Enlightenment Consulting Group, LLC

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A catalyst for transformation.

Phase Two Report:
Community Conversations

Cleveland Public Library | March 2014

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Enlightenment Consulting Group, LLC (ECG) partnered with Cleveland Public Library (CPL) in mid-year, 2013 to initiate a discovery process that would guide CPL through an inclusive and equitable journey toward achieving goals set forth in its strategic plan. Phase One of the process captured the voices of CPL leadership and staff. Phase Two drew upon the voices of the community and community organization leaders. The purpose of Phase Two was to access the four CPL branches in the Cleveland area neighborhoods of Clark-Scranton, Central, and Slavic Village to initiate rich conversations about the notion of the Cleveland Public Library addressing community deficits by leveraging existing human capital, the wealth of community assets, and its own resources. Phases One and Two have now been completed. To that end, the voices of many—internal as well as external stakeholders— have been captured resulting in innovative, substantive, and practical guidance. Appreciative Inquiry methods were used to inspire *all* participants to contribute their dreams for CPL, their perceptions of the challenges faced in the communities surrounding the four target branches, and their ideas for overcoming those challenges by collective effort to reduce health, education, and economic disparities in Cleveland, Ohio.

This report addresses the work that was completed in Phase Two of the project. The primary strategy used to collect the data was a series of qualitative community conversations facilitated by members of the ECG team. There were 157 participants and 9 meetings were held over an eight- week period of time. 56% of the participants were 18 years of age or younger. The locations, participants, and times of the meetings were determined in collaboration with community stakeholders and CPL partners to assure that people who may not be regular patrons of the local branches or those whom may not patronize the library at all could be included in the data collection. Youth and adults were engaged in the inquiry process. CPL provided incentives to encourage residents to actively participate in the process.

A KEY NEXT STEP!

Findings of this inquiry and the resulting CPL strategies should be shared with the participants so that they can be assured that the Library intends to build a long-term partnership with the community and that their input is valued.

In every instance, there appears to be a shared value for the role that Cleveland Public Library can play in partnership with community organizations and community residents to increase the relevance of the library in the very fabric of the communities. It is also evident that the addition of a liaison between the community and the library--an ambassador--is highly valued. Additionally, many of the solutions that arose require that CPL work in collaboration with other entities to achieve the outcomes it has set forth. 2014 will be the year to flesh out the Ambassador model and connect the role/individual(s) to the ongoing work of the Cleveland Public Library as an effective strategy to promote authentic community engagement and build a corps of drum majors that will empower the Library and the City of Cleveland.

Immediate Next Steps

- CONCRETIZE THE VALUE OF THE COMMUNITY VOICE IN CPL'S TRANSFORMATIVE GOALS BY IMPLEMENTING A SYSTEM OF ONGOING ENGAGEMENT.

- BUILD OUT THE MODEL FOR THE AMBASSADOR FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM BASED ON THE INPUT FROM THE STAFF AND COMMUNITY.

- IMPLEMENT A SUSTAINABLE MODEL FOR CONTINUOUS AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AS A BEST PRACTICE FOR TRANSFORMATIVE OPERATIONS AT CPL.

- CREATE A SYSTEM-WIDE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LEAD TEAM TO DRIVE THE SYSTEM-LEVEL CHANGE NECESSARY TO SUPPORT THE SUCCESS OF STRATEGIES ALIGNED WITH PROJECT GOALS.

- REPLICATE THIS PROCESS OF COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS TO SUPPORT THE CURRENT FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

INTRODUCTION

In 2013, Cleveland Public Library set out on a course to change how the public utilizes neighborhood branches by deepening relationships with patrons and strengthening partnerships with community- based organizations in an effort to reduce community deficits. Enlightenment Consulting Group, LLC (ECG) has designed an Appreciative Inquiry approach to ensure the Cleveland Public Library's leadership, staff, and stakeholders are authentically engaged in this transformative process.

The following objectives were established in Phase One of the engagement process:

- Identify and engage key individuals who could contribute to the design of an effective community engagement model;

- Understand and promote the vision to the entire project, specifically its perpetual nature relative to authentic community engagement, and its independence from the levy process;

- Discover from specific CPL staff and relevant constituents their dreams of what CPL "could become";

- Identify possible barriers to achieving the project goals.

