



---

**Martin Luther King Jr.  
Memorial Library**

---

**Staff  
Visioning  
Study**

---

---

This document would not have been possible without the contribution of the following Staff Vision Working Group members who engaged in a two-day workshop to articulate the Strategic Goals of the re-envisioned MLK Jr. Memorial Library:

Manya Shorr  
Kim Zablud  
Jeff Bonvechio  
Adam Schaeffer  
Andrea Akiti  
Ben Merriion  
Bobbie Dougherty  
Brijin Boddy  
Cameron Myers  
Deborah McKinney  
Elissa Miller  
Jen Thompson  
Julia Strusienki  
Kerrie Williams  
Lawrence Clinkscale  
Leslie Griffin  
Marcia Harrington  
Martha Saccocio  
Melinda MacCall  
Michele Casto  
Nick Kerelchuk  
Rachel Meit  
Theresa Wang  
Yvette Davis





## Table of Contents

---

<b>05</b>	<b>Introduction</b>
<b>07</b>	<b>The Framework</b>
<b>08</b>	<b>Library as Mini-City</b>
<b>09</b>	<b>Domains</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Program Vision</b>
<b>11</b>	<b>Framework Diagram</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Domain Descriptions</b>
	City's Community Hub
	City's Classroom
	City's Innovation Lab
	City's Reading Room
	City's Forum
<b>22</b>	<b>Building Narrative</b>
<b>25</b>	<b>Programmatic Considerations</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>The Analysis</b>
<b>27</b>	<b>About The Library</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>What It Means</b>
<b>33</b>	<b>About The Staff</b>
<b>36</b>	<b>About Our Users</b>
<b>65</b>	<b>About The Programmatic Spaces</b>
<b>76</b>	<b>Envisioning The Future Library</b>
	<b>Appendix</b>
	<b>User Statistics</b>

---

---

**“The re-envisioned Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library will be designed to provide a purposeful and meaningful experience for every customer that walks through the doors.”**



# Introduction

The purpose of this document is to create a living framework that enables DC Public Library's Leadership and the Design Team to incorporate the Strategic Vision developed by the Staff Vision Working Group for what the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library Modernization can be and can do for its community of users.

This document is intended to serve as a tool for DCPL and the design team that provides an added dimension to previous programming work and reflects the Strategic Goals of the project as articulated by DCPL Staff Vision Working Group.

Based on a holistic view that the design of a new library is most successful when the design team works in partnership with library leadership, this document supports the collaborative development of library services and physical space design and optimizes the opportunity for a successfully re-envisioned library with customer experience as its primary focus.

This document also sets out to serve as a set of guiding principles established in the draft Library Building

Program, which “aims to go beyond a library that is merely transactional, a place where you go simply to checkout a book, to create a library that truly transforms lives; a world-class library for the 21st century. Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library will be a place for residents to explore, connect, create and engage.” The re-envisioned library will be a place that enriches communities through a library experience of activities, programs, and learning outcomes supported by spaces, collections, technology and equipment.

As this document suggests, design for a purposeful and meaningful experience may challenge conventional library design principles. This document is not intended as a final directive, but to illustrate and articulate a methodology of how the design team can challenge assumptions about adjacencies, program spaces, collections, equipment, and technology to more appropriately reflect, in particular, the Strategic Goals and User Experiences articulated in the following pages.

Most importantly, this document is intended to remind us that we are designing for unique customers who come to the library with unique challenges, needs, and expectations. The re-envisioned Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library can and should be designed to provide a purposeful and meaningful experience for each and every customer that walks in the door.

# The Framework

**The Framework is designed to articulate the Strategic Goals and Program Vision that the Staff Vision Working Group has developed. This Framework, as described on the following pages, establishes a suite of priorities based on creating the purposeful and meaningful experience of all users. It is the result of a two-day workshop with the Staff Vision Working Group, facilitated by Margaret Sullivan Studio.**

# Library as Mini-City

A consistent theme in the workshops and conversations that took place during the two days was that the Central Library is, at its essence, a City Library that serves the citizens of the District of Columbia. As one participant stated, “There is a Washington, DC, and there is a DC.” An important outcome of the workshops was that “the City” (DC) is a “brand” to be celebrated and that the Central Library can be a community anchor defined as “Library as Mini-City.”

## Neighborhoods

Washington, DC, is comprised of 131 neighborhoods as designated by the Office of City Planning. It was clear in the workshop conversations that exploring the depth and richness of these neighborhoods could enrich the library design both physically and programmatically. The acknowledgement of the unique characters of each in the design would provide opportunities to convey a deeper understanding of the communities that the Central Library serves.

## Citizens

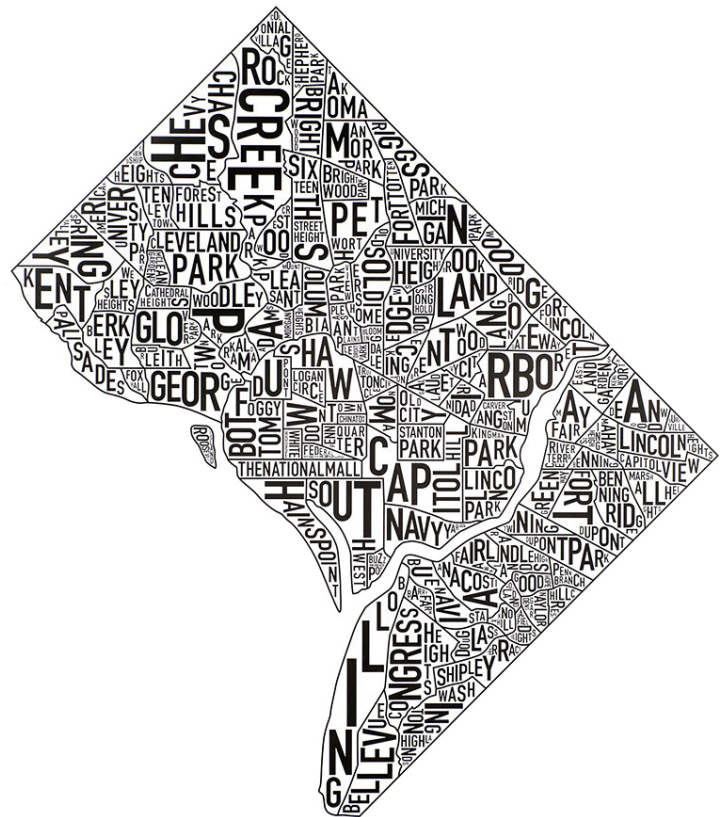
Another important revelation was that the District is comprised of a complex community of citizens, not necessarily the stereotypes of federal government employees, transients, and young professionals often associated with DC residents. Visioning Study participants described complex users with a variety of needs, suggesting that demographic statistics also fail at describing who the library’s current and future customers are. Finally, the “citizens” of DCPL can be from anywhere in the entire metropolitan area, with residents of seven counties in Virginia and Maryland able to get a DC Public library card for free.

## Strategic Goals

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library will be an anchor of the community, designed for the citizens of DC, and be a place where:

**Citizens gather**  
**Citizens learn**  
**Citizens innovate**  
**Citizens read and research**  
**Citizens contribute to democracy**

“Library as Mini-City” is the Vision to support these Strategic Goals.



# Domains

The Domains are derived from the Strategic Goals of the project and represent the most important services the re-envisioned Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library will provide for its community of users.

## Domains

**City's Community Hub**

**City's Classroom**

**City's Innovation Lab**

**City's Reading Room**

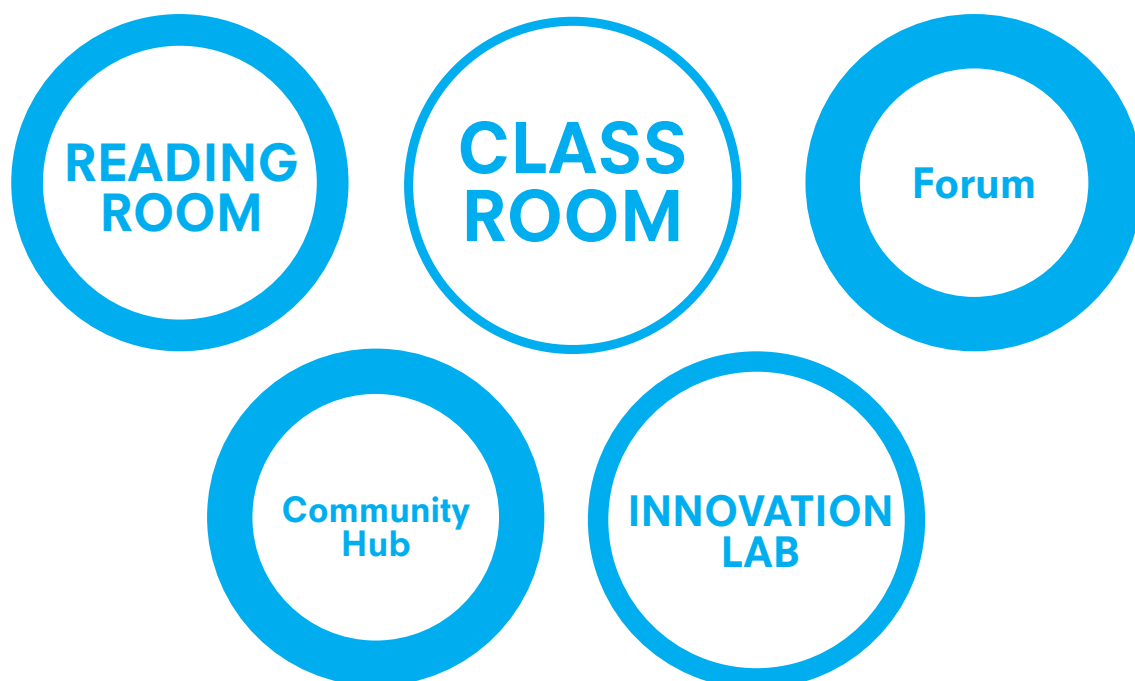
**City's Forum**

Each Domain is comprised of spaces and services and represents five major outcomes and experiences as defined by the DCPL Visioning Study group.

The Domains are also a way to organize functional components to create a meaningful library experience for all users.

The purpose and meaning of each Domain is described in the following pages with examples illustrating how these Domains can be developed as adjacencies of programmatic components in conjunction with functional space planning development.

A Building Narrative (page 22-24) also illustrates how a user engages with both the services and spaces of each Domain.



# Program Vision

The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library will provide boundless learning opportunities for residents of all ages and at all levels along the education continuum. Based on extensive community outreach in all eight wards (with input from over 3,000 residents) and on best practices established in modernized libraries all over the world, some of the services to which DC residents can look forward include:

**A Reading Room and Library:** An inspiring, cheerful, and natural-light filled area for books, readers, and researchers will be a haven and sanctuary for quiet and solitary learning.

**A Digital Commons for High Speed Internet Access, Job Search, and Online Learning:**

The Commons will provide access to scores of computers equipped with productivity software and a variety of databases that provide online learning and certification.

**Classrooms and Training Facilities:** Library staff and partners will provide instruction to better prepare District residents for school and provide digital and career readiness.

**Innovation and Creativity Commons:** Access to and training on an impressive suite of tools will address the growing need for spaces to incubate the next generation of scientists, technologists, and engineers. Studio space and creativity software will empower DC's burgeoning creative community with the means to innovate.

**Co-working and Collaboration Spaces:** Flexible spaces for students, entrepreneurs, and affinity groups to meet, work, and learn together. Equipped with video conference technologies and other necessities, these spaces will host start-ups and other library partners.

**Hands-on Learning for Children and Young Adults:**

Stimulating activities and environments will facilitate early childhood literacy, support for students, and college and career readiness for teens and young adults. The focus of the library's work with youth is to make learning exciting and to stress informal programs that complement the work of DCPL and other partners.

**Large Gathering Spaces for Performances, Readings, and Civic Engagement:**

The Library will be a destination for cultural events, discussions, musical performances, and readings.

**Washington DC History Center:** An archive, special collection, and exhibition space will focus on Dr. King's legacy in DC and the local city of Washington. The center will support the DC History requirements necessary for graduation from DC Public Schools.

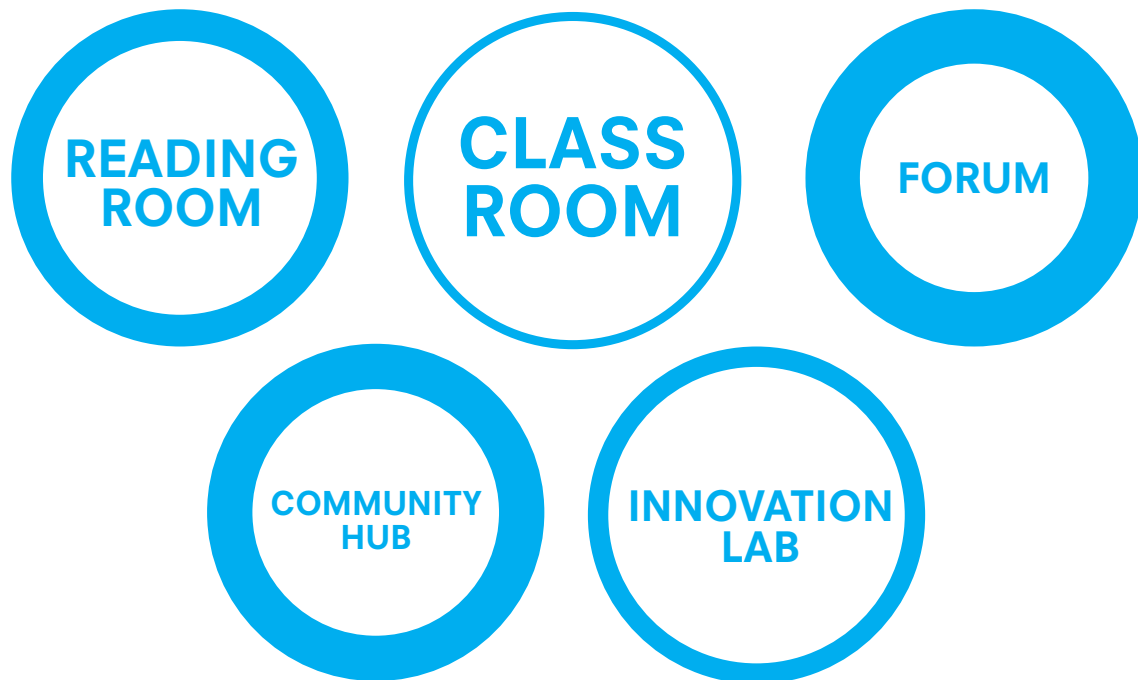
**Flexible Spaces for use by City Agencies and Like-Missioned Non-Profits:**

The building will provide flexible program space for agencies such as Department of Employment Services to offer job placement services, the Office of Returning Citizens for re-entry programs, and DC Health Link to help residents understand and apply for health benefits.

