San Francisco Public Library
Strategic Planning Initiative

SFPL Commission | 07.20.23
Project Overview
Project Process & Timeline

San Francisco Public Library | Strategic Planning Initiative
Internal Engagement

**1** All-Staff Survey
- Staff Values Survey (March-June) Completes: 460

**4** M-Team Focus Groups
- M-Team Meeting #1
- M-Team Meeting #2
- M-Team Meeting #3
- M-Team Meeting #4

**7** Library Commissioner Interviews
- Connie Wolf
- Eurania López
- Pete Huang
- Jarie Bolander
- Teresa Ono
- Mary J. Lomax-Ghirarduzzi
- Susan Mall

**13** Partner Interviews (CCSF Dept. Heads)
- Recreation and Park Dept.
- Human Services Agency
- Dept. of Public Health; Office of Health Equity
- Dept. of Early Childhood Planning Dept.
- Dept. of Child Support Services
- Dept. of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS)
- Human Rights Commission
- Mayor’s Office of Housing and Community Development
- San Francisco Unified School District
- Dept. of Children, Youth and Their Families
- City Administrator
- Dept. of Homeless and Supportive Housing

**11** Broader Staff Engagement Meetings
- Sr. Managers
- Organized Labor
- Special Operations 1
- Branch Managers
- Main/CTS/CPP Managers
- Youth Services
- All Staff #1
- Special Operations 2
- Adult Services
- Circulation Services

**5** Staff Ambassadors Focus Groups
- Ambassador Meeting #1
- Ambassador Meeting #2
- Ambassador Meeting #3
- Ambassador Meeting #4
- Ambassador Meeting #5

**9** SFPL Branch Site Visits
- Bayview
- Chinatown
- Excelsior
- North Beach
- Mission
- Ortega
- Richmond
- Western Addition
- Visitacion Valley

**KEY**
- GREY = COMPLETED ENGAGEMENTS BY JUNE 2023
- WHITE = UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS
Today’s Goal

Share what we’ve heard in the stakeholder partnership interviews, commissioner interviews, and internal staff engagements and align on Priorities and Potential Futures.

We will not be covering any external engagement insights as those are ongoing at present. That will be covered in our fall presentation.

Discuss:

• What insights resonated with you?
• What questions do you have?
• Which Potential Futures excite you?
Internal Engagement Insights

Note: External Insights will be shared Fall 2023
Insights Overview

CITY & COMMUNITY

OFFERINGS

LABOR & ORGANIZATION
At its best, San Francisco is a place for all people to thrive in a uniquely creative and experimental culture surrounded by natural beauty.

Core Needs:
- Cultural life (E)
- Cultural expression (E)
- Access to the outdoors (E)
- Respect (E)
- Social Acceptance (E)

Internal Engagement Insights

**KEY**
(E/I) = External and Internal Need
(E) = External Need
(I) = Internal Need
Each branch is a vital cornerstone of its community, yet staff acknowledge the need to further enhance diversity and cultural representation within the library's staff, collections, and services.
The library has a **wealth of resources, services, and programs**, but lack of awareness and accessibility issues keep the library from serving the communities who need them most.

**Core Needs:**
- Awareness of library offering (esp. in underserved communities) (E)
- Ease of access to SFPL offerings (E)
- Communication (E)
- Support/solidarity (E)
- To be understood (E)
- Partnership (E/I)
- Effectiveness (E/I)
- Feedback (I)

**KEY**
- (E/I) = External and Internal Need
- (E) = External Need
- (I) = Internal Need
The library is a **catalyst for culture, connection, and creativity**, but the current spaces, program development model, and partnership approach limit what's possible.

**Core Needs:**
- Wonder (E)
- Awareness (E)
- Discovery (E)
- Participation (E)
- Inspiration (E/I)
- Fellowship (E/I)
- Play (E/I)

**KEY**
- \((E/I)\) = External and Internal Need
- \((E)\) = External Need
- \((I)\) = Internal Need
While the library has shown remarkable adaptability, the pandemic changed behaviors, shifting patterns of usage and creating new needs.
Many staff members want to (and are making strides to) take a more experiential and relational approach to librarianship. However, real and perceived barriers stand in the way.

