

CREATING THE FUTURE OF OUR LIBRARIES

A Strategic Plan for 2011–2013

ALLEGHENY COUNTY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION



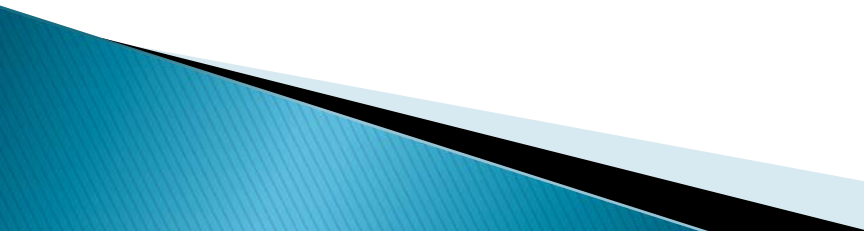
At this POINT in time: 2010

MISSION:

ACLA, a federated library system, pursues, provides and promotes the highest quality public library service possible for all residents of Allegheny County through collaboration, cooperation and coordination.

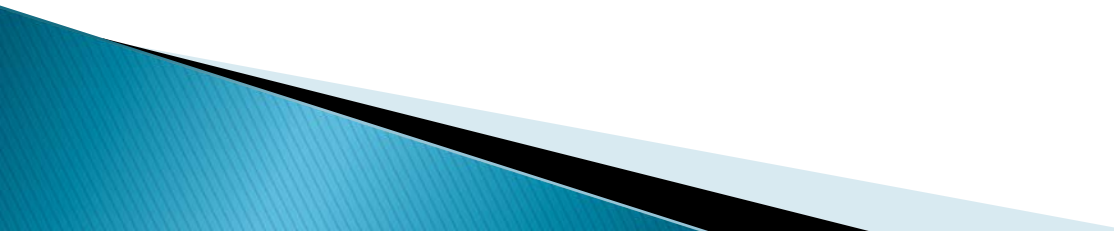
VISION:

To provide the citizens of Allegheny County with the premier library system in the Commonwealth.



AT THIS POINT IN TIME: 2010

CORE VALUES:

- Provides visionary leadership committed to excellence and innovation.
 - Promotes ethical stewardship of resources.
 - Supports member libraries through a free and open exchange of information and active collaboration.
 - Respects diversity of member library opinions and community needs.
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AT THIS POINT IN TIME: 2010

- Where our energies have been directed:
 - *Intense formula process through 2010*
 - *Diverted attention away from 2006-2010 strategic plan*
- Questions that have surfaced:
 - *What is ACLA's primary role?*
 - *Where are we going as a federated system?*
 - *What does "Member-focused" mean?*
 - *Do the current mission / vision / core values articulate those shared collectively by the Members?*
 - *How will our most threatened libraries survive the immediate funding crisis?*

AT THIS POINT IN TIME: 2010

- Representative Planning Task Force
 - *ACLA Board members*
 - *Shannon Debes; Brad Fish; Al Kamper*
 - *Member Library Trustees*
 - *Carri Czyzewski (Bethel Park); Karen Rafalko (Penn Hills); Ernest Williams (Pleasant Hills)*
 - *Member Library Directors*
 - *Christy Fusco (Monroeville), Sharon McRae (Shaler); Adaena Tray (Green Tree)*
 - *ACLA Staff*
 - *Kimberley Hrivnak; Marilyn Jenkins*
 - *eiNetwork*
 - *Rebecca Serey*

AT THIS POINT IN TIME: 2010

ACLA faces critical decisions in a rapidly changing environment.

