

Library Director Report April 2023

Focus Areas:

Building Project (BP)

West Side Analysis (WS)

Organizational Development (OD)

PUBLIC HEALTH

Updates from Public Health at the Mayor's Management Team have been lately, "not much to report." Some services like providing free testing at clinics, distributing home test kits, and free vaccine clinics are coming to an end as Federal and State support for these activities will discontinue in May. Public Health is working on their data collection and hopes to expand on access to that data through their dashboard. I will still ask from time to time if we are in an endemic. Public Health response is most of the country acts as if we are, but it is not something that has been identified in official channels. Mainly they are still working on what that would mean since COVID is still active and although greatly reduced nationally there is still a seven day average of 190 deaths to Covid.

The Mayor's Covid Taskforce has been discussing other City related topics including the end of additional paid leave for all City staff related to Covid, and all departments are reviewing their telework practices.

IMAGINATION CENTER (BP)

The design team and the stakeholders have been in review of the schematic plans and addressing a budget shortfall with value engineering work. There are areas where we can make some cuts but the most gain is by eliminating square footage, which we already did in right-sizing the project for both facilities and I do not see that as an option to further reduce the footprint. It is not unreasonable to think that a budget established 6 years ago would have challenges, especially considering the impact the pandemic has had on construction and material costs. We still have Design Development as our next phase to provide an even more accurate cost for the project. In Design Development we will determine furnishing, finishes, and materials for the interior of the spaces.

This is definitely crystal ball territory but the year delay, moving opening from 2025 to 2026, might be advantageous if construction work slows and bids are coming in lower. This same scenario did happen with the Central Library renovation, where construction companies were needing work and our bids came in lower. Currently, construction in Madison is still in very high demand and there is no lack of work for projects of this scale or larger.

WEST SIDE COMMUNITY ANALYSIS (WS)

Rynn reported that she has collected around 80 responses to the Tell Us survey. The implementation of the one-page version coupled with tabling at the libraries has been successful. Upcoming in May and early June there will be three Tell Us conversations at Monroe Street Library. There will be a community meal hosted with the Park Ridge/Park Edge NRT at the Elver Park Community Center on May 9th. Rynn will also be meeting with NewBridge in May to connect with Latinx older adults on the west side.

She has made good connections with multiple community health nurses at Joining Forces for Families. She helped them with planning questions, and in return they have been great partners for getting the survey out into the Allied and South Madison area.

In general, engagement is going much better these days. With the pace of responses coming in and Parks Alive coming up, she expects to have engagement wrapped up by August.

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW (OD)

The Library Management Team met in a day-long retreat to begin discussion about strategic planning and operational overview. We reviewed our mission and vision, our strategic lens, and the previous strategic plan from 2012-2014. It was a great opportunity to come together collectively in-person since most of our meeting are still via Zoom. It was also a realization of how much our management team has changed since I started in 2012. Only 5 members of the current team were at the table in 2012. We have grown larger and more inclusive in the last 10 years, and the scope and variety in contributions reflected that change.

We will begin with the strategic plan that will be facilitated by an outside agency and move to the operational overview with another outside agency utilizing the newly completed strategic plan as part of the guidance in reviewing our operations.

We are expecting to complete the strategic plan by end of 2023, and have the operational review completed in time to inform the 2025 budget. That would mean an early 2024 target date.

GAMBIAN DELEGATION

I will be presenting a “TAM Talk” on my Kanifing experience and the purpose of a sister city visit. TAM Talks, a play on TED Talks, is a monthly gathering of Tamarack neighborhood residents to share about their experiences or expertise on a variety of topics.

CEOs OF TOMORROW

A member of the Kanifing delegation was Dr. Roxie Hentz, Founder and Director of CEOs of Tomorrow. CEOs of Tomorrow focuses on social entrepreneurship introducing youth from High School and 4th – 8th grade students, primarily students of color, to learn about creating and operating a business. As part of their participation they also receive school credit toward their graduation or toward Madison College. Their program covers the Madison MSA area. Dr. Hentz and I discussed during our stay in Kanifing about the potential partnership between her organization and MPL.

