

Chippewa River District Library
Strategic Plan
2020-2024

Chippewa River District Library Strategic Plan 2020-2024

Adopted by the Chippewa River District Library
Board of Trustees
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- The community leaders who agreed to be interviewed for this process, as well as the community members who attended Community Conversations and shared their aspirations for the community.

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Executive Summary

In order to guide this effort, the Board elected to work with consultants at the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services of Lansing, MI to facilitate a strategic planning process that would help to align library services with the aspirations and needs of the community. Based on the work of The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, community members were asked, “What kind of community do you want?” and “How can the library help?”

The Strategic Planning Committee recommended that the Library Board adopt five strategic areas of focus for the period 2020-2024. The key focus areas are:

Remove barriers

All community members will have seamless access to library services.

Expand non-traditional collections

Community members will have increased access to a growing array of information, physical objects, and resources.

Increase visibility in the community

More of the community, traditional library users and underserved demographics, will be reached and positively impacted by the library district’s presence, through marketing and outreach.

Collaborate with the community

Community members will have increased access to information and resources through coordination and partnering with other community entities.

Improve buildings and spaces

There will be welcoming, flexible spaces for all as the library district’s facilities continually evolve to meet the changing needs of the community.

Overview of the Planning Process

1. The Library Board approved working with consultants from the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services (MCLS) to facilitate the creation of a new strategic plan that would be based on community needs. MCLS, based in Lansing, MI, is a non-profit, member-driven organization whose mission is to facilitate sharing resources and to collaborate with other organizations to benefit Michigan and Indiana libraries. MCLS utilizes a planning process based on The Harwood Institute for Public Innovation's "Turning Outward" approach. "Turning Outward" is a process that entails taking steps to better understand communities; changing processes and thinking to make conversations more community-focused; being proactive to community issues; and putting community aspirations first.
2. A 14-person Strategic Planning Committee was assembled, which included representatives from the Library Board, the Library staff, and the Friends of the Library.
3. At an initial meeting with the consultants, the Strategic Planning Committee brainstormed a list of community leaders to interview, as well as a strategy to invite community members to participate in Community Conversations. The participants needed to represent as many groups and stakeholders in the Chippewa River District Library service area as possible.
4. Strategic Planning Committee members were each assigned community leaders to interview. The interview was based on The Harwood Institute's "Ask" exercise, which entailed asking five simple questions to get a sense of people's aspirations for the community and how the Library might help the community to achieve those aspirations. Forty community leaders participated in the interviews.
5. MCLS consultant David Votta conducted five Community Conversations with a total of 41 community members participating. These conversations were 90-120 minutes long and were about what they wanted their community to be, what challenges they face in realizing these aspirations, and how the Library might help.
6. MCLS consultants compiled the information from the community leader interviews and the Community Conversations to identify themes. This information was used to create a "Public Knowledge Summary" to present the information that was gathered.
7. In addition to the "public knowledge," MCLS consultants created a survey concerning library services and aspirations for the Library. Between April 17 and May 10, 2019, 770 members of the community responded to the survey.
8. The Strategic Planning Committee met on June 6 to review the public knowledge summary and survey results. This was followed by the group participating in a SOAR

analysis of the Library, identifying strengths, opportunities, aspirations, and results. The strengths provided the basis for the development of the Library's core values. Aspirations became the basis of the Library's Vision Statement, and opportunities resulted in the identification of three key strategic focus areas.

9. On June 18, MCLS consultants returned to the Chippewa River District Library to work with the Library's leadership team on the creation of a tactical plan to address the key strategic priorities that were identified by the Strategic Planning Committee. The group answered the questions for each priority: "What will the patron experience?"; "How will the community benefit?"; "What activities might occur?"; "What will success look like?"; "What organizational issues will need to be addressed including facilities, technology, policies, staffing, etc.?" This work created the basis for the development of goals, objectives, organizational competencies, and strategies that make up the five-year Strategic Plan.
10. MCLS consultants returned to the Library on July 11, 2019 to meet with the full staff of the Chippewa River District Library to identify current activities that support the new strategic goals, as well as to brainstorm new initiatives.

