

ACTION GUIDE

for Re-Envisioning
Your Public Library

Based on the report *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*




THE ASPEN INSTITUTE
Communications and Society Program

Re-Envisioning Newton Public Library

Action Guide Sessions
April 2016 - January 2017

**NPL Board & Staff Representatives
Responses**



Looking Ahead

What lies ahead for Newton Public Library? How does NPL Board and NPL Staff proceed? How can Newton Public Library collaborate and partner with community leaders in advancing common goals and quality of life related initiatives? Certainly, Newton Public Library qualifies as one of several community entities impacting quality of life!

NPL Board recently decided to utilize nationally recognized Aspen Institute partly to help crystallize our own thinking as a board as to what Newton Public Library might become in the future. We recognized the value of utilizing some of the brightest minds in the field of library science helping us re-envision our own library in Newton Kansas. In reading “*Rising to the Challenge, Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*,” we sought to expand our own knowledge-base. Comments and feedback received from selected NPL Staff and NPL Board represents our most recent work.

The Board felt it very important securing NPL Staff representation during the re-envisioning process. This proved to be very wise. The board simply does not have the same knowledge-base that NPL Staff possess. Their contributions were absolutely invaluable!

NPL Board (past and present) for many years recognized and wrestled with the notion that the current facility comes up short in various ways. It should be noted that the re-envisioning process was not dependent on pursuing a new or remodeled facility; rather, re-envisioning the library is simply the right thing to do. If it is decided to build new, remodel or revise spaces internally, at least we know a procedure was purposefully chosen to help us with our own thought process.

Information collected below represents active involvement from each participant. Every effort was made to seek and record input from all. We met on five different dates scheduled between April of 2016 and January 2017. Each participant was requested to respond both verbally and in written format. The “*Action Guide*” created by the Aspen Institute coincided directly with the body of text “*Rising to the Challenge, Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*” read by the Board prior to the first work session. Every effort was made to include each response as it was recorded. If an omission occurred, or was not worded as intended, you have my apology.

Lastly, I want to recognize and thank each participant for your work and dedication to making Newton Public Library the best it can be. While the Aspen Institute was very helpful with their expertise, nothing can replace wisdom and commitment from our own staff and board. You are to be commended!

Sincerely,
Pat Duffy
NPL Board Chair

Edited

1

PEOPLE



THE LIBRARY AS PEOPLE



Recommended reading:

Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries, pages 10-20.

THE LIBRARY AS PEOPLE

The library as people reflects the shift away from building collections to building human capital, relationships and knowledge networks in the community.

People are at the center of the library's mission to inspire and cultivate learning, advance knowledge and nurture and strengthen communities. While there are thousands of stories in the public library, the ones that matter most come with the people who use the library.

The public library comes alive when it is teeming with people from all walks of life:

- **FAMILIES** reading with their children in colorful, comfortable chairs
- **TEENS** learning how to write code for a new video game in a noisy learning lab
- **STUDENTS** meeting in a library classroom for group discussion as part of an online high school course
- **JOB SEEKERS** working on résumés in career centers, with guidance from a business librarian
- **ENTREPRENEURS** preparing presentations in co-working spaces, using the library-provided Wi-Fi and creating new products in maker spaces
- **IMMIGRANTS** learning English in classes and improving their job-seeking skills with the help of community mentors
- **RETIREES** using new online tools to create digital scrapbooks for their grandchildren
- **AUTHORS** publishing books on new library publishing platforms



As the library's roles change and expand, library staff have refined and broadened their skills to meet new needs and define the library's continuing value to the community. They serve many roles, as coaches, mentors, facilitators and teachers – more than simply as sources of information. Measuring outcomes is more important than measuring outputs. An intelligent community, not large circulation numbers, is the primary library goal.

Chapter 1 - People

Activity 1

- What are some of the audiences at your library?

Young families, children, *parents*, immigrants, *ESL*, *small business owners*, job seekers, readers, *reading newspapers*, life-long learners, homeless, gamers, authors, *socialization*, *high income and low income*, *finding a warm and safe place*, *historians*, genealogy, *miscellaneous small group meetings*, book clubs, teens, taxes, *social workers*, teachers, students, pre-school, seniors, *home school*, *artists and photographers*, grants seekers, *researchers*, *entertainment and movie watchers*, *new community members*, *political groups/meeting*, *legal information*, *health related*, *cooking/culinary*, and car repair.

- Are there other audiences not represented above? Please list them below:

Those *italicized* above were added after further dialogue.

Activity 2

- What **role** does your library play with each audience?
- What are the **expectations and possible outcomes** that the community and these various audiences have for the library?

Note: We chose to identify a couple of audiences from above. This is reflected below.

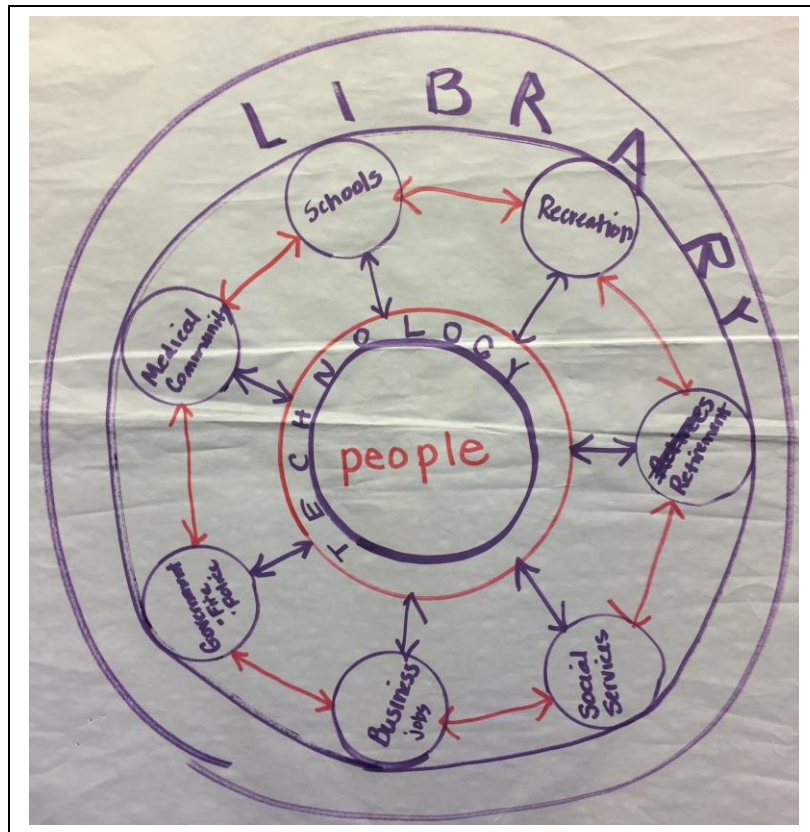
AUDIENCE	EXPECTATION	ROLE	OUTCOME
Students	Research/web access and provide assistance and guidance	Provide materials, expertise, guidance and leadership	Students become more motivated and willing to share with friends
	Scholarship resources	Provide connectivity	Students gain confidence
	College search	Possess necessary hardware and resources	Students experience self-satisfaction
	Working space	Facilitate experience and space for research and collaboration	Students develop creativity when accessing resources
Computer and technology	Access, reliable, relevant hardware, high speed	Provide training and education, access e-books, provide interactive environment, share trends, provide multiple platforms for users and possess budget authority	Acquire new skills, learn to use tech with confidence, learn to access tech outside of library further developing a tech savvy society
Young families	Access children activities, materials, and toys in a safe interactive space with assistance	Provide early literacy experiences, internet connection, serve in-loco-parentis, provide a variety of programs and	Experience socialization opportunities, grooming and creating future library

