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TECHNICAL
R E P O R T



Assessing the Future of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Pathways to Sustainability

Sally Sleeper, Rena Rudavsky

Prepared for Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh



EDUCATION

The research described in this report was prepared for Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and was conducted by RAND Education, a unit of the RAND Corporation.

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Preface

As a publicly supported entity, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP) is reliant, principally, on local sales tax dollars. As such, CLP is competing against an increasing number of regional assets for a fixed pool of local sales tax dollars. In this environment, CLP asked RAND to identify critical factors affecting the library's ability to obtain stable and adequate funding to meet its mission in the future. We developed a framework to understand how the factors connect to resources, which resulted in nine options, expressed as opportunities, for CLP to consider. With this information, the library, in concert with regional elected officials and funders, plans to create a process to evaluate opportunities to improve CLP's ability to secure the resources required to meet its mission in the future.

This report should be of interest to those in Pittsburgh concerned about the future of CLP or that of any public library. It may also be of relevance to policymakers for libraries at the local level across the country.

This research was conducted within RAND Education, a unit of the RAND Corporation. The mission of RAND Education is to bring accurate data and objective analysis to education policy. For three decades, RAND Education has helped identify and analyze the complex problems facing the nation's education system and has conducted complex, large-scale projects.

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Summary

Despite its importance in communities and the local economy, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is faced with decreasing operating revenues that limit its ability to adapt and respond to its users. About 60 percent of the library's operating funds come from local sales tax revenues for which numerous other organizations compete. Total and local revenues have varied but yield a downward trend in both nominal (unadjusted for inflation) and real dollars (adjusted for inflation). Total and local revenues in 2000 were nearly identical to those in 2007; real operating revenues fell 20 percent over the period. And CLP faces funding uncertainty moving forward as the primary source of local revenue for CLP, the Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD), reconsiders the extent to which it will fund CLP and other regional contractual assets that RAD was created to support.

CLP asked RAND to identify critical factors that affect the library's financial soundness and to develop a framework to assess how these factors can be manipulated to provide a more stable and sound financial base. The result is a set of nine options, expressed as opportunities, for CLP to consider. With this information, the library, in concert with regional elected officials and funders, plans to create a process to evaluate opportunities to improve CLP's ability to secure the funding required to meet its mission in the future.

Report Purpose

This exploratory report investigates areas and issues that may affect the library's near- and long-term financial sustainability and provides opportunities that could be addressed by a task force. We identify some of the policy levers that can be used to improve financial stability, including those with the potential to increase revenues, to decrease expenses, or to change the organizational form of the library. The findings may help CLP leadership identify important factors and begin to understand how other libraries have dealt with them. They may also help CLP leaders make decisions concerning whether and how to engage others in the process of addressing those issues. As such, it is suggestive and possibly provocative, but in no way definitive.

Approach

We proceeded in this exploration in a very straightforward manner. First, we conducted a review of literature and studies on public libraries and the issues they face in attracting stable and adequate funding. We identified a set of 15 libraries that on a series of indicators has some

of the same characteristics or challenges as CLP. Based on the literature, we developed an interview protocol to explore resource sustainability factors with these libraries. We interviewed 17 library directors and individuals at nonprofit and governmental agencies who are involved in the high-level management or funding of libraries.

Using the interviews and literature, we identified three broad factors that affect financial sustainability and stability in public libraries: the demand for and extent of consumption of library services, the role and effectiveness of advocates for public libraries in generating community support, and the organizational form of the library. We used data from interviews with library leaders in other cities facing similar issues and a literature review to develop a simple framework to assess how these three factors may affect CLP. The framework considers how each of the broad factors contributes individually or in combination to the approaches available to organizations when resource supply and demand are out of balance. The framework yielded nine opportunities for CLP to explore further with the aid of a task force.

Findings

In our interviews, our library leaders and policymakers stated that their greatest challenge is to secure adequate funding to serve their communities and meet their missions. When funding is tight, libraries have three basic options, that can be conducted in combination or separately, to bring them into balance with operating demands:

- Seek additional funds
- Reduce expenses, including removing services
- Implement more efficient modes of operation.

We explored whether or how the broad factors—and the tradeoffs inherent in each option—may impact the sufficiency of funding needed by CLP to meet its mission. Table S.1 summarizes our findings on the areas in which libraries, and CLP in particular, may influence the factors that affect resource stability and sustainability. The first column lists the factors that affect CLP sustainability: demand for and consumption of services, the role and effectiveness of library advocates in generating community support, and organization decisions such as governance and structure (number of branches). The next three columns provide a snapshot of how each may be a resource contributor, affect or be affected by a decrease in services, or use library resources more efficiently.

Using this framework, we reviewed the available information and identified nine opportunities that might help promote sustainable funding for CLP to explore with the help of a task force. These opportunities are summarized in Table S.2. The opportunities can be combined to yield greater impact. For example, identifying new and emerging community needs is one step in determining the proper mix of services to provide. However, to engage existing and new users in the programs and services might require promotion of the library through outreach and through selecting and working toward performance measures that stakeholders, including taxpayers, care about. Opportunities one, three, and four are methodologies that can contribute to the ability of a library to identify, evaluate, effectively implement, and promote

Table S.1
How Libraries Can Influence Sustainability

Factors	Methods to Increase Operating Revenue	Steps to Decrease Expenses	Means for Improving Efficiency
Consumption of services	Engage users and innovate	Right size services and programs	Create more efficient programs and services
Advocacy effectiveness	Connect stakeholders to mission by demonstrating personal and community value	Internally promote new culture and values	Advocate with greater efficiency and innovation
Organization	Adopt more supportive and effective fund-raising models	Right size facilities, labor, and holdings	Reorganize some services and structures

programs for users. Opportunities three through six allow the library management to more effectively identify and serve community needs, which is important for justifying its funding demands.

In this report, we reviewed some of the relationships between the organizational form of a library and its resources. We learned that library districts, which are funded through voter-approved property taxes, tend to have more stable funding relative to other organizational forms. We also reviewed literature on library mergers and consolidations and found some evidence that larger library systems may have more stable funding as well.

Table S.2
Summary of Opportunities for CLP

One	Evaluate and use methods for identifying service demand and for increasing innovative activities to engage users.
Two	Conduct a rigorous right-sizing assessment for the number and size of services and programs and implement findings.
Three	Evaluate ways to leverage existing and new resource multipliers to meet stakeholder needs and implement findings.
Four	Identify, develop, and use performance measures that provide indicators of progress and uncover areas of need to demonstrate value.
Five	Assess how to involve library staff as part of institutional changes. Evaluate the costs and benefits of training librarians and staff in outreach and of a dedicated outreach department. Implement new approaches.
Six	Evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of formalizing "Library Friends" of CLP. Develop measures of board engagement and participation and assess the effectiveness of the board as advocates for and as partners with CLP. Develop new governing options to increase financial sustainability.
Seven	Evaluate the costs, benefits, and long-term financial stability of new organization models, such as a public library district, including an assessment of the costs of a media campaign to garner public support.
Eight	Conduct a right-sizing assessment for the number and size of facilities, staffing, and holdings and implement the new strategy.
Nine	Evaluate the service and resource efficiencies and tradeoffs from a countywide merger of libraries and implement the best option.

Recommendations

As noted, this report is intended only as a roadmap of where the library might go in its quest for stable funding. It does not provide recommendations for which path to take, but it illustrates some of the benefits and drawbacks for each of the nine opportunities identified. A thorough analysis of each opportunity, which will determine whether and how to proceed, is beyond both the scope and resources of this report.

Of the opportunities identified in Table S.2, all may be appropriate for a task force to explore. However, in light of the recent RAD announcement (RAD, 2008) that it will review whether and how it supports regional assets past 2010, there is some urgency in finding those opportunities that might be most closely linked with stable funding. As a starting point, we recommend that a task force seriously consider an evaluation of *opportunities seven and nine*. The reason for using these as a jumping off place is that the resource underpinning of CLP is currently at risk. Accordingly, it is critical to assess whether the current RAD funding model is the best way for the region to support CLP. Such an assessment can be done only relative to alternative funding models, e.g., through a model of a public library district. Additionally, while examinations of a CLP merger with the county is a politically charged topic, such a model deserves to be revisited if a consolidation could provide more stable funding to all libraries in the county as well as relieve service inequities that exist in the less affluent municipalities.

The library is and can be a stronger partner for community and economic change, particularly in the face of the regional struggle with economic stability and growth. Identifying the right partners to engage who can leverage the strengths of CLP requires engaging advocates and board members who can champion the message and garner the necessary resources.

Acknowledgments

We first and foremost are indebted to those who talked with us and so freely shared their wealth of information and considerable insights across a wide range of topics related to libraries. The library directors and library executives who agreed to spend their time being interviewed by us were important sources of information. We also thank David Donahoe, Regional Asset District executive director, and Rick Pierchalski, a Regional Asset District board member, for sharing their time and information with us. Any errors of interpretation are, of course, ours.

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As with any analytical work, the criticism and helpful comments of colleagues are a key ingredient to developing a better product. We greatly appreciate the comments from our reviewers, Tora Bikson at the RAND Corporation and Parker Hamilton at Montgomery County Public Libraries.

Finally, we appreciate the careful eyes of our editor, Christina Pitcher, and our production editor, Kimbria McCarty, who brought our work through the publication process.

Introduction

The mission statements of many U.S. libraries frequently entail the following: Enable and provide access to literature of all types to promote literacy and learning in the general population, thereby connecting communities to the information and knowledge they need to grow and prosper economically, socially, and politically. Andrew Carnegie so firmly believed in the link between individual knowledge and community economic success that he provided public libraries to more than 1,400 communities between 1881 and 1917, including Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh (CLP) and eight branches in 1890 (Allegheny County and Lucchino, 1991). While a few of Carnegie's libraries received endowments, his standard gift was capital for construction of the library, with the requirement that recipient cities and communities provide long-term operating funds. Carnegie was responsible for obtaining Pennsylvania legislation in 1887 stipulating that *municipalities* maintain free public libraries (Allegheny County and Lucchino, 1991).