Chippewa River District Library

Strategic Plan 2020-2024

VISION

To provide evolving services to educate, inform and entertain a diverse community in a welcoming, flexible space.

CORE VALUES

At the Chippewa River District Library:

Our staff are our most important resource. They are friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable. Our collections are the foundation of our services. They are diverse, accessible, and meet the needs of the community.

Our community is at the heart of everything we do.

COMMUNITY ASPIRATIONS

Collaborative, Welcoming, Informed, Vibrant, Safe

KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2020-2024

Remove barriers

All community members will have seamless access to library services.

Expand non-traditional collections

Community members will have increased access to a growing array of information, physical objects, and resources.

Increase visibility in the community

More of the community, traditional library users and underserved demographic groups, will be reached and positively impacted by the library district's presence, through marketing and outreach.

Collaborate with the community

Community members will have increased access to information and resources through coordination and partnering with other community entities.

Improve buildings and spaces

There will be welcoming, flexible spaces for all as the library district's facilities continually evolve to meet the changing needs of the community.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES

KEY PRIORITY 1:

Remove barriers

Goal 1: Community members will be able to access library services and materials freely, easily, and conveniently in an environment that is welcoming to all.

Objectives:

- ⇒ Circulation of materials will meet a specific target
- ⇒ People will be able to access the materials and services they needed easily and conveniently

Potential strategies:

- Increase the convenience of picking up and returning library materials by developing services such as drive-up material drops for books and AV, drive-through pick-up windows, or after-hours locker pick-up for holds.
- Evaluate facilities, signage, and service desks for ADA accessibility and make improvements to restrooms and entrances for compliance and best practices.
- Expand access to library services among groups that might otherwise struggle to return materials or make payments, such as low-income families, people with disabilities, or the elderly, by investigating eliminating overdue fines and providing free printing.
- Develop an Introduction to the Library class and record it for all new patrons to make them aware of the services and resources available to them.
- Investigate ways to increase and improve parking.
- Create a welcoming atmosphere for people of all cultures by adding multilingual collections and signage.

Goal 2: Community members with special needs will experience programs that meet their needs.

Objectives:

- ⇒ A specified number of programs designed for special populations or special needs will be held each year
- ⇒ People with special needs who attend programs at the library designed for them will say that the program met their needs

Potential strategies:

- Create an autism-friendly environment by offering more sensory-friendly programs and creating a sensory space in the children's area.
- Assist the un-employed and under-employed by providing free resume/job materials and classes.
- Provide inclusive programs and services to the hearing impaired by providing translators and ASL training.
- Assist those who seek to improve their education, including non-traditional students, by offering services such as a long-distance learning lab and test proctoring services.

Goal 3: Community members will experience user-friendly technology and equipment.

Objectives:

- ⇒ People will be able to use the Library's technology and equipment with ease
- ⇒ People will be able to access technology and equipment at the Library that meets their needs

Potential strategies:

- Enhance the experience of mobile device users by enabling mobile device printing and increasing the number of Wi-fi multipliers to reduce dead zones.
- Provide accessible computers, technology, and devices, such as TDD, and magnifiers.
- Offer users a non-threatening method of providing feedback to the Library by developing an easy-to-use online form.
- Provide a color copier/scanner with feeder.

KEY PRIORITY 2:

Expand non-traditional collections

Goal 1: By having access to curated, non-traditional collections of information and physical objects, community members will be empowered to learn and apply new skills.

Objectives:

- ⇒ Circulation of physical objects will meet a specific target
- ⇒ People will learn a new skill or hobby
- ⇒ Circulation of non-print resources will meet a specific target

Potential strategies:

- Provide people with the opportunity to borrow and use a variety of items by continuing to expand a “Library of Things” to include such things as craft items (such as glue guns, punches, various scissors, heat tools, crickets, etc.), tools, Enchroma glasses, etc. and build these collections at the branches as well.
- Assist Library patrons to be more productive by developing a supplies store for patrons to purchase items such as envelopes, paper clips, etc. and to borrow charger cords or use charging stations.
- Improve resources for patrons with low vision by providing braille materials/signage and electronics, as well as large print for youth.
- Facilitate an appreciation and awareness of local history by providing oral or video history collections, such as veterans or CMU.
- Facilitate learning new languages by providing literacy kits.

