

Date: February 16, 2022
To: Chair and Members of the Board
c.c. Paul Takala, Chief Librarian
From: Tony Del Monaco, Director of Finance & Facilities
Subject: **2021 Metrics Report Summary**

The following report provides a summary of 2021 activity as it relates to our key performance indicators with general statements provided for each.

Active Library Cardholders

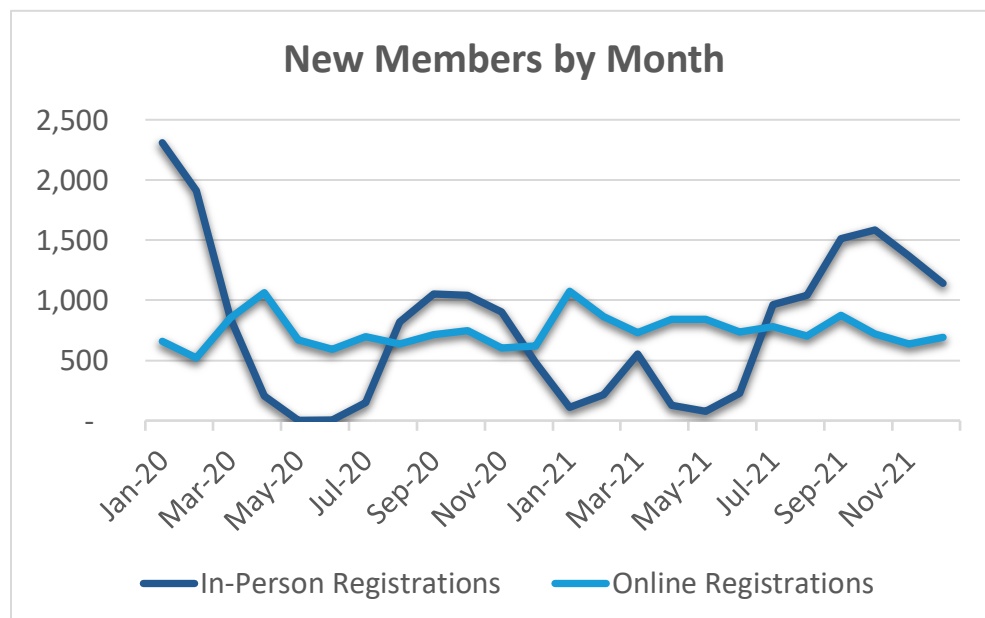
Active library cardholders are defined as those customers who have used their library card at least once in the past 24 months.

While we attract new customers each year, we also lose active customers that don't use their card in that period. Until 2019, active library cardholders had remained relatively steady over the previous five-year period. In 2019 we saw an increase of 6.4% to 167,441 active cardholders thanks to a new online registration option. In 2020 active library cardholders fell to 157,992, a 5.6% drop as the pandemic made new member acquisition more difficult and also restricted the ability of existing members to use their cards in-person. With pandemic conditions and in-person restrictions continuing in 2021, active membership has dropped further to 134,042.

The active cardholder count compared to the population of Hamilton is now at 23.2%. By comparison, active membership was close to 30% pre-pandemic when members had full unrestricted access to the full range of service we offer. The fact that we are still attracting a relatively high number of new members given the current conditions (as shown below) is an encouraging sign that we expect to see membership levels rebound higher post-pandemic.

New Registered Cardholders

An actual count of the number of Library cardholders who have registered for a new Library card is recorded each month and reviewed for quarterly and annual results.



New cardholders averaged about 23,000 per year pre-pandemic or roughly 2,000 per month. In 2019 we had a jump to 32,288 new cardholders but in 2020 and 2021 the level of new cardholders decreased to 18,097 and 18,420 respectively.

In-person registration has fluctuated in-line with our open hours and in-person visit levels, but online registrations have helped to stabilize activity averaging between 500 to 1,000 new online registrations per month, regardless of in-person activity levels.

