

This workshop summary was written by Nicole Swerhun, Workshop Facilitator, and was subject to the review of participants at the workshop. No suggested edits were received. If you have any questions or comments on this summary, please contact Nicole (nicole@swerhun.com or 416-999-2665) or Maggie McFalls, Community Engagement Coordinator, Office of External and Government Relations, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (feedback@carnegielibrary.org or 412-622-8877). As discussed at the workshop, summaries from all 4 public workshops held during Part 1 of the Community Conversation, as well as website feedback, will be posted on the Library website.

I. WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

Terri Wolfe, Library Board member, welcomed participants and thanked them for coming. Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator, reviewed the proposed agenda (Attachment 1), and asked all participants to introduce themselves (over 28 people attended, see Attachment 2). Mary Frances Cooper, Deputy Director of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh then delivered a presentation that briefed participants on “where we were”, “where we are”, and “where we’re going”. The presentation is available online at <http://www.clpgh.org/about/future/conversation.htm>. Participants had an opportunity to ask questions of clarification, before moving into a working session that sought feedback on the following questions:

1. Why do you think it is important that the Library is financially and operationally healthy?
2. What do you think are the two biggest challenges to achieving this? What are your suggestions on how to address these challenges?
3. What are the two or three things you value the MOST about Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh?
4. What opportunities do you see for library users and the broader community to play in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the library?

The working session took place both through small table discussions as well as a full room (plenary) discussion. This draft workshop report is intended to reflect the key messages delivered, and is not a verbatim transcript. It includes both the verbal and written feedback received at the workshop.

II. FEEDBACK RECEIVED

Note that because the workshop started approximately 20 minutes late (during this time several participants arrived), discussion went immediately to Discussion Question 2, focusing on the challenges to achieving a healthy Library, and suggestions to address those challenges. For a sense of why participants felt that it is important that the Library be financially and operationally healthy, please see responses to Question 3. Also one participant submitted their worksheet which said that financial and operational health is important because “the Library is a universal resource.”

2. What do you think are the two biggest challenges to achieving a Library system that is financially and operationally healthy? What are your suggestions on how to address these challenges?

Participants worked first in small groups to identify challenges, and also discussed suggestions on how to address those challenges. A number of common themes emerged, as listed below.

CHALLENGE	SUGGESTIONS
<p>Funding limitations due to the state budget & issues with population decline (in relation to RAD sales tax) and the recession impacts on revenue from the state and local government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for more community organizing in general, not just when branches on doorstep of closing (door knocking). • Seek more corporate donations & hold annual fundraisers. • Look for opportunities for space sharing. For example, where a branch is really on the doorstep of closing, instead of leaving the neighborhood, the Library could partner with a local non-profit (for example) and share underutilized space. • Explore joint ventures and partnerships with community. For example with the Port Authority, the Library could have exclusive deal where bus passes are available in Libraries, or at Library kiosks. That would bring people into the library. The Post Office could be a potential partner too. Another idea was partnering with a candy company – kids can buy reading candy where all proceeds go to library. • Consider earning income in other ways, for example selling coffee, setting up cafes, offering low cost daycare centered around community service (meeting the needs of single moms). Consider a Farmer’s market outside the library. • Consider holding a referendum (like in Ohio). Campaign signs in Ohio read “Vote for the Library Bond”. Though that’s new concept for people here. That being said, it’s an interesting idea – that aspect of local funding. The winds of state level government are so powerful and can be so crushing. We may have more control locally. As one person said “Anytime you talk new taxes, it can be challenging.” That being said, another participant noted that “Gathering signatures to petition against libraries closing last fall was easiest job I’ve ever done. Perhaps minds can be changed.” • Expand volunteer services. • Earning revenue from books. There are a lot of books that are very valuable, maybe we could give those out on loan to museums, or sell some and keep a digital copy.
<p>Limited communication and awareness of the Library’s services to the community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connect to people who don’t use the Library. The library needs to stay connected to the communities it serves to understand how those communities are changing and how services can evolve to meet those changing needs. “Everyone here knows what the Library’s services are. Go across the street though and they may not know. Community is dynamic and changing. We need to get people who are not here to design events and activities in the library. We need to think about how we can get people who DON’T use the library now.” • Promote the libraries. When the City of Pittsburgh promotes the

City and the County, maybe they could put our wonderful Library system on the list of good things about the area (just like our sports teams). Also connect with realtors who can use libraries to attract people to Pittsburgh. For example, when selling townhomes packets are often shared with prospective buyers that list all services available in community – the Library could make these available to realtors.

- **Have community leaders (private sector included) talk about their use of the Library and their commitment to reading,** and communicate that widely. This will help get more information out about the library.
- **Expand the Library’s community outreach program** with things like bumper stickers, flyers, Let Library Live, I’m for Literacy, etc.

Digital era – what is the future of libraries?

- **This Library has a large amazing space as part of the bricks and mortar system, but in the future there’s a possibility we’ll have bricks less and less, more and more online.**
- **Think about opportunities to co-locate** some library buildings in community centers. For example the Polish Hall has a recreation center with pottery in the basement, a gym, and a kids story group. The Library could connect to any kind of facility (e.g. city-owned, run by a community group) to co-locate.
- **Make Carnegie library a future national digital library.** Partner with Google, have them work alongside us, and maybe even involve the National Library of Congress as an intermediary in helping us set this up.

