valley group envisioned this library as a place where a child *“can pick what looks good – pick a book by its cover and get to take it home to see if it is any good.”* No other comments were offered regarding children's materials specifically.

SELF-DIRECTED CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

People were in favor of these activities as they saw them as a positive form of child development. *“I appreciate that this would take them away from the TV and cultivate creativity and self-direction,”* said a mother in the Woodbury focus group. A few concerns were raised about the use of computer games in a library when there is so much more to engage children in a library setting.

“I love that idea because I really think it does tie in so profoundly to the development of the child's self-esteem. I could see a kid going to this library and going home and saying, ‘Mommy or Daddy! Guess what I did by myself today?’ Huge!” (Parent in the Virginia Village group)

ARTS AND CRAFTS

This feature was seen as being fun and providing an outlet for children's imagination in a hands-on way. Two participants in the Bear Valley and Virginia Village groups raised concerns that these activities would take children away from books and might not belong in a library.

KID'S BOOK CLUBS

This feature did not generate specific comments.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Participants weren't sure what was meant by community outreach and hoped that it included the library going into the community – help to increase availability of what's offered that could fill some void left by schools that have cut back on activities.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Youth Inspiration Libraries would be colorful, lively and visually stimulating, and relatively noisy, possibly requiring extra soundproofing. The Montessori area in which they are on their own was thought to be good idea when discussed in the Central Library focus group. It was suggested that the library *“make it attractive to kids to teach them to use it so they will use it through out life, get them used to it and respect it – then they can graduate from one type of library to another.”* (Park Hill)

A father in the Ford-Warren group thought it would be a safe place in which *“parents can bring them with the assurance that there won’t be drugs here, or drunks here, or people fighting. It’s a healthy place to learn healthy things.”*

PARTNERSHIPS

The youth development professionals who gathered to discuss the needs of at-risk children and youth offered a few ideas about possible partnerships for these Youth Inspiration Libraries. It was suggested that these libraries could expand off the existing Denver Parks & Recreation after-school programs and work with libraries in the schools. As well as partner with agencies, schools, and pre-schools for community outreach to bring more children into the library.

BARRIERS

Possible physical and cultural barriers for low-income and Spanish speaking families were identified during discussion of this model and are listed below. These barriers likely apply to library use in general.

- Transportation - *“Getting kids there when parents are working two jobs.”* (Blair-Caldwell)
- Limitation - *“Won’t appeal to older kids and adults.”* (Blair-Caldwell)
- Lack of understanding - *“Many parents don’t know what is in a library.”* (Ford-Warren)
- Lack of awareness - *“Information for parents is missing - that this is a service available to everyone. The library needs to sell its image to the people.”* (Woodbury)
- Cultural differences - *“Well, things are different here than in Mexico. I’m from Mexico. There kids play outside; here they sit in front of a TV and videos. They can’t be creative.”* (Woodbury)
- Access - *“It is important that there be enough variety in scheduling, not just for stay at home parents. I wonder how many homes are run by single parents? Target who is more likely to have a child and what their needs are.”* (Bear Valley)
- Parent engagement - *“Parents need to learn too - Parents need to learn in order to better help their children with homework and would benefit more from the Learning and Language Library.”* (Ford-Warren)

POSSIBLE MISPERCEPTIONS OF THIS MODEL

The most significant potential misperceptions of this library is that it will not be inviting to those over 13 or so years of age, unless they are there on behalf of a child. There were also misperceptions that this model did not encourage enough reading – “*a library is to read*” – as commented a member of the group held in Virginia Village. The importance of reading and developing a lifelong habit of library use was emphasized in a variety of groups and by a variety of adults.

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

A few Spanish-speaking parents shared the challenges they encounter when trying to help their children with the homework, while recognizing the importance of parental engagement to compliment new service models such as described in the Youth Inspiration Library.

“Yes, but things are so different that I can’t help my children with their homework. What I’ve noticed is that things are not the same as when I was young. Even mathematics is not the way I learned them. I can’t help them, but maybe this model could.” (Father in Ford-Warren group)

“Well, from my point of view, something very important is that even with more programs like this, if we as parents don’t work with our children, it’s not going to function.” (Mother in the Woodbury group)

DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY ONLINE MODEL



Highlighted Features

- Access from home, work or school
- 24/7 availability
- Research and homework resources
- Downloadable books and music

Denver Library Online offers information quickly and digitally to those at home, work or school.

This virtual library branch has been designed with the home/school/work user in mind. Library is easily accessible to children, teens and adults who need information quickly and digitally. Its target markets are people of all ages who are on the go and desire information quickly when and where they need it. It emphasizes the following services: 24/7 availability; research and homework resources; downloadable books, movies, music, special collections of photos, journals, and encyclopedias. The distinctive features of this model include an attractive, intuitive interface to a wealth of resources not available to the individual without a library card.

Reactions to Denver Public Library Online

This service delivery model had fairly broad appeal across the focus groups. Convenience of use and access to a world of library materials within and beyond DPL were highlights of this model. Likely users include a broad range of users, from middle school through adulthood, who will use this model for everything from extensive research to placing books and materials on hold to pick up after work. The 24/7 availability, downloadable books and music, and research and homework resources were attractive features.

Participants expressed concern that this model would not be available to those without access to computers and the Internet. While access is available in the libraries, it is not as well known as it needs to be among Denver households without computer and Internet access, and increased access appears to be needed to meet the needs of those who would use it in the libraries. Additionally, its full functionality needs to be available in English and Spanish.

While some senior citizens may not be interested in using this model, others expressed interest in learning at their pace. Maybe the tech savvy teens could help.

OVERALL IMPRESSIONS

The overall impressions of Denver Public Library Online were positive, as focus group participants recognize that an online model is a necessity in the 21st Century. *“It’s absolutely the way of the future, it’s a must, a library system can’t function without it,”* remarked a participant in the group held in Park Hill. A member of the group held in Virginia Village concurred by saying, *“It’s a thing of the future but you won’t have to walk to a library. I think it’s the future.”*

- *“This idea I love. My kids are in an online school, they could have access to all this instead of going all over the web, great resource to have it centralized. Access to this kind of thing for reports would be heaven on earth.”* (Bear Valley)
- *“I like everything about it – you can check for books, put them on hold and then go pick them up, I’ve borrowed books from Louisiana. It is really great.”* (Park Hill)
- *“I love it! I can access it from home or work, 24/7.”* (Ford-Warren)

A big appeal of this service model is its convenience, as was discussed in the group held in Park Hill. *“You don’t have to find parking and walk,”* and *“you can get information without lugging around an armful of books,”* remarked members of the group. At the same time it allows libraries to offer more than what they have on site by providing access to the whole system. It just makes it more convenient rather than traveling to various libraries throughout town to just look in one central resource, have them pulled for you, and delivered to your closest library.

Denver residents also recognize that the online library opens one to a world of books and resources beyond that available at the local branch library and even Denver Public Library. A member of the focus group held in Virginia Village noted the freedom that this model provides, *“Freedom that allows you to look at a vast, greater number of books than you could possibly look at in just one building.”* The online service model was also considered an enhancement to the main library and branch libraries. *“You are not going to be stepping on anyone’s toes. This wouldn’t take away from the experience of going to your local branch. It may enhance it because you don’t have online people there bugging you,”* remarked a participant in the Decker focus group.

A few other focus group participants expressed concern about loss of community when discussing this model. *“Only down point ... loss of community. When I think of the library I think of it as community oriented. You see your neighbors here. One thing you would lose,”* noted a woman in the Bear Valley group. A similar concern was echoed in the Virginia Village group when a participant remarked, *“This is supposed to be for everybody, old and young and, you know, this generational intercourse is sometimes not possible.”*

The positive comments shared about the current online service model and the proposed new features gathered positive support from most focus group participants, suggesting that this is a good use of resources within Denver Public Library. *“I think this is an effective way to use the resources. I think the expansion of the services is essential. This is where the world is going. Sooner is better,”* said a member of the group held at the Decker Branch Library.

In contrast, a small number of participants felt that DPL Online might be duplicating services provided by others. *“Its competition to DPS online, the kids are being taught our system in school,”* commented a school librarian in the Blair-Caldwell group. Similarly a participant in the group held at

the Decker Branch library felt *“that DPL is duplicating services. Why should they do this when you can get this some place else? It’s not the most productive use of resources.”* DPL Online needs *“to present more value to me as an Internet consumer. I can get all those things now without going to DPL on line. I rarely use it except to look up books, manage my account”* stated a member of the Bear Valley group.

Member of the Spanish-speaking group held at Ford-Warren: “In the future, this is the one that is going to be used most, right?”

Group: “Yes, this is the future.”

LIKELY USERS

According to participants in focus groups from Virginia Village to Ross-Barnum, a large variety of users are expected to use DPL Online, including English and Spanish speakers. Students, ranging in age from home-schooled children, junior high and high school students through college were considered to be likely users of this model. A mother in the group held in Bear Valley remarked that this mode fills a void by serving junior high and senior high school students. Some of those students, most notably at-risk children and youth, would have to go to the library to have Internet service as was noted in the group of youth development professionals held at Blair-Caldwell.

This model also provides a gateway to a better life. *“Anybody elementary on up has the ability to use it. A lot more people on line than you think. Great resources especially for families that are struggling, working swing shifts. A lot of times when you are working those shifts (swing shift, graveyard) to make ends meet you are left behind. This gives you the opportunity to better yourself. Really like the availability,”* commented an online user in the Montbello group. A Spanish-speaking member of the Woodbury group confirmed his point when she said, *“I would use it. I have unusual work hours and then libraries are always closed when I can go. This would help me very much.”* Members of the Spanish-speaking group held at Ford-Warren said that adults would use the online library to look for jobs, study while they are in school, obtain information and download forms. *“With immigration the way it is, you have to have access to keep up. I went and spent 6 hours in line only to be told to go online and download a form,”* remarked a member of that group.

Other likely users of this model are those with limited time, people who are home bound and *“can’t get back and forth from the library, this gives them a solution (Park Hill).”* Busy people and those in higher income brackets would likely use this model. *“This is good for people who are very busy; who don’t have time to go to the libraries. And for college students and for those who work and go to school,”* said a woman in the Spanish-speaking group held at Woodbury.

DPL Online could *“attract those that aren’t using DPL Online now”* and *“might attract more... bring more people in. I haven’t tried it. I’m going to go try it,”* noted members of the Central and Montbello focus groups. A retiree in Virginia Village noted, *“Anybody with Internet access who uses the library now would find use in that.”*

LIKELY NON-USERS

Denver residents who are unlikely to use this model are those who prefer to turn the page of a book, whether they are in their 20s or 70s as remarked a few members of the Decker group who prefer the traditional branch model. Some suggested that the older generation might not use this model as much as it is a *“scary thing for them”* and Denver Public Library may need to *“slow it up [for the elderly]. Good that older people can learn. We can learn,”* as remarked a senior citizen in the Montbello focus group. Additionally it was noted that people without computers at home, whether they be at-risk children or seniors, and those without Internet access at all, or with a slow connection, would not use this service from their home computers. *“More kids have computers but they don’t have Internet service at home, lots of families are going wireless (mobile phone) and don’t have access to dial-up (Blair-Caldwell).”*

HIGHLIGHTED FEATURES

Focus group participants had many positive comments to share about the highlighted features of this library model. Each feature is discussed in greater detail below.

ACCESS FROM HOME, WORK OR SCHOOL

This service model was noted for its convenience, especially its accessibility for home, work, school or anywhere, as noted participants in the Central, Virginia Village, Decker, Ross-Barnum and Woodbury groups. The online library was considered to be a time saver as it allowed people to multi-task and avoid extra trips away from home. The access to the card catalogue to look up a favorite author or search for an available book was also highlighted. *“You can order books and then just go and pick them up in about five minutes,”* said a single man in the Spanish-speaking group held at Woodbury.

24/7 AVAILABILITY

The 24/7 availability received many positive comments from groups across the city, from Bear Valley to Park Hill and Ford-Warren. Users included single adult students to parents. People shared stories of using when they needed access late or early in the day, when the library was not open.

RESEARCH AND HOMEWORK RESOURCES

This service model provides access to services beyond the Denver Public Library and can be used for inter-library loan across the state. Those participants who have used it for that access had largely positive comments to share, with the exception being the wait time, which for some people, had been a bit too long on occasion.

Some of the early morning or late night users of the online model have accessed it for research and homework help and found it to be easy to use. *“[I] love the access to librarians for research and homework and the inter-library loan,”* noted a member of the group in Park Hill. A parent in the Bear Valley group commented that it provided access to additional college entrance exam materials. The downside is that this model isn’t available 24/7 to those without a computer and Internet connection at home as noted a single man in the Spanish-speaking group held at Ford-Warren. *“This is of benefit*

to me for homework. There are pros and cons to everything. The con is that not all families have access to the Internet. If they have access at work or at the libraries, there are set times. So this is a disadvantage," he said.

DOWNLOADABLE BOOKS AND MUSIC

Focus group participants were pleased with the idea of being able to download books and music. While some had used the electronic books and liked the feature, others could not imagine reading a book on a computer. As an older man in the Park Hill group pointed out, *"e-tablets –this is coming soon and that's what this service will become. Our kids will appreciate it more than we do,"* speaking to a greater future demand for this feature.

ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

The online library needs to be designed for accessibility and easy navigation in English and Spanish suggested participants in Bear Valley. Other participants hoped this enhanced model would have high up time, download quickly and enable the user to enter their library card number one time for multiple orders. A few parents in the Bear Valley group, some of whom home school their children, spoke of the need for enhanced filtering options to make it safer for children. Others in the group commented that DPL is trusted and felt safe sending their children to the site.

BARRIERS

The most significant barriers to using the online library are awareness and access. It was suggested that the library needs to provide more education about the website and how to use the card catalogue since the old fashioned paper-based catalogues are gone. This comment was shared by a person who found the site to be very helpful for looking up books before going to a branch.

The access barrier exists at home and in the library. Households without computers or Internet access cannot take advantage of the 24/7 functionality and found that it could be hard to get on a computer at the library due to heavy demand. This issue was of particular interest to several participants in the Spanish-speaking group held at Woodbury, as well as in the group of youth development experts at Blair-Caldwell.

POSSIBLE MISPERCEPTIONS OF THIS MODEL

There were no misperceptions of this model, other than some participants wondering if all of the enhancements were available today. The larger issue appears to be that of lack of awareness of the benefits of this model as noted above.

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

One might expect that the topic of computers and libraries would raise issues for some people who do not believe computers should be used for games in libraries. This issue was discussed among some of the older participants in the Virginia Village group, many of whom supported the traditional branch library concept over any changes.

BARRIERS TO USING THE LIBRARY

A tally of the most commonly cited barriers to using the library reveals the following Top 15 list. It is interesting to note which barriers were most commonly identified in the Spanish-only and bilingual groups, as it indicates several important language and cultural barriers.