Goal 2: By having access to curated, non-traditional collections of information and physical objects, community members will experience and enjoy recreation and leisure time.

Objectives:

- ⇒ Circulation of physical objects will meet a specific target
- ⇒ People will learn a new skill or hobby
- ⇒ Circulation of non-print resources will meet a specific target

Potential strategies:

- Provide people with experiences by developing a circulating collection of passes (i.e.: museums, fitness, other experiences.)
- Provide people with the opportunity to borrow and use a variety of items by continuing to expand a “Library of Things” to include such things as board games, fishing and sports equipment, bikes, Go Pros, artwork, camping gear, toys, etc. and build these collections at the branches as well.
- Expose people to new forms of music by providing an album or CD exchange, or creating a local music section.
- Expose people to local authors by creating a local author collection.
- Help people explore new hobbies and activities by expanding the development of kits for loan, such as baking kits, backpack kits.
- Expand online offerings of audio and eBooks.
- Expand multi-media offerings.

KEY PRIORITY 3:

Increase visibility in the community

Goal 1: Through strategic marketing activities, community members will be aware of the multitude of library services available to them.

Objectives:

- ⇒ People will be more aware of the services the Library offers
- ⇒ Social media interactions will increase
- ⇒ People will say the Library is an essential community resource

Potential strategies:

- Make newcomers aware of the Library's services by developing welcome packets/bags for various audiences, such as new parents/babies, realtors, etc. and by providing information about the Library in CMU and Mid-Michigan student orientation packets.
- Develop consistent signage across the entire Library district for greater brand awareness
- Increase visibility of Library presence at community events by providing staff with CRDL branded clothing to wear.
- Create greater reach by developing more engaging social media.
- Expand distribution of current publications such as the Library magazine by distributing them at COA, pediatrician offices, schools, etc.

Goal 2: Through outreach efforts, community members will experience the Library's presence and services throughout the community, at various locations and events.

Objectives:

- ⇒ Each year the Library will participate in a specific number of community events
- ⇒ People will say the Library is an essential community resource
- ⇒ People will be more aware of the services the Library offers

Potential strategies:

- Actively and visibly participate in various community festivals and events, such as Beer Fest, Maple Syrup, Christmas, Farmer's Market, etc.
- Create a permanent visible installation in the community such as a story walk.
- Reach youth in the community through holding meet-up, eat-up events, visiting schools, and attending various youth events, such as Zoo at the Park and Thrilling Thursday.
- Display community leadership through staff involvement in service groups and community volunteering opportunities, such as rotating dinners.

- Be “seen on the street” delivering materials through a book bike program, or food truck/bookmobile.

KEY PRIORITY 4:

Collaborate with the community

Goal 1: By developing partnerships with community organizations, community members will have greater access to a more diverse array of programming, services, and expertise on-site at Library locations.

Objectives:

- ⇒ More of the programs the Library offers will be developed in partnership with community organizations
- ⇒ Program attendance will meet a specific goal
- ⇒ People will be more engaged with the community

Potential strategies:

- Expand collaborative opportunities by identifying key strategic groups that the Library does not currently partner with and investigate new partnership opportunities.
- Enable community groups and organizations to provide programs and services on-site at the Library by providing consistent space for them to meet, such as providing space for Mid-Michigan or CMU classes to be held at the Library.
- Offer expertise on a variety of issues by developing new programs and services in collaboration with other organizations such as Michigan Works for resume assistance, MSU Extension, or the Garden Club to create a seed library.
- Provide more exposure to the arts by partnering with various artists and arts groups to develop rotating art collections in the library.
- Work with all schools in the Library district to encourage use of the Library (Inviting all first grade classes to the library for a tour and orientation).

Goal 2: Community members will be more aware of and more connected to the resources available to them in the greater community, beyond the Library.