Current environment:

- ✓ *Decreased funding (the “new norm”).*
 - *Libraries are in crisis mode.*
 - *Will only the “rich” survive?*
- ✓ *Increased demand for remote access to resources.*
 - *How do libraries connect with remote audiences?*
- ✓ *Increased need for collaboration*
 - *How do we deliver consolidated services in a federated system?*
- ✓ *Shift toward electronic & digital formats.*
 - *What are the implications for physical space and resources?*

AT THIS POINT IN TIME: 2010

Assumptions regarding the funding climate (through 2013):

State:

- ✓ *State Aid will likely be level at best for the next few years (possibly further decreases).*
- ✓ *Review of State Code may result in new formula for distribution.*

Gaming Table funds:

- ✓ *Revenue will likely level off due to competition and saturated market.*

RAD:

- ✓ *Sales tax revenue will see increases as confidence in the economy returns.*

Local Government:

- ✓ *As Federal and State push more responsibility to local government, library revenue will decline or remain level at best.*

**BEYOND THIS POINT
THERE BE DRAGONS...**



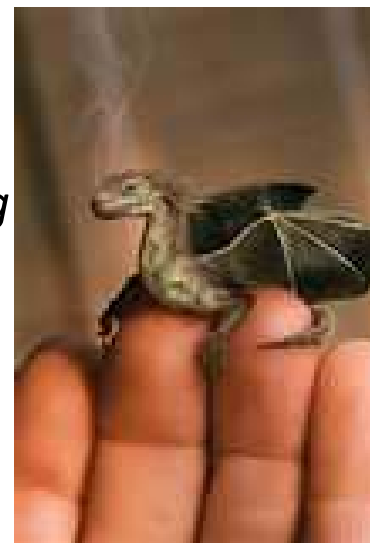
TASK FORCE CONCLUSION

What got us here won't get us there.

We need new thinking to tame dragons.

THREE GOALS for Strategic Plan:

1. *To re-imagine how library service is delivered.*
2. *To actively engage Members in decision-making for the organization.*
2. *To re-think how libraries can most effectively operate and function in Allegheny County.*



GOAL NUMBER ONE

1. To re-imagine how library service is delivered.

- *Develop new programs and services aligned with regional vision.*

- *Gather and synthesize regional thinking to identify trends / needs.*
- *Consider external factors impacting on library service
(content, technology, use of physical space, etc.)*
- *Build responsive service models based on local library input.*

- *Communicate libraries' plan in alignment with regional vision.*

- *Position libraries for success as responsive, relevant, valued, supported.*

GOAL NUMBER TWO

2. To actively engage Members in decision-making for the organization.

- *Utilize communication tools and discussion techniques to fully engage Members.*
- *Ensure that Members have adequate and frequent opportunities to provide input and comment.*
- *Apply process to immediate as well as long term issues.*
- *Position ACLA as proactive vs. reactive organization.*

GOAL NUMBER THREE

3. To re-think how libraries can most effectively operate and function in Allegheny County.

■ *SHORT TERM:*

Identify demonstration projects for outside funding that would:

- *Leverage consortium savings.*
- *Establish new and more efficient relationships among libraries.*
- *Establish large-scale partnerships with outside agencies.*
- *Re-purpose library space from warehousing to materials to interactive community centers.*

GOAL NUMBER THREE

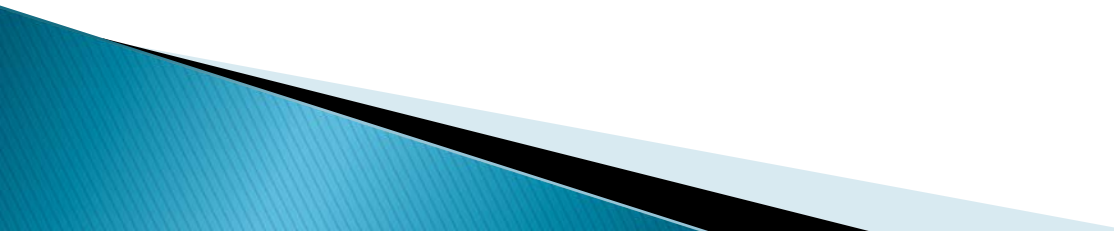
3. Re-think how libraries can most effectively operate and function in Allegheny County.

■ *LONG TERM:*

Consider how libraries can operate most effectively and efficiently:

- *Look at benefits and disadvantages of a federated, consolidated, or hybrid system.*
- *Consider new / dedicated funding sources.*
- *Define roles and responsibilities of system & Members.*

BEYOND THIS POINT: 2011 – 2013

- How we will get there (the desired future):
 1. *Find out what the big picture for the region looks like.
RAD, local government, County, State, foundations, etc.*
 2. *Ask tough questions.*
 3. *Analyze what is / isn't working.*
 4. *Emphasize participation – get local boards involved.*
 5. *Let go of predictable biases / sacred cows.*
 6. *Try new things.*
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BEYOND THIS POINT: 2011 – 2013

ASKING QUESTIONS:

What will the region need over the next 5-10 years and how can libraries support that?

