1. The context: What's happening globally, nationally and locally that is, or will, have an effect on MLS and its members? Think about technology, social/generational trends, consumer patterns, institutions, etc.

- Access to broadband
- Agility
- Aging population
- Beyond school setting this is true too – people are pleased with database results when they see what they can get - both opportunity & challenge we have a brand image of trust
- Budget cuts and how it affects what and how we offer what we have. Getting the message about these conflicts to the right people.
- Budget pressures limit funds available to libraries especially health care
- Budgets are affecting smaller libraries where they can't afford membership in C/W MARS, meeting state aid requirements, etc.
- Challenges of moving to electronic resources, reassigning library space.
- Closing schools.... regionalizing, population reduction, privatization, school choice, leads to a lack of community cohesiveness
- Collection development concerns - what to buy in what format, how to spend limited budget.
- Community center for towns, generational differences, current issues, terrorism
- Decreased attention span - patrons think in snippets.
- Demographics
- Distance education,
- Economy
- ESL
- Expanding needs, no more money
- Expectations of libraries/librarians tech skill and tools
- Fluctuating budgets - unreliable funding, worry about accreditation.
- Harder to collaborate (with teachers) - need to advocate value
- Huge difference in opportunities for collaboration with other libraries - that has diminished
- Inability to fund through taxes
- Information overload: relevancy vs. Access; information literacy
- It’s about what the library - we are about resource sharing - but that should not be narrowly defined - other opportunities (seed libraries, framed prints, etc.) - define shared resources more broadly - an opportunity isn’t maker space about resource sharing?
• Job loss, decreased population, more demand, especially tech
• Keeping up with technology
• Lack of investment in community
• Lack of staffing for special projects.
• Lack of time for everyone - e.g., faculty unwilling to give up time to librarian to provide instruction.
• Language
• Leisure activities for retirees
• Library culture is perhaps mired in preservation we are not a risk taking culture
• Library staff can report to local city council, but maybe the word needs to come from the patrons
• Life is so complicated....libraries can make life easier for people
• Loss of young adult staff and programming to draw in our next generation of adult users
• More demand for a wider variety of resources (in content and format). Pressure to spend money on a/v materials in particular.
• Need to balance different generations when considering the digital divide - provide older formats while recognizing cutting edge technology.
• Patrons distracted by new technology - less reading, more cell phones and texting. Less reading for pleasure or items of substance.
• People are rigid in what they need, not about thinking about we need as a community
• People more dependent on technology
• Redefining opportunity of our public space
• Regard your resources broadly: sidewalks, air, etc.
• Smaller families
• Smaller libraries used to be fund raising for specific events, now fundraising to keep the roof on
• Social unrest, tornados, library use
• Space planning concerns - meeting rooms, outlet placement. Lack of funding to reconstruct spaces.
• Streaming is a huge threat
• Students seem to be doing majority of research online - difficult to wean them from Google - challenge to get students on databases
• Summer patrons and email needs
• Telemedicine, seeing your specialist via skype, medical devices (cardiac, etc.)
• The opportunity presented at this time is similar to that of 19 century immigration - public adult education - are we taking advantage of this, claiming this
• The political environment that might affect educational priorities
• The sweet spot for libraries is everything except k - 12 in non-school hours
• Too many part-time positions, low pay
• Uncertainty of election
• Unfunded mandates
• Voting block changing as community change, tourist can’t vote for library funding
• We are a non-means tested centers of learning and cultural enrichment for preschool afterschool and post-secondary populations
• We are the antidote to bowling alone
• We can leverage trust - libraries should serve role in emergency management
• Worry about inequality in use of meeting rooms - need more outreach to different groups and publicize services to the community.

