

Free Delivery and Pickup for Everyone

(without
killing your
budget)





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What Do You Mean “Free” Delivery and Pickup?



Any Canton resident with a valid street address can request:

- delivery of library materials from the hold shelf
- pickup of any checked-out library materials they have



Deliveries and pickups occur Tuesdays and Fridays between 10:00 AM and 5:00 PM



This service is provided at no charge

SPOILER ALERT People Love It

“Last year, after reaching my 90th birthday, I decided to stop driving, and get rid of my car. This action gave rise to some major changes in my life. One principal change was the need to find entertainment confined to the four walls of my home.

Unfortunately, much of this type of entertainment was found at the library, which was now inconvenient to visit, That's why my wife and I were nothing less than ecstatic when we first learned about your plan to institute a pick-up and delivery system. And, indeed, this system proved to be a godsend for us. We can now acquire and enjoy such items as DVDs and books without leaving our home.

I'm grateful to the library for establishing the pick-up and delivery system and fervently hope that it becomes a permanent fixture.”

– Larry Binstock (One of our patrons)

We don't have his photo, but we
assume he looks like this



Origin Story

Home Delivery wasn't built in a day

Circulation Services and Information Services staff began meeting in February 2020 with a goal to “explore the feasibility of curbside or home delivery of materials, and the impact on staffing needs.”

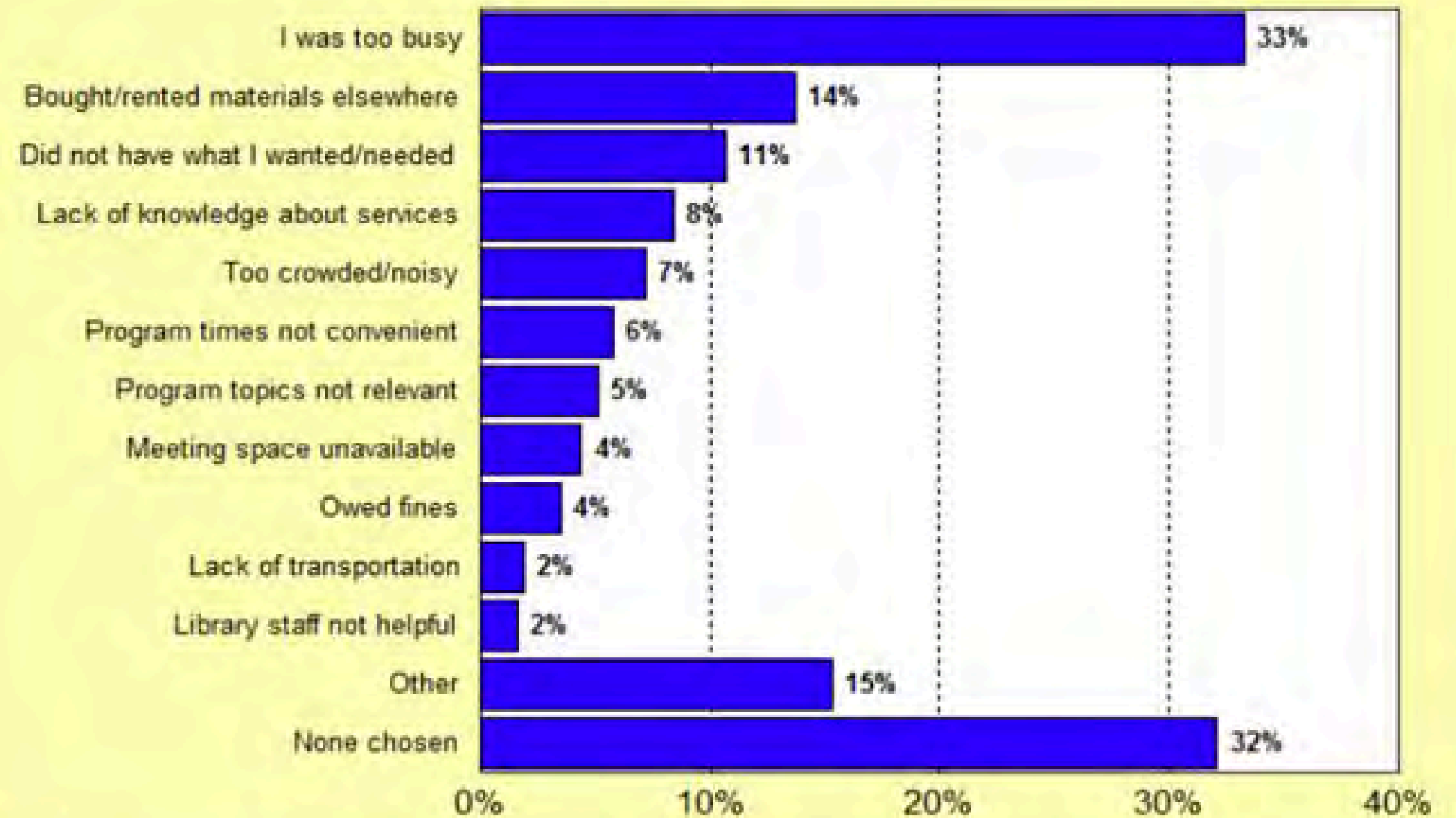
After a detour, we returned to this goal in March 2022, and implementation started December 2024.

