



LLNJ Community Workshop  
Willingboro Public Library  
February 14, 2017

**1. Context: What's happening in the world right now that is having--or will have--a big effect on libraries in New Jersey, their people and the people they serve? Consider all scales (global, national, local) and opportunities as well as challenges.**

- Fake news, what is the library function in making sense of what can be trusted?
- Fake news: both for adults and for kids. For adults, we want to help people identify what it is REALLY, and for kids we want to teach them critical thinking skills, media literacy and more.
- New governor next year... regime change.
- What can we expect from the next NJ governor? Will they support librarians in every school?
- Redoing the school funding formula next year.
- No real information curriculum... school librarians need to own this.
- Libraries can capitalize on our technology projects and training to gain support of communities
- Civic literacy as a means to manage political polarization. Strengthening our commitments to diversity and inclusion. How do we make it clear that everyone is welcome in the library, that the library is FOR everyone and that we have resources to help them take part?
- Extreme weather: disaster planning for libraries, the need to learn about different weather patterns which may affect NJ more now than in past years; thinking about our nearly 2000 miles of shoreline (coastline PLUS inland waterways).
- Explaining databases to town council was impressive.
- Demographic shifts: NJ is becoming younger and less white; yet, our profession remains overwhelmingly white.
- The effect of the current political climate on community mental health.
- Schools are not teaching information literacy/how to use databases.
- Library as third space; a place to take a break from all your worries (which sure would help a lot).
- Engagement: keeping people coming to the library.
- Charter schools sometimes don't have school libraries.
- Demographic shifts within the profession as a whole.
- Library outside our four walls—getting a constant presence anywhere community events and gatherings occur.
- Personal connections with community stakeholders make for good relationships for the library
- Money needed to transform library buildings
- Community partnerships are great!
- We now have global connections... ripples impact locally, statewide, within the country and globally... global

- economies, impacts on publishing, social conditions, political connections.
- Cost of gas limits the number of trips to library at base.
- Intimidated by digital tax forms.
- Politics and abolition of IMLS.
- Unemployment affects usage, still suffering from community recession.
- Immigrants seeking more info about their situation.
- Cost of technology is escalating and funding not predictable.

**Themes and further conversation:** Fake news; immigration; lack of funding; politics; community economics; diversity; uncertainty; the environment (ecology); what libraries do; civic engagement; need to be proactive; civic literacy; school librarians in every school; A4500 bill in legislature.

**2. Envisioning our future: It's 2025 and libraries of all types are thriving hubs of their communities. Draw a picture describing what's happening. What do libraries look/feel like? Where are they? Who is in and around them? What are they doing? How are libraries connected to the rest of the community and the world? Who are our partners/collaborators? What services do they offer and for whom? What new skills do librarians have and what new roles do they take on?**

[\[Link to photos on site here\]](#)

**3. Strategic Analysis: Thinking about our conversation so far, what is working really well that we want to KEEP? What isn't working that we might do well to ABANDON? What might we INVENT or REINVENT that would make a big difference to our success?**

KEEP

- Literacies of all kinds, readers' advisory, cultural advisory, collections, good customer service
- Buildings
- Teaching
- Wifi
- Collaborative spaces and tools
- Emerging literacy for preschoolers
- Librarians in schools
- Local partnerships

- FINES especially for children's & YA materials (but really, for everyone) due to barriers to access
- Barriers to access
- High shelves
- Punitive library rules/regulations (especially but not limited to charging for item check-outs, room reservations, fines, etc.)
- Running libraries like a business. Libraries are a public good, not a for-profit business.
- Fixed furniture

ABANDON

- Tech for tech's sake/"OOH SHINY" approaches
- Rigidity
- Structured ideas of what a library job/career is; continual reinvention of yourself

INVENT

- Adaptable, unfixed-use space—a space that can be used differently depending on the needs of a given day
- Sharing of eBooks
- Transportation options (shuttle, bikes, etc.) to/from library by partnering with local businesses, schools and churches;

- businesses can provide funding for shuttles that will stop by their business
- Statewide library card
- Symbiosis between library and private sector
- Local authors center—self-publishing at the library of eBooks, publishing on demand

#### REINVENT

- Transfer of home movies
- Spaces
- Communicating with non-users
- Transforming spaces—totally mobile furniture
- Makerspaces for things like: entrepreneurship, or other intent such as prototyping products/inventions, band merch, t-shirts for teams, intergenerational crafts, crafts as small business, etc.

- Statewide ILL of eBooks
- Staff continually—new skills, new attitudes
- Concept of library membership
- Public transit routes to libraries; develop a partnership with NJ Transit
- The library presence outside the building
- Continuing education for paraprofessionals/support staff
- Library sources of funding—shift burden from patrons and community members to municipal/county/state/federal sources, where it belongs
- Ease of getting a library card
- Local history at the library
- Classification and organization/presentation of library materials

#### ***4. Thinking about what we've learned so far, what is an action step/project/initiative that we might start today to create the desired future for LLNJ and its members and stakeholders? Include a 5-6 word catchy title and 50 word description of the project.***

1. **YES, YOU CAN!:** Reinventing staff and patron codes of conduct, but maybe also an overall messaging: Yes, You Can access our Wi-Fi for free, check out these movies, stream Prince's back-catalog, come to these wonderful events. We envision a reframing of the library staff-community member relationship and expectations PLUS a full on marketing strategy.
2. **Paraprofessional Training:** Can we make minimum training mandatory to certify a minimum level of skill? LLNJ and NJSL could take the lead on this.
3. **ELIMINATE PATRON DEBT:** A statewide initiative to encourage libraries to go fine-free. If we get a few libraries statewide to jump on board: Princeton, Paterson, Newark, a few county college libraries, some schools, too. When some libraries (and we'd like to see both larger libraries and some small ones, too) get on board, it becomes easier for others to join. If NJLA wanted to participate, could include a trustee education component and staff training via LLNJ (need buy-in from circ. supervisor and staff).
4. **Sharing and Caring Shuttle:** A hop-on hop-off shuttle, including stops like local food markets and businesses, urgent care providers, hotels, any government service/office, schools, etc. Funded by business (maybe with paid ad space, digital or print), crowdfunding, legacy gifts, clubs like Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis. Can collaborate with other transit like NJ Transit and shuttles. Library services like digital downloads can be advertised on the shuttle of course.

5. **The answer is yes!** Be positive in all you do. Avoiding the negative. Be nice, be friendly, be open. Signs around the library that say the answer is yes.
6. **Libraries Connecting You with what Matters to You!**
7. **Libraries Connecting Communities**