

Gilbert Public Library
2015-2019 Strategic Plan

Adopted by the Library Board:

March 2, 2015

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Gilbert Public Library completed a comprehensive strategic planning process between September 2014 and January 2015. Composition of the planning team included representatives from the Library board, Library Foundation, and library staff.

A community-based process was utilized, which centered on answering the questions: 1) *What are the pressing needs in our community?* And 2) *What is the library's role in helping to address those needs?* Major steps included surveying stakeholders, reviewing demographic data and library statistics, discussing organizational values and mission, identifying service priorities, and developing action plans for the first year of implementation. In addition, indicators were established to track progress toward achieving the library's goals.

WHAT WE FOUND

Several themes emerged through the environmental scan process. The only different theme with this strategic planning process was the desire for more adult-focused programming. Several suggestions were made to engage adults, but most were to provide information in the form of classes for our older adult population.

Much like the last strategic planning process, the community continues to be concerned for its youth. While there is overall pleasure about the library's success in meeting the needs of young children, there is still a scarcity in constructive activities for older children and teens in the area. More engagement with teens and young adults is highly valued.

There continues to be a need among residents to learn how to use technology, and that trend is not anticipated to go away with the rate of change in technologies. Although the cost of internet is much more affordable and the use of smartphones is widespread today, there continue to be citizens who cannot access reliable internet connections from home. Our public access computers are still heavily used by those people, despite the fact that use has gone down. However, use of our Wi-Fi has increased dramatically as patrons use their mobile devices in the library to access the internet.

While there were a few comments about the facility, Gilbert seems to have dropped the subject of a new facility for the library. The conversation appears to have stopped in 2013 when we carpeted the library and the City went to considerable expense to refurbish the building façade.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES:

Community Connectedness –

The Library is a welcoming place that acts as a community hub, providing opportunities for social interaction and sharing knowledge. We solicit input from the community and are responsive to local needs.

Intergenerational Access –

Children and adults alike are encouraged to utilize the library, with special emphasis on activities that integrate community members across generational lines.

Unbiased Information –

Open access to information is important in developing capable citizens. The Library maintains a broad range of materials and technology that cover current issues in a balanced, unbiased way.

Lifelong Learning –

We value literacy and promote continued learning throughout each individual's lifetime.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Gilbert Public Library's Mission is to provide community members with access to resources and services which can enrich and fulfill their cultural, civic, intellectual, and recreational needs. (Adopted March 2000)

LIBRARY GOALS (In order of priority):

- 1. The community will have access to quality, up-to-date technology and technology education.**
- 2. The Library will have a strong visual presence in the community.**
- 3. Community members will explore topics of personal interest to continue learning throughout their lives.**
- 4. The Library will serve as a transmitter of quality entertainment in multiple formats.**
- 5. Children will be excited about reading and learning.**

PROGRESS INDICATORS:

Goal 1 (Technology)

- ✓ Number of people who attend technology training classes.
- ✓ How frequently we update our public access computers and software to reflect technology trends.
- ✓ How many people participate in maker events.

Goal 2 (Library Presence)

- ✓ Number of Library outreach programs.

Goal 3 (Lifelong Learning)

- ✓ Number of adults participating in adult reading programs.
- ✓ Number of participants in teen and adult programming.
- ✓ Number of adults who use library resources for self-education like MOOCs, technology classes, etc.

Goal 4 (Entertainment)

- ✓ Number of participants who come to musical and other entertainment programs.
- ✓ Circulation statistics of DVDs.
- ✓ Number of tickets handed out to local Legacy-funded concerts.

Goal 5 (Children)

- ✓ Number of children participating in the Summer Reading Program.
- ✓ Number of child care providers who participate in Library outreach activities.
- ✓ Number of children participating in weekly storytimes and other children’s programs.

IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

<i>Implementation Steps</i>	<i>Timeline</i>
1. Present strategic plan to Library Board for adoption.	March 2015
2. Communicate the new plan to stakeholders and the public.	March/April 2015
3. Discuss strategic plan progress as regular agenda item at Library Board meetings.	Monthly
4. Compile progress indicator data for annual review with Board/Staff meeting to discuss successes and challenges and suggested revisions.	Annually 2015-2019 (November)
5. Staff develop action plans for the next year.	Annually 2015-2019 (November)
6. Full round of strategic planning.	Fall 2019 (New plan in place by January 2020)

Appendix A:

YEAR 1 Action Plans

March 2015-December 2015

GOAL #1: The community will have access to quality, up-to-date technology and technology education.