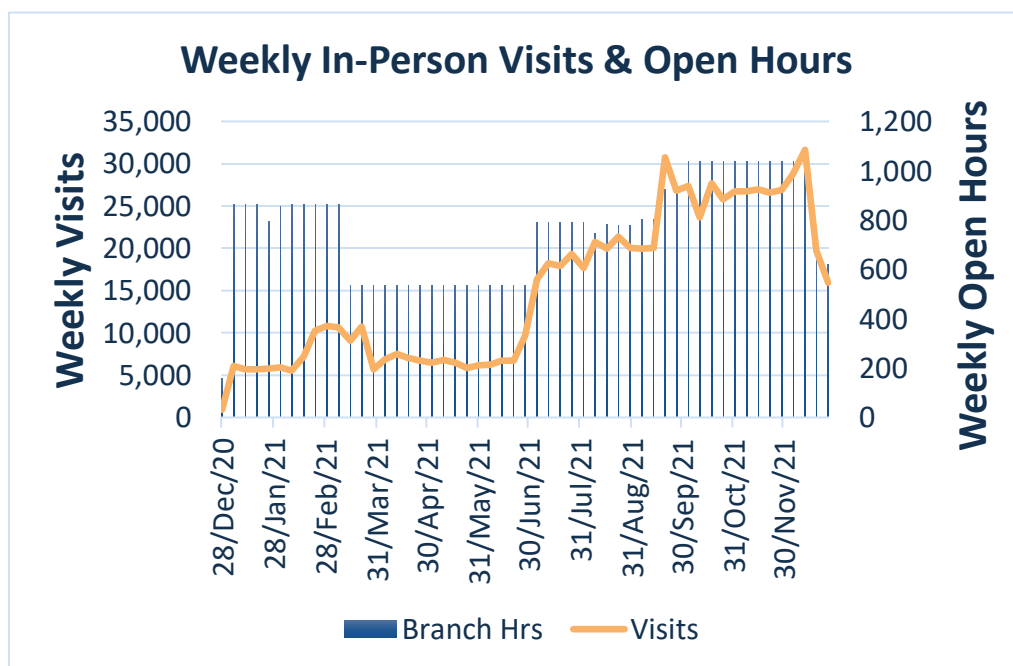
In-Person Visits

This refers to the number of in-person visits to all Library branches. Visits to HPL branches decreased by 25% in 2021 to 795,498 from 2020's 1,061,164 visits. It should be noted that 2020 visits also includes the pre-pandemic period from January to mid-March when we were experiencing normal levels of visits around 70,000 per week.

Throughout the year in-person visits have been directly impacted by the state of the pandemic. Staff secondments to support the community response also impacted our open hours.

Throughout the pandemic we have attempted to open our branches for as many service hours as we could while also adhering to public health guidelines.

As we've been able to open branches more, we have seen a corresponding increase in visits.



The year started with branches open for pickup of holds, print jobs and Makerspace projects. In February, we saw visits increase as the stay-at-home order was relaxed to "Red", enabling members to browse and use computers. In March, branch service hours were reduced as many HPL staff were seconded to the City to support Public Health's vaccination clinics leading to a drop in visits again.

In April, a stay-at-home order was imposed. The only in-branch services that were allowed was for holds pick-ups, computer use, and print & copy services. In June Ontario entered Step 1 of the provincial re-opening plan which was much the same for us from an operating perspective. We were still operating under reduced hours for all of Q2 with branches only open from 1-6pm