BARRIER TO USING DPL	NUMBER OF FOCUS GROUPS THAT MENTIONED THIS BARRIER (10 TOTAL)	MENTIONED IN 1 BILINGUAL AND/OR 2 SPANISH LANGUAGE GROUPS
Hours of operation	9	1 of 2 Spanish language groups
Parking	7	Bilingual group
Lack of awareness or knowledge	7	Bilingual group, 1 Spanish language group
Language	5	Bilingual and both Spanish language groups
Customer service	5	Bilingual group, 1 Spanish language group
No access to Internet or computers	3	<i>Not identified</i>
Long lines	3	<i>Not identified</i>
Noise	3	<i>Not identified</i>
Facility is too small	3	2 Spanish language groups
Distance	3	<i>Not identified</i>
Late fees	3	<i>Not identified</i>
Sufficient staffing	3	2 Spanish language groups
Cultural barrier	2	2 Spanish language groups
Access to library card	2	2 Spanish language groups
Don't have what we need	2	2 Spanish language groups

INFRASTRUCTURE

Hours of Operation. Some participants mentioned that the dates and times in which a particular library was closed seemed arbitrary. In nine of the 10 focus groups, hours of operation were identified as a barrier to use. Other participants noted that they couldn't access their branch library for four days due to closures and personal observation of the Sabbath. Several groups indicated that before the library modified its service delivery model it should re-institute the closed

days and extend the hours to better accommodate users, including weekends and evenings past 9:00 p.m.

Parking. Lack of parking downtown town and at several branches is a barrier to using the library, as commented in seven of the 10 focus groups. Another related issue is lack of transportation for some families, particularly low-income ones.

Lack of Awareness. Five groups mentioned that Denver residents are lacking in awareness of the library and/or knowledge of the resources and services it can provide. This issue spanned demographic groups and languages and was perceived to be a fairly broad issue.

Language. While Spanish and English speakers identified language as an issue, it was mentioned more often among Spanish speakers. One English speaker in Southeast Denver noted that as the Hispanic population grows, the library staff would need to be equipped for it. Members of groups held in neighborhoods with larger Hispanic populations recognized that the need is immediate and includes such things as knowing one can renew books over the telephone and that one can volunteer at the library. A member of a Spanish-speaking group said, *“Lack of Spanish-speaking staff is a problem. So often those giving customer service don’t speak Spanish. If you happen to find the section with Spanish materials you’re OK, but if not you wonder all over the place. If they stumble on to what they need, they are fine. But so many can’t find what they are looking for or find help and so they just leave. It would be most helpful if there were more bilingual staff.”*

Customer Service. Participants reported a mix of good and bad customer service experiences. Most believe they have excellent customer service, while others have been given the run around when trying to find something. A few would like to see more environments that are more controlled in terms of noise and access to computers. As a Park Hill participant stated, *“Depends on what you mean by [barrier to] usage, if I’m using it online because I don’t want to go to the library because of kids throwing spit balls that’s a barrier but I would just change my usage and go online.”* Others noted that there are very few librarians on site to serve customers. It was not surprising that focus groups suggested that the library staff needs to reflect the population served, especially Hispanics.

Building Size and Features. A few participants mentioned that their library was too small, especially in light of recent population growth in the area. For example, the Montbello area has seen explosive growth over the past 10 to 15 years with growth in Green Valley Ranch and other areas around the airport. Ross-Barnum was cited as being too small as well. Other facility related issues were the lack of bilingual signage, desire for separate areas for children and adults, increased computer access, bigger express check-out areas and more counter space to stack your books when using the self-check out. Lack of computers is a big barrier for household without access at home. Others noted having to wait in line to check out books, at times up to 10-15 minutes, due to lack of staff. One participant wondered how accessible the buildings were for parents with more than one young child, as in *“can you bring a stroller, can you nurse, keep your eyes on the kids at all times AND still have a good experience with the kids?”*

Resources. Other infrastructure issues mentioned as barriers included: an insufficient number of computers, a sometimes confusing card catalog; seemingly long waits for a book that is on hold; waiting for a new book or DVD and not being able to renew it; and returned books showing up as not-returned when checking one’s account.

CULTURAL BARRIERS

The Spanish language groups held at the Ford-Warren and Woodbury branch libraries revealed several important cultural barriers more unique to the Hispanic population in general than those of recent immigrants in particular. Quotes have been used to express the issue in the individuals own voice based upon their personal experience.

Not part of the person's culture

- The moderator asked a non-user why she had not used the library and she said, *“For lack of culture. I come from Mexico. When I would go to the library there it was only because I had to study something in particular. I lived an accelerated life, and I only went to the library when I had to. Here, I think that I am just beginning to get involved. Yes, as I find out more ... it makes me want to go. When he speaks of comfortable seating and everything. It makes me want to go. I did go to a nearby library, but only to get my library card, nothing more. I have never gone saying, ‘Now I’m going to read.’”*
- *“Yes, it is our culture. We only were taught to go when we had homework. But we were not educated that a library was a place to go for enjoyment.”*
- *“Some of them are coming from countries where they don’t have libraries, it’s an alien concept, they’ve never been able to check things out, they are used to going to Blockbuster and pay to rent.”*

When discussing this issue the following dialogue occurred.

Hispanic Woman: I was hoping that he would come instead of me so that he could gain more experience, understanding and orientation about these things; so he could “get with it.” I am against how he doesn’t like to study and he is not interested in anything.

Hispanic Man: He just wants to work and save money, right?

Hispanic Woman: Yes. And I want to access the Internet, to speak English and to be able to give my children a better education and many things.

Hispanic Man: That’s the kind that just wants to work and make money. That’s a situation not of “They don’t let me,” but “I choose not to.”

Lack of knowledge and awareness of the library

- *“I think that many people aren’t informed about what a library offers. I think that if the library produces propaganda, especially targeting the adults and youth...and I don’t say children because they have to go along with what the parents say... put ads on radio and TV, especially during the soap opera (novelas) that say, “Come, come and bring your children!”*
- *“One has fear. One thinks that they won’t speak Spanish. They don’t know what to expect. Of course, they don’t know what a public library is about. Is it a government office?”*

Obtaining a library card

- *“Needing a photo ID to get a library card. Many are here illegally and don’t have one. Also, all the regulations around getting a library card are not clear.”*
- *“They ask for proof of where you live. So often many adults live together in one home, like cousins, etc. but the bills are in one person’s name. So one person can get a card but the others don’t have a way to get one.”*
- *“Some people do like to read and would like to check out books, but they can’t get a library card. They don’t have the ID.”*
- *“If you don’t have your library card with you, then you can check out books with your driver’s license. But I know many people who go to the library to read books, but they can’t check them out because they don’t have a driver’s license.”*

Some married women are not permitted to go out much

- *“My husband doesn’t let me go outside the home. He did study and everything but he just doesn’t let me come. If I comb my hair or put on make-up he gets angry with me. I can’t go out.”*
- *“They don’t let me.” (The moderator notes that this phrase culturally means her husband will not let her.)*

INCREASING USAGE

Focus group participants offered a variety of ideas to increase usage, many of which address the barriers discussed in the prior section. In some cases, a brief idea was mentioned and in other cases a more detailed strategy was suggested. The reader should note that the groups did not have time to rank or prioritize ideas, and thus the ideas are offered to stimulate thinking and confirm plans already underway.

General Awareness and Outreach

- Be more “public” by letting the general public know it exists and about the services and materials that are available. Everybody watches the news, like to see the weather forecast. They could make announcements then
- Let people know about the programs through radio and television. I’ve seen promotions like “Read a million words in a year.” They should do this bilingually so the Hispanics could learn more. They should target the Hispanic population, because we are going to be the ones to use it the most
- Schools should send information home to the parents asking them to help the children find certain books. That way the parents can begin to get involved in the libraries. Some of them will never go otherwise
- Put information in the bus and in public places like that. When you are riding the bus, you must see that Denver bus service is the best in the country about 30 times. So if you read that there will be classes at such and such time, it is going to stick with you. Then if someone asks you where to go for English classes, they will remember it is at the library
- Increase interaction with the community. Go out into the community more
- Remind people of the library’s services. Market the library’s services via Internet, television, flyers; pop stars and rappers (for teens). Market to every home in Denver
- Entertain. Show movie. Talk afterwards. Show books
- Hook them in with unique venues

Target Market - Adults

- Develop partnerships with corporations. Do something for adults. They have something going on there

Target Market - Parents

- Offer joint family literacy programs for parents and children together
- Help families bring more books into the home – “this is a book I can keep at home”
- Provide education for parents on how children learn using books. That reading the same book over and over is good for kids, as it is a key tool in helping them build vocabulary
- Host a “books on tape” club for parents who can’t read
- Make sure parents have something to do while kids are at the library. Offer a listening center for parents to listen to CD’s while kids are reading
- Let parents take old magazines home to encourage them to read at home
- Offer more activities. Reach out to schools and day cares through events such as story time. Get kids excited who then get their parents to come
- Host events where older kids and parents can talk about world issues topics like the environment, economics, investments...”real world issues” and their impact on their lives – learning through discussion. Look more towards business end, such as understanding of economics and the importance of investments at a younger age. Important things that impact your life
- Appeal to parents who are non-readers and answer the question, “why should I go to the library?” Appeal to them to come in and use pictures to tell a story to their child, through the conversation they can help their kids build their vocabulary – let parents know they don’t have to “read” to read to their kids, if you can help build their vocabulary that’s what matters
- Provide better control, such as a security guard. Adults do not like to come because of the chaos. We want to keep the kids here too

Target Market - Children and Youth

- Help kids learn how to use the library. Do whatever we possibly can to encourage parents to bring in their kids
- Hook up with Hollywood and make it cool to go to the library
- Jefferson County has a baby library card program – starts them off with a book, parents can take the baby in and get them a library card, not as many questions asked
- Children running around, apparently we are not meeting the needs of the children. Need areas for children and adults. Kids are in the library, which is a positive thing. Want to keep the kids here. Want all the models being served

Target Market - Hispanics

- Provide an instruction manual on how to use the library
- Provide an organizational chart so we can know who to go to for help
- Create a bilingual map that shows where to find books, etc.
- Hire more bilingual staff
- Offer bilingual introductory sessions to new people on how to use the library, with a tour
- Use universal signage that can be read in any language to meet the needs of a multi-cultural community such as the one near Ross-Barnum
- Have volunteers that act as ambassadors/greeters and who could address questions. This would build a sense of community

Transportation

- Provide a B-Line that will take people to the libraries so we do not have to worry about parking

Hours

- Increase hours to increase accessibility

Facility

- Have more meeting rooms to serve community
- Provide clean, quiet and comfortable environments
- Bigger/better library that is closer to Green Valley Ranch (Montbello)

Resources and Materials

- Have software applications such as Word and Excel
- Stay updated on new materials, books and DVD's
- Books on tape – Everyone can listen and then open up discussions on the topics covered
- Have recorders to take/check out with tapes

FOCUS GROUP #1 HELD AT THE CENTRAL LIBRARY

The first focus group conducted for the Denver Public Library was held at the Central Library on February 22, 2005 from 6:00-8:00 P.M.

GROUP PROFILE

Number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Males • 7 Females
Age Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid 20s to Late 50s
Average Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39
Number of Participants Married	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2
Number of Participants with Children or Grandchildren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 (ages range from 12-22 years old), both participants have children 18 & under
Race/Ethnicity (As Self-Identified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White (7), Native American (1), Asian (1) and Other (1)
Where Participants Live (Neighborhood Where Known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Hill (2), Downtown (2), SE Denver, Sloan's Lake, Highlands, and Cherry Creek
Level of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School Graduate (1); Some College, But No Degree (1); Associate Degree (2); Bachelor's Degree (3); and Master's Degree or Higher (4)
Top Library Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central and Ross-University Hills
Frequency of Library Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the focus group participants visit the Main Library most frequently (on a weekly basis). The participants use the Branch Libraries on more of a monthly basis and rarely use the DPL online.
Library Services They Utilize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the whole, the participants are using the Library for a variety of reasons. All but one participant uses the Library to check out materials like books, videos, DVDs and music. Well over half of the focus group participants visit the Library to ask for expert help from a librarian or Library staff person and to research the Library's rare and unique materials. The other preferred services are the use of computers for email, Internet access and research and to access electronic materials from home, school or work. None of the participants go to the Library to spend fun, quality time with their children.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from this focus group are presented below. These findings were identified through a combination of group observation, review of materials specific to this group, including pre-group surveys, and synthesis and analysis of those materials.

REACTIONS TO THE DIFFERENTIATED SERVICE MODELS

- Initially, the focus group participants preferred the “New Demand” direction the library offered. However, when the moderator offered the option of being “in the middle” of “Old Emphasis” and “New Demand,” most people related better to this option. The participants envisioned floating between the book and text-centered collections and the computing, web services and popular materials. One participant who preferred the middle option said, *“I do more classical research.”* Another participant who supported the “Old Emphasis” option said, *“I’m a writer and I’m only interested in research and all I need is text.”* Another participant strictly uses the online services and indicated that he has *“gone completely virtual.”*
- Overall, the participants envisioned the new models to benefit the community. One participant noted that the service delivery models *“cater to different needs.”* While some did not see themselves visiting some of the new models, they did not voice discontent about the models. When asked about their initial reactions to the models one participant said, *“It’s probably a good idea, but the one you want is probably going to be the furthest away.”* Other participants indicated excitement about multiple models because they envisioned themselves visiting the new models. When discussing the Contemporary Model one middle-aged woman said, *“This would fit my lifestyle because I’m in my 50s and I would like to check out books and DVDs fast. I can do my research on the Internet.”* Another younger female agreed by saying, *“This sounds awesome because I do well with displays. It’s much easier than looking for it in the stacks.”*
- The participants from the first focus group prefer the Contemporary Library. They envision this model to resemble a bookstore and they accurately identified the specific market to be served. They imagine busy professionals, students, people who work from home, and people who want to find new books visiting the Contemporary Library. The participants visualize this model to be more of a place to *“just hang out,”* as said by one participant rather than it being more of a place to conduct research. One female participant who has utilized the Schlessman Library said, *“It’s a very good lay out, it’s Barnes & Noble-ish kind of feel, open and relaxed. I see a lot of people hanging out. There are a lot of windows and sun.”* Furthermore, people especially like the wireless access in the library.

MISPERCEPTIONS OF THE NEW SERVICE MODELS

- **Classic Library.** When the participants were asked what they thought about the Central Library model, only one younger female said, *“I’m really impressed that people come here from all over the world to visit our library.”* Other than that initial comment, the targeted market for the Central Library was not identified by this focus group. While the group recognized that downtown users would continue to utilize the Central Library because of convenience, no one considered the Central Library as a cultural hub and a resource to be utilized by out-of-state visitors. In addition, one participant noted that, *“It would fill a niche for Internet cafes,”* which is more of an intention for the Contemporary Model. While some participants believe that the

Central Library caters to everyone, even the whole family, one younger male participant said, the Central Library *“may not attract people in the bar scene, but a little more wholesome [of a group].”*

- **Learning and Language Library.** One female participant had difficulty with the name Learning and Language. She said, *“When I think of languages, I don’t just think of Spanish, you’re talking about foreign-born peoples. I think of other languages as well.”* The Library may want to be more specific with the naming of the Learning and Language Library if the intention is to emphasize Spanish language materials.
- **Classic Library.** One significant element that emerged from the Classic Library discussion was confusion around its name. One older male participant indicated that the model is *“a good part of the whole. I don’t know why they call this Classic, instead of family. This is more of a family library than a classic library.”* In addition, another participant agreed by saying, *“I see the Central Library as the Classic Model.”*

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

- The focus group participants provided different perspectives regarding how far they would be willing to travel to their preferred library model. One middle-aged male participant in particular would not change the distance he travels because he is strictly an online user. He will drive to any branch simply to pick up the book he had reserved online. Another participant in her 20s said, *“This is what I’m used to. I would go to the closest or most convenient.”* Finally, one respondent said, *“I would travel to the Central Library. I wouldn’t go there [Classic Library].”* Overall, the participants are willing to travel an average of 25 minutes to their preferred library model.

