



LLNJ Community Workshop  
Wyckoff Public Library  
February 15, 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.**

- New administration; changing federal government; opportunity for more value and asserting ourselves; more connectivity.
- Tech opportunities.
- Open access moving forward.
- Politics are changing the use of and need of libraries.
- Accessibility of resources—electronic collections.
- Common core—gaps in haves and have nots, especially digital divide.
- New opportunities for identifying the communities' needs for libraries and new threats for libraries that are anti-library.
- More partnerships between libraries, activism, shrinking budgets create collaboration, de-emphasizing truth, arts, education, not wanting to think for your self.
- Funding! Expectation of owning electronics.
- Recognizing and using assets like volunteers.
- "Fake news" and responsible use of social media and knowledge of sources; state leadership; disaster preparedness; preparing for changing needs in library services.
- Finding new ways to get money.
- Staffing stresses.
- Unlimited data access disintermediation competing with fast-paced world, competing with convenience.
- Opportunity to do things that matter, bringing in new voices to brainstorm, what the library is in the community, try to keep it apolitical and be inclusive.
- Local politics.
- Information truth is the purvey of the library.
- Politicization of boards.
- MLS devaluation.
- Technology, media content, digital content, new roles (disaster relief center), source of recreation, community center, lifelong learning, tutoring (as activity in library), noise level—and philosophy of library service, Board leadership and different visions of what a library is, access to technology, keeping up tech infrastructure, need for up-to-date equipment, tech as supply and not specialty.
- Net neutrality issues.
- Engaging millennials.
- Shifting demographics—people moving towards the cities for jobs, we are a stretch of suburbs; 20-30 years from now we will have largest population area in a shrinking area.
- Image problem.

- Financial constraints.
- Diversity—in library expectations, users, communities, generational, cultural and linguistic diversity, need for diverse staff, need for a research-based approach to addressing diversity.
- Seeing a trend of increased advocacy, more librarians not being silent as people are paying more attention.
- Disaster planning.
- Working with homelessness and mental health issues.

**Themes and further conversation:** Accessibility, \$\$\$\$\$, technology: opportunities and hurdles... tech isn't an add-on as opposed to an essential tool, many high schoolers don't like to read on phones... they'd rather read books; digital circulation is increasing; difficult to maintain balance between different types of items; we forget that books are tech (mature) that we assimilated well... new tech is different ways to access content; the need for civic action/responsibility; our role in tech means we're involved in synthesis and creation of content; people's interest is in the use as well as the seeking... more complex than just tech support.

We are part of people being able to produce content rather than consuming it; diversity across the board; partnerships; being a coastal state: emergency response role... before major storms recently, this wasn't thought about much; being able to respond to emergencies; expanding roles for libraries in the community; expanding community needs and the library is asked to respond; English language learning is still seen as an add-on... we do not address language diversity as a core service by virtue of our actions... direct instruction and collections.

In a growing way, we're a place for communication in addition to suppliers of content. Whatever we do is in support of communication between people. Enabling conversation. This is a growing role of libraries that is aided by technology and staff is core; FINANCIAL CONCERNS—how do we fund these new things? Need to look for alternate sources of funding. Increasing problem with corps monetizing what we give away for free. What happens when people have unlimited data access? Where does this leave libraries? How do we address the rise of algorithms? How do we facilitate conversations that are diverse?

**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

- Books, humans, Storytime, history, access
- Books, librarians, strong children's services
- Physical and digital resources, personal service, shared resources/services, collaboration and cooperation
- Multi-type cooperative, the MLIS/professionalism, serving

- community, something for everyone, sense of equal space for everyone
- Customer service, partnerships, books, open access
- Sharing of materials; delivery; vibrant children's services; support of technological access/deployment etc.; community centered approach to building use; public programs; cooperative approach to providing digital content

#### ABANDON

- Tech obstacles, friction to access, bad attitudes
- Fines, isolation, buy in cost for MLS, image/perception of libraries and librarians
- Constant threat to funding, library/librarian stereotypes
- Paper reference, stereotype, poor customer service, guardian of info
- Our Image, reference collection, attitude of gatekeepers
- Shushing, punitive/restrictive image; resistance to change

#### INVENT

- Natural language catalog, intuitive interfaces, better marketing

- Drive thru window, streaming app for library services, better models for access to MLS staff
- New Image, funding sources, ways to engage the community
- Self-cleaning bathrooms, information literacy education, badass librarian advocate who can listen to other people to build a conversation about libraries
- Ways to train staff
- Methodologies for learning about users and their experience(s) (e.g., interests, needs etc.)

#### REINVENT

- Staff (skills, expertise); funding structure; governance; brand and image
- DELIVERY, staff skills, image, spaces
- Programming, collaboration, statewide library card(!), library as community space, connectivity between libraries, hiring processes (esp. academic)
- Advocacy, fundraising
- Programming
- Access, quiet space in the classic sense—subset of the library, certain staff
- Local experts in different areas

**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. **Cooperative Cooperation:** Complete the Circuit—we have all of these different cooperatives but no communication between them. Consortia, academics, and special libraries have deemphasized communications. Hybrid and standalone libraries are left out. :(
2. **We Tell Our Stories:** Gathering stories that show libraries and their staffs in a positive new light, to make available for traditional and social media. Bank of stories available to media stakeholders. Akin to what the "I Love My Librarian" contest does, which gathers stories about how librarians have changed people's lives. Professionally produced.
3. **Not Your Mama's Library:** An advocacy campaign to raise awareness and change the image of libraries.

4. **Hours for the People:** Base hours on community needs, as opposed to staff convenience. Find appropriate funding.
5. **All Aboard (Choo Choo Libraries):** Partnership and access, trains librarians, partner with community organizations, show what type of access libraries can offer. What type of things that libraries have to offer. How can libraries help local groups, businesses, train the public on what we have. Redefine, how you partner with an organization. Offering and listening to the community. Partner with local government. Advertise local groups, non-profits, religious, moved to town.
6. **Having a better than Prime Delivery - You Pick it! We Get it!:** Organizing a better satellite and centralized sorting sites, consistent delivery times and unlimited pick up capacity.