Strategy: Technology Programming

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
Schedule presenters from outside organizations (Mesabi Range College, etc.)	Adult Services Specialist	August 2015

Strategy: One-to-One Assistance

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
Arrange for tax preparers to assist with tax prep (if not for 2015, then 2016)	Adult Services Specialist	March 2015
Advertise that patrons can schedule one-on-one technology help	Director	Quarterly

GOAL #2: The Library will have a strong visual presence in the community.

Strategy: Advertising

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
Maintain a strong social media presence on Facebook with 3-5 posts weekly	All staff	Weekly
Send weekly announcements to Hometown Focus and Mesabi Daily News about upcoming library events	Director	Every Monday/Tuesday
Send announcements to Mesabi Community TV weekly	Director	Every Monday/Tuesday

Strategy: Collaboration with Outside Organizations

ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
Ask Salvation Army, Humane Society, YMCA, and other volunteer	Adult Services Specialist	August 2015

organizations what kind of help is needed and who to contact if we find volunteers. Set up spreadsheet to share information.		
Collaborate with school principals and PTA/PTO to bring outreach programs to schools.	Director	Quarterly

GOAL #3: Community members will explore topics of personal interest to continue learning throughout their lives.

Strategy: Adult Programming		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
Schedule monthly cooking classes – contact outside sources to teach classes	Adult Services Specialist	August 2015
Schedule seasonal gardening classes – contact Swansons Greenhouse and Botanical Garden in Virginia	Adult Services Specialist	March 2015
Schedule monthly adult crafting classes – staff can take turns teaching one of their crafts	Audio-Visual Specialist	September 2015

Strategy: Teen Programming		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
Schedule monthly lunch book club at the Gilbert school – talk to principal & media specialist	Director	September 2015
Schedule monthly manga club & set up Crunchy Roll account	Director	March 2015

GOAL #4: The Library will serve as a transmitter of quality entertainment in multiple formats.

Strategy: Cultural Programs		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
Continue Friday Night and Monday Morning Movies	Audio-Visual Specialist	Monthly
Continue planning Legacy cultural programs with ALS	Director	Monthly
Host a murder mystery at the library & evaluate attractiveness to host more	All staff	August 2015

GOAL #5: Children will be excited about reading and learning.

Strategy: Children's Programming		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
Reach out to School Readiness for early childhood field trips and programs for Children's Book Week (May)	Director	March 2015 and September 2015
Plan quarterly childhood events during the school year	Director	Quarterly
Continue morning Toddler Tales through the school year	Director/Circulation Specialist	Weekly
Plan fun Summer Reading programs to correlate with Read to the Rhythm	All staff	May 2015

Strategy: Connecting with Parents		
ACTION STEPS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	COMPLETION DATE
Attend Open House at Franklin Elementary and Nelle Shean Elementary	Director/Circulation Specialist	August 2015

Appendix B:

Community Needs Surveys –
Summary

October and December 2014

Community Needs Surveys – Summary of Responses

Gilbert Public Library

October and December 2014

A total of 20 community members responded to two surveys administered separately in October and December 2014. Representation included local officials, youth, civic groups, local business owners, and the faith community.

ELEMENTS OF A COMMUNITY VISION

Participants first imagined a time in the future when the community has achieved its full potential and everyone is proud to call it home. They then answered the question: *What does that success look like, and for whom?*

Who	Result
Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibrant school district
Teens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vibrant school district • Up-to-date curriculum to teach 21st century skills • Constructive things for teens to do
Adults	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior living and venues for seniors to get involved
Whole Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All elements of the government working together in harmony • Local shops, dentist office, grocery/drug store, esp. along Main Street • People involved in community projects • Walking and biking trails • Reliable, fast internet • Full-time jobs • Active, friendly, and busy public library

STATE OF THE COMMUNITY TODAY

Considering the community’s current situation, participants were asked to identify: 1) conditions that could help the community move toward the vision outlines above (strengths and opportunities), and 2) conditions that might impede progress toward that vision (weaknesses and threats).