IMPACT ON USAGE AND BARRIERS

- The majority of this group would not be impacted by model implementation. The people who did not like a particular model found interest in other models or the online library. This group was divided among those who both utilize the online services and visit the libraries briefly to pick up reserved materials or those who visit the library because it is a fun place to hang out. Overall, this group’s library usage would not be negatively impacted.

THE PACE OF CHANGE

- Once more, this group was divided about how quickly the library should implement the service delivery models. One segment of the group expressed excitement about the change while others forecasted resistance to change. One participant said, *“People with families and kids would be more excited about it than older guys like me.”* Moreover, one participant recognized that there might be a resistance to change when *“people have grown to like something.”* One participant said that the *“Hispanic-centered”* library should be implemented as soon as possible, while another participant revealed that, *“In general, people are resistant to change.”* This group recommended opening a pilot model first to obtain feedback and to ensure that it is addressing the community needs. Another participant said, *“For DPL Online, the sooner the better. I’d implement it as soon as they have the resources. People will be using it.”* The majority of the group agreed to implement the DPL Online services.

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

- The very first comment made by a younger male participant regarding the Learning and Language Library was that he would like to learn Spanish. Another participant agreed by saying, *“I would like to see more bilingual emphasis than one or the other.”* Rather than simply teaching English as a Second Language classes, participants would be interested in visiting this model if they had the opportunity to learn Spanish. This model would reflect Denver-area schools because of the bilingual emphasis; therefore, this model may offer a *“more comfortable environment for learning,”* as noted by one of the participants.
- The focus group participants envision the Youth Inspiration Library to be more of a daycare center. One female participant said, *“The Library needs to think about this. They need to address if a librarian is taking over parent responsibility and be a babysitter.”* The group appreciated the Kids Book Club because *“it’s trying to foster independent thought in children”* and they envision librarians being *“good to point kids in the right direction about what books they want to read.”* However, there is concern that the role of a librarian would change if they had to be a babysitter as well.

FOCUS GROUP #2 HELD AT VIRGINIA VILLAGE BRANCH LIBRARY

The second focus group conducted for the Denver Public Library was held at the Virginia Village Branch on February 23, 2005 from 6:00-8:00 P.M.

GROUP PROFILE

Number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Males • 6 Females
Age Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low 30s to Late 70s
Average Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 61
Number of Participants Married	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 (one separated)
Number of Participants with Children or Grandchildren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 (ages range from 2 –56 years old), 3 participants have children 18 & under
Race/Ethnicity (As Self-Identified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White (9), Hispanic (1), and Other/Persian (1)
Where Participants Live (Neighborhood Where Known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook Park, Cherry Creek Meadows, Virginia Village, and Tamarac Square
Level of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School Graduate (1); Some College, But No Degree (4); Associate Degree (3); Bachelor's Degree (1); and Master's Degree or Higher (2)
Top Library Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia Village, Ross-University Hills, Central, and Hampden
Frequency of Library Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the focus group participants visit branch libraries most frequently. About half of the participants do not utilize the online library services. Finally, the majority of focus group participants visit the Central Library once a year.
Library Services They Utilize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 11 participants use the Library to check out materials like books, videos, DVDs and music. Over half of the focus group participants visit the Library to ask for expert help from a librarian or Library staff person. The other preferred service is the use of computers for email, Internet access and research. None of the participants go to the library to help their children with homework.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from this focus group are presented below. These findings were identified through a combination of group observation, review of materials specific to this group, including pre-group surveys, and synthesis and analysis of those materials.

REACTIONS TO THE DIFFERENTIATED SERVICE MODELS

- Of the six service models discussed, the group confirmed that the models' intended users were those identified by the Denver Public Library. For example, the group identified that people doing research and people with an interest in Western History would prefer the Central Library, while the *“audio visual aspect [of the Contemporary Model] might appeal to the younger groups.”* As such, they recognized that the models would meet the needs of different people based on their age, language skills, family composition or personal/professional development needs. This group also recognized that *“the Hispanic population could really benefit from this [Learning & Language] model.”* Similarly, the parents with young children in the group were excited about the proposed models. Overall, the participants believed that the Hispanic Community and parents would be excited about the proposed models.
- While there was a positive response to some elements of the service models as noted above, there were areas of concern as well. This group of predominantly older and middle-age users did not see themselves represented in the four branch models. Several participants expressed concerns about the senior population being ignored. One participant said, *“I think it's great to want to have kids get more involved, but what about the senior population?”* Another participant agreed and said, *“I just think the older end of the spectrum wants the quiet, comfortable place to sit and read.”*
- **Contemporary Library and Classic Library.** After reviewing each of the service delivery models, several participants regarded the models as good concepts, especially the Contemporary Library and the Classic Library models. One respondent asked, *“If there was another model up there and we said ‘branch library the way it is now,’ how many of you would vote for that as being your favorite type of branch?”* The majority of the group (nine) voted to keep the library that resembles their current branch. Combining the factors of average age of the group (61 years old) with their reasons for library use leads one to believe that this group does not want the library to stray far from its traditional definition, as the current service meets their needs for both traditional “Old Emphasis” services such as books as well as more current “New Demand” services like computing.
- **Learning and Language Library.** The participants recognized that the new service delivery models would serve underserved populations. One Hispanic participant noted that the Learning and Language Library would benefit the Hispanic community. However he said, *“My concern is that it would look and feel below standard. I work with this population around civil rights, and I wouldn't want this model to be second rate just because of this population. I would hope that it would be inviting to the Hispanic community and that Denver cared enough to give this population a comfortable, inviting place to come. It would be important for the population to know that we care.”* Furthermore, other concerns surfaced around the models catering to underserved populations; however, those populations' ability to access the models would be limited. One participant acknowledged that transportation could be an issue for some populations. He said, *“The cost of gas that's going up all*

the time. You know, with poorer people, they're not going to be able to manage it." In addition, the group recognized that not all people have access to the Internet at home and therefore, would not be utilizing the online services.

MISPERCEPTIONS OF THE NEW SERVICE MODELS

- **Youth Inspiration.** While discussing the Youth Inspiration Model, the group's feelings were divided. Those participants in favor of the model were the participants with young children. One participant noted that, *"Creating these models just caters to individual groups of people and would encourage them, like kids, to read. So I find it great."* Another participant agreed by saying, *"I love that idea, because I really think it does tie in so profoundly to the development of the child's self-esteem. I could see a kid going to this library and going home and saying, 'Mommy or Daddy! Guess what I did by myself today?' Huge!"* Other participants disagreed. One respondent said, *"That's a community center"* when referring to the Youth Inspiration Model. Another older male participant said, *"Libraries are basically for books and there is nothing like going down a row and having a book in your hand to look at, and then continuing to do that. This type of thing sounds like kindergarten and lower grades, which I enjoyed when I was there, but we certainly didn't do that at the library...that's a waste of money. Let the public schools waste their money in that regard, but that's not a library."*
- **Classic Library.** According to focus group participants, there was some confusion around the Classic Library title. The group agreed that the actual model does not fit what they consider to be *"classic,"* because they consider it their current library or *"what we grew up with,"* as one respondent said. The participants offered other titles, for example, *"The Family-Focused Library"* or *"Family Oriented Library."* Another concern about the Classic Model is that it appears to be geared too much toward families and children, rather than making it apparent that they offer popular adult materials as well. One respondent said, *"The description does not say a word about adult books."*

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

- Various focus group participants said that they would be willing to travel 10 miles to go to their desired library. When asked how far they would be willing to travel to the preferred branch, one respondent said, *"As far as it takes, but I wouldn't go as often. But I would still go, because it's important to me."* Overall, the participants are willing to travel an average of 7.8 miles or 25 minutes to their preferred branch.

IMPACT ON USAGE AND BARRIERS

- The focus group participants are already traveling to various libraries to get what they need, so this may be an indication that library usage may not be negatively impacted if other models are implemented in their surrounding area. As mentioned, though, users may drive as far as it takes to get to their preferred library, but they may not go as often.
- While the group recognized that all of the models would benefit a certain population, every proposed model was envisioned to be noisy. One participant suggested sound proofing the walls so that there are quiet rooms available to read and relax. This may be a potential barrier to Library, usage because current users indicated a desire for a quiet space and do not envision finding that space in the four branch models proposed.

- Most barriers identified by the participants were related to the Library’s infrastructure (i.e., parking, hours of operation, and ability to use a computer for Internet access). One other barrier identified was related to language and *“the staff needing to reflect the population that they serve, especially Hispanics,”* as one participant noted.

THE PACE OF CHANGE

- The focus group participants would not like to see a fast change from the current library to the proposed models. One respondent said to wait, *“Three years because I like things the way they are today.”* Others said to wait 10 years and suggested piloting some of the models. As one participant said, *“They should try one service model at a time. They should try it and see what the response is after six or eighteen months.”* This may be due to the demographics of the surrounding neighborhoods. The intended users of the four proposed branch models do not match the demographics of the southeastern Denver neighborhoods represented in this focus group. The households in the Southeastern segment of Denver consist of predominantly older, White residents, according to a map of 76 Denver neighborhoods.³ One participant recognized that, *“It seems that the demographics that you listed below don’t match or reflect the services the library wants to start. Why are there so many kid and family-friendly models when that’s not what the demographics are telling us to have? I think they need to reconsider.”*

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

- As mentioned, the demographics of the group and the surrounding community represent the older segment of the population, beyond Baby Boomers. While this population appreciates the Library’s attempt to connect children to the Library, they indicated that they feel ignored. This is especially significant considering that the older segment of the population is frequently visiting local branches, and will be growing with the impending retirement of the Baby Boom generation.
- The group was aware of the Library’s financial state and continuously questioned where the funding would come from for the models. As a result of this group’s concerns, the Library may want to address this issue directly as it launches model sites.

³ The Piton Foundation. Neighborhood Facts: A Data Book on the Status of Denver Neighborhoods from Census 2000, August 2004.

FOCUS GROUP #3 HELD AT PARK HILL BRANCH LIBRARY

The third focus group conducted for the Denver Public Library was held at the Park Hill Branch on February 28, 2005 from 6:00-8:00 P.M.

GROUP PROFILE

Number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Males • 5 Females
Age Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low 30s to Mid 70s
Average Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 53
Number of Participants Married	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7
Number of Participants with Children or Grandchildren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 (ages ranging from 8 –51 years old), 4 participants with kids 18 & under
Race/Ethnicity (As Self-Identified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White (6), African American (2), Asian (3) and Other (1)
Where Participants Live (Neighborhood Where Known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stapleton, near Schlessman Library, and Park Hill
Level of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School Graduate (1); Some College, But No Degree (2); Associate Degree (2); Bachelor's Degree (2); and Master's Degree or Higher (5)
Top Library Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schlessman, Central, Park Hill, Pauline Robinson, and Ross-Cherry Creek
Frequency of Library Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of participants use a branch library on either a daily or weekly basis. Usage of the Central Library is evenly split between daily, monthly, yearly and never. Finally, seven participants take advantage of the on-line library services and their visits range from daily to monthly.
Library Services They Utilize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 12 of the participants use the Library to check out materials like books, videos, DVDs and music. The next most popular service was to go relax and read. Using the computer for email, Internet access and research and accessing electronic material from home, school and work were tied as the third preferred service by participants.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from this focus group are presented below. These findings were identified through a combination of group observation, review of materials specific to this group, including pre-group surveys and synthesis and analysis of those materials.

REACTIONS TO THE DIFFERENTIATED SERVICE MODELS

- **Contemporary Library.** While the Contemporary Library was the most popular with this group, several of the participants commented about concerns on what the actual draw was for this model. One participant said, “[It] brings people in but not for the traditional reasons people come to the library.” Throughout the discussion on this model, group members made several comparisons to Blockbuster and Starbucks. Several other participants asked what the difference is between this model and a bookstore, “if you want to go to the library you go there to browse the shelves not get coffee.” The father of elementary-aged children also noted, “The atmosphere encourages socializing, but if you are trying to study or work it could be distracting.” However, one participant did mention that they find the layout to be “new and refreshing.”
- **Learning and Language Library.** The group liked the Learning and Language Library but no one felt that it would meet their personal needs. However they did feel that it could be an asset to the community. An older white male noted, “This type of library is exactly what we need in Denver, especially in the minority areas to increase participation and encourage participation of children...this attracts kids (and) attracts parents that need to get involved with their kids in a learning situation...a tremendous addition.” The GED classes would also be another key addition for the community. An older white female believed, “There are kids that are embarrassed to take the GED, (and) they might be more likely to follow through if they can come to the library where they would be less likely to see someone they know.” The group also liked the fact that the focus of the library was back on learning. “Offering movies like Blockbuster is not the answer to bring kids into the library, the purpose is learning and this is a perfect example, plus the added benefit of the adult learning opportunities,” said a group participant.
- **Classic Library.** The Classic Library was the second favorite in this focus group. Overall, the group liked the family focus however several participants said they viewed this model as more of a traditional model than a family model. An older white male said,

“I don’t think the library, as we knew the library when we were growing up, can draw kids today; can draw anybody but us. We’ve got to do things to the library to make it attractive to kids. Start using it, and then use it throughout life. We didn’t have as much to distract us when I was growing up. Only place I could go besides playing outside with my buddies. Get them used to it, involved in it and then graduate from this type of library to another.”

He then went on to say, “As long as the rest is there too, I don’t expect a huge research section in a neighborhood library but I do expect adequate books for both kids and adults and some research services.”
- **Youth Inspiration Library.** Only one participant, a single white male, really liked the Youth Inspiration Library. He referred to it as the “YMCA of libraries – it could help get kids physically

active.” However, the remaining participants did not see much difference between this model and the Classic model, *“both are focusing on youth, its just changing words around but basically the same concept.”* Another participant compared it to Parks and Recreation with books added, not a standalone library. A father in the group also voiced some concern about the library becoming a day care center, *“it’s a babysitting type of library geared to single parents. I don’t want my tax dollars paying to care for kids.”* Another participant countered by suggesting that *“it should be incorporated into a book mobile – encourage kids to go read under a tree.”*

MISPERCEPTIONS OF THE NEW SERVICE MODELS

- **Central, Classic and Learning and Language Libraries.** Participants got hung up on the titles of three of the service models. One participant felt that the Central Library title was deceiving. She said, *“The collection is so dispersed throughout the branches, it’s not really centralized, it’s more de-centered...(you) may have to travel or wait if a book isn’t there.”* The Classic model also confused several participants. An older female stated that a *“Classic brings to mind a quiet library not a kid-friendly library.”* Many participants felt a better name would be a Family Library. Learning and Language was the third title that the participant’s felt was misleading. A female participant suggested that it be called a *“Spanish Library”* since it seems to be geared more towards serving the Hispanic community as opposed to a true learning and language resource for the entire community.
- Another consideration in presenting these models should be financial funding. Adequate funding for the new service models was also a concern for this group. Regarding the Learning and Language model one participant suggested, *“Have specialized people doing these services but offer them at the library rather than have the library do it, the library could save its resources but offer space to existing programs.”* Another participant also said, *“I don’t think the library is ready for more usage at this point, you need staff, hours and facilities.”* The group also asked several questions on the redistribution of library resources. They wanted to know if all the libraries will be changed or will each one have certain aspects emphasized.