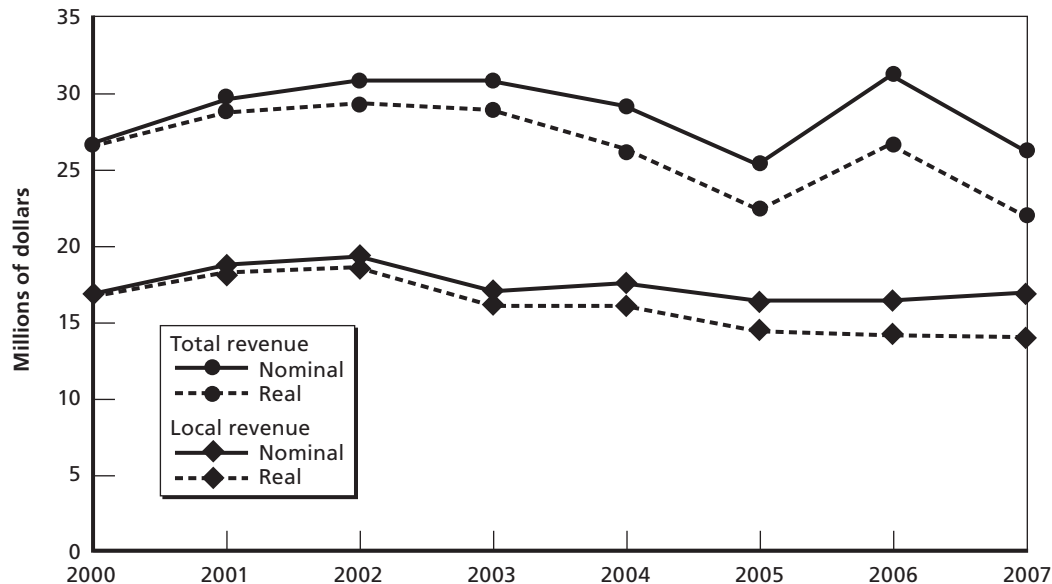
To obtain its founding gift, CLP was established as a public trust in 1890 and supported entirely by public dollars. Public ownership (e.g., through taxes) paved the way, Carnegie believed, for community appreciation and protection of the asset. Since the library's inception, the mix of public funding has changed little, with the bulk of operating funds raised locally.

Financial Uncertainty

Financial instability stemming from the initial organizing decisions of local public funding has been a part of CLP from its inception (Munn, 1970; Allegheny County and Lucchino, 1991). Yet there are significant and tangible community impacts and benefits of the library (Miller, 2007; CED, 2006). The last full study of the problem of how to address the support and provision of library services to the communities in Allegheny County was conducted nearly two decades ago. Since then, changes in the economy, demographics, and the "digital revolution" have altered the demand for services and the options for delivery of these services.

Despite its role in communities and the local economy, CLP is faced with operating revenues that limit its ability to adapt and to respond to its community. As presented in Figure 1.1, about 60 percent of CLP's operating funds come from local tax revenues that numerous organizations compete for. Total revenues have varied but yield a downward trend in both nominal (unadjusted for inflation) and real dollars (adjusted for inflation). Like total revenues, local revenues reveal a steady downward trend in real purchasing power as a result of flat local

Figure 1.1
Total and Local CLP Operating Revenues, 2000–2007, in Nominal and Real Dollars



SOURCES: CLP, *Annual Reports*, 2000–2007; BEA, Table 1.1.9 (Index numbers, 2000 = 100), 2008.

NOTE: The base year is 2000.

RAND TR638-1.1

revenues. With total and local revenues in 2000 nearly identical to those in 2007, real operating revenues fell 20 percent over the period.¹

A decrease in state funding caused library hours to be cut in 2002. Although local funding provided for the return of some hours, CLP continues to rebalance days and times of operation: Of the 19 neighborhood locations (1 is currently closed awaiting a new location) only 2 have (limited) Sunday hours, 11 are closed on Monday or Friday to allow for Saturday operation, and 1 is open four days each week. Yet as presented in Table 1.1, circulation, visits, and program attendance increased between 2000 and 2007 as CLP invested in technology and new ways to engage the community. CLP expanded its technology reach in 2007 with the introduction of free wireless access at all its locations; almost 6 million visits were made to its Web site and 94 subscription databases.

Table 1.1
CLP Circulation, Visits, and Program Attendance, 2000–2007

CLP	2000	2007	% Increase
Total circulation	2,609,348	3,354,417	29%
Total visits	2,200,000	2,791,536	27%
Individuals attending library programs	130,150	269,588	107%

SOURCE: CLP, *Annual Reports*, 2000 and 2007.

¹ Total and local revenues were slightly lower in 2007 (\$26.38 million and \$16.86 million, respectively) than those in 2000 (\$26.74 million and \$16.99 million, respectively).

Books and materials, programs, technology, keeping facilities open, and trained staff require operating funding, which was lower in 2007 than it was in 2000. In addition, CLP faces resource uncertainty moving forward as the primary source of local funding for CLP, the Allegheny Regional Asset District (RAD), reconsiders the extent to which it will fund CLP as one of nine regional contractual assets for which RAD was created to support.

Purpose

Dedicated to meeting its mission to the community and bolstered by a recent study of its economic importance to the region, CLP asked RAND to identify critical factors affecting the library's options for stable and adequate funding, to provide a framework for exploring the impact of these factors on sustainability, and ultimately to identify possible opportunities for improving its financial stability. With this information, the library, in concert with regional elected officials and funders, plans to create a process to explore opportunities to address the pressing impediments to CLP's ability to meet its mission in the future.

Accordingly, in the face of a trend of decreasing operating revenues and the uncertainty over its principal source of local funding, we explore what factors may be linked to funding and how the linkage operates. Using the framework, opportunities emerge that could provide an adequate funding foundation in the future.

This report investigates issues that may affect the library's near- and long-term operational sustainability and provides recommendations on the topics that should be addressed by a task force. We begin to identify some of the policy levers that might improve financial stability, including those that have the potential to increase revenues, to decrease expenses, or to make it more efficient.

This exploratory report does not provide recommendations for which path to take, but instead illustrates some of the benefits and drawbacks for each of nine opportunities identified. It is intended to help CLP leadership identify important factors and understand how other libraries have dealt with them. It is especially intended to help CLP leaders make decisions concerning whether and how to engage others in the process of addressing those issues. As such, it is suggestive and possibly provocative, but in no way definitive.

Organization of the Report

In the next chapter of the report, we describe the literature search, comparison libraries, and interview methods used to identify the factors and opportunities. We describe the factors that emerged from these sources and the analytic framework that is used in the subsequent chapters. Chapter Three provides a brief background of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and key characteristics that affect how CLP gathers and uses resources. The next chapter describes the basic funding characteristics of libraries in the United States, including federal, state, and local revenue sources and organizational forms. Chapter Five presents our synthesis of three high-level factors identified in the literature and interviews that work together to shape the options available to libraries: (1) library consumers, (2) library advocates, and (3) organizational form. Options, expressed as opportunities that CLP might pursue, are presented in the framework developed in Chapter Six. The concluding chapter provides our observations on

how the opportunities, singly or in combination, can inform ongoing discussion of the future of CLP and libraries in Allegheny County. The appendixes provide our interview protocol, a list of CLP branch libraries and hours, a list of Allegheny County Library Association (ACLA) libraries and population numbers, and performance metrics.

Data, Methods, and Analysis Framework

We proceeded in this exploration in a very straightforward manner, with a review of literature, data collection on a subset of libraries, and interviews. We used these sources to identify a set of factors that shape the resource options for many libraries. We developed a simple framework to evaluate the impact of the factors on resource sustainability. We use the results of the analysis to begin our exploration of the opportunities for CLP.

Literature Search

We reviewed literature and studies on libraries in the United States to explore the current issues confronted by publicly funded libraries in serving their communities.

We first reviewed the literature and studies on the creation of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh and other libraries in Pennsylvania and on the role of Carnegie in establishing libraries in the United States in order to understand the historical and current context. These readings coupled with a broader literature review provided a wealth of issues facing public libraries and approaches used to address the issues.

Munn (1970) provided a history of CLP, its funding, growth, and decline from its inception in 1895 through 1964. The last full study of the library was published in 1991 by Allegheny County and by then–County Controller Lucchino, who detailed the dismal state of CLP and the independent county libraries. We collected annual reports and studies about CLP, its bylaws, and statutes that govern libraries in Pennsylvania, and we conducted literature searches aimed specifically at public libraries in Pennsylvania.

We then broadened our search to gather evidence from a wide range of literature on libraries and public organizations. We searched several databases, including LISTA (Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts); OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) library literature; ERIC (Education Resources Information Center), a Department of Education database; and Google Scholar. We used search terms for public libraries *and* variations on mission, funding, revenue, resources, stability, performance, quality, impact, efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, technology, agility, stakeholders, organization, governance, structure, districts, merger, services, programs, transformation, and strategic planning.

Comparison Libraries

We next identified a set of 15 libraries based on data provided by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in 2005 and based on conversations with CLP. On a series of indicators, these libraries have some of the same characteristics or challenges as CLP.

This set of comparison libraries was *not* intended to represent a statistically representative sample of libraries based on strict criteria, but rather a representative sample of similar library systems from which to learn. The limited set of urban and county library systems shared one or more characteristics with CLP and/or were emblematic of notable service, funding, governance, or other initiatives, both successful and unsuccessful. For each of the library systems, we assembled characteristics from publicly available data sources, examined materials published by each (such as annual reports), and visited library Web sites to obtain information about missions, board structures, and initiatives.

For each of the libraries we used in our comparisons, Table 2.1 presents four characteristics: service area, legal basis of the organization, the number of library branches, and the population of the service area. Note that we include two population numbers for CLP—the city and the county—because, as discussed later, CLP provides many services to the county.

Interviews

We interviewed 11 (75 percent response rate) of the directors of the selected set of libraries listed in Table 2.1, and another six individuals at nonprofit or governmental agencies involved in high-level management or funding of libraries.

We interviewed library leaders and others to understand whether issues presented in the literature were affecting their financial sustainability and how they are addressing them and adapting in the process. The interview protocol (see Appendix A) was developed based on the literature review of initial factors that affect stable or adequate funding for libraries as described below.

Analysis and Framework Development

Initial factors for consideration were identified based on literature written by and about Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; other libraries and library systems; and reports, books, and studies about libraries. We developed an interview protocol to probe the factors with respondents to understand how these might be related to the use and attraction of library resources. A synthesis of the literature and interviews revealed three high-level factors that we used to form the basis of our analysis framework. We describe our analytic process below.