Initial Surveys

Community survey data
pointed to needs
curbside couldn't meet

Q18. Reasons Respondent Households Did Not Use at all or More Often the Canton Public Library During the Past 12 Months

by percentage of respondents



Source: Leisure Vision/ETC Institute for Canton Township and Canton Public Library (2014)

Initial Surveys



Barriers to more use

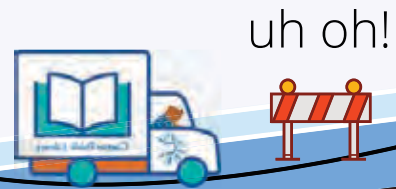
		Main barriers that impede library use										
		Lack of knowledge of services	Did not have what you wanted/needed	Owed fines	Bought materials elsewhere	Wait times too long	Building too crowded/noisy	Lack of transportation	Staff not helpful	You are too busy	Distance from home	None of these
Age Group in Home	0-4	5%	-	-	-	5%	-	-	-	32%	9%	60%
	5-14	13%	11%	-	5%	8%	16%	-	-	37%	-	45%
	15-19	11%	13%	-	-	2%	9%	-	-	30%	4%	53%
	20-34	13%	7%	-	2%	2%	15%	2%	-	33%	8%	44%
	35-54	8%	10%	-	4%	3%	12%	2%	-	30%	3%	49%
	55-74	11%	6%	-	2%	3%	8%	4%	-	24%	12%	52%
	75 or older	8%	-	-	4%	2%	-	8%	-	12%	8%	62%
Respondent Age	Under 20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	20-34	3%	-	-	-	3%	6%	6%	-	39%	3%	45%
	35-54	13%	15%	-	8%	5%	11%	-	-	28%	8%	40%
	55-74	11%	4%	-	1%	3%	8%	4%	-	22%	11%	52%
	75+	7%	-	-	5%	2%	-	5%	-	7%	5%	63%

Initial Surveys

Data also showed interest in delivery

		Potential future library services											
		Home delivery of materials	Smart phone/tablet device support	In-library use of special equipment (laminator, large	Media creation (podcast, video green screen, audio/video	Notary public	Test proctoring	Video conferencing	Personalized reading/viewing suggestions	Reservable study rooms	Eliminating overdue fines	Simplified logins for electronic media	Library super fan experiences
Age Group in Home	0-4	9%	18%	18%	9%	45%	-	5%	5%	-	-	14%	-
	5-14	39%	26%	29%	21%	42%	3%	-	11%	13%	11%	11%	5%
	15-19	21%	19%	28%	23%	43%	4%	2%	15%	28%	9%	9%	4%
	20-34	18%	23%	21%	10%	43%	3%	-	11%	20%	5%	8%	7%
	35-54	23%	27%	30%	17%	41%	4%	3%	11%	18%	9%	8%	5%
	55-74	18%	25%	15%	6%	37%	2%	2%	7%	7%	5%	9%	3%
	75 or older	14%	24%	4%	4%	32%	-	4%	4%	8%	8%	10%	2%
Respondent Age	Under 20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	20-34	6%	26%	26%	3%	45%	-	3%	13%	13%	3%	6%	-
	35-54	27%	27%	21%	19%	43%	4%	-	11%	20%	11%	5%	8%
	55-74	19%	23%	14%	6%	34%	2%	3%	5%	7%	5%	11%	3%
	75+	12%	26%	7%	5%	30%	2%	2%	5%	7%	7%	9%	2%

start **A COVID-19 Detour**



goal!



COVID closure quickly boiled the goal down to materials pick-up after the lockdown ended, but before we were fully open for browsing.



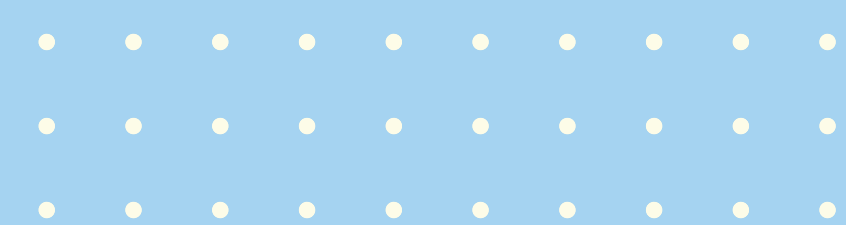
Lots of demand for materials pickup while people were limiting movement – very busy/full/chaotic – but use declined rapidly once people started being more comfortable out and about and we transitioned to curbside



This experience had two consequences for Home Delivery discussion:

- **Staff hesitation about whether too many people would want it (overwhelming) or too few people would use it (not worth it)**
- **Staff experience helped shape our thinking about the logistics**

Getting Back on the Road



Our own assessments also highlighted areas for improved service

A 2021 exploration of “how to safely meet the short-term needs of Canton seniors?” had (among other things) the following takeaways:

- They [seniors] require things that are easy and convenient, and they need to be able to receive help without feeling like a burden, in most cases this means receiving help without having to ask for it.
- Let’s find new ways to do old things, connect seniors and caregivers with resources, and make living on your own easier with safer home management and direct-to-door services.

“I’m writing to express my deep appreciation for the Canton Public Library’s delivery program and to share why it has become such a vital resource for our family. I am a homeschooling mother of 14 children and currently in my 25th year of homeschooling. As you can imagine, the library plays a significant role in our lives. Our family has a deep love for reading, and every month we check out between 30 and 40 books, often centered around seasonal themes, holidays, and nature studies. In the past, library visits required many helping hands and lots of bags!

In February 2024, our 15-year-old daughter was diagnosed with bone cancer. Over the following year, she and I spent more time at Mott Children’s Hospital than we did at home. While my adult children and husband stepped in to help with homeschooling and childcare, I hesitated to add “pick up library books” to their already full plates. On rare days when I had time away from the hospital, library runs were still on my to-do list.

When I learned about the trial of the CPL delivery service, I was overjoyed. From a hospital room, I could request books for my children—and they would arrive right at our doorstep. It was a small miracle in the midst of a very difficult time. This service brought a sense of normalcy and joy to my younger children when life felt anything but normal.

While our daughter is now home, her battle with cancer continues, and the delivery service remains a tremendous blessing. It has eased my burden in ways that are hard to express fully in a short letter. I sincerely hope this program can continue and even expand—it truly makes a difference.

Thank you for your consideration and for supporting families like ours.