Objectives:

- ⇒ Local agencies will consider the Library an important partner in increasing awareness of issues and resources
- ⇒ People will say that the Library helped them to be more informed of community events and services

Potential strategies:

- Help create awareness of what is happening in the community by advertising community events and groups in Library publications or spaces, or by providing links to existing community calendars or hosting a community calendar.
- Improve awareness of social resources and supports that are available to people in need by partnering with social services agencies.
- Assist local business in informing the community of their services by sponsoring programs that allow them to feature what they provide, such as a funeral home, or local pottery place.
- Be a resource for community needs by partnering with the Red Cross to expand access to blood drives, CPR courses, flu shots, disaster relief, and regular physicals.
- Assist local non-profits with their missions by sponsoring awareness sessions, such as a HATS adoption day at the Library.

KEY PRIORITY 5:

Improve buildings and spaces

Goal 1: Library buildings will be accessible, safe, attractive, and comfortable for all community members.

Objectives:

⇒ People will say that the Library facilities meet or exceed their expectations

Potential strategies:

- Create a comfortable interior atmosphere for patrons by assessing and replacing furniture, improving bathrooms, installing Vitamin D lights, creating private space for nursing mothers, improving study room privacy, providing access to a kitchenette, and investigating noise-reducing tools, such as white noise machines.
- Make the Annex a more user-friendly space by making infrastructure improvements, such as roof repairs, updated electricity and HVAC, new door locks, etc. or investigate addition of two-story building to replace Annex.
- Create more comfortable working conditions for staff by providing dedicated space for the work of the Pages, improving staff areas and offices, and increasing storage space.
- Enhance “curb appeal” and enhance the exteriors by providing covered seating outside, covered bike racks, umbrellas over outdoor tables, working with Garden Club, and providing horse hitchers for the branches.
- Exhibit environmental responsibility and serve as a model for other community organizations by developing green initiatives.

Goal 2: The Library buildings will serve as hubs for the community for engagement, learning, and experiences.

Objectives:

- ⇒ People will say that they had a pleasant experience at the Library
- ⇒ People will engage with others at the Library

Potential strategies:

- Facilitate engagement by creating a café or café environment, which might include a dedicated Friends' book sale space, or access for patrons to a kitchenette.
- Use outdoor space to enhance engagement, learning, and experiences by providing playground equipment or developing a food plot or community garden.
- Enhance learning and experiences by providing Smart Boards in study rooms and meeting spaces.

Organizational Competencies

Staffing/Organizational Structure

- Evaluate current staffing priorities, responsibilities, and roles, and revise as needed to meet new strategic priorities
- Develop/investigate training and certifications regarding new spaces and services (Café, valet service, Bookmobile)
- Develop a staff training plan to include:
 - Procedures for Library of Things, such as how to use new non-traditional collection items, how to clean/replenish/thoroughly check-in new non-traditional collection items/kits
 - Procedures for use of any new services/makerspace tools, etc.
 - Develop training for sensory-friendly programming
 - Evaluate current services/norms at all locations, then develop appropriate training at branches to provide consistent service across the district
- Develop cataloging standards for new non-traditional collection items
- Evaluate need for additional staffing to meet goals (services/programs which come from new service priorities and outreach/marketing duties.)
- Develop a data collection plan to review and meet strategic priorities

Finance/Funding

- Investigate/evaluate the impact of a fine-free Library
- Investigate outside funding for non-traditional collections and makerspace tools – possible grants/donations
- Investigate outside funding for Bookmobile
 - If the Bookmobile project proceeds – allocate funding for ongoing maintenance
- Investigate the financial impact of adding travel time for new duties outside the Library
- Investigate funding for new programs which come from service priorities
- Investigate potential fundraising campaign to make facility changes
- Allocate funding for promotional/give away items and identifying clothing
- Allocate funding for “Welcome bags”
- Allocate funding for staff training
- Allocate funding for potential increased hours
- Allocate funds for increased advertising
- Investigate an equitable way for everyone to use the Library without some feeling more financially burdened than others
- Evaluate budgeting process to align/comply with strategic priorities and goals

Policies

- Revise policy for meeting rooms
- Revise fines policy
- Develop criteria/policies for partnerships
- Refine policy for circulating non-traditional collections
- Develop policy for community calendar duties if implemented
- Develop policies for makerspace, Bookmobile, and valet parking
- Develop policy for outreach/marketing – Who/what goes where, when?
- Investigate liability for issues concerning the non-traditional collections (power tools, etc.)