**Auxiliary Spaces that will Offer Additional Services to the Library's Visitors and Jobs for Residents:**

Cafés, restaurants, a DC visitor center, and other spaces represent a myriad of possibilities for a mix of uses within the building that can help activate downtown DC and underscore its importance as a destination for all residents in addition to visitors to the nation's capital.

# LIBRARY AS MINI-CITY




---

**A Reading Room and Library**

---

**A Digital Commons for High Speed Internet Access, Job Search, and Online Learning**

---

**Classrooms and Training Facilities**

---

**Innovation and Creativity Commons**

---

**Co-working and Collaboration Spaces**

---

**Hands-on Learning for Children and Young Adults**

---

**Large Gathering Spaces for Performances, Readings, and Civic Engagement**

---

**Washington DC History Center**

---

**Flexible Spaces for use by City Agencies and Like-Missioned Non-Profits**

---

**Auxiliary Spaces that will Offer Additional Services to the Library's Visitors and Jobs for Residents**

---

# City's Community Hub

The purpose of the City's Community Hub will be to provide a welcoming, relaxed, and safe environment for citizens of all ages to gather.

The Community Hub is the informal meeting place, the "Third Place" of the library where unintentional, spontaneous interactions can occur; where rather than an intentional learning agenda, an intentional informal social agenda fosters positive community conversation, interaction, alone/together-ness, discovery, entertainment, and enjoyment.

This concept is further reinforced in "The Great Good Place: Cafes, Coffee Shops, Bookstores, Bars, Hair Salons and Other Hangouts at the Heart of the Community" by Ray Oldenberg, which argues that "third places—where people can gather, put aside the concerns of work and home and hang out simply for the pleasures of good company and lively conversation—are the heart of a community's social vitality and the grassroots of democracy."

The Community Hub is an essential component of the user's "learning pathway." Connected learning principles state that we learn best when we pursue our interests and have peers and mentors who share these interests. The Visioning Study participants expressed that the Community Hub could be a vital part of catalyzing interest-based learning communities, where citizens could connect spontaneously around common interests and passions, independent of stratifications such as age, school, work, socioeconomic status, and neighborhood.

**"People can gather for the pleasure of good company and lively conversation."**

## **Outcomes**

**To promote positive, playful and happy conversation**

**To promote serendipitous experiences and serendipitous community connections**

**To be a neutral place**

**To create community**

**To be a safe place for all citizens, including kids, teens and homeless**

**To be free and accessible to all groups**

**To be a place for local gatherings**

**To be a place for neighborhood gatherings**

**To be welcoming for all**

## **Physical Space Considerations**

As the design develops, the Community Hub may be a single place, such as the entry of the library with a café, café seating, impromptu performance spaces, popular materials displays and gallery display, represented in the current renderings on pages 63 - 64; a place in a department or program space, such as a "hang out" area in the youth services department for parents and caregivers to connect over a coffee while their child is at Story Time; or a designated space for "hackers" to take a break during the all day Hack-a-Thon in the Fab Lab.



# City's Community Hub

**POP-UP  
CENTRAL**

**OUR GREATS  
PERFORM HERE!**

**COOLEST  
CAFE  
IN DC**

**DC'S  
LIVING  
ROOM**

**PERFECT PLACE  
FOR GROUP  
MEET-UPS**

**INFORMATION  
STATION**

# City's Classroom

The purpose of the City's Classroom will be to demonstrate DC Public Library's commitment to life-long learning and providing accessible education to all.

The Visioning Study participants were in agreement that the City's Classroom Domain could be considered the entire building. Every place in the library could have a "learning moment", whether structured or unstructured, intentional or unintentional. Increasingly, public libraries provide a critical support system for learning at all ages and stages and for all styles of learning.

The Institute for Museum and Libraries Partnership for 21st Century Skills Framework is a great resource for the outcomes that the library as the City's Classroom will be designed to foster. The P21 Framework is divided into four categories: Learning and Innovation Skills; Information, Media and Technology Skills; Life and Career Skills; and 21st Century Themes.

If we take, for example, one of the goals of the Learning and Innovation Skills category, "Basic Literacy," we can envision that the physical space could support this skill development in several programmatic areas: a small group study room equipped with the most state-of-the-art tutoring technology, or a six to eight person collaborative environment to discuss books, or a comfortable and inviting room for twenty to practice speaking English.

"Creativity and Innovation" is another skill category supported by learning that happens in a space designed to promote creative learning engagement, whether a theatrical play space in the children's area or a gaming lab in the teen space.

## Outcomes

**To provide learning opportunities for all citizens at all ages and stages**

**To provide effective learning environments for all styles of learners**

**To provide both "traditional" and "non-traditional" learning environments**

**To be a place that connects learning communities (i.e. schools, teachers, parents, tutors) across the District**

**To provide customized Pathways to Learning**

**To provide Certificate Programs**

**To provide Digital Badging**

## Physical Space Considerations

Several examples of possible learning spaces have been provided in the above description. Because of the importance that the Visioning Study participants have placed on the role of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library as the City's Classroom, it is encouraged that, as the program spaces are developed, DCPL and the design team carefully consider what learning opportunities and programs are happening in each space to ensure that they are most effectively designed for successful learning outcomes. Even features as simple as having a marker board in a collaborative workspace or a printer in a meeting room dedicated to be a co-working space can more successfully facilitate learning. Another example of a consideration could be to develop one of the meeting rooms as a constantly changing "innovative classroom" where teachers from the District could test new teaching methods. The roof garden could be designed as DC's Outdoor Classroom. Considering learning outcomes for each space in the building provides great opportunity to enrich the design.

# City's Classroom

**ARTIST  
STUDIO**

**OUR FAVORITE  
PLACE TO GEEK OUT!  
(COMPUTER LAB)**

**STUDY  
ROOMS**

**COOLEST  
PLACE  
TO BE A  
TWEEN**

**COMMUNITY  
COURTYARD**

**CRAWLING,  
WALKING,  
AND READING!  
(EARLY LITERACY)**

**GATHERING  
PLACE**

# City's Innovation Lab

The purpose of the City's innovation Lab will be to demonstrate DCPL's commitment to innovation, discovery, creativity, originality, ingenuity, and inventiveness.

One approach to layer a meaningful experience on the layout of the Innovation Lab is to consider that innovation is about a process of testing new ideas. This iterative process requires idea generation, research, testing, sharing and collaboration, refinement, prototyping, and production. This implies that, much like the City's Classroom, each place in the library can play a role as the City's Innovation Lab.

The Visioning Study group designated the Digital Commons and Makers Spaces of the functional space program as the "anchor" spaces of the City's Innovation Lab, but acknowledged that in the future, these may no longer be considered the most "innovative" places in the library. The intrinsic character of the Innovation Lab must allow for constant innovation.

## Outcomes

**To encourage a community of innovation and creativity**

**To provide tools that enable inspiration**

**To be innovative**

**To offer tools that are relevant to the community**

**To be national leaders in providing innovative programming**

**To encourage innovative learning as a creative activity**

## Spaces

**Digital Commons**

**Fab Lab**

**Audio Equipment Lab**

**Studio Lab**

**Center for Accessibility**

**Art Studios**

**"The Innovation Lab is not just intended to be a place, but an attitude and a brand that encourages adaptability and forward thinking for all library services."**

## Physical Space Considerations

The Visioning Study participants demonstrated a strong commitment to innovation and to creating a culture of innovation for the customers. The design could tap into this enthusiasm and knowledge to create a library experience unlike any other by incorporating innovative ideas into the design, whether through new technologies, innovative architectural materials, or even by simply designating spaces that encourage new ideas. Also, it is important to consider the infrastructure required for the plethora of equipment and technology that could be a part of this domain, including specialty electrical and ventilation requirements. User narratives assist in creating that initial list of the technology and equipment being considered.

# City's Innovation Lab

**WE CAN MAKE  
EVERYTHING AND  
ANYTHING HERE!**

**THE BEST  
PLACE TO  
DISPLAY YOUR  
BEAUTIFUL  
ART!**

**LET THE SPARKS  
FLY AND PAINT  
SPLASH IN THIS  
COLLABORATION  
ZONE!**

**TECH  
LAB**

**COMMUNAL  
ARTIST LOFT**

**PRODUCTION  
STUDIO**

**WITH EVERY TYPE OF  
PRINTER THAT ONES HEART  
COULD DESIRE!**

**POP-UPS**

# City's Reading Room

The purpose of the City's Reading Room will be to demonstrate DCPL's commitment to literature, arts, and traditional library uses.

Reading Rooms for public and private libraries are historically the grand symbol of enlightenment and knowledge. As much as the decorative qualities often associated with great reading rooms like the Rose Reading Room at the New York Public Library, or the Main Reading Room at the Library of Congress, the grandeur of these spaces evoke the sense of dignity and transformation that we associate with an enlightened experience. The character of quiet dignity, with individuals coming together for individualized study in a hushed, respectful environment adds to our reverence for them.

## Outcomes

To be the place in the library that evokes the grand reading room

To create a place for quiet study, contemplation and reflection

To be a place for focused reading, research, studying and writing to be alone or alone together

To be the environment that ties the meaning of a library to its historical purpose

To be a place that allows learning at one's own pace

## Activities

Quiet Reading

Research

Writing

Study

Tutoring

## Physical Space Considerations

The Visioning Study participants stated that the Reading Room is to be a "conventional and contemporary" experience. Programmatically, the City's Reading Room could be similar to the "Community Hub" Domain as both a designated place and a place that is part of specific departments. The Reading Room domain could be both a large gathering space and be comprised of small and medium meeting rooms and reading nooks.

**"For one who reads, there is no limit to the number of lives that may be lived, for fiction, biography, and history offer an inexhaustible number of lives in many parts of the world, in all periods of time."**

**- Louis L'Amour**

# City's Reading Room

**COZY UP  
& READ  
AWAY!**

**ADULT SERVICES**

**(QUIET ROOM)**

**PERFECT  
PLACE TO  
BE ALONE  
TOGETHER**

**SPECIAL  
COLLECTIONS**

**ROTATING  
GALLERY**

# City's Forum

As the City's Forum, DCPL will demonstrate a commitment to educational democracy. The purpose of this Domain is to empower the community to find their voices and let them be heard. The goal of this Domain is to create a safe place for the community to organize, document, and promote their opinions.

Whether the Greek Agora or the Roman Forum, the roots of American democracy can be traced to the public space that these societies created to be an agency of public engagement and citizenry.

Both the Agora and the Forum had twin functions: to be a center for political conversation and discourse and a marketplace for selling goods. The marketplace concept has already been introduced in the program, and, as the design develops, could be regarded as the public forum "anchor."

## Outcomes

**To be the place for serendipitous conversations that may never happen anywhere else**

**To bring diverse cultures together**

**To promote justice**

**To be a center for cultural activities**

**To promote democracy**

## Activities

**Town Hall Meetings**

**Debates**

**Voter Registration**

**Teen Engagement**

**Free and Safe Meeting Space**

**Conversation Circles**

**Community Fairs and Library Festivals**

**"Ideas matter—and philosophy is the art of thinking about them rigorously. In my view, that should be done in as public a forum as possible."**

**- Sam Harris**



# City's Forum

**ATTEND ALL  
OF YOUR  
MEETINGS  
HERE!**

**A PLACE FOR ALL  
AGES AND STAGES TO  
BE ACTIVE MEMBERS  
OF THEIR COMMUNITY**

**EVENT  
SPACE**

**BEST COFFEE  
DC HAS EVER  
TASTED**

**THE NEW  
TOWN  
HALL**

**IMPROMPTU  
STAGE**

# Building Narrative

It's 6:00 am and the sunrise is just starting to strike the top of the Capitol with its bright rays. The runners are all up and making strides around the National Mall while the streets begin to fill with their daily traffic. The cleaning crews are unlocking the doors and a new day has officially begun at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library.

It has been almost six months since the Library completed its Modernization and word has traveled fast about the amazing space it has become. As a small line begins to form at the door, the baristas fill the air with the warm aroma of the latest Fair Trade coffee. The doors to the "Market Place" open promptly at 7:30 am and the space fills with a variety of characters. Many come for the artisanal pastries but most use the space as a place to wait until the rest of the Library opens.

After the Modernization, MLK Jr. Memorial Library saw a vast increase in daily users of the Library and they were able to add more programs and activities with the new funding that followed. Because of this, the Library realized that if they opened earlier people would come earlier. A lot of the users really loved the idea of learning something new before going to work, so the library now opens at 8:00 am.

The crowd begins to spill over from the café into the entrance area now called the Community Hub and the space slowly starts to buzz with activity. Everyone has their place to be whether it's the classrooms on the second floor or just getting comfortable in the break area around the performance stage. The space is open but still divided with a variety of seating and layouts that all promote spontaneous interactions. Dispersed throughout this area are recently released popular collections: books, movies, games. They are all on display as if it were the coolest bookstore in town.

As the morning crowd begins to make its way to work, the second group of users start to arrive and this group is here to stay. These users are the GED students and the entrepreneurs who study and work all day at the Library. As they move their way through the Library, each person settles into the area that they will call theirs for the rest of the day. The students head to the Classroom area where they have small study groups and one-on-one tutoring sessions. This area also has study guides set up near the computers and quick, easy access to test-prep books. There is an open area filled with computers and projection screens where open workshops are often conducted. There are also individual rooms for quiet study. The students are hard at work studying while the entrepreneurs set up their stations. One starts a Skype call in one of the smaller meeting rooms and another is spreading out their books on how to run a non-profit.