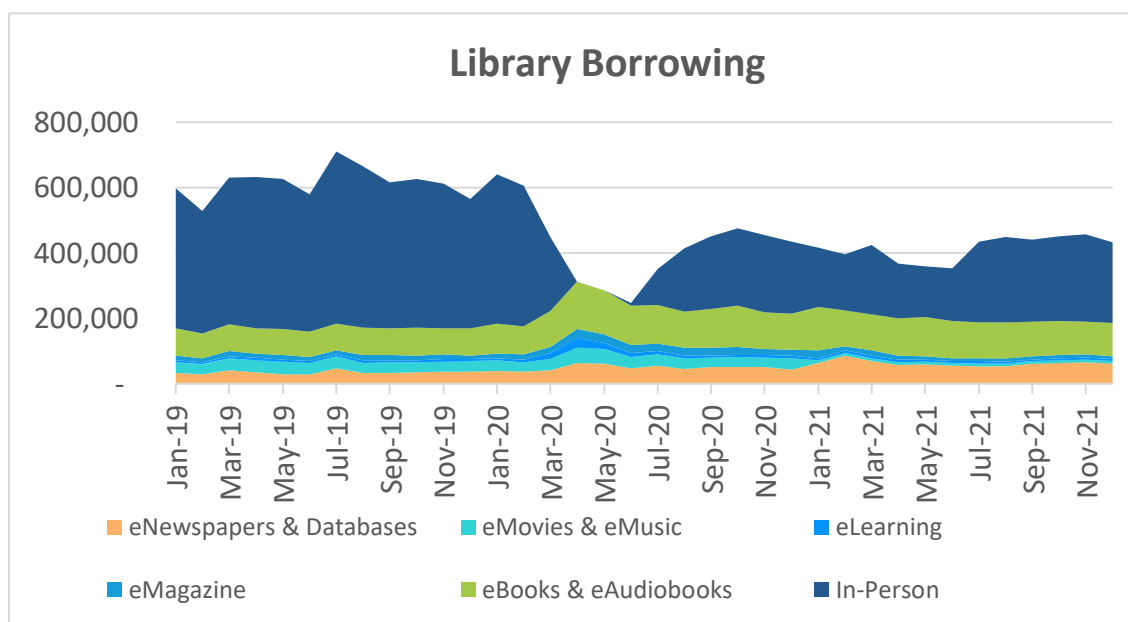
Tuesdays to Fridays and 1-5pm on Saturdays. We remained in that step until July at which point we moved to Step 2, expanded our open hours to 10am and began seeing an increase in visits. Opening times were then extended to 9am at select locations starting in September. We did not begin to open on Mondays at all locations until early in October. The combination of increased open hours coupled with eased pandemic restrictions and increased vaccination rates in the community allowed many of our members to return to our spaces. It was not until late in the year that we began to see the effects of the Omicron variant which resulted in an hours contraction as some HPL staff were once again seconded to the City.

Circulated Items – Physical

This is a measure of the number of physical items borrowed/checked out from the Library's collection (holdings). Physical items that are renewed are also included in this statistic. Items that are used in the Library but not checked out are not included in this total.

Physical circulation increased 10% in 2021 to 2,578,886 items. While we were still operating under fluctuating pandemic restrictions in 2021 we did not endure a complete shutdown period like we did in 2020 from mid-March to early July. That helped keep physical borrowing up but we were still only at about 50% of the physical borrowing levels we would normally see.

Given the level of visits, physical circulation is relatively high which indicates that although members were visiting less, they were taking out more items when they did visit. Perhaps an indication that members were restricting visits in effort to adhere with public health guidelines and stocking up on materials in advance of potential changing restrictions.



Circulated Items – Digital

This represents the number of digital items borrowed/downloaded/checked out by active Hamilton Public Library cardholders during the reporting period. Digital items include downloaded eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines and eNewspapers, as well as digital streaming items such as music and videos.

Digital circulation decreased by 20% in 2021 to 2,023,700 items. With so many in-person restrictions in place in 2020, we saw a record level of digital circulation so it is not surprising to

see a decline in 2021 especially since we did not see a prolonged shutdown period as we did in 2020.