Identifying Broad Factors That Affect Financial Sustainability

There is a wide literature on library funding issues that link library users and other stakeholders to the consumption of resources (see, for example, Davis, 2006; American Library Association, 2007a) and as advocates for library resources (Imholz and Arns, 2007; Morrill, 2007). The literature guided our understanding about how changing demographics might affect demand

Table 2.1
Characteristics of Selected Comparison Libraries, 2005

Library Name	Service Area	Legal Basis	No. of Branches	Service Area Population
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	City (County)	NPO or Agency	19	458,597 (1,223,411)
Baltimore County Public Library, Maryland	County	County/ Parish	16	754,292
Cincinnati and Hamilton County Public Library, Ohio	County	County/ Parish	41	806,652
Cleveland Public Library, Ohio	School District	School District	28	464,744
Columbus Metropolitan Library, Ohio	County	County/ Parish	20	771,097
Enoch Pratt Free Library, Maryland	Metro Area	County/ Parish	21	633,100
Free Library of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	County	Municipal government	54	1,517,550
Hennepin County Public Library, Minnesota	County	Municipal government	41	761,637
Indianapolis–Marion County Public Library, Indiana	Other	Library District	23	832,693
Kansas City Public Library, Missouri	School District	Library District	9	239,525
King County Library System, Washington	County	Library District	43	1,183,855
Louisville Free Public Library, Kentucky	County	County/ Parish	16	700,030
Multnomah County Library, Oregon	County	County/ Parish	16	685,950
Seattle Public Library, Washington	City	Municipal government	24	573,000
St. Louis County Library, Missouri	County	Library District	19	873,483
St. Louis Public Library, Missouri	City	Library District	15	348,189

SOURCE: NCES, 2005.

NOTES: The most recent available data set is from 2005. NPO is nonprofit organization.

for services and programs (Caldwell, 2006; Wilson and Train, 2006; Pew Internet & American Life Project and University of Illinois, 2007) and about how advances in technology were changing the demand for services and the role of libraries in the communities that the libraries serve (American Library Association, 2007a, b; Boss, 2008; Pew Internet & American Life Project and University of Illinois, 2007). Additional documents linked libraries' role in economic and community stability and growth to the generation of goodwill and advocacy for libraries among a broad base of stakeholders (McClure and Bertot, 1998; Berk and Associates, 2005; Urban Libraries Council, 2005, 2007; CED, 2006). In our interviews, we explored how libraries adapt their services for different sets of stakeholders, the impact users have on funding needs, and how these libraries balanced the two.

The literature suggested that the ability to adapt to changing environments is part of the culture of a library and, further, that some libraries were adopting business-like “change management” initiatives to aid their sustainability (Bell, 2008; Forrest, 2008; Higa-Moore et al., 2002; Saunders, 2008). Our interviews elicited examples of how libraries cope with

and encourage change in their staff to facilitate innovation in an effort to attract and sustain funding.

Literature on partnerships and strategic planning in libraries (Urban Libraries Council, 2005, 2007; Walker and Manjarrez, 2003; Higa-Moore et al., 2002; Gall and Miller, 1997; Feldstein, 1996) suggested that libraries use a variety of means to engage stakeholders as advocates, for example by including individuals in the planning process or leveraging the capabilities of other organizations. In our interviews, we asked respondents about the role of various stakeholder groups, from users to board members, in advocacy for their libraries. We also asked about partnerships with other organizations that strengthen libraries' funding base.

As discussed in Chapter Three, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is a citywide library system that also provides services to Allegheny County residents, who are served in turn by 43 independent municipal libraries, some with multiple outlets. Studies by Munn (1970) and by Allegheny County and Lucchino (1991) suggest that local funding to the multiple libraries dilutes the libraries' ability to garner resources effectively. Accordingly, we examined the literature on funding as it relates to the organizational form of libraries through mergers of libraries (e.g., Amdursky, 2004; Hennen 2002, 2005) and governance structure (Urban Libraries Council, 2004; NCES, 2005; Colorado Department of Education, 2003, 2008). Our interview protocol explored how other libraries perceive the impact of organizational decisions and governance structures on their funding stability.

Organizing the Factors

The literature and interviews suggested many individual factors that are directly or indirectly linked to resource sustainability. To provide a tractable framework, we looked for similarities across the areas to identify common themes that could be applied across public libraries, although the specific circumstances may vary. For example, while demographic profiles, which drive demand for library services, run the gamut, libraries share similarities in how they *respond* to changes in demand. We also found that different locales engage different stakeholders in their quest for funding, but each relied on local advocacy in some form to help secure funding. Finally, the operating environment of libraries varied, but funding was intimately related to the organizational decisions and structure of a library.

Drawing on these observations, we organized the findings in the literature and interviews around three broad factors: demand for and consumption of library services, the role and effectiveness of advocacy for libraries in generating community support, and the organizational form of the library.

Framework for Analysis

We developed a simple framework to identify the opportunities that CLP might pursue to enable stable funding. To bring resources back into alignment, the organizations we interviewed and those described in the literature employ three strategies, singly or in combination: increase funding, decrease expenses, or improve the efficient use of available resources. Accordingly, our framework assesses each of the broad factors we identified against its ability to affect, or its being affected by, the increase, decrease, or more efficient use of dollars. The application of this framework, which is presented in Chapter Six, yielded nine opportunities for CLP to explore further with the aid of a task force.

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

This chapter provides an overview of operational aspects of CLP. Drawing from the three major themes identified in Chapter Two, we highlight consumers of CLP services in terms of users, services and programs, the role of various stakeholders in their advocacy of CLP, and key organizational characteristics that shape its operating environment.

Historical Overview

Andrew Carnegie believed public access to a library was a fundamental element of civil society. By providing unlimited access to a wide range of information, Carnegie hoped to solidify the role a library could play in blurring entrenched and generational economic distinctions. He linked his respect for the power of libraries to the passive actions of Colonel Anderson of Allegheny who opened his personal library once a week to Carnegie and other boys in the neighborhood. Carnegie (1889) resolved, “If ever wealth came to me, that it should be used to establish free libraries, that other poor boys might receive opportunities similar to those for which we were indebted to that noble man.” Following his declaration, Carnegie spent much of his earned wealth building libraries throughout the United States and the world. As Carnegie’s home and source of much of his wealth, Pittsburgh received substantial funds. On November 5, 1895, Carnegie established the aptly named Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

While the words “Free to the People” adorn the mammoth CLP building, the notion is a bit of a misnomer. Carnegie believed in the *free use* of a library, where patrons need not pay for access to materials, but also in a sense of ownership and right to the material. He strongly believed in the ability of the library to mitigate class distinctions, but he felt an endowed public library would internalize a sense of paternalism rather than possession. Upon his decision to provide at least \$1 million for start-up costs only, Carnegie (1895) stated, “There is nothing here that can tend to pauperize, for there is neither trace nor taint of charity.” Carnegie provided capital so the people of Pittsburgh could own a library.

In its initial inception, Carnegie envisioned the library as the anchor upon which the progress of the city lay—any worldly city worth its weight had a library.¹ While Carnegie’s theory may be well-rationalized, the practicality of funding a huge public trust through fluctuating tax dollars has proved to be an awkward dance of competing public values.

¹ Interestingly, though, he chose to endow his colocated art gallery and museum, saying, “these are to be regarded as wise extravagances, for which public revenues should not be given, not as necessities” (Carnegie, 1895). Currently, along with the endowment, these entities are tax supported and require a user fee.

We note here that the mission of CLP is to “engage our community in literacy and learning.” This has not changed over time and is consistent with the mission statements of many public libraries, which emphasize supporting and improving literacy, learning, and access to knowledge for the American public.

The remainder of this chapter discusses the three primary areas that affect funding sustainment and stability: (1) demand for and consumption of library services and programs, (2) the role and effectiveness of advocates for the library or level of community support, and (3) organizational form.

Library Consumers

Library users, or consumers, drive resource demands for any library. We describe here demographic characteristics of Pittsburgh and the county and then the users, programs, and services CLP provides to these communities.

Demographics

Declining Population. Like many cities, Pittsburgh has suffered from a population move to the outlying suburbs but, more significantly, from population loss in the entire region. Starting with the demise of the steel industry, both Pittsburgh and Allegheny County have seen a steady decline in population, losing over a quarter of a million people from 1979 to 2006 (289,000) or over 11 percent of the population (BEA, 2008). Typical of many urban areas, the City of Pittsburgh has lost population at a higher rate than the surrounding suburbs—both to these outlying areas and to other regions. While the Pittsburgh metropolitan statistical area is estimated to have lost about 2.4 percent of its population between 2000 and 2006, the city saw a decrease of about 6.3 percent of its population during the same period (Katz and Liu, 2008).

Aging Population. With the decline of manufacturing, the area lost working-aged population over several decades, leading to an aging population. In 2006, the median population over the age of 60 in the region was greater than the nation (22 percent and 17 percent, respectively; U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Pittsburgh retains a large and active senior community.

Brain Drain. While Pittsburgh houses several major universities and the corporate headquarters for seven Fortune 500 companies, it has not been the beneficiary of major immigration or a steady population of young professionals. In a recent U.S. Census Bureau report on “brain drain” from American metropolitan areas, Pittsburgh reported the second highest loss of single individuals between the ages of 25 and 39 with at least a bachelor’s degree, posting a net loss of 7,444 individuals between 1995 and 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). While the 29 universities and colleges in the region attract a large number of students to the Pittsburgh area, the students leave the region after graduation.

Affordable Living. In contrast, Pittsburgh now retains young families because of its highly rated quality of life and affordable cost of living.² The affordable cost of living and relative ease of transportation seem to have contributed to the phenomena. The median population between the ages of 15 and 44 in the City of Pittsburgh resembles the nation (roughly 44 per-

² In 2007, Pittsburgh was rated top among 379 metropolitan areas based on cost of living, transportation, jobs, education, climate, crime, health care, recreation, and ambiance (museums, performing arts, restaurants, and historical districts).

cent) and is greater than that of the county or the metropolitan statistical area, with 37 percent of population in the age group.

Race and Educational Disparity. In 2006, the demographic profile of Pittsburgh was roughly two-thirds white and about one-quarter African-American. Allegheny County is similar with 83 percent white and 13 percent African-American residents.³ Typical of many urban areas, and perhaps because of the insulated nature of its 91 distinct neighborhoods, Pittsburgh has struggled with racial issues. The Pittsburgh public schools report wide racial achievement gaps between white and African-American students, despite sharing classrooms. The 2007 Pennsylvania State Scholastic Assessment (PSSA) revealed that while 12 percent of white students in the Pittsburgh Public School District perform below proficiency in math, the number nearly triples to 34 percent of African-American students performing below math proficiency. These numbers are repeated for reading, with 14 percent of white students performing below proficiency, while 37 percent of African-American students read below basic levels (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2007b, pp. 871 and 967).

Library Users

Data on holders of CLP library cards suggest that usage is in line with national trends. Table 3.1a and 3.1b present two views of library use. The top table reports the percentage of Pittsburgh residents that have a CLP library card for five age groups. The bottom table shows the survey results from a national survey of library users for similar age groupings (Pew Internet & American Life Project and University of Illinois, 2007). While not directly comparable, the tables illustrate similarities in patronage by age group up through age 60. Perhaps somewhat surprising is the lower percentage of “mature” CLP card holders relative to the Pew/University of Illinois survey results given Pittsburgh’s elderly population.