Strengths/Opportunities

- + School in town
- + Centrally located, small efficient library with excellent staff
- + Cheap properties
- + Post office

- + Local restaurants, antiques shops, and churches
- + Dee Dental call center in town
- + Vacant buildings along Main Street that could be refurbished for new business
- + Peaceful, little crime
- + Space to add more homes and businesses

Weaknesses/Threats

- Lack of vision within city government, stagnant/ambivalent city government
- Small town can be deterrent for large corporations to open shop
- Aging/shrinking population
- Poor local economy
- Not enough high-wage, full-time jobs
- Too much negativity and fear of change
- Too far from a metropolitan area to attract movers and shakers
- Distrust of anything new
- Losing young families to other areas that offer more than the bar community
- Nothing is open late at night
- Continued politics of scarcity limits cooperation/collaboration between towns
- Crumbling city infrastructure

COMMUNITY NEEDS

Given where we are today, and where we want to go, participants responded to the question:

What needs to be done to make progress toward the vision?

- The city needs to push harder to attract businesses to come to Gilbert
- Have a great vision for the future and implement it
- Form a citizen group with representatives from all age groups to brainstorm ways to bring new people, and businesses to Gilbert
- Younger people need to become involved in government
- Encourage use of new technologies from city government down
- Create an online place to show people where they can find things to do
- Government should provide more support to the library to continue doing its good work
- Grow jobs to entice young people to stay
- Update city infrastructure

LIBRARY PRIORITIES

Finally, participants were asked to vote on library priorities by answering: ***What roles can the library focus on to make the greatest contribution toward addressing community needs?***

Library “Services Responses”	Number of Votes
Connect to the Online World: Public Internet Access	8
Know Your Community: Community resources & Services	8
Satisfy Curiosity: Lifelong Learning	8
Stimulate Imagination: Reading, Viewing, & Listening for Pleasure	8
Succeed in School: Homework Help	8
Visit a Comfortable Place: Physical & Virtual Spaces	7
Be An Informed Citizen: Local, National, World Affairs	6
Build Successful Enterprises: Business & Nonprofit Support	6
Express Creativity: Create & Share Content	6
Make Informed Decisions: Health, Wealth, & Other Life Choices	6
Understand How to Find, Evaluate, & Use Information: Information Fluency	6
Discover Your Roots: Genealogy & Local History	5
Get Facts Fast: Ready Reference	5
Learn to read & Write: Adult, Teen, & Family Literacy	5
Make Career Choices: Job & Career Development	4
Celebrate Diversity: Cultural Awareness	3
Welcome to the United States: Services for New Immigrants	2

Appendix C:

