

FREE-TO-ALL

BPL Strategic Planning Committee

MARCH 28, 2024, AT 4:00 P.M.
COMMONWEALTH SALON

Members of the Public may sign up for Public Comment via the CHAT by 4:30 p.m. by leaving your name and "public comment"

Comments left in the chat will not be acknowledged.

Written comments may be submitted to the Clerk of the Board, pcarver@bpl.org

- Christian Westra, Committee Chair

BPL Opening Statement

The Trustees of The Boston Public Library reaffirm our commitment to racial equity and to principles of diversity equity and inclusion, more broadly.

The Library is formally committed to becoming an anti-racist organization in response to systemic racism, inequity, and injustice prevalent in our society.

We acknowledge also that the Boston Public Library's Central Library stands on land that was once a water-based ecosystem providing sustenance for the indigenous Massachusetts people *and is a place which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange among nations.* We are committed to land acknowledgements for all locations at which we operate.

We reaffirm this commitment to set the context for our planning, deliberations, and public engagement so that they take place from the spirit of welcome and respect, found in our motto 'free to all.'

Taken from the Institutional Statement Ratified by the Board of Trustees for the Boston Public Library on September 29, 2020.

Strategic Planning Committee

Christian Westra, Committee Chair

- Welcome Remarks
- Roll Call of Committee Members
- Approval of 4.3.23 Meeting Minutes

Boston Public Library

Strategic Planning Initiative

Strategic Planning Committee Workshop 1

March 28, 2024



Gensler



Agenda

- 1. OVERVIEW**
 - Process & Roadmap
 - Developing a Strategic Plan
- 2. ACTIVITY: ROLE & PURPOSE OF THE LIBRARY**
 - What we're learning
 - Define opportunities for the role of the library
- 3. DISCUSSION: GROWTH & IMPACT**
- 4. IDENTIFY COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS**



Meet the Strategic Planning Team



ELAINE ASAL
Gensler



PATRICIA NOBRE
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ERIN CORCORAN
Gensler