Table 3.1a
CLP Cardholders by Age Group, 2006

Cardholders	13–24	25–36	37–48	49–60	61+
% of city population	67	73	54	59	25

SOURCE: CED, 2006, Table 10, p. 14.

Table 3.1b
Library Usage Nationally by Age Group

Attendance	Gen Y (18–30)	Gen X (31–42)	Trailing Boomers (43–52)	Leading Boomers (53–61)	Mature (62–71)	After Work (72+)
% going to a public library	62	59	57	46	42	32

SOURCE: Pew Internet & American Life Project and University of Illinois, 2007.

NOTES: N = 2,796, including an oversample of 733 “low-access” respondents. The margin of error is ± 3 percent for the entire sample. The column headings are from the source survey.

³ The city and county have a small percentage of other nationalities: 7 percent and 5 percent, respectively.

Library Branches, Departments, and Programs

As a legacy to its industrial history, the City of Pittsburgh consists of 91 distinct, close-knit, and somewhat homogeneous neighborhoods.⁴ Settled over generations by Western and Eastern European immigrants, each neighborhood has a unique flavor, a robust culture, and a strong community identity that frequently spans familial generations. The 19 library branch locations have targeted their services to meet the needs of these distinctive communities. While basic services are similar across the branches, e.g., all branches offer wireless and computer access and library loan services, variation exists across the branches in services offered to meet local user needs (see Appendix B for a list of CLP branches). An example of a targeted library service is seen in the East Liberty Branch, which is located in an economically depressed area. It offers a PC center with 33 computers to allow users to learn basic computer software, search and apply for jobs, and complete computer-friendly work. In another example, Homewood Library, also located in a depressed area, interfiles juvenile and adult books in its newly renovated library to better address the varying education levels of its users.

All but one branch is open at least five days a week, each with varying after-work hours and some providing hours on Saturday. Most branches offer large meeting rooms for public use.

With the help of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation grants, CLP has been able to offer a large number of computers to its users in each of its libraries. This program is epitomized by the PC center offered at the East Liberty Branch library. A study funded by the Gates Foundation in 2007 (American Library Association, 2007a) identified prohibitive gaps in individual economic potential caused by the lack of access to computers. Much like Carnegie's library grants, Gates' grants across the country attempt to bridge those gaps.

Library Departments. CLP has connected with a large number of users as indicated by its circulation of 3.4 million and nearly 2.8 million visits in 2007. CLP maintains its presence in communities through its strong branch library system and informal community networks. In addition to the branch system, CLP offers specialized departments aimed at serving Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. In general, these targeted services focus on children, teens, and the elderly, while some focus on supporting economic development. These services include a business center; children's and teens' centers; music, film, and audio collections; a foundation center; a job and career center; the Pennsylvania Collection; a music center; PC centers; reference services; and the Oliver Special Collections room. Many of these departments provide special programs as described below.

Special Programs and Attendance. At any given time, CLP offers 17 categories of events ranging from baby "lap-sit" and book discussions to technology programs and toddler story times. In 2008 in the month of July alone, CLP provided 492 programs in its 18 open branches. As presented in Table 3.2, the programs cover a wide range of topics that are intended to engage all age groups.

In 2006, more than 168,000 individuals attended 8,700 library programs like those presented in the table. Program attendance increased in 2007 to nearly 270,000 individuals, with the number of programs offered topping 10,800 (CLP, *Annual Reports*, 2006 and 2007). In addition to providing programs, CLP provides space for community meetings at its libraries, with 2,100 community groups in 2006 and 2,700 groups in 2007 using these facilities.

⁴ The City of Pittsburgh Web site provides a list of neighborhoods (City of Pittsburgh, undated).

Table 3.2
Types of Programs and Their Frequency Offered
by CLP in July 2008

Number of Offerings	Type of Program
7	Art and music appreciation
54	Book discussion
8	Business and business development
2	Community development
26	Computer class
6	Diversity appreciation
7	Aging and the elderly
6	Film appreciation
33	Educational games and gaming
16	Health
18	Language
7	Nonprofit and personal business
18	Reading club
35	Themed children's program
66	Special interest
124	Story time: baby, toddler, family
5	Writing workshop

The Impact of Library Consumers

The cost for the main library and its branches to provide services to its consumers amounted to 82 percent of its total operating expenditures in 2007. While some of the many programs and services provided by CLP to the community are included in this number, another 3 percent of its operating expenditures, \$666,000 out of \$26.4 million, supported additional programs and activities. As a percentage of total operating expenditures, funding for the main library, its branches, and additional programs and activities has held steady at between 84 and 86 percent since 2000.

Library Advocacy

With the amount of foot traffic in and around CLP and its branch libraries, it is not surprising that a recent study completed by the Center for Economic Development (CED) at Carnegie Mellon University concluded that CLP generates more than \$63 million in economic output in Allegheny County each year and sustains more than 700 jobs (CED, 2006). The study found that the library, as the region's most visited regional asset, provides an economic benefit

of \$3 for every dollar it spends. Further, for every dollar provided by the City of Pittsburgh and the Allegheny Regional Asset District, the library provides more than \$6 worth of direct and indirect benefits to the communities served (CED, 2006).⁵

The CED notes, but does not try to measure, benefits that accrue to individuals from improved quality of life and to individuals and society through increased literacy. Yet the library is one of five literacy measures that allow the City of Pittsburgh to be consistently ranked in the top ten most-literate cities since 2004, when the ranking system started (Miller, 2004–2007). Information on the social, community, and economic impacts of CLP paves the way for various stakeholders to be advocates for the library.

Table 3.3 presents the roles that advocacy plays on behalf of CLP, where advocacy is defined as providing resources in the form of money, influence, and donated time. As presented in the first row, library users can contribute through direct monetary donations; by lobbying for resources, programs, and services; and by donating their time through volunteerism. “Library Friends” are formal groups of users. At CLP, Library Friends are strongly associated with a branch library and typically volunteer and raise money for projects and events in their locale.

Government officials, business leaders, and other government and civic elites play an important advocacy role for CLP, from donations to informal influence through writing opinion-editorials, hosting events and programs, and promoting the resource needs of the library to funding sources. CLP staff is a vital set of stakeholders and may donate some earnings and time back to CLP, but its primary advocacy role is in promoting the library to the users and to the broader public.

Library foundations are nonprofit organizations that typically provide the library endowment and may also raise money for special projects. As a nonprofit entity, and unlike municipal government libraries, CLP is able to fund raise and accept donations directly. CLP does not require a separate foundation to receive donations. The market value of CLP’s endowment in 2007 was \$12 million.

Table 3.3
Advocacy Roles of CLP Library Stakeholders

Library Stakeholder	Advocacy Role		
	Donations	Time	Influence
Library users	Giving directly through monetary donations	Volunteering	Informal
Library Friends	Fund-raising for specific branches	Organizing volunteers	Informal
Government and civic elites	Promoting the roles of the library in the community	Promoting through events and programs	Informal
Library staff			Informal
Library foundation	Acting as intermediary to advocate for and collect donations		Informal
Board of Trustees	Promoting the role of the library in the community and for specific stakeholders	Attending meetings, fund-raising, and promoting through events and programs	Formal designated role

⁵ Direct benefits result from spending by the library and its customers (CED, 2006, p. 2). Indirect benefits are associated with externalities produced by the purchases of supplies and materials from library vendors (CED, 2006, pp. 6–8).

The board of trustees was given the authority to manage the property, business, and affairs of CLP in 1890, including the power to acquire grants and gifts and all fiduciary activities. The board consists of three classes of trustees—public, life, and term. Active engagement by each group of board members varies.

The Impact of Library Advocates

Advocates provide numerous tangible and intangible resources to CLP. Private contributions from individuals and corporations more than doubled between 2000 and 2006—from about \$636,000 to \$1.38 million—but perhaps more remarkable is the impact of these dollars on CLP's finances. In 2000, private contributions were 0.2 percent of all operating revenues; in 2006, these contributions accounted for 4.4 percent of operating revenues. It is probably impossible to capture the full impact of advocates, but through goodwill and actions, including petitions and other non-financial advocacy, they are an important contribution to the visibility and financial support of the library.

Organizational Form

Although established in 1895, the current organizational form of a single, citywide library system was not achieved until 1956 (Munn, 1970). Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is a non-profit, public trust that serves its constituents directly in 19 locations throughout the city, including its flagship Oakland (main) library. A comprehensive Web site fills the accessibility void that results from the limited branch locations. In 2007, the library Web site received 5.9 million visits. Currently, the nonunion CLP system employs 97 American Library Association certified–Master of Library Science (ALA-MLS) librarians out of a total of 143 librarians to manage a circulation of 3.4 million, a total collection of 5.5 million tangible volumes, and 94 virtual databases.

To ensure proper local support at its inception, Carnegie established a board of trustees consisting of a carefully picked set of 18 members. These members included the mayor of the city, the presidents of select and common councils, the president of the central board of education, and a library committee of five members of city councils. The remaining 9 members were to be a self-perpetuating group of the city's most influential individuals (Frew, 1895). Its initial members included some of the city's most well-known names: Frew, Pitcairn, Frick, Mellon, Magee, and Porter.

The current board of trustees is nearly double in size from its original incarnation. Presently, the board includes 32 members, although it is authorized to have as many as 38 members and as few as 30. The board consists of three classes of trustees—public, life, and term. With its inherited legacy of advisors, some Board members are remotely engaged with the library.

Allegheny County Library Association

The idea of a merger of the independent libraries in Allegheny County with CLP as its nucleus was promoted in 1955 by a special commission for uniform development throughout the county (Munn, 1970). Typical of present-day local politics, the plan was resisted at the time out of fear that library consolidation was a first step in the absorption of the 100-plus local governments by the city (Munn, 1970). In 1991, after several decades of fiscal decline in the county, Allegheny County and Lucchino released a special report, *A Quiet Crisis: Libraries in Allegheny*

County, which again called for a merger of the many independent libraries in the county and CLP. At the time of the report, despite the independent county libraries receiving significant services from CLP, there was little if any cooperation across municipal borders.

The Allegheny County/Lucchino report concluded that gross underfunding, inadequate services, and limited access could be turned around if the libraries were to unite under a single library system. As before, resistance to a merger was strong but in order to obtain funding from a proposed countywide sales tax, the libraries came together under an agreement of increased cooperation and coordination called the Allegheny County Library Association. ACLA was established as a voluntary organization in 1992 to improve cross-library coordination and began receiving county funds as a group in 1993. Each library within the federation retains its own independent board, administrative duties, and hiring authority.

