

APPENDIX B - Focus Group Report Upper Dublin Public Library

Seven public and one Library staff focus group sessions were held during November 12th through 17th to gain the ideas and opinions of community and staff regarding the library's current and future service and space needs. A total of 81 members of the public and 15 staff members participated.

Executive Summary

The participants were generally pleased with their library. In particular they identified strengths as

- The accommodating and helpful staff and director
- The computer system that allows users to request books from home
- The collections, especially lots of new books (although this was not universally cited as a strength; some felt space limitations kept the collections smaller than they'd like)
- Story time and book clubs, programs
- The book sale
- Good hours of service
- The drive-up book return
- Good location.

Their suggestions for improvements were largely related to more space for

- An area where students could work together—including computer space
- Media production facilities
- More quiet spaces
- Community rooms
- A larger story time area
- A larger teen area
- Tutoring spaces
- Seating
- Parking.

Participants also suggested

- Linking school and library resources more closely together
- More instruction, classes in effective use of the Internet
- Greater emphasis on ESL and services for immigrants to the community
- A focus on strengthening services to North Hills children
- Better signage
- Longer loan periods.

In describing the perfect library for Upper Dublin, participants suggested

- Whatever would engage kids, such as “lightening fast Internet access”

- Better merchandising of materials and the library
- More open space and windows
- A snack bar, café
- Cozy area for adults
- More user-friendly shelving
- A foreign language collection
- A comprehensive CD music collection.

Participants in the North Hills focus group wanted longer hours, more space, more legal materials, a bigger children's section, and "a lot more computers."

Staff members cited many of the same strengths and weaknesses as did the public focus group participants. Their list of needed improvements tended to be more specific than those from the public. They suggested

- The story time room needs to be properly outfitted with technology
- Better accommodations for those who are physically challenged
- Better temperature control
- Better sound control
- Reorganization of the circulation desk to improve efficiency.

The staff list of characteristics and features of the perfect library included

- Comfortable reading areas
- A more welcoming entrance
- A fireplace
- Outdoor seating/a courtyard
- A café or vending area
- Higher ceilings.

(Notes from each of the focus groups arranged by date follow. The staff focus group notes are located at the end.)

Educators Focus Group – 11/13/2008

There were eleven participants in this session, including school librarians, a school nurse, teachers, and a principal.

What's really good about this library? What are its strengths?

- Miss Barbara is a good resource in children's literature. There is an open door for children's classes. We spend some class periods here. It's a good children's library.
- I worked closely with Tara in teen services, comparing notes on how the kids are using the library.
- They have increased the hours. That's a positive!

- Physical surroundings are pretty good; it's well lit. I like the bright rooms.
- The librarians will go to the schools if you ask; they're very accommodating.
- They're very welcoming to elementary students.
- Lots of kids greet the children's librarian with hugs. They really love her.
- I want to praise Cheri and Barbara; they are excellent to work with. We wrote a grant together; they also join our Title I parents' meetings.

What's not so good? What needs to be improved?

- I would like to see more space here. The library was at Sandy Run before – it was tiny. This one is larger but it's still not big enough.
- As a parent, teacher and reader, I see lots of kids here.
- I'd like an area where a group of students can get together, a distinct area for students.
- I do like that you have some different areas in the library for kids of different ages already.
- They could have computers to use as a group. Provide wireless access. (the person wasn't aware that this service is already available)
- More and more assignments requiring the Internet are being given.
- They could use video cameras and production facilities, a project room that was locked off (to protect the equipment) where they (the teens) could work with production equipment.
- Could library resources be tied into the school system for sharing collections? Maybe the collections could be shared between the library and the high school.
- Maybe some more instruction - how could the HS library provide more instruction?
- Could the library's educational video resources be available through the high school's new media distribution system?
- We need to have places for community use (noisy) and for silent use (studying).
- I wouldn't limit group study or production space just to students; the adults might use it as well.
- Barbara does a lot of programs for the younger kids. The kids have had a great start with reading through the library.
- This may come up at North Hills. The former director of curriculum wanted every child to get a library card, but the parents had to sign the application and that created a problem. Some parents were afraid of the liability they'd take on by signing the application.
- I ran into the same problem; we had a book discussion at North Hills. There are lots of good books there, but the application process is a problem.
- ESL and immigrant meetings