HOLLY JIN
Gensler



MARGARET SULLIVAN
Margaret Sullivan
Studio



JADE ESPLIN
Margaret Sullivan
Studio



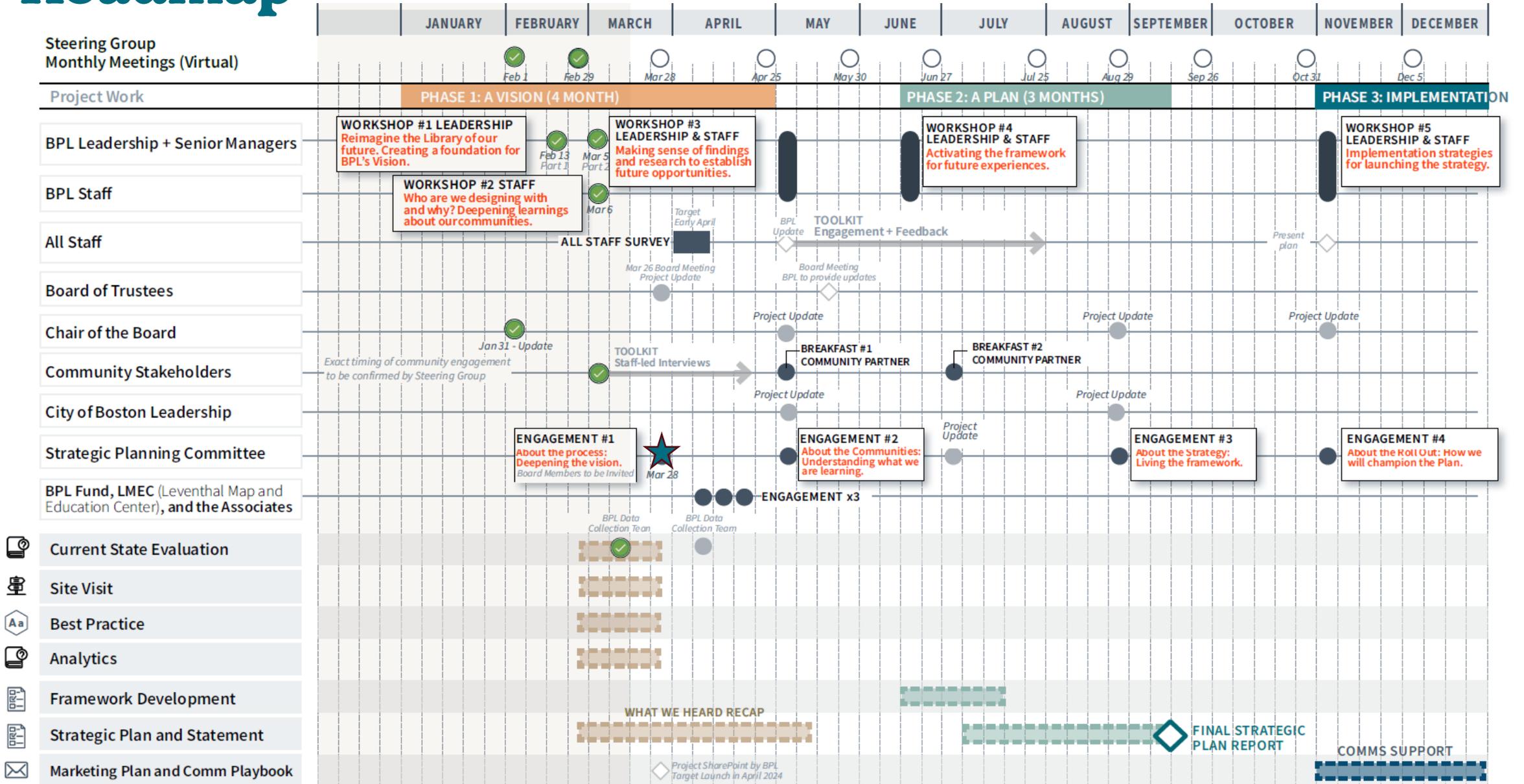
KIM ZABLUD
Margaret Sullivan
Studio



DARCY BURNHAM
Margaret Sullivan
Studio

Process & Roadmap

Roadmap



* Community survey to be considered at a later date, removed from current scope.

● Interactive engagements (workshops, focus groups, etc.) ● Project update and other meetings ◇ Other project meetings/efforts led by BPL

Updated on 03/15/2024

Workshop Look Ahead



Workshop 1: About the Process & Deepening the Vision

Objectives:

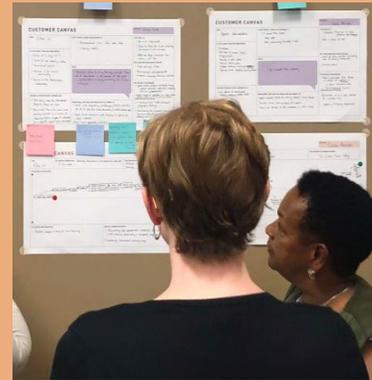
1. Introduction to strategic planning
2. BPL's role, purpose and areas for growth and impact
3. Identify key stakeholders



Workshop 2: About the Communities & Understanding What We're Learning

Objectives:

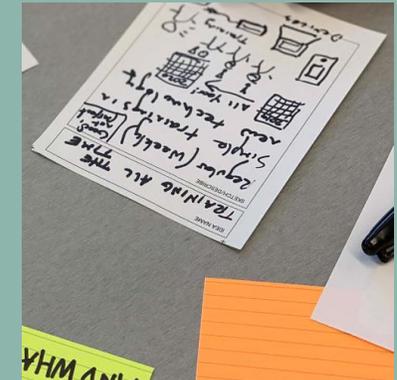
1. Share learnings
2. About the community
3. Opportunities exercise



Workshop 3: About the Strategy & Living in the Framework

Objectives:

1. Mission & Alignment
2. Strategic Areas of Focus



Workshop 4: About the Rollout & How to Champion the Plan

Objectives:

1. Implementation approach
2. Communication strategy

Roles and Expectations

BPL Internal Stakeholder
 External Stakeholder

BPL Leadership + Senior Managers

- Provide input and co-create direction
- Connect the team to strategic priorities

BPL Staff

- Provide input and co-created direction
- Gather ground-up insights from additional voices

Board of Trustees

- Support and evangelize the process, guide the work and provide direction
- Review and provide input at key milestones

BPL Fund, Map + Education Center, Associates of the BPL

- Provide awareness for aligned strategic priorities
- Widen the view to connected communities or initiatives

City of Boston Leadership

- Provide awareness for aligned strategic priorities
- Inform at key milestones as a key partner

Strategic Planning Committee

- Support and evangelize the process
- Review and provide feedback of content at key milestones
- Inform the community approach