On April 1st I attended one of their Teen Pitch programs at Madison College. Teens presented on their business in “shark tank” fashion to a panel of judges. After the presentations the audience had a chance to see and purchase the products the entrepreneurs had developed for the program. It was impressive learning about the creative process, the reason for their business and product, and as part of the social aspect of their business, some proceeds from their sales would go to a cause they selected to support. Amazing work by the organization and the participants.



One of the products, “There is beauty in diversity” produced by Theckla, an exchange student from Ghana, was part of a packet of a t-shirt, bracelets, and stickers, promoting diversity. Her proceeds were going to an international organization that helps refugees.

MPL will be hosting the next CEOs of Tomorrow Teen Pitch event at Central Library on December 9th.

NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARY UPDATES

Just as I thought we had a done deal with resolving our Lakeview Library differences on Cam expenses and agreeing to terms of a new lease, we heard back from the management company with an amendment to the lease. We will still need to resolve this difference before we can sign a new lease.

Meadowridge Library negotiations are moving along toward finalizing a new lease. We have been having discussions with management about their intent to add cameras in the parking area due to disruptive behavior. It is hoped that cameras will help curb that activity. The Library will not have access to the cameras, and maintenance will be the responsibility of center management. It will add to our CAM costs.

We are having similar discussions with the management of the East Shopping Center where Hawthorne Library is located. The center continues to experience illegal activities in and around the center. There is also some loitering and “camping” taking place on the property. MPD has recommended the cameras in the parking lot, and police doing special assignment monitoring of the center. The Library will not have access to the cameras, and center management will bear installation and maintenance costs, although a portion of the costs will be added to our CAM. Jane Jorgenson, Mark Benno, and I attended a security meeting with MPD, Center Management, and other tenants of the center. The management team has been very supportive of its tenants and is encouraging other activities like a weekly farmer’s market to help activate the center in a positive way.

MADISON’S DOWNTOWN ARTS AND CULTURE

Some years ago a small group consisting of the directors/representatives of MMOCA, Overture, Madison Community Foundation, and MPL came together to discuss possible collaborative work between our agencies. The group evolved to include a variety of other arts and culture organizations. Before the pandemic the group grew to include Madison Opera, Madison Ballet, the Chazen, Wisconsin History Museum, and the Children’s Museum. Plans were being discussed for possible joint projects. Then the pandemic hit and everything came to a halt.

The group recently came together again at Central Library, and grew again to include the Veterans Museum, UW Arts and Humanities, and Olbrich Garden. The focus of the meeting was a presentation on

the new Wisconsin History Center. The old Wisconsin History Museum will be demolished in 2023 and make way for the construction of a new 5 story Wisconsin History Center. It will be an impressive facility and the potential to activate the top of State St. and the corridors leading to the building will be exciting. The front door will be on Mifflin St, instead of Carroll St. as it is now. There may be many opportunities for the new History Center to connect with the Overture and MPL being just down the block, especially with their emphasis on youth visits from across the State.

LUNCH FOR LIBRARIES

The 2023 Lunch for Libraries had to be moved to Monona Terrace largest space due to demand. The event featuring author Emily St. John Mandel broke records for the event with over 700 in attendance and over \$100K raised before expenses. Thank you to the Library Board members who were able to attend. It was an amazing event and show of support for Madison Public Library. The event raises funds to support the Wisconsin Book Festival, and more recently additional funds raised go toward youth programming. A short video by MPL Youth Service's staff shared how some of those funds have gone to innovative programming to support young library users. Unfortunately, the author experienced a last minute illness and could not attend in person. Despite that, the virtual conversation shown on large screens seems to work for the crowd, and at least I did not hear any negatives about the shift. I guess having someone virtually present has become part of our culture by now.