Once the daily customers settle in, the real business begins. The stay-at-home parents and other caretakers begin to funnel in. They make a straight line for the second floor eager to get the best seat for the greatest production of all time: MLK, Jr. Story Time! The kids begin to recognize one another and the parents start to chat. Everyone seems to be very pleased with the new Story Time area, they are almost as happy about it as they are about the entire new children's area. The space takes up half of the entire floor and is filled with interactive educational technology. However, just because there are interactive screens everywhere does not mean that the books have disappeared. In fact, they are even easier for the kids to search through than they were before. There are baskets filled with books all throughout the space and the kids love it! The kids run around searching and collecting everything that peaks their interest then they rush off to their favorite places to read. Some find small

reading nooks while others love lying on the large, soft seating. The whole space is full of activity until Story Time begins. Once Story Time begins, some of the parents and caregivers tag team watching responsibilities. Some of them make their way across to the adjacent classrooms to squeeze in a class while they have the time. Most of the classes taught during this time are computer based, but some of the parents and caregivers find their way upstairs to the Innovation Lab to take creative studio classes instead. The variety of options really allows the adults to enjoy some time for themselves while their children are happily and safely engaged. Many families and caregivers that used to go to the branches now come to MLK Jr. for youth programming. The Central Library enjoys partnerships with many of the neighboring museums and the programs are unlike any other in the country. In fact, they just won an IMLS grant for the innovative programming created from these partnerships.

While the DC natives are enjoying their daily rituals, the tourists come streaming in! Some of the visitors come just for the amazing treats in the cafe and to see the city's skyline from the rooftop garden, but most of the visitors are here for the "Beginning and End" tour of the District. The Librarians designed a tour to 1) Be the starting point for all tourists visiting for orientation 2) To integrate the library's collections and programs into the tour and 3) Create a tourist community that uses the Library as its "home base." The tourists start at the Library by looking at the interactive map of the sites they will visit. The large digital touch screen provides historic information and also provides information about the Library's collections that relate to the selected tourist destination. The tours usually last a full day and they end back at the Library's Innovation Lab where they make a souvenir with the 3-D printers. This Modernization has not only made the Library a great

destination for the members of the neighborhood to visit, but it has also become a destination for people from all over the world to see.

Even though the Library has seen a great deal of activity in the morning it is nothing in comparison to the afternoon rush. The Library fills with youth ages 5 to 18. There has been a huge increase in after-school programs in the Library since the Modernization and with the café and the dedicated youth spaces the Library is a favorite hangout spot for all ages. While most of the younger kids stay close to the adults in the interactive children's play area, the tweens and teens head to the Innovation Lab. The teens have their own 'no tweens allowed' space and the tweens have a 'no teens allowed' space but they all seem to make peace in the large, open Makers Studio. The space is filled with 3-D printers, computers, iPads, art supplies, building tools and more. There is no limit for what can be created! There are also classes that are taught in parts of the studio for any youth that want to learn a new craft. Every 6 months, any work they have created can be submitted to be voted on by other youth and the winning works are put on display on the ground floor in the Community Hub gallery. Finally, the youth have a "Third Place" that they can call their own; a place where they feel safe and free at the same time.

The parents arrive after work to pick up their kids and college students and young professionals start their Library take-over! They all come for many different reasons and they fill every level and room of the Library. Some come to listen to the band playing in the Community Hub and others head to the Reading Room to work on research assignments in peace. Once a week the debate teams from the surrounding colleges and universities meet to put on a public debate in the area of the library known as the Forum. This event has generated some of the largest crowds

---

the Library has ever seen. Politicians even attend to recruit!

The Library started to stay open later for researchers and PhD candidates who love the contemporary Reading Room. And then one of the librarians had the idea to create intern meet-ups during the summer. Now the Library has become the go-to place for the intern community to hang out in the evenings and gather around all sorts of activities, including game nights, creative “making” nights and debate nights. It doesn’t hurt that local restaurants sponsor free food! It can be a sight to see when all of those interns from The Hill are at the Makey Makey at midnight!

As the day comes to an end the library begins to slowly shut down and everyone heads home with eager thoughts of what they might accomplish tomorrow. Who knows, maybe a child will learn how to say their first word at Story Time or a grandparent will learn how to Skype with their grandchildren who live across the world or a writer will write the first sentence to their future best seller or a teen will create the next generation of ‘apple’ computers. The possibilities are endless!

# Programmatic Considerations

## Special Considerations

During the design process the following questions should be considered: How does the space support activities to create desired outcomes? What are the tools, spaces, and conditions that foster desired outcomes? How do the tools—collections, technology, equipment, furnishings, and the look and feel of the space—enable positive user experiences?

## Service Points

Consider Service Points as any touch-point in the library that enables a user to achieve their goals. Service Points may be expert-assisted or self-directed. Consider the function of the Service Point, and design to achieve those transactional goals.

## Collections

Consider designing to prioritize program and activity space over space dedicated to collections. This may require the design team and client to verify collections quantities at each iteration of the design process. DCPL should develop a Collections Philosophy to help guide the design team.

## Technology and Equipment

Consider the plethora of technology and equipment that a public library now houses. Refer to the analysis of the User Narratives in this document to establish the list of items that may live in the library. Consider special electrical and ventilation requirements.

# The Analysis

The Visioning Study group participated in a series of interactive activities over two days. The following pages represent the findings of these activities. It is intended that the design team and DCPL use this analysis to inform the design process. The structure of the analysis is intended to be a workbook that can be refined and augmented.

# About this Library



The first branch of the DC Public Library was built in 1911 in Takoma Park. Soon after, additional facilities were added. The library system now includes 25 neighborhood libraries, three of which are Carnegie built, and one central library.

In 1972, the Central Library at Mt. Vernon Square was replaced by the large, modern Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library at 9th and G Streets NW. The new main library is eight times the size of the original Carnegie Library.

An extensive study by the firm of Booz, Allen and Hamilton had established the need for a new central library in the downtown business district. The original Carnegie Library was unable to keep up with the growing needs of Washingtonians.

The world-famous architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe was commissioned to design the structure, and ground was broken at 9th and G Streets in July 1968. By action of the Board of Library Trustees in 1971, the new building was named in memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The new library, dedicated in



September 1972, has contributed to the revitalization of the old downtown business district and shopping area.

Beginning in 2007, the Library commenced a Neighborhood Library Capital Improvement Program and has invested well over \$180 million to facilitate the transformation of the District's Neighborhood Libraries. The Library has completed or has in process 17 Modernizations or major new construction projects, many of which have earned LEED Gold certification and national recognition, including two RIBA International Awards, along with numerous local and national AIA awards.

In February 2014, the architect team Mecanoo and Martinez + Johnson Architecture were selected to lead the Modernization of MLK Jr. Memorial Library.

# What it Means To Be:

Washington, DC's Central Library is layered with meanings that most municipal public libraries don't need to address. This is both a burden and a privilege, and for this exercise, we asked participants to define what the DCPL Central Library means for the following roles that the Central Library assumes.

**"Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'"**

**-Martin Luther King, Jr.**

**What does it mean to be the CENTRAL library for the DCPL system?**

**What does it mean to be the CITY library for the District of Columbia?**

**What does it mean to be a FEDERAL library for the nation's capital?**

**What does it mean to be the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library?**

The results of this exercise are described in words describing this character on the following pages.



# What It Means to be the Central Library for DCPL System

We are a showcase • We have a wide range of collections • We are a gateway to other libraries • We do not have a distinct neighborhood that we serve • We are a reflection of the City's diversity • We are the heart and brain of the system • We have to have a lot of specialized staff • We have a lot of history • We are the flagship • We have advanced technology • We have a wide range of special collections

# What It Means to be the City Library for Washington, D.C.

We have specialized help • We focus on preservation • We are the link to social services • We are the City's connector to material • We have a large amount of space for a multitude of activities • We are an easy meeting space • We offer free technology • We are the City's campus • We offer interest based learning to everyone • We are a cultural destination • We are where the old & new meet • We aim to cater to all • We are a regional library • We are proud

# What It Means to be a Library in The Nation's Capital

Visitors have high expectations •  
We are also a state library • We  
are a tourist destination • We are  
thought of as a visitor center • We  
have to compete with other cultural  
institutions • Users expect us to  
have state-of-the-art technology •  
We are a model for sustainability  
• We are the nation's hub • We  
are an international bridge • We  
are a connector between Federal  
and State • We are looked at for  
inspiration • We must be excellent at  
what we do

# What It Means to be the Memorial Library for the MLK Jr. Legacy

We want to be a place to celebrate civil rights • We want to promote advocacy • We want to promote justice • We want to illustrate MLK's actions in D.C. • We want to create a better local and national connection to the civil rights community • We want to create a genuine visual transformation • Full-time exhibit • We want to engage local leaders • We want to host activist lectures • We want to be a place that shows artistic representations of MLK Jr.'s legacy

# About the Staff

What an amazing and talented Staff Vision Working Group! For this exercise we asked the participants three questions:

**What do you love about working at DCPL?**  
**What are your passions as a Librarian?**  
**Why did you choose this profession?**

What we learned was that this is a group committed to their community and to transforming and improving the lives of their customers, and that they take great pride in working for DCPL. They also are passionate leaders, change agents, and innovators. They spoke with great pride about “their” library. How striking that the library they describe is not reflected in the current physical spaces. We encourage the design team to get to know some of these talented librarians and design for their “brand” to flourish.

**“What if librarians used libraries to create the kind of communities they want to be?”**

# What do you love about DCPL?

Innovative • Trusting staff support • **Anything is possible** • Role models for the community • **Enthusiastic** • Equitable non-judgemental • **Commitment to improvement** • We break it better • **Play Create Learn** • Say Yes! • Instill life-long passion for reading • Everything is free • Unique • **Quality programs and services** • Constantly improving • Appreciative customers • **Diverse History and Culture** • Freedom to create • **Accessible** • Collaborative

# What are your Passions as a Librarian?

## The Library can change your life

- To make a difference at a the local level
- Amazing democratic place
- Programming
- **Helping make connections**
- Caring about my City, our City
- Connecting with the public
- **Helping others feel empowered**
- People are our passions
- Connecting people to information and services
- **Opportunities for teens**
- Make life easier for others
- Technology
- **Singing, talking, playing, and reading**

# About the Users

The exercises and activities related to User Experience form the core of our work. During the two-day workshop, we spoke about the variety of library customers that currently use DCPL and those that are envisioned as future users. Our premise is that we are not designing for “department” users, as has been the basis of library design in the past, but for a unique customer with unique challenges and expectations.

As a way to further articulate this idea, we asked the participants to write User Narratives. The participants were divided into pairs, each group selected a user based on the customers they typically serve, and wrote stories based on the following key questions:

**Who are your users?**

**Why are they coming to the library? What is their desired outcome?**

**What are the positive experiences and feelings that the library will provide?**

**Consider the space where these activities occur; what is their look and feel?**

**What are the “enablers”? Collections? Technology? Staff and community partners?**

**How is a user spending a day? An hour? When will the customer return and what will they do?**

**Why is the user choosing the library over going to other cultural and educational public places in the community?**

We then analyzed the narratives to cull important aspects that will inform both a re-envisioned service model and re-envisioned physical space.

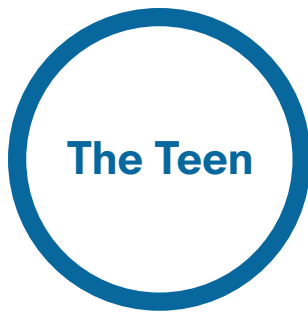
**Outcomes**  
**Experiences**  
**Programs and Services**  
**Marketing and Outreach**  
**Spaces**  
**Collections**  
**Technology and Equipment**  
**Look and Feel**

The goal of this structure is to create a holistic approach to designing a re-envisioned library and to create a qualitative program that augments the quantitative program.

In the following pages you will meet the users that each participant group selected to write about. These narratives are a great window into the library customers and their interest. However, since each group of participants was allowed to select their users, there are a number of users you will not meet in the following pages. The others users that have not been mentioned include:

**New Retirees**  
**Job Seekers**  
**Tourist**  
**Community Organizers**  
**Emerging Adults (18-24)**  
**Customers Without Homes**





## The Teen

By Martha & Kim

Describe your customer: Our customer is a teen who lives in the city and attends public high school. He enjoys many of the things a typical teens enjoys, like sports, music, hanging out with friends. He gets pretty good grades at school, but sometimes feels like he doesn't have all the resources that some of his more affluent peers have. For example, he enjoys spending time on-line, but he doesn't have a computer at home. He does have a smart phone.

He is hoping to be the first one in his family to attend college. He thinks he might like to study engineering because he really likes to solve problems and one of his teachers said it would suit him, but he doesn't really know what engineering is. Now that he is in high school, he finds some homework assignments pretty challenging. His parents can't really help him with his math, because they never took advanced classes. Same goes for his Spanish class. Besides, his mom is pretty busy taking care of his three younger siblings. In fact, the house is pretty chaotic in the evenings, and it not the best place to get studying done. He doesn't know the first thing about navigating the college search process. The whole thing feels a bit overwhelming to him.

What are the positive experiences and outcomes that the library will provide? Our teen can solve a lot of his problems at the library. He can find a place to study and get on-line. He can get help from the Homework Help lab that is open and staffed with trained tutors every day after school. The teen space is co-located with a fabrication lab where he can take classes and learn more about computers and technology. He can visit the College Center and get help navigating the whole college search process. He can even get help filling out applications and financial aid forms.

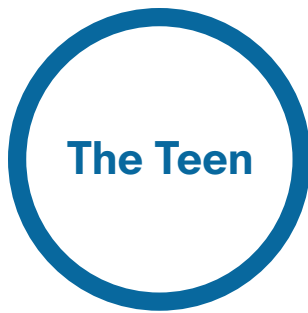
How is the user spending a day? An Hour? When

will the customer return and what will they do? Typically, he comes to the library 2-3 days a week after school. He's really found it is the best place to get work done. He usually spends the first 30 minutes just hanging out and checking his social media and eating a snack in the teen café. He doesn't really need the computer to check his social media because he does that all from his smart phone. Then, he turns to whatever homework he needs to get done. He gets help from the tutors.

He still has some community service credit hours that he has to earn in order to graduate from high school next year. He is psyched because the library has a volunteer program where he can earn those hours working in the café and assisting with other tasks like signing kids up for summer reading and helping out at special events.