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

- In order to get away from the Youth Inspiration model, eight participants said they would drive five to ten miles. Several participants also noted that they already drive cross-town anyways. A Black male with high school-aged children commented that, *“Park Hill is near my home, but I pick up my wife from work and I’ll wait for her at the library across from her work if I’m early (Blair-Caldwell) or go to Schlessman which is near my work.”* Time was another factor that played into participant’s willingness to travel. According to a single male, *“I’m impatient...when I want a book I don’t want to wait.”* He went on to say that he often would drive to Boulder to use Norlin Library at the University of Colorado. However, several participants also said that they would use the DPL Online services to order books and have them sent to their local branch. A young female said, *“I’m lazy, I like to reserve books and have them sent to Park Hill, that way I don’t have to drive around town.”*

IMPACT ON USAGE AND BARRIERS

- Surprisingly, 10 participants said that if their local branch turned into a Youth Inspiration library it would not diminish their usage, they would just figure a way around it by using online services or going to other libraries. An older White female stated, *“[It] depends on what you mean by*

usage, if I'm using it online because I don't want to go to the library because of kids throwing spit balls that's a barrier but I would just change my usage and go on-line." Another participant said they felt this way about Park Hill. They felt the Park Hill Branch Library fit into the Classic model and commented that, "It's useful but doesn't meet my needs right now other than just stopping by to pick-up and drop off something."

- A father with elementary-age children had concerns on whether the new models would distract from the traditional use of libraries. He felt that when you go to a library, "you can go to work or look something up to learn...(but you) don't want to deal with all of the kids...there is too much stimulus with lots of kids running around, Schlessman is exciting, it's like candy to me, it's cool and I get excited but it's not stuff I really need or want." Another participant, a young Asian female, reiterated these concerns.

"If I picked one I'd pick Central because I'm so used to a traditional library. As the library tries to change and evolve, which they should consider, they (might) do so much trying to inspire the youth then they might start isolating classical users because I just finally returned to the library system. I chose Park Hill and I get overwhelmed with all these kids running around. Now, I just use it to pick up and drop off."

- Loud kids were commonly identified as a barrier. Another participant that worked at an elementary school and had high schoolers at home noted "kids are loud, rude and socializing, there is a difference between using the library and just being there, I had to break up a fight with kids arguing over using the computers."
- Good library management was another barrier noted by participants. According to the group, this involved making sure there are enough materials to go around and maintain waitlists so that people were not waiting forever to get books. As well as ensuring that they have enough people on staff to help patrons and monitor the various resources to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to find what they need (i.e. computers, bilingual staff).
- Many participants felt that the online services are crucial to the future of the Library. One young participant noted that she can "stay at home and have dinner and do this while eating, that way I don't have to go anywhere after work." However, the group also emphasized that it has to be done well. A female participant said, "Change the user interface if you are going to expand it, I hate entering my library card 500 times, it's a pain."

THE PACE OF CHANGE

- The focus group participants were reluctant to endorse any changes to their current branch. In response to changing his local branch to a Youth Inspiration model, one participant said, "It would bother me that they did it in the first place, because obviously they didn't think about it enough or do enough demographic research...demographics will be vital." Another participant said that they "wouldn't like it if they went all out in a model but if they just had an emphasis (of that model's aspects) in might be okay." The concept of an emphasis rather than a complete model was popular with this group. Another participant drove this point home when they said, "It's an artificial way of determining things, is it a little bit of something or is there a balance." A few participants did acknowledge a need for the Learning and Language model but they cautioned to "work from obvious needs."

- A father in the group was also concerned about how the change would affect the community. He enjoyed walking to the library *“not only to get books but interact with community members, the community gets built here.”*

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

- In the Learning and Language model participants suggested that it should include English to Spanish classes as well as ESL classes. Several participants also saw the opportunity for other languages (German and French) and well as other subjects (math and science).

FOCUS GROUP #4 HELD AT DECKER BRANCH LIBRARY

The fourth focus group conducted for the Denver Public Library was held at the Decker Branch Library on February 28, 2005 from 6:00-8:00 P.M.

GROUP PROFILE

Number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Males • 5 Females
Age Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low 20s to Late 70s
Average Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50
Number of Participants Married	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4
Number of Participants with Children or Grandchildren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 (ages range from 35 –52 years old), The ages for grandchildren were not provided
Race/Ethnicity (As Self-Identified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White (11)
Where Participants Live (Neighborhood Where Known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washington Park (2), Bonnie Brae, Botanic Gardens, Baker (2), Capital Hill, near University of Denver, near Ross-Broadway Branch
Level of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some College, But No Degree (4); Associate Degree (2); and Bachelor's Degree (5)
Top Library Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central, Ross-Cherry Creek, Ross-University Hills, Ross-Broadway, and Eugene Field
Frequency of Library Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the focus group participants are visiting branch libraries on a weekly basis. Over half of the group indicated either never use or did not respond to using the online Library.
Library Services They Utilize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 11 participants use the Library to check out materials like books, videos, DVDs and music. Furthermore, two-thirds of the focus group participants visit the Library to: ask for expert help from a librarian or Library staff person; use of computers for email, internet access and research; relax and read; and research the Library's rare and unique materials. Few or none of the participants go to the library to: attend programs, classes and children's events; spend quality time with their children; help their children with homework; and attend meetings of community groups.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from this focus group are presented below. These findings were identified through a combination of group observation, review of materials specific to this group, including pre-group surveys, and synthesis and analysis of those materials.

REACTIONS TO THE DIFFERENTIATED SERVICE MODELS

- The focus group participants equally represent the “Old Emphasis” direction and the “New Demand” direction. The participants who related to the “Old Emphasis” direction were mostly retired individuals who are not comfortable with computers and navigating the Internet. When referring to the “New Demand” direction, one participant said, *“Those services weren’t there 20 years ago. No computers. Smaller branches are the [most] affected. May be a good idea, as long as they put the ones I wanted near my house.”* One retired woman said, *“There is an overemphasis on technology. Doesn’t appeal to me or I don’t think it would appeal to families either.”* Another participant said that there is a *“lack of emphasis on books. I resent this because there is a population that doesn’t use computers.”* A middle-aged gentleman said, *“I would spend more time there [Contemporary Library] because of coffee. I could hang out there for hours. I can see that people who get there by 11 a.m. wouldn’t have a place to sit”* because of its popularity. Other participants believe the Wi-Fi service would be extremely beneficial in all of the libraries. One younger male participant noted, *“That would be amazing. It would alleviate the use of computers. They should put Wi-Fi in all libraries.”*
- A discrepancy in responses surfaced in regard to the Learning and Language Model. Some participants believe this model should be implemented as part of the curriculum in school. *“It angers me that they aren’t learning it in school. Anger because what are these schools teaching? Because they must not be learning it in school and why does the library have to do this,”* as questioned by one participant. On the other hand, one younger male participant who was a former public school teacher said, *“I think this is a great idea. Kids need this because we are all better off as a community if children are better educated. This could be an extension of school.”* Another participant noted that this model could be inviting for school dropouts. She said, *“They might feel more comfortable here than in school.”*
- The overall theme that emerged from the focus group was the dislike of over specialization. One younger gentleman provided an analogy by stating, *“At the Tattered Cover, you can find anything about anything and at Barnes & Noble you only see the best sellers, cookbooks, pop or the bubble gum of the book world.”* Similarly, one older male participant said, *“I’d hate for the library to be all things to all people. I don’t want them to start carrying groceries. It makes more sense to spread these out over the community. We can’t afford to do the same for everyone.”*

MISPERCEPTIONS OF THE NEW SERVICE MODELS

- **Classic Library.** The participants perceived the Classic model title as misleading. One participant said, *“How can videos and DVDs be named Classic?”* Another participant noted, *“I see nothing that is ‘classic’ that’s on that list. So, the word classic is misleading. Classic is Shakespeare, Polk, Dickens, books, novels, classics, periodicals, history, serious nonfiction and fiction.”* The participants believe that the Eugene Field Branch best resembles a classic library, because it has

reading material for everyone. The participants see the proposed Classic model as a “*children’s library*,” which should be named appropriately. In addition, the participants did not view the Classic Library as a library. “*If it’s not book-based, like arts and crafts, then it isn’t a library.*”

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

- The average travel time this focus group is willing to spend getting to their preferred library model is 21 minutes. The majority of the group indicated being willing to travel; however, two participants did point out that their library usage would decrease if their preferred model was further away. One participant noted, “More time commuting means less time in the Library.” Another participant said, “*This would decrease me going because I (take the) bus.*”

IMPACT ON USAGE AND BARRIERS

- In general, the focus group participants noted the sociological risks or concerns of the libraries becoming segregated entities. A young female stated, “*It’s almost like having segregated libraries. And, everyone wants to hang out with what their own type is and that’s not what a library is. Central is for upper class and well educated, Contemporary is for clique group that should be at Barnes & Noble, and Language and Learning is for Hispanics and dropouts.*” More specifically, the focus group participants appreciate the diversity they see when they visit the Library. Many expressed concern that the Contemporary model would not offer a diverse experience. One younger female participant said, “*I don’t like the idea of losing the feel of a library. It’s a very special place. I don’t get that going to a bookstore.*” Furthermore, one participant said, “*A library should be a microcosm of the world.*” As a result of not being exposed to their typical experiences, the participants may not visit the library as much.
- The participants viewed the Learning and Language, Classic and Youth Inspiration libraries as noisy. When discussing the Learning and Language model, one participant said that he envisions “*kids and teens running around making noise. This would increase noise because of too many kids. Kids take over and get rid of us old geezers.*” There are further concerns about the amount of space the current libraries have to absorb the proposed models. “*Physically, there’s not enough room. If you’re going to have this, there isn’t enough to (room to separate the noisy activities from the quiet ones). There’s not enough room upstairs. This would need to have a segregated area,*” noted one participant. The library would need to ensure that the amount of noise is monitored in the library as well as obtaining sufficient space for users to maintain their current library usage.

THE PACE OF CHANGE

- The senior focus group participants cautioned on how quickly the Library should implement the new models. One participant said, “*Perhaps we should talk about this pace. We need to adjust if this happens too rapidly, especially for older people. We need more time to adjust.*” Another older female stated that, “*I would be the most vociferous complainer if my branch was removed.*” Another participant said, “*If too much happens too fast, I’d stop going.*” Not all of the resistance to change was coming from the older crowd. One younger female participant stated that the Library should be clear on how the Library would be restructured. She said, “*Percentages of the library (space that would be used for each type of service) would be important to know. If I have to give up only 20 percent of my space for the kids, that would be okay, but if I have to give up 70 percent, I’m not okay with that.*” Overall, participants agreed they would prefer reinstating the extended hours of operation prior to implementing new models.

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

- The focus group participants were mindful of the Classic and Youth Inspiration Library's role in the community. Multiple participants envision these models as a potential babysitting service. One younger male participant stated, *"It would be fun as long as it wasn't a babysitter."* While one participant recognized that the Youth Inspiration Library is *"a good way to introduce kids to the library as a fun place to go,"* another participant asked, *"How many parents are going to use this as a babysitting service?"*

FOCUS GROUP #5 HELD AT BLAIR-CALDWELL AFRICAN AMERICAN RESEARCH LIBRARY

The fifth focus group conducted for the Denver Public Library was held at the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library on March 1, 2005 from 5:00-7:00 P.M with representatives from local at-risk youth programs acting as a proxy for these youth and their families.

GROUP PROFILE

Number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Males • 5 Females
Age Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early 30s to Early 50s
Race/Ethnicity (As Self-Identified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White (4) and African American (3)
At- Risk Youth Organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School librarian for Steadman Elementary (DPS), Bright Beginnings, Clayton Family Head Start, Glenarm Recreation Center, Denver Parks and Recreation, Denver Great Kids Head Start, and The Piton Foundation
Ages served	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ages 4-11, infant to 3, infant to 5, infant to 17, 5 to 18, 3 to 5, and infant to 8

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from this focus group are presented below. These findings were identified through group observation.

REACTIONS TO THE DIFFERENTIATED SERVICE MODELS

- **Contemporary Library.** Most participants felt that the Contemporary model was not very effective for the families that they serve. However the participant from Denver Parks and Recreation noted that *“If it makes it more fun or a little bit easier, for kids to come in, middle school aged, it might be an asset to the community, because they don’t normally even use a library.”* Another participant echoed this thought as long as the right message is being delivered and the message is directed at the right group, *“it’s a way to get them in the door, that’s not a bad thing, at least they are hanging out at libraries, could be hanging out at worse places...but does it get them or Mom and Dad in the door.”* The representative from the Piton Foundation also acknowledged that while this model does not necessarily meet their particular needs it is important to look at the demographics if *“only 23% (of Denver residents) have children – it makes sense to have more offerings that appeal to adults.”*

- **Learning and Language Library.** One participant gave two thumbs up when the Learning and Language model was presented. The at-risk representatives liked that this model would help get parents in the door, *“they will have something worth while to make it worth risking coming into an ‘institution.’ It’s key to get a book in their first language.”* A Head Start representative also encouraged the idea of partnerships with this type of model, *“I’d love to see it and would love to partner with libraries in high risk neighborhoods where we have sites because these are services we find very difficult to offer in the numbers we’d like to serve because we aren’t serving anywhere the numbers we need to.”* Several participants also liked the family literacy model where parents and kids could learn together.
- **Classic Library.** The Classic Library was the favorite in this group because of its appeal to children. However the librarian in the group pointed out that there is a missing piece, namely *“after-school activity or summer programs, something that starts at 4 or 4:30 p.m. after school gets out for latch key kids. There has to be something for them to do in the summer. The library as a babysitter is becoming a reality.”* Several participants also suggested the idea of field trips in conjunction with themes at the library. Many of the families they serve are not able to take advantage of local attractions (i.e. zoo, museum, mountains) but this model could offer opportunities to kids that they would not have otherwise.
- **Youth Inspiration Library.** Many of the at-risk organization representatives saw the Youth Inspiration as an opportunity to take the library to kids who do not have a way of getting to libraries through its community outreach. However, the participants were concerned on the narrow range of appeal for this model. *“Many Spanish families usually travel in family units. Older kids may feel inhibited. Older kids wouldn’t want to come its too focused on one age,”* said a participant.

MISPERCEPTIONS OF THE NEW SERVICE MODELS

- The key for communicating these new models is building familiarity, a participant said, *“A public library is a novelty to them (Spanish speaking public school parents), they have no idea what that means. They don’t speak English or read Spanish. They don’t understand what the library can do for them; it’s completely alien to them.”* Participants suggested holding community meetings and having story time for the kids at the library, *“they will get more comfortable and it will set them on the path to using the libraries.”*
- Another participant noted that the Central Library is beautiful, *“But how inviting does it look to them? Why would they go there? How inviting and accessible is it? Many of our families are not here with legal status. The families we serve are very suspicious of institutions. There is great concern for getting deported if they give their information to get a library card.”* The Library needs to address the fear surrounding the information that needs to be given in order to get a library card, *“It can be the most wonderful model in the world but if you can’t get access to a card it doesn’t do you any good.”* The Bright Beginnings representative explained that Jefferson County Libraries now have a baby library card program that helps with this issue. Participants can take their babies and get a card for them without as many questions being asked and it helps to alleviate the concern of giving out information that could get them deported.

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

- Transportation was a large concern for this group. Many of the families served by these organizations do not have access to cars and if they do they do not always have the money to pay for parking. Overall, the group felt that families wouldn't travel more than a few miles.