After intensive discussion with the leadership of CPL, it was determined that Phase Two of the engagement process would focus on the goal of developing a strategy for and conducting community conversations. This strategy included the identification of locations, participants, and topics for the discussions that would support the planning process for engagement and CPL ambassador model and fellowship program. Using community conversations to capture the voice of patrons and community residents would enable ECG to glean the valuable insight of those who would benefit from CPL's innovative direction. Their input would assist the library system in securing the necessary buy-in from the staff, CPL Board, community members, and potential funders needed to effectively implement the ambassador model. Residents of the selected neighborhoods willingly engaged in facilitated conversations that yielded practical, creative, and even transformative ideas that CPL will find valuable.

The response to the need for an ambassador in each branch was a resounding 'YES!' There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the need for effective community collaborations to address the neighborhood challenges they highlighted. Residents trust Cleveland Public Library. There is an expectation that the library is willing and able to respond to the list of priority issues and proposed solutions they outlined. The remainder of this report will provide information on the robust conversation process—what we heard about challenges and solutions, and the suggestions from the community members relative to the key criteria for selecting ambassadors. The report will conclude with recommendations on the next steps necessary for CPL to move towards this transformative model that will set the standard for effective community engagement.

METHODOLOGY

After consultation with CPL leadership, ECG determined that the development of a Community Conversations protocol would be an effective approach to use to gather community input. The conversations would prove useful in planning the Ambassador model and also serve as a means to bring the community into the longer term planning efforts that are slated to occur according to the current CPL strategic plan. A slate of questions, aligned to the Appreciative Inquiry process that had been conducted with CPL staff, were determined. The conversations took place in small groups that averaged 18 participants. CPL provided incentives to the participants that included refreshments and the opportunity to win gift cards in a raffle.

Five questions were used in the conversations, which are consistent with the Appreciative Inquiry methodology. Participants were asked to dream big and think about what a local library branch *could be;* identify top community deficits in their neighborhood; propose innovative solutions to those challenges; understand and decide if the participants desired to have an Ambassador Model; and finally, to suggest characteristics of a successful ambassador. This information was transcribed by CPL staff and analyzed for common themes by members of the ECG team. The analysis involved coding and recoding the responses to organize them into categories for action.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

LOGISITICS

LOCATION:

- At least one meeting was intentionally held at the branch and one meeting was held in the broader community to capture patrons in the natural environment and residents who may not access the branch, respectively.

- ECG strategically collaborated with community development corporations, community activists, faith institutions and/or community based organizations to secure the site for community-based meetings.

- Small group conversations were used to ensure adequate time was provided within a two hour period to cover orientation, food, questions and closing.

DATE:

- All meetings were scheduled to accommodate a diverse population and the host organizations. Meetings were held on weekdays or weekends at the option of the community partner.

TIME:

- Time of meeting was varied to accommodate a diverse population including late morning, late afternoon, and evening times.

OUTREACH:

For branch-based meetings the following steps for engagement were used:

- ECG team members met with branch manager or designee to:
  - Secure meeting space at the branch;
  - Encourage outreach to patrons, particularly high frequency patrons;
  - Distribute printed material regarding the meetings.

For community-based meetings the following steps were taken:

- ECG team members communicated with community development corporations in each neighborhood to:
    - ° Secure contact information for active and engaged residents and community partners;
    - ° Encourage dissemination of knowledge of the initiative and of the meetings;
    - ° Recruit conversation participants.

In addition to meeting with partners to host the meetings, ECG team members also met with community based organizations to solicit their support in the identification and encouragement of resident participants. Strategies used with these partners included:

- Communication with community-based organizations (i.e., faith institutions, schools, etc.) and grassroots groups to:
    - ° Encourage dissemination of knowledge of the initiative and of the meetings;
    - ° Recruit conversation participants.

Recommendations to improve the engagement process in the future

As a result of conducting the first round of community conversations, ECG has identified several practices that each branch may want to consider using to improve communication with the community. One would be to develop an effective communication protocol with community leaders and anticipated participants prior to specific engagement activities that clearly outlines the purpose of the engagement and how it fits into the broader goals of the CPL system.