What are the activities, programs and services he is experiencing at the library? What is he learning, creating and sharing? How is the staff assisting? He uses the teen space, the teen café and the homework help center regularly. On occasion, he will take a class in the fabrication lab. He has learned about programming, movie editing and a few other cool projects that he learned about from one of the librarians who has taken an interest in him. He also has visited the College Center at the librarian's encouragement and has started researching colleges that offer engineering programs. He still isn't sure about navigating the whole college thing, but now he feels more confident that he has a resource that can assist him.

Consider the spaces where these activities occur. What is their look and feel? What are the collections, technology and equipment that are supporting their experience? The teen space has an atmosphere that is totally different from the rest of the library. It is a



---

more industrial vibe, with easy-to-clean floors and surfaces. Here, food and drink is allowed as long as the teens clean up after themselves. In fact, there is a small café adjacent to the space with affordable drinks/snacks. Teens can even use a special card that gives them a discount on purchases.

There is comfortable lounge seating and round tables where teens can work in groups. There are big ottomans where the teens can sprawl out if they prefer not to sit. There is a big flat screen where teens can game, but it is separated from the Homework Help area so that the teens who want to get work done aren't distracted. The space is well-lit, but the lighting is more task-focused, not uniform overhead fluorescent. The space is adjacent to the big fabrication lab where customers of all ages come to learn new skills and collaborate on projects. The teen space always seems to have the latest cool gadgets and the staff know how to use them. The staff is constantly coming up with interesting classes like jewelry making on a 3-D printer, using graphics programs to create tattoo designs and even bicycle repair clinics. That is great for our teen, because he often rides a bike to the library. His family doesn't own a car.

Why is the customer choosing the library over going to other cultural and educational public places in the community? Our teen comes to the library for several reasons. It is conveniently located on public transportation and there are plenty of bikes racks out front when he does ride his bike. Some more affluent kids at his school go to Starbucks after school, but he can't afford that – the manager there requires that everyone at a table make a purchase. Also, he feels like they get hassled when they hang out in public places. The library is the one place where he feels welcome. It has a cool, welcoming vibe and he has found adults there who take a genuine interest in helping him achieve his goals.

# The Teen

## Domain

## Use

Community  
Hub

CLASS  
ROOM

INNOVATION  
LAB

READING  
ROOM

Forum

### Outcomes

- First one to attend college
- Found a great place to get work done
- Learned new skills
- Gained knowledge of colleges
- Found a possible career path
- Created confidence
- Discovered resources

### Marketing & Outreach

### Technology & Equipment

- Computers
- Mobile devices
- 3-D Printer

### Furnishings

- Comfortable
- Lounge seating
- Round Tables
- Big ottomans

### Collections

### Programs & Services

- Homework Assistance
- Tech Classes
- College Search Help
- Volunteer Program
- Summer Reading
- Crafting Classes
- Affordable Food
- Adults with Interest in Helping

### Spaces

- Homework Help Lab
- Fabrication Lab
- College Center
- Teen Cafe

### Look & Feel

- Completely different
- Industrial vibe
- Easy-to-clean
- Well-lit with multiple layers

### Experiences

- Finding a safe place
- Place to call his own
- Getting help from advisors
- Assisting with sign-up events
- Hanging-out after school
- Eating while working
- Easy to access resources



By Ben & Marcia

---

**Describe your Customers:** Our customers include adult learners (native and non-native speakers of English who are at least 18 years old), friends, acquaintances, and family of adult learners, adult literacy practitioners, and community-based and government agency stakeholders. We also serve those with intellectual disabilities.

Our customers come to the library to get information, referrals and resources concerning adult literacy programs and the services that we currently provide. The services are: student assessments, tutoring, information and referral to adult literacy programs, information about adult literacy volunteer opportunities, books and materials for leisure reading and instructional purposes, book club discussions, trainings for practitioners, and targeted programs (e.g. English Conversation Circles).

**The problems that lower literacy customers experience are finding help in:** getting a high school credential; meeting instructional needs; discerning educational pathways; finding easier to read materials. Adult literacy practitioners need help in identifying professional development needs and gaining teaching skills and strategies as well as finding resources to use with their students.

**Positive Experiences and Outcomes Provided by the Library:** We provide answers to questions related to adult literacy and referrals to adult education programs and places that take volunteers. We help potential adult learners identify their skill levels content area needs by providing assessments for those who want to pursue obtaining a high school credential. Our customers have access to unlimited use of computers for instructional purposes. The tutoring services we provide help our customers improve their skills. We also provide them with free GED practice tests once they are ready to take

the GED tests. We provide teacher trainings that focus on instructional practices and resources. The trainings and best practices meetings we host also provide interaction and sharing with colleagues and peers. We also provide free books to adult learners when they participate in our book discussion series (A Feel for Books.)

**How Our Users Spend Their Time:** Our customers spend their time being tutored and improving their reading, writing and math skills. Customers are also studying, testing, reviewing resources, training, engaging in book discussions or special programs such as our Opportunities Fair. They obtain information both verbal and written about adult literacy programs and what those programs provide. Some have ongoing needs for tutoring and training so they return for those opportunities. Adults who need tutoring return during the times and days of the week when we offer that service. Adult literacy practitioners who desire training return when workshops are scheduled or when they require technical assistance.

**Activities, Programs, and Services Our Customers Experience at the Library:** In addition to the previously mentioned services that our center provides, some of our customers attend the computer classes in the Library's computer lab as well as the monthly job seekers clinics. They check out DVDs and CDs in the Popular Library Department, including ones that help them build English language skills. Customers use our online resources such as the Learning Express Library, the Testing and Education Reference Center and Homework Help.

Adult learners write essays for our annual Women's History Month Essay Contest, and they participate and share their ideas, experiences and reflections



during book discussions. During trainings adult literacy practitioners share techniques that help their learners gain skills, and they learn how to create lesson plans. They also create lesson plans and share them with the participants at the trainings. Staff publicize and coordinate the essay contest as well as edit the essays for a collection. Staff also hold trainings and/or recruit teacher trainers to provide professional development. We also provide outreach at community events and present at adult literacy programs and other community based organizations letting people know about the services our center provides as well as other services the library provides that they might be interested in such as our job seekers clinics and our Online resources.

**Spaces Where Activities Occur:** The spaces where our programs and services take place include our reading room, our tutoring/computer lab and our training room. Our reading room is open and accessible with our collection being organized by subject and not the Dewey decimal system. Our computer lab has computers in each cubicle and the space is designed so that tutors and students can be intimate when working together. We also have a CCTV in this space which can magnify books and materials for people with visual impairments.

Our training room is multi-functional so that we can have a variety of programs and events take place there. It can be set up as a classroom, arranged for trainings and our conversation circles, or we can move the tables out and arrange chairs in a circle for our book discussions. We have a SmartBoard, a CD Player and 5 Chromebooks in this space.

**Why Customers Choose the Library Instead of Other Related Places:** We are the only adult literacy resource center in the city and the DC Metropolitan

area. The Adult Literacy Resource Center in Virginia is located in Richmond. We are a one-stop office for many different kinds of services and information related to adult literacy.

We are also the only place in the DC Metropolitan area that provides free, ongoing professional development for adult literacy educators. Thus, we have adult literacy practitioners from Maryland and Northern Virginia attend our trainings as well as those who work in the District. Many who attend are not here for the first time and attend on a regular or semi-regular basis because they desire to learn more ways to help their learners and to interact and share information and practices with their peers.

We are the only place that provides free, drop-in tutoring for a high school credential without students having to go through a formal registration process, and the library is the only place that provides free, drop-in conversation circles for speakers of other languages. These help these non-native speakers of English practice conversational skills and build vocabulary, fluency and cultural awareness. No formal registration process or testing is required.

The location of the library is extremely convenient for most of our customers, and they appreciate being able to use various forms of transportation to get to the library. Our customers also appreciate our staff who understand their educational needs and respect the need for their confidentiality and who provide non-judgmental service to an at-risk population.



Domain

Use



### Outcomes

- Referrals to adult education
- Identify the customer's skills
- Provide skill level assessment
- Improve skills with tutoring
- Build confidence with practice
- Peer-to-Peer knowledge sharing
- Customers take home free books

### Marketing & Outreach

- Only center in DC Metro area

### Technology & Equipment

- Computers / co-working space
- Accessibility hardware/software
- SmartBoards
- CD players
- Laptops

### Furnishings

- Two person cubicles
- Multiple teaching arrangements

### Collections

### Programs & Services

- Tutoring
- Student assessments
- Information and referrals
- Training
- Group studying
- Book discussions
- Opportunities fair
- Workshops/classes
- Job seeker clinics
- Online resources
- Essay contest
- Teacher sharing

### Spaces

- Reading Room
- Tutoring Rooms
- Computer Lab
- Training Room

### Look & Feel

### Experiences

- Getting a high school credential
- Meeting instructional needs
- Discerning educational pathways
- Finding easier to read material
- Identifying development needs
- Gaining teaching strategies
- Finding new resources



# Brilliant Teen

By Jen & Bobbie

I came to MLK Library because I had an assignment to learn about DC voting rights. I used to hang out in Gallery Place/Chinatown all the time but my friends and I didn't go in the library too often - It seemed like there was always too much going on - but not in a good way. When I walked through the revolving doors I was so surprised by how the library has changed!

There were a lot of people walking around - it was so busy. I must have looked confused because a librarian who was walking by asked me if I needed help. I told her I wanted to research DC voting rights and she pointed down to the floor - there was a

giant map of DC that I had been standing on the whole time PLUS a really cool interactive timeline that displayed DC history - including voting rights!

The librarian told me to head to the Teen Space to get more help with my assignment, so I went in that direction. As I started walking, the first thing I saw was a whole space where people were making things. They had all sorts of technology, equipment and tools - things that I would use in shop class and art class. I didn't know you could do that stuff in a library! I watched people make things for a few minutes through a glass wall before noticing that the teen space was right next door.



Hamilton Grange New York Public Library



When I walked in to the teen space, I immediately felt really comfortable. It was so open and had everything there! College information, vending machines with earbuds and flash drives, lots of books and magazines - even stations where I could download books and music straight to my phone with my library card.

There were lots of laptops and study rooms available to use and there were all kinds of different programs happening. I noticed fliers for an open mic, author visits, coding workshops and a video game tournament against other libraries. I love playing video games, so I was glad to see that they had the latest systems and games.

There were lots of other teens in the space. Some were playing games, others were doing homework and some were just hanging out and eating. There was lots of comfortable seating and tables, and the staff were really nice when I asked them about the library. They told me about the different kinds of programs and how teens can help. They have cool internships and volunteer opportunities where I can get credit for school, and they'd even let me help create and run the programs!

I checked out a laptop and had the librarian show me some good resources on the library website for learning more about DC voting rights. While I was researching I noticed that a group of teens were messing around and working on different beats nearby. I started playing excerpts from a speech about DC statehood that I was listening to over their beats and it sounded pretty cool. They asked me to come back later to try to record a full song in the library's recording studio! We could then enter it into a contest that was coming up later that month.

I recognized one of the kids from middle school - I hadn't seen her since we started going to different high schools across the city, it was so awesome to catch up. It seems like the Teen Space is a place where teens from all over the city meet up and I can't wait to go back and maybe earn my required community service hours there.

After I returned the laptop and went to grab a copy of a book for my AP English class, I saw flatscreens advertising cool programs for older adults and little kids. They offer workshops and courses where my parents can learn about all sorts of things. There's a whole children's section where my little brothers can play on computers and hang out and read.

On my way out, I passed a cool art exhibit that was all about streets named after Martin Luther King, Jr. all over the country. This library is named after him too and there is always something happening relating to MLK Jr. in the building. I listened in on the librarian interview the artist about the exhibit for a minute but I really had to go get that book and head home - I spent so much more time at the library than I thought I would!





Domain

Use



### Outcomes

- Learning about new technology
- Connecting with friends
- Safe environment
- Earn community service hours

### Marketing & Outreach

### Technology & Equipment

- Digital map of DC
- Shop and art class machines
- Vending machines (with tech products)
- Laptops
- Download station
- Latest game tech
- Recording equipment
- TVs

### Furnishings

- Comfortable seating
- Varying size tables

### Collections

- Books and magazines
- Download Station

### Programs & Services

- College information
- Open mic
- Author visits
- Coding workshops
- Video game tournament
- Internships
- Volunteer programs
- Teen teaching
- Music contest
- Art exhibit

### Spaces

- Teen space
- Adjacent to makers space
- Study rooms
- Recording booth
- Tween area

### Look & Feel

- Busy
- Fun
- Energetic
- Comfortable/Open
- Welcome

### Experiences

- Immediate help from roaming staff
- Helped with research
- Unexpected lecture
- Meeting old friends



By Yvette & Cameron

I stop by MLK Library with my friends because it is a perfect meet up place between hangout spots. We like to go to eat, catch a movie, and check out the downtown sites. I walked into the library looking for a spot to chill while waiting for my friends to show up. I didn't expect a library to have such a cool vibe. It looked like a mall... full of information. I'm not that into reading, and I've never felt that the library was really a place for me.

When I walked in there was so much to check out. . . and not in a stuffy museum nerd kind of way. There is a place to record music, relax and listen to my iPod, learn how to make clothes, create computer apps, and learn about movie making and video game development. I've always been a big gamer and wanted to make my own games. I never would have thought that the library would be the place to go to learn this.

Not only that, the people that work there don't kick us out just for being teens. A lot of places me and my friends go, the people give us mean looks when we enter, but the library isn't one of those place. That means a lot to me. Also, I'm not the best student, but when I do need help the librarians are great about lending a hand. They also had a class to help me make my first resume and find a job.

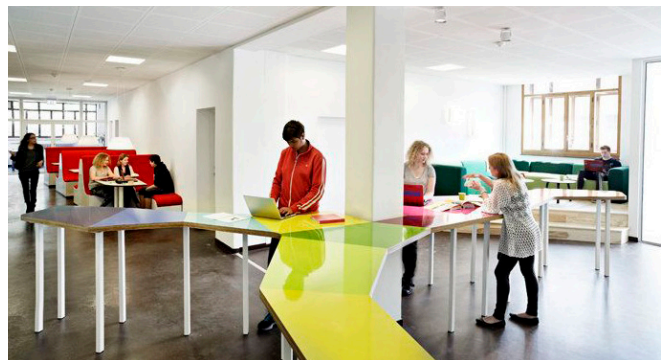
Also, I saw someone that goes to my school that works at the library. He helped us with the make a movie from a video on my phone. I never thought a library would have so many different kinds of things we like to do. It's real cool what the library has done for me and my friends.