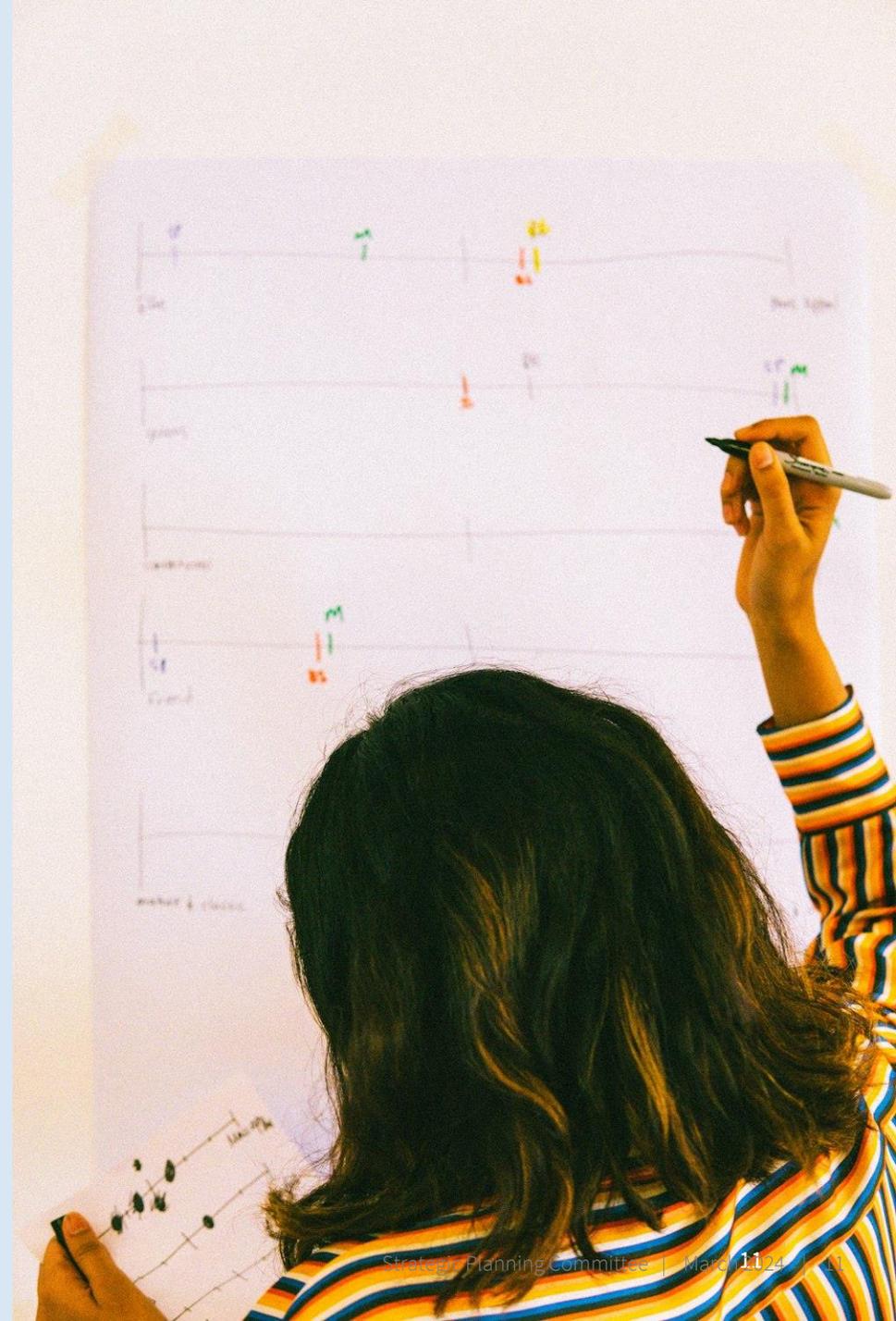
Community Stakeholders
 (Level of Engagement TBD)

- Provide input and bring of insights from connected community sources

Steering Group

- Support the strategic plan as key decision makers for process and approach
- Provide feedback and insight
- Champion the project with the wider stakeholder group
- Tie groups together to support the plan