This will help provide the needed context for individuals who assist in planning the engagement event or those responsible for securing participants.

It is extremely helpful to have key community partners or partnerships that can champion this work.

In addition, it is valuable for the CPL to identify other community projects or events that community partners may have in progress so as to avoid schedule challenges. Unfortunately, there were at least two communities in which attendance at the CPL conversations may have been affected by conflicting partner events.

A KEY NEXT STEP!

CPL might also consider maintaining community calendars of events in the branches

There are some steps that can be taken with regard to the logistics for community conversations or other community engagement opportunities. It proved to be advantageous to offer the conversations at different times in the day to accommodate the participants. However, transportation continues to be a barrier in many Cleveland communities specifically for those who are beyond walking distance to the meetings. Both the cost and availability of bus routes make public transportation challenging especially for parents with young children and the elderly.

If CPL can partner with other community organizations to provide transportation this may improve attendance at meetings and other CPL events.

Branch Managers and staff need to be knowledgeable of the engagement activities in order to provide patrons and organizational partners with accurate messaging. CPL should disseminate fliers at least three weeks prior to the scheduled event. It is also recommended that marketing and graphic design team members are fully engaged in the process to ensure that materials are developed and used in a timely manner. Access to these materials in a timely manner supports the success of the program and sustains continuous involvement. These materials project to the communities that the conversations are more of a campaign for engagement that is rooted in long-term sustainable relationship building as compared to a process that will end once the targeted engagement is complete.

DEMOGRAPHICS

As a result of the efforts of the ECG team, CPL leadership and community leadership, nine conversations were held over a period of eight weeks. Four conversations were held in CPL branches and five were hosted at sites in the three selected neighborhoods. 157 residents participated in the community conversations.   The ECG team partnered with youth serving organizations to assure varied age representation in the responses.

Demographics

18 and up
44%

18 and Under
56%
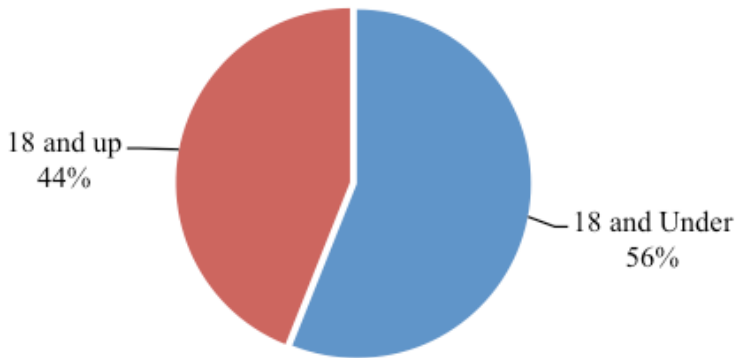
Slavic Village/Broadway 3 sessions
(2 at the library and 1 off site)
Fleet Branch
Elizabeth Baptist Church

Central/ 4 sessions in
(1 at each library and 2 off site)
Woodland Branch
Sterling Branch
Friendly Inn Settlement House
Father Jim O'Donnell's Chapel

Clark-Scranton/ 2 sessions in
(2 off site)
Boys & Girls Club
Esperanza

VISIONING AND COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Three major categories emerged from the responses given during the community conversations. Duplicate responses were combined during the coding process. The definitions of the categories below are intended to help the CPL organize staff and resources in order to maximize their overall impact in a timely manner, consistent with the organizational goals and resource management.

1. **Organizational Structure/Materials/ Equipment**

 Items placed in this category refer to procedures and processes that the CPL currently takes ownership of. Use of the facilities, alternative use of property including parking lots and grounds, and suggestions regarding hours of operation are in this category. Equipment purchases and staffing related concerns are included as well.