How will libraries keep current and relevant as technology shifts and changes?

How will utilization of space change as physical collections are replaced with digital materials?

What new strategic partnerships should we establish with other nonprofits or private businesses to deliver more effective services?

What will funding of public libraries look like?



BEYOND THIS POINT: 2011 – 2013

MORE QUESTIONS:

How do we effectively measure and reward the full range of library services?

How can the value of library service be communicated more effectively and efficiently?

How will libraries and the system ensure that they have the staff competencies and levels to meet the new challenges?

What should be the responsibilities of the system and its members?

What would be the benefits and disadvantages of a federated, consolidated, or hybrid system?



BEYOND THIS POINT: CREATING THE FUTURE

What is “*scenario planning*?”

“Scenario planning is not about predicting the future.

It is about exploring the future.

If you are aware of what could happen,

you are more likely

to be able to deal with what will happen.”

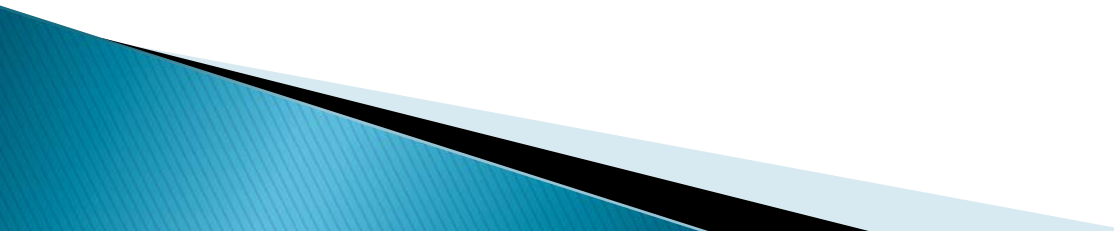
BEYOND THIS POINT: CREATING THE FUTURE

Scenario Planning:

- *Involves identifying trends, exploring their implications, and designing possible responses.*
- *Entails an ongoing, active and focused process that engages and aligns the organization and community.*
- *Results in a set of well-crafted options / strategies that could be implemented as actual environments and challenges occur.*
- *Moves the organization away from a reactionary into a proactive mode.*

A TIMELINE

October 2010 through April 2011

- a) Communicate the scope and desired outcomes of the strategic planning process.*
 - b) Cost out components of process & secure outside funding.*
 - c) Identify overall project manager / facilitator.*
 - d) Identify available in-system resources (including facilitators for local board discussions).*
 - e) Secure commitments for presentations from innovators in the field.*
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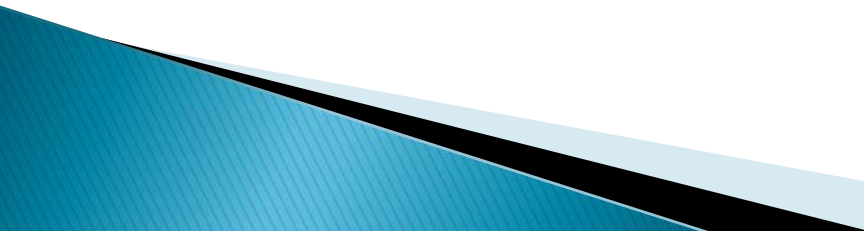
A TIMELINE

May through August 2011

- a) Design process and communications plan with facilitator.*
- b) Conduct inventory of regional vision from key stakeholders.*
- c) Prepare materials for local board presentations including key questions for input.*
- d) Orient internal team of facilitators.*
- e) Host presentations from innovators in the field.*
- f) Host change management training for library directors (underwritten by grants and the system's continuing education funds).*