Warm regards,
Amy Ekblad and Family”



A New Survey – Sept 2022



Survey sent via
email and
conducted by
phone

Key data from the 875 responses received:

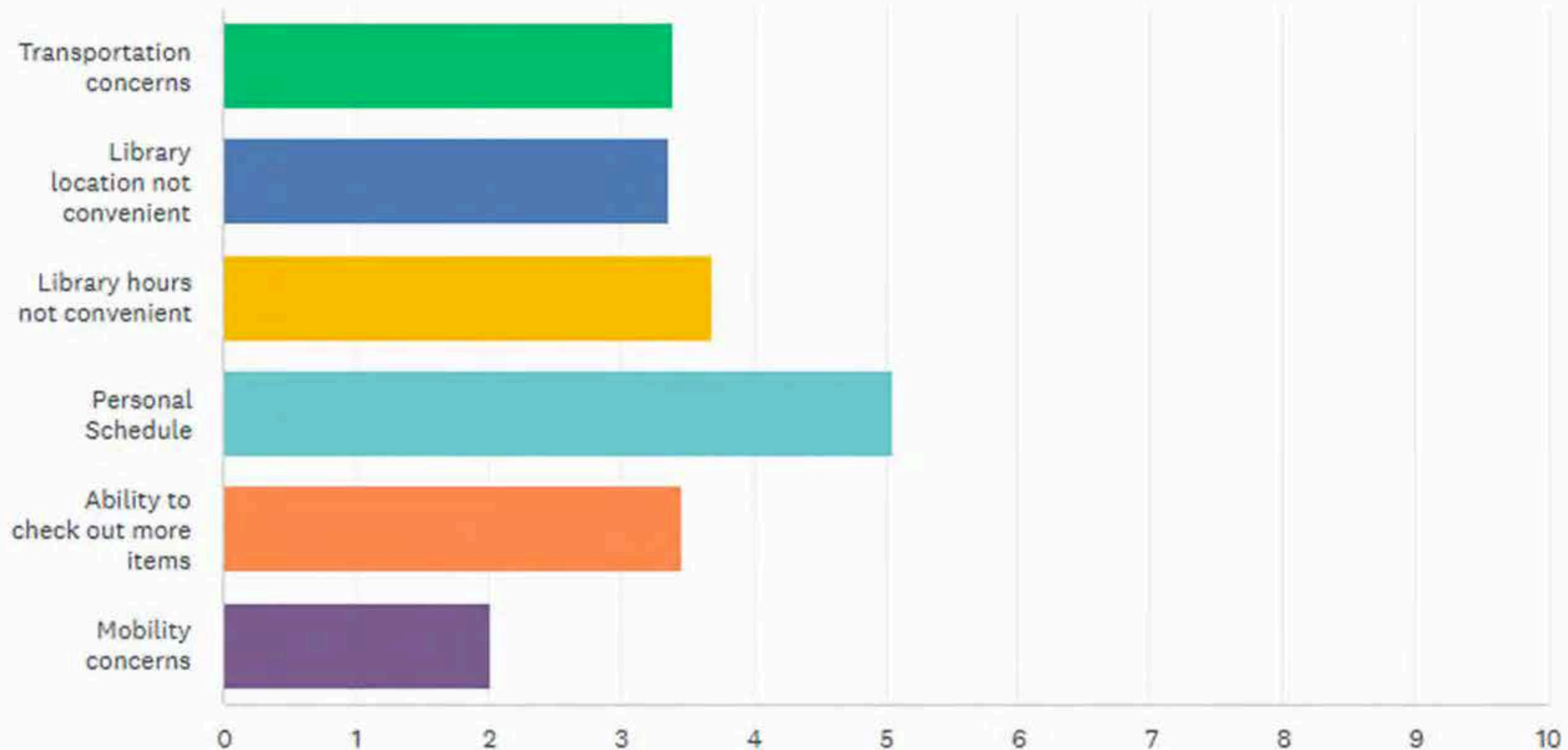
- Half were interested in home delivery.
- 100% of households with children nine and under who responded were interested.
- 100% of individuals 65–74 who responded were interested
- Individuals who used the library infrequently or rarely now were most interested.
- Of the respondents, 16% had expired Canton library cards, possibly pointing to an under-served group with high interest in the library

A New Survey – Sept 2022



Why would you be most interested in home delivery? Please rank your respon... ☐ ↺

Answered: 368 Skipped: 507



Forming a Recommendation



•Exploring
Potential Service
Options

- Creation of avatars
(personas) from
data:
- Pat, Independent Senior
- Paula, Young Mother
- Perry, Sandwich Generation
- Peter, Power User with
Transportation issues

•Comparing
Obstacles,
Opportunities and
Costs

16% of CPL cardholders and 13% of Canton residents fall within this age range.
13% of responses indicated children 9 and under living in the household

Paula, Young Mother



Persona example

About

- Married, with two children and pregnant with third
- Very interested in education, children are involved in several activities
- Loves bringing children into library, but cannot always fit it into the family schedule
- Uses e-media for herself, but wants her children to read print material
- Financially comfortable

Needs

- Occasional delivery now and more when baby comes
- Entertainment and enrichment for children
- Flexibility and convenience

Home Delivery Obstacles

- No just-in-time delivery
- Nebulous delivery time-frame

Home Delivery Opportunities

- Time savings
- Convenience
- Doesn't have to bring the children in on a bad day

Best Delivery Options

1. Staff/Contracted Delivery Service

- Convenience is Paula's highest concern. She wants the library to fit into her personal schedule at her convenience, so she wants items delivered ASAP. This option has the shortest time between request and delivery.
- Item return possible, if budget adjusted. Paula would need to call for return pick-up, but she is likely to return items at her convenience, as she is a regular user of the physical library who relies on home delivery only when trips to the library can't be scheduled.

2. USPS/UPS/FedEx

- Offers consist, simple (for Paula and staff) delivery and returns, but adds more time to delivery.
- With two small children, Paula will likely request large numbers of items. Multiple boxes/bags will make costs higher than staff/contracted delivery service.