Stockholm Öppettider TioTretton Library



Swedish School Vittra Södermalm



Denmark Campus Gentofte



Domain

Use



### Outcomes

- Library becomes a place for all

### Marketing & Outreach

### Technology & Equipment

- Video production
- Speakers
- TVs
- Gaming tech

### Furnishings

### Collections

### Programs & Services

- Fashion design
- Computer software classes
- Movie making
- Video game development
- App development
- Resume writing
- Job searching

### Spaces

- Recording studio
- Places to relax
- Space to listen to music
- Maker studios
- Computer studios

### Look & Feel

- Cool vibe
- Mall like but full of information
- Welcome

### Experiences

- Meet up with friends
- A lot to look at/engage with
- Help from Librarians



By Kerrie & Michele

I am a third-year American Studies doctoral student at George Washington University. I've been coming to this library regularly since moving to the area several years ago, sometimes alone but often with friends who are graduate students, professors and independent scholars/writers.

When we visit MLK we spend most of our time in the Washingtoniana (WASH), which also includes the Black Studies (BST) reference collection. Archival and reference collections are located in WASH and we conduct research using primary materials, including photographs, manuscript collections and rare books related to Washington history and culture. The BST collection provides research level reference books, microform and databases that support our work. Knowledgeable archivists and reference librarians assist us in identifying and locating research materials. We use online finding aids and digitized collections to gain access to resources.

I remember the first time I entered the space, and being thoroughly impressed by the exhibits



Atlanta University Center - Woodruff Library Learning Commons

encountered near the entrance. In addition to a permanent installation that draws from the department's collections to provide a dynamic and interactive introduction to DC neighborhood history, architecture, performing arts and social history, there are also cases containing rotating topical exhibits.

Besides being visually compelling, carefully designed and curated, and educational, the exhibits immediately convey to the viewer the range of subjects, areas of collecting strength, and breadth of collections and formats available in the department. Interactive touchscreens embedded in the exhibit allow for exploration of digital collections before even entering the research area! But since I'm generally visiting as a researcher and not a tourist, I have to make myself resist stopping to play (I can always pop back out to watch some Go-Go videos or find my house on a digitized historic map when I need a break from studying!).

Today I can see there's a program going on over in the intimate author's lounge – the poster by entrance indicates that they are hosting a local professor to discuss her research on gentrification – the discussion is lively so I'll definitely catch this one on the DCPL YouTube channel later, and I've grabbed a calendar so I don't miss the next one! Besides a variety of local history programming, this department is known for excellent Black Studies programming such as symposia, author discussions, film series and other cultural programming that link Washingtoniana resources to larger historical narratives about race, class and identity in Washington, DC and the United States, sometimes in this space or in larger programming spaces available elsewhere in the building.

Entering the research area – first having a preliminary conversation with reference staff about my research





Midland Centennial Library in Midland, TX

plans for today and locking my bag in a locker – I’m always struck by the contrast to the lively program area and visually exciting exhibits in the outer area of the department. In the research area there is a hush, a contemplative feel – clearly a place to focus and study.

As a user of special collections in other institutions I’m accustomed to the stricter rules, but even if it were my first such experience, say I was a high school student or someone with a casual research interest, the welcoming attitude of the staff and their considerate explanations about the reasons for the rules would make me feel welcome in the space while respectful of its purpose. I think this perfect balance between access and preservation is what makes this department is one of my favorite places to do research in the city – I have to come here when

I’m using resources that aren’t available anywhere else, but I choose to come here because it’s clearly designed to make local history accessible to all, whether engaging people with any level of education through dynamic programming and exhibits, or having staff that meet you where you are and provide as much guidance in your research as you need. Well, enough about how much I love this department – I should get started with my research!



## Domain

## Use



## Outcomes

- Favorite place to do research

## Marketing &amp; Outreach

- DCPL YouTube Channel
- Brochure Calendars

## Technology &amp; Equipment

- Interactive touchscreen

## Furnishings

- Lockers

## Collections

- Black Studies (BST)
- Photographs
- Manuscript collections
- Rare books on local history
- Research level books
- Microforms
- Databases
- Digitized collections

## Programs &amp; Services

- Archivist's assistance
- Finding aids
- Local history programming
- Symposia
- Author discussions
- Film series
- Washingtoniana cultural
- Vast amount of resources

## Spaces

- Washingtoniana (WASH)
- Exhibit space
- Intimate author's lounge
- Program space
- Large lecture space

## Look &amp; Feel

- Hush feel
- Contemplative vibe
- Accessible
- Friendly

## Experiences

- Impressed with entrance exhibits
- Watch Go-Go videos
- Exploring historic map
- Local professors speaks
- Conversation with staff
- Locker use



By Julia & Brijin

---

Our customers are a family comprised of parents in their mid-thirties and their two young daughters -- ages 18 months and 3 years. Both parents work; Mom works full-time as a lawyer and Dad works as a consultant though he is currently part-time so that he can spend more time at home.

Both Mom and Dad are leaning into their roles as newer parents and enjoy maximizing the time they spend with their daughters and the ways in which the library helps them do that. Because of his more flexible schedule, Dad brings the girls to weekday story times and visits the early literacy play space to connect with his daughters as well as other parents and caregivers in the area. The early literacy play space has plenty of interactive toys and a great dress up area. The floor is soft for crawling children but still sturdy for those new walkers. There are also low shelves for kids to explore books as well as benches for parents to sit and visit together.

On most weekends, too, the whole family drops by the library. At least once a month, the Children's Department has a special story time or other event appropriate for the girls, and the family always makes sure to attend. They also like to come by when there is nothing planned, though, as Mom and Dad enjoy it when the Children's Department is a little quieter, and they can explore the displays and shelves with the girls. The space is fun and interactive with plenty to do as a family. Whether it is puzzles and coloring sheets or more advanced technology like the iPads that tell fairy tales, the family enjoys spending time together in the inviting space. Often, they will build a little pile of books and read or flip through them together on-site; when it's warm outside, they do this outside in the library's small garden area.

Without fail, they always find some good stories to bring home, and their older daughter lately has taken

to handling the business of checking out the family's items on the library's Self Checkout Machine.

Mom and Dad would enjoy spending time with their girls anywhere, but their time in the library is especially valuable to them because of the way they see it benefiting their children. They've found that story time provides great enrichment for the girls through developmentally appropriate activities such as books, singing and action rhymes, as well as shows Mom and Dad ways to help their children develop early literacy. Also, through speaking with the Librarians in the Children's Department, Mom and Dad have learned how talking about what they are reading and modeling reading behaviors are also great ways to increase reading later in life for their girls.

Additionally, Mom and Dad were already library users before they became parents, but they spent less time in the physical building. More often, one or both of them would drop in to grab items they had put on hold. If they did linger, it was to browse the Adult collection; they have always liked the way that, in the rooms that house it, bookshelves cover the walls, thereby creating lots of open space so that they can meander around the rooms without feeling like they are being crowded by -- or are crowding -- other users.

As for adult programming, they only attended occasionally, when the topic very much drew their interest or an author they enjoyed was presenting and signing books. At that time, they valued the library, but they saw it in a more discrete way as the place to get books and DVDs, while they had most cultural and educational experiences at other places -- including movie theatres, playhouses, and concert venues.



Now, though, that perception is shifting, and while Mom and Dad continue to enjoy checking out items for themselves, they also are starting to pay more attention to the programming offered by the library's Adult Department. In part, this is because spending more time at the library with their girls -- and bonding with other families who also spend time there -- has made them more personally connected to the space and therefore more likely to check out what else is happening there.

Additionally, as parents in an urban area with a family income currently reduced by Dad's part-time status, they have started to pay more attention to free events, of which the library has many. They like the diversity of the programming too -- everything from poetry readings to lectures by local professors on topics such as Genetically Modified Organisms. They were surprised to find that the variability of the room where the events take place matches the diverse content, and they appreciate the way this makes each event feel unique; specifically, they have noticed that with its combination of movable padded chairs, excellent acoustics, and highly variable lighting, the medium-sized space can feel like everything from a small theater to a cozy classroom.

Mom and Dad also appreciate the informality of library events, as they've found having two young children has made it trickier to plan outings far ahead of time. In short, they like being able just to show up -- and not facing any consequences if they find they cannot at the last minute.

Finally, Mom and Dad also are taking increasing notice of the library's Innovation Space and all the new technology it offers. The space opened soon after their second daughter was born, and it caught Dad's eye right away as a place where he could say up to date with technology and maintain an edge

while he is part-time. He appreciates the frequency with which staff there lead classes on topics including 3-D printing and Photoshop, and he has taken a few of these courses right after attending weekday story time with the girls, who are watched by another story time-attending Dad he's connected with through the library. (Dad returns the favor when Dad 2 needs to fit in a run after story time.)

Mom has enjoyed hearing about Dad's positive experiences in the Innovation Space, and she is looking forward to trying out other fabrication tools when the second phase of the lab opens in a couple months -- both because of her own creative interests and because she thinks it will be great to share hobbies that are both practical and imaginative (like woodworking) with her girls farther in the future.

Overall, our customers appreciate the library for the many ways it enriches their lives both as family members and individuals, and they look forward to using it for years to come.



*Hjørring Library in Metropoli*





Domain

Use



### Outcomes

- Childhood enrichment
- Parental modeling
- Personally connected

### Marketing & Outreach

### Technology & Equipment

- Digital displays
- iPads
- Self-Checkout
- 3-D Printer
- Woodworking machine
- Computers Everywhere

### Furnishings

- Low Shelves
- Benches
- Movable Chairs
- Comfortable Seating

### Collections

### Programs & Services

- Weekday Story Time
- Singing and action rhymes
- Adult programs for parents
- Free events
- Poetry readings
- Lecturers by professors
- 3-D printing
- Photoshop classes
- Woodworking

### Spaces

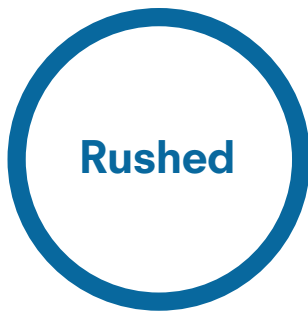
- Early literary play space
- Art space
- Dress-up
- Play area
- Outdoor area
- Small theatre
- Cozy classroom
- Innovation space

### Look & Feel

- Soft Flooring but sturdy
- Inviting
- Great acoustics
- High variable lighting

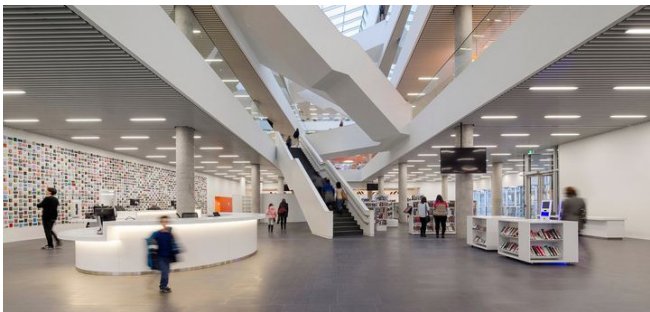
### Experiences

- Connect with other children and their parents



By Andrea & Elissa

Mark Christian works near the library. He passes it each day as he makes his way hurriedly from the Gallery Place Metro station headed to his office on the corner of 10th and G. Not once has he thought about dropping in. He lives in Virginia and seldom has time to dawdle after work because he must catch the VRE home---to do it all the next day.



*The Halifax Central Library in Halifax, Canada*

Tuesday afternoon was different. He was not having the best day and just needed to get out of the office. He took his lunch with him, intent on eating at the atrium inside the Portrait Gallery. He saw his secretary leaving the library with a book and some papers in her hand. She was smiling. He wondered to himself, "What's going on in there?" He heard music as the doors opened to let customers in and out. On a whim, he decided to go inside.

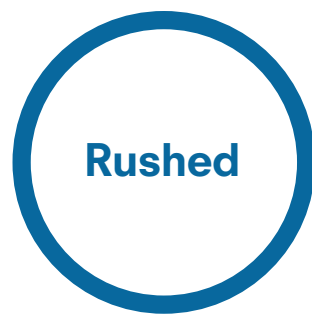
There was a concert taking place. Near a café in the Great Hall, people were seated at small tables eating and listening to music. Some were reading and seemed oblivious to the sound altogether. There were displays of materials to peruse and check out, he supposed. Not feeling up to chatting with anyone, he found a table and took a seat. He was so distracted leaving the office, he'd forgotten his coffee. He smelled fresh coffee brewing at the café and decided to grab a small cup there. As he ate, he watched the comings and goings of folks in the building. Thirty minutes had flown by. The trio

took a short break from their lunchtime brown bag concert. During the break, Mark decided to explore the building in the short time he had remaining on his lunch break.

As he was looking for a directory, he spotted a library employee who quickly took him over to the touch screen directory of the library's floor plan for all three floors. She introduced herself as Charlotte and said she'd be happy to help him find whatever he needed. Mark told her he had just happened in to eat lunch because he'd heard the music. Charlotte told him that the trio was musicians who practice in the library on the third floor and offered to perform---they were retired music instructors and loved having an audience. "How delightful," Mark replied.

He told her he wasn't looking for anything in particular and couldn't check out anyway because he lived in VA. Charlotte quickly corrected him and told him he was indeed welcomed to have a free DC Public Library card because he lived in Prince William County. "Wow, I didn't know that." Charlotte directed him to the Self-sign up station to get a library card. "This'll be quicker than you waiting in line at the User Services desk," she said as she walked the short distance with him. He completed his online application and received an e-mail notification with a temporary card and PIN he could use immediately. He was surprised to find out his temporary number would be valid for thirty days. He was given information about the library and how to download e-content.

Mark was so captivated by all the library had to offer, he lost track of time. On his way out, he picked up several flyers and a schedule of free classes. He'd be back and soon! No wonder Jackie, his secretary was smiling on her way out----the library had that effect on him too!



