



STRATEGIC VISION WORKSHOP

APRIL 29 & 30, 2019

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County



GROUP 4



THE WORKSHOPS

On April 29 and 30, 2019, Hamilton County community leaders, library staff and board members, and representatives from local public agencies, private businesses, and non-profit organizations gathered to discuss the future of the library system and its role in the community. Serving 800,000 county residents, the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County (PLCH) is a top-ranked library system with 41 facilities. A year ago, county voters passed Issue 3, a library levy increase that will be primarily used to provide funding for library facility improvements. This triggered a facility master planning process to assess community needs and plan for necessary capital improvements.

Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning, Inc., a planning and architectural firm, led the library staff and community workshops in April as part of a year-long facility master planning process happening throughout 2019. To develop a vision and plan for a more vibrant, sustainable, and equitable community, the two workshops engaged stakeholders and community members.

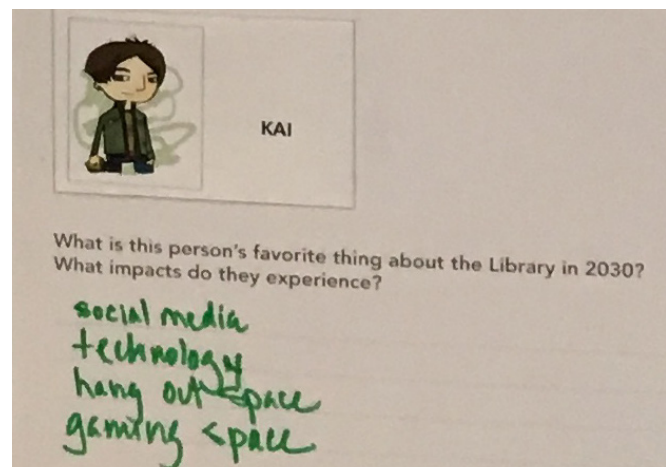
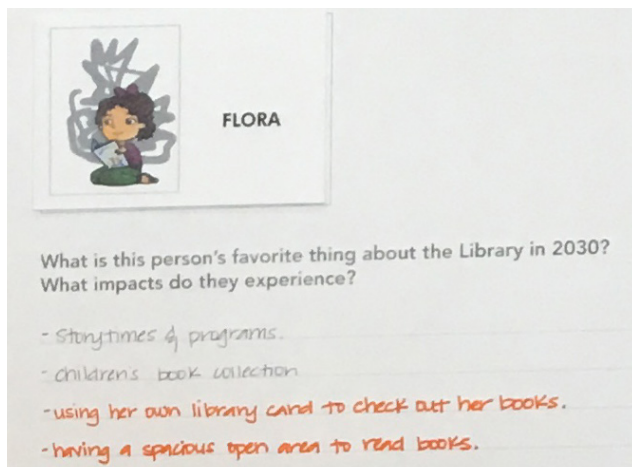
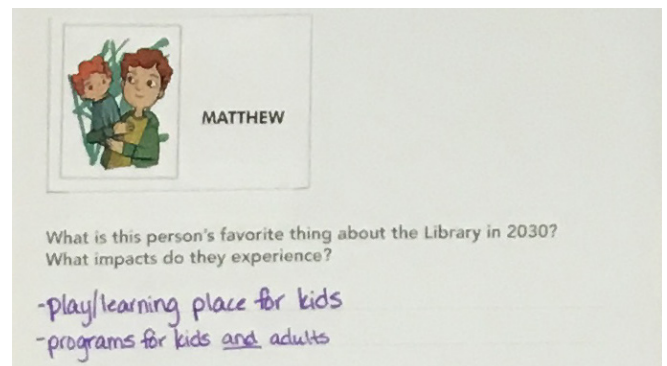
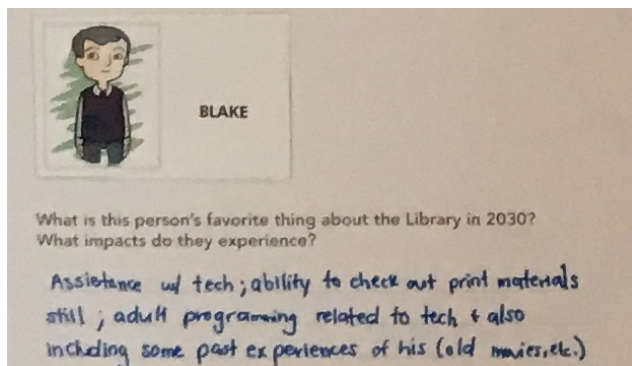
Library staff focused on four themes throughout their workshop: place, service, inclusion, and customer experience. The community workshop examined the themes of place and service too, but also evaluated library and community needs from the perspective of equity and sustainability.