Not Ideal Delivery Options

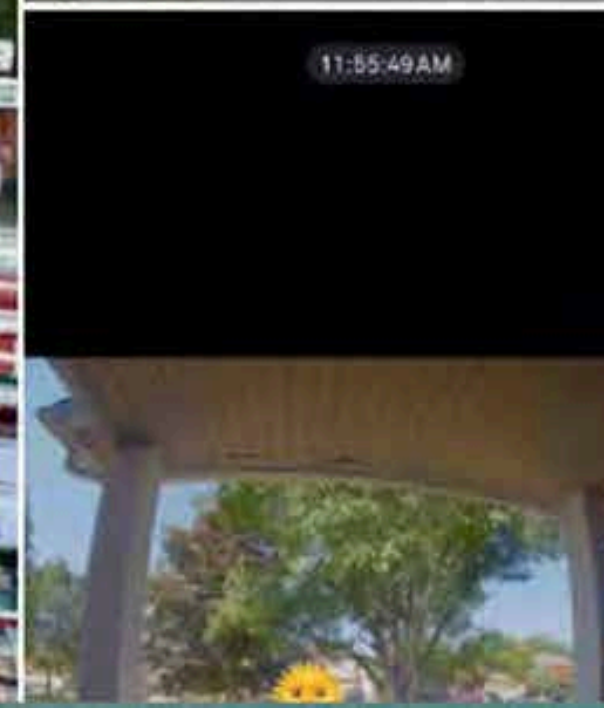
Paula does not want to bother with yet another app/technology interface as needed for Door Dash/Roadie, but she will if this is the only option.

“Paulas” are
our biggest
user group

I just had to share this here since I've posted about Canton library delivery service (which is absolutely amazing and the delivery man is such a gem)...

Posted on my own page:

Our Twp public library offers free book delivery. We've been taking advantage over the last few weeks, but normally only get a few books at a time. Imagine my surprise when I saw the amazing delivery guy walking up with a WAGON to deliver our books 🤩 Leave it up to my 2 youngest to add 36 books to their library cart when I left for an appointment! 📚📚



Forming a Recommendation – When the Wheels Hit the Road



Diving deeper into the details

- Dig into budget assumptions
- Road Test!
- Refine assumptions

Make a draft Plan

- Small group of staff involved – More repetition to get the process down, limit problems/better communication with a smaller group
- Limited days to start – Provide options, make it easier to track problems by spreading days out
- Limited time frame – Patrons know when to expect items, we know when to stop worrying, made it 10 AM to 5 PM to avoid waking anyone up or bothering them late at night

Lessons Learned from Planning/Recommendation Phase



- Expect many meetings and spend time communicating to administrators, the board and fellow staff what you found and where your planning is going

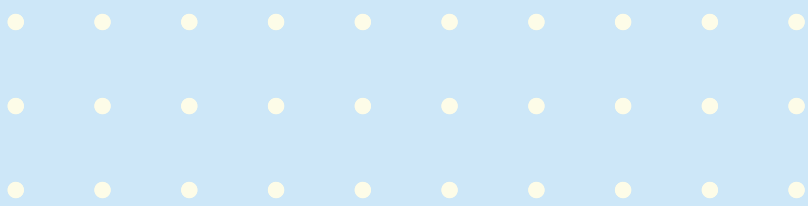
- Leverage related experiences (but don't let fear stop you)

- Direct input from library patrons (and non-patrons) is invaluable

- Acknowledge it won't be perfect

- Let go of your unknowns and worries

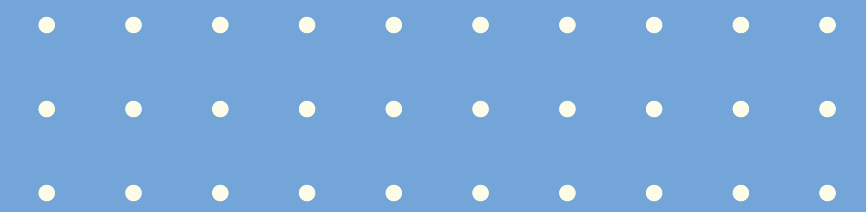
The Recommendation



We recommend that the library undertake a six-month trial, beginning Fall 2024, to provide home delivery on request to Canton cardholders and that, if certain benchmarks are hit during the trial, the library establish home delivery as a regular option for Canton patrons.

	Expanded Books by Mail (USPS)	UPS/FedEx	Courier Service	Staff
Minimum turnaround (days)	2	2	Same day	Same day
Maximum turnaround (days)	5	6	3	3
Max items	4 per mailer	4 per mailer	No limit	No limit
Cost per delivery	\$4.50	\$12.00	\$7.00-11.00	\$8.43
Cost per return	\$4.50	\$12.00	NA	\$8.43

Preparing to Launch



Staff vs. Courier

- Clear from cost comparison that staff would probably be cheaper in the long-run – but resistance due to liability and unpredictability of demand
- There was also resistance to pilot overall due to perception of potential users as “lazy” – including clear personas, use cases helped

Decided to pilot with courier

- More capacity if overwhelmed, less risky if low use
- Minimize liability
- Test interest and re-evaluate budget impact with real data

Solicited quotes from multiple vendors

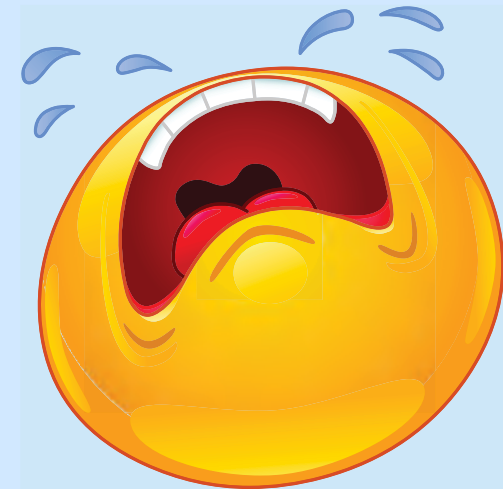
- Included key criteria based on persona needs and feedback from key staff through planning process
- Leveraged ideas gathered over multiple years

Preparing to Launch – Cont.