2. Programs and Services

Suggestions related to program offerings or services that are currently offered within the scope of services provided across the Cleveland Public Library system and suggested enhancements or modifications to these programs are included in this category.
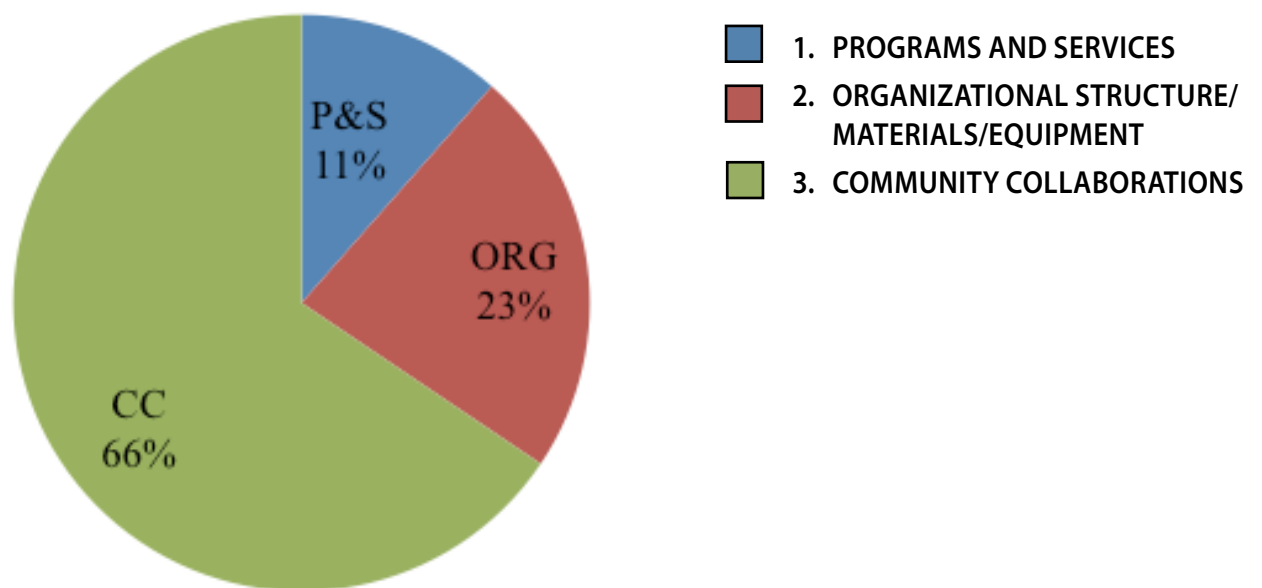
3. Community Collaborations

Suggestions for the Library system that are either typically offered by other providers, need to be offered in concert with other providers who typically provide these services, or programs that were suggested to be implemented in collaboration with other community partners are included in this category. In addition, services or program ideas that would bring business or vendors into the library facilities are included in this category.

Results of the Analysis

When asked to identify solutions to the challenges that the participants prioritized in their conversations, they provided a total of 61 unduplicated responses. Of the responses, seven refer to programs and services (P&S), 14 focus on organizational strategy (ORG), equipment and materials. And, 40 require community collaborations (CC) for successful implementation.

Solutions by Domain

1. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
2. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE/ MATERIALS/EQUIPMENT
3. COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

P&S 11%
ORG 23%
CC 66%

WHAT WE HEARD

Effective collaboration with community partners is crucial to Cleveland Public Library's ability to meet the needs of the local community and to become the drum majors for minimizing or eliminating community deficits. Over 66% of the solutions that were proposed fell into the category of requiring collaboration with the community to both plan and offer services and programs that the participants identified through the Appreciative Inquiry process. The majority of these opportunities rely heavily upon CPL's ability to enter into new partnerships with service providers and system's owners or to expand current partnerships in order to maximize benefits that the participants can realize. While several suggestions build upon programs or services that may have been provided on some level or in select branches across the system, the implication in the responses is that partnering with other providers and residents would likely increase the degree of community benefit.

Another interesting aspect of the responses was the clear willingness of participants to increase the role of community members and local residents in building and promoting these new partnerships. The idea of using community members as volunteers in programming and raising awareness was mentioned often. Various suggestions included: residents serving on committees that identified new opportunities and residents providing services to the patrons, particularly providing trainings or opportunities for youth.