CLP participates as an “at-will” member of the ACLA, which integrates 44 independent county libraries and a bookmobile into a loosely federated system, with comprehensive inter-library loan privileges. Some regions without adequate library access offer computer rooms as “library access points” into the greater ACLA interlibrary loan and computing system. The service population for ACLA libraries (minus CLP) totals 822,623, with circulation reaching 5,961,589 in 2006. The operating expenditures of these libraries equaled \$20,721,311.⁶ Local county funding for these libraries equaled \$4,902,400 in 2006, about one-quarter of the total operating expenses.⁷

The Electronic Information Network (eiNetwork) was launched in 1996 as a partnership of ACLA, CLP, and the Commission on the Future of Libraries. The eiNetwork established a common automation system for libraries throughout the county.

CLP: Regional, District, and State Resource Center

In the 1960s, several changes were made to the library systems in Pennsylvania. To help consolidate materials and the special equipment required to serve visually impaired and disabled readers, CLP receives annual appropriations to provide the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped—one of two regional libraries in Pennsylvania serving these populations.

In 1961, CLP became one of 29 district library centers in Pennsylvania. As Allegheny County’s designated district library, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh provides reference services, interlibrary loans, consulting services, and continuing education to libraries and residents in the county.

CLP also is one of four state resource centers, which maintain major research collections and are tasked with providing specialized materials and services to all Pennsylvania residents. State funds for these additional services have been small compared with local support and have fluctuated dramatically based on the state’s budgetary requirements.

Conclusion

In summary, the consumers of CLP services account for about 85 percent of its operating expenses, and the many advocates for CLP play different roles in sustaining funding. CLP is

⁶ See Allegheny County Library Association, 2007, for data on the 43 member libraries, not including CLP.

⁷ See Appendix C for a list of ACLA libraries and population numbers.

governed by a large board and serves the city, the county, and the state. The breadth and scope of services provided will be important in any consideration for sustaining funding.

Operational Revenue Sources

As in other libraries, the factors discussed in Chapter Three lead to CLP resource gains and losses. In this chapter, we describe how local and other agencies provide operating revenue to CLP in support of its users and programs. We then describe sources of operational funding for the set of comparison libraries to understand areas of similarities and differences.

CLP Operational Revenue Sources

Prior to 1956, funding for CLP came solely from the City of Pittsburgh (Munn, 1970). As early as 1909, funding shortfalls caused CLP to reduce operating hours, discontinue Sunday hours, and alternate evening and morning hours the rest of the week. The crisis reached a pinnacle in 1915 when the city reduced the operating budget by \$50,000 to \$200,000. One-fourth of the total staff was dismissed. The city restored funding in 1917.

Approaching the end of the 20th century, the area found itself again faced with diminishing revenues in the city and county—this time, because of a decline in industry and population. The region was hard-pressed to support its many publicly assisted assets. The burden of public support fell to local jurisdictions, with the City of Pittsburgh housing many of these assets within its borders. To support regional cultural and arts assets, Allegheny County voters supported creation of the Regional Asset District to provide funding drawn from a countywide sales tax in 1995. In 2003, state funding to libraries was reduced by 50 percent and has only in 2008 returned to its 2002 level for CLP, not adjusting for inflation.

Below is an overview of the local, state, federal, and other sources of CLP operating revenues. Total operating revenues in 2007 were \$26,381,000, which include operating revenues from local, state, and other government sources of nearly \$23.5 million. Private contributions from foundations, corporations, and individuals totaled slightly more than \$1.2 million in 2007.

City of Pittsburgh

Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh receives local government funding from the City of Pittsburgh. The city is required to give CLP only \$40,000 annually, but it sometimes provides special one-time grants, typically for specific projects. In 2006, the City of Pittsburgh provided CLP operating revenues of almost \$50,000, and \$70,000 in 2007.

Allegheny Regional Asset District

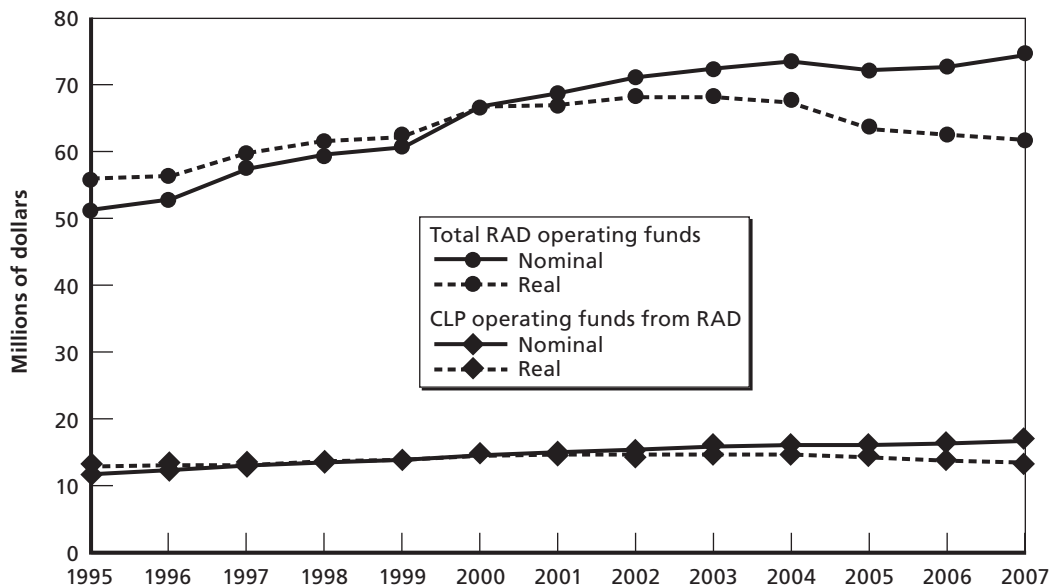
In an attempt to stabilize funding for all regional assets, the legislature approved the creation of a RAD 1 percent sales tax in 1993. In 1995, much of the local burden for CLP support shifted from the city and county to the countywide RAD sales tax, which remains its major source of local funding.

CLP is 1 of 9 “contractual assets” established at the inception of the RAD tax with a ten-year commitment. The contractual assets were reauthorized for five additional years in 2005. In addition to 2 multiyear assets for sports arenas and stadiums, RAD funded 67 “annual” assets.

As presented in Figure 4.1, CLP funding from the RAD sales tax to the library increased from \$11.9 million in 1995 to about \$16.8 million in 2007, with RAD operating funds increasing from \$51 million to \$74 million in that period. The growth in RAD operating revenues has slowed considerably: After increasing 23 percent between 1995 and 2000, these revenues increased by 10 percent between 2000 and 2007 (in real—adjusted for inflation—tax dollars, the increases were 16 percent and –7 percent, respectively, for the two periods). CLP operating revenues from RAD mirror this trend.

In 2007, a House bill was introduced in the state to earmark 2 percent of RAD funding to promote economic development and tourism, which would directly reduce the money available to other supported assets. While the initiative was rejected, it is worth noting that the arts and cultural assets in addition to politicians and others looking to promote programs compete for allocations from RAD. While CLP is currently the largest single recipient of RAD funding, its current contract extends only through 2010. Also,

Figure 4.1
Total RAD Operating Funds and CLP Operating Revenues from RAD, 1995–2007, in Nominal and Real Dollars



SOURCES: RAD data supplied by CLP, *Annual Reports*, 2000–2007; BEA, Table 1.1.9 (Index numbers, 2000 = 100), 2008.

NOTE: The base year is 2000.

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CLP faces resource uncertainty moving forward as RAD reconsiders the extent to which it will fund CLP and the other regional contractual assets that RAD was created to support.

Federal and State Funding

Direct federal funding is a small percentage of any public library funding. As for other systems, federal funding is a tiny part of CLP revenues, about \$75,000 in 2006.

State funding has been stagnant for CLP and the county libraries. After Pennsylvania Governor Rendell reduced aid to libraries in 2003 by 50 percent, CLP received \$2.7 million in 2008—the same amount it received in 2002: roughly \$500,000 for its role as the county coordinator library, about \$1.3 million as its designation as a “district library center,” and slightly less than one million because of its designation as a “state resource center” (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 2007a). In total, CLP receives about \$1.14 per capita in the city from the state to provide county, district, and regional services.

Pennsylvania state funding is tied to operating hours and the level of local funding. Although most local libraries receive incentive funds for being open at least 45 hours per week with at least seven weekend hours, CLP is required to be open 65 hours per week at the main library location. State funding cuts in 2003 caused CLP to reduce hours of operation; in 2008, CLP was able to increase operating hours to 62 hours per week from 59 per week. A library also receives increased state funding with increased local funding. However, the state library code on “local” tax is confusing in the case of CLP since it receives money from a countywide tax and a small amount from the city.

Other Sources of Revenue

Nearly 90 percent of CLP operating revenues come from local and state government. The balance is from three additional categories. Roughly 5 percent (\$1.2 million) of CLP 2007 operating revenues came from private contributed support, including grants from foundations and donations from corporations and individuals. Another 4 percent (\$0.9 million) was raised from fines, fees for services, and entrepreneurial activities. The remainder was the return on investment from the endowment.

Comparison Libraries’ Operational Revenue Sources

Like CLP, the public libraries we examined obtained their primary funding from either local or state revenues, with one or the other forming the lion’s share.¹ Libraries vary on their access to “other” funding, ranging from local foundation support, to grants for special projects from nonprofits and corporations, to donations. Fines and fees were another category of revenue.

NCES annually surveys public libraries on a number of dimensions, including sources of operating revenue. In 2005, the latest year for which information is available from over 9,000 public libraries in the 50 states and Washington, D.C., NCES (2007, p. 3) reports that of public libraries’ total operating revenue of about \$9.7 billion:

- Eighty-one percent came from local sources.
- Ten percent came from state sources.

¹ Federal funding was not a significant funding source for any of the libraries we examined, totaling 1 percent or less of revenues for any library.

- Less than 1 percent came from federal sources.
- Eight percent came from other sources, such as monetary gifts and donations, interest, library fines, fees, or grants.

The first three columns in Table 4.1 show the percentage of revenues from local, state, and other sources of funding for the libraries in our subset. The three libraries located in Ohio are noticeably different from the others because they receive significant funding from state revenues. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh shows a lower percentage of revenues from local sources, in part because of the extra state monies received as a district and regional library resource.