Getting more people, including government officials, to accept the fact that libraries are necessary, and building a broader understanding of how important libraries are to the health of the community and the people that live here

- **Recognize that the Library is a universal resource.**
- **Recognize what will happen as the School District cuts back on libraries and librarians in schools.** If the school district won’t supply the service the kids will come to us. We’ll assume even more responsibility if school eliminates that service.
- **Recognize the support the library provides to clients of other service providers.** For example, with so many government services reducing or eliminating series (at the federal, state and local levels), people dependent on these services now come to the library for help. They use the computer at the library, depend on the librarians for help, etc. The same is true with the private sector. People come in to apply for jobs online, to get copy paystub online (because companies no longer provide hard copies of paystubs), and in connection with their medical services. There are doctors directing people to the library website to get info on their upcoming operations.
- **Recognize that “Librarians can answer questions on almost any topic that comes across our desk. They definitely get their money’s worth when they come to the library.”**

3. What are the two or three things you value most about the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh?

Participants indicated that they most value:

Resources

- Books on CD
- Network of library catalogue online & ability to show up at branch library that has available book
- Combination of online databases for research & Reference librarian accessible in person

Space

- Writers appreciate quiet space away from home
- Safe haven for children after school

Services

- Inter-library loans are wonderful
- Children's library
- Internet

4. What opportunities do you see for library users and the broader community to play in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the library?

Participants saw opportunities for library users and the broader community to contribute to the long-term sustainability of the library in a number of ways, including:

- Donating their discretionary spending (e.g. what people spend on Netflix, magazine subscriptions, etc.) to the library
- Volunteering
- Learning why other cities raise more per capita (e.g. Cleveland) and shape pitches to elected officials based on those learnings
- Keeping up with new technology such as the ability to download books/literature to handheld devices
- Community organizing/activism to keep increasing awareness of library's needs
- Fundraising (e.g. holding an annual even), getting corporate donations
- Fostering "Friends groups"

Other advice - Outreach

At the end of the meeting participants shared a number of suggestions on how to reach a broader audience for the Community Conversation. Ideas included:

- Creating a Facebook group called "Save our Pittsburgh Library";
- Outreaching through other non-profit networks that already have an audience;
- Connecting with non-profits and business groups that use the libraries' online resources, research databases, etc. (those are the constituencies that will suffer if the library resources go away, so we should get community organizing support from them);

- Hold meetings both on a weekday evening (about half the room supported this), and on the weekends (the other half of the room supported this);
- Connect with existing listservs; and
- Offer food and advertise that the meetings will include food.

III. NEXT STEPS

Nicole Swerhun, Workshop Facilitator, wrapped up the meeting by asking participants to please submit any written comments – either today or online until the end of May. She let participants know that the draft workshop report would be distributed to them for review prior to being finalized, and that the final reports from all of the workshops will be available on the Library website. She also encouraged everyone to continue to participate in the Community Conversation process – and hoped to see them during Part 2 in July 2010.

ATTACHMENT 1 – Workshop Agenda

CLP STAGE 1 WORKSHOP

Sunday, May 16

2:00 – 4:00 pm

CLP-Allegheny, 1230 Federal Street

- 2:00 pm **Welcome**
Terri Wolfe, CLP Board Member
- 2:02 **Introductions & Agenda Review & Introductions**
Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator
- 2:10 **Community Briefing**
Mary Frances Cooper, Deputy Director, CLP
- Questions of clarification*
- 2:45 **Discussion**
1. Why do you think it's important that the Library is financially and operationally healthy?
 2. What do you think are the 2 biggest challenges to achieving a Library system that is financially and operationally healthy? What are your suggestions on how to address these challenges?
 3. What are the 2 or 3 things you value MOST about the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh?
 4. What opportunities do you see for library users and the broader community to play in ensuring the long-term sustainability of the library?
- Any other feedback?*
- 3:55 **Next Steps and Wrap Up**
- 4:00 **Adjourn**

ATTACHMENT 2 – Participant List

The following participants signed in at the meeting (alphabetical by last name):

Rebecca Altes
Peg Cammanata
April Clisura
Debby Dodds, CLP Board
John Falk
Mara Falk
Tony Iacone
Dennis Jones
Eddy Jones
John Kennedy, Senator Jay Costa’s Office
Mark Kohut
Kate Lovelace
Stephanie Meyer (Senator Ferlo’s Office)
Anna Porter
Rik Rekowski
Brian Smith
Laura Travoularis
Terri Wolfe, CLP Board
Glenn A. Walsh

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Mary Frances Cooper, Deputy Director
Sheila Jackson, Assistant Director, Main Library Services
Audrey Iacone, Branch Manager, Beechview Branch
Maggie McFalls, Community Engagement
Mary Monaghan, Assistant Director, Neighborhood Libraries
Karen Rossi, Branch Manager, Downtown and Business Branch
Marian Streiff, Branch Manager, Mt. Washington
Karlyn Voss, Director, External and Government Relations
Trina Walker, Director, Communications and Creative Services

Facilitation Team

Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator