

Memo

To: Montana State Library Commission

From: Jennie Stapp, State Librarian and Tracy Cook, SLR Director

Date: December 1, 2016

Re: **Strategic Framework feedback**

The following feedback is shared for Commission review and discussion. These comments were gathered at face to face meetings and via Survey Monkey.

The comments no longer include information about the strategic directions since the new framework does not use them. It continues to include overall rankings for the barriers and the major areas of focus (now called what we will do). The language has been modified to reflect the new strategic framework.

QUANTITATIVE RANKINGS FOR VISION STATEMENTS, BARRIERS, AND STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Question: Do you see value in working towards fostering partnerships; securing sufficient and sustainable funding; and creating a useful information infrastructure?

	Yes	No
Partnerships	51	2
Funding	45	0
Infrastructure	42	2

Question: How would you rate the barriers listed: strong barrier; we can overcome; or this isn't a barrier?

	Strong	Overcome	Not a barrier
Challenging Geography	11	24	3
Non-strategic resource allocation	10	24	0
Divergent Expectations	9	23	4
Risk-Averse Library Culture	9	23	4
Limiting Political Climate	21	13	1

RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS ABOUT VALUE OF VISION STATEMENTS, BARRIERS, AND OVERALL PLAN

Question: What value do you see in working towards fostering partnerships?

- Making sure your community understands the libraries importance in the community!
- Ability to share resources & workloads on collaborative projects. Shared knowledge, experience, & expertise
- Sharing resources; reduction if overlap or duplication of efforts; added "advertising"
- Shared knowledge, building on each other's strengths, avoiding duplication.
- Collaboration between agencies and those we serve; helps reduce duplication of efforts and preserves fiscal integrity
- I think libraries having a connected partnership with other community entities is a win-win for all. It would make advocacy easier, there would be a broad understanding of the library's work in the community along with those of the partners, and also more transparency for the public and library users.
- More shared resources between libraries
- The more we share (ideas, experience, resources), the more efficiently we deliver services to our users.
- With funding cuts and inadequate staff hours, community partnerships help others to see the value of libraries and takes some of the pressure off library staff.
- Cost sharing; information sharing; improved access; resource sharing
- Partnerships assist everyone in reaching goals and reaching out to community members.
- Clear identification of user needs; strengthening of MSL's importance
- Enhanced cooperation may lead to better data sources and larger user base.
- Speaking from the perspective of the Geographic Information Program, the value of the data and GIS products we provide is dependent upon the kinds of partnerships we have with state, federal, and local agencies, as well as others who utilize geographic data.
- They allow the Library to address the needs of users.
- Combining services can help alleviate duplication of resources within state agencies
- Better able to connect patrons to resources
- Better Understanding amongst the different sectors in the community.
- ILLs, e-book and audiobook consortium, professional development, list serve to help each other with questions and ordering
- Builds community, solves problems, improves governance, greater transparency, saves money

- Leveraging limited resources. Accomplishing what our users need us to accomplish instead of guessing at what they need to accomplish.
- Connected communities can work more effectively for shared goals.
- We have lofty goals that can't be met by working in isolation
- Enables small libraries to have access to information that a small library cannot afford
- Connecting with users and non-users
- To leverage common interests and ensure a need is being met

Question: What value do you see in working towards securing sufficient and sustainable funding?