It should be noted that in 2021 we switched our provider of eMusic from Freegal to Hoopla. Hoopla tracks checkouts on an album basis whereas Freegal used to track checkouts on a per song basis. This is a noteworthy change considering Freegal usage was recorded at over 300,000 in 2020 (per song basis) whereas Hoopla usage in 2021 is only counted as 16,000 (per album basis). We estimate that overall digital circulation figures may have been about 10% to 15% higher if the previous tracking method had been used.

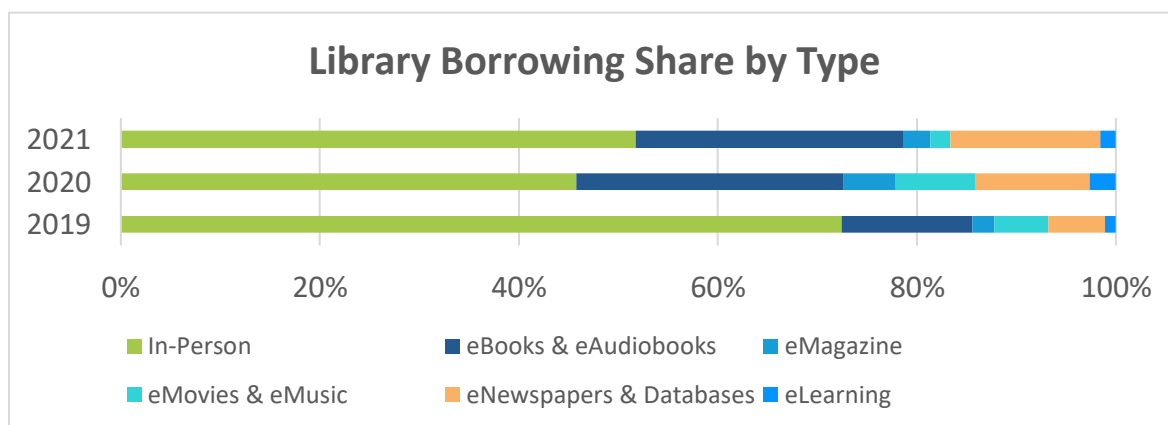
It should also be noted that we discontinued our RB Digital service in January 2021. This service was primarily used by members to checkout eMagazines. Members were able to auto download these titles depending on the publishing frequency. Now that RB Digital has been discontinued members can still checkout their favourite eMagazines using Overdrive, however there is no auto-download feature on Overdrive. This is being noted since it may have a slight impact for comparability purposes from year to year. RB Digital eMagazine checkouts ranged from 15,000 to 17,000 per month. With the switch to Overdrive this is down to about 8,000 to 10,000 checkouts per month.

Still, 2021 represented the 2nd highest level of digital circulation we've seen which was previously averaging 1.6 million circulated items per year pre-pandemic.

Over the last decade, we have seen a gradual increase in the percentage share of digital circulation in relation to overall circulation. Due to extreme circumstances we saw digital circulation levels spike to 52% of total circulation in 2020 and 2021 was similar at 44%, significantly higher than the 22% to 26% levels we experienced pre-pandemic.

eBooks and eAudio account for the most used digital resources with 1,221,546 or 60% of digital checkouts. Within that category eBooks make up 70% while eAudio represents 30%.

eNewspaper usage increased to 371,000 in 2021 from an average of 28,000 uses per month to 30,000 uses per month. eNewspaper usage represented 18% of all digital circulation in 2021. eMagazines represented 99,000 uses in the year. eLearning resources represented 76,000 digital checkouts.



Programs and Attendance

A program is a planned presentation given at a scheduled time by Library staff, or another resource person. Program examples include children's story time, visits to classrooms and auditoriums, Library tours, movie and gaming programs, as well as talks given to groups that introduce users to our materials and services. Additionally, external authors, presenters or

speakers delivering a presentation to Library users within the Library itself count towards this statistic. Activities such as exhibits, contests, booths and the use of meeting rooms by external groups are not counted.