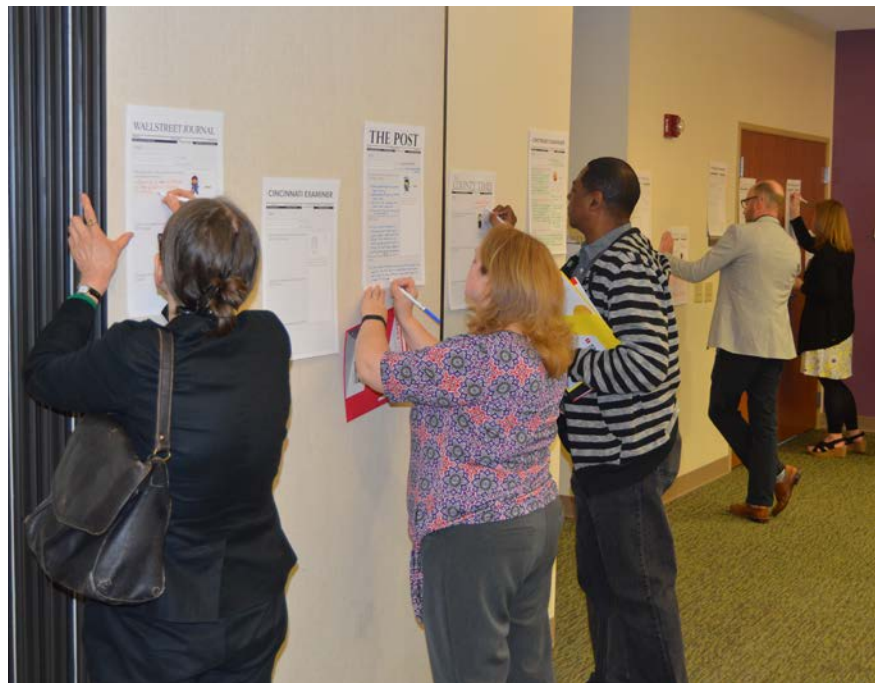
TRENDS 2030: STAFF WORKSHOP

To warm up and start thinking about future possibilities for the library system, the staff workshop began with an activity that envisioned the needs of diverse library visitors in the year 2030. The activity encouraged participants to consider the library's impact on different segments of the community and potential future directions.

This led into a discussion about future library trends, building on the four central themes of the staff workshop:

- **Place.** Libraries should be easily accessible, flexible, and inclusive spaces with both collaborative and quiet areas.
- **Service.** Libraries will need to continue expanding services beyond traditional lending and programming. Technological resources and education for all ages will play an important role, as well as partnerships with social services, arts organizations, businesses, and more.
- **Inclusion.** Libraries should adopt a user-centered model to ensure relevant services. Staff should reflect the diverse community and welcome visitors by removing unnecessary barriers.
- **Customer Experience.** Libraries with personalized, on-demand services will thrive.



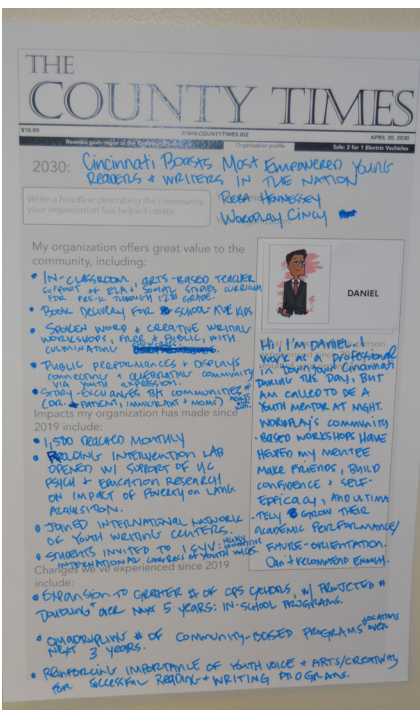


TRENDS 2030: COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

Community workshop participants were also invited to imagine the year 2030, and to reflect on the value and impact of their organizations in Hamilton County since 2019. Workshop participants then snowballed in small groups to discuss the trends that shape how their respective organizations deliver service and benefit the community.