Developing a strategic plan



Methodology



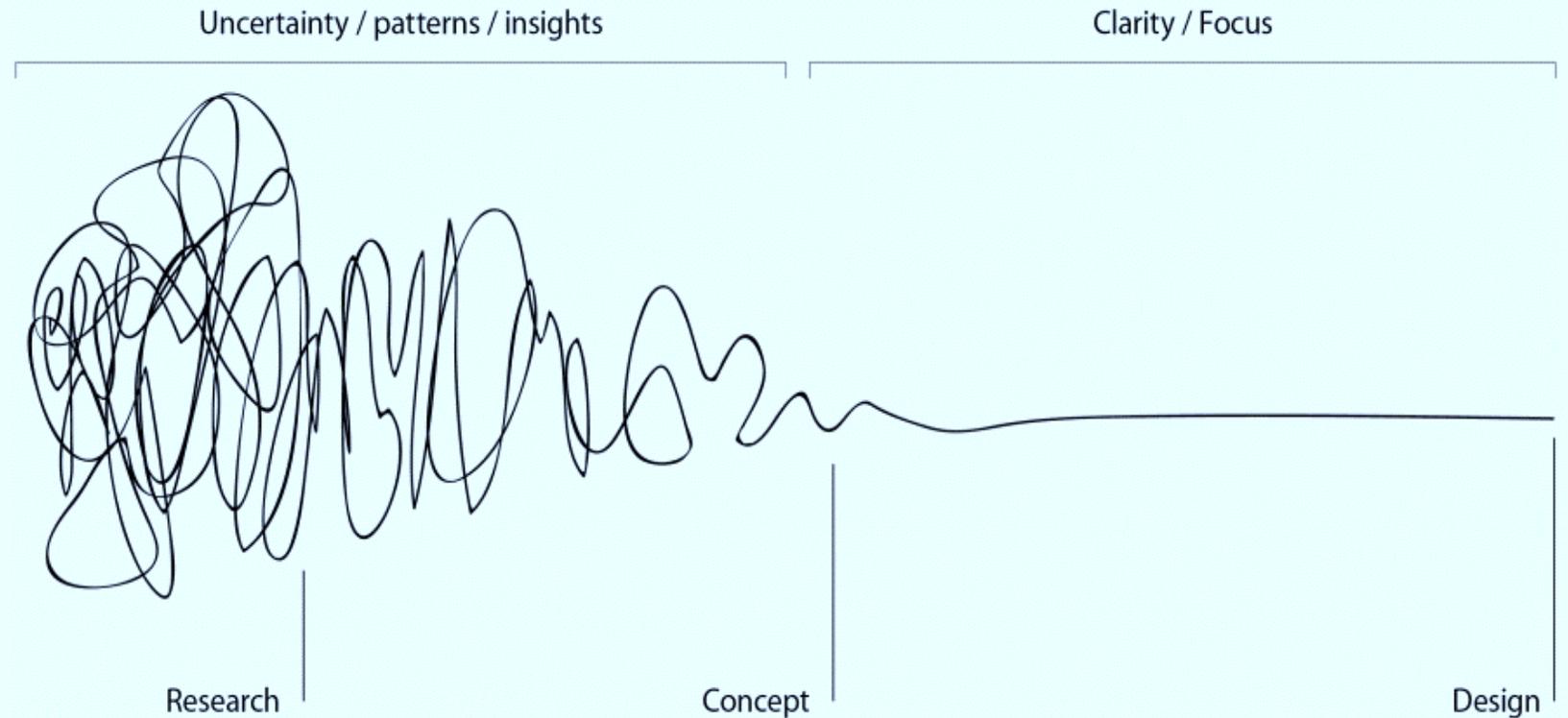
Results

1. A flexible strategic framework
2. Strengthened strategic partnerships
3. Staff embrace a growth mindset
4. Collective impact approach to assessments and measurements

What this can feel like

The experience of the strategic planning process may vary based on organizational culture, individual perspectives, and communication effectiveness. Some may feel uncertain or apprehensive about the impact on their roles, leading to resistance.

Promoting a sense of inclusion and collaboration fosters positive teamwork and unity. The process can generate excitement and optimism for positive change and collaboration.



A Strategic Plan:

IS:

- A document that sets long-term direction and priorities
- A tool for decision-making and resource allocation
- Flexible and intended to evolve
- Future-focused

IS NOT:

- A business, operational, or detailed project plan
- A tool for day-to-day operations, budgets, or specific project implementation
- Static or inflexible
- Short-term or tactical

Strategic Plan Structure



Vision

"How we see the future"

The outcome of our work in the community. It articulates the desired future for our community as results of our efforts.

Mission

"What we do"

The purpose of the organization to contribute to the Vision based on our role, strengths and objectives.

Values

"What we Believe"