Not surprisingly, the fact of whether or not the source of funding is mostly local is uncorrelated with total revenue per capita, which ranges from \$23 per capita (Louisville Free Public Library) to \$146 per capita (Cleveland Public Library). Using the City of Pittsburgh service area, CLP falls roughly in the middle of the group with revenues of \$56 per capita. However, Allegheny County consists of 44 independent libraries including CLP, whereas the libraries in the table have consolidated county systems or merged city-county systems. As the designated county library, CLP provides many services to residents in the surrounding county, directly and through lending services and as a regional, district, and state resource

Table 4.1
Percentage of Total Revenues by Source and Total Revenue per Capita, 2005

Library	% Local	% State	% Other	Total Revenue per Capita (\$)	Legal Basis
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh	65%	19%	15%	\$56, city (\$21, county)	NPO
Cincinnati–Hamilton County Public Library	0%	93%	7%	\$65	County
Columbus Metro Library	42%	51%	7%	\$63	County
Cleveland Public Library	52%	41%	6%	\$146	Sch.D
Baltimore County Public Library	74%	10%	15%	\$45	County
Kansas City Public Library	75%	1%	24%	\$81	Lib.D
Free Library of Philadelphia	83%	12%	4%	\$49	Lib.D
Indianapolis–Marion County Public Library	84%	9%	7%	\$41	Lib.D
Multnomah County Library	91%	0%	8%	\$68	County
St. Louis County Library	92%	2%	6%	\$35	Lib.D
Louisville Free Public Library	92%	3%	3%	\$23	County
Hennepin County Public Library	93%	1%	6%	\$55	Muni.G
St. Louis Public Library	94%	1%	4%	\$58	Lib.D
King County Library System	94%	0%	5%	\$67	Lib.D
Seattle Public Library	96%	4%	0%	\$67	Muni.G

SOURCE: NCES, 2005.

NOTES: Legal basis abbreviations: Sch.D = school district, Lib.D = library district, Muni.G = municipal government. Hennepin County Library figures are before the merger in 2008.

center (see previous chapter). Revenues per capita using the county population would place CLP at about \$21 per capita. Though CLP does not replace local library services for the entire county, it plays a significant role in serving it. As such, the true revenues per capita probably lie somewhere between \$56 and \$21, moving it nearer to the bottom of this list of libraries.

Each library had unique sources of local revenues. Revenues were obtained from the general revenues from the city or county, which were themselves obtained from a mixture of income, sales, or property taxes.² In other cases, local library revenues were obtained directly from property and/or sales tax. We were able to determine sources of local revenue for 11 of the libraries in Table 4.1 (not including CLP): four received general fund appropriations and seven had dedicated property or other taxes. Two of these libraries also noted the ability to issue bonds for capital projects with voter approval.³

Stability of Funding

Stable funding and sufficient funding were issues even for libraries with significant state funding. Dedicated taxes and general fund revenues are subject to the same fluctuations arising from changes in the local and broader economy. Even with a dedicated revenue source, respondents noted a limited ability to obtain a needed increase in levies when it involved a request to taxpayers to raise their own taxes. The conventional wisdom among the interviewees points to a “portfolio approach” to local library funding. Any single revenue source has pitfalls—a property tax is affected more slowly by economic downturns than is an income tax, but it is slower to rise in economic upturns. As publicly funded entities, however, the ability to obtain a truly noncompetitive funding source is elusive. Still, local and state advocates for libraries may shield library funding from some of the turbulence.

Other Funding Sources

Although libraries listed in Table 4.1 obtained funds from “other” sources, few saw these as sources of general operating funding except for fees and fines. Entrepreneurial activities, such as coffee shops, contribute some resources, but the motivation of adding business-like venues appeared to be directed at creating inviting spaces and not an alternative revenue stream. Other funding is acquired through library foundations and friends via grants, fund-raising, donations, and related activities. These funds typically are earmarked for special projects rather than for core funding. Indeed, several interviewees indicated that local revenue providers were forbidden, by statute or other agreement, from reducing or offsetting allotments by revenue raised via other means.

Statutes and Regulations

Some respondents noted statutory limitations on their ability to raise revenues. In some cases, state law determined the levy amount for dedicated taxes. In other cases, the legal status of the library itself constrained its choices, e.g., as a municipal service. Some libraries can place issues on the ballot to voters either directly or via their board. Library districts appeared to have the most flexibility vis-à-vis regulatory constraints. In our review of the libraries and literature, it was difficult to extract any general findings about the regulatory environments of the various

² Some states prohibit certain types of taxes, such as local income taxes (although occupational fees may be used). State appropriations also were provided from general revenues raised in various forms.

³ We did not question libraries about their ability to issue bonds, and it is likely that others fall into this group.

libraries. Each has made decisions that are framed by its particular regulatory context, though at least one library system has actively (and successfully) lobbied at the state level for a change. There may be opportunities for CLP to consider options that are currently constrained by state statute.

Summary

Like many public libraries, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh receives the bulk of its operating revenues from local sources. While its major single source of local funding, RAD, has been stable over the last decade, allocations have not kept up with the rate of inflation. On a total revenue-per-capita basis, CLP appears to be on a par with libraries in our small subset. However, when adjusting for the services that it provides to the county, and thus a larger population in the denominator, per capita revenues for CLP fall precipitously, placing it at or near the bottom of this group of libraries.

Factors Affecting Options for Sustainable Funding

Theoretically, sufficiency of funding allows libraries to adapt to population needs, which then garners public support for the library and, in turn, should yield adequate future funding. In short, a positively reinforcing cycle should ensure that libraries are well funded. In this chapter, we gather evidence from interviews and a broader literature on factors that may affect this theoretical cycle. As described in Chapter Two, the literature and interviews yielded three high-level, interrelated factors that merge to form a library's operating environment:

1. demand and consumption of library services
2. the role and effectiveness of advocates for the library in generating community support
3. organizational decisions.

In this chapter, we explore how the libraries in our comparison set connect the factors to sustainable and adequate resources so that we can identify options available to CLP. We link the insights gained from interviews and the literature to the factors presented in Chapter Two.

Consumption of Library Services

Libraries are serving a changing population of library consumers. Nationwide, trends include 72 million aging baby boomers; 60 million members of Generation Y, born between 1980 and 1999; and increasing numbers of immigrants (KC Consensus, 2004). Along with demographic changes, technology is changing how patrons use libraries, what they expect from libraries, and how libraries provide their services.

To cope with the needs of shifting populations, nearly all interviewees indicated the need for libraries to be “agile” in order to remain relevant to their communities and meet evolving service requirements. Agility included recognizing emerging needs, reacting quickly, and anticipating future trends (Haricombe and Lusher, 1998). In recent years, libraries have been transitioning from a model in which facilities were designed by and (largely) for librarians to one more dedicated to the provision of services for a diverse set of patrons. This transition includes the notion that libraries are becoming “destinations” for community congregation, as opposed to storage areas that people move through to acquire materials. According to interviews, some of the change is due to advances in technology and some is a consequence of changes in the expectations of library users and competition from other venues for patron time.

Despite, or perhaps in addition to, the new image of libraries, interview respondents stressed the need for the fundamental services of libraries to be tailored to the needs of a diverse population of consumers, the library patrons.¹ Libraries in our comparison set were finding new and innovative ways to meet changing demographics, even as they sought to meet existing service demands.

Gauging and Identifying Need

The libraries examined in this report were continually assessing whether they were meeting the needs of their communities. Surveys were the prevalent tool for ascertaining need and adjusting services and materials; other libraries obtained direct feedback through regular community meetings. A fundamental resource in gauging community needs comes from within the library where librarians serve as eyes and ears in their communities to identify emerging and unmet demands.

Urban Library Journal devoted a special issue in early 2008 to how librarians are instruments for innovations in the face of diverse user populations, emerging technologies, and other issues. Bell (2008) credits library workers with the ability to identify subtle or large shifts in user behavior, including changes in user expectations and whether they are going elsewhere for information. He cites tapping into the knowledge of librarians as critical, in addition to drawing on their creativity to adapt quickly.

Stimulating creativity among library staff and creating an environment for risk taking involves some level of change in library culture. Forrest (2008) recommends a brainstorming model as a way to stimulate creativity among library staff. Another means identified in the literature to encourage staff to communicate ideas for change is a formal (but simple) proposal process that uses a standardized proposal submission template (Saunders, 2008). During one of our interviews, a director demonstrated a commitment to innovative activities by branch librarians by shielding these individuals from negative fallout, and by building an environment of trust that new ideas directed at meeting unique service needs were supported.

An increasing number of immigrants was a prominent impetus for change in library services. Respondents highlighted the impact of immigration on demands for unique language material, often a challenge both to identify and to acquire, and the need for employees with language skills who could work with non-English speakers to find appropriate material, recognize distinctive requirements, and bring these to the libraries' attention. Libraries with fast-growing immigrant populations indicated they were refocusing some expenditures to meet specific needs of these populations: "[We are] challenged to try to find language materials and programs appropriate to the needs of our vastly changing [immigrant] population," said one respondent. In addition to expanding foreign language material, libraries stressed the need to support literacy for English as a second language for adult and youth to hone skills needed for employment opportunities.

Technology

Layered on top of any discussion of library services is technology. The literature and interviews indicate that new technology changes the way users interact with the library, the services pro-

¹ Fundamental services were those that aligned with the missions of literacy, learning, and connecting communities to knowledge.

vided by libraries, the investment function of libraries, the hardware and other infrastructure, and the need for personnel with appropriate technical skills.

Investments in hardware, software, and online services are expensive. Hennen (2006) tried to estimate the direct spending per electronic (e-)use and per print use for libraries serving populations from under 1,000 to more than 500,000. He found wide discrepancies in reported costs between 2003 and 2004 and concluded the differences in e-resource costs might have arisen from steep increases in usage, rapidly declining costs, or even confusion about how and what to report.² As Hennen and others point out, the cost of e-resources is dependent on the cost of each database or resource and the number of users of each. On this basis, e-resource usage costs appeared to vary from \$0.01 per use for widely accessed CD-ROM material to \$10 per use for obscure or technical databases. OCLC estimates that the average cost for database searches in FirstSearch was \$0.55 to \$0.58 per use for most libraries (Boss, 2008).

The discussion illustrates the challenges of balancing (and rebalancing) traditional library consumer needs with new usage. Boss (2008) proposes that public libraries evaluate products and services that cost \$0.75 or more per use to determine how valuable users consider the product or service. Such a review might lead to canceling a product or service, seeking an alternative provider, cost-sharing with other institutions, or aggressive advertising of the product to promote use.

Not surprisingly, different sociodemographic groups use the library differently and have distinct requirements. More affluent groups may be more likely to demand services that are coupled with emerging technology, such as downloadable e-books. They may expect reference librarians with deep expertise in data searches and databases. The increase in commuting time nationwide was cited by one library as creating new demand for audiobooks, expanding the collection (and expenditures) for material traditionally used by vision impaired patrons.