- We cooperated with the library on a grant. We're working with \$ 4000 to reach the immigrant populations. We're also getting some adult and children's books in those other languages. There are many Koreans in the community as well as some Russians now and adopted children from Russia.
- We should be looking at audio books as well for ESL programs – sometimes it's easier to absorb a language if you can read along while someone narrates.
- It would be interesting to know from what zip codes this library serves...
- Barbara shared that with me that when the Horsham library opened.
- I also recall that about 32% of kids participate in school's summer reading.

If you were creating the perfect library for Upper Dublin, starting from scratch to design and build it, what would it look like? Describe the perfect library for Upper Dublin.

- I'd want something to engage kids, offer positive things so that the kids want to be here. Keep them engaged; offer lightning fast Internet access.
- When I take my boys to Barnes & Noble I see lots of UD kids there. What do they have that the library doesn't have?
- You have to have good hours. I think you'd have kids at 10 PM, if the library had a place with an identifiable area for kids.
- More Sunday hours for sure
- A snack bar
- The library needs to match services with what people get in the retail sector. People have a high expectation in services. One bad experience turns them off. They want computers that work, multiple copies of popular things.
- I like the idea of younger learners.
- I like the idea of self-checkout.

What else would you use if it were available?

- I think a quiet study area would be heavily used, and project rooms where 5-10 kids can pursue an idea.
- It could be any little group... it wouldn't have to be students. Adults from organizations could use this space as well. That kind of facility would really get the traffic.
- The township room upstairs gets used a lot.
- At least two teachers I know are tutoring at the library. There are probably lots more. Having a couple of small tutoring rooms each set up for a couple of people would be helpful.
- Taking that even further, offer a help room where you can schedule a tutor.
- Provide online conferencing... teleconferencing.
- I have actually turned around (changed my mind) on the coffee in the library. People have to feel comfortable and welcomed. I started off thinking "no food in the library," but I've changed my mind.

- We have to figure out how to reach the Immigrant population in the community.
 - Parents are willing to pay for some things. Have some services free and some value added services to build in some income.
 - Build in space for professional development for school staff and for staff of other business and non-profits in township. Have a large instruction room. We don't have the well-equipped space (with smart boards, teleconferencing, etc.) to do the professional development that's needed in the schools.
 - ESL is offered in some libraries.
 - Foreign language conversation groups would be good.
 - Quakertown has display space for collections, personal collections. We have the one display case but this would be larger.
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- Art work is displayed in the administration building, but what a wonderful thing it would be to have the student art in the library. That would bring the kids' parent in and the kids would be really proud to have their art work displayed.
 - Take a clue from Appleby's – have a section with the walls decorated with Upper Dublin memorabilia such as photos of old sports teams, graduation pictures, etc.
 - Provide a permanent display to build community connections.
 - Historical society might be interested in helping with that.
 - We forget that there is a resource down the street; Fort Washington Estates would provide lots of resources for those kinds of intergenerational programs.
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- The Abington Library had WW II veterans in to speak. The sessions were very well received.
 - Landsdale Library has folks for programs/lectures. The kids could interview them.
 - The large theater group could do reader's theater. Maybe that would be possible when this becomes a community center.
 - One thing that I would like to see happen is that all kids get a tour of the library... as a regular part of the second or third grade curriculum. Every child would get a free book and a library card application.
 - I was thinking that combining our websites (schools and library) would be good. At least share some pages and offer explanations that would make it easier to use.
 - The library could offer a copy of textbooks, one copy of each book in use. It would be great if this could be online!
 - We have a link to the public library site on our elementary school website.
 - Maybe providing some training in using Internet resources.
 - This library does offer programs like this, but I would like to see more training available in effective use of the Internet (search engines, PowerLibrary, etc.)
 - Facilities and programs: it's hard to separate the two. It's hard to offer top-notch services without top-notch facilities.
 - I would have a puppet area in the children's section. That's great for language development. Offer a courtyard area or reading garden.