- Original plan was to have patrons request delivery through catalog when placing hold
- Knew returns (aka pickups) were essential, but couldn't easily be done through the catalog – developed webform process to request
 - ➡ Independent choice from delivery for maximum flexibility
 - ➡ No card entry required for patron simplicity, and because patrons often return for each other
- Intentionally on the down-low. Minimal announcement on website – avoid a rush and requests from patrons without available holds

SPOILER ALERT
Delivery option in catalog
didn't work



The Aftermath



- Original plans don't always work

•Had to decide if alternate approach for delivery was viable and worth it – thorough groundwork in recommendation helped identify key features (easy, on demand, visible at point of need) which made rapid assessment of alternatives easier

NEW Plan

- Second webform
- Include links in notices for “just in time” visibility

Canton Public Library
1200 S. Canton Center Road
Canton, MI 48188
734.397.0999



CANTON MI 48187

10-16-24 08:32AM

2nd Notice! The following items are overdue. Please return them to avoid loss of borrowing privileges. For more information, visit <https://cantonpl.bibliocommons.com/user/login> or call 734-397-0999.
AUTHOR: Chamberlin, Holly, AUTHOR: Brown, Carolyn,
Home for the summer [large print] The wedding gift [large print]
LARGE PRINT FICTION CHAMBERLIN LARGE PRINT FICTION BROWN
BARCODE: 35149005963495 BARCODE: 35149008886503
Adult Large Print DUE: 10-12-24 Adult Large Print DUE: 10-12-24

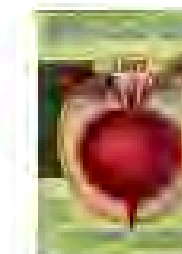


Hi John,

The following items are due today.

ITEM(S) DUE:

Title	Item Type
Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	Book
Author	Due Date:
by Rowling, J. K.	12-22-2023



Please return these items to the library so others may use them.

Would you like us to pick up and return your item(s) for you?

Pickups occur **Tuesdays** and **Fridays**, between 10:00 AM and 5:00 PM. You do not have to be home to have items picked up. We do not pickup on days the library is closed.

Request Pickup



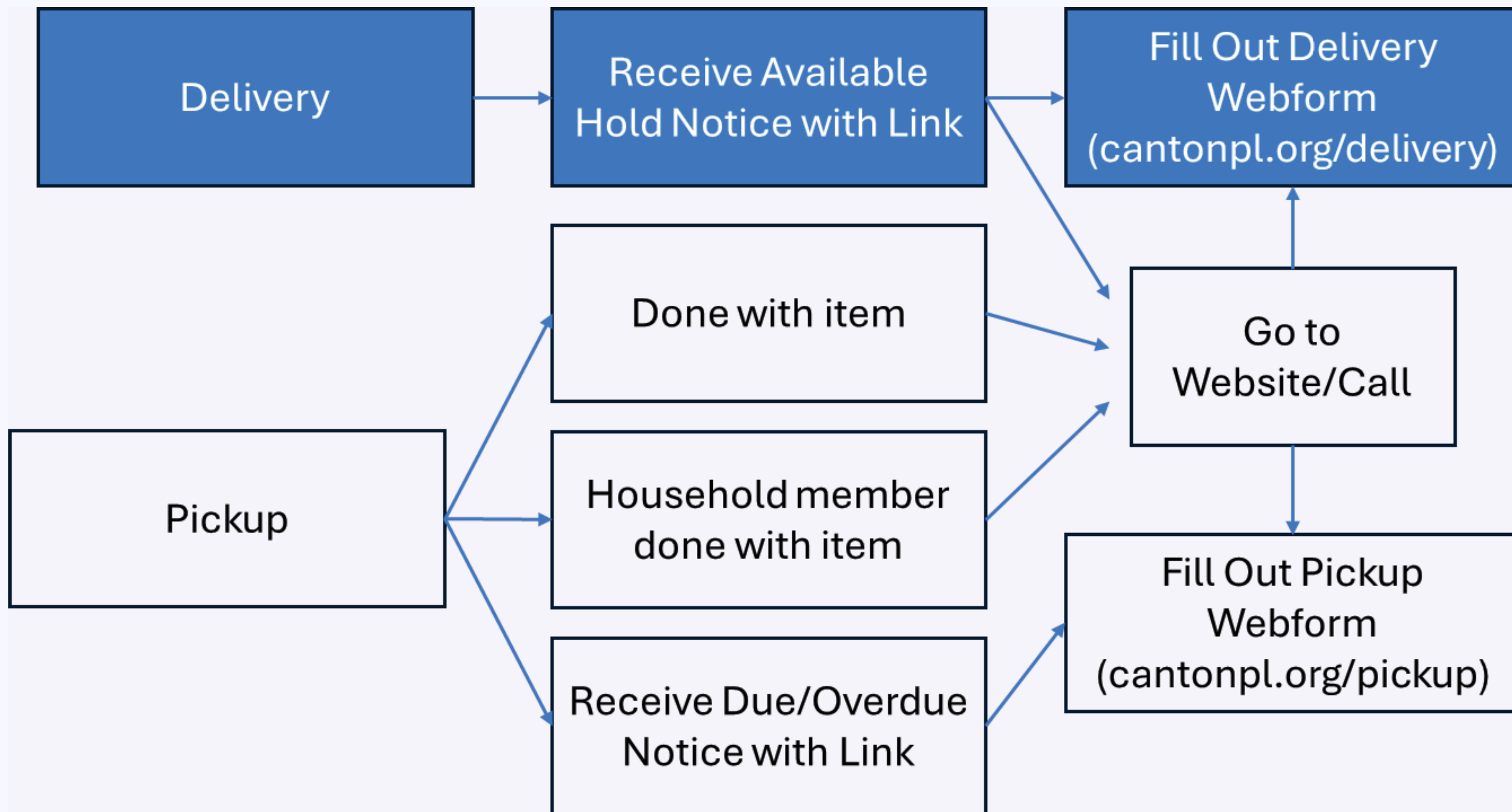
You can check the status of all materials on your account anytime by calling 734-397-0999, signing up for text message alerts by texting SIGNUP to 833-588-7876, or by checking [My Account](#).

Share + Follow Us



[Need a card or a replacement?](#)
[Looking for library hours or location?](#)
We are happy to help!

[Catalog](#) | [My Account](#) | [Programs](#)
www.cantonpl.org



Preparing to Launch – Wait, Webforms?