Domain

Use



### Outcomes

- New library user

### Marketing & Outreach

- E-mails with sign-up
- Brochures/Flyers by door

### Technology & Equipment

- Downloading kiosks
- Catalog stations
- Espresso printing machine
- Art supplies
- Interactive directory of library
- Library card machine

### Furnishings

- Bookstore displays

### Collections

- Extensive collection
- Variety of formats
- Popular
- Short Fiction
- Media collections

### Programs & Services

- Roaming staff with tablets
- Writing and poetry workshops
- Art classes
- Art supply checkout
- Artist in residence
- Concert

### Spaces

- Audio and video production
- Meeting areas
- Small group study rooms
- Reading rooms
- Café
- "Break" area

### Look & Feel

- Vibrant Art all over
- Bathed in light
- Feeling of safety

### Experiences

- Spontaneous discovery
- Efficient help from staff



By Rachel & Deborah

---

I recently moved to DC from North Carolina and I'm already frequently visiting the Center for Accessibility at DC Public Library's central library. I have low vision so I am really glad that they have the technology that enlarges the screen so I can check my e-mail, Facebook, and do job applications online. Even though I'm new to the area, I do have some extended family here but it's been nice to meet others who have vision issues and other disabilities at the Center.

When I returned to the C4A two days later I was so excited to hear that in addition to the beginners' Braille classes there's also advanced Braille being taught in the Summer. I know how to read Braille but it's been awhile so I'm a little rusty.

One of the coolest and maybe most helpful things they offer is one-on-one adaptive technology consultation with highly trained staff. They even have a tech petting zoo so I can check out the latest, cutting edge adaptive technology. The librarian even let me know that there's a meet up at the Center specifically about using iPhones and all the cool adaptive apps available now. The programs are even offered on evenings and weekends which make getting to them much easier.

At the C4A some of the librarians found out I'm new to the area and have connected me with an agency that does travel training--helping me navigate Metro and even helping me practice the different routes I need to go about my day--doctors' appointments, job interviews... They gave me a bunch of pamphlets and handouts about the various agencies in the area that help people like me.

DC is really different from home and it can be a little hard getting to know people. I like the Center for Accessibility department, but, the rest of the



*WeWork Wonder Bread Location in Washington, D.C.*

library has had some cool events too. I went to a free concert, my sister came with me for a demo on Indian cooking by a chef and cookbook author (yum!), and I am coming next month when an author I love is going to talk about her latest novel. I even recently joined a Spanish language Meet-Up group that comes here twice a month. Some of us go out for food afterwards so I am getting to know some really nice people. I wasn't expecting the library to become a hang-out spot for me, but, I feel welcomed here and like I will keep finding fun things to do here! Staff throughout the library have made me feel welcome and the other departments and amenities are all designed with accessibility in mind. I really appreciate how the Library is making me feel so welcome and feeling like I am connecting to my new home and getting to know local DC.

# New Girl

## Domain

## Use

Community  
Hub

CLASS  
ROOM

INNOVATION  
LAB

READING  
ROOM

Forum

### Outcomes

- Access to library materials
- Opportunities to learn, create and share
- Chance to be inspired
- Empowerment
- Self-advocacy
- Connections to agencies
- Community builder
- Entertainment
- Explore passions

### Marketing & Outreach

- Downloading E-books
- Audio Books
- Applications
- Skype Consultations

### Technology & Equipment

- Accessibility software/hardware
- Video games
- Skyping (Video Calls)

### Furnishings

- Variety of seating
- Adjustable
- Lighting is very important
- Clear Signage

### Collections

- Braille books
- Digital collection
- Accessible games
- Related material per area

### Programs & Services

- Technology petting zoo
- Travel training
- Guest speakers
- Host conferences
- Tours for visitors
- Next Chapter book club
- Talking book club
- ASL classes
- Job seeking services
- JAWS screen-reader training
- Library for the blind and physically handicapped (LBPH)
- Braille classes
- Happy hour
- Lunch and learn
- Medical lectures
- Spanish meet-up
- Cooking demo

### Spaces

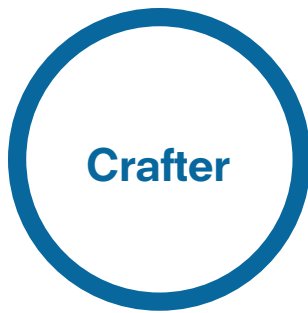
- Sensory garden
- Art exhibit (Tactile exhibit)
- ASL poetry slam

### Look & Feel

- Easy to maneuver around
- Beautiful and welcoming
- Addresses all senses
- Sound proof story time

### Experiences

- Chance to meet similar people
- Latest advancing technology
- Ability to get around the city
- Place to feel comfortable



By Leslie & Melinda

I just landed my first “real” job and am new in town. I like to read, so I always try to join the library wherever I live in case I have time to visit. I’m also finding it difficult to meet new people in town, so it’s nice to have a safe place to go to just to hang out. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library is near my office, so I stopped by after work, and was just amazed by the building and all the exciting activities happening there.

The entry area is huge, but the art work and digital displays invited me in. I admired the work of local artists, and the digital photo collages of DC neighborhoods. It would be easy to feel overwhelmed in this large space, but a library staff person asked me if I needed help just as I saw a bank of interactive screens that allowed me to access the building layout, locations, and programming. I took a moment to discover all the unexpected things this library offers then I stopped by the coffee shop where I bought a cup to sip while I walked around.

There was such a bustle of activity on the first floor – there were glass doors that offered a view of a large performance space. Since there wasn’t a performance at that time, people were sitting on the risers, using wi-fi, chatting quietly or reading. I stopped to watch a dance class go through their

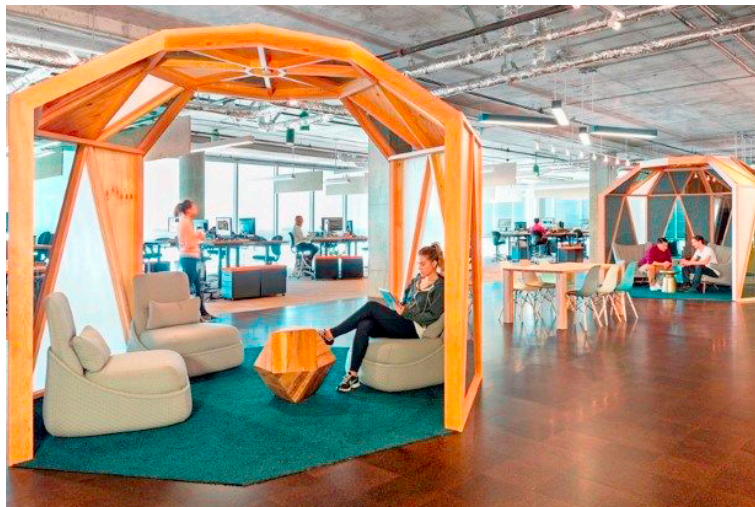
steps in another glassed-in area, and grabbed a flyer that listed the performances and classes that were offered for the month. I may have to sign up for Beginning Tango!

I then visited the Adult Collection, which I could see as I rode up the escalator. All of the areas are glassed-in and the shelves are low, so there’s nothing to block the views through all those huge windows.

I saw a mixture of spaces that blended collaborative and quiet zones, and I loved that the Special Collections rooms were located near the Adult area. I love to do genealogical research, so the proximity with the circulating collection makes it very convenient to research in both areas. The types of materials that circulate are plainly labelled, so I grabbed the latest best-seller I’d been looking for and sat down to read. I had a hard time choosing which

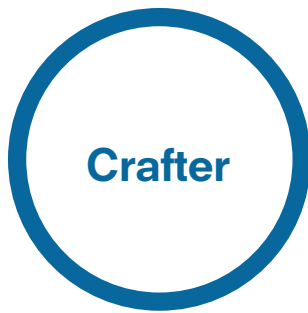
area to sit in – there are not only the usual tables and chairs, but also pods and tables along the windows, and hammocks, and other great places to sit.

After a rest, I continued to explore the rest of the library and discovered a whole world of exciting makerspaces. They have an Espresso Book Machine and an array of regular printers and copiers. I wondered into a nearby writer’s workshop that had a poem in progress displayed on a moveable wall board and there are white boards for writers to use to



Markit Headquarters in London





*Fibre Space Workshop in Alexandria, VA.*

brainstorm ideas. There was also a list of book clubs and writer's workshops. I then wondered into a DIY lab where people were using a laser cutter, and there was a row of 3-D printers making prototypes and all sorts of cool things. There are also cabinets full of tools that a staff member said could be checked out! Now I won't have to buy tools when I need to make small repairs in my apartment, and I grabbed a list of DIY programs that looked really helpful, if I decide to become more adventurous with decorating. There is also a Digital and Electronic lab, and some teens were tearing apart old computers and using the parts for new inventions.

Nearby was an Art and Textile lab full of people knitting, drawing, and making crafts. Another staff member told me that some folks were part of a knitting group, and that others were taking advantage of an open craft and drawing period. There are looms, pottery wheels, and cabinets full of basic art and craft supplies and they even have a vending machine where people can buy pens, pencils, watercolors, brushes, pads, and other materials.

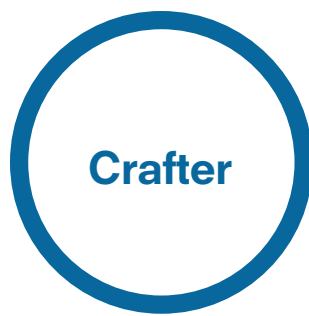
Once again I took a list of programs and tutorials, and am excited to come back for the array of textile and pottery classes.

I passed a recording and video production studio, and saw groups of teens recording a spoken word session, while another group was making a music video. Nearby was a Teen Space like I wished libraries had when I was that age. There were banks of iMacs, books, a download station, and lots of areas where teens could collaborate, as well as quiet areas where they could just think or do homework.

Nearby was a Game Room that had Wii, PlayStation, and Xbox stations. There were also cabinets full of games that could be checked-out, and tables with inlaid game boards for chess and checkers. A staff member told me that while the spaces were used by teens during open sessions, Adult Services did book the studio and game room for programming, and showed me the list of upcoming events.

Beside or inside all of the labs, I noticed mobile book shelves that held materials and displays related to the activities and programs going on in the different areas. I think it is a great idea to integrate traditional materials that enhance these innovative spaces and activities, so that customers can easily discover more information about what they've learned in the labs and programming spaces.

I spent so much time investigating that I didn't realize that the library was about to close. The library will give me the opportunity to try new things and enhance my existing interests and skills. I felt really safe and comfortable here, and it seems to be a good place to meet new people who have similar interests. I will definitely come back, because there is so much to do and learn.



Domain

Use



### Outcomes

- Personal growth
- Skill enhancement

### Marketing & Outreach

- Flyers with performances and classes

### Technology & Equipment

- Digital displays
- Interactive map
- Espresso book machine
- Printers
- Copiers
- Laser cutter
- 3-D printer
- Looms
- Pottery wheel
- iMacs
- Download stations
- Gaming systems

### Furnishings

- Low shelving
- Varied seating
- Pods
- Seating near the windows
- Hammocks
- Whiteboards

### Experiences

- Prompt and efficient roaming staff
- Meet new people

### Programs & Services

- Dance rehearsal
- Beginning tango
- Writer's workshop
- Book clubs
- Knitting group
- Open craft time
- Recording spoken words
- Music videos

### Spaces

- Coffee shop
- Large Performance space
- Collaborative
- Quiet zones
- Special collections
- Makers Space
- DIY lab
- Digital and Electronics lab
- Art and Textile lab
- Recording and video production
- Game room

### Look & Feel

- Safe
- Inviting art work
- Lots of activity
- Open

### Collections

- Adjacent to special collections
- Easy to find
- Games
- Art supplies
- Tools





By Nick & Adam

A friend of mine, and fellow artist, had a show at my neighborhood library displaying their amazing digital medium works. I have lived in the area for quite some time but never had a reason to come to the library. I was surprised to see the numerous spaces designated for creating and displaying the creative works of the community.

As an artist, I kept an inventory of all the spaces and programs the library had to offer as I began weaving my way through it. I have been struggling to translate my art career into something a little more commercial. The Digital Creation Labs with all the creative software, high-powered graphics computers, and person studio spaces was unexpected and something I should be utilizing right away.

The whole place was buzzing with activity in every area I visited. A very diverse environment with numerous programs taking place but all neatly separated to provide a quality learning experience. Wide open spaces with colorful comfortable furniture, and tons of natural light bathed all the users as they sat and collaborated or maybe just talked about what was going on, I immediately immersed myself as I was jealous of all the elbow rubbing.

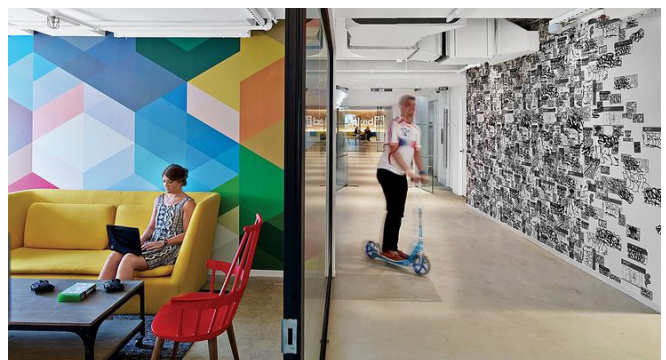
In the middle of the giant Commons area I started a conversation with a staff member who truly inspired me to start coming more often. They seemed more like a tinkerer or an artist than a Librarian. I explained my motive to become more commercial in the my field, and they explained the studio space for me to work in and a co-working space that provided programming on jump-starting my business. I may have a new muse.