As more employers increasingly accept applications only electronically, urban and county library systems agreed that a critical service is to connect people, particularly poorer populations, to jobs and related information. The portion of library users without home computers varied, but it was estimated at over 20 percent by one urban-county system and over one-third by another.

With their primary mission of literacy, learning, and access to knowledge, libraries remain a critical resource. In the words of one respondent, “The mission has not changed; implementation of our mission [has changed]. We are still in the business of reading.” Our interviews indicate that libraries are adapting to changing technology, but technology investments alone are not driving their expenditures nor changing their mission. As one respondent stated, “Technology is not our replacement, it is an enabler to our mission.”

Partnering to Serve Communities

Libraries can be agents for community change with the help of partners. Many of our conversations focused on the role that libraries can have in economic development vis-à-vis engaging small and mid-sized businesses that use the library as a public resource to augment their business resources,³ which would be otherwise unaffordable. Chicago is an acknowledged example of the connection between investments in neighborhood libraries and increased com-

² Because of these questions, Hennen does not use electronic resources in his ratings of public libraries.

³ Business resources included directories, journals, and databases.

munity stability and prosperity (Urban Libraries Council, 2005, 2007). Mayor Daley has supported the library's plans for more than a decade to build or renovate libraries throughout the city, often through the acquisition and razing of abandoned buildings. The results have been remarkable, with dramatic changes in some poorer areas. Within a few years of a library opening, coupled with a sustained investment in library services, homeowners and existing businesses began investing in their surrounding property, new businesses opened up, and former residents returned.

In another example, with a basic goal of instilling a love of reading and combined with an effort to combat rising crime in an area, one library used special project funding from donations and foundations to institute an expanded and heavily marketed after-school program to reach young teenagers. The program was deemed successful in both undertakings, so much so that it was subsequently funded through an increase in the library's core operating budget (i.e., public revenue source).

Library Consumers

The mix of immigrant, age, and sociodemographic groups affects the service choices libraries make and, thus, resource requirements. These same characteristics influence the location of dollars invested (e.g., by branch), the need for regional service provision, and relationships with other (independent) libraries. These investment decisions also have an impact on future funding. Community needs are distinctive based on the blend of the service region. Urban, county, and consolidated library systems indicated the difficulties of balancing the services required by populations in urban core, rural areas, affluent suburbs, and transitioning suburbs. Gauging and responding to consumer needs is a key input to attaining and maintaining adequate resources.

Library Advocates

There are many types of stakeholders in public libraries, each with distinctive characteristics. Each type plays a different role, formal and informal, in the ability of public libraries to secure the resources required to execute their missions. This section briefly describes the various stakeholders presented in Table 5.1 followed by a discussion of how libraries engage them as advocates.

Roles of Library Stakeholders

Library stakeholders include individuals and groups that provide direct time and money and can influence resources through advocacy. Table 5.1 presents the primary roles of library stakeholders.

Library Users. Although the primary source of service demands for libraries, library users also may coalesce along interest group or community lines to the benefit—or burden—of a library. Ultimately, public library support is generated by engaging patrons. Libraries benefit from the engagement directly through volunteer hours and donations and through advocacy. Users may support or resist objectives of the library, for example, with ballot initiatives that tap into local tax revenues or expand or close branch libraries. Library patrons may participate in library governance informally or formally. In a failed attempt to place a property tax levy for the library

Table 5.1
Roles of Library Stakeholders

Library Stakeholder	Primary Roles
Library users	Advocacy, donations, volunteerism
Library Friends	Advocacy, donations, volunteerism
Civic elites and government officials	Advocacy
Library staff	Service agility and innovation, advocacy
Library foundation	Advocacy, accepting donations on the library's behalf
Board of trustees	Formal advocate for resources, change, and agility

on the ballot, one library director was challenged by government officials to demonstrate that the public actually was behind the measure, that the community valued the services it was providing. Subsequently, using consultants, the library convened multiple public forums, gathered community input, and the results became the basis for a renewed tax campaign, which then passed by a good margin.

Library Friends. Users can formalize their library relationship by becoming a Library Friend. While there is a national nonprofit organization providing networking opportunities and educational support for local Friends of Libraries (see the Friends of the Libraries home page) groups, the library systems we spoke with varied in their formal relationships with Friends of Libraries. In some cases, Library Friends operate largely as a single group that raises donations for projects and sometimes endowments for the library system. In other cases, as with CLP, Library Friends are allied more closely with a branch library—volunteering and raising money for projects and events in their locale.

Our interviews indicated that some library systems are able to really benefit from the community support embodied in Library Friends groups. One library director, who had experienced the powerful advocacy voice of Library Friends in a former library system, sought to establish a centralized group within a new library setting. Focusing on the most active members of the loosely knit Library Friends, the group eventually combined to become a source of donations and a strong political advocate for the library system. In another example, the director noted that a key advocacy benefit arose from the fact that the Library Friend's group was organized to allow political contributions and political lobbying.

Civic Elites and Government Officials. Library officials we interviewed spoke of the importance of engaging government officials, business leaders, and other civic elite, who often share the viewpoint of Andrew Carnegie that an active library system promotes a good workforce. These individuals tend to have clout with decisionmakers regarding resources or are the decisionmakers themselves. Given their position in the community, this group can draw attention to the importance of libraries in communities and are significant advocates for special programs of local importance and for discussions at the state level. Strong leadership within this group is often the deciding factor in the success of initiatives.

Library Staff. As indicated earlier, librarians and library staff are a vital stakeholder. Respondents noted that staff can receive training and be encouraged to be innovators to help the library system identify needs before the system would be able to do so. However, changing the culture of a library is not only difficult, it can alienate library employees. Accordingly, one director noted that the ability to be nimble and agile in their approach to serving the public

“requires obtaining ‘buy in’ [of the] staff . . . , [so we conduct] many change management workshops.” Strong and clear leadership from the library director and the board of trustees to guide change turned up in nearly every interview as the central element for successful change. However, coupled with this was an equally strong message from respondents that libraries cannot stray—or be perceived as straying—from their core mission of literacy and learning.

Library Foundations. These nonprofit organizations are typically the source of library endowment money and may also raise money for special projects. In most libraries, the foundation acts as the conduit for money from other nonprofit organizations and donors. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is itself a nonprofit organization, and, while it established a foundation in 2002, it does not require a separate organization to receive donations. Still, at libraries that are not organized like CLP, some respondents realized advocacy benefits in addition to resources from their foundations.

Board of Trustees. While the stakeholders above are essential advocates for libraries, the board of trustees (also called the board of directors or the library board) was viewed as pivotal to the ultimate success of the library. Respondents almost uniformly agreed that their board members were the political and financial advocates for the library. While each board was described as having the fiscal oversight role similar to that of CLP, board members were selected for a far more public role as champions for the library. Upon becoming director, one respondent noted the need to purge the board of inactive members and to replace these with members who were active political advocates and/or fund-raisers. Though the process of changing the board took time, the results were, according to the director, well worth it.

Engaging Advocates: Service Performance and Accountability

To engage advocates, a library must provide services that users demand and, generally, validate that these requirements are being met. Various sources of funding, such as donors or grantees, may request a demonstration of “success” as a result of their gift giving. In short, engaging stakeholders and securing funding often require that libraries demonstrate accountability for the resources they have expended.

Performance measures (metrics), by their very design, are intended to align the actions of individuals in organizations with high-level, enterprise goals. As such, measures are carefully selected and tied to success or progress. However, it often is difficult, sometimes impossible, to measure desired outcomes directly—e.g., inspiring lifelong learning—and so proxies, when well designed, can be used to measure, and to influence, good outcomes. However, when measures are poorly linked to desired outcomes, the measures (by design) have little or no impact on aligning (individual and organizational) activities with enterprise goals, and the results can be mixed or even poor overall outcomes.

Libraries, like all organizations, respond to metrics and also create ones that demonstrate performance that is desirable to various stakeholders. We did not learn of instances in which *primary* funding sources for libraries were tied to performance measures. However, metrics are useful—even critical—tools to garner sustained support from the service population, funding sources, and donors.

Libraries collect information that tends to be directed at their own demographics, for example, usage by age group or attendance at special branch programs. It is therefore difficult to find aggregate measures that can be compared across many library systems. Instead, there is a standard set of metrics reported and shared for many different performance measures, from

circulation of various types of material, to staffing numbers of librarians with master of library science degrees, to the number of electronic portals.

These more aggregate measures have meaning, but just as no single measure can adequately describe the “performance” of a library, the aggregate of such metrics is equally challenging since different stakeholders will apply different weights to each measure. Which numbers are too high, too low, or just right? We use common measures that are meaningful, yet difficult to compare across systems. The reason for the difficulty is that each library faces different population demographics and makes different investment decisions to serve these demands.

Table 5.2 illustrates some standard measures for a subset of the comparison libraries. The lowest expenditures on print materials per capita were reported by Louisville Free Public Library (\$2.88 per capita) and the highest were reported by Cleveland Public Library (\$12.57), more than double the next closest library system we examined (King County, \$5.99). Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh ranks fourth highest in the overall set of libraries we examined, with reported per capita expenditures on print materials of \$4.81.

The literature and several respondents noted the importance of engaging young children in the library to encourage early literacy. Table 5.2 presents a puzzling reversal from the first measure, with Louisville Free Public Library having the highest percentage circulation of children’s materials relative to all circulation, and Cleveland Public Library having the lowest. When we look at total circulation per capita, Cincinnati-Hamilton County Public Library is the frontrunner, followed by Seattle Public Library. Although not a primary funding source for libraries, Pennsylvania state resources are linked to two library metrics: hours of operation and expenditures on material per capita. As a public library, the intent of these two metrics is to ensure adequate access of fresh reading and reference material to the service population. State funding to a library is in jeopardy when the library fails to meet standards set for these metrics. While the purpose is to encourage operational efficiency in libraries (e.g., closing underutilized branches for failure to meet metrics), it is paradoxical that underfunded library systems are penalized further with resource cuts; tying funding to these two measures cannot adequately capture the complex outcomes desired from a public library.

Understanding which measures sufficiently capture the diverse services of an urban public library system will depend on the services that are required and valued by its community. One director published an annual “report card” in the newspaper in an effort to broadly publicize the library’s activities. The release is coupled with targeted and televised meetings in the communities to obtain feedback from users. The approach provides opportunities for stakeholders to comment on recent performance and to indicate desires for future performance and services. Measures along a number of dimensions allow a library to know whether it is balancing its mission of access to knowledge to those with different needs.

Organizational Form

The literature review suggested that the organizational form of a library may affect its ability to attract and sustain resources. Organizational form was described primarily along its legal basis (e.g., as a nonprofit or municipal entity) but also included the structure of the library’s board of directors. Statutes in some states limit the ability of some libraries from changing their legal basis, although merging or consolidation of independent libraries provides one such avenue.