Themes and further conversation: Technology; communications; budget; demographics; roles: they are expanding; access; opportunities for new roles; physical space; identity: who are we now?; community: patrons who come in the door are an asset/connections/biological-social network; diversity: who's using the library? Who is using meeting spaces? Which populations are coming through the door and who should be encouraged to do it more?; Lack of time and staff...what do we have to leave behind to do what we need moving forward?; redefining mission moving forward; preservation mandate; people coming in for histories and that sort of information; We are a trusted resource, which is an asset, Librarian Brand has its upsides; as resources get tighter, agility is more and more important, even the unsexy things like electrical outlets.
2. Envisioning our future: It’s 2025 and libraries everywhere and of all types are thriving hubs of their communities. Draw a picture describing what’s happening. What do libraries look/feel like? Where are they? Who is in and around them? What are they doing? How are libraries connected to the rest of the community and the world? Who are our partners/collaborators? What services do they offer and for whom? What new skills do librarians have and what new roles do they take on?

Rich Picture Team 1

- Provide space and organization of arts programs
- Provide health information
- Family tree (patrons with ancestry interest)
- Scientific equipment and technology
- People! Librarians, patrons
- Indoor and outdoor library space
- Library love – mutual love
- Many miscellaneous resources to be loaned out
- Cooking programs (community learning in general?)
- Wi-Fi, the “Cloud”
- Library engages new people who move to town
- Casual community space (bar-like)
- Intergenerational
- Political support
- Money! State, fed, municipal, grants, donations
Rich Picture Team 2

- Various types of libraries –
- Well-funded
- Intergenerational
- Gardening
- Young adults
- Higher number of people coming in
- Community space – flexible, both noisy and quiet library space
- Guidance
- Not print-reliant
- Well-trained and qualified staff
- Energy self-sufficient
- Support of business and government
- A small part of the global world
Rich Picture Team 3

- Physical space – comfortable, well maintained
- Creative use of space
- Diverse community – intergenerational, diverse occupations and interests
- Content changes as tech changes
- A lot of uncertainty in what the future will look like
- Advocacy
Rich Picture Team 4

- Library as information conduit between groups and people
- Skills inventory
- Peer to peer sharing among librarians
- Conversation on expanding role of library and repurposing library roles – conduit of information for community (such as questions about other municipal departments), assisting other departments as they are not information professionals
- A lot of discussion on being a means of acquiring information from other municipal departments (clerk, building inspector, assessor, etc.) – way to get other municipal departments to view libraries as an ally instead of a competitor for funding
- Ed Augustus excited about using the library as a way of conveying information to constituents – keen on Worcester school libraries staying open during the summer
- Young Adult resources – makerspace, education (ex. coding, nature, etc.)
- Programming, enrichment – bringing in experts and notable people for programs of cultural enrichment (ex. authors, filmmakers, professors, etc.)
- MLS involvement (among other collaborative library organizations)
- “Tummy Time” for mothers and other club-like programs – community building
- Source of trust – very powerful aspect of library brand, utilize that for emergency management
Rich Picture Team 5

- Resource-sharing
- Library community as a cog
- Resources at the center
- Government, local/municipality, schools
- Community involvement
- People keeping the cog machine moving
- Funding and resources keep everything else moving
3. Strategic analysis: Thinking about the context and what we want to achieve, what are we doing really well that we want to KEEP? What isn’t working that we want to ABANDON? What might we INVENT or REINVENT that, if we did, would make a big difference to our success? Note: Repetitions are intentional to show emphasis.

KEEP

- Beautiful physical spaces
- Delivery
- Delivery
- Friends groups
- Good communication
- Ill
- Information professionals
- Keep and strengthen community relationships
- Keep connecting people with information and other people
- Librarians
- Library for the Commonwealth support for libraries
- Novelist select
- Outreach, because it increases use
- Physical brick and mortar, library as place
- Reputation
- Understand the role of libraries in triage for irrational consumer tech market
- Vibrant programming

ABANDON

- Barriers to small libraries accessing collections, resources
- Fear of communicating, we can be too selective about who we communicate with
- Late fees
- Library stereotype
- Low budget or no budget!
- MassCAT for public libraries
- Notion that teenagers mean trouble.
- Older, irrelevant resources and formats.
- Our frustration with google and Wikipedia
- Rules. Regulations
• Separation of space within the library - makes it difficult for patrons to navigate, communicate, collaborate
• Shushing
• The attempt to be all things for all people
• The attitude that we have a right or responsibility to change patron behavior,
• The idea that digital literacy doesn’t need to be taught
• The notion that conventional reference is alive and well

INVENT
• A framework for peer-to-peer sharing
• Invent a realistic framework for operations
• Local history resources - more access - r copyright issues to allow for more use.
• Method for sharing change in library leadership
• Methods of communication (and reinvent)
• New way for librarians to work with faculty
• Research databases
• Time travel - need more time! For collaboration, meeting, discussion.