For new requests (both pickup and delivery):

- Form gets submitted on website and data is emailed to service account mailbox
- Email triggers Power Automate flow and adds item to SharePoint Online list

For emailing list to courier (both pickup and delivery):

- Power Automate flow is set to run specific times
- Flow gets items from list, put into excel sheet and emailed to courier

For library staff for gathering/packing deliveries:

- Python script is manually run by staff whenever a list of delivery requests is needed
- Python script outputs to Excel file with patron name and hold data
- Script will also remove any delivery requests on SharePoint that don't have any holds available

Lessons Learned from Prep Phase

- Keep the end user in mind/Know what would make the project non-viable or not address the need, and revisit as the plan changes to make sure it still works

- There is still time to change the plan

- This is when real resistance comes out of the woodwork

- Super helpful to have an engaged IT team with variety of skills – got up to speed and developed solution quickly, expanding tool/process originally intended just for returns

- Also super helpful to have a clear understanding of what info we needed, and practical step by step at actual work (again from work in recommendation) to test IT's solution

Lessons Learned from Prep Phase – IT Perspective



- From the IT side:
be ready to try
stuff, googling is
your friend

Expect the
unexpected from
patron data entry



Pickup launched
Dec 3, 2024

Delivery launched
Dec 17, 2024

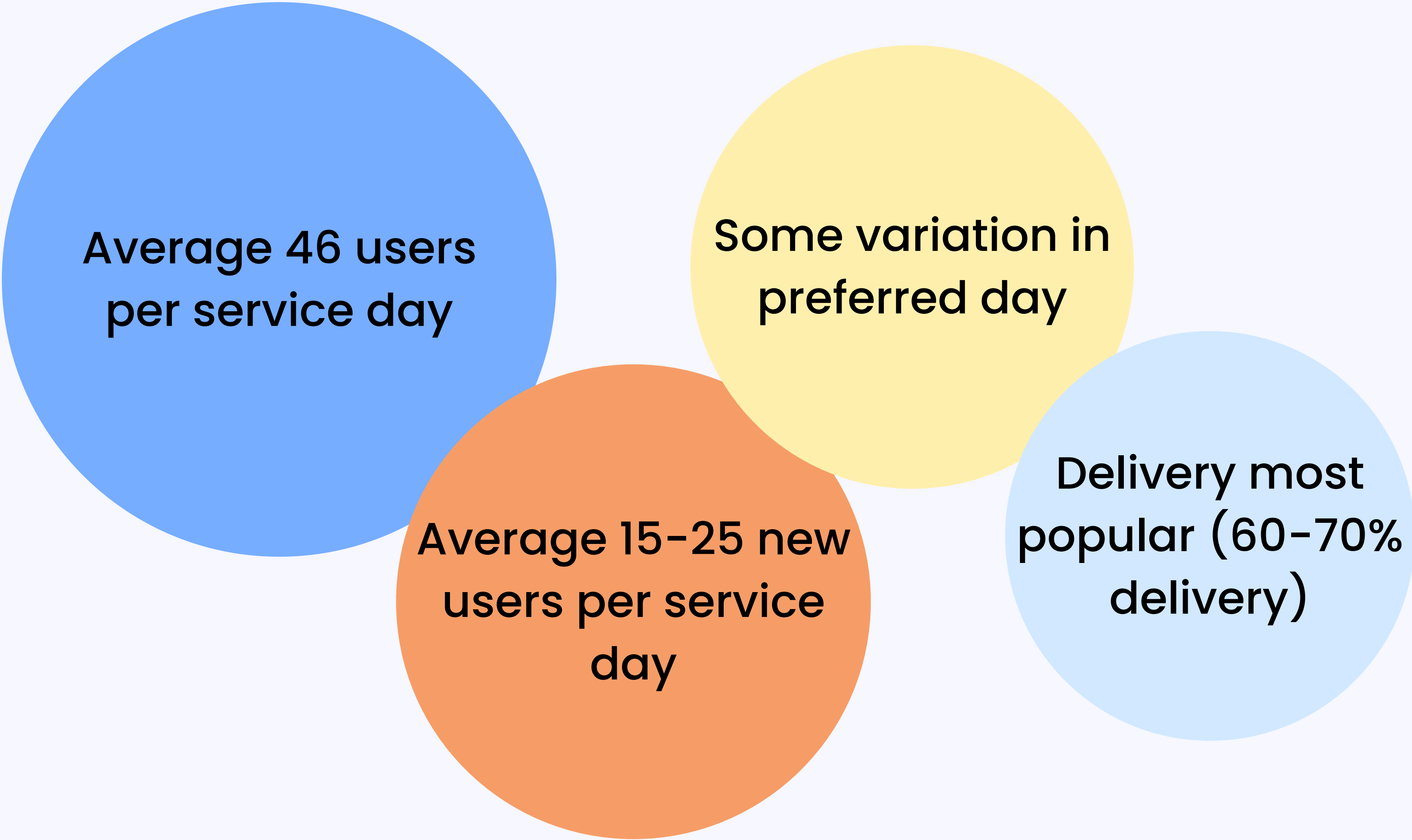
Use and Impact

75 service days so
far

756 unique patrons

2167 deliveries/1021 pickups





**Average 46 users
per service day**

**Some variation in
preferred day**

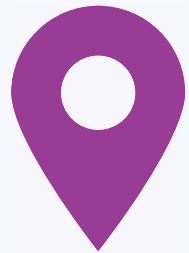
**Average 15–25 new
users per service
day**