IMPACT ON USAGE AND BARRIERS

- A Denver Great Kids Head Start home survey found that very few literacy materials are in the home of the families they serve confirming the need for children's books and materials from the new demand column. A participant suggested giving old issues of magazines to parents to encourage them to read at home. The group also suggested sending people from the library into the community to do informational sessions for both kids and adults to help them understand what all the library can offer them. This links back to the need for building awareness of how the library can help at-risk families.
- The ESL program was also a great tool according to this group. However, they cautioned that the library needs to ensure that it is *"offered at a time or place they can reach it, is there childcare or food wrapped around that."* Along this thought, the representative from the Piton Foundation noted that low-income moms are staying at home more and higher-income moms are working more. The Library needs to consider the hours of when the programming is offered so that it is available to all. Another participant noted that some of the families who they serve have parents working two or three jobs.
- The group also applauded the GED program but the families they serve still face challenges. The cost of the book can be prohibitive and prevent people from following through even if the classes are free. A Head Start representative also voiced a concern that many of their families do not have a sense of book stores in general, *"I had a child from my program ask me where they could get the latest Harry Potter book, I asked if they went to the book store and they said that Wal-Mart didn't have it."*

THE PACE OF CHANGE

- The participants would like to see many of the models suggested implemented in the appropriate neighborhoods but they also want to ensure that the library will be able to keep up with the changing needs. The representative from Denver Great Kids Head Start cautioned that, *"Neighborhoods are changing very quickly, what works one year doesn't work the next, how would you keep up with and change with the neighborhoods; we have to do annual assessments."*

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

- Partnerships with local organizations were a crucial key for this group. One participant suggested that DPL work with recreation centers. *"The rec center draws kids into play and then they see the other pieces – get to play in the morning and go to the library to study in the afternoon. Widens your resources and your programs, gives them a little taste,"* he said.

- Consideration of the neighborhoods not feeling like they are being treated equally was another concern brought up by the group. The DPS librarian brought this concept to the next level by emphasizing that, “*Spanish and English collections need to be intermixed. A child shouldn’t be segregated you shouldn’t have to ‘go over there’ to get your books. All the books on badgers should be in one place.*”
- Spanish to English classes were also encouraged in this group as a way the help build a more bilingual community. Giving Spanish and English speakers the ability to close the gap between the classes would be a tremendous addition to the community. It would open doors for all in a society where being bilingual gives you a huge advantage in the marketplace.

FOCUS GROUP #6 HELD AT BEAR VALLEY BRANCH LIBRARY

The sixth focus group conducted for the Denver Public Library was held at the Bear Valley Branch on March 2, 2005 from 6:00-8:00 P.M.

GROUP PROFILE

Number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Males • 7 Females
Age Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid 20s to Early 70s
Average Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43
Number of Participants Married	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6
Number of Participants with Children or Grandchildren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 (ages range from 2 –53 years old), 5 participants with children 18 & under • Two of the parents home school their children
Race/Ethnicity (As Self-Identified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • White (7) and Hispanic (4)
Where Participants Live (Neighborhood Where Known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bear Valley, Pinehurst Hills, Harvey Park
Level of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School Graduate (1); Some College, But No Degree (2); Associate Degree (1); Bachelor’s Degree (3); and Master’s Degree or Higher (4)
Top Library Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bear Valley and Central
Frequency of Library Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of participants use a branch library on either a weekly or monthly basis. Only four participants indicated that they use Central Library on a yearly basis, the remaining participants either did not answer or indicated never visiting. Finally, the majority of participants do not use the Library’s on-line services, however a few did note weekly web visits and one reported daily visits.
Library Services They Utilize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the participants use the Library to check out materials like books, videos, DVDs and music. Using the computer for email, Internet access and research and accessing electronic material from home, school and work were tied as the second most popular service by participants. Third place was tied as well between spend fun, quality time with my child and ask for expert help from a librarian or Library staff person.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from this focus group are presented below. These findings were identified through a combination of group observation, review of materials specific to this group, including pre-group surveys and synthesis and analysis of those materials.

REACTIONS TO THE DIFFERENTIATED SERVICE MODELS

- **Central Library.** Reference and archiving were seen as two key components to the Central model. A married man felt that, *“It is important. It could be an archiving center – an opportunity to share with local museums, who else would have these records for city, state and regional development.”* People also identified the Central Library with the building itself. A father with two young daughters said, *“It is a special building, it’s nice for it to have its own special collection as different from the branch libraries, it’s a nice dovetail there.”* The mother of home schooled children also pointed out the wow factor. She said, *“When I take my children to the Central Library it is much more academic. They walk in and go ‘wow,’ it’s way beyond what the kids are used to and it’s a good thing, it’s good to have the kids see people studying and not just checking out books...even the children’s area is more academic.”*
- **Contemporary Library.** The single participants in this group really liked the Contemporary model and felt that of all the models it best meets their needs. The stack displays for the new releases and the express check out were key draws for the parents in the group as well. One of the moms in the group noted that, *“I always came for the kids but now (that Bear Valley has an outward facing display) that is right there out front I check more books out now than I did before.”* Another mom commented on the concern of having coffee in the library as *“it just feels wrong.”*
- **Learning and Language Library.** The Learning and Language model was very popular with this group. A single white male commented on the inclusive nature of the model, *“I think it is great. It would teach us a lot of things...how to get along better with each other. I would really like to see this happen.”* One of the moms who home schools her children shared that there is *“a similar program at Sheridan Public Library currently, it works well especially the computers.”* Another participant who is a bi-lingual kindergarten teacher found the concept very exciting. She said, *“It is definitely something very exciting for me to see in the neighborhoods I work in. Very exciting for the kids. Already the book mobile comes by our school...and the kids use it a lot and the parents are interested too.”* The only concern voiced was a Latina mother who worried if it would be enough to meet all the needs of the community. She said, *“You’d want to have something like this available at all libraries. The demographics are overwhelming and it isn’t just in one particular area of town. (There is a) gap in filling the need even with one specialized library like that. May need a space in each library.”*
- **Classic Library.** Overall, the Classic Library was the most popular model with this focus group. A single female stated that she *“remembers being little and going as a kid for story time with the librarians, the other models don’t seem like they do that anymore.”* The group also liked the family orientation. *“It puts emphasis on family and puts the emphasis back on learning, the others are more for enjoyment, not a bad thing, but the library is a place for learning,”* said a single male. Several of the parents felt this model provides a certain comfort level. A mom noted, *“You go and you don’t have to worry, you can look at a book and let your kids go to the children’s section, your kids will*

know the librarians.” A father also pointed out that “people are looking for a place where kids can run around and they can explore and not be told ‘no, you can’t touch that’...kids can pull books of the shelf.” This same father went on to note later in the discussion that, “I’m still interested in visiting the models but day in day out, week in week out, the Classic fits my needs, my family’s needs.”

- **Youth Inspiration Library.** Many parents and non-parents liked the teaching aspect of the Youth Inspiration model. A single female liked the *“emphasis of starting early. Make it a lifelong process.”* In the DPL vision one of the actions is to inspire. A married male without children identified this model as a potential tool for achieving that vision. He said, *“A lot of families can’t afford to bring their kids to the Children’s Museum or Epcot. This would be another way to get that service and find some inspiration in their kids.”* However other participants were not as convinced that the arts and crafts emphasis is necessarily a role for the library. A single mom said, *“As a parent I love the idea of (free) arts and crafts, children’s activities, but am concerned about being drawn away from books.”*

MISPERCEPTIONS OF THE NEW SERVICE MODELS

- A Latina mother felt that the Youth Inspiration title was misleading, *“I think of youth as 12 and above.”*
- Throughout the discussion several participants, parent and non-parent, noted a concern about the focus of the models on enjoyment rather than learning and books and how that impacts kids. In reference to the Contemporary model a single male pointed out that, *“[It] seems like kids are being left out, [and that] doesn’t seem right for a public library.”* A father voiced a frustration with the distraction of computer games from using the library and its resources as a tool for learning. *“It’s frustrating to see kids focused on computer games when they are surrounded by a vast array of knowledge and better stuff to get involved in, why are they doing that here?”* said the dad. While acknowledging the need for supporting schools in the arts and culture a Latina mother stated, *“It is a balance to what extent they do that and a child’s understanding that the library is a place for reading not just activities.”*

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

- Several participants stated that they would be willing to travel 15 miles to get to their preferred model. However the majority said that on a weekly basis they would be more likely to travel 10 minutes. A father did say that on a monthly basis he would be willing to travel downtown to the Central Library but *“in today’s active lifestyle it would be difficult to make time to go out of the way to go to a specific library [on a regular basis].”* A student stated that she would travel 15 to 30 minutes if she needed research material but she said that she was used to traveling longer distances on a regular basis. One participant jokingly added that, *“I would have more over due fines.”*

IMPACT ON USAGE AND BARRIERS

- Fines were an issue for several people in this group. One of the mothers who was home schooling her children stated that she has switched to the Arapahoe Library because of the fine policy, *“I don’t use DPL even though it is the closest branch.”* However, in response the other mother with home-schooled children stated, *“I’d rather pay the fee to the Library and put it back into the community than pay Blockbuster.”*

- Limited funding for services was also a concern mentioned by several participants. Regarding the Contemporary model a father asked, *“It brings the question...is that the best way for the library to spend its resources, getting lots of popular books that will quickly be replaced by the next top seller?”*
- Other barriers identified by the participants were related to the Library’s infrastructure (i.e. hours of operation, waiting lists for books and DVD’s and the availability of computers).
- A single mother also emphasized the importance of offering programs that work with all parents’ schedules. *“I think it is important that there be enough variety in scheduling...for not stay at home parents. I wonder how many homes are run by single parents?”* wondered the Latina mother.

THE PACE OF CHANGE

- The group voiced positives and negatives about change. A Latina mother felt that the community would react positively, *“the way our society is changing you have to be up with the times; (people will think) wow my library is up with the community.”* Another participant echoed this thought saying, *“It adds to the value of the community by keeping it competitive.”* However an older female participant noted that older people are set in their ways and that *“some will fight tooth and nail...older people don’t want change.”*
- According to a single male he felt that *“this (focus group) is a great start.”*
- Another participant suggested that the on-line changes should be first *“if there is any confusion you still have a way to find what you need online.”* Along with doing the online first, a father suggested to *“start planning now...but have a five-year transition, implement one at a time and get feedback from the community then you can improve the rollout as you go along.”*

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

- Building the community through the Learning and Language model was also encouraged by two mothers. One mother liked the idea of having Latino high school students volunteer at the library and teach White kids Spanish and vice versa for White high schoolers and Latino kids. Another parent pointed out that *“middle schoolers and high schoolers tend to drop away from using the library unless they have to for school, it would be a neat way to bring them back in.”*
- A key component of the Learning and Language Library was the concept of teaching Spanish as well as English. A mother of Hispanic decent liked the idea of being able to reclaim the language of her ancestry, *“My grandparents spoke English as a second language. Not one of the grandchildren speaks Spanish. There are a dozen of us and none of us speak Spanish...except for a few phrases, I would absolutely take it (classes at my local library that were inexpensive).”*
- One participant noted that they imagined the various models to be *“small libraries with specific services, I imagine a little building where all you do is pick up books you ordered on-line or DVD’s.”*
- With the development of the on-line services several participants, including two single females, voiced a concern of losing a place where the community can be built. However another participant countered their concern by saying, *“There is the same argument for higher education on-line courses but its working. It serves a different group of people who might not be able to otherwise.”*

FOCUS GROUP #7 HELD AT MONTBELLO BRANCH LIBRARY

The seventh focus group conducted for the Denver Public Library was held at the Montbello Branch Library on March 3, 2005 from 6:00-8:00 P.M.

GROUP PROFILE

Number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Males • 8 Females
Age Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late 20s to Early 70s
Average Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44
Number of Participants Married	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not asked
Number of Participants with Children or Grandchildren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 (ages range from 1 –38 years old)
Race/Ethnicity (As Self-Identified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African American (6), White (3), Hispanic (1), and Native American (1)
Where Participants Live (Neighborhood Where Known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montbello. (Note: Participants used the term “<i>live in the community</i>” when responding to this question.)
Level of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School Graduate (3); Some College, But No Degree (5); Bachelor’s Degree (2); and Master’s Degree or Higher (1) Several participants were home schooling parents. About half were educators.
Top Library Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Montbello
Frequency of Library Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall, the participants are visiting branch libraries the most frequently, on a weekly basis. About one-third of the participants visit the Central Library once a year. Only three participants are accessing the Library online.
Library Services They Utilize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 11 participants use the Library to check out materials like books, videos, DVDs and music. Over half of the focus group participants visit the Library to ask for expert help from a librarian or Library staff person. In addition, the participants are visiting the Library to spend fun, quality time with their children.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from this focus group are presented below. These findings were identified through a combination of group observation, review of materials specific to this group, including pre-group surveys, and synthesis and analysis of those materials.

REACTIONS TO THE DIFFERENTIATED SERVICE MODELS

- **Central Library.** The composition of the focus group may have been the reason for a discrepancy in responses to who would visit the Central Library. First, five participants identify themselves as being in the middle of “Old Emphasis” and “New Demand.” Four participants prefer the “New Demand” direction, while two lean towards the “Old Emphasis.” Consequently, a segment of the group views the Central Library as a positive aspect of the community and think it *“sounds pretty nice,”* said one participant. Another participant believes that the Library was *“built for show. I go to this library and it looks like an empty mall. Book collection is put off to the side.”* Furthermore, the group identified the target market for the Central Library as people who live close to the area, people doing research and business professionals. However, they do not believe that the Central Library will attract children and families. One participant said, *“As far as us and the kids...that’s a hard thing. Activities that are down there...can’t get the kids down there. Parents that are single, doing whatever they are doing in the household-they miss out. Wow. Look at all this stuff you can get down there. I believe the only people going down there are older people, business people, people that are right there in the area.”*
- **Contemporary Library.** As previously mentioned, the composition of the focus group may be the reason for divided opinions regarding the service delivery models. When asked about their thoughts on the Contemporary Library, the majority of the conversation went one of two ways. The first opinion focused on the benefits for adults. One participant said, *“It is probably more focused on the average adult than on children. You are looking at continuing education for the adult. Whether you are a teacher or a professional, this is more focused on the continuing education for the adult.”* Later in this discussion, one participant envisioned the model to be *“a more controlled environment. Quiet.”* A participant who is a mother of an 18-month old child said, *“I like it. I would probably frequent the library more often if they had this availability. It wouldn’t be a place where I would probably take my child. Instead of just checking something out and leaving, maybe take my laptop and stay.”* Furthermore, one woman who home schools her children and often frequents the library stated, *“When I saw this I thought good, my husband would actually go to the library with us. It has services he would like as compared to what we have now. At Montbello, the kids are running around and there is no quiet. Accommodate more of a variety of people.”* The second opinion concentrated on how kid-friendly this model is. One woman who home schools her kids said, *“As a home-school mom it just doesn’t seem kid friendly. Sure I don’t want my kids running around and making noise...I want it to be a place for them to grow up and enjoy a library and to go to and understand we are learning from this and to not feel that this isn’t for me.”*

MISPERCEPTIONS OF THE NEW SERVICE MODELS

- **Contemporary Library and Learning and Language Library.** A concern for the Library is how the models will be perceived. While the Library is attempting to fulfill a community need, the public could misconstrue libraries that cater to a specific market. A conversation about segregation stemmed from the Contemporary Model discussion. One African American male

participant raised the issue of class and racial segregation and how that relates to the proposed models. More specifically, he believed that the Contemporary model resembled class segregation. He said, *“When I see this, I see the market place. I thought that libraries were supposed to be public libraries, which meant the public could use them. I’m not objecting to it, but I see Barnes & Noble and Starbucks. Why have them? You already have them. You go there and you don’t see kids, don’t see all people. Basically, what you see very often is segregation – class segregation, racial segregation. Why use a marketplace model for a public library? I can understand that with evolving needs those are things that people might want.”* As the topic of segregation emerged again in the conversation regarding the Learning and Language Library, an African American female said that this model would be helpful and *“break down some barriers.”* An African American male then said, *“It is a good idea. Really couldn’t do that in a particular community because then people would look at that as ‘why do they get their own library?’”* A White male noted that, *“I’m on the fence. Listening to the conversations. The argument is accurate on both sides. Going to feel discrimination, segregation. Going to feel ‘why do they have this library and not us.’ Shouldn’t be that way. Should be about all of us. It is a melting pot. We should embrace one another and not say you should have this over here, you should have that over there.”* Finally, the African-American male who initiated the conversation regarding segregation said, *“Since I’m the one that brought up the issue of segregation, I don’t see this as segregated. Very often we tend to draw false analogies. If you have a growing population that wasn’t here 20 years ago and that has been underserved, addressing that need is a part of the commonwealth. I don’t think that is segregated. That isn’t a policy of segregation this is a policy of paying attention to the needs of the community. This is a specific part of the community. Nothing stops you from using except your own discomfort in a place with people that might speak a different language.”*

- **Contemporary Library.** According to one focus group participant, the Contemporary Model picture did not convey *“contemporary.”* This participant said, *“I’m just a little bit curious how the picture of the model with the skinny knees and the bags...that doesn’t say contemporary library to me.”*
- **Youth Inspiration Library and Classic Library.** The focus group participants had difficulty distinguishing between the Youth Inspiration model and the Classic model. When talking about the Youth Inspiration model, one participant said, *“I expected to see it geared more towards young adults [given the name].”* Nine participants believed that combining the Youth Inspiration and Classic models would benefit the community, instead of implementing them separately.