REINVENT
• Better marketing of resources
• Classes in computer lab that need refreshing
• Collaboration
• Collaboration between school, public and academic libraries. Emphasis on college-readiness. Same population at different stages of life.
• Collection development
• Community partnerships
• Databases (repetitive, confusion about access)
• Delivery
• Delivery to small libraries
• Embrace problem-solving for patrons
• Focus on the service not the location, on the librarians rather than the library
• Friends support
• Grass roots advocacy
• How small libraries are supported, especially in remote places
• Inter-organizational long range planning
• Loan periods
• Method of paying for databases - no longer have to pay for same thing every year. Duplication between databases.
• Patron instructions on how to use the library
• Physical spaces, digital/electronic spaces, consistent brand across all libraries in Mass (MLS can help here)
• Platform for discovery of e resources
• Pre-K through elementary level databases - more supplied by MLS.
• Professional development
• Professional development - more meetings, more autonomy for librarians. More assertive and creative.
• Public service
• Record keeping. More efficient
• Reference service
• Reimagining the role of librarians beyond the physical space
• Shared ILS
• Shared resources, including historic collections (we don't know what other libraries have)
• Support for small libraries
• The interplay of paper and online
• Thrive grant and circuit riders
• Ways of thinking about time, better use of technology
• Working together
• Workshops: are we getting what we need out of them
• WorldCat

Themes and further thoughts: Abandon is underrepresented; there are more things that need to go. We need to be honest about trying to do everything...if you're on a lot of budgets, that's there. You need to pick your battles. We have to look at what we've already abandoned. We need to invent some statewide systems, integrated searching, ways to collect data, things that don't really exist yet outside the network (databases, etc.) This would cut down a lot of the time we use explaining things to users. Where is the statewide library card (in a committee)?
4. Taking action: Thinking about what we’ve learned so far, what project or program might we start right away—individually and/or collectively—that will help us achieve our vision for libraries? What successful models/programs might we borrow from other states/countries? What might we do that could become something for others to emulate?

1. **Tech Tubes:** Searching the databases. Sexy online tutorials. Adding humor that can be entertaining as well as educational. Borrow models from YouTube. Short snippets. Easily accessed. Text instructions added. Different levels for different levels of learning. If you think you can solve the problem, then the chances are better that you will. If you don’t have the positive thinking, nothing will get done. Integrating searching in multiple databases is not an impossibility. And integrated search engines. For special libraries to share in expertise.

2. **Just Ask Me:** Comprehensive skills inventory in the library community to identify specific expertise that creates relevant continuing education opportunities for libraries. Examples: This service would provide specific training at a granular level ... e.g., not just how to advocate but how to advocate for your library at an open town meeting. Not just accounting but how to adapt QuickBooks for a town-supported library. A component for success statewide would be effective use of virtual meeting services. Example: bring school library expertise with teen space to public librarians who need knowledge.

3. **Just say yes!** On demand collection development-solving the wait time for very popular out of the blue titles. Set a reasonable hold ratio.

4. **Historic Collections Circuit Rider:** Circuit rider to travel through (for example, the Berkshires) to create finding aid/database for small libraries special collections. Tap into expertise from local museums, other libraries (academics). Provide opportunities for ongoing conversations between librarians. Sharing the process online (example, slide share, recordings, etc.)

5. **Together We Thrive Again!** One person can’t do it all. Revive the former grant-funded program to assist small libraries.

6. **Help clarify the library universe hierarchy:** (How do libraries, systems, networks, associations work together?) Define roles. Strength in numbers.