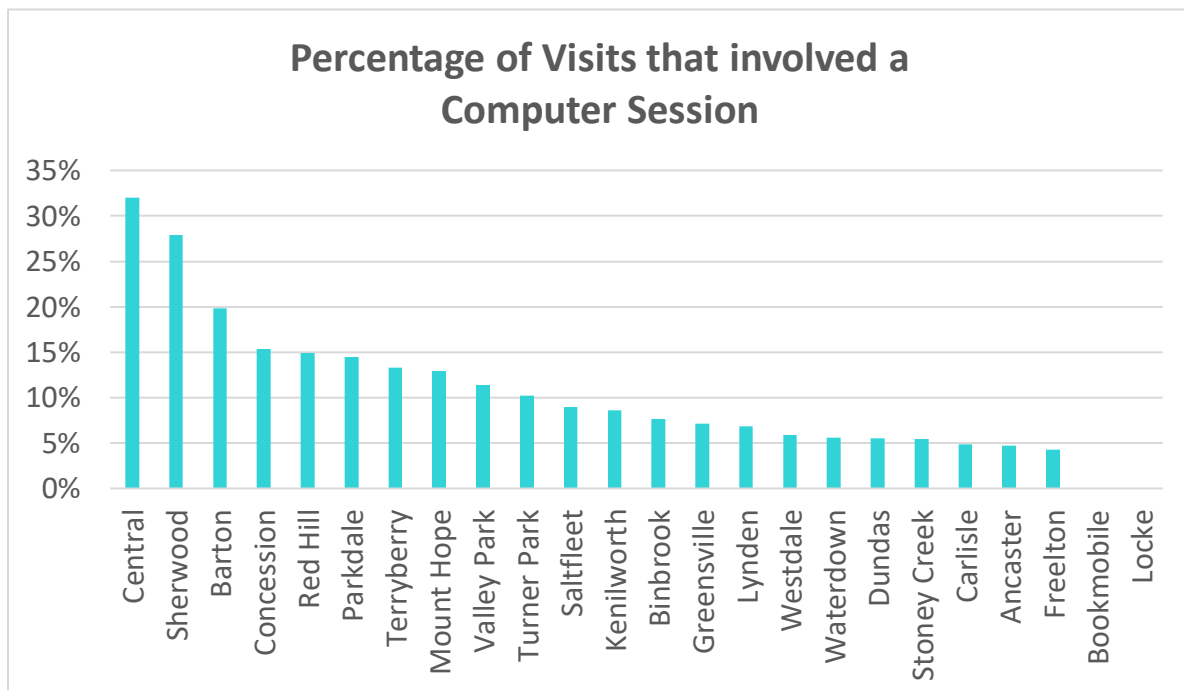
HPL's programming pivoted during the pandemic and the numbers now include virtual programs both live and those hosted on YouTube. Program attendance represents the number of people attending all programs offered in the year as well as in-year views of current and previously posted videos.

The number of programs offered decreased by 62.6% to 1,426 in 2021 and program attendance decreased by 27% to 44,663. That is mainly related to the level of regular in-person programming we were able to offer in the 1st quarter of 2020. Staff secondments in 2021 also played a factor resulting in less program offerings.

Computer Sessions

A computer session is defined as a customer log-in from a library workstation (computer) during the given period. Cardholders who book/sign up in advance to utilize computer time, as well as those who utilize computer time on an ad-hoc basis are counted. The amount of time that the customer uses the computer does not count in this statistic. As an example, if someone uses a workstation for 30 minutes in the morning, and then 30 minutes in the afternoon, the library computer session use for this person would be two.