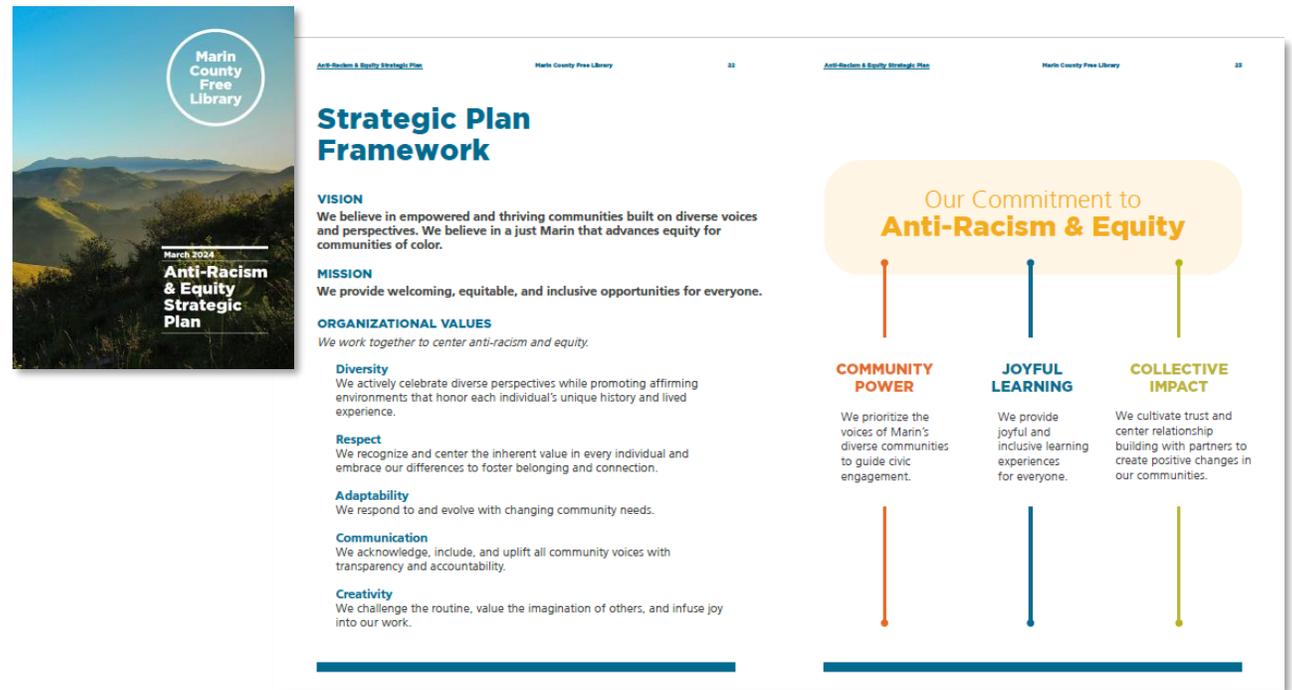
Our core beliefs form the foundation of our community work and guide our behavior, interactions, and tactics daily.

Strategic Plan Case Studies

San Francisco Public Library Strategic Plan 2024-2030



Marin County Free Library Anti-Racism & Equity Strategic Plan



What we will deliver:

- 1 Strategic Framework Document**
- 2 Strategic Toolkits**
- 3 Implementation Approach & Communications Plan**

Role & Purpose

Of the American Public Library

Activity: BPL's Role & Purpose | Leadership Workshop

The Public Library fosters social connectedness by becoming a cultural anchor and the center for learning

A Cultural Anchor institution provides vital cultural programming, offering resources for knowledge, traditions, and heritage, uniting surrounding communities and fostering joy.

The Public Library provides essential resources to promote health, well-being, and quality of life

Some ways to impact health, well-being, and quality of life are by providing resources for:

- Safe housing, transportation, and neighborhoods
- Anti-racism, discrimination, and violence
- Education, job opportunities, and income
- Access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities

The Public Library supports human growth to fulfill their greatest potential

Human growth milestones refer to significant developmental achievements that individuals typically reach at specific ages or stages of life. These milestones encompass various aspects of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral development and serve as markers of typical development.

The Public Library fosters the Creative Economy

Creative Economy refers to the sector of the economy that is based on the creation, production, and distribution of creative goods and services. It encompasses a wide range of industries including design, arts and crafts, advertising, architecture, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, software, video games, television, radio, and more.

What roles are **ideal**, a **stretch**, or **not aligned** with BPL's vision?



Categorize BPL's Role and Purpose

Once you've reviewed the role and purpose cards, choose the ones that best fit any of the categories listed below.

This is an ideal role and purpose Boston: **Not all stretch goals for us!**

This role and purpose would be a great opportunity, but it would be a stretch for BPL:

This role and purpose does not align with BPL mission:

What question or concern do you have and that may hinder BPL from fulfilling these roles?

Categorize BPL's Role and Purpose

Once you've reviewed the role and purpose cards, choose the ones that best fit any of the categories listed below.

This is an ideal role and purpose BPL can play for Boston:

This role and purpose would be a great opportunity, but it would be a stretch for BPL:

This role and purpose does not align with BPL mission:

What questions or concerns do you have and that may hinder BPL from fulfilling these roles?