- Twenty years ago in Troy, Michigan I was awed by how beautiful the children's area was. It was a separate place. I learned something every single time I went there. That library was ahead of the curve.
- There are some really innovative libraries in San Francisco. I would like that cutting edge in our library.

Is there anything else you'd like to say or add? Final say?

- I'm concerned about the North Hills community. How do we reach the kids there? You'd almost have to go door by door. As far as the design... I appreciate consistency. I would organize things in a similar way. It wouldn't have to look the same, but the new books would be in a similar place... there would be displays in each area... comfortable seating... computers...
- I've heard lots of good ideas. The library should reflect the diversity of the world. The pictures, the staff, etc. should reflect the community. I wouldn't be concerned about the books coming back if the books got into their hands. We're going to have a new high school library and there should be more linkages.
- We need to do more for the North Hills children.
- I would like a WOW effect here!
- One of the reasons that the teens come here is that they feel safe. Safety and security are an issue. We need to make sure that the library remains a safe-haven.
- I was thinking along the same lines. People have to feel comfortable and stay for a while.
- I used to come when my kids were little; when they stopped, I stopped too. We go to Barnes & Noble instead of the library. But in hard economic times we may see more people coming back to the library.
- I have to agree with everything that has been said. The library has to surprise and delight. I want to capture that.
- Move the Library to North Hills. The kids there need something safe, a place that has the resources that they don't have in their homes.
- What I'd like to see is designated areas especially for children so they can do their thing and not disturb others.
- I agree completely... a community center with space for every group.

Parents of Elementary Age and Younger Children Focus Group—11/13/2008

There were eleven participants in the session. They included writers, stay at home moms, a radiologist, a supermarket owner, a registered nurse and teachers. One said he had not been in the library in 40 years, but used Barnes & Noble instead. Another said she came every week to get books.

What's really good about this library? What are its strengths?

- Youth books section, and sale of youth books
- Would like to see it bigger, like Abington Public Library
- Story time
- Go online, have books ready for you, they get books from anywhere
- Can check account, place reserves, etc. all online
- They e-mail you when your books are due
- “Book Worms” book club is very good
- Seating area for children; they can stretch out, etc.
- Lower tables for smaller children
- Staff are very friendly, customer oriented
- Really a media center, well organized
- Media is great, draws you in
- Story time gets the children interactive and the use of music is good.

What is not so good? What needs to be improved?

- Size is a real drawback; there are things they would like to offer but cannot due to lack of space
- Teens from the high school across the street use the Library as a hangout and noise is a problem as a result
- Latch key teens, using profanity, “I felt threatened by them”
- Library is like a large “break room,” which has pluses and minuses, no area for kids to be kids
- Lack of smaller rooms where you can work on your projects
- Lack of quiet rooms for study
- Story room can be extremely crowded, difficult for kids to play with each other after story time
- Collections suffer, Upper Dublin does not have a lot of titles it should have, probably due to the lack of space.

Design the perfect library for Upper Dublin. What would be in the perfect library?

- Be able to see front covers of books (like Barnes & Noble or Borders), more end caps
- Better merchandising
- “Steal” the Abington Library children’s section
- Automatic doors are good, but not so close to the children’s area
- A building with more than one level
- Snack bar (“run by my store”)
- Parent resource center
- What about corporate sponsorship?
- Larger youth book sale room
- More open space, more windows, it feels like you’re in a basement now

- A demonstration space, like a space where you could demonstrate cooking and then promote cooking books
- Community rooms
- Book stacks on casters that could be pushed aside to create an open space
- More appealing children's area
- Separate teen area
- More teen books
- A place of and for the community, do whatever you can to bring people into the building
- Café
- Cozy areas for adults
- Room where you could see movies, then have books that relate to what you just saw
- More PCs
- Display space for books and other things
- "I have always viewed the library as a media center."
- The branch library is very important for the neighborhood
- The branch library is small, but has a lot of "stuff in it," great use of space
- Angled shelves
- Shelves should be more user-friendly (not as tall as they are now)
- More programs for children besides story times, e.g. "video hour," movies
- Play room for children with volunteer supervisors
- Room for movies
- Summer reading club for adults as well as for children
- Need a budget for the book club.