**Delivery most
popular (60–70%
delivery)**

Use and Impact



Delivery

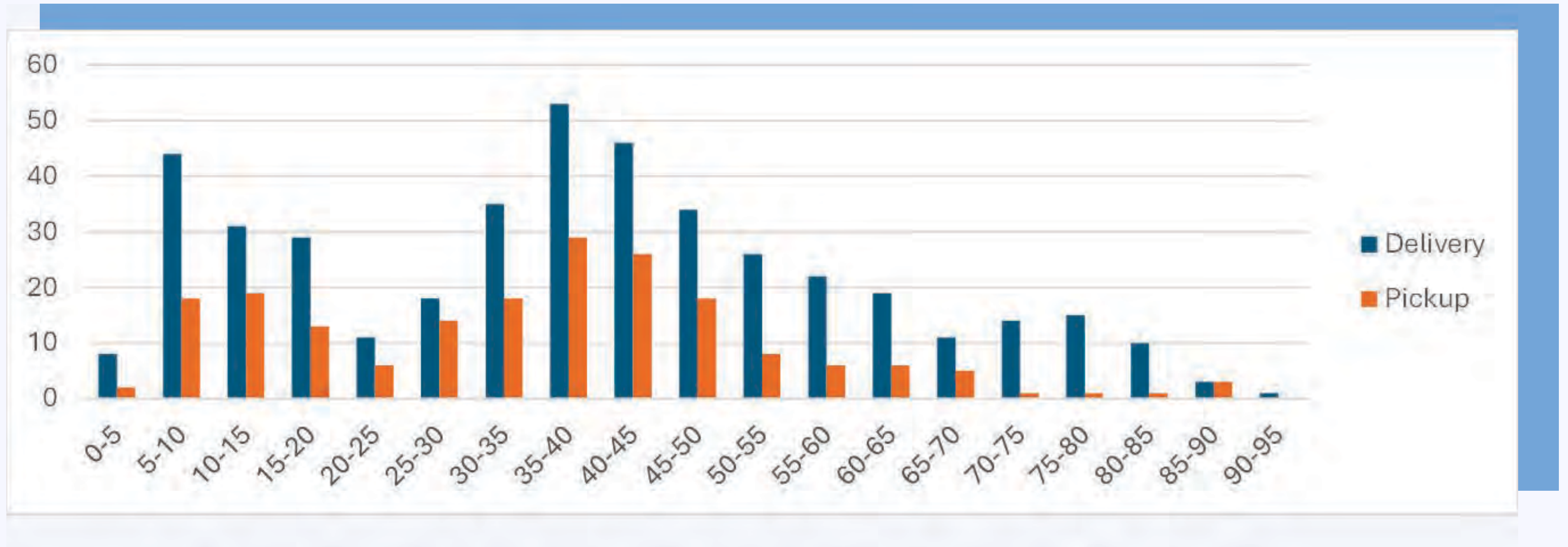


Pickup



Use and Impact

Looking by age:



Who Uses Pickup and Delivery?

We predicted:



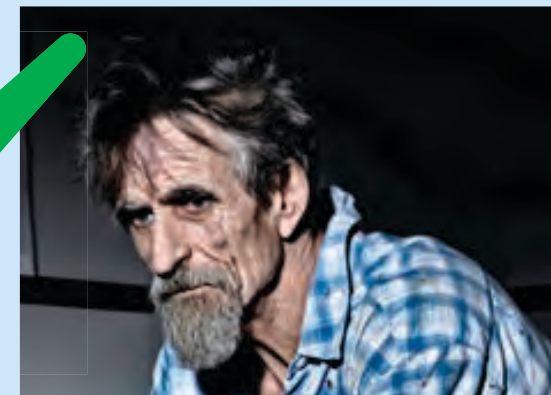
**Independent
Seniors**



**Young
Parents**



**Sandwich
Generation**



**Power Users with
Transportation
Issues**

Use and Impact

Current Clusters	Cluster Definition	Count of Users
Bedtime Stories	Adults who borrow children’s materials	169
#N/A	No library account on record	132
Digitarians	Primarily use digital resources	95
Occasionals	Have not used card in last 12 weeks to a year	76
Rising Stars	Youth between 0-12	70
Page Turners	Primarily borrow Adult and Teen print materials	57
Unknown	Library card is active but no checkouts in last year	48
Bright Future	Teens 13-17	40
Transitionals	Borrow both digital and physical materials	36
New Cardholder	New account within last 12 weeks	16
Double Feature	Primarily borrow physical A/V	10
Dependables	Use a mixture of physical materials	7

756 Total

Who Uses Pickup and Delivery? – Cont.

Unknown,
inactive and
occasional
users become
more active

Use and Impact

- Users with late items are more likely to use service than other patrons, and more likely to resolve their issues than other patrons when blocked

- Users are less than half as likely to go to collections

- Delivery users check out fewer items on average than other patrons – but it is a wide range with some maxing out holds, on multiple cards

- Only one item has been damaged to date, nothing stolen

Did we mention people like it?



One of the Moms that I know through her kids let me know how much they appreciated our Home delivery and Home Pick-up Service. I had interviewed her last year in relation to how the library can support home school families. She said regarding that question this service has been extremely helpful for them because they check out so much, and now they have help maintaining it all.

posted on Monday, January 27, 2025 at 4:26 PM

Like Comment ...

Comment: I was excited to learn about your trial of delivery services and that your decision about whether to continue it will be based on level of use. Perhaps you are already getting many requests however, if not, may I suggest making the availability of this service prominent on your website somehow. I actually thought you had decided to to end the service already when it didn't immediately come up as a choice upon placing a book on hold. I have mobility problems that make it difficult for me to go out and would really like this service to be successful. Thank you for the option to leave feedback.

The following feedback was submitted on Tue Sep 16 10:52:01 EDT 2025.



Comment: I am an amputee in a wheelchair who loves to read. I am so thrilled to have this service available. Ordering books online and having them delivered was amazing. Thank you.

Lived Experience – Courier Version

Some (interesting) scenarios working with a courier:

- Courier says they can't find the address...
- The courier is an hour late getting to the library...
- Courier calls because patron doesn't have their items on the porch ready to pick up...
- Courier returns with undelivered items they state are not on their list; they are, however, on ours...
- A mysterious charge appears on the invoice for \$4K...
- Courier takes all the returned books home over night...