Facilities

- Conduct a space study encompassing all branches
- Investigate infrastructure need for a makerspace and flexible programming space
- Investigate/assess space for makerspace
- Investigate/assess space for non-traditional collection storage
- Investigate location of updated book drops and feasibility of valet service
- Evaluate doors/bathrooms, spaces at all locations to ensure accessibility
- Evaluate/identify a facilities assessment that would align with the new strategic plan
- Conduct an ADA self-assessment of all facilities

Technology

- Investigate an expanded media cart/providing that service at branches – for staff and community members
- Investigate software/hardware options/needs for a community calendar
- Identify tech needs for a makerspace, café, bookmobile
- Evaluate needs for hotspots, laptops, scanners and other tech for outreach activities
- Revise/modify cataloging process to incorporate needs for non-traditional collections

Collections

- Investigate best practices for non-traditional collection development and policies – including Library of Things, rotating art collection, EnChroma glasses
- Investigate best practices for Bookmobile collections
- Evaluate collection development – If no short-term space allocation for new collections - weed collection to make space for new items

Operational Efficiencies

- Assess current activities and processes against new strategic goals

Summary of Community Conversations and Interviews

The library used a combination of both community conversations and one-on-one interviews with a wide variety of community residents and community leaders. The conversations and interviews were based on the Harwood Institute model of community engagement, which seeks to “Turn Outward” to the community to determine their aspirations, and in turn, prioritize services that are in alignment with the true needs of the community.

Five community conversations were held between April 29 and May 11, 2019. The conversations took place at the Veterans Memorial Library and the Isabella County Commission on Aging. The conversations were facilitated by David Votta and Pamela Seabolt of the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services. These were opportunities for residents to discuss their aspirations for the community, the concerns they have about reaching those aspirations, and to identify areas where the library might help. Forty-one community members participated in the 90-minute conversations. Additionally, the members of the library’s strategic planning committee conducted one-on-one interviews with various community leaders, seeking similar information to the community conversations. Forty community leaders were interviewed.

The notes from the conversations and interviews have been summarized in a blended Community Narrative and Public Knowledge Summary. The community aspirations and community concerns have also been organized in word cloud illustrations with words that community members used to describe their aspirations and concerns. Additionally, information on how the conversation participants and interviewees believe the library can help the community to reach its aspirations are organized, themed, and aligned with specific aspirations or concerns that they might address.

Community Narrative

Community members openly shared their aspirations and concerns. The following is a narrative of the information, summarized in a blended form of the Harwood Institute models of the “Community Narrative” and “Public Knowledge Summary”.

Chippewa River District Library Community Narrative/Public Knowledge Summary

The Chippewa River District Library community aspires to be welcoming and collaborative with equitable partnerships between agencies; where people of all backgrounds, regardless of race, religion, socio-economic status, or age work together to build an inclusive, diverse, safe and accessible community. The community wants to be vibrant, positive, imaginative, curious, well-informed, connected, one that supports education and recreation throughout a person’s life-time, and a place where families have the support, career and housing options, and pride in the community that will make them want to stay, build, and grow their families.

Collaborative – In every conversation, and in most interviews, the concept of a collaborative community, where people from diverse backgrounds work together for the common good, came forward. The Maple Syrup Festival in Shepherd was mentioned as a shining example of how this could manifest. “Everyone is on their best behavior, having fun and working together. This festival brings the community together.” However, some mentioned the community has “lanes” or silos, and that most people stay in “theirs”, not really interacting with others who do not look like or live like them. These silos were referenced as both socio-economic, and cultural. On an organizational/agency level it was suggested that communication between groups might not be completely honest, that possibly the apparent goodwill “is a little shaky and no one wants to rock the boat or ruin the relationship”; that competition between groups/agencies keeps them from working as effectively together as they could. The concept of Town versus Gown, repeatedly arose, and it was referenced that if there was greater integration of CMU with the broader community both sides would benefit.