Anything else you want to tell us about?

- The age of the facility, cramped space, anything that enhances technology will attract more people and provide for greater accessibility
- Expand the children's programming; have designated children's area; do more public relations and outreach; let more people know about all that is going on; "I did not know about Library newsletter"
- This location is good, close to the high school; have to have bigger rooms
- Young children's programming in the early evening for working moms/parents
- Library is free, is a great use of tax money
- Excellent libraries have depth of collections
- "Where is the money coming from?" "Will we be it again with another tax increase?"
- Staff helps make this what it is; kudos for the staff; more expansion of programs
- "I never considered that I could come to the library to read a book, it's not comfortable for adults; I would love to know that I could read a book away from home;" would like to see authors come to the Library
- I love the library; it is like home; it is a place that feels like home.
- "I mail out about 50K pieces a week, would be happy to put in Library program news."

General Users Focus Group I—11/14/2008

There were nineteen participants in the group. They included a Library page, Library friends, Library volunteers, teachers, librarians, a home schooling parent, a tutor and long time residents of Upper Dublin. Two said this was their first visit to the Upper Dublin Public Library; others came weekly; another said her daughter came to the Library “a lot.”

What is really good about this Library? What are its strengths?

- Staff very friendly and positive
- Drive-up book return
- Location is outstanding here in the Township Center
- Teen programming
- Hours of operation are good
- North Hills Branch Library
- Online services
- Programs for children; Summer Reading Club
- “Atmosphere has improved with the arrival of Cherilyn Fiory
- The PCs and the computer classes
- Diverse programming
- Will order any books you request
- Interlibrary loan system.

What is not so good? What are the weaknesses of the Upper Dublin Public Library?

- Lack of space, stacks are so crowded that they have to lay books on top of each other when shelving
- Access to seating, not enough PCs, limited parking if there is a program being held
- Out-of-date travel books and craft books
- PCs and users make too much noise, put them in a separate room
- Noise
- Need a parent resource center
- Book sale area is too small
- Inadequate publicity about what the Library has to offer
- Programming is too traditional; needs more multi-cultural programming
- Cost of ILL may be higher than buying the books for the Upper Dublin Library
- Collection depth is not what it should be
- Need a better way to deal with gift books
- Lack of an automated telephone notification system.

Design the perfect library for Upper Dublin. What would be in the perfect library?

- Have a foreign language collection
- One or two classrooms for home school students
- Have a long-term plan
- Partner with other libraries, including academic and school libraries
- A teen section that is visually appealing
- Baskets for use to place books in when browsing
- A larger budget for programming
- Gaming for teens
- Erect partitions to “seal off noise”
- Self-check
- Expand ESL collection; spaces for tutoring
- An atmosphere like Barnes & Noble/Borders
- A better use of space for Technical Services
- Stay in the Township Center.

Anything else you want to tell us about?

- Teens could use the High School after school
- Library should be a quiet place
- Have outdoor space when weather is good
- “Wall off children’s area”
- Home school parents make their children use books
- Effective coordination with the schools is needed
- Be more multi-cultural
- Do not move from present location
- A better space for teens, more variety
- “I would like to know what percentage of us use this Library because of its location”
- Why build? Lease space
- “No way Upper Dublin Township will spring for a new library”
- Noise level is a real problem.

General Users Focus Group II—11/15/2008

There were thirteen participants in the session. They included retirees, a graphic designer, a book club member, a Library Friends volunteer, mothers, and writers. While they had lived in Upper Dublin for one to forty years, the average length of residence was nearly 18 years.

What’s really good about this library? What are its strengths?