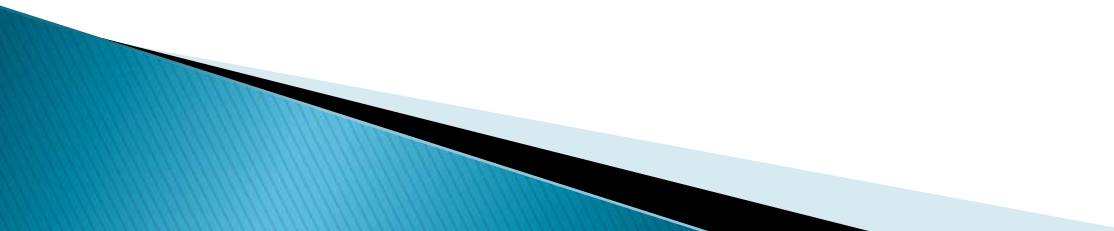
A TIMELINE

September 2011 through April 2012

- a) Deliver presentations to and solicit input from local libraries.*
 - b) Collate input and begin to identify key strategies.*
 - c) Prioritize and cost out strategies.*
 - d) Identify key demonstration projects (short term).*
 - e) Fund and test key demonstration projects.*
 - f) Communicate to stakeholders regarding libraries' new programs and services.*
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A TIMELINE

May 2012 through December 2013

- a) Prioritize and cost out large scale change strategies (long term).*
 - b) Development Implementation plans for those change strategies.*
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What will this process actually look like?

□ *Synthesis of regional vision (project management team):*

1. *Inventory existing documents*

Power of 32, Allegheny Conference, Pittsburgh Today, Allegheny Forum, etc.

2. *Interview key stakeholders*

RAD, County, Legislators, Commonwealth Libraries, foundations, etc.

3. *Capture trends and needs*

□ *Internal organizational discussion and response:*

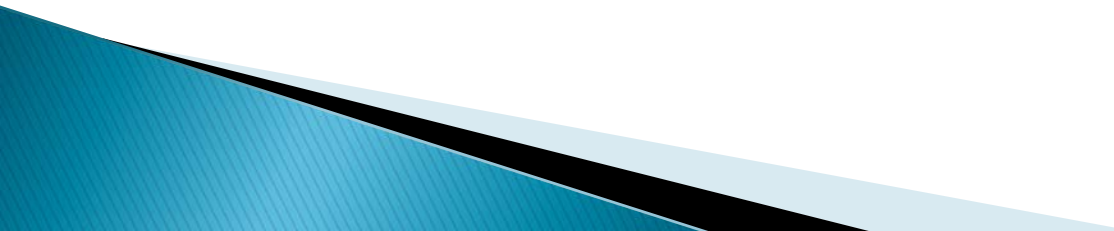
1. *Solicit input from local boards and library directors*

Internal facilitators at local library board, General Membership, LAC, Regional, meetings

2. *Shape and articulate responses to regional trends / needs*

Project mgmt. team with General Membership, LAC, ACLA Board

What outcomes will “scenario planning” generate?

- ✓ *A set of well-crafted strategies to implement as actual environments and challenges occur.*
 - ✓ *A proactive vs. reactionary organization.*
 - ✓ *An organization with clear purpose and direction.*
 - ✓ *Reduced inter-library competition.*
 - ✓ *More effective use of all available financial, physical and human assets.*
 - ✓ *Increased public trust and perceived value of libraries.*
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What about the immediate needs of libraries while scenario planning occurs?

- *Solving current problems – emphasis on funding crisis*
 - *Advocating the positive impact of libraries on local communities.*
 - *Promoting collaborative planning and resource utilization.*
 - *Leveraging system resources to assist Members.*
 - *Developing models for service in at-risk communities.*
- *Creating demonstration projects*
 - *Identifying libraries willing to try new things.*
 - *Securing funding for key projects.*
 - *Analyzing and sharing results.*
- *Monitoring impact of changes*
 - *Keeping an eye on the formula.*
 - *Tracking developments with State Code.*
 - *Reviewing service standards.*

WHAT IS THE FUTURE WE WANT FOR OUR LIBRARIES?

- *Libraries responding to community need.*
- *Communities valuing library service.*
- *Stakeholders supporting libraries.*