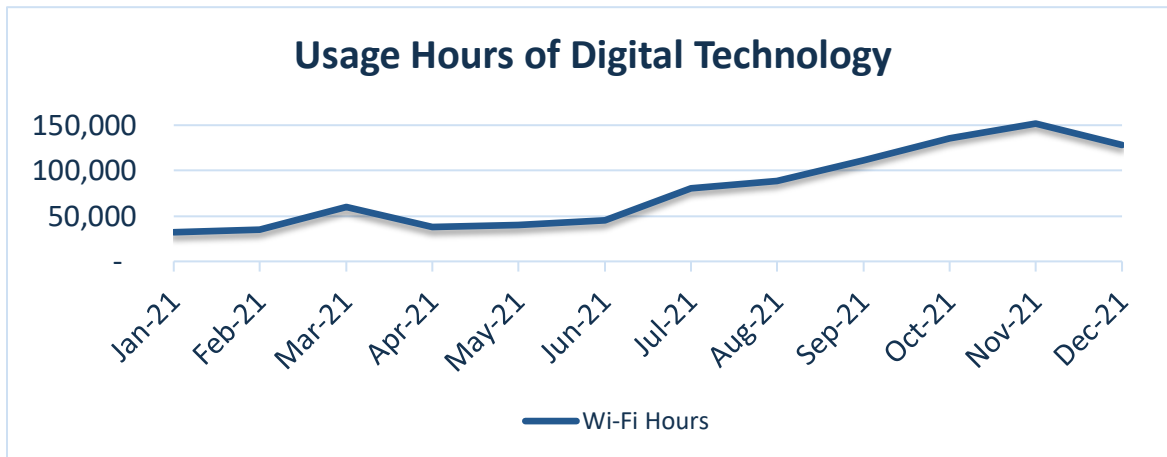
Computer sessions are closely correlated with in-person visits. The number of computer sessions was down by 52% in 2021 to 115,260 for the year. About 15% of all in-person visits included a computer session in 2021. The following provides a breakdown of the percentage of visits that were related to a computer session.



Wireless Network Connections

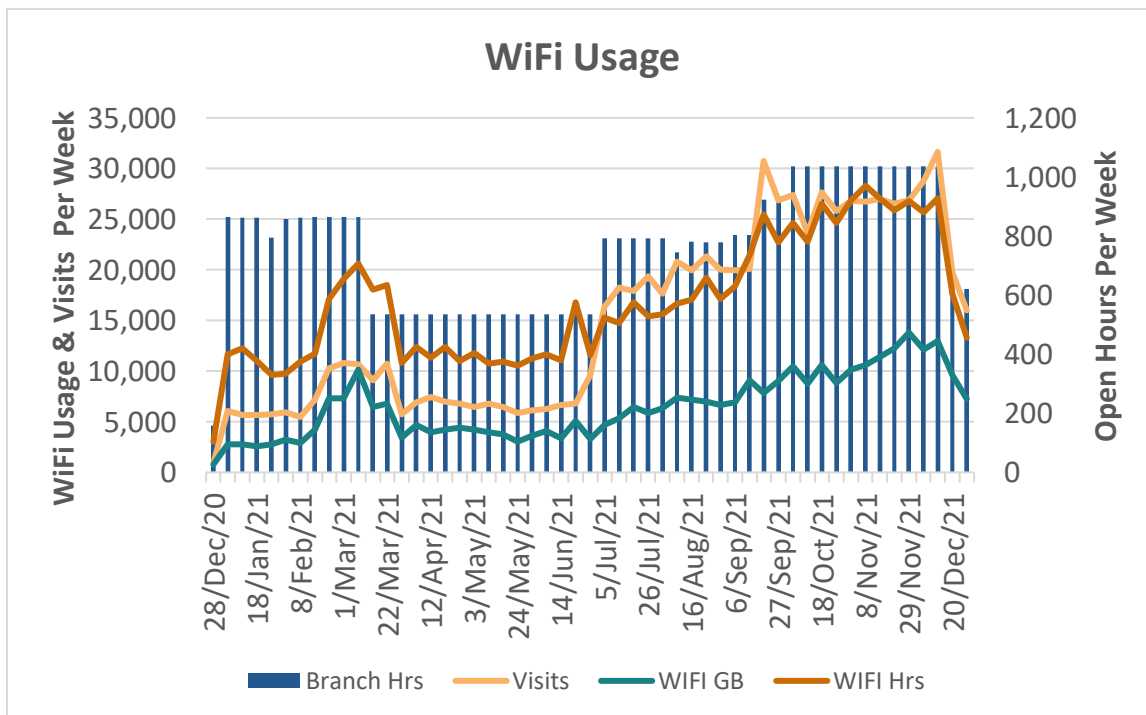
This number refers to the number of times customers log on to our wireless network. We continuously expand and improve our wireless network to provide more Hamiltonians with free