YOUTH LITERACY (OD)

I was joined by Tammy Ocampo, Youth Services Supervisor, to visit the Playing Field, a pre-school, that operates in facilities on both West and East locations in Madison. Tammy and I met with Abbi Kruse, Executive Director, at their East-side facility that will be moving to a much larger space in the former Menard's in East Town Mall. We received an overview of their operations and a sneak peek at the new facility, still under construction. We were there to find possible ways for MPL to help support and promote their work. It was an amazing experience. Their plan to collocate with a Plumber's Union at the new space to provide childcare and help support the apprentice program (and perhaps attract more women to the profession) was impressive. The other advantage to this approach is that the students would be integrated from different socio-economic households. At this time the children at the East side facility are all from lower income and housing insecure households. We also discussed the possibilities of how the future Imagination Center at Reindahl Park., due to its adjacency, may be a resource for their program.

Tammy and I also met with Mayor Satya to discuss a recent meeting she had with MMSD, and how the City may become more involved with supporting schools. Tammy shared with Mayor Satya the many ways MPL already helps support MMSD schools and programs. We also discussed some of the challenges in partnering with the schools with so many changes MMSD has experienced in personnel and leadership changes. We will always have some type of relationship with MMSD, but the potential to collaborate better is something we will continue to strive for moving forward.

ELECTION RESULTS

Again MPL served as early voting and polling places for the April 4th election. Mayor Satya was reelected so our current established relationship with her will continue. The Common Council elections resulted in 8 new alders. (Technically, 3 alders are returning after previously serving on the CC.) I will be making arrangements to meet with the new alders along with Coran Moran from the MPL Foundation to introduce them to MPL's programs and services.

Central Library was selected to host a brunch for the newly elected and departing alders prior to their swearing in ceremony. It was a good opportunity to introduce myself to some of the new alders and

briefly gain a sense of their impression of MPL. I also attended the evening session to meet with alders who were unable to attend the brunch. I was impressed by their level of engagement and the numerous compliments I heard about our libraries.

And a hearty welcome to Alder Sabrina Madison, District 17, who has been assigned to the Library Board. I have known Alder Madison since shortly after I arrived in Madison, and MPL has worked with her in conjunction with the Progress Center for Black Women and other social issues.

BUDGET 2024

The Library Board approved Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was submitted to Finance. I will be presenting our CIP to the Mayor's Budget Team on May 15th. These presenters are to help inform the Executive CIP Budget that will be introduced on September 15, 2023 and reviewed by the Finance Committee the following week. Next major date in the 2024 Budget process will be the kick off of the 2024 Operating Budget on June 20th.

UPCOMING

I will be presenting on MPL's Work Plan to the Mayor's Management Team on May 2nd. I will making a short trip to Omaha from May 5 – 7 to attend an annual meeting. On May 10th I will be attending the annual Madison Region Economic Development and Diversity Summit.

MEETINGS, COMMITTEES, TEAMS & MORE

City

Mayor's Management Team
Mayor Check-in
Deputy Mayor Check-in
Mayor's COVID-19 Taskforce

Common Council
RESJ Strategic Planning Committee

MPL

Library Management Team
Imagination Center Design Team
ICRP Communications Planning
MPLF Board Meeting
Meeting with MPL Foundation Executive Director
The Care Plan workshops
ULC Director/CEO Call

Dane County Director Meeting
South Central Library System Director's meeting
Capital Budget
Follow-up with City Real Estate on Lakeview Lease
Webinar on Qualitative Measurements
Webinar Gigabyte Libraries State of the State
Budget 2024 Cost to Continue meeting

External

Wisconsin Film Festival (Always nice to see MPL's recognized on the screen for our work with the Fest)

Forward Madison game with pre-game introduction to our reading partnership
WBF Michelle Zauner
WBF Susan and James Patterson
SCLS Groundbreaking of new facility
Viajas del Horizonte Artwork Celebration

