

Preliminary Summary of Key Themes



Exploratory Focus Groups
and Environmental Scanning

Stakeholder Focus Groups Data Gathering Framework

- Eight focus groups were conducted from late August to late September 2017.
- Focus groups are a highly interactive approach allowing a robust cross-section of information to be gathered from stakeholders across the community.
 - Focus groups generally included 8-12 participants during each session.
- The focus group sessions conducted included the following:
 - Library Staff
 - Friends/Foundation Focus Group
 - Adult User/Resident Group (2)
 - Young Adult Focus Group
 - Intergovernmental Focus Group
 - School District 303 Focus Group
 - Open Town Hall

Focus Group Data Gathering Framework (cont'd)

- All focus groups were greeted by the Director of the Library a on behalf of the Board. The Director departed and all groups/participants were asked the same set of 6 questions by the facilitators:
 1. How would you describe the St. Charles Public Library to a stranger or someone who doesn't live or work here?
 2. If you left St. Charles tomorrow, and did not see or encounter the library for 15-20 years, what do you think you'll see, or what do you hope you'll see, when you return?
 3. What do you like best about the St. Charles Public Library? Related to that, what are the strengths/greatest assets of the Library?
 4. Can you identify areas or topics in need of attention or improvement? Related to that, what are the weaknesses/greatest needs in the St. Charles Public Library? Challenges?
 5. What are/should be the top priorities for the Library over the next 3-5 years?
 6. If you could change or initiate one key item or thing about the Library, what would it be?
- The data analysis methodology is to transcribe, organize, review and code the qualitative data, in the aggregate. CGS scans and categorizes all input to identify themes and/or outliers within questions.

Process Introduction

Exploratory Focus Group Sessions

2017

- The information that follows presents an overview and summary of key themes and topics that emerged during the exploratory focus group/community engagement process.
- These stakeholder input sessions serve as a *primer* for the environmental scanning component of the strategic planning process.
- The information is designed to add *exploratory & thematic information* for the Board and Senior Leadership Teams to consider during the upcoming strategic planning workshop sessions.

Stakeholder Visioning Results

General Themes

- For the St. Charles Public Library we **envision a future** in which:
 - *The library serves as an inviting community gathering place to foster collaboration and connectivity throughout the community.*
 - *The library's interior space is enhanced with more meeting and study areas to foster group projects, student learning opportunities and may include a cafe'*
 - *There are more blended learning opportunities to enhance diverse participation (i.e., age, race, ethnicity, etc.)*
 - *An emphasis on being a resource center remains the core mission with community access to resources, books, programs and technology.*
 - *There are increased activities and programs for the younger adult population.*

Key Themes & Data Analysis Highlights

Across All Questions

- **The St. Charles Public Library is...**
 - A strong community resource with a variety of quality services
 - Inviting, friendly and comfortable with historic charm
 - Connected to the community
 - An excellent gathering place for community members
 - Centrally-located
 - Up-to-date with technology
 - Progressive and innovative

Key Themes & Data Analysis Highlights

Across All Questions

- **The St. Charles Public Library offers...**
 - Superior customer service from professional and knowledgeable staff
 - Access to a vast variety of high-quality resources, collections, programs and services
 - Fantastic community outreach and outstanding community events
 - Technology resources
 - Adds historical character and charm to the community
 - Excellent, knowledgeable and dedicated professional staff
 - A welcoming gathering place for individual growth or group interactions

Key Themes & Data Analysis Highlights Across All Questions

- **The St. Charles Public Library should *strive towards*...**
 - Enhancing community awareness of the library's services and programs
 - Developing a marketing and communication strategy
 - Increasing intergovernmental coordination and collaboration
 - Addressing space needs and improving internal space functionality
 - Offering diverse approaches to learning via programs and services
 - Staying current with technology and improving rooms with technological amenities
 - Enhanced inclusivity/diversifying staff/multi-lingual programs/representative of all community members
 - Updating the facility's space to meet service needs and functionality
 - Enhance facility access with improved parking and safe walkways

Key Themes & Data Analysis Highlights

Across All Questions

- **The St. Charles Public Library's future expectations and priorities are to...**
 - Conduct a space needs assessment
 - Increase meeting and interactive learning rooms/areas
 - Establish a “Makerspace”
 - Create an inspiring atmosphere with cozy seating and natural light
 - Attract more middle and high school students
 - Support more youth activities and programs
 - Enhance intergovernmental coordination and bridge community resources
 - Improve communication and relations between Board and staff members and with the community

Frequency of Words/Phrases At a Glance...

Phrase/Term(s) Overall	Frequency*
Space/Building/Facility	74
Programs and Resources	65
Friendly, Knowledgeable and Helpful staff	40
Youth-Focused Activities/Student Services	26
Technology	23
Community Outreach/Increased Awareness of Library's Resources and Services	18
Centrally Located/Additional Satellite Locations	18
Cozy Seating/Natural Light/Better lighting	16
Coffee Shop/Café	13

Overall Summary

Strengths

- Variety of programs, resources, and services
- Collection development
- Professional, knowledgeable and highly committed staff
- Superior customer service
- Centrally located
- Connected to community
- Community gathering place
- Safe and inviting place to go to or gather with others
- Access to technology and unique resources

Opportunities for Improvement

- Address space needs and functionality
- Enhance community outreach and awareness of library services
- Update facility with more seating areas and a café space
- Elicit stronger student and youth involvement and support youth activities
- Establish unified direction and improved communication internally
- Increase intergovernmental collaboration and sharing of resources
- Improve parking and safe walkways
- Adapting to evolving demographics of all kinds



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Thank you!