Finally, the input from the participants that emphasized the need for new partnerships in the community and City at large further indicates an expansive role for the Ambassadors. In addition to CPL's ability to mobilize their current staff and human resources around building interesting partnerships it could also be beneficial to design the ambassador model with a clear set of responsibilities around serving as a liaison to other initiatives that involve the Library, specifically around program planning and raising awareness of current library programs and services. This was consistent with what we heard from the staff and leadership members in Phase One of this project. It also became clear in the analysis that residents trust CPL to represent their interests in other initiatives and reflect their needs in program planning and new program development. The creation of additional opportunities to engage community members on an ongoing basis will assure the community that CPL is acting on their behalf. The opportunity for ambassadors to serve in this role is also evident in the analysis of participant recommendations for characteristics that the ambassadors should possess, which is discussed later in this report. Participants clearly saw the ambassador as a servant to the community.

Expansion of the Education services provided. Participants defined education in its broadest sense and their visioning went well beyond education around the use of library materials, collections and current technology resources. The suggested solutions to identified community challenges focused on the provision of education services across the pipeline, from early childhood through lifelong learning for adults of all ages. In addition the recommendations for education services included opportunities for CPL to provide continuing professional development, certification programs, career training, ACT/SAT test preparation supports, college readiness supportive services to traditional and non-traditional students, and literacy skills development for adult students. Expansive programming that addresses the various ages and stages of development of people and the availability of technology to support the acquisition of education skills gained in the library facilities such as laptops or iPads to 'borrow' were also repeated suggestions to help solidify the learning.

In addition to an emphasis on education programming that supports academic skills development, participants also suggested a role for the CPL system in providing information on positive life skills development and good health and nutrition choices. Technical training on software and current technology and instruction in the acquisition of skills in the fine arts and music also were suggested. Education in self-defense, parenting, and character development for youth in particular was also recommended. The constant theme throughout,

was that participants trusted the library to provide quality instruction to them that would be beneficial to the individuals and the community. Regardless of the current reality where libraries are not generally formal providers of education services, participants clearly attached responsibility to eliminate the education disparity in these neighborhoods to their dreams and solutions for the community deficits they face.

Participants identified Innovative uses of space and equipment that would make the branches a central component of each community through meeting the needs identified by residents, creating a hub for patrons that encourages new patronage and makes equipment that meets community goals accessible. Residents increasingly envisioned a space where people could relax, engage, and learn-over-lunch. There were repeated suggestions to have food and drink allowed in the branches at all time, including the opportunity to purchase food and drink on site. These ideas ranged from providing opportunities for vendors to sell their wares in the branches to having the branches sell food to patrons. Clearly the respondents want to see the libraries become more social spaces, with opportunities for group learning or group play. Game nights, game rooms, gyms, recording studios, and outdoor recreation spaces were recommended frequently. The concept of the library as a quiet place of solitude was clearly not evident in the responses.

The possibility of increasing the availability of technology such as computers to help patrons study at home after engaging in onsite instruction was common, as well as the desire for access to larger collections of books and movies. There were also multiple recommendations for patrons to have options to purchase goods and services in the branches including items such as clothing, shoes, or other tangible goods. These suggestions were rendered as an opportunity to build the independent wealth of community members, which could support the economic development of the communities and increase patrons access to goods without having to travel outside of the community given the barriers to adequate transportation that currently exist in some low-income Cleveland neighborhoods.

COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

The categories used for community challenges were similar to those identified in the staff engagement exercises in Phase One of the analysis as well. The original categories used in the staff and leadership engagement were:

- Social
- Educational
- Economics
- Health and Wellness

Space and Materials was added to reflect the frequency of responses from the participants in the community conversation in order to provide an in depth and accurate analysis.

THE SPECIFIC CATEGORIES used at this phase of the analysis are reflected in the table below.