Residents talked about serving the underserved, and how there is above average poverty in the community. They also talked about that there are solid agencies in town who provide services. However, those services are not uniformly coordinated, and if the services were brought together through one access point, readily available to everyone, this collaborative effort would begin to make traction on the concerns around poverty, education, community health, and more.

Welcoming, Inclusive, Diverse, Equitable, Accessible – Discourse around diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility were referenced many ways in the conversations and interviews. They were all framed around a desire for everyone to feel welcome, that they felt a real part of the community, and often that everyone had a hand in building the community, services, and programs. It was mentioned that if people from different, sometimes marginalized groups and demographics, were included in designing and building the community, they/everyone would have greater engagement, ownership, and pride in the community initiatives and projects. Further, some suggested that as well intentioned as programs and services are in the community, without direct design input from those who require the services they will never be fully assessible or utilized. There specifically was a desire mentioned that the homeless population not be marginalized and that they be welcomed as part of the community.

Access manifested as a topic in both broad conceptual themes and specific, tangible realities of community members. There was considerable and emotionally weighted conversation around who has access to the library. The county-wide millage not passing, and subsequent need for non-service area residents to contribute for access is still fresh on resident's minds.

The diversity conversations ranged from race, religion, socio-economic status, cultural background, education level, and frequently around age. Without knowledge that others brought it forward, many suggested a need to bring people of different age groups together, for face-to-face interaction, programs and projects. There were conversations about how elders

could mentor the young, and how younger residents could help those mentors in an array of ways. It was suggested intentional programming and/or events which would provide face-to-face interaction on a secular level between different religions would be an opportunity for the groups to learn about one another, and foster kinship by a creating the space for them to get to know one another as individuals.

Some said that the greater community would be stronger, richer, more vibrant, and more interesting if there were more diverse voices participating. They said that by including different voices, there likely would be more innovation, and that not only would the minority and marginalized groups benefit, but that the majority demographic would lead more dynamic and informed lives. It was suggested that by bringing people together, allowing them to know one another more personally, it would create a feeling of “interconnectedness”, which “is good for people, simply in terms of feeling at home in a place”.

Informed – Several times the loss of the local newspaper in Shepherd arose as a concern. People missed having access to timely information about what was going on in the community. Related, there was an uncertainty referenced in the greater community as to what is happening programming wise; what events, services, or issues residents should be aware of. Even on a neighborhood by neighborhood level, community members pined to know what was happening with those immediately around them, on campus, and with the tribe. The concept of Town versus Gown rose up within these conversations, people expressed they felt students had little idea what was happening in the community, and that if the students were better informed, they would be more engaged, resulting in a more dynamic downtown. Additionally, residents expressed they did not know all that was happening on campus, and that there were likely little known cultural and educational resources and events that would benefit the greater community.

Vibrant, Positive, Imaginative, Curious – The current process of developing the community master plan was referenced several times. This was universally acknowledged as a good thing. It

was also uniformly connected to residents expressing a desire for more dynamic elements to be included. Connected to the conversations around diversity and bringing in other voices; in different manifestations the idea that the community in general and the plan in development “seems like the same old, same old” surfaced. In different conversations and interviews residents talked about being curious for new, vibrant, and positive ways the community could be reimaged. A concern expressed was a lack of creativity, and that by creating new connections there might be a spark of innovation, which could create new pathways to success, socially, financially, and otherwise.

Safe – In both conversations and interviews residents expressed concerns around safety. There was not an overwhelming sense of dread at all. However, they shared that there are both property and violent crimes in the community which have caused some alarm. Connected to the conversations around being well informed, community members expressed that because of the lack of local information, there is a heightened focus on safety. They said they feel like they didn’t know what was going on, and the unknown triggered anxiety.

A specific safety concern was connected to the aspiration of good recreational opportunities in the community. Residents communicated a desire for a walkable and bikeable community. While some said in the neighborhoods it is both walkable and bikeable, there was a desire brought up on more than one occasion for more formal bike lanes, especially on busy roads, and for accommodations for pedestrians to be throughout the community.