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Frequent Themes/Phrases Q-1

- **Question 1: “How would you describe the St. Charles Public Library to a stranger or someone who doesn’t live or work here?”**
 - Vast variety of quality services/diverse programming/strong community resource (46)
 - Organized/inviting/friendly/comfortable/historical charm/safe/quiet (33)
 - Connected to the community/community gathering place/collaborative/great community events (28)
 - Excellent professional staff/superior customer service (18)
 - Centrally located/accessible/connected to downtown (12)
 - Up-to-date technology/online opportunities/innovative/progressive (8)

Frequent Themes/Phrases Q-2.

- **Question 2: “If you left St. Charles tomorrow, and did not see or encounter the library for 15-20 years, what do you think you’ll see, or what do you hope you’ll see, when you return?”**
 - Community gathering place/inclusive/foster partnership and collaboration with governmental and community organizations/strong community outreach and connection (40)
 - Improve internal space functionality/more meeting and study room areas/utilize outdoor space/satellite locations/increase parking (34)
 - Re-examine library’s role in the community/blended learning opportunities/increase diversity/variety of programs for all ages (26)
 - Keep up with technological advances/establish a Makerspace/charging stations (14)

Frequent Themes/Phrases Q-2.

- **Question 2: “If you left St. Charles tomorrow, and did not see or encounter the library for 15-20 years, what do you think you’ll see, or what do you hope you’ll see, when you return?”**
 - Emphasis on resource center/maintain book collection/preserve historic charm/retain knowledgeable staff (11)
 - Maintain positive atmosphere/natural lighting/quiet zones/specialized lighting/cozy seating/warm/inviting (11)
 - Attract younger adults/student service projects/increase activities and programs for teenage population (9)
 - Coffee shop (7)

Frequent Themes/Phrases Q-3

- **Question 3: “What do you like best about the St. Charles Public Library? Related to that, what are the strengths/greatest assets of the Library?”**
 - Strategic leadership/fiscally responsible/professional staff/superior customer service/strong communication (31)
 - Access to resources/variety of quality programs and services/collection development/inter-library loan (27)
 - Fantastic community outreach/active in hosting community events/community gathering place/collaborative (14)
 - Technology resources/online presence/innovative (12)
 - Central location/parking/book drop off (10)
 - Historical character/Carnegie room/outdoor space (5)

Frequent Themes/Phrases Q-4

- **Question 4: “Can you identify areas or topics in need of attention or improvement? Related to that, what are the weaknesses/greatest needs in the St. Charles Public Library? Challenges?”**
 - Community outreach/enhance awareness of services and programs/marketing and communication strategy/intergovernmental coordination and collaboration (35)
 - Limited space/redesign internal space to improve functionality/interactive learning and meeting spaces /cozy seating/natural light (16)
 - Increase capacity for programs/diversify resources/offer different approaches to learning via programs and services/expand library hours/coffee shop (9)
 - Stay up-to-date with technology/increase electric charging stations/rooms with technological amenities/improve social media sites (8)

Frequent Themes/Phrases Q-4

- **Question 4: “Can you identify areas or topics in need of attention or improvement? Related to that, what are the weaknesses/greatest needs in the St. Charles Public Library? Challenges?”**
 - Enhance inclusivity/diversify staff/multi-lingual programs/represent all community members (6)
 - Financial stability/long-term financial planning (5)
 - Update facility/improve parking/safe walkway design/early parking on Sunday (4)
 - Professional development opportunities for Board members/enhance relationship and awareness between Board and staff (3)
 - Stricter library code enforcement/updated library card design (2)

Frequent Themes/Phrases Q-5

- **Question 5: “What are/should be the top priorities for the Library over the next 3-5 years?”**
 - Conduct space needs assessment/increase meeting rooms and seating areas/establish a Makerspace (23)
 - Expand programming/explore social outings/maintain community’s access to resources/stay current with community needs (19)
 - Attract middle and high school students/more support for youth activities and clubs/enhance and create social interaction opportunities for the youth population (16)
 - Re-design interior/create an inspiring atmosphere/cozy seating/more natural light/a café (13)
 - Improve communication between Board and staff/increase staffing levels to meet community needs/enhance participation and engagement between Board and staff (12)

Frequent Themes/Phrases Q-5

- **Question 5: “What are/should be the top priorities for the Library over the next 3-5 years?”**
 - Enhance intergovernmental coordination/bridge community resources/partner with schools to provide resources to all students/become a community leader (11)
 - Enhance community outreach/increase awareness of library services/communicate library’s direction (10)
 - Stay current with technology/expand technology/increase charging station areas (10)
 - Improve inclusivity/offer public transportation to allow access for all community members (2)

Frequent Themes/Phrases Q-6

- **Question 6: “If you could change or initiate one key item or thing about the Library, what would it be?”**
 - Continue to focus on collections and programming/broaden the definition of resource learning/maintain creativity/community gathering place/stay current with technology/ enhance community communication and transparency (16)
 - Conduct space needs assessment/update facility/maintain historical Carnegie façade/incorporate sustainability elements (14)
 - Elicit student involvement/establish mentorship program between adults and students/increase and support youth activities/allow all students in District 303 to have a library card (11)
 - Establish unified direction/improve communication and trust between Board and staff member’s/staff professional development training (11)
 - Increase cozy seating areas/café shop/quiet study areas (5)
 - Intergovernmental collaboration/sharing of library and community resources (2)
 - Services and opportunities for the older population (2)