Some of the recurring ideas echoed the staff workshop's discussion. Community workshop participants discussed key trends and issues around the four guiding workshop themes:

- **Place.** Create welcoming and accessible spaces located close to good transportation options.
- **Service.** Be flexible to adapt to rapid changes and provide nontraditional services, address the labor gap, and partner with other organizations. The limited capacity of the library system means that there is a need to prioritize among the many service needs of the community.
- **Equity.** Address equity issues by focusing on inclusion and skill development.
- **Sustainability.** Strive to be sustainable by embracing diversity, transparency, and consistency.



METAPHORS & MODELS

After the opening activities, participants in both workshops took part in a “metaphors” brainstorming exercise. Working in small groups, participants discussed how the attributes of local and national brands, events, and organizations might be applied to libraries. The small groups then came together to combine the most resonant metaphors into hypothetical future libraries representing those key attributes. Each future library was named by its creators and presented to all participants. To facilitate discussion, participants organized metaphors by theme. Several metaphors resonated with multiple groups:

- The **Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden** inspired the most comparisons. It serves as a model for an inclusive “third place” that has something for everyone. Both staff and community workshop participants admired the zoo’s mission to teach through fun experiences. The nationally recognized brand also stirred ambitions.
- **Amazon’s** ease of use, delivery speed, and recommendation system attracted fans.
- The **Great American Ball Park** was chosen by multiple groups as an example of inclusivity. It is an accessible venue with friendly staff. The multi-purpose space hosts theme nights, an attribute that workshop participants readily incorporated into their hypothetical libraries.
- **Netflix** offers exemplary customer experience with its customizable, on-demand services. The company lends itself well to comparison with a borrowing model that evolved from physical to digital materials, providing users with endless variety and curated recommendations.
- The **Flying Pig Marathon** allows participants at all levels to be successful and encourages healthy habits. The marathon relies on community partnerships and volunteer support, a highly relevant attribute for public libraries. The event is also adapted to modern times with the latest technology and a commitment to sustainability.
- The **Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal** reinvented itself to serve a broader audience. It now features interactive learning opportunities and programming aimed at a diverse community.
- **Lyft** was chosen by multiple groups as a model for efficiently aligning supply and demand. As a transportation company, Lyft also improves accessibility, which in turn promotes equity.
- **Blink Cincinnati**, a light-based art festival, inspired a couple groups to think about one-of-a-kind, multi-sensory experiences. With the help of community partnerships, Blink Cincinnati transforms a public space into a destination.



STAFF WORKSHOP METAPHORS

	Space: The Final Frontier	Something for Everyone	Consistently Customizable	Destination: Known	Library of Me (You-ser Experience)
VISION	<i>Build on community partnerships to create lots of flexible public space</i>	<i>Appeal to diverse users with on-demand, custom services</i>	<i>Offer variety of new experiences at accessible locations</i>	<i>Reinvent existing spaces & provide excellent customer service</i>	<i>Set people up for success with convenient, curated services that are fun!</i>
Inclusion	Great American Ball Park	Great American Ball Park	Red Box	Trader Joe's	Flying Pig Marathon
CX	Eden Park	Netflix	Jungle Jim's International Market	Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal	Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden
Place	Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden	Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden	Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden	Blink Cincinnati	Amazon
Service	Starbucks	Graeter's Ice Cream	Apple Store	Amazon	Blue Apron