- The electronic system, ability to request books from home, it is superb

- Staff will get items from other libraries
- Summer Reading Club and good collection of books for children
- Very welcoming place
- Staff keeps you informed, there is a Youth Council
- Downloadable ability, reference librarian showed me how to do it
- Book sale area
- Staff is exceptional, knowledgeable and friendly
- Reference librarian good with seniors, started computing classes
- Will order magazines if not in collection
- Story time Room is a multi-use space
- Bulletin boards in Entrance Lobby informative and kept current
- Teens being here is a positive
- Good hours of operation, even open on some Federal holidays
- Buys a lot of new books
- Materials are in good condition
- Order what you request
- Do not charge for DVDs (as some other libraries do)
- Quantity of books for children
- Hours are extensive, including being open on Sundays
- The drive-up book drop off
- Ability to check on personal account online.
- Norristown Library charges \$1 for ILL

What is not so good? What are the weaknesses of the Upper Dublin Public Library?

- Poor signage; a newcomer would not know where to go
- Need a floor directory at the entrance
- Book sale area not adequately signed
- Size – have to go to Abington, Norristown, or Horsham for many items
- Not enough parking
- Some drivers ignore the stop sign at the pedestrian crosswalk
- Not enough publicity
- Do not get new releases (of books).

Design the perfect library for Upper Dublin. What would be in the perfect library?

- Study room(s)
- Tutoring spaces
- Circulation period from three to four weeks
- Teen space
- A comprehensive CD music collection
- Comfortable adult reading area
- A pamphlet or brochure near the entrance that tells the reader where things are in the building
- Allow periodicals to be checked-out.

Anything else you want to tell us about?

- I'm very happy with the Library
- The Library cannot be all things to all people
- Are there off-site possibilities for some activities?
- Library does participate in Upper Dublin Day with a booth
- Keep the staff and keep them friendly (as they are now)
- Twenty percent of public libraries in Montgomery County not in the online system
- Develop a Library video and have it on the Township TV channel
- Promote the online services
- List/describe new acquisitions on the Library's website.

Teens Focus Group—11/15/2008

There were eleven participants in the group. Two were high school students, three were 8th graders, four were 7th graders, and two were 6th graders. The high schoolers said they used the Upper Dublin Public Library for book reports and reference projects; the others used the public library for books, movies, and music. One said simply, "for enjoyment."

What's really good about this library? What are its strengths?

- The way it is organized, the different categories of books and age sections
- Programs
- Lots of titles on different subjects
- PCs, lots of them and easy to use
- Graphic novels
- Easy to find things.

What is not so good? What are the weaknesses of the Upper Dublin Public Library?

- Some people misuse the Library
- Too many restrictions
- Flash drives get locked and not in a good location on the PCs
- Not enough parking spaces
- Building is too small
- Little kids area near the book sale area
- Book sale area not well organized
- Online catalog hard to use
- Music CDs not in good condition
- Teen section too small
- Not enough books for general use
- Noisy.

Design the perfect library for Upper Dublin. What would be in the perfect library?

- More magazines for teens

- More PCs and newer PCs
- More and newer music CDs
- More books for the teen area
- More windows
- Murals on the walls
- Paint the walls different colors
- Place posters that relate to teens
- Have a homework center
- Separate rooms for different ages
- More PCs in one place
- Café
- Tutoring space
- More information about the books in the collection
- A color printer
- Move the book sale area toward the front part of the building
- Play background music
- Have a smart board in the Library (Story time Room?).

Anything else you want to tell us about?

- Have a delivery service
- Allow public library books to be returned to school libraries
- Focus on re-cycling
- Arrange the Library like Barnes & Noble
- Keep the DVD collection current
- Library closes too early on Fridays
- The Library should be more environmental friendly.

Fort Washington Estates Focus Group – 11/17/2008

There were eight participants in the session. Three had moved to the area in the 1960s. Most recent arrival had been in Upper Dublin for 2.5 years.

What's really good about this library or about other libraries you've used? What are(were) its strengths?

- Accessibility of books, good for browsing
- I grew up in Philadelphia in the 1930s. Used the school library. We had to read so many books per month.
- The library I used to use had art work displayed — (Bronxville). The library had art classes and the library hung the pictures that we did.
- I grew up in Yonkers, NY, made use of the Getty Square Library
- I started with A and read every book. I went on for a while but I only got to B!
- People are willing to help you; I like the idea of the computer classes, but they should have them more often.