Role & Purpose: Leadership Workshop

 Cards chosen for 'deep dive' exercise

Ideal role

Leadership identified the following cards as representing ideal roles and purposes for BPL.

CARD 11

The Public Library promotes equitable access to enriching opportunities, allowing everyone to enjoy the best offerings of a city.

5/5

CARD 10

The Public Library cultivates innovation, entrepreneurship, and inclusive, equitable learning for 21st-century skillsets.

4/5

CARD 1

The Public Library promotes social connectedness by becoming a cultural anchor.

4/5

WRITE-INS

The Public Library champions digital access and literacy.

The Public Library supports cultural preservation.

The Public Library enables research and scholarly exploration.

Great opportunity but a stretch

These cards represent where leadership *wants* to go but where they acknowledge it will require a big push to achieve.

CARD 8

The Public Library operates through a community-led model.

4/5

CARD 9

The Public Library fosters an inclusive democracy.

4/5

CARD 4

The Public Library is a conduit for community talent pipelines.

3.5/5

Role & Purpose: Leadership Workshop

 Cards chosen for 'deep dive' exercise

Ideal – Stretch Split

The following cards were split between the “ideal” and “great opportunity but a stretch” categories, suggesting a need to align on priority to make an impact.

CARD 5

The Public Library nurtures the creative economy.

2-2

CARD 6

The Public Library is a portal for personal growth and fulfillment.

2-3

CARD 2

The Public Library provides essential resources to promote health, well-being, and quality of life.

2-3

Needs further investigation

No card had significant votes for “doesn’t align” but rather required further investigation for *how* the role would align with BPL (produce, partner, lead, connect).

CARD 3

The Public Library is a generator of economic justice.

1-2-2

CARD 7

The Public Library catalyzes collaboration among community partners to achieve collective impact.

2-1.5-1.5



Activity Overview

20 min

01 Review

Review the Role and Purpose Cards that outline potential roles for the contemporary public library

<p>The Public Library fosters social connectedness by becoming a cultural anchor and the center for learning</p> <p>A Cultural Anchor institution provides vital cultural programming, offering resources for knowledge, traditions, and heritage, uniting surrounding communities and fostering joy.</p> <p>1</p>	<p>The Public Library provides essential resources to promote health, well-being, and quality of life</p> <p>Some ways to impact health, well-being, and quality of life are by providing resources for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safe housing, transportation, and neighborhoods• Anti-racism, discrimination, and violence• Education, job opportunities, and income• Access to nutritious foods and physical activity opportunities <p>2</p>
<p>The Public Library is a Generator of Economic Justice</p> <p>Economic justice is the idea that the economy will be more successful if it is fairer. The goal is to create opportunities for all to succeed regardless of sex, race, age, disability, color, creed, national origin, religion, or genetic information.</p> <p>3</p>	<p>The Public Library is a Vehicle for a Community's Talent Pipeline</p> <p>Community Talent Pipelines function as a mechanism through which the diverse talents, skills, and knowledge within a community are identified, cultivated, and utilized for personal and collective growth. It is a platform for individuals to access resources, education, and opportunities, thus facilitating the development and enrichment of the community's talent pool.</p> <p>4</p>
<p>The Public Library fosters the Creative Economy</p> <p>Creative Economy refers to the sector of the economy that is based on the creation, production, and distribution of creative goods and services. It encompasses a wide range of industries including design, arts and crafts, advertising, architecture, fashion, film, music, performing arts, publishing, software, video games, television, radio, and more.</p> <p>5</p>	<p>The Public Library supports human growth to fulfill their greatest potential</p> <p>Human growth milestones refer to significant developmental achievements that individuals typically reach at specific ages or stages of life. These milestones encompass various aspects of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and behavioral development and serve as markers of typical development.</p> <p>6</p>



02 Categorize

Choose the Role and Purpose Cards that best fit any of the categories outlined in the worksheet

Categorize BPL's Role and Purpose

Once you've reviewed the role and purpose cards, choose the ones that best fit any of the categories listed below.

This is an ideal role and purpose BPL can play for Boston:	This role and purpose would be a great opportunity, but it would be a stretch for BPL:	This role and purpose does not align with BPL mission:
<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 200px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 200px;"></div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 200px;"></div>
<p>What questions or concerns come to mind that may hinder BPL from fulfilling these roles?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 50px;"></div>		

Intermission

Break out groups

Role & Purpose: Share out

15 min

Share out your findings from the exercise –
What is BPL’s ideal role?
What is a stretch?



Impact & Growth

Share future growth scenarios and discuss shared goals and ambitions.