Library & Community Profile

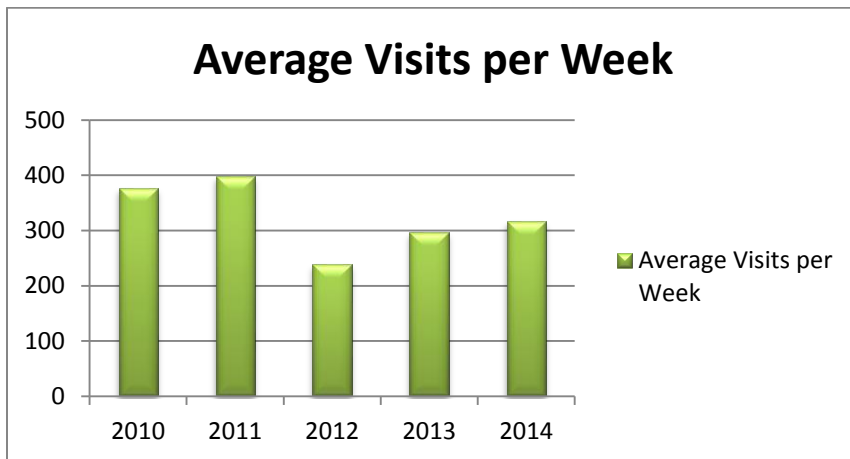
January 2015

Library & Community Profile: Gilbert Public Library

I. LIBRARY STATISTICS

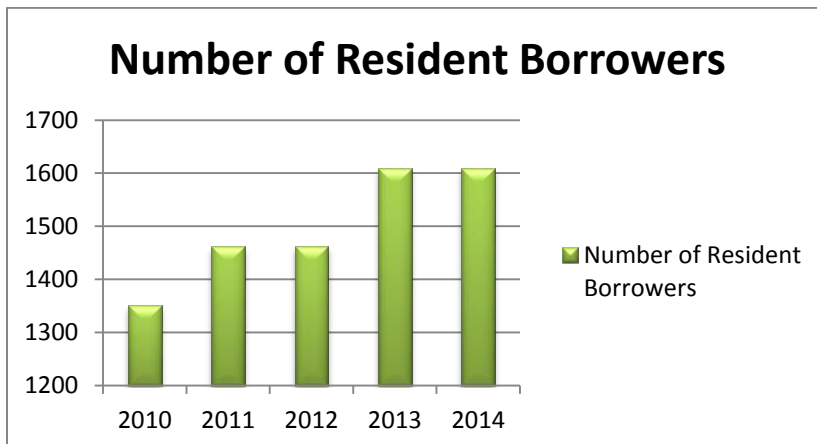
Library Traffic

The Gilbert Library has seen a reduction in hours since the last strategic plan was adopted. We reduced our operational hours from 46.5 hours per week to 45 hours per week in 2012. There was a dip in library visits during 2012, which was an anomalous year with substantial upheaval. However, average weekly visits have been on the rise since 2012 and are once again at the 2004 rate.



Number of Resident Borrowers

ALS last purged inactive user records in 2012 and is expected to purge records again in 2015. Despite the last purge, Gilbert Library has maintained its net increase of registered borrowers and we are again at the 2004 level. According to population estimates, about 89% of Gilbert residents have a library card.



Collection Size

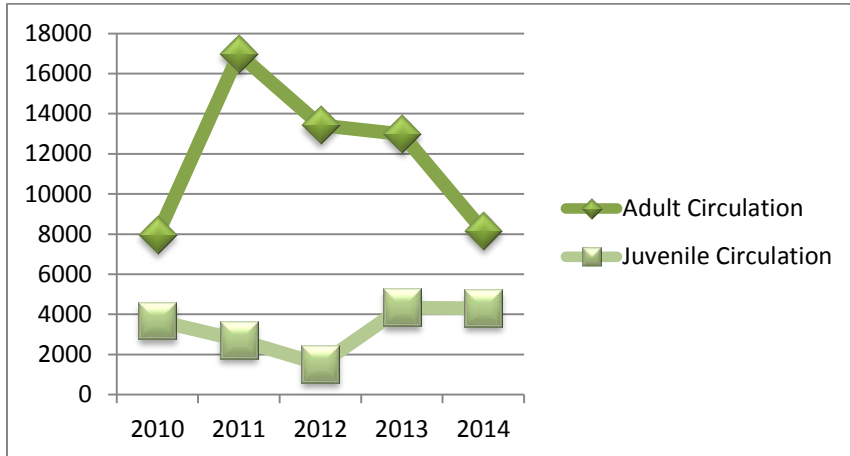
In 2012 and 2013, we staged a huge weeding project whereby items that had not circulated in at least 3 years were purged from our library. However, despite the reduction in materials, circulation has increased substantially since that project was undertaken.

Type of Material	2010	2013	Change
Print	14,086	11,418	-2,668
Audiovisual	2,197	1,385	-812
Serial Subscriptions	49	35	-14
Other	38	9	-29