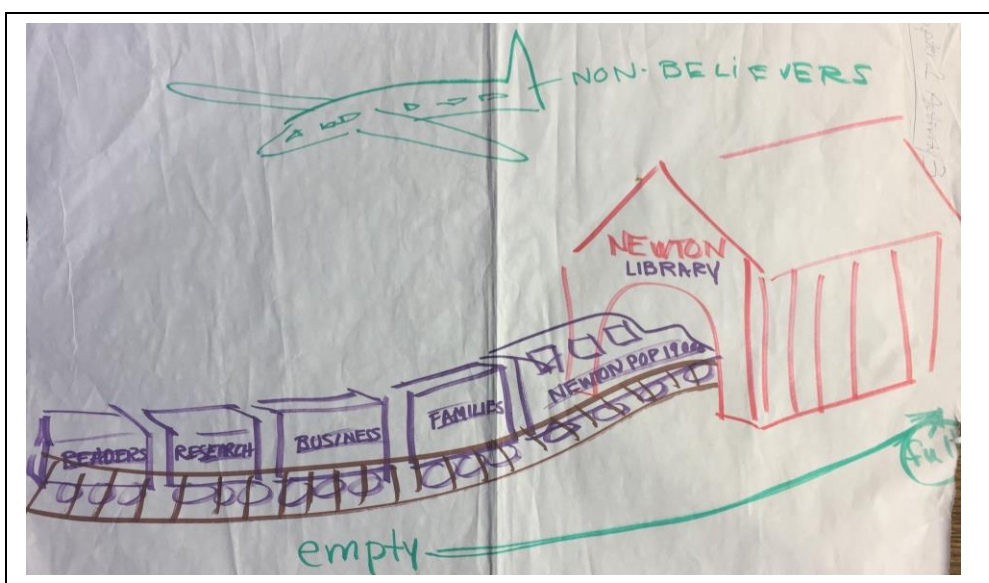
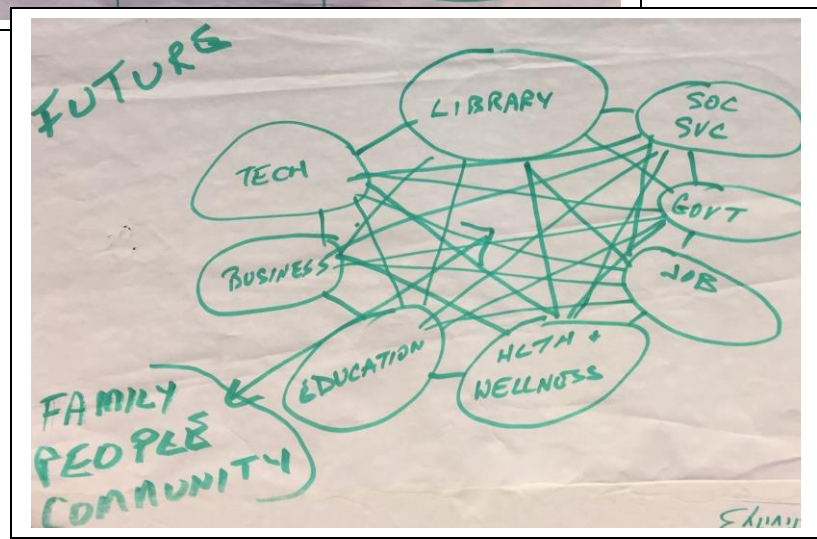
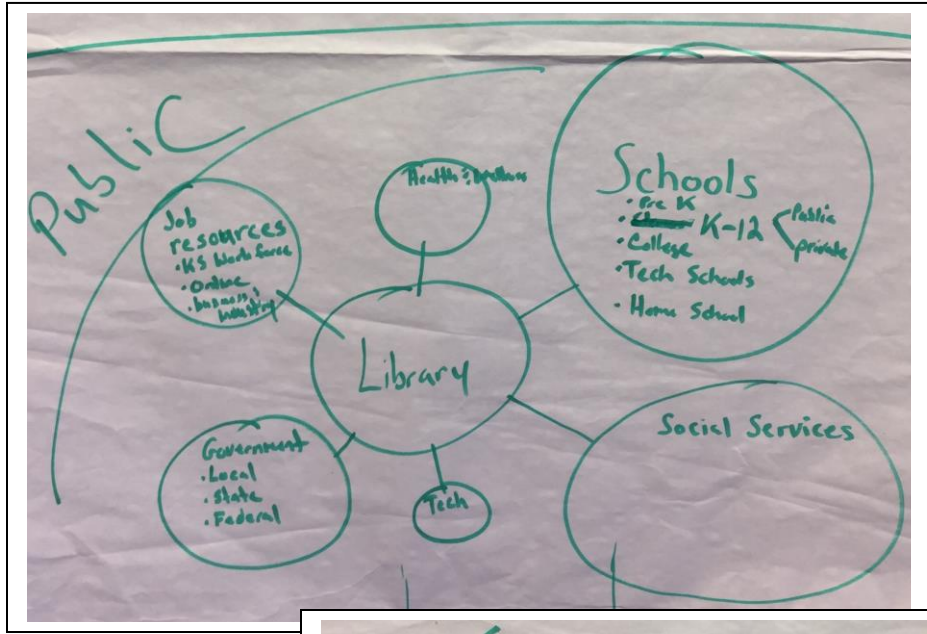
		activities,	supporters, developing life-long readers and learners
Job seekers	Find a job, staff provides support during process utilizing resources and outreach,	Well trained staff provides network opportunities,	Develop technical skills resulting in economic development, acquire basic interview tips/skills, creating resume and gaining self-satisfaction

Activity 3

- A community is a network of many interconnected relationships. Consider the library as one node on the community relationships, and not necessarily at the center. How would you design a diagram (drawing of sorts) representing the many relationships among the audiences in our community?

Note: Please refer to attached pictorial representations.





2 PLACE



THE LIBRARY AS PLACE



Recommended reading:

Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries, pages 10-20.

THE LIBRARY AS PLACE

In an increasingly virtual world, physical library places are **community assets**. They:

- **ESTABLISH PERSONAL CONNECTIONS** that help define community needs and interests
- **PROVIDE AN ANCHOR** for economic development and neighborhood revitalization
- **STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY IDENTITY** in ways that yield significant return on investment, including drawing people together for diverse purposes
- **PROVIDE A SAFE AND TRUSTED LOCATION** for community services such as health clinics, emergency response centers, small business incubators, workforce development centers and immigrant resource centers
- **CREATE CONNECTING PLACES** in new locations that draw people together—shopping malls, big box stores, airports and mobile buses

The reduction in physical materials, greater customer mobility and the desire for more collaboration and creation are changing the nature of the public library's physical space.