SPACE/MATERIALS	Items placed in this category refer to physical space related to new structure; expand existing rooms for a program, or service, e.g. daycare centers, to target a group or to increase more participation. This includes expansion or reduction of materials such as books, laptops, or computers.
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL	Items placed in this category refer to social and emotional conditions in relationship to the person and community. This may include social and emotional learning opportunities or community conditions that are challenges to residents. Topics ranged from mentoring programs for children and adults to the need to address crime.
EDUCATIONAL/SKILLS BUILDING	Items placed in this category refer to opportunities that promote learning particularly related to academic achievement, trades, vocations, art and music. This may include learning a computer skill to classes related to any suggested topic where having a class for it was indicated.
ECONOMIC	Topics related to employment readiness, social entrepreneurship, or any skills building that could produce an economic development opportunity (e.g. computer training certifications, resume development, and job training that may build an employable skill set.
HEALTH AND WELLNESS	Health and Wellness refers to any recommendations that can impact the physical health and wellbeing of a person and community such as recreation activities that promote wellness. This includes any possibility of a condition that may cause a positive or negative impact on the health conditions of the person and community. For example, gang violence can be a social ill, but it can also effect one's health and well being .

Results of the Analysis

Participants identified numerous opportunities for engagement around the identified solutions that provide a broad slate of possibilities that can be built in concert with community partners.

Community Challenges by Domain

1. SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL
2. HEALTH/WELLNESS
3. ECONOMIC
4. SPACE/MATERIALS
5. EDUCATION/SKILL BUILDING
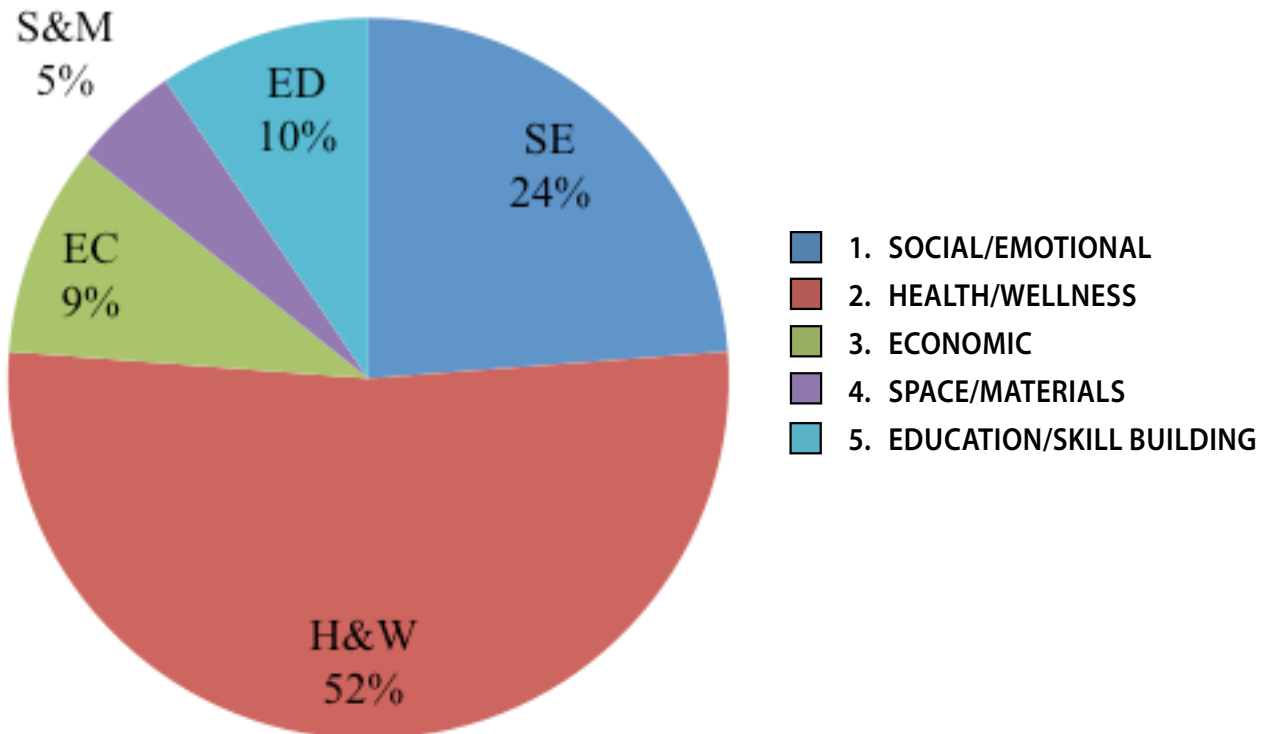
Safety was a priority concern across the board in terms of community challenges. In one community 100% of the challenges related to safety issues and concerns. Residents spoke about safety in terms of its impact on the health of the individuals and the overall community. The perceptions of healthy choices, the outcomes of poor choices, victimization and prevention were topics that arose repeatedly. Most importantly residents saw the role of a library system ranging from the provision of education and training, to the provision of resources to help communities combat safety issues, to an active role in planning community solutions. Furthermore residents felt the library should be a safe space for all residents to enjoy through having proper security in place that would allow for extended hours for their use.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES AROUND THE SOLUTIONS