Circulation

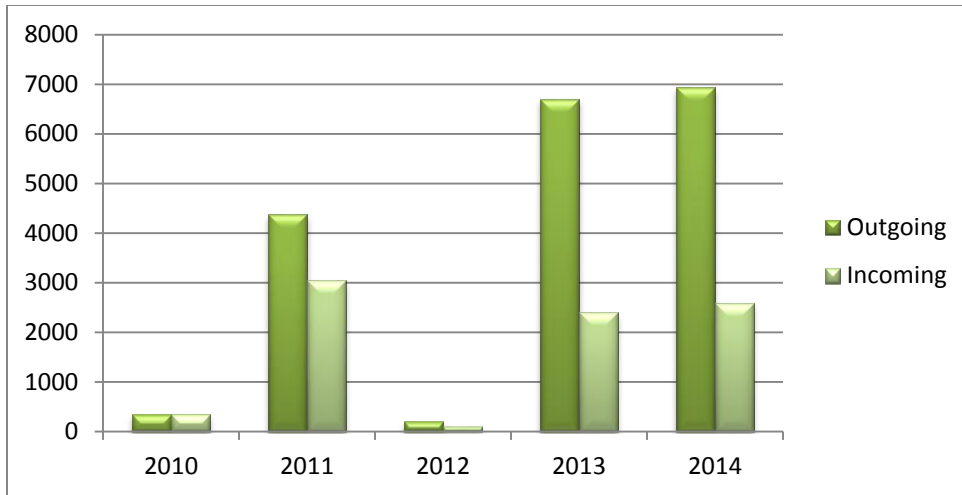
There is insufficient historical data to determine trends in audiovisual and periodical circulation during the past 5 years. It is also worth noting that the 2011 spike in circulation is dramatically off-trend for reasons that cannot be explained, but that, despite a drop in circulation in 2012, circulation continues to increase, particularly among children and young adult books.

Note that adult circulation counts for 2011-2013 included movie loans in the annual reports. As a result, data numbers are skewed.



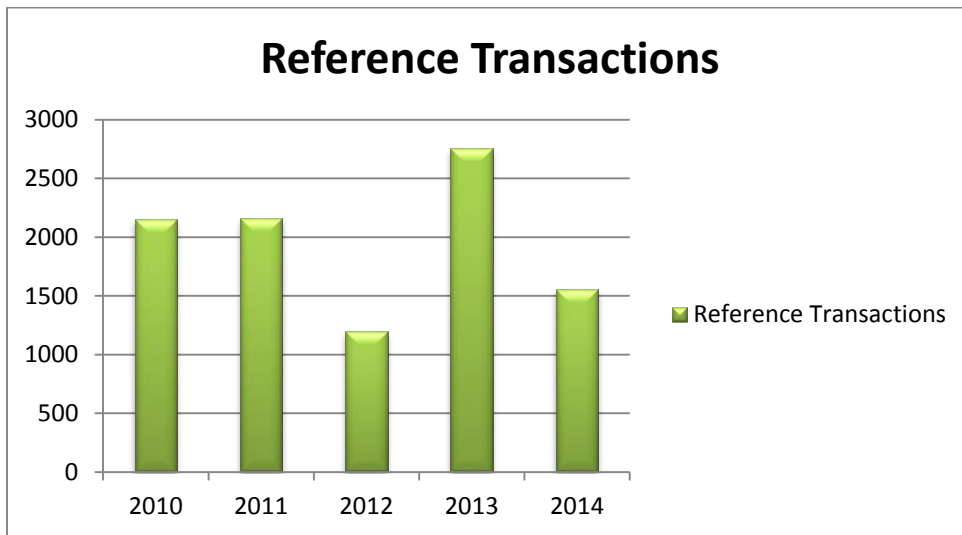
Inter-Library Loan

The low numbers in 2010 and 2012 are due to an incorrect counting of ILL. Disregarding those years, it is clear that Gilbert is a strong user of ILL within the ALS system and statewide and that the trend toward requesting from Gilbert is on the rise.



Reference Requests

In general, fewer people come to Gilbert Library staff to ask reference questions. This declining trend was noted in the last strategic plan as a national trend.