Cool Things at BPL



GBH Studio

Kirstein Business Library & Innovation Center (KBLIC)



Teen Central



Our Impact: Questionnaire Learnings

*What BPL offerings, in your opinion, **have the most impact** and why?*

From Staff Perspective:

- Free Access Lending Materials, vast and diverse collections
- BPL as Community Center, Community Place to Gather
- Immigration and citizenship classes
- Increasing Access to Technology (Tech Goes Home, Long Term lending program)
- ESOL classes, Conversation groups
- Online resources
- Free Tax Help
- Children's programming
- Teen Volunteer Program, Teen Librarian
- Resume assistance, job training, job fair
- Social services
- Early literacy programming

"This is a hard question because the library is such a large institution."

From Leaders Perspective:

- Our buildings and services
- The role the library plays for young people
- ESOL
- Citizenship Programs
- Free literacy programs (children's programming)
- Career Related Services and resources
- Free Tech services, drop-in tech help, bridging the technical divide
- Online resources
- Branch-specific customized programs

"Hard to know as we don't measure our impact"

Activity: Impact & Growth Scenarios

Scenario #1:

The library is charged with making a difference for every Boston resident. With adequate funding, citywide support, and strong partnerships, it is well-equipped to fulfill this mission.

Scenario #3:

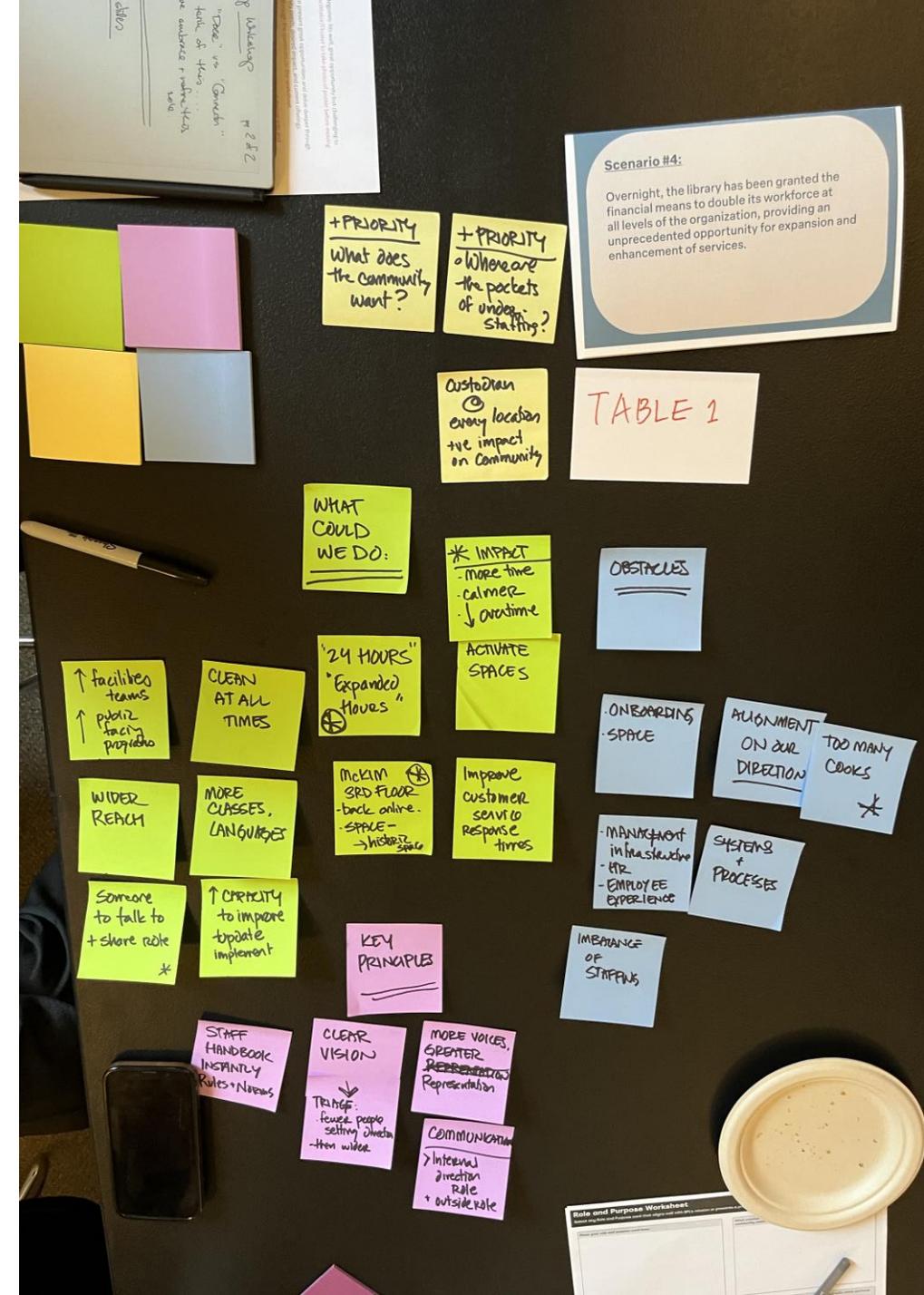
Over the next 20 years, the library will gradually expand and align its resources through an equity lens. This approach will enable the library to delve deeper into its offerings and services, ultimately expanding its reach to better serve its core customers.