The ECG team recommends the following suggestions as examples of practical ways that the findings from the community conversations can be operationalized to create solutions that are truly innovative and practical for implementing in local libraries and libraries across the country. These opportunities are creative and can be actualized through creative resource management. The role of the ambassador will enhance the work of the Drum Majors (i.e. staff and community members) and will result in greater impact in specific branches over the short and long term. The opportunities to address the challenges through authentic engagement and collaborative and strategic planning in multiple domains are both many and multifaceted.

Health and Wellness

Develop an adult and youth driven program that provides a peer driven community safety program in partnership with groups like the Guardian Angels, or Boys and Girls Club. Programs such as these can expand safe spaces in partnership with small businesses that can include peer walk groups during the mornings or late evenings. This may be a targeted effort at the peak or heightened times for acts of violence such as rape or kidnapping. The library can be a convener and facilitator. The concept of the community ambassadors provides the anchor for being more than a convener, it creates a space to engage, build upon the social network, and develop actionable outcomes.

Social/Emotional

Build a community rooted in positive social engagement where youth and adults strive to simply speak to each other in support of cultivating community pride, safety and social engagement. The ultimate goal is to have neighbors and organizations partner by taking actions that may require painting a building, cleaning a lot or supporting a family in need for example. This could lead to the creation of a sustainable marketing campaign with action outcomes that are driven by community residents and ambassadors based on their own pre-existing social network. CPL can make this a valued partnership where resources and targeted initiatives occur once a year across communities in concert with local branches.

Education/Skills

Developing initiatives and providing progressive educational strategies—programs and services linked with social entrepreneurship, social change and skills-building—presents an opportunity for the People's University to expand learning opportunities. For example, a film and music program partnered with the Cleveland Film Festival could teach not only film and music, but computer skills as well, and create a voice for patrons. CPL could use this vehicle to sustain the voice of patrons engaged for positive social and academic progress in their communities. Community Ambassadors could drive and lead peer education programs both within and external to the library. A global library exchange program for communities could be created where patrons would communicate with people in other countries using the latest technology. This type of program could begin at the neighborhood level then expand to the region and state. It could involve other CLEVNET libraries as well.

Economic

Develop a micro-loan opportunity or initiative in partnership with relevant community partners and a skills building center at the libraries that focuses on job development and social entrepreneurship. This type of initiative would provide a deeper dive in training and support that is not rooted in classroom learning, but builds economic opportunities and meets residents where they are. A quick win/win would be to expand summer job opportunities for youth at libraries in collaboration with the closest school near the library. This can become an initiative related to several areas giving each participant some leadership skills, an opportunity to become a service learner, and earn money during the summer.

Space

The community desires to fellowship and be social with food. The level of direct interpersonal engagement grows smaller as technology for video and texting interfacing increases. The libraries' presence and level of participant engagement can increase by establishing the value of conversations and community interaction during non-traditional hours for service.

> **Out-of-the-box Idea:**
> **Create a space for licensed barbers to provide haircuts once a month during non-traditional hours may support residents in the community.**

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE DRUM MAJOR MODEL

Information was shared with the participants in each community conversation regarding the value that could be added by having an ambassador assigned to the branch. This information was shared from the staff engagement activities in Phase One. Participants overwhelmingly agreed that it would be beneficial to their engagement with the library to have an ambassador available to them just as staff seemed to feel. Where participants differ from CPL staff was in their perception of how the ambassador could serve the community and act as a liaison between community organizations, residents and library patrons, and the CPL leadership and staff. Participants saw the role in its broadest sense with the ambassador having an active role in planning, communication and even helping to evaluate the success of current and newly developed programs. When staff was asked about the value of an ambassador they saw the role as somewhat of a 'cheerleader' for the library with a primary responsibility to help raise awareness about library programs and services – to the community on behalf of the library.