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

- When asked how far they would be willing to drive to their preferred branch, five participants said they would be willing to drive five to 10 miles. This group revealed that they are already traveling to their preferred branch, so there would not be much change for them in this arena. Four participants indicated they would use Denver Library Online more and another said it would be time for her to learn how to use the online model.

IMPACT ON USAGE AND BARRIERS

- When the group was wrapping up its discussion about the Contemporary Library, seven out of the eleven participants believed that the model, as it was described would attract users who otherwise would not go. This group appreciated the technical piece, including the wireless aspect as well as the comfortable, abundant space, latest releases and more media. Furthermore,

the 11 participants believe that the Contemporary model should include a children's section to encourage more library use.

- Inadequate parking, hours, noise, fines, quantity and quality of books, and lack of computers were identified as barriers to using the library. Another barrier for some people is the perception of the Montbello Library as a hangout for youth. Lack of awareness of the library was also a noted barrier.
- The focus group recognized that DPL Online would be a great resource for everyone. While the group noted that this resource might be “scary” for the older generation, which was confirmed by a senior participant, they are confident the older generation could learn how to use it. In addition, one participant said that this service “*might attract more...bring more people in. I haven't tried it. I'm going to try it.*”
- Participants identified that the current problem with children running around the library (i.e. lack of control) indicated that the children's needs aren't being met, and neither were those of the adults who felt this was a barrier to use. As such, they suggested that the library enhance services to better meet the needs of children and adults. This confirmed one participant's point that the library needed to offer some components of all of the models.

THE PACE OF CHANGE

- Three participants confirmed that the Library should take immediate action on implementing the proposed models. If the change were not what the community wanted, and if they were aware of it, indicated that the community would get involved through actions such as petitions. The group's suggestions on ways to encourage more use could directly relate to the pace of library change. The group would like to see the Library interact with the community to engage library users, as well as provide more activities to reach out to schools, day care facilities and parents. Overall, the more the community is engaged the more likely the model will become an accepted part of the community.

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

- All eleven participants would welcome the opportunity to take Spanish classes at the Learning and Language Library. One participant said, “*The one thing that I don't see is Spanish language classes so that our children can learn Spanish as well. That would attract me. Bilingual is where the jobs are. If I saw that then I would think I could take my own kids down there because they offer classes like that.*” Overall, the group recognized the importance of offering bilingual opportunities at the Learning and Language Library. When polled, the group indicated that they would like to see a new and larger library for the Montbello community.

FOCUS GROUP #8 HELD AT ROSS-BARNUM BRANCH LIBRARY

The eighth focus group conducted for the Denver Public Library was held at the Ross-Barnum Branch on March 8, 2005 from 6:00-8:00 P.M. This group was conducted bilingually with the moderator doing live translation for both groups. Please note that not as much information was covered as in other groups due the extra time required for the live translation.

GROUP PROFILE

Number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Males • 9 Females
Age Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid 20s to Late 70s
Average Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44
Number of Participants Married	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8
Number of Participants with Children or Grandchildren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 (ages ranging from 2 months –39 years old), 8 participants with children 18 & under
Race/Ethnicity (As Self-Identified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hispanic (9) and White (3). Three of the nine Hispanics were monolingual Spanish speakers and the remainder were bilingual of various proficiencies.
Where Participants Live (Neighborhood Where Known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Villa Park, Barnum, West Colfax area near Sheridan, Westwood, 18th and 19th near Federal and Townview
Level of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School Graduate (4); GED (2); Some College, But No Degree (3); Bachelor’s Degree (2); and Master’s Degree or Higher (1)
Top Library Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ross-Barnum and Central
Frequency of Library Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of participants use a branch library on a weekly basis. Only half of the participants use the Central Library. The online library services are only used by three participants.
Library Services They Utilize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All 12 of the participants use the Library to check out materials like books, videos, DVDs and music. The next most popular service was using the computer for email, Internet access and research. There was a three way tie for the third most preferred service between spending fun, quality time with my child, asking for expert help from a librarian or Library staff person and going to relax and read.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from this focus group are presented below. These findings were identified through a combination of group observation, review of materials specific to this group, including pre-group surveys and synthesis and analysis of those materials.

REACTIONS TO THE DIFFERENTIATED SERVICE MODELS

- **Contemporary Library.** Participants found the social aspect of the Contemporary Library appealing. One participant said, *“It’s a place to get out of your home and meet neighbors – get to know people. It would augment the spirit of the community.”* The group was also attracted to the “hip-ness” of the model. The wireless capabilities were recognized as being, *“the cutting edge; just bring your laptop and tune in.”*
- **Learning and Language Library.** The group also liked the Learning and Language Library for its technology opportunities. One participant stated, *“I’d like to see Barnum have a mentoring program to help people in the community learn how to use the computer.”* Additional adult education classes were another strong point in this model. The ESL classes were seen as essential because, *“the local middle school stopped giving ESL classes.”* This model could also serve as an entry point into the community for recent immigrants.
- **Classic Library.** Fans of the Classic Library model liked the idea of *“a library to bring toddlers to and teach them to read at any early age, and to have respect for books and others who are using the library.”* This type of model is a great opportunity to teach kids how to use a library. Another positive to this model identified by the group was its ability to encourage interaction between grandparents and grandchildren. Participants also felt that *“when you teach your children you enrich your community. You cannot place too much emphasis on the children.”* However one participant did voice a concern about the model being unique enough to warrant a separate infrastructure.
- **Youth Inspiration Library.** The community outreach and environment where kids can learn on their own in the Youth Inspiration Library was appealing to the group but they were also concerned at the prospect of librarians as babysitters. It seems like *“more of a day care center. It seems like a lot more responsibility,”* said one participant.
- When asked to identify potential users for the various models the group consistently identified members of the community who fit the market the Library was aiming for in their design.

MISPERCEPTIONS OF THE NEW SERVICE MODELS

- The group was also concerned about the service delivery models being too narrowly focused. Education and explanation would be needed, otherwise community members would be hesitant to accept the changes, *“if it were a Classic there would be acceptance.”* According to this group, the key to keeping criticism at bay would be to consistently update the community on what was happening.

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

- Most of the participants indicated that they would only be willing to travel five miles or less to reach their preferred model. However, one participant would travel any distance, *“We have a*

wonderful system in Colorado because we can return anywhere. I like the library structure the way it is now. I would drive anywhere.” At the prospect of having to travel longer distances to go to their preferred library a participant noted that increasing gas prices could be a limitation for many families. Another participant stated, “We want a library where the kids can walk to without needing anyone to drive them.”

IMPACT ON USAGE AND BARRIERS

- According to group participants, “Barnum has done a fabulous job in adapting to the community needs, but there are not enough computers and they need to be updated, e.g. have CD burners.”
- A barrier identified by the group was the lack of bilingual staff. Libraries can have a bilingual person on staff but in reality they need more than one. There appears to be a large demand for bilingual staff for instances when a staff member is helping someone on the phone but there is a Spanish-speaking patron at the desk who needs help using a computer.
- To encourage usage within the community and bring in non-English speaking users one participant suggested offering “bilingual introductory sessions to new people on how to use the library, with a tour.” The group proceeded to develop this idea identifying the need for universal signage. “There are many different groups of people who live in this community, not just Hispanics but various Asian groups. We need ‘universal’ signage like that used in Europe.” One of the Spanish speaking participants who was unable to read English very well did not realize that there was an after hours drop box to return books when the library is closed because she could not read the signage. She also couldn’t use the phone renewal system because of the language barrier. The group also thought that Spanish-speakers would be interested in volunteering but currently everything is in English.
- The hours and days of operation were also identified as barriers to using the Library. One participant even went to the extent of saying, “bad and painful.” Another participant pointed out that the various libraries can be closed on Friday, Sunday and Monday, for those who observe the Sabbath that translates into four days where they cannot use the library.

THE PACE OF CHANGE

- Participants were divided about how quickly they thought the new models should be implemented. One participant mentioned six months while another suggested five years. However, the group did think the changes would be received positively and that “the community would appreciate these changes if they are based on the community (bilingual, Latinos, Asians).” Participants also suggested that the library take an active role in educating people on the reasons for the changes to help them transition from understanding to acceptance.

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

- A participant brought up an example of a local middle school that works on building relationships with not only the kids but their parents as well. “When they held a library field day, they invited the parents to come along to introduce them to the library.” Along this same thought process of the Library as a community builder, participants suggested the Learning and Language Library could serve at a community entry point for new immigrants.

- It was suggested that the Learning and Language Library offer Spanish classes as well, and one participant suggested that this model should not be limited to just two languages.
- As a result of the live translation by the moderator it was intriguing to see the building community interest between the English and Spanish participants as they heard each other's comments and gained an appreciation of the various barriers that each faces.

FOCUS GROUP #9 HELD AT FORD-WARREN BRANCH LIBRARY

The ninth focus group conducted for the Denver Public Library was held at the Ford-Warren Branch on March 9, 2005 from 6:00-8:00 P.M.

GROUP PROFILE

Number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Males • 7 Females
Age Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 to Mid 40s
Average Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30.5
Number of Participants Married	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8
Number of Participants with Children or Grandchildren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 (ages ranging from 4 months - 13 years old), all 7 participants with children have kids 18 & under
Race/Ethnicity (As Self-Identified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hispanic (10). This group was conducted in Spanish.
Where Participants Live (Neighborhood Where Known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 32nd and Marion, Delgany, Downing, Curtis Park? (31st and Lawrence), Sunnyside, Evans and Clay, Green Valley Ranch, California between 25th and 26th, 1st and Stuart
Level of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sixth Grade (1); Eighth Grade (1); Tenth Grade (1); High School Graduate (1); GED (2); Some College, But No Degree (3); and Master's Degree or Higher (1)
Top Library Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central, Blair-Caldwell, Smiley, Woodbury, Montbello and Ford-Warren (*some participants did not check any libraries)
Frequency of Library Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Half of the participants use a branch library on a weekly basis. Six of the participants use the Central Library on either a weekly or monthly basis. The online library services are used by seven participants.
Library Services They Utilize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 10 participants, eight use the Library to check out materials like books, videos, DVDs and music. The following services each received five votes: use the computers for email, Internet access and research; spend fun, quality time with my child; help my child do homework; ask for expert help from a librarian of Library staff person; and go relax and read.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from this focus group are presented below. These findings were identified through a combination of group observation, review of materials specific to this group, including pre-group surveys and synthesis and analysis of those materials.

REACTIONS TO THE DIFFERENTIATED SERVICE MODELS

- **Contemporary Library.** The Contemporary Library was not very popular with the participants in this group. However, they did like the Internet access. Many participants felt this was a key tool that their community could use.
- **Learning and Language Library.** Of all the models presented, the Learning and Language Library was the favorite among the group members. *“I think it will serve our children best. In Mexico there is nothing like this,”* said a mother participant. The GED was another key piece of this model for many group members. A female participant made the point *“once you have your GED, you can pursue a career.”* The group also believed that not only Hispanics would use it but younger people as well.
- **Classic Library.** Overall the group felt that the Classic Library was not traditional enough. Many participants said there were too many videos and DVD’s. A concerned mother echoed that concern by saying, *“But they need to spend time reading books!”* However another mother felt that overall it would be the best for her children. *“I didn’t have the opportunity to get a good education so this is the most important this to me,”* she said.
- **Youth Inspiration Library.** Many participants felt that the Youth Inspiration model was nothing more than day care, although on a positive note, they did acknowledge, *“It helps them grow and develop their ideas.”* A mother countered this idea by saying that the Learning and Language Library could be more helpful in this aspect because *“the parents need to learn in order to better help their children with homework.”* On the pre-group survey helping kids with homework was one of the top identified preferred library services. However, some of the participants also acknowledged that they do not always have time to take their children, so with the implementation of the Youth Inspiration model *“(kids) could help themselves and let loose.”* Another counter to the model came from a mother of older children who pointed out that it *“depends on the ages of children you have at home, my 14 year old wouldn’t like it.”*

MISPERCEPTIONS OF THE NEW SERVICE MODELS

- The library concept is a new concept to many in the Hispanic community, especially new immigrants, as pointed out by the female participant who said that they didn’t have anything like this in Mexico. This lack of awareness can be a great barrier. A female participant commented that she liked how books were displayed in the Contemporary model, *“Although I guess sometimes one may wonder if the books can be checked out or if they are for sale.”* Another participant echoed this confusion with a story of her own. *“I was checking out videos and had my money ready. I didn’t know it was free. There is no signage or literature that tells us about what the free services are,”* she said. This same participant went on to say that she did not know about libraries or the Internet until her children showed her. *“The Hispanics are not familiar with the benefits of a library, they need to be informed, they need to be ‘soaked’ with information. My husband*

wants to know more about Internet access,” said the female participant. Another mother took this thought a step farther and said, *“More than information, we need an orientation.”* Intimidation also results from the lack of information. According to a couple of participants many Hispanics feel that the library is too difficult or they do not have enough interest to really look into what services are offered. A male participant stated, *“We create our own obstacle by not being interested.”*

- Participants gave several ideas on how best to get the message out to the Hispanic community. Radio, newspapers, flyers, and public service announcements on television were some of the proposed mediums. A female participant noted that she watches public service announcements *“to learn about the newest services available.”*
- A male participant had seen the “Read a million words in a year” promotion but has not seen anything that is in Spanish. He felt that the Library should offer programs like this in a bilingual format so that Hispanics could participate. *“They should target the Hispanic population, because we are going to be the ones to use it the most,”* he said. A female participant added, *“There needs to be a fusion of information about the programs and publicity.”*

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

- The distances participants were willing to travel varied anywhere from 5 to 35 miles. Another participant said she would be willing to travel for 30 minutes. Bilingual services and larger Spanish material selections were identified as two reasons the participants would be willing to travel to another branch.