The physical library must undergo a transition that embraces the openness and flexibility needed to thrive in a world of constant change. Central to this flexibility is creating spaces that can adapt to the changing operational models of libraries.

The library as it exists within virtual space must be considered as a wholly independent but highly integrated experience; that is, the library's virtual presence must be as engaging as its physical space and fully serve the library's mission built around equitable access, learning and civic development. Platforms must be conceived that address not only the operational and practical benefits of libraries but also benefits that are emotional and highly social. The public library should define what makes a great online public space.



The library is first and foremost a place... a place that promotes development in society. It is the family room of a community. That's the vision, that's the future.

— Akhtar Badshah

Chapter 2 - Place

Facilitate a discussion around the following questions:

Activity 1: PHYSICAL SPACE

- What does your library do to make it a great *public* space?
 - Public friendly hours
 - Resources for all ages
 - Publicized in local newspaper
 - Able to reserve books on-line
 - Friendly personable NPL Staff
 - Variety of programs
 - Quality displays creating interest
 - Not a club, membership or targeting selected segment of community
 - Not pay to play
 - Safe place
- In what ways is your library transforming from a space for basic transactions (checking out books) to a space that provides richer experiences (inspiration learning, collaborating and performing)?
 - One-to-one tech classes/support
 - Computers, lap tops, wifi, mobile hotspots
 - Intentional thinking/planning transforming spaces
 - Book groups and story hour
 - School visits
 - Local organizations and business
 - Checking out non-traditional items
 - LEGO's
 - Actively modifying collections
- Where in your library do you have places/opportunities for nurturing emotional and social interactions and development?
 - Bessmer Room
 - Teen programs
 - NPL Staff interacting with public
 - Tables for talking
 - Private nooks
 - Kida area
 - Community strengthened via programs
- If there were no barriers, what five things would you do to make your library even better?
 - More physical space, new building, true maker space
 - More outlets, faster internet, additional wifi
 - Increased storage space
 - 3D printers
 - Additional staff and bilingual
 - Study rooms
 - Mobile kitchen
 - Coffee bar, vending machines

- More outreach/farmers market
 - Shift community attitudes becoming advocates/allies
- Select one of the five aspiration goals above and identify one that is a priority you could work on over the next six to eight months.
 - New building and or space downtown
 - Work with community groups
 - Economic portal
 - Donations of resources and grant writing
 - Shift perception and understanding library potential
 - Increase outlets and electrical infrastructure
- What do you need to accomplish your goal? Who can you partner with inside or outside of the library?
 - Utilize Duane Pauls
 - Utilize downtown store front
 - 3D printers and grant writing
 - Donation of resources from electrical contractors
 - Increase budget parameters
 - Community support/economic portal
 - Newton Chamber, EDC, schools, job services, college partnerships/networking

Activity 2: ONLINE SPACE

- What are the key features that create a great online community? (Consider online groups you participate in professionally and personally.)
 - Effective moderator
 - Technology that is reliable, responsive and adaptable
 - Increase number of computers
 - Common interests
 - Relevant thought provoking/creative content
 - Respect other's opinions/civility
 - Keep it positive
 - Story factor built in
 - Strong social media connection
 - More and reliable hotspots
- How is your library's online space currently used?
 - Do not know which is part of problem
 - Genealogy research
 - Data bases and social media
 - Issuing library cards
 - Advertising
 - Announcing events
 - NPL catalogue
 - Web links
 - Face book, Pinterest, Twitter and YouTube
- If there were no barriers, what five things would you do to make it even better?
 - Job seekers
 - Increase number of computers for job seekers

Action Guide for Aspen Institute Re-Envisioning Your Public Library - NPL Activities Responses

- Computer classes
- More databases (Zinio etc...)
- More hotspots
- Additional social media
- Increase volunteers working with job seekers
- Hire professional to tell NPL story on-line
- Professional development involving all staff increasing knowledge base
- Dedicated PR person and webmaster
- Need dedicated fiber (bandwidth)
- Pick one of the five aspiration goals above and identify one that is a priority you could work on over the next six to eight months.
 - On-going professional staff development
 - Computer classes including job seekers
 - Bandwidth
- What do you need to accomplish your goal? Who can you partner with inside or outside of the library?
 - Create more partnerships within community including city, Cox Communications
 - Time designated exclusively for staff professional development (staff reach full potential)
 - Coordinate/team with local businesses delivering staff training
 - Work in conjunction with community resources supporting job seekers

3

PLATFORM



THE LIBRARY AS PLATFORM

The transformations of the digital age enable individuals and communities to create their own learning and knowledge. To that end, libraries become platforms—bases on which individuals and communities create services, data and tools that benefit the community. The library as community learning platform is the innovative proposition of the public library in the digital age.

A great library platform is a “third place”—an interactive entity that can facilitate many people operating individually or in groups. The library platform supports the learning needs and goals of the community.

As a platform, the library promotes development in the community and society by identifying and filling gaps in community services including early-childhood education, lifelong learning, technology literacy and e-government. The library as platform makes the library a participatory enterprise.

The library as platform creates community dialogue that makes way for new expertise and creates social knowledge.

The library as platform radically reshapes the library’s daily activities, shifting away from the old model of organizing and “lending” the world’s knowledge toward a new vision of the library as a central hub for learning and community connections.

The library’s new activities include:

- **Bringing** analytical understanding to disorganized and abundant streams of information
- **Connecting** people seeking information to the resources, people or organizations that can provide it
- **Synthesizing, analyzing, storing** and **curating** information for those who want to consult material in the future



TIP

Recommended reading:

Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries, pages 10-20.

David Weinberger, “Library as Platform,” http://libraryjournal.com/2012/09/future-of-libraries/by-david-weinberger/#_

Andy Havens, “From Community to technology ... and back again,” <http://www.odc.org/en-US/publications/nextspace/articles/issue20/fromcommunitytotechnologyandbackagain.html>

R. David Lanke, “Library as Platform: Unlocking the Potential of Our Communities,” <http://quartz.syr.edu/blog/?p=6710>

- **Facilitating** discovery and serendipitous encounters with information
- **Helping** people solve local problems
- **Recruiting** volunteers and specialists to participate in platform activities, especially by helping meet the needs of those querying the system
- **Performing** information concierge services and access to government services that are not at times delivered well by existing government agencies

As available content grows exponentially, the library’s curator capacity becomes more important and more challenging.