- Possibility of different programs & projects
- Ability to offer Pilot projects; keep existing programs & projects free
- Possibly find funding previously not apparent or newly available
- Staff can focus on most important projects, rather than ones that bring in funds (such as grants). I do not like the idea of securing funding through grants.
- Better able to budget plan and create stability of staff and users.
- The work we do is contingent on sufficient funding, and the sustainability of the funding allows us to provide continuity of services and data.
- Sufficient and sustainable funding is necessary to accomplish realistic goals.
- Not relying on state budgeting for funding would provide stability in planning and remove a level of uncertainty that could impede growth or program implementation
- Avoid providing a service and then having to discontinue it for lack of funds; plan for future
- Knowing what the budget will be.
- Connections/relationships with legislature to educate them about why we need sustainable funding. Tech is always changing and we will need to bridge the gaps, then keep up.
- We need sustainable funding to recruit and retain high quality staff. Our partner/patrons need to know that we will be there into the future or they won't enter into partnerships and will leave the partnership when funding declines.
- Our current funding is inadequate and too vulnerable to reduction.
- Particularly in an uncertain political climate, one cannot rely on just one or a few sources of funding
- It is possible there is funding available that is not being asked for by our libraries.
- Changing times, old funding may become smaller or deleted.
- Opportunities for external funding sources -- organizations want to give money to assist with worthy causes, but often our MT regulations doesn't allow us to accept these funds when it would otherwise be a perfect match for both the funder and recipients, a great fit for the projects.

- With new and diversified funding there is the hope of actually having funding. "New and diversified" seems pretty vague, so hopefully that idea will be fleshed out and include a more focused form of funding sources.
- I think this is important to look for, however I don't understand what resources the state library would get funding from.
- Stable funding is absolutely necessary for a library's continued existence.
- We have to, as we've already seen cuts due to decreased funding resulting from the war on coal and I suspect that will continue.
- Cost sharing
- Better accountability and transparency
- Funding sources are never stable, so diversified funding will help. The State Library also helps each library in the State, so funding helps everyone.
- a library needs funds to operate and a sustainable fund would help with the planning
- Sustainable funding is extremely important. There appears to be a reliance on other state agencies to fund and general fund dollars.
- Without secured sustained funding any medium to long term plans are at risk.
- Sustained funding is worthy, but prioritization is more worthy

Question: What value do you see in working towards creating a useful information infrastructure?

- Exchange of ideas is better
- Making sure money is well spent!
- Reduce duplication -time spent looking for Resc; coord. of services
- More users; MSL becomes THE place for information rather than another option.
- Internet and information are inherently connected to successful distribution of data and security of resources.
- Providing a useful information infrastructure is at the core of the services that libraries provide, and particularly within the context of accessing GIS and natural resource related data, products, and services.
- It is critical for ensuring all patrons have equal access to information resources.
- The infrastructure is the backbone of information delivery, the better supported the whole system is the more effectively and efficient it can be disseminated, even to the most remote locations
- Infrastructure is the bones of our operation; it must be solid and reliable for our stakeholders
- It is the essence of what a modern library must be....not just the high speed pipes, but comprehensive, reliable, and up-to-date information.
- Information is inherently valuable, but not if its infrastructure is useless. The statement from the previous question seems to imply that "high speed internet" is the definition of "useful information infrastructure". It should also include the idea that the tools for obtaining information are useful rather than difficult.
- Broadband is increasingly important to education and economic development.

- Better ability to provide patrons with access to job searching, training, and education.
- The near future will demand on this. No exceptions.
- This is already shown as being valuable with the transmission of personal health information among participating medical facilities for the safety and optimum care of Montana residents & visitors.
- I think those areas with a weak infrastructure are likely those areas of economic disadvantage and very rural with low population. It seems just as important that rural/economic disadvantaged areas have the same (or relatively the same) capabilities to inform their communities and end users with the information they desire/need.
- I think this is very important as more and more information is found digitally now rather than on the stacks.
- The internet is the way we'll be sharing data at long distances and in large clumps, for the foreseeable future. It needs to be as fast and reliable as possible.
- I would love some help from MSL, as our technology isn't up to par and our county IT Dept does not see the value in libraries having up to date technology.
- Closing the digital gap and enhancing all members of a community.
- It's the best way for libraries to keep current and remain relevant to the public
- Collated useful information in one place makes it easier to find.
- If you don't have a stable infrastructure you won't be able to deliver services or they will be very limited.
- Enable collaboration, engagement, and participation from community; need to make it easy and modern to folks can interface with it the same as they do in their personal lives (cell, mobile, as you go just in time interaction)
- The Commission along with many others should lobby for information access, but in the absence of the infrastructure the Commission needs to effectively utilize existing pathways (e.g. book mobiles, mobile facilities)

Question: What other barriers should the Commission consider?