IMPACT ON USAGE AND BARRIERS

- Customer service can be both a draw and a barrier for the Hispanic community. According to a female participant, *“I have a special library I like to go to because they help me find the books I want. I love that!”* However the key to customer service for this group is bilingual staff who can actually answer their questions and give them the guidance they need. Another female participant notes, *“I can speak a little English, but not always enough to express myself. This is a barrier.”* Many participants have to go out of their way to find libraries where they can get the assistance they need. *“I go from Green Valley to the Bear Valley Library, just because I like the way they treat me,”* a female participant said.
- As mentioned by participants in the bilingual focus group, being able to drop books off at any library is a great feature. According to a male participant, *“It makes it easier to go to any of the libraries (because you can then return books at the library closest to you).”*
- Library hours are another universal barrier. A female participant noted, *“The hours are so different and difficult among all the libraries. I have a library that is a half a block away but when I have a day off, they are closed. So I have to go to another to get what I need or a video.”*
- DPL Online is seen as a value add, but many Hispanics do not have access to the Internet from their homes. According to a single male, *“This is certainly the right direction in terms of the Internet, but I don’t think most Hispanics have the resources to buy a laptop. We need PC’s available to us. Yes, this one (DPL Online model) is advanced but it is out of our reach.”* Many Latinos look towards the library for their computer and Internet access. A father made the point that in

today's world you can only apply for jobs via the Internet. Later in the discussion he went on to point out *"with immigration the way it is, you have to have access to keep up. I went and spent six hours in line only to be told to go online and download a form."* A Latina mother also pointed out that Internet access at the library is a great escape for some mothers, *"We are just stuck in our homes, and I would love to get out and go to (a library with Internet access)! Learn to use the Internet!"*

- When asked how they would react to their local library being turned into a Youth Inspiration Library the majority of participants said they would change what library they go to or would stop going. A few said they would use the Central Library instead but that brought up a new barrier, parking.

THE PACE OF CHANGE

- The group was unanimous in their agreement that the library needs to respond to the overall change that the community has gone through in recent years based upon the demographics that were presented earlier in the discussion. Many felt that it is an urgent need and called for change as soon as possible.

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

- In addition to fear about giving out the necessary information to get a library cards there seemed to be large discrepancies in how the various libraries process library card requests. The moderator suggested that participants could be going to libraries in different counties but it was interesting to see that some had come across large obstacles while others thought it was easy. It could just be differences in perception but it might be worth pursuing this further on down the road and seeing if there is a standard policy that could be applied.
- Two female participants noted that their husbands do not let them leave the house on their own and on an occasion when they can leave; they cannot go very far. This brings a unique cultural aspect to the issue of barriers to library usage.
- Hispanics also face the challenge of overcoming the cultural barrier that in their native countries they do not use the library as a source of entertainment or enjoyment. Instead it is viewed as a place for research. Many recent immigrants from Central or South American countries do not understand that the various services are made available to them for free through the library. A female participant made the comment, *"It's our own culture that is at fault."*

FOCUS GROUP #10 HELD AT WOODBURY BRANCH LIBRARY

The tenth focus group conducted for the Denver Public Library was held at the Woodbury Branch on March 10, 2005 from 6:00-8:00 P.M.

GROUP PROFILE

Number of Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 Males • 7 Females
Age Range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late teen's to Late 30s
Average Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30
Number of Participants Married	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7
Number of Participants with Children or Grandchildren	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 (ages ranging from 2 years –18 years old), all 7 participants have kids 18 & under
Race/Ethnicity (As Self-Identified)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hispanic (11). This group was conducted in Spanish.
Where Participants Live (Neighborhood Where Known)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zuni and 29th; Edgewater; 32nd; 42nd and Fillmore; Villa Park; Federal and Colorado; Evans and Quebec; 20th and Pecos; and Alameda and Federal
Level of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ninth Grade (1); Tenth Grade (1); High School Graduate (1); GED (2); Some College, But No Degree (1); Bachelor's Degree (4) and Master's Degree or Higher (1)
Top Library Preferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodbury, Ross-Barnum, Smiley and Central
Frequency of Library Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The majority of the participants use a branch library on a weekly basis. All but three of the participants use the Central Library on a weekly basis (two never use it and one uses it monthly). The on-line library services are used by seven participants.
Library Services They Utilize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all participants use the Library to check out materials like books, videos, DVDs and music. The next most popular service was using the computers for email, Internet access and research. There was a four way tie for the third most preferred service between going to programs, classes and children's events, spending fun, quality time with my child; helping my child do homework and going to relax and read in a place I like.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from this focus group are presented below. These findings were identified through a combination of group observation, review of materials specific to this group, including pre-group surveys and synthesis and analysis of those materials.

REACTIONS TO THE DIFFERENTIATED SERVICE MODELS

- **Central Library.** The Central Library is a draw for many because of its vast resources and broad appeal. A mother notes, *“We go to the Central with our children. The older ones can find what they need, the younger ones can too. The whole family can go and it’s free. I like the order of things there. The children are taught to be quiet and not scream. I feel privileged.”* Another participant like the cultural appeal as *“we can find history on other cultures there.”*
- **Contemporary Library.** The group liked several of the aspects of the Contemporary Library. One female participant said, *“I could take (her adopted nieces) so they can use the library and I could do my work on my laptop in the meantime. And I love the idea of comfortable seats!”* The recent releases and the displays were also considered to be draws for the group. A male participant was impressed by the idea that the models will *“take what exists now and augment it. That’s a marvelous idea.”*
- **Learning and Language Library.** The Learning and Language Library was by far the most popular model with this group. A mother liked that *“this gives priority to the community. We need more education.”* Another participant echoed this comment saying, *“Like we are important, and that they are thinking about our community.”* Trust of institutions is a barrier in the Hispanic community but by acknowledging their growth within the communities’ one participant felt that this model gives them some ownership. *“It gives up a place we can trust. We can feel comfortable to go in and ask for things, getting classes in English and in computers. A model like this would be of benefit to the Hispanic community, especially the recent immigrant,.”* s/he said. Another single female also saw this model as a way to help the outlook of Denver Hispanics. She said, *“This would help change the stereotype of our people. People think that we are dirty, lazy and call us thing I can’t repeat. I have lived here a long time and when you go to public schools you find out about a lot of thins. We are the ones that drop out early. This would give our people the chance to study so as not to dropout or is they do dropout, they could continue studying like getting the GED.”* A male participant also touted the benefit for children, *“kids don’t speak enough English and it seems overwhelming, or they don’t have support, or their parents can’t help them.”* He went on to say, *“It has to be taken into consideration that in 10 years we are going to be a very, very important segment of the population. Well, we already are, but this will continue to grow. So if we can work jointly with library, it would benefit society.”*
- **Classic Library.** The majority of participants did not think there was much difference from the Classic Library compared to the existing libraries. (The other Spanish group said this too) They did like the DVD’s and videos, which they said they like to check out to help them practice their English. A male participant felt that movies could help you learn *“real”* English, *“if you just learn from books then you are not learning English as it is commonly spoken. No one speak like this. The movies reflect real English.”* Books on tape are another good resource for practicing English. According to a mother, *“I like talking books for this reason because I can hear the English.”*

Another perception of the Classic model was pointed out by a female participant, *“The Classic Library, well, I always thought that a library was a place to sleep. So to me that’s the image of a Classic Library. We need to attract the young people and offer new things and activities. It has to be more than for them to come and get a book and fall asleep on the chair. I think it has to be combined with aspects of other models.”*

- **Youth Inspiration Library.** The Youth Inspiration Library was appreciated as a way *“to take kids away from the TV and cultivate creativity and self-direction.”* Teaching kids how to help your self was another key element for this model. *“The more you teach a child the more you build your tomorrow. We want them to be successful and for things to go well for them. When they can learn to help themselves, they will develop more,”* said a single male participant. A mother with teenagers also emphasized the idea; *“it would build the habit of enjoying things that are more cultural at a very young age. This is a habit that they will stay with for life.”* A young single female also liked the idea that the Youth Inspiration model gave kids the opportunity to express themselves, *“I don’t know about your families, but in mine children can’t say much because they are children. If they have ideas or something to say, this would be a place they could have the freedom to express themselves.”* The elementary teacher in the group also encouraged helping the children learn as many words as possible, *“I always tell them that when they are my age, you are going to be worth two people because you speak two languages.”*

MISPERCEPTIONS OF THE NEW SERVICE MODELS

- Both a father and a young male participant want to see the library get information out to the public on what type of services it provides, especially parents, *“the library needs to sell its image to the people.”*
- The Library should focus its advertising towards adults and teens because they are the ones who will come and will bring the children with them. A male participant suggested radio and television advertisements, especially during the soap operas to reach the most people. He went on to say that the *“propaganda”* should appeal to people’s curiosity, *“people are curious. If I’m told that I can get movies, DVD’s or free classes for me or my children – that will bring me in to check things out.”* The bus would be another good medium to get the libraries message out, *“when you are riding the bus, you must see that Denver bus service is the best in the country about 30 times. So if you read that there will be classes at such and such time, it is going to stick with you. Then if someone asks you where to go for English classes, they will remember it is at the library,”* said a young male participant. Humanitarian centers and clinics like Clinica Tepeyac were also suggested as possible locations where information could be distributed to the community.
- Changing Hispanics’ perceptions about libraries is also critical to increasing usage. Many members of the group admitted that in their home countries they did not use the library unless it was for homework research purposes. The library needs to introduce itself to Hispanics as a source of entertainment as well as education. They also need to help Hispanics overcome the sense of fear they associate with institutions. *“One has fear, one thinks that they won’t speak Spanish. They don’t know what to expect. Of course they don’t know what a public library is about. Is it a government office?”* asked a participant.

WILLINGNESS TO TRAVEL

- Many participants agreed that they would be willing to travel in order to find the materials or services they need. *“It’s why we go from library to library. We’re trying to find the services we need.”* On average they would be willing to travel 20 minutes. A mother noted, *“If they put a model next door to me that did not serve me, I would go and find one that will.”* A father echoed this statement as well, *“if it doesn’t satisfy me, I simply won’t use it. If I have needs, I will satisfy them by going wherever I need to go.”* One participant did suggest that the DPL should *“strategically place these (models) in clusters of four.”*

IMPACT ON USAGE AND BARRIERS

- Language continues to be the biggest barrier for the Hispanic community. A participant who is a teacher finds, *“There are places where we go as Latinos where the children can be helped because they speak English, but we can’t because no one speaks Spanish to help us. We just are left standing with our arms crossed. When I go downtown I can find help because I can tell who can speak the language. If not then I feel restrained.”* A Latina mother has not gone to the library because of the language barrier and feels the same restraint mentioned by the other participant.
- Size of the facilities was another concern brought up by this group. They favored the Central Library to the Woodbury branch because, *“it is better suited for studying. It is quieter and more spacious. Here at Woodbury, although it is a good library, it is too small and you can’t find a place to sit and study or read. And if you want to do research, there aren’t as many reference books here.”*
- Noise was also indicated as a barrier. A male from Colombia (native pronunciation) noted, *“It is more conducive. You can sit and read a newspaper and there is a nice silence. I like the way things are located, a section for children, for youth etc. I think it is superb and it reminds me of the university where I studied.”*
- Easier access to library cards was also brought up as a way to improve status. According to the participants in the Latino community it is quiet common for multiple families or extended families to be living under one roof. *“Being Latinos, a house has all kinds of people living there.”* This can be problematic because all of the utilities will often be under one name, *“so one person can get a card but the others don’t have a way to get one.”* A female participant also added, *“All the little regulations around getting a library card are not clear.”*
- Another usage issue that came up was Mexicans’ preference for magazines as opposed to books. A young male noted, *“Statistics show that the average Mexican read 1 ½ books per year or less. As proud as I am to be a Mexican, I am ashamed. We most ready magazines, and these are only gossip at that.”*
- The group also reiterated the need for parents to get involved, *“even with more programs like this, if we as parents don’t work with our children, it’s not going to function.”* A young single male encouraged parents to think of the Library as a safe place. *“Parents can bring them with the assurance that there won’t be drugs here, or drunks here, or people fighting. It’s a healthy place to learn healthy things,”* he said.

THE PACE OF CHANGE

- As soon as possible was the most common response from the participants regarding how quickly the Library should respond to the overall changes in the community. A male participant said, *“The more that our society grows, the more the library will be behind, and it will take more to catch up. So if they don’t take action now, the moment for them to receive their laurels will be gone. They need to work together with the community, as they are doing tonight, to find out what we want. They may be slightly behind the growth, but they are close.”* This comment also reiterates the concerns noted by the at-risk representatives that steps need to be taken but the Library also needs to be able to respond to how quickly the changes are happening as well.

UNEXPECTED FINDINGS

- This group was very adamant about getting parents involved with kids and helping them with their education, *“The schools should send information home to the parents asking them to help the children find certain books. That way the parents can begin to get involved in the libraries. Some of them will never go otherwise.”* A mother noted, *“Barnum send information home with the children with the dates and time of children’s programs.”* Anyway to get information to the parents to help get them and their children involved is key.

APPENDIX A – LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS

The following organizations assisted Denver Public Library in recruiting focus group participants.

Association of Professional Genealogists
Circle of Latina Leadership
Clinica Tepeyac
Denver Broncos Boys and Girls Clubs
Downtown Denver Partnership
Escuela de Guadalupe
Illiff School of Theology Library
LARASA (Latin American Research And Service Agency)
Metro CareRing
Metro Denver Black Church Initiative
North High School
Northeast Neighborhood, Inc.
Padres Unidos
Pinehurst Estates HOA
West University Community Association

APPENDIX B – FOCUS GROUP ATTENDEES

A short questionnaire was administered to each participant during the focus group. The questionnaire gathered the following information about each individual.

- Age;
- Zip code;
- Level of education;
- Number and ages of children (if any);
- Frequency of library use;
- Frequency of library use with children;
- Preferred library branches; and
- Services used while at the library.

Based on information provided in the short questionnaire and introductory remarks made by participants, brief descriptive group profile characteristics were compiled for each group. Those characteristics are presented in profile format for each group and the race/ethnicity mix is presented below.

Self-Identified Race/Ethnicity of Focus Group Participants

Group #	Date	Location	White	African American	Hispanic	Native American	Asian	Other	Total	
1	2/22/05	Central	7	1		1	1	1	11	
2	2/23/05	Virginia Village	9	0	1	0	0	1	11	
3	2/28/05	Park Hill	6	2	0	0	3	1	12	
4	2/28/05	Decker	11	0	0	0	0	0	11	
5	3/1/05	Blair-Caldwell	Not asked							
6	3/2/05	Bear Valley	7	0	4	0	0	0	11	
7	3/3/05	Montbello	3	6	1	1	0	0	11	
8	3/8/05	Ross-Barnum	3	0	9	0	0	0	12	
9	3/9/05	Ford-Warren	0	0	10	0	0	0	10	
10	3/10/05	Woodbury	0	0	11	0	0	0	11	
Total			46	9	36	2	4	3	100	
Average			46%	9%	36%	2%	4%	3%		

Hispanic - includes Mexico, El Salvador, Chile, Spanish American, Columbia

Other - includes Biracial, Persian

Asian - includes Pacific Islander

APPENDIX C – MODERATOR’S GUIDE

DISTRIBUTE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete the questionnaire before we start. It includes some questions about how you use the library and how best to communicate with you. (*Refer to handout on the table.*) We’ll collect those before we begin. (*Facilitator hands to note taker for quick tabulations on library usage.*)

WELCOME AND BACKGROUND ON THE FOCUS GROUP (1 MINUTE)

Welcome. Thank you for making time to be here today. My name is _____ and I am with Corona Research, a Denver-based market research firm working for Denver Public Library on this project. Before we get started, I’ll give you an introduction about what we’re going to do tonight and the reasons that we’re doing it. Denver Public Library has found that library usage varies across the community and this change mirrors larger demographic and lifestyle changes in our community. Tonight, we’d like to hear your thoughts and opinions about some potential library design ideas. In particular, we would like to gather your feelings and perspectives on specific library services and service-delivery models.