Chapter 3 - Platform

Activity

Facilitate a discussion around the following questions:

Looking at your own library, how are you:

- Bringing new analytical understanding to disorganized and abundant streams of information for your community? The library can be a critical asset to help the community make sense of a world of information abundance, and to help individuals without strong information literacy skills learn how to find high quality and credible information—the right information for their needs. How does your library help the community to manage the firehose of information available from many sources?
 - Credible databases
 - Links to resources
 - Helpful, available and knowledgeable NPL Staff assistance (be a partner with patron)
 - Locating quality information in a timely fashion
 - What is really needed as a patron?
- Connecting people seeking information to the resources, people or organizations that can provide it?
 - ENLITE
 - Income tax information
 - Be able to refer patron to credible community resources
 - Be a bridge to community/organizations connections/links to websites
 - One-to-one support
 - Community/political forums for various audiences
 - Programs with targeted speakers
- Curating information for those who want to consult material in the future and making it visible to the community?
 - Historical preservation
 - Obituary initiatives
 - Oral histories
 - Create partnerships with community organizations
 - NPL Staff go out and speak to community functions highlighting library offerings
 - i.e.; Genealogy, historic preservation, micro-film, Kauffman Museum, Bethel MLA, videos, newspapers and meals on wheels etc...
- Facilitating discovery and serendipitous encounters with information and other people, whether at the library or outside the library's walls?
 - Variety of programs
 - School visits
 - Presentations to community advocating library
 - Volunteers getting out in to the public
 - Newspapers
 - Displays in the library
 - Narrowing research
 - Media that is interactive
 - Garden tour
 - Book sales

- Designated toy area
- Helping people solve local problems?
 - Job searches
 - Education classes
 - Tapping community resources
 - Community board in breezeway
 - Political forums
 - Story time
 - Directions to local authorities, offices, health ministries and local resources
 - Designated space allowing small groups to interact
 - Gamezone
 - Children centers
- Recruiting volunteers and specialists to participate in platform activities?
 - Volunteers coming (VITA)
 - Inviting volunteers
 - Word of mouth
 - Staff interaction with patrons to pursue interests/gain knowledge
 - Social media, newspapers keeping eyes open
 - Connecting to community programs outside of library
 - Genealogists, photographers, computer tech, etc...
 - Social media subscriptions
- Engaging other members of the community to assist you with the functions noted in 1-6 above—analyzing, connecting, curating, facilitating, discovery and problem solving—whether they are helping inside or outside of the library’s walls?
 - First Bank provides support (donations and volunteers)
 - Presentations and discussions
 - Utilize community resource experts
 - Look for both financial and physical supports
 - Welcome packets
 - Advertisements (magazine)
- Hosting events that are both physical and virtual—where interaction can begin in one space and continue in the other?
 - Video conferencing
 - Webinar (live)
 - Video on Facebook
 - Kids gaming
 - Nathan provide tech programming and is shared beyond NPL walls

4

JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Recommended reading:

Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries, page 27.

JOBS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

While libraries increasingly are seen as part of the education infrastructure that serves children and schools, **their role in the workforce infrastructure is newer and less well understood.**

This is a time of enormous opportunity for public libraries to reach out to local and state governments, labor departments, economic development agencies and others to ask how the library can use its platform to create a 21st-century workforce that will retain current businesses and attract new ones to the community.

Here are five examples of libraries supporting workforce development:

- 1** In **Omaha, Nebraska**, the Omaha Public Library initiated new partnerships with the business community that build on the library's community engagement and learning work. The library has worked with regional software companies and technology businesses looking for workers with software and design skills to establish workforce development initiatives that train area residents in these much-needed skills. The participating businesses helped the library rethink its technology offerings to support workforce needs.
- 2** In **Memphis, Tennessee**, the Memphis Public Library's JobLINC mobile career center helps job hunters find employment opportunities and helps employers find new employees. The 38-foot bus delivers job and career resources to job seekers at convenient locations in the community. It comes equipped with computers, email access, information resources and staff to assist with job listings, job applications, resume writing, interviewing and improving other skills.
- 3** In **New York City**, the Department of Small Business Services established one of its Workforce 1 career centers at the Brooklyn Central Library. The center prepares and connects city residents to job opportunities in the city, with emphasis on both job skills needed by local employers and soft skills such as interviewing that are equally important to securing a job.
- 4** In **Kings Mountain, North Carolina**, Mauney Memorial Library offers a Downtown Kings Mountain Business Success Project. In this multi-year project the public library is providing training and other assistance to microenterprise businesses so that they are successful in the 21st century marketplace. Local officials, including the mayor, are involved in and very supportive of the project.
- 5** In **Mocksville, North Carolina**, the Davie County Public Library has an arrangement with the Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC) to have two Workforce Development reps on site two days weekly to work with job seekers on job searches, applications, resume writing, and entering data in the NC Works website. The PTRC was shutting down the local Workforce office in Davie County and job seekers would have had to drive into Winston-Salem (30 minutes away) had no other arrangement been made available. The library provides space where PTRC staff can work with job seekers. Through staff assistance at the library, several people have found jobs. Mocksville is a small town and while the numbers of clients served are not huge, the service is greatly appreciated.

Chapter 4 - Jobs and Economic Development

Activity

Facilitate a discussion around the following questions:

- What means do you have in place to identify the workforce needs of your community?
(Examples: community college, Chamber of Commerce, county or state agencies, Small Business Administration)
 - People are sent here from organizations for help
 - Connection with Newton Chamber
 - Kansas Workforce
 - Marianne attending Newton Chamber events
 - Setting up booths at community events
 - HopeFest
 - Harvey County Resource Council
 - Kiwanis
- What is your library doing to support workforce and economic development? If your community's unemployment rate is low, how do you provide assistance in finding the right job or developing a career?
 - Resources to find out information/skills
 - Books/periodicals for testing
 - Classes
 - New residents
 - Retooling
 - Kansas Workforce
 - Learning Express and Lynda.com
 - How to manage computers with resume etc...
 - Resume writing and assistance
 - How to conduct job search
 - How to navigate application process
 - Volunteering at Newton Homeless Shelter
 - Community presentations to potential new residents
- What relationships do you have with local businesses and corporations?
 - Advisory groups consisting of community leaders
 - Materials purchased locally
 - Sponsor with local businesses
 - Retail shops
 - We have no relations with manufacturing
 - Purchase locally
 - Taste of Christmas
 - Downtown Promotion Committee
 - We partner with First Bank
 - Partner with State Library of Kansas
 - Humanity
 - Crust & Crumb, Mojo's, Salted Creamery, Prairie Harvest
 - Grand Central

- How can your library become more involved in supporting workforce development in your community?
 - Improved communication promoting library purpose and potential
 - Partnership within community/business
 - Financial resources for job seekers and space
 - Resume writing
 - Dress for success
 - Interview skills
 - Needs of Economic Development Council (EDC)
 - Talks with Brooks Trade Center (HS)
 - Involvement with HCC
 - GED Classes
 - Relationship with SRS
 - Bethel College Career Development
 - Prairie View
 - Makerspace experts/resources/technology
- What organizations, associations or businesses can you align with?
 - Bethel College
 - ESSDACK
 - SCKLS
 - Prairie View
 - Local businesses
 - Newton Police Department
 - Harvey County Sheriff
 - Circles, Homeless Shelter
 - Non profits
- Based on the discussion you've had related to the above questions, what are three things you can accomplish in the next six months to one year in this area?
 - Making library visible/known to community through purposeful efforts
 - Utilize professional resources to market NPL
 - Use people in community to help job seekers
 - Coffee with Cops
 - Take book talk out into the community
 - Reach out to Prairie View to do staff training
 - Demo with Lynda.com
 - Get involved with manufacturing

5

THE LIBRARY AS CIVIC RESOURCE



THE LIBRARY AS CIVIC RESOURCE



Recommended reading:

Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries, pages 29-31.