Scenario #2:

Despite facing economic recession and political pressures diverting support away from the library, it remains steadfast in its commitment to serving communities in need. Recognizing that certain populations rely on library resources more than ever during difficult times, the library is determined to find innovative solutions to continue meeting their needs despite these challenges.

Scenario #4:

Overnight, the library has been granted the financial means to double its workforce at all levels of the organization, providing an unprecedented opportunity for expansion and enhancement of services.



Impact & Growth: Leadership Workshop

BPL's Impact

Contributes to BPL's vision & mission.

- **Cultural and historical preservation:** Preserve and celebrate our community's history. (Scenario 1)
- **Support the whole person:** Take a holistic approach to patron support, addressing their physical, emotional and intellectual needs. (Scenario 1)
- **Create joy:** Cultivate a welcoming environment through programs that create joy and provide cultural enrichment. (Scenario 2)
- **Highlight community talent:** Foster innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship through programs, resources and networking opportunities. (Scenario 3)
- **Enhanced outreach:** Strengthen community connections through proactive outreach efforts. (Scenario 1 & 4)
- Improved customer service response times
- **More languages, more classes:** Expand offerings by enhancing language resources and class options. (Scenario 4)

BPL's Growth

Organizational shifts needed to realize BPL's impact.

- **Aligned direction:** Align and shift funding, skills and job openings with priorities. (Scenario 1, 2, 3 & 4)
- **Operate from a data/evidence-based perspective** while aligning with city priorities and leveraging our partner ecosystem. (Scenario 1, 2 & 3)
- **Community advocacy:** Reimagine the community engagement process to better understand community needs (Scenario 2 & 3)
- **Collaborative leadership:** Promote collaboration in decision making and establish clear criteria for prioritization, including what to say 'no' to. (Scenario 3)
- **Facilitate rapid prototyping:** Cultivate an environment and mindset conducive to experimentation and innovation, allowing the freedom to explore new ideas. (Scenario 3)
- **Activate spaces:** Transform library spaces into vibrant hubs. (Scenario 4)

Group Discussion

20
min

Take some time to take notes individually and then we'll share as a group!

1. What **impact** can and should BPL make in Boston?
2. What is the **growth** that needs to happen to realize this impact?

Identify Community Partners

Framing City Alignment

The Public Library is a **Malleable Instrument for Change**

An *instrument for change* is someone who intentionally shares their resources to pursue an aim to make a change in an area they are passionate about transforming.

The Public Library is a **Community Economic Development Engine**

Community Economic Development is a process that engages community members, builds on community assets, and plans for future development that considers economic resiliency and a vibrant quality of life for all residents across health, economic, social, educational, and cultural well being “pillars.”

Partner Mapping

15
min

What partners do you suggest we engage with throughout this strategic planning process? What questions do you want to ask them?

Arts & Culture

Education & Learning

*Civic Engagement &
Human Services*

Youth Services

Workforce Development

“Free to All’ encapsulates what we’re all about. And the ‘all’ part is as important as the ‘free’ part in that phrase. **It really has to be everybody.”**

– David Leonard, BPL President

“Our libraries throughout our city are symbols of our dedication to **knowledge, inclusivity, and progress...** BPL is and always has been a space for all of Boston’s people, a place to seek and find not just knowledge, but **community.**”

– Michelle Wu, Mayor of Boston

Intermission

Break out groups

Report Out & Wrap-up



Next Meeting

Workshop 2

About the Communities: What We Are Learning

New Business

**BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**



Jose C. Masso III, Committee Vice Chair

Public Comment

**BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**



- If follow up is required, please send your contact email or phone number to the Clerk of the Board at pcarver@bpl.org
- People will be chosen in the order they were received and allowed 2 minutes to speak.
- The Moderator will unmute your mic when you are called on.
- Comments made in chat during meeting will not be acknowledged.

Adjournment

**BOSTON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY**



**Meeting schedule will be posted on the BPL Website*