LOGISTICS (1 MINUTE)

So that’s the big picture. Now let’s talk about logistics. We’ll be here for 2 hours. Please help yourself to refreshments if you haven’t done so already. If you want to get up to get more to eat or drink, or go to the bathroom, feel free to do so. We do have people observing to take notes, and we are also audiotaping and videotaping the session for reporting purposes. Your comments will be summarized and reported anonymously, though, and we won’t identify you as a participant. Finally, we promised to pay you \$50 for participating tonight, and you will be paid at the end of the session.

GROUND RULES (2 MINUTES)

How many of you have participated in a focus group before?

The rules are simple: I’ll bring up a topic, and I want to get your thoughts and opinions. Sometimes I’ll ask a question and we’ll just go around the table and get everyone’s thoughts, and other times I’ll just wait for anyone to answer. Feel free to respond to something that someone else says, and feel free to disagree, but please show respect for others even if you disagree with their opinions. There are no wrong answers. At certain points during our discussion I may poll the group to determine how many of you agree or disagree about a certain issue. This will be done to summarize opinions for reporting back to the client.

Keep in mind that we want everyone to participate. If you’re not talking, I’ll eventually notice and ask you for your opinions. On the other hand, if you’re the only one talking, please recognize that and give others a chance to participate.

Finally, I may politely interrupt if you’re talking about something that strays off of our topics. No disrespect intended if I do this, but we have a lot to accomplish tonight so we need to stay focused so we can make sure that we do not need to keep you beyond our scheduled two hours.

INTRODUCTIONS (10 MINUTES)

We'll begin by briefly introducing ourselves, using a "one minute biography." In one minute or less, tell us the important facts about yourself: your first name, your family at home and what neighborhood you live in.

I. CURRENT LIBRARY USAGE (10 MINUTES)

First, we'd like to learn more about your current library usage.

1. I see from the questionnaires you've completed that some/several of you use multiple library branches. Tell us why. *(Refer to questionnaires and call on participants specifically to share as needed.)* What do you get from one branch that you do not get from another? What do you get from DPL online? What do you get from the Central Library?
2. What do you expect to find when you visit a "physical" Library (branch or Central)? Hope to find?
3. What do you expect to find at the Library online? Hope to find?

II. BACKGROUND AND NEW DIRECTION (75 MINUTES TOTAL)

I'd like to share some interesting findings from research on our community and how we use the Library. Let's take a look at these PowerPoint slides as I share some demographic findings.

Moderator – You will use 16 PowerPoint slides during the focus group. Most of the slides have notes that you will read aloud to the group. On a few slides, you will read directly from the slide. You are encouraged to review the notes ahead of time along with the slides to become familiar with what you will be reading. Corona will provide you with copies of the notes pages for reference during your group.

(Show Slides 1-5 and READ THE NOTES ALOUD TO THE GROUP.)

We've also noticed that our residents use the library differently, in part due to changes in our lifestyles.

(Show Slides 6-7 and READ THE NOTES ALOUD TO THE GROUP.)

4. Denver Public Library is able to track our preferred library services, whether it is adult books or Internet access. They know that our preferences have changed as illustrated on this table. Let me walk you through the changes.

(Show Slide 8 and READ THE SLIDE ALOUD TO THE GROUP.)

How many of you would say your usage matches with the right-hand column? Who matches with the left-hand column? Raise your hands. For those of you that raised your hands with the right-hand column, what's driving your usage of those services? Let's hear from some of you. Anyone "in the middle" – using some services from both columns?

5. Based on these changing patterns of use and changing demographics in our community, Denver Public Library has identified a possible “new model” for library services. The new DPL would include six service models. Let me review them with you.

(Show Slide 9 and READ THE NOTES ALOUD TO THE GROUP.)

Now, we’re going to discuss each service delivery model – one at a time. Please remember to keep the six library models in mind as you answer questions about a specific model. Let’s start with the Central Library.

Central Library – *Show Slide 10 and read the notes aloud to the group*

- A. What do you think about this service delivery model? How do you feel about it?
Say more.
- B. Who is most likely to use this model? Be specific. What would they like about it?
What would they expect to find when using this model?

Contemporary Libraries - *Show Slide 11 and read the notes aloud to the group*

- C. What do you think about this service delivery model? How do you feel about it?
Say more.
- D. Who is most likely to use this model? Be specific. What would they like about it?
What would they expect to find when using this model?

Please note that while a library model, such as the Contemporary Library, may feature or highlight certain services, all libraries will have at least some adult books, audio visual materials, children’s materials and computers.

Learning and Language Libraries - *Show Slide 12 and read the notes aloud to the group*

- E. What do you think about this service delivery model? How do you feel about it?
Say more.
- F. Who is most likely to use this model? Be specific. What would they like about it?
What would they expect to find when using this model?

Classic Libraries - *Show Slide 13 and read the notes aloud to the group*

- G. What do you think about this service delivery model? How do you feel about it?
Say more.
- H. Who is most likely to use this model? Be specific. What would they like about it?
What would they expect to find when using this model?

Youth Inspiration - *Show Slide 14 and read the notes aloud to the group*

- I. What do you think about this service delivery model? How do you feel about it? Say more.
- J. Who is most likely to use this model? Be specific. What would they like about it? What would they expect to find when using this model?

DPL online - *Show Slide 15 and read the notes aloud to the group*

- K. What do you think about this service delivery model? Be specific. How do you feel about it? Say more.
- L. Who is most likely to use this model? What would they like about it? What would they expect to find when using this model?

III. OVERALL LIBRARY CONCEPT (15 MINUTES)

Let's step back once again and discuss the overall design idea for Denver Public Library. We've talked about the Central Library, four (4) models for branch libraries and the Library's Internet based services.

(SHOW SLIDE 16 FOR REFERENCE.)

- 6. Recognizing that a branch library would be one of the four models we've discussed, which would you prefer to use? Let's go around the table and hear from each of you.
- 7. How does that particular model meet your needs? Your family's needs? Say more.
- 8. What do you like best about that model? What would you hope to find there?

Let's imagine that the greatest need in your neighborhood was for _____ Model. *(Facilitator – Select the model that was least preferred by the group - Contemporary, Traditional, Language & Learning, Youth Inspiration and that was not your preferred model.)*

- 9. How would this affect your usage of the library? What would you do differently? *(Probe for responses including use of other branches, Central Library and online.)*
- 10. How far would you be willing to drive to go to your preferred library model? *(Refer to other branches nearby from DPL list.)*
- 11. How quickly do you think the Library should respond to this overall change in our community? How do you think the community will react to changes at DPL? Say more.

IV. LIBRARY USAGE (5-15 MINUTES)

In this section, we'd like to discuss ways to increase Library usage.

12. What are the barriers to using the library? Let's hear some specific examples of barriers.
Prompt for specifics related to parking, hours of operation, technology, collections (AV, print formats), signage, customer service.
13. What could the DPL do to encourage more use? *Ask about the specific needs of adults, Spanish speakers, teens and children.*

CONCLUSION (1 MINUTE)

Thank you for your time! Your input will be very helpful to Denver Public Library as it plans for the future. We have some information about library services if you're interested in learning more. We also have a sign-up sheet if you'd like to be kept apprised of future library initiatives or to possibly volunteer for DPL. *(Distribute materials and sign-up sheet.)*

Now, we've promised you a payment...

APPENDIX D - PRE-GROUP SURVEYS

Two short surveys were administered prior to the start of the focus groups.

Please help us with some information...

1. What is your age? _____

2. What zip code do you live in? _____

3. Please circle one to indicate the highest grade of school you completed, or your highest degree if you have complete college:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 or GED
Some College (no degree) Associate Degree
Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree or Higher

4. Do you have children?

Yes No

5. (If Yes) Ages of children.

6. How often do you go the library to use its services? Circle one for each library option.

Main Library	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Never
Branch Library	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Never
Online	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Never

7. If you are a parent, how often do you take your children to the library? Circle one.

Yearly Monthly Weekly Daily Never

8. **Please indicate which libraries you visit? Check all that apply.**

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Central Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Park Hill Branch Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Byers Branch Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Pauline Robinson Branch Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ross-Barnum Branch Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Ross-Cherry Creek Branch Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Smiley Branch Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Schlessman Family Branch Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Woodbury Branch Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Valdez-Perry Branch Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athmar Park Branch Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Decker Branch Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bear Valley Branch Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Eugene Field Branch Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hadley Branch Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Hampden Branch Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Westwood Branch Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Ross-Broadway Branch Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Montbello Branch Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Ross-University Hills Branch Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ford-Warren Branch Library | <input type="checkbox"/> Virginia Village Branch Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library | |

9. **What services do you use at the library? Check all that apply.**

- Check out materials like books, videos, DVDs and music
- Use computers for email, Internet access and research
- Go to programs, classes and children's events
- Spend fun, quality time with my child
- Help my child do homework
- Access electronic materials from home, school and work
- Ask for expert help from a librarian or Library staff person
- Attend meetings of community groups
- Go relax and read in a place I like
- Research my interests with the Library's rare and unique materials

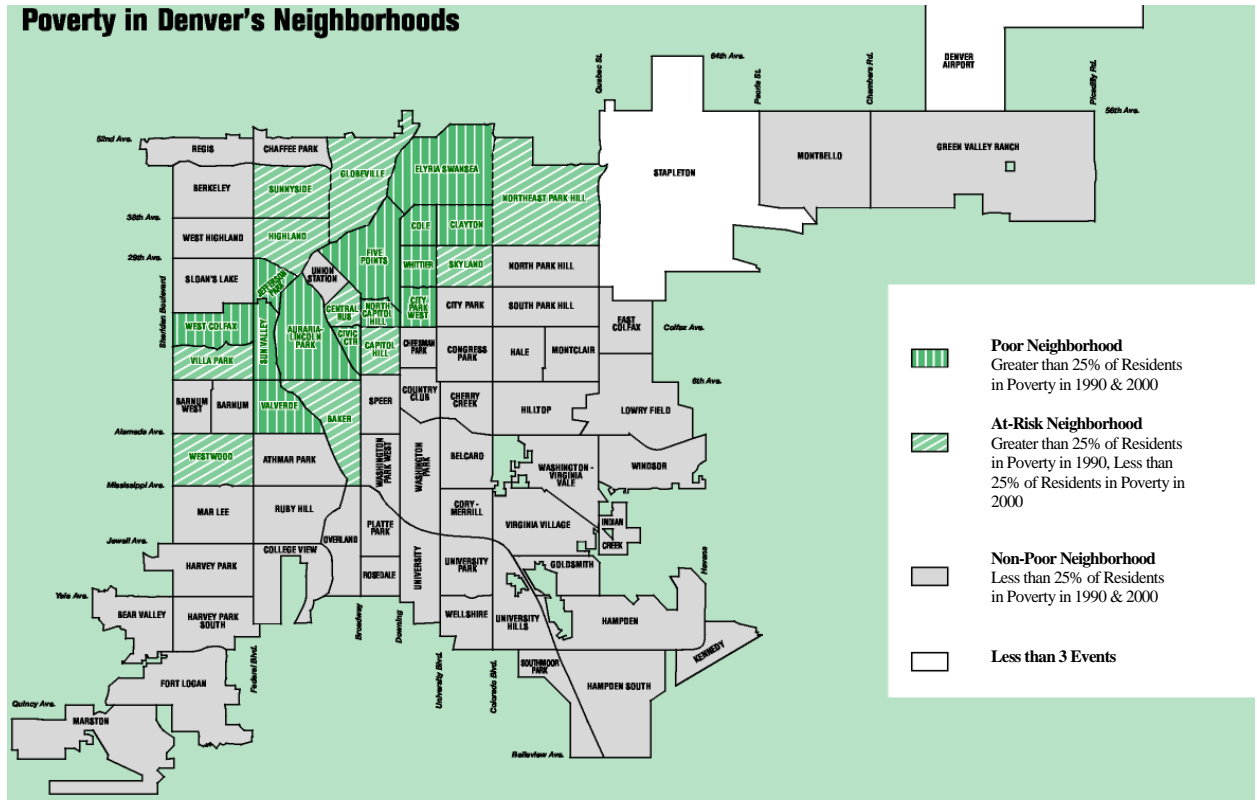
Denver Public Library Focus Group

Tell Us About Your Media Habits

1. What media sources do you pay attention to on a regular basis? List the sources you watch, listen to or read. Include radio, TV, magazines, newspapers, etc. Be specific.

2. What's the single best way to communicate a message about a public service in your community (such as a library) to you? Be specific.

APPENDIX E – MAP OF DENVER



Source: The Piton Foundation Neighborhood Facts 2004 (www.piton.org)

APPENDIX F – INTEREST IN BILINGUAL OR MULTILINGUAL CLASSES

Six of the focus groups suggested that the Learning and Language Libraries offer Spanish classes, with some participants hoping it would focus on other languages as well, in keeping with its rather broad name. Specific comments made by participants are listed verbatim below.

- Ross-Barnum - *Spanish classes should be offered, especially to the young Hispanics who don't speak Spanish ■ I think non-Hispanics need Spanish classes, too. ■ A dominant Spanish-speaker said her daughter, who speaks English and Spanish, is now studying French. This model would help people in many languages, not just Spanish/English.*
- Blair-Caldwell - *Many professionals would benefit by having access to English to Spanish classes ■ I can see a lot of middle school and more high school age, even college age and young adults, working young adults who would like to use a library like this to help them with their Spanish, because in a lot of employment opportunities or a lot of young adults, particularly in the court system like the probation officers and law enforcement who speak Spanish, but could probably learn to speak much better Spanish. Greater utilized if yes we could help these individuals speak English and Spanish ■ Family literacy model – for parents, children and a child and parent component where parent and child come back together to do a literacy activity together ■ I think this could be greater utilized if we can help these individuals learn to speak better English but on the other side like you said if you're bilingual you're not going to be around cause everybody is looking for people that are bilingual, well we have a lot of young adult kids out of college that could use these services as well (opens up job opportunities and job growth)*
- Bear Valley - *Beneficial for both Spanish speakers and English speakers to learn the different languages. Very necessary ■ There was a big demand at my school when they offered Spanish classes for kids ■ My grandparents spoke English as a second language. Not one of the grandchildren speaks Spanish. There are a dozen of us and none of us speak Spanish. Place where I could regain my Hispanic ancestry that I've lost, no one in my generation speaks Spanish anymore except for a few phrases. I would absolutely take it [classes at my local library that were inexpensive] Spanish decent and very Americanized ■ It's an inexpensive way to learn a language ■ It would be good to have a place to practice the language on a regular basis that isn't expensive ■ People working with Spanish speaking people (i.e. interior decorator...could help them communicate and learn what those potential clients like and what's important in their culture)*
- Central Library - *I would like to learn Spanish. ■ I would like a more bilingual emphasis then one or the other. ■ When I think of languages, I don't just think of Spanish, you're talking about foreign-born peoples. I think of other languages as well*
- Park Hill - *Why limit only to Spanish, what about French and German? And what about English to Spanish?*
- Montbello - *Would like it to be in Spanish and English. Help them. ■ The one thing that I don't see is Spanish language classes so that our children can learn Spanish as well. That would attract me. Bilingual is where the jobs are. If I saw that then I would think I could take my kids down there because they offer classes like that. ■ Offer Spanish (11 hands concurred) ■ They would like that it is in Spanish and English. Would help them. I could say I could learn some Spanish and English*