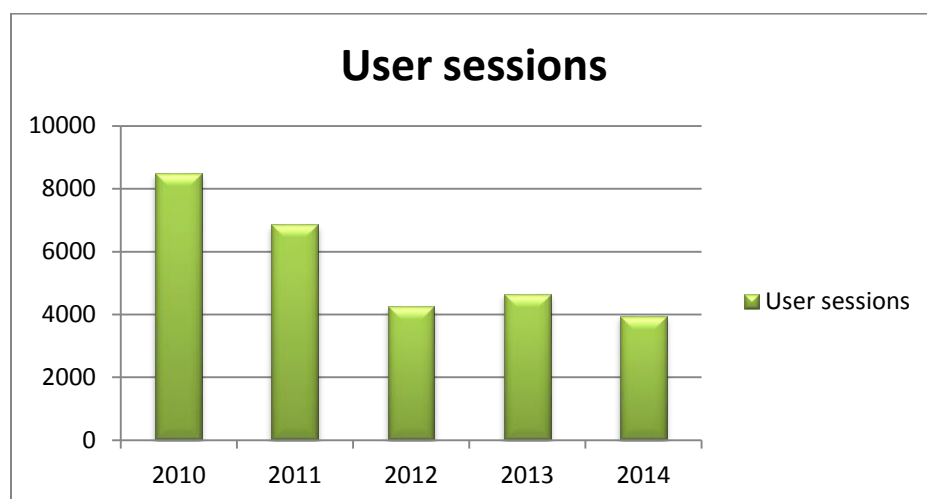
Programs

Following the trend noted in the last strategic plan, program participation continues to increase. People in Gilbert are thirsty for diverse activities, especially culturally rich and educational activities.

Target Audience	Number of Programs	Type of Programs	2014 Attendance
Adults	25	Technology class, music, cultural event	342
Teens	14	Cultural or educational event	788
Children	123	Weekly storytimes, children's performers, educational events	1637
Total Attendance:			2767

Public Computer/Internet Usage

Public computer use has decreased by 73% over the past five years, once again reaching 2004 levels. Over the past two years, we have experienced frequent technical difficulties with at least 1 computer being unusable for months on end, but this has finally been resolved. Wireless access is available to all patrons, who make liberal use of it, particularly students on their school-administered iPads.



Website Traffic

We began tracking our website traffic in 2012 when we began using Google Sites as our website platform. According to Google Analytics, website sessions have held steady for the past two years, hovering in the mid-12,000 range. There is no data regarding website user sessions prior to 2012.

Operating Expenditures

Year	Staffing	Collection	Other	Total
2010	\$81,545	\$12,084	\$12,794	\$106,423
2014	\$104,672	\$14,987	\$14,536	\$134,195

II. COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

The population of the City of Gilbert has held a relatively steady population since our last strategic plan in 2009. We expect that Gilbert's population fall, however, with the loss of Sparta in the near future. Some key demographic indicators about Gilbert are shown below. Except when otherwise indicated, figures are taken from the 2010 U.S. Census.

Population

Time of Count	Number of Residents	Change from Previous Period
2000 Census	1847	
2007 Estimate	1754	-93
2010 Census	1799	+45
2013 Estimate	1801	+2

Race

The vast majority (96.8%) of Gilbert's residents are Caucasian and is becoming less diverse than in 2009. According to the 2010 Census, 30 people identified themselves as people of color and 14 identified as Hispanic or Latino.

Age

Age Group	Number of Residents	Percentage of Total Population
Children 0-17	405	22.5%
Adults 18-64	1073	59.7%
Adults 65 & Over	321	17.8%

Education

Gilbert continues to be home to one of Eveleth-Gilbert's district schools after a district reconfiguration in 2012. According to the Minnesota Department of Education, the 2014 Eveleth-Gilbert graduation rate was 92.7%. While most children residing in the district attend Eveleth-Gilbert Public Schools, 8 students are currently taking advantage of Open Enrollment to attend school in another school district, whether it is in one of the neighboring towns or homeschool.

There is an active Early Childhood/School Readiness program at the Gilbert School, with a total enrollment of 90 students in the 2013-2014 academic year.

An estimated 17.4% of the adult Gilbert population (age 25 & over) holds a Bachelor’s degree or higher, which is a slight uptick from the last strategic plan.

School	Number of Students (2013-2014 academic year)
Elementary Grades 5-6	194
Jr. High School Grades 7-8	162
Total Students:	356

Income

According to the latest Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) reports, the average wage in St. Louis County in 2013 was \$40,716, more than \$9,000 below the state average. In their latest unemployment report for December 2014, the county unemployment rate has substantially dropped since 2009, to its current 4.3%, compared to the overall state unemployment rate of 3.7%. The U.S. Census estimated that Gilbert residents living below the poverty line in 2013 was 8%. Overall, this paints a varied economic picture as compared to 5 years ago, when unemployment and poverty was more widespread, but the average wage was nearer the state average.

Housing

The 2010 Census reports that there were a total of 937 housing units in Gilbert.

Housing Type	Total Units	Percentage of Total
Owner-occupied	662	70.7%
Rental	173	18.4%
Vacant housing units	102	10.9%

According to the U.S. Census 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, the 2013 estimated median home value was \$83,500 and the median rent was \$528 per month.