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP METAPHORS

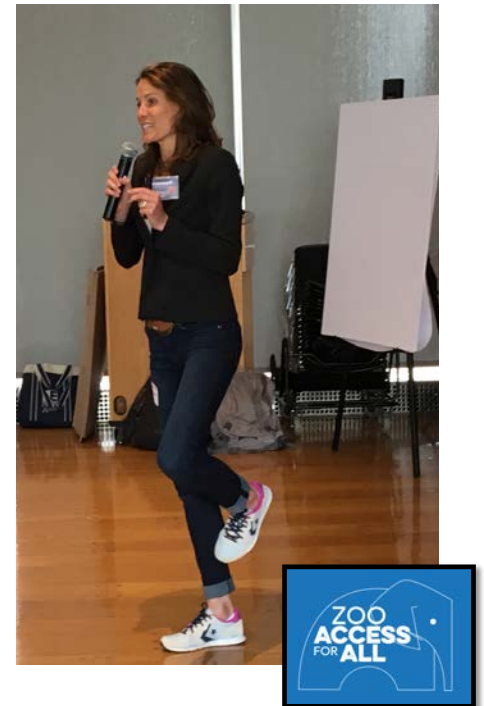
	Highway to the Portalzone	More Than You Even Knew You Needed	Library of Public Welcome, Community Engaged	Librarypalooza: Night at the Library	iLibrary
VISION	<i>Portal to knowledge, service providers, & additional resources</i>	<i>Memorable experiences designed for the community & its evolving needs</i>	<i>Through community collaboration, reach & serve a diverse audience</i>	<i>Forum for local vendors & fun destination</i>	<i>Open platform with endless variety & a compelling brand</i>
Place	Airbnb	Blink Cincinnati, Great Parks of Hamilton County	Aronoff Center, Cincinnati Zoo, Graeter's	--	Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden
Service	Amazon	Starbucks, Findlay Market, Cincinnati Zoo	Spotify, Pinterest, Greater Cincinnati Foundation	Blink Cincinnati	Apple Store
Equity	Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal	Lyft, Costco, Great American Ball Park	Cincinnati Museum Center, Farmers' Market, Lyft	Cincinnati Rollergirls, BBRG	Instagram
Sustainability	Netflix	Lyft, Etsy	Flying Pig Marathon, Trader Joe's, LaRosa's Pizza	Flying Pig Marathon	Netflix



FOOD FOR THOUGHT: LUNCH SPEAKERS

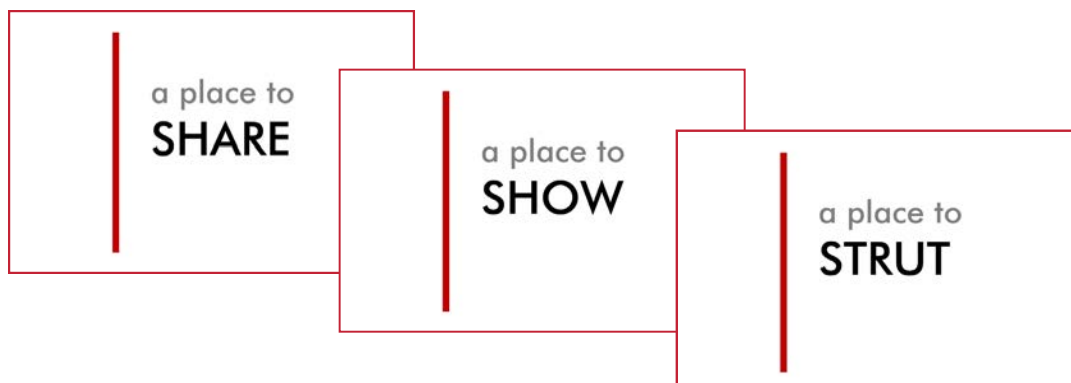
STAFF WORKSHOP SPEAKERS

During the staff workshop lunch, Rhiannon Hoeweler, the V.P. of Visitor Experience, Strategy, and FUN at the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden, presented the “zoo access for all” vision. Three pillars support the vision: serving the low-income population, translating resources for visitors for whom English is a second language, and providing access for the disabled, in partnership with the children’s hospital. To achieve their vision, the Cincinnati Zoo uses a variety of strategies. Special SNAP cards greatly reduce admission prices while still allowing the zoo to make a profit. Students on free or reduced lunches enjoy free zoo field trips thanks to the Living Classroom Education Access Fund. To serve ESL (English as a Second Language) and refugee communities, the zoo has translated its website into many different languages. Lastly, to extend access to individuals with developmental disabilities, the zoo offers a range of sensory-processing and information-processing resources including special maps and a ride access pass for visitors who cannot wait in line. Staff training, sensory-friendly bathrooms, and other specially-designed amenities create an inclusive environment for all.



The guiding principles and creative strategies showcased in Rhiannon’s presentation resonated deeply with staff workshop participants, based on exit survey comments.

After Rhiannon spoke to the workshop, David Schnee of Group 4 Architecture, Research + Planning talked about how public libraries are facing disruption and re-imagining their community role. Examples of cutting-edge library services and facilities impressed workshop participants. Libraries now host events such as the Lilac City Live in Spokane and boast new, flexible spaces such as the Black Box Theater in Dayton. Teen spaces, community resource fairs, makerspaces, and more can be housed in inspiring new facilities. Additionally, many libraries are forming strong partnerships to better serve their communities.