THE LIBRARY AS CIVIC RESOURCE

The public library is a place for the community to experiment and collaborate, to gather and engage, and to explore and confront important community issues such as homelessness, immigration, economic development, public health and environmental sustainability. With its deep knowledge and relationships in the community, its physical presence and its platform, the public library is playing an important role in sustaining the civic health of the community. Libraries are carrying out this important civic role in the 21st century by:

- **SUPPORTING GOVERNMENT SERVICE DELIVERY** including public health education, immigration and citizenship services, government jobs information, disaster response and recovery information
- **ENGAGING CITIZENS IN THE GOVERNING PROCESS**, both through face-to-face participation and use of the library platform to strengthen citizen-citizen and citizen-government partnerships
- **CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES** to bring people of different backgrounds together to solve problems and build stronger communities. Civic engagement in the digital age takes on new dimensions with exciting opportunities for virtual engagement



Chapter 5 - The Library as Civic Resource

Activity

There are many ways for the library to serve as a civic resource, from basic government service provision through active engagement and leadership to create a sense of belonging in the community and help the community to identify and achieve its aspirations. You can think of this as akin to the iconic pyramid of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, with basic needs (physical needs, safety) at the bottom, intermediate needs (belonging and esteem) in the middle, and self-actualization (reaching one's aspirations) at the top of the pyramid.

Facilitate a discussion around the following questions:

- How is your library a civic resource in your community? At what stage of a hierarchy of civic needs does your library operate?
 - Place for debates
 - Government agencies and voting forums can be help at NPL
 - Web link for candidates
 - Trustworthy place for Hispanic population
 - Safe place for patrons
 - Teens after school/sense of belonging
 - Potential for NPL to help people from different backgrounds
 - People come in for help and occasionally come back to report results
 - NPL functions at intermediate level
 - Internet can provide a sense of belonging among patrons
- In what ways do library leadership and staff get out of the library and into the community to learn about the civic needs of the community and its residents?
 - NPL functions at intermediate level
 - Local meetings and boards
 - Newton Chamber
 - Harvey County Resource Council
 - Mirror Board
 - Bethel College
 - KidFest
 - Giving Tuesday
 - Talks among civic groups
 - Staff members participate in community groups
 - People approach library staff to talk
 - Booths at fairs
 - ENLITE goes to retirement communities
 - NPL Staff talk to volunteers
 - Informal connections among community patrons and groups
 - We might want to consider attending Framers Market
- What level would you like your library to occupy in the community? Does anyone else already do this in the community? What help and support do you need to get to the desired level and be effective (consider whether your library needs to develop or strengthen people, place or platform assets to fulfill this role)?
 - Meet and greet candidates
 - Going out to Farmers Market

- Need more meeting places
- NPL functions at basic and intermediate levels
- Self-actualization, but also need to reach out to current non-library users
- Additional staff and financial resources
- Who can work with you?
 - Schools/colleges
 - Recreation Center
 - Civic groups
 - Small and large business
 - Media
 - Government agencies
 - Non-profits
 - ENLITE
 - Community volunteers
 - YMCA
 - Hospitals/health related services
- What do you do to communicate your role as a civic resource?
 - Do community members know the library...
 - is a welcoming environment for experimentation and collaboration?
 - provides opportunities for gathering?
 - provides the resources for exploring and addressing community issues?
 - Facebook
 - Newspapers
 - Website
 - Signage
 - E-mail blast
 - Displays
 - Many opportunities for gathering
 - Study groups
 - Interviews
 - Hobby groups
 - Scouts
 - Social workers
 - Photographers
 - Historians
 - Genealogy

If you are not communicating about your role as a civic resource, what can you do to communicate more effectively? What communication channels can you use – e.g., library newsletter, e-blast, social media, news release, etc.?

6

THE LIBRARY AS LITERACY CHAMPION





Recommended reading:

Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries, pages 27-28.

The 21st-century library is the champion of the literacies needed to navigate information abundance, create knowledge, bolster economic opportunity and make democracy dynamic.

In the digital age, content is widely available in diverse formats outside traditional publications, requiring new skills to succeed in this information-rich environment. Building on its historic commitment to literacy, the library is uniquely positioned to provide access, skills, context and trusted platforms for sharing. Examples of new digital literacies include the ability to:

- **INTERACT WITH TECHNOLOGY DEVICES AND CONTENT** at very different levels than ever before
- **FILTER MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF INFORMATION** and translate it into knowledge in a highly complex environment
- **SELECT THE RIGHT TOOLS** for knowledge creation and management



Howard County (Maryland) Library System **HITech: THE ROAD TO A STEM CAREER**

The Howard County Library System's HiTech digital media lab is designed to open doors and opportunities to the region's teens. HiTech delivers cutting-edge science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education using hands-on technology projects, experiential learning and peer-to-peer communications. Envisioned as a launching point for the STEM career pipeline, HiTech focuses on producing the next generation of scientists, mathematicians and engineers to meet the needs of the region's highly skilled job market. The curriculum includes both self-paced and structured learning opportunities divided into four modules that

emphasize interaction, improvisation, invention and instruction. The HiTech Academy component focuses on teens who are interested in pursuing higher education in science, technology, engineering or math by providing instruction, site visits to STEM work environments and attendance at college-sponsored STEM sites. Since HiTech's launch, more than 2,000 teens have participated in a wide range of classes, created a mobile game that was released in 2013 and has been downloaded 5,000 times around the world, and worked on the library's Choose Civility e-book featuring their own stories and photos.

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Chapter 6 - The Library as Literary Champion

Activity

Facilitate a discussion around the following questions:

- In what ways is your library a literacy champion?
 - Early literacy
 - Digital
 - STEM
 - Finance
 - Delivering services
 - Book study
 - Story time
 - We could do more with environmental/Earth Day

adult literacy legal
 English as a second language environmental
 early literacy STEM
 civic financial
 health or medical visual
 digital other _____
 cultural

- Which of the above are the areas of greatest need in your community? How will you go about identifying these areas?
 - Health/medical/Harvey County Health Survey results
 - Fake news
 - Digital and finance
 - People who cannot use computers
 - Perhaps could have had a forum on Camp Hawk
 - Petitions (Q and A sessions)
 - STEM
 - English as second language
- Which of the literacies that you listed is a strength for your library? Identify one. How did you develop that strength?
 - Digital
 - Education classes
 - One-on-one support
 - Partnerships
 - NPL Staff expertise
 - Smart Phone (with Z Wireless)
 - Data base skills
- How are you using that strength in your community now? How can you enhance its use in the future?
 - Helpful and supportive NPL Staff