In order to assist the CPL Design Team in fleshing out the responsibilities of the ambassador, participants were also queried about characteristics they thought the library should consider for a person placed into the role of the ambassador. The top 5 criteria from the conversations are listed below.

Compassionate
Leadership
Motivated
Perseverance
Loyalty to Community

These criteria are consistent with concerns raised by the participants and their perception that the ambassador should be accessible to them and be empowered to reflect their concerns to the branch and CPL leadership, in advancing the program and service options in the branches. Other characteristics such as having good negotiation skills and being a 'people person' further illuminate the perception from the community that the ambassador would be in place to work directly with the patrons. Given the large number of dreams and solutions that arose relative to community solutions and the Appreciative Inquiry process that relate to community collaborations it is very clear that the ambassador will need to have solid facilitation skills and be able to work with all types of people and levels of organizations to act on behalf of the community and the CPL system. Some of the work will be branch specific given the agreed upon priorities that will arise from further staff and community engagement.

IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

As the completion of the initial phases of this project come to a close, the Enlightenment Consulting Group proposes that the following steps occur as the Cleveland Public Library continues to build on the momentum that has been set in motion through active listening and engagement with the target audiences in support of the Strategic Plan.

- Recognize that the value of the community voice in CPL's transformative goals must be concretized through the enactment of a system of ongoing engagement fueled by future conversations and other effective strategies that appreciate the role of the community. This can be accomplished through the designation of human resources committed to this effort thereby establishing authentic engagement as a best practice across the country.

- Build out the model for the ambassador fellowship program based on the input from the staff and community. Identify financial resources to pilot the model in the fall of 2014 and secure funding to begin bringing the model to scale across the system by mid-2015.

- Implement a sustainable model for continuous authentic community engagement as a best practice for transformative operations in CPL. This will involve effective decision making around community partnerships, facilities, programs and services and community engagement as a primary source for understanding community needs. This will assure the relevancy of the library as a valuable partner in eliminating community deficits and thus enhancing the human and social capacity of the city.

- Create a system-wide community engagement lead team TO DRIVE the system change necessary to support the successful design of processes that will promote efficient communications and ENGAGEMENT between the community and CPL administration and branch staff. The primary responsibility of this design team will be to build an organizational culture where all staff have input in all levels of decisions thereby reducing the perception of top down decision making and resistance to change.

- Replicate this process of community conversations as the foundational strategy for development of practices to repurpose branches in alignment with the future facilities development plan.

CONCLUSION

The results of this project indicate that transformational ideas exist in the minds and hearts of staff and residents. They have clearly articulated significant guidance to the proposed planning effort relative to the community ambassador fellowship program. The Cleveland Public Library system can shift its trajectory to become a library of change and community transformation by building upon the assets woven into the fabric of the existing human and social capital that exist in the communities they serve. Being an institution that engages residents, organizations, and institutional leaders through authentic conversations, transparent boundaries and collective impact requires both new strategies and new language.

According to Peter Block in his book *Community the Structure of Belonging,* "If transformation is linguistic, then community building requires that we engage in a new conversation, one that we have not had before, one that can create an experience of aliveness and belonging. It is the act of engaging citizens in a new conversation that allows us to act in concert with one another and actually creates the condition for a new context."

As a result of the work conducted by Enlightenment Consulting Group, authentic community engagement has been implemented and the power of shifting the conversation from a deficit-based approach to one that builds upon the assets of the human and social capital available to the CPL system has generated transformative impact. The challenge now will be for CPL to continue on the course by supporting staff and community throughout the change process. The library's future structural and spatial design strategy will require a clear understanding of how the targeted communities view their concerns and assets. Authentic community engagement strategies will enhance the work of an urban design team and assure the resulting designs move CPL towards its goals. Similar to many organizations that are seeking change, many leaders and employees can often acknowledge and readily state the deficits; however, finding words that acknowledge the deficits, but focus and uplift the assets of its team provides a foundation for a different communication process and a different community building strategy.