Family-Supportive – A family-supportive environment manifested as a conversation and interview topic several different ways. In multiple community conversations and interviews the concern of affordable housing emerged. Some spoke about derelict landlords, and the shrinking middle class. Residents said there are diminishing starter house options locally, and rentals are predominantly geared for students. It was stated that students living off campus are in lower income neighborhoods, and that they, coupled with derelict landlords contribute to an

environment which is not conducive to raising children. It was stated that these areas are blighted, and young families would not want to invest in purchasing a home there.

Another area of concern was career options. People talked about limited professional career opportunities in the community, that most of the jobs are service industry and would not be enough to raise a family. There was significant conversation around the need to develop skilled trade workers locally, that there are jobs which are not being filled because there are not enough locals with the expertise or experience.

Retention of those residents who are native to the area, and retention of some CMU graduates was additionally noted as an important factor specifically. It was suggested that this process of retention and/or loss of young families, and young single professionals, is cyclical. When “they” do not see themselves, they look elsewhere, to places where they see other young families, or other young professionals, they also look where there are greater career opportunities to start their adult lives, and they move there.

Educated – The topic of education cropped up in four distinct themes across the conversations and interviews. Many references were related to greater support for the formal education of school age children. There was talk about how strapped schools and teachers are for resources, and how other entities and individuals in the community could and should support them in various ways. Secondly there was conversation around the need to better illustrate the importance of trade skills, and the education supporting and developing those. Those discussions centered on developing a viable workforce and community building in general. There was agreement that the community could do a better job prioritizing those skills. Thirdly, there were references to a desire for lifelong learning opportunities; adulting classes, learning technology skills like photoshop, bee keeping, and art classes. Connecting all these themes was discourse around the community valuing education in all its forms.

Active – Recreation & Leisure – In all the conversations and many of the interviews there was at least a mention of a desire for opportunities for recreation and leisure activities in the community. Many talked about the need for green, open spaces, neighborhoods where children have places to play safely, a walkable and bikeable community. Others mentioned a community which provides “an interchange around cultural things”. Related to the aspiration of Education, many talked about wanting hands-on opportunities to learn, but to do that through an activity, creating art, or old window repair workshops.

Connected – Throughout the engagement process there were direct references to the palpable need for face-to-face interaction among community members, especially between those of different groups, age, race, socio-economic status, etc. Residents wanted a neutral space that should be used for a variety of purposes and served multiple demographics. By interacting face-to-face, learning about one another as individuals, and successfully working on projects together, even small ones; there was agreement this would be a decisive first step towards actualizing many of the other community aspirations.

CRDL Strengths and Aspirations 6-8-2019

Strengths

- Staff knowledgeable, resourceful, up to date
- Friendly, knowledgeable and adaptable staff
- Friendly and helpful staff
- Helpful
- Adaptive
- Individualized customer service – special interactions with customers
- Service to patrons – everyone leaves with what they came for
- Ability to help people from all walks of life for free
- One-on-one interactions with patrons
- Passion
- Staff welcoming
- Staff dedicated to the community
- Community support
- Everyone loves the library
- Positive relationships with the community
- Well known – appreciated
- Services energy
- Interesting programs
- Access to electronic resources
- Depth of collections
- Patron focused collections
- Variety of collections
- Provide the will of individuals involved in library operations
- Build early learners
- Access to world-class databases such as ancestry

Aspirations

(**Bolded with an Asterix*** are the high-level aspirations derived from Affinity Mapping)

- **Evolving services***
- **Community-focused***
- **Accessible to a diverse community***
- **Educating, informing and entertaining***
- **Welcoming and flexible space***
- Move forward and build on what we are already doing
- Evolving with community

- Traditional and futuristic learning opportunities
- Stay relevant
- Busy – everyone uses the library for something
- More collaboration
- Place community comes to interact and learn
- Center of the community
- Community leader and engaged in the community
- To be the place/resource people think of/refer to/consult when they have an information or entertainment need
- Accessible, diverse hug of knowledge and community
- Place where all feel welcome and where there is something for everyone
- Supportive of the community
- Programming that is varied and beneficial
- Place for informational and recreational needs
- Place for people to learn, explore and discover knowledge and leisure activities
- Keeping community informed and entertained
- Beautiful facilities
- Flexible space
- Modern, comfortable spaces
- Welcoming space
- Community space – encourage clubs and hands-on opportunities