- Drop ins (patrons drop by for help)
 - Appointments
 - Hotspots
 - Presentations
 - Word of mouth
 - Community help
 - Education classes supporting community needs
 - One-on-one support
- Share one or two ways to further develop an area of need for your community where your library also needs to develop strength. For example, are there opportunities to form partnerships in the community that would lead to positive outcomes?
 - Partner with health related agencies
 - Partner with Newton Recreation Center
 - Partner with Newton Medical Center
 - Partner with Newton YMCA
 - Partner with bike groups
 - Partner with Master Gardeners
 - Partner with Newton Schools, Bethel College and ESSDACK
 - How can you take steps and identify partners who could help your organization develop that literacy so that it will lead to positive outcomes?
 - Bunting Magnetics
 - Arts and displays
 - Choir rehearsals at NPL
 - Create relationships with museums
 - Create relationships with area businesses
 - Railroad
 - STEM
 - Harvey County Economic Development Council
 - Cargill
 - What does your state library do to support the various literacy areas that you listed? Are you connected to that effort?
 - Grant opportunities
 - Databases
 - Interlibrary loan
 - Continuing education opportunities
 - SCKLS

7

SOAR ASSESSMENT



SOAR ASSESSMENT

SOAR ASSESSMENT

STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES, ASPIRATIONS, RESULTS

The SOAR assessment is an effective, easy-to-use tool to build a strengths-based strategy for community development. It helps groups and communities to focus on what they are doing well, what areas or capacities can be improved upon and what is most compelling to stakeholders. Its focus aligns well with the Dialogue's emphasis on the future and community aspirations. This tool evolved in the practice of Appreciative Inquiry as applied to strategic planning in organizations.

Appreciative Inquiry is an approach to change that begins with careful identification of strengths to enable stakeholders to pursue their dreams and visions of what might be. It is a process of collaborative inquiry to clarify the strengths, positive experiences, achievements and best qualities of a group, an organization, a situation, a relationship or an individual. It is a means to create change based upon the premise that we can effectively move forward if we know what has worked.

The implementation of the SOAR assessment engages all levels and functions of an organization. It is not designed to be a top-down assessment tool.

The role of the facilitator during the SOAR assessment is to probe by asking leading questions and, when necessary, to provide some direction and assistance with answers. When conducting a SOAR analysis, the basic questions to be answered are:

1. What are your greatest **strengths**?
2. What are your best **opportunities**?
3. What is your preferred **future**?
4. What are the **measurable results** that will tell you that you have achieved that vision of the future?



TIP

Small or rural libraries with a limited staff – consider talking to community members, partners, policy makers or collaborating with neighboring libraries.

SOAR is best defined in this way:

Strengths: What does the library do very well now, what works, what are your assets and capabilities? What are your greatest strengths?

Opportunities: Where in the current context are there opportunities for the library to make a difference, to contribute, to innovate? What are your best opportunities?

Aspirations: What are your hopes and dreams for the future? What do you want to be known for? What is your preferred future?

Results: What do you most want to accomplish? What will success look like?



TIP

For more information on aspirations facilitation, please refer to the [Harwood in a ½ Hour Aspirations Facilitator's Guide](#).

Chapter 7 - SOAR Assessment

Activity

Form small groups of five to seven individuals. Invite the groups to address each of the four topics in turn.

Note: Each team chose one question from each of the four SOAR components to respond. They are included below following each section.

Some questions to ask when assessing the **STRENGTHS** of your organization:

- What is it that makes you proud of your organization? How does that reflect your greatest strength(s)?
- Of what achievement in the last two years are you most proud?
- What are your greatest assets?
- What do your strengths indicate about your capabilities?
- Prompt participants to share stories that demonstrate library strengths or areas of excellence. One member of each group will report on the major themes that emerged during their discussions.
 - Friendly NPL Staff meets patron needs
 - Staff have strong relationships among themselves
 - Can support digital needs (specific programming)
 - Retention of NPL Staff and consumers
 - NPL deliver programs for all ages
 - Amazing presenters
 - Public image
 - NPL Staff continue to be learners

Some questions to ask when assessing the **OPPORTUNITIES** of your organization:

- What opportunities should you focus your efforts on? Identify the top three from your list.
- How can you best meet the needs of your audiences?
- What trends could work in your favor? What is possible?
- What new skills or resources do you need to move forward?
 - Need a pull-in coffee bar
 - New/improved facilities meeting growing and changing needs of both library and patrons
 - Increase in staff to facilitate makerspace
 - Partnerships in networking with community
 - STEM programming
 - Library as a learning space

- More access to new technology and training
- Remain current with governmental regulations and trends
- Further develop skills set to interact with people of differing cultures

Some questions to ask when assessing the ASPIRATIONS of your organization:

- If you could wave a magic wand to accomplish three things to strengthen the health and vitality of the community, what would they be?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- It is three-to-five years from now and the library and community have a thriving, productive relationship. What does this look like? What three steps were critical to making this happen?

Three Steps

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
- What kind of a community do you want? What are the most important attributes? Essential components?
 - What kind of change is needed to make that happen?
 - What role could the library play in making that change?
 - What are the core factors that give life to your community?
 - Industry/job growth/entrepreneurial
 - Employment levels
 - Education
 - Recreation
 - Health
 - Faith
 - Values a learning community
 - Kind, understanding and compassionate
 - Safe place
 - Quality of life initiatives
 - Collaboration within the community

Some questions to ask when assessing the RESULTS of your organization:

- What are some key results that have already been achieved?
- How do you measure success now? How will you measure success in the future?

- In what areas does your library need to improve based upon the results?
 - Be able to measure success, but also acknowledge authentic comments and feedback
 - Attendance at program initiatives
 - Growth and improved library experiences
 - Digital expansion

8

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS



STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS



Recommended reading:

Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries, pages 33-47.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

In the report, *Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries*, the following four strategies were identified as opportunities for continuing library transformation:

- 1. Align library services in support of community goals.**
- 2. Provide access to content in all formats.**
- 3. Ensure long-term sustainability of public libraries.**
- 4. Cultivate leadership.**

The ACTIVITIES for this section have been broken down into three parts. You can choose to address all of them at one time or address them in three separate sessions.

As you work through the Action Guide for Re-Envisioning Your Public Library, assessing how your library is performing in the areas of supporting community goals, providing access, ensuring long-term sustainability and cultivating leadership will help you better prepare for hosting your library's own community dialogue.



Chapter 8 - STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Activity 1

Align library services in support of community goals – Identify 2-3 priorities or goals in your community. In what ways is your library supporting these local community goals? (If your community does not have clearly articulated goals, or you are unsure who determines these goals, this can be a starting point on the agenda when you convene your own public dialogue—see *Convening Your Public Dialogue* – page 61.)

- ReNewton (by 2020)
 - Strengthening downtown
- Bike Path plan
- Harvey County Health Assessment
- Tightening of city and county budgets
- Possible broad band implications for NPL

Note: *Teams responded to Activity 1 only. Responses are listed above.*

Activity 2

PROVIDE ACCESS TO CONTENT IN ALL FORMATS

As the public library shifts from a repository for materials to a platform for learning and participation, its ability to provide access to vast amounts of content in all formats is vital. Libraries face two immediate major challenges in providing access to content in all forms:

- Being able to procure and share e-books and other digital content on the same basis as physical versions
- Having high capacity, easily scalable broadband technologies in every library that deliver and help to create content

Stakeholders must work together to find solutions to these challenges that meet the community's needs and work for content creators, publishers and the public.