access to the Internet. Wi-Fi usage continues to be in demand due to the increasing number and affordability of mobile devices. In 2021 HPL provided 264,066 sessions a decrease of 45% from 2020. This is mainly a result of the high levels of activity in Jan to March 2020 pre-pandemic.



Since 2020, we have been tracking hours and gigabyte usage. In 2021, members logged 946,379 hours of Wi-Fi usage and 360,172Gb.

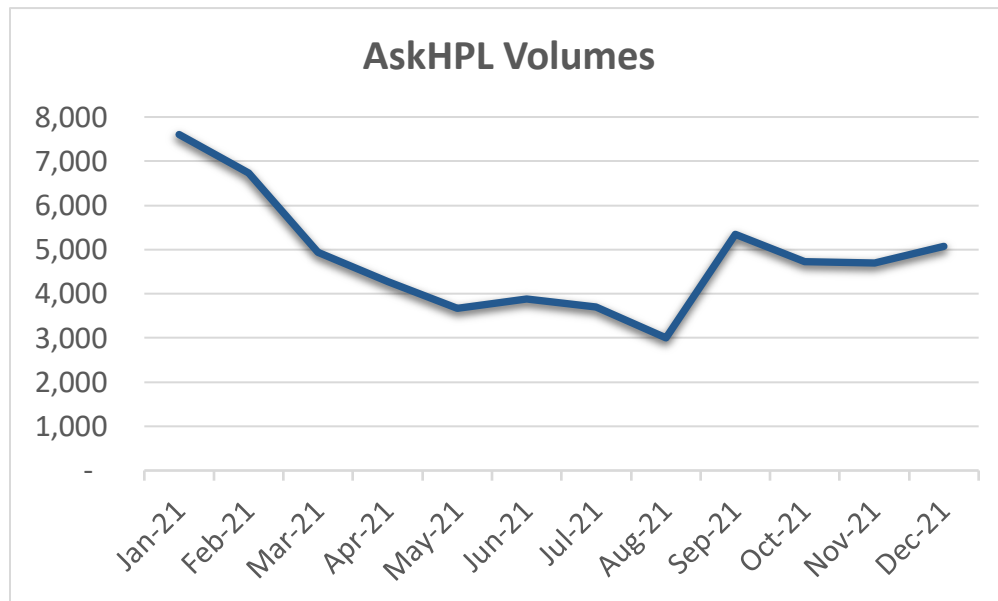
This is another figure that is correlated to open hours although signals do extend outside and access is still available outside in close proximity to our branches.



AskHPL

At 57,648 uses, AskHPL activity was up by 24% in 2021 (Note: 2020 was a partial year since service did not start until after we went into pandemic lockdown in 2020).

Monthly volumes have ranged from 3,000 to almost 8,000 per month. This includes all queries including calls, emails, and online chats. Volumes have been fairly steady in the last third of the year averaging about 5,000 per month.



Social Media Fans

The aggregate total of the number of fans and followers of Hamilton Public Library on social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter. This statistic is taken as a snapshot at the end of the given period. Followers increased by 8.5% in 2021 to 28,926. HPL is active on Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest and continues to build these audiences particularly during the pandemic.