*Anthropologie Headquarters in Pittsburgh, PA*



*BRIC Arts Media House in Downtown Brooklyn*



*LinkedIn in Midtown Manhattan*



Domain

Use

**Outcomes**

- Art work on display

**Programs & Services****Marketing & Outreach****Spaces**

- Creation spaces
- Display areas
- Digital creation labs
- Studio spaces
- Co-working spaces

**Technology & Equipment**

- Latest creative software
- High-powered computers

**Look & Feel**

- Buzzing with activity
- Diverse environment
- Wide and open
- Natural light

**Furnishings**

- Colorful
- Comfortable furniture

**Experiences**

- Serendipitous meeting
- Jump-starting business

**Collections**



By Lawrence and Theresa

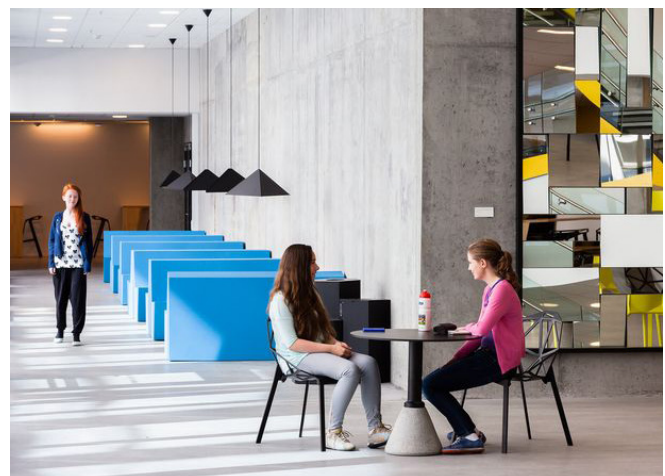
I go to school near the library, and there's nothing for me to do at home before my dad gets home and makes dinner, so I go to the library after school. A lot of my friends hang out here, too. My dad tells me I should get my homework done first, but sometimes I blow it off and play Minecraft and Roblox on the computers with my friends instead. Sometimes I have to research a topic and provide a few pictures for a school project. That's easy - I usually just find some information on the internet to write my report on. I use my sister's card so that gives me more time to play. I love getting to use the computers. My dad doesn't let me use his laptop except for homework.

I used to just stay on the computers, but sometimes they're all full and then I've got nothing to do. One time I was in when the computers were all being used, and one of the librarians told me there was going to be a poetry open mic. They were going to have weekly workshops so that we could get ready for the open mic. That's how I got into poetry. The Tuesday poetry workshops are really fun and interactive. It's one of the few things that gets a lot of my friends off of the computers. They bring in different artists to run the workshops. Some of my friends are into music but in the workshops we can do both. At the end of this month we'll be doing an open mic and get a chance to recite some of what we've been writing in the workshops. I'm a little nervous, but we get prizes for participating.

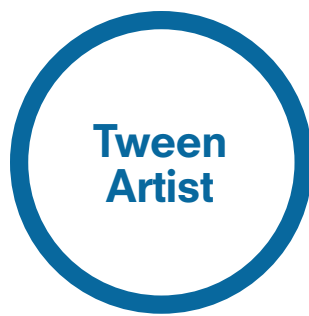
There are also art projects every other Thursday. A lot of them include computer programs or technology. There's a big digital display screen that we get to post digital artwork on. Whatever we make we display all over our space. I like how our space changes all the time based on the project we're working on. For our last project, the whole group designed and then constructed a sculpture that they put downstairs by the entrance to the library.

A lot of people really liked it. It was cool seeing different people tell the staff how much they liked our sculpture. The librarian says the next art project will have a poetry theme to add visual art to our open mic.

If I weren't at the library, I'd probably be in the park when it's nice out or home when it's not. But it's cool having a place where I can hang out with a lot of my friends, do homework, talk to the librarians, or do stuff like the poetry workshops. And you don't have to buy a drink or something to stay here. It would be better if we had a cafe where we could eat snacks in the library. The librarians always tell us to put our food away when they see it, but we sneak it in the back sometimes.



Norwegian School of Economics



Domain

Use



### Outcomes

- Safe Place to be
- Adult advice and guidance
- Art for library

### Programs & Services

- Poetry slam
- Weekly poetry workshops
- Art projects

### Marketing & Outreach

### Spaces

- Art room
- Writing studio
- Recording booth
- Café
- Performance space

### Technology & Equipment

- Computers
- Screens to display work

### Look & Feel

- Always changing

### Furnishings

### Experiences

- Poetry contest
- Group art project

### Collections



By Jean

---

I've been a DCPL branch-surfer for six years or so. When I finally lost my place because I got laid off from my job as a janitor and started living on the street and in shelters, the library was the only place to go during the day to hang out. At the library you are a regular person rather than a homeless person, and besides, it's a great place to get out of the cold or heat of the day. I'd usually go to Mt. Pleasant or West End, depending where I got breakfast. I never really liked coming to MLK because of some of the "bad elements" that hang out downtown, but then another homeless guy told me I should check out the "new MLK."

This is a cool place to walk into. Honestly, when homeless people were talking about how MLK was going to be renovated, they usually spoke about how the renovation was just a way to get rid of homeless people. I'm just not seeing that at all. Sure, there are lots of different kinds of people here, but the minute I walked in I was greeted at the door and was handed a postcard with a list of all the stuff happening at MLK that day. I usually take the bus if I have money on my card or I walk over after I have breakfast at Miriam's Kitchen. The West End branch is closer, but now I really like what's happening at MLK and I'd rather come here instead.

My first stop is usually the computer room, I think they're calling it the Digital Commons. I like to check email and Facebook, watch some videos, and listen to music for a while. I don't know much about computers but the librarians are always helpful with getting me logged on if I need to. The Digital Commons is really interesting. They have lots of equipment to make and build stuff. Not really sure what all the stuff does, but it looks interesting and maybe I'll get my nerve up to check it out.



Last week one of the librarians suggested I come to a new program, Coffee and Conversation. I went for the first time and really enjoyed it. There are a couple librarians and a volunteer who seem to be in charge. Most of the people there were homeless but not everyone. We were able to have a cup of coffee and just have conversation. We didn't talk about homeless services or anything, which was great. I understand the conversation topics are picked by the group and sometimes there is an outside speaker or we do a craft. I like that. I'm a creative person but there's not a lot of opportunity for creativity when you're homeless, it's mostly a survival situation. I'm really looking forward to the next meeting when a storyteller and writer will be talking to us about how we can tell our personal stories. I've been through a lot in my life, not always things I'm proud of, but I definitely have a story worth telling. It sounds like there is a recording studio here and if we are interested, the storyteller will work with us to record our story for something called a Podcast.





When I was at Coffee and Conversation someone told me that every Tuesday an outreach worker from the Department of Human Services (DHS) is on the second floor signing people up for food stamps, connecting people with services and doing housing assessments. It's great that I don't have to spend money I don't have going all over town when I can get these services taken care of at MLK. There are these cool rooms where I met with the outreach worker. It looks like they are rooms for different government agencies and non-profits to meet with people. As part of my housing assessment the outreach worker also talked to me about looking for a job. Since I spend time at MLK she suggested I look at the DCPL job seekers program. I had no idea the library helps people find employment.



Finding a job when you are homeless is tough. There are lots of barriers, especially if you are homeless and have been locked up. That's my situation. From what the DHS worker tells me it sounds like this new program at MLK connects you with an employment

counselor who works with you on a resume, connects you with potential job openings, helps fill out online applications and will work with you through the whole process. I walked by the DCPL job center just to check it out. People were really nice and the space had flyers about current job openings, lots of computers and small meeting rooms. There was a class going on about how to interview for a job. I also saw an announcement about a job fair the library is hosting. I hear the library's new cafe hires people who have been homeless. I'd love to get a job there. I've done some cooking.

I think it's great the library has made this new cool space for the community and hasn't kept homeless people out. There are so few places homeless people can go during the day and just relax and not be harassed. Even the museums are not as friendly as they used to be. But at MLK I can see tons of art and relax on the comfortable new chairs. I will definitely be back for more Coffee and Conversation and who knows what else!



## Domain

## Use

**Outcomes**

- Introduced to new technology
- Finding a support group
- Opportunity to be creative
- Recoding his personal story
- Taking care of multiple needs
- Finding employment
- A safe place to be

**Marketing & Outreach**

- Peer-to-Peer (Word of Mouth)
- Postcard
- Suggested by other Librarians
- Posted flyers
- Announcements

**Technology & Equipment**

- Computers
- Equipment for building things
- Recording equipment

**Furnishings**

- Comfortable Chairs

**Collections****Programs & Services**

- Basic Internet use
- Watch videos and movies
- Listen to music
- Coffee and Conversation
- Speaker and crafts
- Storytelling and recording
- Department of Human Services
- Food stamps and housing asses.
- Employment counselor
- Job fair

**Spaces**

- The Digital Commons
- Recording Studio
- On-site government offices
- Job Center
- Cafe

**Look & Feel**

- Lots of computers
- Filled with art
- Cool new space

**Experiences**

- Only place to go
- To be treated like an equal
- Warm welcome immediately
- Always helpful

# About the Programmatic Spaces



For this exercise we pinned up the renderings shown in the presentation by Mecanoo and Martinez + Johnson for the proposed Modernization of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. The group then spent time going around the room and writing their reactions to the program spaces. We asked them to describe who the users are of the space, what programs and activities they can envision happening in the space, what they imagine this space looking and feeling like, what technology and equipment might be in this area, what collections might be in this space, and what would possible outcomes of the space could be.



## Great Hall

### Look, Feel & Location

Better Lighting  
 Lots of "Merchandise"  
 Stay Local  
 Bring the outside in (Courtyard)  
 Activate the Space  
 Near Café  
 Feels inviting and warm  
 Bustling with Activity  
 Furniture and Spaces:  
 Quiet Touch Point for Circ.  
 Breakout Areas  
 Gallery Space  
 Space for demos  
 Improv Space  
 Exhibit Space  
 Gathering Spaces  
 Comfort is important  
 Less Utilitarian  
 Less Closed off but more personal

### Technology & Equipment

Interactive Map of DC  
 Library App (Like Apple Store App)  
 Accessibility Technology (Guidance)  
 Way finding (Map App) to help direct building  
 Screens displaying activities going on

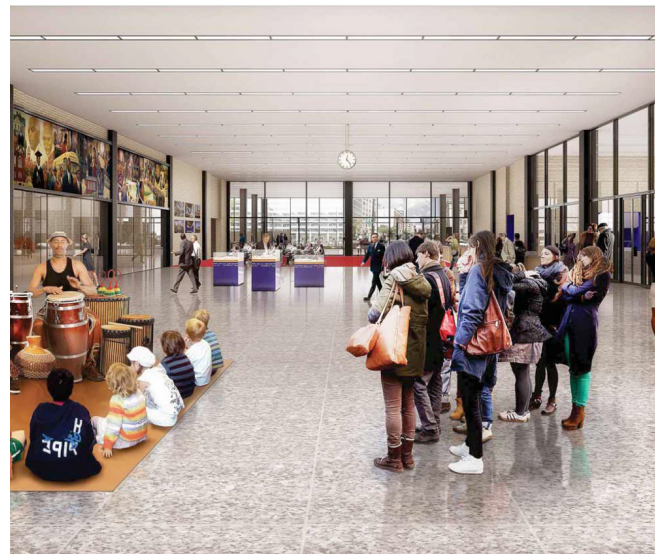
### Users

Everyone

### Furniture & Spaces

### Programs & Activities

Visitors Bureau Desk for DC Info to Public  
 Rotating Exhibits from outside vendors  
 Quick Drop-in Activities  
 Demonstrations  
 Performances  
 Exhibits  
 Inactive Art  
 Music/Concerts  
 Movies with captions



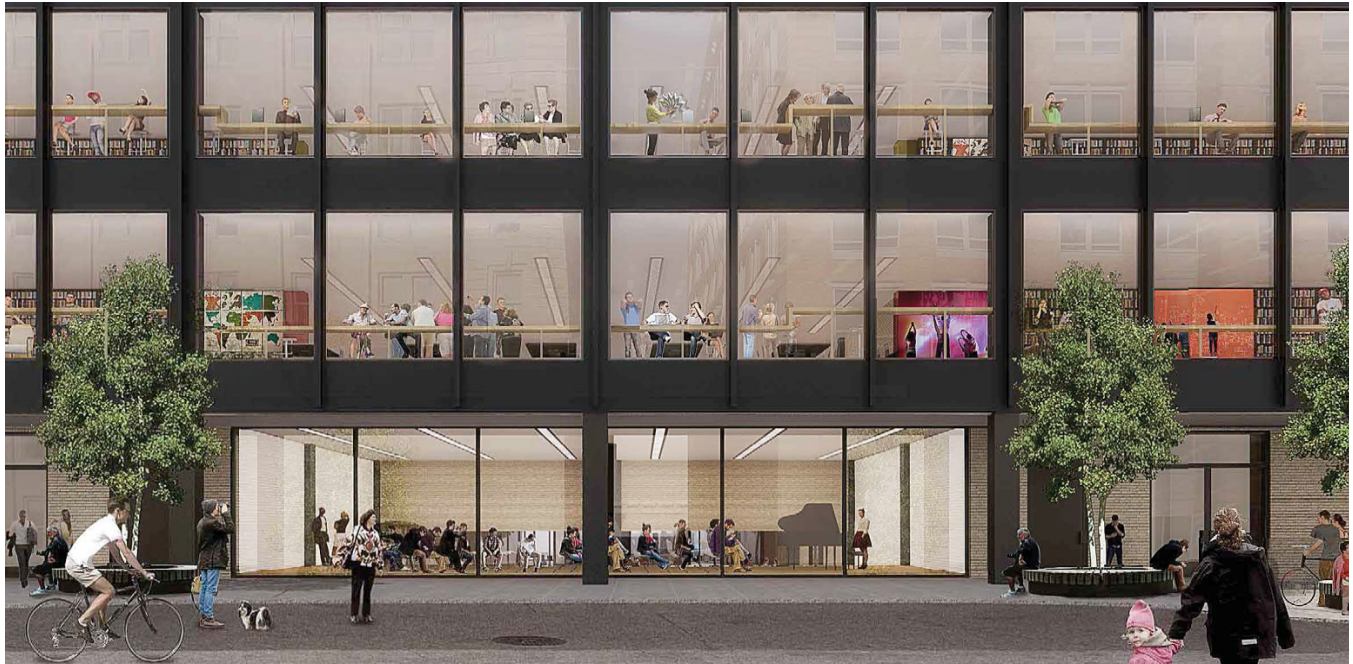
### Collections

Maps  
 Photos

### Experiences

### Outcomes

## Activating G Place



### Look, Feel and Location

Visible art displays  
Door/Walls that open completely on nice days

### Technology/Equipment

Projections of Activities  
Promotion

### Users

Downtown Employees  
Tourist  
Passerby's

### Programs and Activities

Public Performances  
Interacting Activities  
Lunchtime activities  
Public Speaking  
Staged Readings  
Skate Park  
Graffiti Wall

### Furniture and Spaces

### Collections

### Experiences

### Outcomes

## Cafe Space

### Look, Feel and Location

Public Art Installations  
French Bistro Vibe  
Large Kitchen  
Close proximity to restrooms

### Technology/Equipment

Projection (Films)