- We're lucky to have MCLINC; we have access to university libraries too; I like the newspapers.

What's not so good? What could be improved?

- I don't mind paying overdue fines; there was a Peanuts cartoon about overdues. Character had a 5 cent fine and thought it was outrageous... but I think that as long as the money helps the library, it's OK.
- Hours are great
- UD has a 3 week loan; some have 4 weeks. I like 4 weeks better; 14 days is too short.
- Top shelf is hard to see.

If you were creating the perfect library for Upper Dublin, starting from scratch to design and build it, what would it look like? Describe the perfect library for Upper Dublin.

- No eating in the library! Shouldn't eat there.
- I think a café in the library is a great idea!
- First proposal for our library at Ft Washington Estates was that it would combine the café and bookstore. I didn't like that idea so they're going to be separate (although close to each other).
- Have lots of natural light
- Comfortable chairs
- One of the reasons people come is that there are the computers.
- Computers do get a lot of use. More computers
- I like a table to take notes.
- Have a large area for children.
- Bronxville had a new library with rooms for meetings, a movie room, art exhibits.

What other libraries have you used that had interesting/attractive features?

- Doylestown
- Willow Grove had a little library.
- Programs...the Women's club brings in authors, with new books. It costs money.
- I'm going to buy some of the used books from the book sale.
- Is it possible to have delivery to Ft. Washington Estates? Request it here and have them deliver it? Books by mail?
- We're close to the library but many of us don't drive and it's too far to walk.
- I was wondering about large print books. There are relatively few available. I would like some large print books with substance... not just light fiction.
- They are going to order a few (large print) for the resident library here.
- We're going to have some audio books (in the resident library)
- I fall asleep listening to audio books.

What features would an ideal library have?

- Lots of windows.
- I'm more interested in what's in it.
- No stairs! It wouldn't be multiple floors.

- If it had more than one floor, the meeting rooms should be on the first floor.
- Children's room should have things that are the right size for children.
- The Ft Washington Estates Library will have a fireplace that goes through on both sides. (café and library). That would be nice for the public library.
- I like the tilted shelves in the picture you showed us!
- I like the idea of quiet spaces.
- Could the library provide space for small book discussion groups?
- If we implement a lot of the ideas, we'd need a larger building.
- Make it inviting and accessible, understandable and intuitive.
- Entice kids so they don't watch TV.
- I'm not unhappy with the UD library.
- It would be wonderful if they built a new larger library!
- Do they serve coffee? The coffee and café idea are enticing.
- I'd hate to leave the discussion without remembering the staff; they've very helpful.

North Hills Focus Group – 11/17/2008

There were eight participants. Two said they had lived their entire lives in Upper Dublin. Three of them talked about being frequent users of the UD library; one said he had lived in North Hills for five years and this was his first time at the UD library.

What's really good about this library? What are its strengths?

- People are friendly; they can pick things for you.
- For how small it is, it has a good selection. New books are always coming in.
- I ask for books from other libraries quite frequently. I request a lot.
- For the kids, it's computer access. They may not have a computer or their computer may be down or they might not have Internet access.
- I would like to see it expand, longer hours. We need the library.
- When I first moved here, it was where I met people.
- It's walkable ...local transportation is poor and the transportation stops at 7 pm.
- It's hard to get to the UD library because of lack of transportation. We need the same hours as the UD library since that one is so inconvenient for us to get to.
- If you can read you can do anything.

What's not so good? What could be improved?

- Hours are poor; there are no morning hours at North Hills
- The activities, story times, etc. need to be more often
- Listening area—language instruction.
- Needs to advertise more. Lots of people may not know that the library is here.
- They have improved it a bit within the last few years. They upgraded the library because we complained.
- We need more Books on CD.

If you were creating the perfect library, starting from scratch to design and build it, what would it look like? Describe the perfect library.