Core Needs:
- Hands-on, individual support for patrons (E)
- Reciprocity (E/I)
- Partnership (E)
- Support (E/I)
- Structure/predictability (I)
- Knowledge (I)
- Recognition (I)
- Cooperation (I)
The staff believe that the library should be a **safe, welcoming place** for all, but current conditions create an unsafe environment and staff don’t feel properly supported to handle it.

**Core Needs:**
- Acceptance (E)
- Dignity (E)
- Free spaces to “be” (E)
- Bathroom access (E)
- Hospitality (E)
- Empathy (E/I)
- Tranquility (E/I)
- Physical and Emotional Safety (E/I)
- Trust (E/I)
- Predictability (I)

**KEY**
(E/I) = External and Internal Need  
(E) = External Need  
(I) = Internal Need
The library's goal is to uplift the communities it serves, but there's a need to **improve the health and morale** of staff in order to better support the patron experience.

**Core Needs:**
- Abundance/thriving (E/I)
- Appreciation (I)
- Wellness (I)
- Respect (I)
- Recognition (I)
- Solidarity (I)
- Growth (I)
- Support (I)
- Listening (I)

**KEY**
- (E/I) = External and Internal Need
- (E) = External Need
- (I) = Internal Need
Staff at SFPL are motivated by the library's potential for good. That said, to realize the possibilities, staff members desire empowerment through greater transparency, more role flexibility, and permission to take risks.

Core Needs:
- Purpose and value (I)
- Order/structure (I)
- Communication (I)
- Receptivity (I)
- Interdependence (I)
- Transparency/openness (I)
- Clarity (I)
- Achievement/productivity (I)

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Library Commission Presentation | July 2023 | 16

Key:
(E/I) = External and Internal Need
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Partner Insights

(CCSF Department Heads)
Leaders share a **bold 'can-do' attitude** and **compassionate approach** even when faced with intractable social issues.

All agreed that SFPL is an **excellent partner** at every level (from librarian to leadership), with many **successful outcomes** as proof.

Partners emphasize **working strategically**, while focusing on developing **interconnected systems** to create positive change.

“I keep asking myself, what big, audacious thing can we do next?”
- CCSF Department Head

“There’s a need for coherent storytelling between agencies, that tells the whole story.”
- CCSF Department Head

“We should really have a joint mission and sub strategic plan to pursue initiatives that benefit different communities.”
- CCSF Department Head
In addition to building on SFPL strengths, partners highlighted numerous additional opportunities for collaboration:

- **Integrate and extend access** more deeply into communities
- **Assist people of all ages on their developmental journeys**, including socialization and general life skills
- **Be an approachable entry point** for discussions about challenging topics, including health, public policy, and human rights
- **Become a multipurpose public space** and "third place" for families
- **Capture the impact stories** of government programs and services
- **Act as an advocate and organizer** while teaching those skills
- **Guide people** within the increasingly exclusionary and opaque world of technology
Strategic Priorities & Potential Futures
What is a..?

**Preliminary Strategic Priority**
- A more informed restating of our initial project goals
- What this work must accomplish regardless of which direction we pursue

**Potential Future**
- A way to push our thinking beyond the traditional definition of the library
- A platform for exploring ideas without commitment
- A jumping-off point for discussing what each direction would mean for our facilities, programs, services, partnerships, funding & labor model, and organizational culture

*Note: the Preliminary Strategic Priorities and Potential Futures will be shaped and prioritized based on what we learn through the external engagement.*
Preliminary Strategic Priorities

Please note that these are only based on Internal Engagement and will evolve based on what we learn from external engagement. They will also become increasingly more tactical.

1. Radically center and deepen relationships with the community by applying innovative best practices and consistent feedback loops
2. Reconsider the service and labor model to support and articulate what a 21st century model (experiential, transformational, socially impactful) means for SFPL
3. Deepen coalitions and partnerships for collective impact and alignment with city strategies
4. Create a healthy and productive internal culture to foster professional growth, innovation and entrepreneurship
5. Realign measurement tools, goals, and assessment techniques to advance SFPL’s mission
6. Encourage the confidence and belief that everyone has the power to create impact and to fully embrace their role as public servants
7. Infuse culture with curiosity, research, and exploration that is self-initiated and community-oriented
Potential Futures

**Cultural Activator**
Champion of all forms of cultural expression and creativity at every level.

**Radical Equalizer**
Using a social justice lens, provide seamless access to upward-mobility tools and programs.

**Living Laboratory**
Become an incubator for improvement to test and evolve thinking from leading research institutions.