Provide access to content in all formats – What steps has your library taken to meet the changing technological and digital needs of your community?

What strategies do you have in place to balance the provision of resources in a variety of formats, including formats that meet the diverse needs of different audiences and populations in your community?

Is your library's current broadband capacity sufficient to meet patron demands for broadband and wireless connectivity at peak times? What plans are in place to address increasing demand?

What capacity and resources does your library have to plan and implement new technologies as the information environment and content industries continue to evolve? Are there partners in the community or in state or national networks who can assist with the skills, expertise or capacity that your library may need to build, and who are they?

Activity 3

ENSURE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Public libraries need to transform their service model to meet the demands of the knowledge society while securing a sustainable funding base for the future. Achieving this means libraries need to:

- Identify reliable revenue resources for both daily operations and long-term planning and investment
- Explore alternative governance structures and business models that maximize efficient and sustainable library operations and customer service
- Become more skilled at measuring outcomes rather than counting activities
- Balance the local and national library value proposition to consider economies of scale in a networked world without compromising local control
- Ensure long-term sustainability of public libraries

What form of consistent funding do you have in place for operational costs (short-term needs)?

What do you see as opportunities for additional funds for new initiatives?

How do you build a more sustainable future on the strengths and priorities that are in place? What new partnerships, consortia or collaborations could you develop to bring in new resources or leverage existing resources?

Activity 4

CULTIVATE LEADERSHIP

Leadership is needed to build communities and public libraries that thrive and succeed together. Every community needs a vision and a strategic plan, with input from all stakeholder groups. Key steps include:

- improving communications with community leaders
- developing community champions
- strengthening intersections with diverse communities
- reaching out to and engaging with young-professional organizations and demonstrating the collective impact of partners working together

Cultivate leadership

In what ways are you cultivating leadership within your library (new skills and competencies needed)? Are you addressing the development of staff at all levels and in different capacities?

In what ways are you cultivating leaders in the community to support your library? How might community leaders who are engaged as library partners, including those identified in the sustainability section above, be enlisted to help the library to overcome existing barriers to sustainability?

9

ACTION STEPS FOR LIBRARY LEADERS



ACTION STEPS FOR LIBRARY LEADERS



Recommended reading:

Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries, page 50.

ACTION STEPS FOR LIBRARY LEADERS

The following action steps are not listed in any particular order of importance. The action steps are meant to serve as a set of **starting points** for moving forward.

15 Action Steps for Library Leaders

- 1) Define the scope of the library's programs, services and offerings around community priorities, recognizing that this process may lead to choices and trade-offs.
- 2) Collaborate with government agencies at the local, state and federal levels around shared objectives. This includes partnerships with schools to drive learning and educational opportunities throughout the community.
- 3) Partner with local businesses, chambers of commerce and community colleges to provide access to curricula and resources, to technology and certification programs and to job search resources to maintain a highly skilled yet highly flexible workforce.
- 4) Engage the community in planning and decision-making, and seek a seat at tables where important policy issues are discussed and decisions made.
- 5) Connect resources from other agencies or libraries to the library platform rather than reinventing the wheel or always going solo.
- 6) Develop partnerships and collaborations with other libraries and knowledge networks that can contribute to efficiencies, using the opportunities provided by digital technologies.
- 7) Support the concept of a national digital platform to share collections nationally while continuing to maintain a local presence and focus; participate in content-sharing networks and platforms.
- 8) Deploy existing resources in new ways.
- 9) Collaborate in negotiations with publishers on reasonably priced and easily accessible access to e-content and develop win-win solutions.
- 10) Provide mobile devices for in-library, in-community and at-home use.
- 11) Measure library outcomes and impacts to better demonstrate the library's value to the community and communicate these outcomes to key partners and policy makers.
- 12) Communicate the library's story of impact directly to the public, partners, stakeholders and policy makers. Include the new vision built on the library's people, place and platform assets.
- 13) Develop a richer online library experience and stronger competencies in using digital and social media to demonstrate the library's role in the digital transformation.
- 14) Change long-held rules and operating procedures that impede the development of the library's spaces and platform.
- 15) Take proactive and sustained steps to brand the library as a platform for community learning and development.

Chapter 9 - ACTION STEPS FOR LIBRARY LEADERS (Director)

Review each of the above Action Steps for Library Leaders and identify the top five that offer the most promise to your community.

1. Collaborate with government agencies at the local, state and federal levels around shared objectives. This includes partnerships with schools to drive learning and educational opportunities throughout the community.
2. Partner with local businesses, chambers of commerce and community colleges to provide access to curricula and resources, to technology and certification programs and to job search resources to maintain a highly skilled yet highly flexible workforce.
3. Provide mobile devices for in-library, in-community and at home use.
4. Measure library outcomes and impacts to better demonstrate the Library's value to the community and communicate these outcomes to key partners and policy makers.
5. Communicate the Library's story of impact directly to the public, partners, stakeholders and policy makers. Include the new vision built on the Library's people, place and platform assets.

Select one or two of the above that are important and feasible for implementation in the short term.

1. Provide devices for in-library, in-community and at home use.
2. Communicate the Library's story of impact directly to the public, partners, stakeholders and policy makers. Include the new vision built on the Library's people, place and platform assets.

How will you begin the process of implementation? What is your first step?

1. Proceed with acquisition and processing of 10 additional hotspots for public use.
2. Look for new ways to publicize the library's stories. Gather and share more stories on how the library has impacted individual lives.

What support would you need and where would you get it?

1. Funding from the Bessmer Foundation.
2. Staff and board gathering "library" stories from people.

What resources would you need and where would you get them?

1. Funding and tech support is currently available.
2. Marketing advisors?

What would you need in order to move on with the other three action steps identified?

1. Finding interested persons at the other agencies, especially from schools to develop collaborative opportunities.
2. Make connections, especially with local businesses to share what the Library has to offer them and what the library should provide.
3. How to gather outcomes and impacts.

10

ENGAGING COMMUNITY LEADERS



ENGAGING COMMUNITY LEADERS



Recommended reading:

Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries, pages 49-52.

ENGAGING COMMUNITY LEADERS

A key step to convening a public dialogue for your library is to identify community leaders who you want to invite to participate in your discussions, either as guests, presenters or panelists.

When thinking of who these individuals might be, consider who you'd want as a programming or advocacy partner, community sounding board, donor, etc.

Careful thought should be given to who the leaders are for each of the primary stakeholder audiences that your library serves.