- Internal barriers; lack of an encompassing, inclusive strategic vision that equitably values all the different programs at MSL
- Diverse educational backgrounds and values of patrons.
- Public Libraries should reflect their communities. I think people will want to pay more for their libraries if they feel connected to them.
- The greatest barrier at this point is branding to both our patrons and the governor's office and legislators with regard to thinking of libraries as books on shelves instead of the information infrastructure they need to make decisions and enrich their lives at many levels.
- This is a difficult time to be planning. A change in leadership could present real barriers.
- The public's definition of what a library is and does offer.
- Marketing the library.

- The lack of knowledge of what other agencies are doing that are similar or otherwise dovetail our efforts too. Lack of communication and awareness outside of "librarian-thinking."
- I'm sure there are other barriers, but I can't think of anything right now. I think the political climate/library culture barriers seem like plenty to tackle.
- Communities aren't fully aware of all our libraries have to offer.
- Local government
- Some staff clinging to outdated business practices
- Inertia is a barrier particularly in a thorny political climate. Change / transformation is hard and takes leadership, buy-in and focus on a long term vision
- Overcome the idea that libraries are no longer relevant in today's information society

Question: What other concerns, comments, or questions do you have about the Commission's draft strategic plan?

- It is extremely broad, but maybe that is intentional and necessary. There are not specific tasks for each program, which has caused some programs to feel left out and less important than others.
- The Geographic Information Program and the work of the GIS staff at MSL is entirely missing from this strategic plan. I realize GIS and geographic information is part of the Digital Library, but I think it's important that geographic information is called out explicitly in the mission statement, in the definition of roles, and in the plan's Practical Vision, beyond some idea of an augmented reality app. Ultimately, the work and value of the geographic information program is just not reflected or present in this Strategic Plan. Also, under "Who we are," it's unclear to me how the current statements define who we are.
- It is important for the process to be transparent and have a strong outreach component.
- How will the Commission support all Montana students through partnerships and shared resources with our schools?
- "First, kudos on the new version which is very compact, easy to digest, and provides an essential overarching direction for our agency. Our Purpose: I really get hung up on the last word, "lives" for two reasons. First, I think the purpose statement needs to indicate that MSL strives to serve the needs of "individuals of all ages and abilities". Second, you can have thriving organizations and communities, but "thriving individuals" makes a lot more sense than "thriving lives". I would suggest replacing "lives" with "individuals of all ages and abilities". Who We Are: In its current form the last sentence only means something to us and it only focuses on the negative. It needs to be more explicit for ready interpretation by everyone...something like "We strive to promote a modern view of libraries as providing a holistic digital information infrastructure that is essential to our economy and our communities." Page 3 under Internal:

marketing is missing "et" Page 4 under External: copyright is one word Internal Review Only Section 1. Still find doubling the budget or going to 60.1 million to be of no use for a practical vision. A number of people have indicated they agree with me on this. Seems more practical to focus on recruiting and retaining staff to meet the needs of a modern library than to throw out pie in the sky dollars. 2. Would add "Governor's Office and" to the "Legislators are unaware about why & how MSL should be funded" box under the Limiting political climate section."

- Nice work!
- I feel there is not enough representation from all types libraries and other industries.
- I think it's an excellent start and look forward to what the Commission decides.
- Keep it focused and attainable. Challenge is good, but we want to be able to achieve stated goals in a manner that show value, viability, and future growth and orientation.
- Thank you to all who worked on this plan. Thank you for leading by example.
- There didn't appear to be a whole lot of tangible "action items". There also appeared to be a large importance placed on "story telling". That needs some context or it may not be viewed in the light MSL hopes.
- I did not get a good sense of the vision -- what does the library of 2021 look like and how citizens will identify with it?