### Users

Passerby's  
Staff  
Visitors  
Researchers  
Artist  
People who live near by  
Lunch break workers  
Book groups  
Knitting groups  
Meet-Ups

### Programs and Activities

Discount Programs  
Affordable and Diverse  
Operated by non-profit that trains those in need  
Public Art Installations  
Outdoor interactive fixtures  
Coffee and Food  
Local Roasters  
Pop-up Residences (bakers, baristas, chefs, etc.)  
Food Demos

### Furniture and Spaces

Additional Program Space  
Furniture for Large and Small meetings  
Place people respect (Clean and cared for)  
Mobile Book Cart  
To-go window  
Bike Shop



### Collections

### Experiences

### Outcomes



## Entrance & Stairs

### Look, Feel and Location

Remove brick bump outs  
Dramatic Entry  
Art Exhibits  
Market Feel  
Welcoming  
Clear Circulation  
Color

### Technology/Equipment

Map Story  
Wall displays (Projections)  
Map of DC  
The day's events

### Users

Tourist  
International Visitors  
Large outside groups

### Programs and Activities

Bike Support/Repair/Borrowing  
Interactive Service Points

### Furniture and Spaces

Flexible  
Always changing

### Collections

### Experiences

### Outcomes



## Makers Space



### Look, Feel and Location

Adjacent to teen space  
 Adjacent to Business Center  
 Industrial  
 Noisy  
 Well-lit

### Technology/Equipment

Flexible  
 Adaptable  
 Pop-up Use

### Users

STEAM  
 Techies  
 Artists  
 Makers  
 Disabilities  
 Accessibility communities  
 Students  
 Veterans  
 Job-seekers

### Programs & Activities

Inter generational Activities  
 Creative and Collaborative  
 DIY Programs  
 Partner with Experts/Mentors/Patrons  
 Beginners Welcome

### Furniture and Spaces

Flexible/Accommodating  
 Various ways to watch/interact

### Collections

Maps  
 Photos

### Experiences

### Outcomes

## Children's Area

### Look, Feel and Location

Soft feel  
Warm feeling  
Consider Autistic needs

### Technology/Equipment

More Technology  
iPads (Not just computers)  
Self-check machines

### Users

Moms on weekends  
Story Time users  
Families  
Teachers/educators  
All caregivers  
Families  
Day-care Centers  
Autistic children

### Programs and Activities

Story Time  
Early Lit  
Tutoring  
Homework Help

### Furniture and Spaces

Soft Seating  
Very large enclosed area for story time  
Private area for nursing  
Breakdown room  
Variety of seating/gathering places  
Nooks  
Unconventional Furniture  
Different Spaces for different ages

### Collections

### Experiences

### Outcomes





## Reading Area



### Look, Feel and Location

Ambient Lighting  
Natural Light (with Shades)  
Transparency  
Subdued  
Inviting to everyone  
Inspirational

### Technology/Equipment

Shelf-check machines (Everywhere)  
Access to digital content (roaming)  
Pathfinders

### Users

Students of all ages  
Researchers  
Tourist and transients  
Writers  
Performers  
Adults with special needs  
Traditional Readers  
Readers of all ages  
Study groups

### Programs and Activities

#### Furniture and Spaces

Range of Seating  
Places to read quietly  
Comfortable seating with laps  
Use Furniture to breakup space  
Space for Traditional Reading  
Sight lines  
Solo seating  
Small meeting rooms

#### Collections

Language Learning  
Popular  
Arranged by Interest

#### Experiences

#### Outcomes

## Event Space

### Look, Feel and Location

Larger and private might be better  
Constant Movement  
Heighten Pathways between spaces  
Sound needs to be addressed

### Technology/Equipment

### Users

Theatergoers  
People who read

### Programs and Activities

Always has Programs going on  
Public Forums  
Community events  
Theater Performances  
Open Mic  
Concerts  
Talks  
Special Exhibits

### Furniture and Spaces

Seating should be more inviting  
Accessibility  
Flexibility to create smaller spaces

### Collections

### Experiences

### Outcomes





# Rooftop Garden

## Look, Feel and Location

## Technology/Equipment

Solar Lighting and heaters

## Users

People who want “getaway”  
 People who want quick nature  
 Everyone!

## Programs and Activities

Education and Information about Outdoors  
 Programs on planting, healthy eating, etc.  
 Community gardens  
 Evening observatory programs  
 Renting it for events  
 Outside story time  
 Book groups  
 Yoga  
 Petting Zoo

## Furniture and Spaces

Soft Seating  
 Very large enclosed area for story time  
 Private area for nursing  
 Breakdown room  
 Variety of seating/gathering places  
 Nooks  
 Unconventional Furniture  
 Different Spaces for different ages  
 Early Lit Space

## Collections

Goats  
 Sustainability  
 Gardening  
 Harvesting  
 Healthy eating  
 Healthy living



## Experiences

## Outcomes

New Gathering Spaces  
 Increased Library visitors  
 Boost Sustainability  
 Helps with climate issues  
 Tourist Destination

## Teen Space

### Look, Feel and Location

Adjacent to Makers Space  
Improv Performance Space  
Shopping Feel  
Visible Sight Lines  
Cool  
Easy to change with time

### Technology/Equipment

Laptops  
Gaming Equipment  
Charging Station

### Users

Students  
Gamers  
Readers  
Researchers  
Volunteers  
Tourist  
Musicians  
Artist  
Writers  
Social Butterflies  
Media Junkies  
Fashionistas  
Techies  
Tutors

### Programs and Activities

Performances  
Art Exhibits  
Tutoring  
Mentorship

### Furniture and Spaces

Meeting Rooms  
Study Rooms  
Quiet Space  
Gaming/Movie Room  
Co-working Tables (preferably round)  
Flexible Seating  
Sound Proof Room  
Hang-out Space  
Bean Bags (Fatboys)

### Collections

College  
Career  
Musical  
Art Topics

### Experiences

### Outcomes

# Envisioning the Future Library

In this exercise, participants created a conceptual future-state library to develop out-of-the box thinking about what a library can be. Participants worked in groups of five or six. Each group was given the Library as Studio Toolkit and designed their future state library based on one of three themes: Arts and Literature, Arts and Education, and Arts and Career.

The results were fantastic. Participants demonstrated a clear understanding that the library is to be designed to support user outcomes, and used the exercise to apply their innovative spirit.

# Group 1

## Consumer / Creator / Community



Small performance and practice spaces are visible from the street—drawing you in. Beautifully curated displays featuring pieces created by library customers as a part of art program offerings are prominently featured in the foyer. The Great Hall is buzzing with activity. School children filing in for a field trip while preschoolers bobble up and down as they make their way to the Children's space on the second floor. Knowledgeable, efficient and friendly staff are roving about and the self-check stations host a steady stream of customers checking out library material in a variety of formats. Downloading stations are interspersed throughout the library. Audio/Video production spaces along with flexible meeting spaces are at peak use. There is always something edifying, aesthetically pleasing, and stimulating happening here. The space is drenched in natural light with calming colors and textures on the walls and environs.

The space is well maintained, not rigid, but flexible. The sound of soft music teases you up the steps to the third floor. Small spaces for impromptu performances are available. Larger practice rooms are filled with yoga students and dancers—of different ethnicities. And for those looking for a quiet corner or window seat to simply “be” there are those spaces as well. Something for everyone in NW DC at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library.

### Programs and Activities

Content creation – Media  
 Writing Workshops  
 Open mic  
 Performances  
 Books/Writing workshop  
 Art Production  
 Themed across medium  
 Theatre – Readers Theatre  
 Dance – Workshop Stop  
 Storytelling workshop  
 Audio book narration (Practice and Expert)  
 Visual Stories  
 Integral (Adult Lit Learners and Services)  
 Oral History

### Look and Feel

Neutral Colors  
 Hard Spaces  
 Adaptable/Flexible  
 Sound Proof  
 Light  
 Display Spaces for materials, books, media  
 Soft recessed lighting  
 Creative Computer areas (Individual and group)  
 Remote Projection  
 Holograms  
 Recording Ability  
 Projections  
 Interactive Walls  
 Multi-use Tech  
 Automated Checkout Stations

# Group 2

## The Interactive Agricultural Library Homestead



**Walk into this vibrant library, open to engaging your whole mind and body. Interact with technology in surprising ways – from greeting the accessibility robot dog at the entrance, to challenging yourself in a coding for seniors, class taught by a local high school student. Find programs and activities for all ages and interests: adaptable, inter-generational spaces for gathering, performing, learning, hacking, collaborating and making. Grow with your community through volunteering at the library bike shop or the roof farm & apiary. Eat a healthy snack from the art gallery café & kitchen incubator with your granddaughter after she finishes after-school tutoring. Find a comfortable, quiet space to read a new book, to meditate or just be.**

### **Programs & Activities**

Digital/preservations (Community / Personal history)  
Local tech meet-ups  
Writers group workshop self-publishing  
Pot-lucks  
Game Night  
Hack-a-thons  
Family Photos  
Story Time  
Story Groups  
Art Bar  
Yoga  
Teen led coding  
Teacher Practice  
KCDC – Community taught classes  
Digital Makers Space  
Teen Tutors  
Thinking Space  
Mindfulness Lab  
Permanent Café  
Kitchen Incubator/Test Kitchen

### **Look, Feel & Location**

Blue and Mint Green (Thermostatic Paint)  
Digital Wall = Hogwarts Level  
Giant Telescope  
Observatory  
No chunky chairs  
Hammocks  
Gym/shower/lockers  
Nap pods (self-cleaning)  
Virtual Reality Library and Archives

# Group 3

## The City's Studio



**The excitement is palpable when you enter the library, as though you are an actor stepping on stage. People do, perform, and create everywhere – from the staged reading in the small first floor arena to the pottery class throwing clay upstairs. The lighting and design is particularly conducive to the feeling of a play; you move between scenes and have new sensory experiences in each zone. There are even alcoves for reading and discussion circles, so the act of reading the classics is imbued with a spirit of relevance, even rebellion.**

### **Programs & Activities**

Customer Creating and Sharing  
 Outside Greeting and Support  
 Hands-on  
 Current and Reflective  
 Continuum  
 Tap Local Arts Scene  
 Collaborative  
 Something's Always Happening in Multiple Places  
 Reflect Diversity of the City and Country  
 Arts hit all the scenes  
 Inter-generational  
 Not static  
 Creation Oriented  
 Multiple Sides  
 Multiple Talent levels  
 Community Building  
 Layered Programs

### **Look, Feel & Location**

Calming Lighting and Bubbles  
 Relaxing  
 Exciting  
 Changing Colors  
 Stage Sets  
 Nooks  
 Variety of Furniture  
 Private, Safe Pods  
 Hammocks  
 Universal Design



# Group 4

## Name to be Determined



This bustling, energetic space has something for multiple generations. When you enter the library, the first floor has multiple spaces for creating, making and learning. These spaces aren't defined by traditional walls, but by movement and "pockets" of creativity. People of all ages are participating in maker programs, tech programs and working together on fun projects. There's a beautiful, spacious café with food and drink that appeals to all age groups. Downstairs, you'll find an auditorium, where patrons of all ages can watch performances, take part in open mic nights and gather for specialized programs. There's also a small area with tables and chairs, where the community can chat before or after performances, drink some coffee and eat delicious pastries. Traveling to the second floor, kids and teens will find separate spaces dedicated to their needs.

Materials, programming rooms and quiet spaces are beautifully lit with color surrounding each area. In the children's area, parents and grandparents read are actively involved with different projects happening simultaneously on the floor. In the teen space, youth are playing video games, reading, chatting with the staff, studying in groups and prepping for upcoming tests. All of this energy from the kids, teens and adults extends to the roof, where generations work together on gardening projects and other outdoor activities that bring the community together.

### **Programs & Activities**

Inter generational  
Traditional and Innovative!  
Family Oriented  
Educational  
Teen in Charge  
Collection Related  
Community Integrated  
(Networked)  
Technology for all ages

### **Look, Feel & Location**

So much tech!  
Touchscreen Accessible  
Lots of Natural Light  
Comfortable Group Seating  
Inviting Seating  
Outdoor Components  
Treehouse  
Lots of Flexible space  
Good Sight Lines  
DIY Bar  
Durable Surfaces – easy to clean  
Nontraditional reading spaces



# Group 5

## Loop of Awesomeness



**Our library is designed to induce a feeling of discovery and exploration when you walk in. Everything is on one floor and arranged in a circle, so all elements of the library are accessible and visible to patrons. As a patron walks in they are immediately exposed to art exhibits, maker spaces, computer labs, art studios, meet-up spaces, and books. The various departments, studios, and other elements are designed to be approachable and encourage people to explore more than the just the element for which they entered. The layout also promotes cross-department collaboration and inter-generational mixing. It is a library for and of the people: the art that library users have made in the library's studio spaces is displayed throughout the building; community discussions and forums are held in open meeting spaces; start-ups and small businesses use the library for meetings and networking events; caregivers and other like-minded**

**groups meet to share knowledge and advice. The library gives to the patrons, but the patrons are also giving back to the library.**

**Our library is also a forerunner on using technology to bring people closer together. Beyond just technology classes, the library uses new technologies in book clubs, check out, reference, story times, and more. The library models constructive and novel uses of technology for all age groups. This library is a place for learning, discovery, connecting with others, productivity, and contribution to the community.**

### **Programs & Activities**

STEAM  
Live Performances  
DIY Workshops  
Demos with A/V Production  
Incubator/Co-working Space  
Artists in Residency  
Maker in Residency  
Gallery Space/ Programs  
Meet-ups  
Civic Collaboration  
Messy Room / Hand on Space  
Kitchen Programming  
Local History

### **Look, Feel & Location**

Energetic  
Inviting  
Light / Transparency  
Light / Industrial  
Indoor / Outdoor Performance Space  
Extremely Flexible  
Open Floor Plan  
STEAM Equipment  
Exploratory Technology  
Kitchen  
Bring Outside In  
Studio Spaces



**Margaret Sullivan of Margaret Sullivan Studio, New York City, is a leader in visioning, programming and designing innovative cultural centers, with a focus on public libraries. She skillfully collaborates with stakeholders and**

**the design team to represent a holistic understanding of the 21st century public library delivery service model and is a leader in translating these innovations into physical spaces.** [margaret@margaretsullivanllc.com](mailto:margaret@margaretsullivanllc.com)

---