Chapter 10 - ENGAGING COMMUNITY LEADERS

Here are criteria to keep in mind when identifying community leaders from each audience. These are individuals who:

1. **are known in the community** – they may be leaders in their neighborhoods, political figures, business heads and are names that many would recognize and respect.
2. **are likely to be committed to this work** – whether because of their position or their library support, these are individuals who will share thoughts and ideas to help keep the library forward-thinking.
3. **are key influencers** – these are individuals who, by virtue of the position they hold or for other reasons, have resources, relationships or networks to move work forward.
4. **cut across boundary sectors** – these are individuals who break through barriers rather than resist them.
5. **add a dimension of diversity** – in the broadest sense of diversity – race, age, religion, job, area of focus or expertise.

Consider the five criteria above. Who are the 10 leaders that you would engage immediately?

Name, Affiliation

When engaging community leaders, careful consideration should be paid to making sure there is representation from each of the above audiences. Be mindful about the influence that individuals have in the community and how their participation or attendance may be beneficial to the library.

When reviewing the tree diagram, what other primary audiences for your library would you add?

When you examine your tree and the audiences you added, where do you see your greatest relationships?

Why are they the strongest?

Now, when you think about the 10 leaders you identified above, are there others you would add after thinking about these audiences? Who will you add and why?

Name/Community Entity:

Barth Hague
Deborah Hamm
Vallerie Gleason
Second Century Board
Tim Hodge
Carolyn McGinn
Larry Lee
Barbara Bunting
Matthew Schmidt
Lynnette Redington
Jason Reynolds
Alex Carbajal
Tom Adrian
Erin McDaniel
Lana Myers
Lori Kessler

Affiliation:

City Commission / Mirror Inc. CEO (past NPL board member)
Newton USD 373 Superintendent
Newton Medical Center President/CEO
NPL
Attorney of Law and Kansas Representative
Kansas Senator
Pastor, VITA Program Volunteer
Newton USD 373 Board
Health Ministries Executive Director
Harvey County Health Dept. Director
Chaplain (Sheriff & NPD)
Realtorhot
Attorney of Law
Public Information Officer for City of Newton
Author
Healthy Harvey Coalition

Pam Stevens	Newton Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director
Chris Zuercher	Prairie View - Vocational Services Director
Angie Tatro	Central Kansas Community Foundation Executive Director
Bill Hake	Central Kansas Community Foundation Program Coordinator
Chad Gay	Harvey County Sheriff
Eric Murphy	Newton Police Department Chief
Jessie Kaye	Prairie View President/CEO
Tom Williams	Asbury Park President/CEO
Marc Kessinger	Newton Presbyterian Manor Executive Director
Carol Sue Hobbs	Newton USD 373 Board / Prairie Harvest
Loni Jensen	Newton - Hutchinson Community College Coordinator
Marianne Eichelberger	Newton Public Library Director

What are additional sub-categories that you would add to fill in more ‘leaves’ in each category?

A sub-category are the groups, partnerships and affiliations within each primary audience.

Example: Local Officials—Mayor, Chief Administrative Officer, Council or Commission, Finance Board, etc.

It may be helpful to form small groups and have each discuss sub-categories for assigned primary audiences and to identify individuals affiliated with each.

Sub-category Contact

Children & Families

Philanthropy

Policymakers

Education

Staff & Colleagues

Other

Activity

Now that you’ve thought about which community members to engage, take note as you navigate around your own community. What are you noticing about the people and institutions who are active in your community?

What activities are happening quietly but making a big difference? Are leaders from these organizations on your list of top 10?

Arrange face-to-face meetings with your top 10 leaders and ask them about their business or organization.

What can the library do to serve them better? Document the discussion from your meetings. What have you learned? What changes will you make as a result?

11

CONVENING YOUR PUBLIC DIALOGUE



CONVENING YOUR PUBLIC DIALOGUE

This action guide is designed to be a tool for library leaders to prepare for and initiate an ongoing dialogue with the community and its leaders around the community's priorities. The goal is re-envisioning the library's role in addressing the community's needs, priorities and aspirations. The starting point is your initial public dialogue, but this should not be considered a one-time event. Rather, the dialogue event that you schedule following the completion of this Action Guide should be seen as the catalyst for developing a new relationship and ongoing conversation with your community and its leaders. The goal of this conversation is to look forward and enable the community and library together to develop strategies and implement actions for deploying the library's key assets in new ways to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.



This section is flexible to enable the planning committee and facilitators to adapt it to the needs of the individual community.

The following content is designed to aid library leaders in convening a public dialogue:

- Responsibilities of an Effective Facilitator
- Guidelines for an Effective Discussion
- A Sample Agenda for a Discussion
- Appendix

Responsibilities of an Effective Facilitator

The facilitators of public dialogues have an important role and contribution to make in helping community members to understand and work with the report. The following is a list of suggested responsibilities to help facilitators be most effective in this role:

- Welcome all participants
- Present a set of guidelines for the discussion and test for agreement with the participants
- Open the discussion with a general, broad question
- Be prepared with additional, more specific questions
- Encourage everyone to participate
- Ensure balanced participation
- Remain neutral on the content of the discussion
- Practice active listening
- Encourage the expression of different points of view
- Help participants to understand each other and their different perspectives
- Summarize periodically
- Record key points
- Manage time
- Invite the 'reflective observers' to comment
- Provide concluding remarks and thank participants

Chapter 11 - CONVENING YOUR PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Note: It was decided that NPL Board would respond to Chapter 11 at a later date following further discussion regarding re-envisioning NPL.

12

TAKING ACTION: NEXT STEPS



MOVING FORWARD WITH NEXT STEPS

The power to re-envision public libraries is the power to re-envision our communities for success in the digital era. Re-envisioning the public library for every community will require a unity of purpose and action by stakeholders at all levels. It will require new relationships and partnerships that are nurtured and strengthened through ongoing dialogue and engagement, not a single event.

To get started, library directors, staff and their supporters must forge new partnerships and collaborations in the community and align their work with the community's goals. Leadership at the local level is crucial. Library, government and civic leaders will have to adopt new thinking about the public library. This thinking rests on understanding what makes the library uniquely valuable to the community beginning with its people, place and platform assets. It also rests on the uniquely public value proposition grounded in the principles of equity, access, opportunity, openness and participation. These are also values at the heart of American democracy.

The challenge to pick up and move forward is dependent on iteration, available resources and the commitment and vision of library and other community leaders. Specific next steps will depend upon the unique needs and priorities identified in the initial dialogue.

Here are some recommendations for initial action steps to help you chart your path forward.

- **Consider formation of an advisory group or steering committee** to continue working on development of action items, implementation and future dialogue events.
- **Bring the summary of the event to regional or statewide library meetings** or meetings of municipal leagues and associations to share experiences and encourage other communities to hold their own events. Use this opportunity to nurture a community of practice around these conversations and the promise of libraries engaging with civic leaders to transform communities.
- **Consider outreach to key stakeholders** like community foundations or other philanthropic partners to share the outcomes of the meeting and invite their participation in next steps.
- **Publish a report**, share and market it widely.
- **Share your report and experience**, including resources you have created, with the community at www.LibraryVision.org.



Chapter 12 - TAKING ACTION: NEXT STEPS

Note: It was decided that NPL Board would respond to Chapter 12 at a later date following further discussion regarding re-envisioning NPL.