- Hours would be 9-9 and open 6 days a week. Open Friday and Saturday. It doesn't open until 1 pm now... make that seven days a week!
 - Have a legal section with more specialized books.
 - There would be regular deliveries from other libraries.
 - There would be a children's section with bean bag chairs.
 - There would be story hours every day and at different times of day.
 - It would be a good source of human services and civic information.
 - This is a tight knit community. We're kind of a village within the township. Everybody knows everybody else.
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- Bigger Children's section
 - An extensive legal section
 - Really comfortable chairs
 - Cubby to study
 - Textbook collection
 - I like science fiction. We need more.
 - We're getting more authors though.
 - The library should offer classes to teach using computers, the Internet, software, etc.
 - Adult classes
 - Teach job skills
 - Reading club, book club
 - How would you advertise an improved library?
 - Do it through churches, schools, door to door
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- Most of the time there is a waiting list for the computers already. We need a lot more computers.
 - The library should have more plug-in access for laptops now that it has wireless access.
 - Have tax forms, state forms, senior services.
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- Provide preparation classes for the SAT and other exams
 - Have a summer library boot camp
 - The biggest obstacle for teens is space.
 - Have more computers for the little kids.
 - Is sound available on all of them? It should be.

Final say?

- We need more space.
- We need to be exposed to new things; we don't even know what to ask.
- We need more space and more availability (hours).
- More African American Resources
- More space

- More space and an area where the kids can work on school projects
- Family space
- Longer hours, including more evenings and weekends
- This library should have the same resources as the other library.

Library Staff Focus Group—11/14/2008

There were fifteen participants in the staff focus group. Their average length of service at the Upper Dublin Public Library was nearly six years although the “newest” staff member had been with the library only one month and the longest tenured one had been there 15.5 years. Two had worked in school libraries before joining Upper Dublin Public Library, one had been at a college library, one a hospital library, and four had been at other public libraries.

What is good about the Library? What are its strengths?

- Staff, friendly, great teamwork, no discord, “we enjoy working here”
- Patrons are very supportive, as is the Township Manager
- Director is strong, an excellent listener, focused
- Great collection of materials; if not in collection will be ordered
- Reference collection is getting better, as is the AV collection
- Central location in the Township
- Children’s and Teens programming
- Starting to increase adult programming
- Teens like coming here
- The number of PCs
- Wireless network plus able to “plug in” at many of the tables
- Hours of operation, open seven days a week
- Friends of the Library (FOL) support for children’s programming, \$3,500 a year
- Volunteers.

What is not so good? What are the weaknesses of the Upper Dublin Public Library?

- Size, building is too small
- Not enough parking
- Difficult for physically challenged to move about because space is so crowded
- Rooms upstairs very difficult to get to if physically challenged
- Story time room not properly outfitted with technology
- If a program is being held upstairs (not a library program), downstairs can be very noisy
- Library network not integrated with Township network; no access to Township’s personnel network
- Parks & Recreation Dept. can be negative if our programs do not have attendance that was planned
- Temperature in the library is a major problem – too hot – Story time Room very bad
- Book sale area too small
- Sound control poor

- Bookstacks are too high
- No group study space
- Building is “very” dated
- Custodial maintenance of the building is not what it should be (contract maintenance via the Township)
- FOL understaffed, staff have to spend too much time with book sales
- Circulation Desk needs to be organized for a more efficient operation.

Design the perfect library for Upper Dublin. What would be in the perfect library?

- Comfortable reading areas
- Airy
- More windows
- A more welcoming entrance
- Outside seating, like a courtyard
- Entrance “out” of the library – like at the Indian Valley Library
- Totally separate area for teens
- Fireplace
- Quiet study
- Café or vending area
- Large multi-purpose room like at Horsham
- Higher ceiling.

Anything else you want to tell us about?

- There is “wasted” space; some space could be rearranged.
- Need a totally new library with much bigger teens and children’s areas
- Can the present building be “pushed” out to the sidewalk?
- A more ADA friendly building
- It is claustrophobic in the teens area
- Need short-term and long-term plans
- Rework the Circulation area
- Location must be central
- Locate Technical Services behind the Circulation Desk
- Rework the space we now have.