COMMUNITY WORKSHOP SPEAKER

Over the community workshop lunch, Tim Kambitsch, Executive Director of the Dayton Metro Library, talked about equitable spaces and sustainable service models. In comparison to other library systems serving a similarly sized population, PLCH has a lot of locations, relatively high per capita borrowing, and a huge collection. The Dayton Metro Library offers an interesting alternative model of operation. Dayton has a more modest collection, achieved through a rigorous weeding process that determined which materials were most appropriate. According to Tim, the library system was “drowning in books” and branches were “beloved, but too small and too crowded,” until they adopted a collection “diet” and expanded library space. Now, the Dayton Metro Library focuses on efforts to promote equity and create adaptable, forward-looking opportunity spaces for a variety of uses.

Dayton’s approach provided a lot of food for thought for the community workshop participants, as evidenced by enthusiastic exit survey comments.



DAYTON
METRO
LIBRARY

STRATEGIC LIBRARY VISION

After lunch, participants in both workshops gathered in groups to brainstorm and rank vision statements on the themes of Place, Service, Inclusion, Customer Experience, Equity, and Sustainability for the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County. Overall, participants were particularly excited by the following visions for PLCH:

Top 10 Visions Across the Two Workshops

- Embrace and promote the diversity of library staff, Board members, patrons, and volunteers
- Continuously evaluate services to adapt and stay relevant to the community
- Provide flexible spaces and services
- Revisit current model for fines to determine how best to democratize access
- Create a safe, welcoming space for all
- Engage in partnerships with social services, arts organizations, businesses, and more
- Build sustainable, green facilities
- Ensure accessibility
- Empower customers and facilitate community engagement
- Revisit the existing branch model of many small locations with limited space and service and consider providing fewer but larger branch facilities with enhanced services strategically situated throughout the county

The two workshops agreed on most of these vision statements; however, there were a couple differences worth noting. Abolishing fines and consolidating to provide enhanced services at larger, but fewer branches were important topics of discussion for staff, but were not mentioned by the community workshop participants. In the meantime, in addition to the visions listed above, the community workshop also emphasized the library's role in youth development.

PLCH will build on these vision statements and other input gathered during the workshops to plan for future library facilities and services.



THANK YOU

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County and its Board of Trustees would like to express its gratitude to the many community members, stakeholders, and leaders for the generous contribution of their time and thoughtful participation in the two Strategic Vision Workshops, as well as to the library staff and volunteers whose support and hard work helped make this event a success.

Special thanks to Rhiannon Hoeweler and Tim Kambitsch for their presentations.

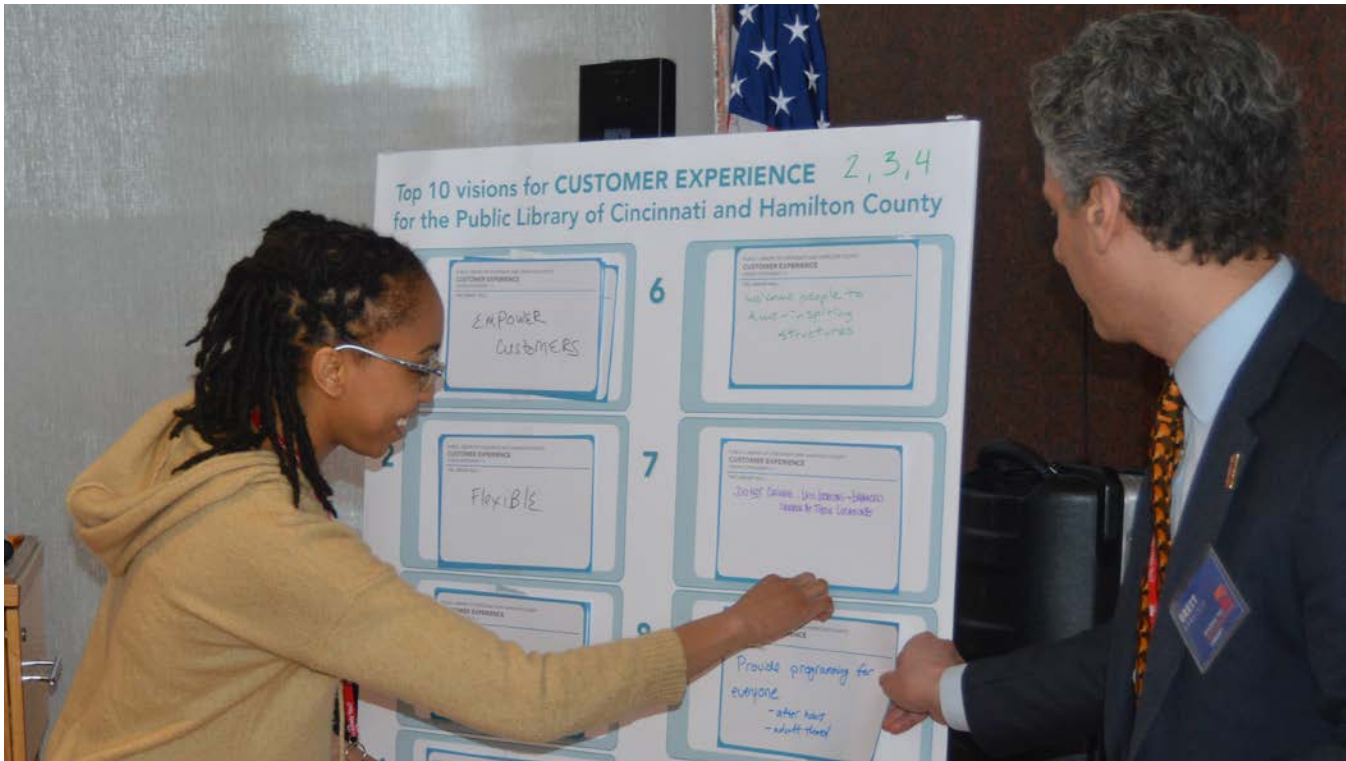
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- Tonya Dyer
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COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS

- Wylie Ackerman, Deschutes Public Library
- Brad Warren, University of Cincinnati Libraries
- Michael Beck, Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
- Trish Kitchell, YMCA of Greater Cincinnati
- Michelle Otten Guenther, Literacy Network of Greater Cincinnati
- Paul Brehm, City of Forest Park, Ohio
- Calista Hargrove, Cincinnati Works
- Margo Warminski, Cincinnati Preservation Association
- Renee Martin, GBBN
- Nicole Schiesler, PreventionFIRST!
- Mathew Cooper, Cincinnati VA Medical Center
- Lee Rose, Scripps Howard Foundation
- Rosie Polter, Greater Cincinnati Foundation
- Joel Lam, Cincinnati Pride
- Jasmine C. Humphries, ViBE Workshop
- Christina Hartlieb, Friends of Harriet Beecher Stowe House
- Janet Buening, Woman's City Club / CET
- Jake Hodesh, People's Liberty / Haile Foundation
- H.A. Musser, Jr., Santa Maria Community Services
- Margaret Fox, Metropolitan Area Religious Coalition of Cincinnati
- Cathy Allison, Transgender Advocacy Council
- Pat Frew, Covington Business Council
- Sarah Day, ArtWorks
- Tiffany Grant, University of Cincinnati
- Barry Strum, Retired (career in economic development)
- Andy Collins, Great Parks of Hamilton County
- Hank Davis, Cushman & Wakefield
- Allison McKenzie, AIA Cincinnati
- Michael Link, Joseph-Beth Booksellers
- Brandy Del Favero, 3CDC
- Trista Davis, St. Francis Seraph Ministries
- Debbie Poweleit, Cincinnati State
- Craig Hockenberry, Three Rivers Local Schools
- Shannon Kemen, University of Cincinnati Law Library
- Amanda Welter, University of Cincinnati Libraries
- Shannon Braun, Alzheimer's Association
- Valerie Daley, Community Building Institute, Xavier University
- Tony Staubach, OSU Extension Hamilton County, 4-H Youth Development
- Tim Eppstein, Cincinnati Police
- Steve Johns, Hamilton County Planning+Development
- Alexia Lohanich, Friends of the Public Library
- Vanessa White, Office of Councilmember Greg Landsman
- Tom Burton, Princeton City School District
- Trina Jackson, Hamilton County Office of Reentry
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- Willie Hill, Greater Cincinnati Microenterprise Initiative (GCMI)
- Julia Elmer, Child Poverty Collaborative
- Carolyn Gutjahr, Northside Resident
- Genell Stephens, Shelterhouse
- Jennifer Ridenour, Caracole
- Claire Pollock, Cincinnati Museum Center
- Katie Brass, American Sign Museum
- Melissa Mitchell, American Sign Museum
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- Sean Kelley, PCW/Greater Cincinnati STEM Collaborative
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- Patrice Watson, Soapbox Media



WORKSHOP DESIGN AND FACILITATION

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LEARN MORE

To learn more about the Facility Master Plan project, and to stay up to date on related developments, visit <http://tinyurl/CincyLibraryProject>