Robert the courier and
his brand-new library
card



Dolores (one of our
staff) with her package



Lived Experience – Circulation Staff

Version



It still takes staff time

Packing, checking list, cancellations, day-of issues, checking invoices



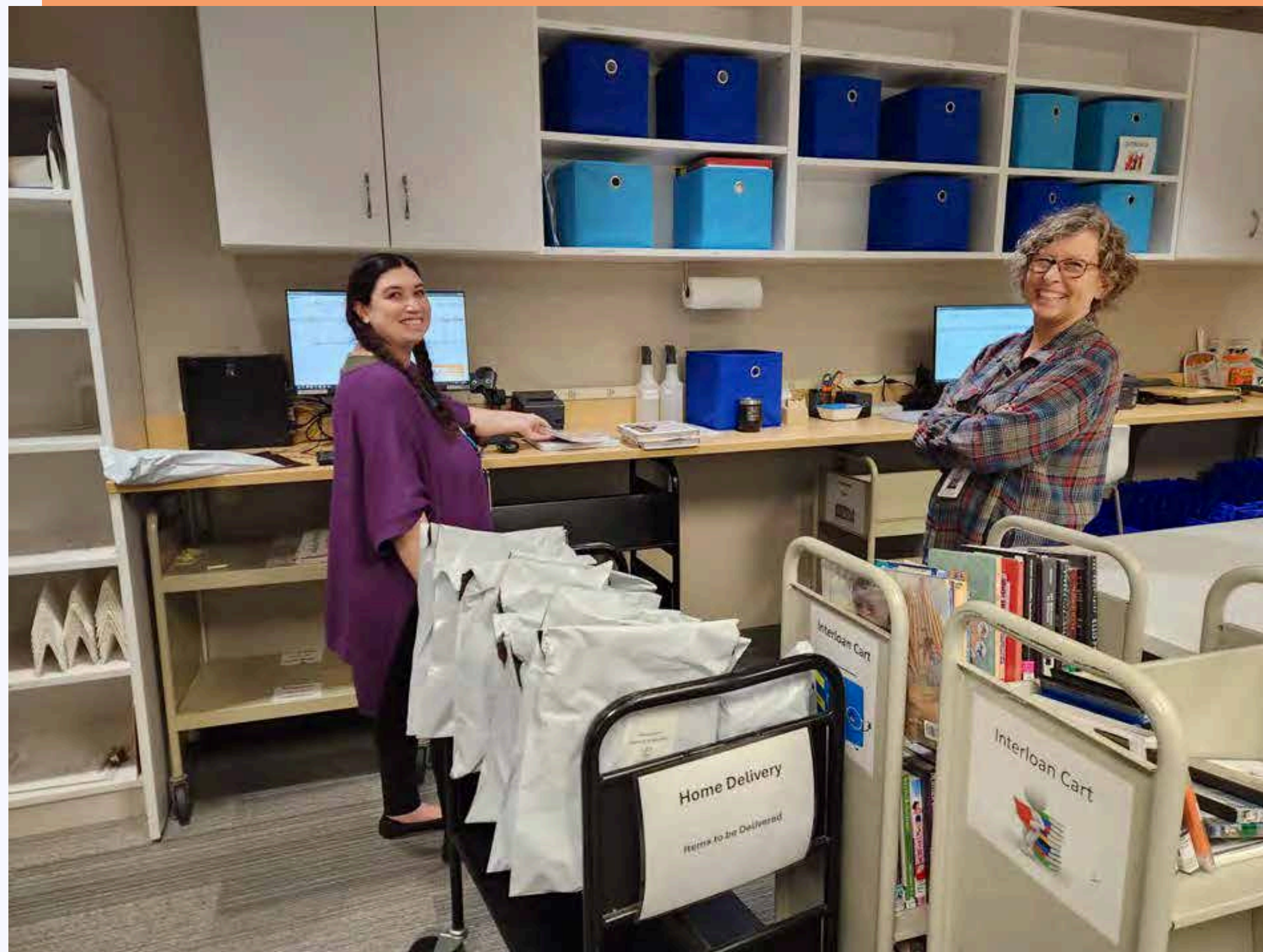
Curbside structure – get it to the hold shelf through regular processes, then build from there – was a solid base for designing workflow



A return label is in every bag when we send it out. The patrons reuse the bag with the label we provide. When they do not have a return label, we tell them to just write CPL in large letters on the bag.



Double-check patrons booted off the list!



Our staff packing deliveries

Lived Experience – IT Version



Adding confirmations



Adding reminders



Confirming identity



All of the many ways you can spell city and state



Accidental rejections



Automations during closures

Lessons Learned from Lived Experience

- If using a courier, a clear contract and detailed consistent timely follow-up is essential (even when you feel like a jerk)

- Send reminders for pickup and delivery

- Schedule staff to start earlier in the day, it can be very time-consuming, printing the labels and bagging them up, don't want to leave all of that for the night staff

- Check to see if any additional holds have been activated overnight, bag those up and send any updates to the courier all early in the morning

- Keep a "paper" trail and put in fail-safes for unexpected problems (like accidental form rejections)

- Make a way for patrons to tell you they want to cancel

- Labels are great but self-made is ok too

What About the Budget?



➡ We used existing budgeted salary from an unfilled position as starting point
(kept board informed of the pilot and rationale)

➡ We don't currently have library vehicles or driving titles – this informed our liability/insurance conversation

➡ We may still change from courier to staff – but now we have a real cost to compare our staff estimate to:

- \$8.79 average cost per service now with courier – and they cover liability
- \$4.97 estimated average cost per service if we used staff
 - Updated based on pilot
 - Includes insurance and routing software costs – but we would also have liability
 - Would be an on-call title
 - Would be a new driving specific title
 - They would use their own vehicle – we would have expected standards re vehicle

Average Cost Per Service – What's Included?

Courier charges set rate per radius + Fuel surcharge based on AAA statewide average price/gallon

- Charged once per address – may have multiple services/multiple barcodes
- Charged once for return trip (for all returns)
- They route, supply drivers and backups, dispatch, and vehicle

Supplies Cost

- Waterproof resealable poly mailers
- Sticky labels (useful for other purposes too)
- A couple of bins

Staff Cost

- Staff steps are worked into regular pre-existing schedule; we have not needed to add hours



~~DAYS WITHOUT~~
~~AN ACCIDENT~~

Since last
refinement

**THANK
YOU!**



Questions?

Contact: Katerli Bounds, boundsk@cantonpl.org