**Experiential Educator**
Promote personal growth and lifelong learning through inclusive, immersive, and varied educational offerings.

**Community Builder**
Be a core community connector and navigational guide to help people find the resources they need to flourish.

**Outcomes**

- A vibrant, weird, and creative San Francisco.
- A San Francisco where residents have freedom to choose their future.
- A San Francisco that gets better every day.
- A bright and brilliant San Francisco.
- An interconnected and united San Francisco.
**SFPL AS CULTURAL ACTIVATOR**
A champion of all forms of cultural expression and creativity at every level.

**Outcome:** A vibrant, weird, and creative San Francisco.

**EXISTING STRENGTHS**

- Perceptions that SF is a little wacky and it’s a place where anything can happen
- Branches in neighborhood centers, with key adjacencies to parks, schools, transportation and recreation centers
- Ortega’s modular Community Room that opens out onto Park & Recreation space
- A wide variety of collections, exhibitions, and programs that help people explore a range of interests
- Night of Ideas and other community catalyzing programming

**EXAMPLE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

- Become a destination for culture of all types
- Establish and facilitate creative partnerships to activate space and programs
- Create a system for identifying and supporting local talent to highlight or collaborate with
- Expand hiring criteria to attract applications from people with a variety of creative backgrounds and skillsets

**Key Values:** AUTHENTICITY | FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION | CREATIVITY | PLAY | OPENNESS | EMPOWERMENT

Note: Bold font notes the values that are emerging in the Ambassador’s working group.

**Example Organizations:** SF Jazz Foundation, Pioneer Works, The Adams Morgan Community Center, The Kearny Street Workshop
Look Ahead
Ongoing & Upcoming Activities

Internal SFPL Engagement Activities

- **M-Team Focus Groups**
  - July 31
  - Sept (TBD)

- **Staff Ambassadors Workshops**
  - Aug 1
  - Sept (TBD)
  - Oct (TBD)

- **Commission Meetings**
  - Fall 2023
  - Winter 2023/24

- **All-Staff Meetings**
  - Fall 2023
  - Winter 2023/24

External Community Engagement Activities

- **Urgency Index & Equity Analysis Mapping**
- **1,900+ Branch User Intercept Surveys**
- **City Survey SFPL Usage Analysis**
- **19 Community Focus Groups** (in partnership with local community orgs)
- **Industry Best Practices**
- **Local Planning & Strategic Initiatives Research**

San Francisco Public Library | Strategic Planning Initiative
Community Focus Groups

Upcoming & Completed Sessions

05.31.23 | Priority Population: Teens
06.20.23 | District 10 (Black/African American community focus)
06.21.23 | District 11 (Latinx, Black/African American, AAPI focus)
06.22.23 | Priority Population: Disability Community
06.28.23 | Friends of the Library (2 groups)
06.29.23 | District 4 and 7 (Parkside)
06.30.23 | Priority Population: Chinese Language
07.05.23 | District 3 and 6 (focus on Filipino)

07.06.23 | District 9 (focus on Latinx)
07.11.23 | D10 #2 (Black/African American community focus)
07.12.23 | Priority Population: Parents
07.13.23 | District 5, 7 (West of Twin Peaks) and 8 (LGBTQIA+)
07.18.23 | District 1 and 2
07.19.23 | Priority Population: Filipino Language
07.20.23 | Priority Population: Spanish Language
07.25.23 | Priority Population: Elders
07.26.23 | Community Leaders #1
07.26.23 | Community Leaders #2
Next Meeting

External Insights Review – Fall 2023
Find out more

Strategic Planning Initiative Website
https://sfpl.org/about-us/strategic-planning

Strategic Planning Initiative Email
strategicplanning@sfpl.org
Discussion

• What insights resonated with you?
• What questions do you have?
• Which Potential Futures excite you?