Table 5.2
Selected Performance Measures for a Subset of Library Systems, 2005

Measure	CLP	Louisville Free Public Library	Enoch Pratt Free Library	Free Library of Philadelphia	Seattle Public Library	Cincinnati-Hamilton Public Library	Cleveland Public Library
Print materials expense/capita	\$4.81	\$2.88	\$3.10	\$3.82	\$4.73	\$4.44	\$12.57
Total collection expense/capita	\$7.35	\$4.02	\$5.60	\$5.22	\$8.41	\$10.13	\$26.57
Circulation of children's materials as % of total circulation	22.60%	34.50%	23.90%	27.40%	28.30%	25.20%	17.00%
Total circulation/capita	7.11	5.47	2.16	4.22	13.01	17.78	10.78
Library visits/capita	4.24	5.06	2.23	3.7	17.52	4.18	8.11
No. of public Internet terminals	366	410	358	774	459	617	326

NOTES: The subset was selected for ease of presentation. Information for each library is shown in Appendix D.

Organizational Basis and Revenues

In 2002, there were over 9,000 public libraries in the United States (NCES, 2005). As shown in Table 5.3, more than half of these were part of municipal government, and nearly 15 percent were organized as nonprofit organizations.

Some library funding structures, such as municipal entities, were viewed as competing head-to-head with support for public safety and other critical (and visible) services. During economic downturns, these forms were suggested to be more vulnerable to cutbacks, as was the case with CLP until local funding changed to a countywide source. Library districts, including school districts, in particular were suggested to have more predictable and steadier funding than other forms of organizing. Generally, library districts are funded through a voter-approved property tax and are autonomous from the localities in which they exist. Accordingly, a library district's funding is not vulnerable to being diverted to other purposes when local tax revenues decline.⁴

We looked for evidence of a relationship between the legal basis of the comparison libraries and total per capita revenues obtained. Based on the libraries in our set, which is not a statistical representation of libraries or of legal basis, we cannot discern a difference except that the lone public library based on a school district (a special type of library district) has much higher total per capita revenue than the others. Taking an average across the other groups, we find that those public libraries that were library districts or part of a municipal government were roughly equal, with about \$57 per capita, and the countywide library systems garnered about \$67 per capita. Still, we note that the Colorado Department of Education issued two reports (2003, 2008) to examine how public libraries in its state had been affected by state and local budget

Table 5.3
Percentage Distribution of Public Libraries by Legal Basis in the United States, 2002

Legal Basis	Percentage Distribution (N = 9,137)
Municipal government	54.2
County/parish	10.4
City/county	1.0
Multijurisdictional ^a	3.5
Nonprofit association or agency	14.9
School district	3.4
Library district	11.2
Other	1.4

SOURCE: NCES, 2005.

^a Operated jointly under two or more units of local government.

⁴ The structure of library districts in the United States varies by state: a board, which has authority over the budget plan and execution, may be elected or appointed; budgets may be approved by public vote; bonds for capital improvements may be placed on a ballot.

cuts since 2002. The reports show that library districts in that state were better off across the board than nondistrict libraries in terms of absolute local operating income per capita (\$35 per capita for nondistrict libraries in 2006 versus \$62 per capita for district libraries) and in the percentage increases since the 2002 cutbacks (an 18 percent increase in average local operating for nondistrict libraries versus a 36 percent average increase from 2002 to 2006 for library districts). The 2008 report also notes that library district public libraries had higher percentage increases than their nondistrict counterparts across outputs in the form of circulation, library visits per capita, and program attendance.

Board of Trustees

Board structures varied widely—a few in our subset are state mandated compositions, some have elected boards, some appointed. The number of members ranged from as few as five to as many as 32 members on CLP's board. A 2004 survey of 90 metropolitan public libraries (including 12 of the libraries examined in this report) found that nearly 60 percent (52) of the libraries had boards with 1 to 9 members, and fewer than 5 percent (4) had boards with 30 or more members.⁵

A board that is too small (e.g., a five-member board) may be problematic if a single personality dominates the direction of the group and the library. Yet working with a large board can be unwieldy and, at worst, dysfunctional. When informed of the size and structure of CLP's board, respondents questioned how such a large, disparate group could be harnessed to do its job effectively. Interviewees indicated agility hinged in heavy part on an informed and engaged board to support and advocate for change. In essence, the board was the hull of the (library) ship, breaking the water for the director steering the ship.

Library Mergers and Consolidation

Library mergers and consolidation of independent libraries is a contentious issue. Proponents of larger library systems point to the efficiencies in sharing resources among a larger pool and a broader tax base that could insulate both the library and individual property owners from changes in the economy. Others argue that larger systems reduce services and value to consumers and are slow to respond to changing needs.

Amdursky (2004) argues that reducing the number of administrative units, not the number of library outlets, increases the likelihood of a dedicated revenue stream that is independent of direct municipal allocations. However, the tax capacity of the various jurisdictions can be an impediment to consolidation, for example, with urban cores having lower capacity than adjacent affluent suburbs (Hennen, 2005). Yet, Amdursky counters that these differences are a core reason why libraries *should* consolidate—as a means to improve access across a wider region. Independent libraries that draw upon local revenues increase the divide in services between the haves and have-nots, and they accentuate issues of race and poverty: Affluent suburbs and jurisdictions provide services that poorer ones cannot (Amdursky, 2004).

Hennen (2002) reported a strong correlation between consolidated library districts and higher funding levels, which he credits in part to independence from competition for revenue. Relying on voters for tax levies to support the library has risks in larger systems because these systems must satisfy a more diverse set of needs. It might be difficult to garner the votes needed

⁵ Nearly 90 percent (80) had board sizes of fewer than 20 members (Urban Libraries Council, "Analysis and Conclusions," 2004).

without diffusing the mission of the library. Many of our respondents indicated they will be closely watching the results of the 2008 merger of Minneapolis Public Library with Hennepin County for its impact on funding.

Entrepreneurial Activities

As publicly supported institutions, libraries would be hard pressed to charge for admission or book loans. Instead, libraries, including CLP, are engaging in some entrepreneurial ventures, ranging from leasing space for events to operating coffee shops to providing fee-based special services, with the potential for significant revenues (Urban Libraries Council, 2004).

The libraries we interviewed, including CLP, are continually exploring the landscape of new possibilities. Similar to “loyalty” cards issued by businesses, some libraries offer a “plus” card that provides the holder with some benefits and discounts within the library in return for a donation. While many donors resonate with these business-type models, respondents also received negative feedback upon instituting such practices, an indication that not all ventures will be met with open arms. Donors and consumers may bristle at paying for a service—or paying more than another taxpayer for the same service—from a public library. In addition, there is the potential that donors will perceive commercial and fee-based activities as offsetting—instead of supplementing—the need for resources, or that the library is straying from its core mission. Accordingly, the pursuit of such ventures must be evaluated against a backdrop of possible reductions in support in dollars or advocacy.

Summary

In the literature and interviews, libraries connected with consumers and stakeholders through fundamental services, via special programs directed at specific needs and for entertainment, and by educating (lobbying) key decisionmakers about libraries. They adopted and adapted to technology to serve their communities better, partnered with business and community organizations to fill unmet needs, and actively engaged library staff to improve agility. Libraries connected with advocates through performance measures and metrics to help them advertise their successes, track ongoing deficits, and uncover emerging needs. Interviews stressed the relationship between engaged stakeholders and their power as advocates for the library.

The literature and interviews suggest that organizational form may have an impact on a library’s ability to sustain resources. Interviews emphasized the need to align board structure and function to meet future challenges. Further, the organizational basis of a library may affect its ability to attract and sustain resources, although there is a need for a solid analysis of whether and how this happens.

Opportunities for CLP

As presented in Chapter Two, the literature and our interviews yielded three factors that are related to stable and adequate library resources. We examined these factors for CLP in Chapter Three and again for our subset of libraries from interviews in Chapter Five. In this chapter, we incorporate the information in a framework to identify the opportunities that CLP might pursue to enable stable funding.

Framework

In our interviews, respondents echoed the results in a 2004 survey: Regardless of the source of the revenue, their greatest challenge is to secure adequate funding to serve their communities and meet their missions (Urban Libraries Council, 2004). Ideally, the factors that consume and contribute resources presented in Chapter Five form a sustainable cycle. When resources are scarce,¹ libraries have three basic options, which can be conducted in combination or separately, to bring them into balance:

- Seek additional funds.
- Reduce expenses.
- Identify more efficient modes of operation.

Libraries and their proponents can exert direct and indirect influence over these options.

We explore whether, and if so how, the factors—and the tradeoffs inherent in each option—may impact the sufficiency of resources needed by CLP to meet its mission. Collectively these suggest nine opportunities that are related to sustainable funding for CLP to explore with the help of a task force to assess their viability. Table 6.1 summarizes our findings on the areas over which libraries, and CLP in particular, may have influence on factors that affect resource stability and sustainability. The first column lists the factors by which library consumers, library advocates, and organizational decisions can affect CLP sustainability. The next three columns provide a snapshot of how each may be a resource contributor, affect or be affected by a decrease in services, or use library resources more efficiently.

¹ We focus here on shortfalls. In the literature and interviews, surplus resources were used to supplement preexisting deficits and invested in an endowment to buffer lean times.

Table 6.1
How Libraries Can Influence Sustainability

Factors	Methods to Increase Operating Revenue	Steps to Decrease Expenses	Means for Improving Efficiency
Consumption of services	Engage users and innovate	Right size services and programs	Create more efficient programs and services
Advocacy effectiveness	Connect stakeholders to mission by demonstrating personal and community value	Internally promote new culture and values	Advocate with greater efficiency and innovation
Organization	Adopt more supportive and effective fund-raising models	Right size facilities, labor, and holdings	Reorganize some services and structures

Consumption

The mix of age, education, and socioeconomic groups affects the service choices libraries make and thus resource requirements. These same characteristics drive the allocation of investments (e.g., by branch and by program), the need for regional service provisions, and relationships with other (independent) libraries. These investment decisions also have an impact on future funding.

Consumers and Increased Operating Revenues: Engaging Users

Opportunity one: Evaluate and implement methods for identifying service demand and for increasing innovative activities to engage users.

In our interviews and in the literature, identifying unmet or underserved demand was the first step to engagement. CLP currently undertakes many activities directed at these tasks through surveys and outreach. We surmise that there may be additional opportunities to consider, for example, directed at understanding the needs of users and nonusers through targeted surveys and focus groups.

Like other libraries, CLP staff has been responsible for introducing many new ideas and programs. Based on the literature, there is an opportunity for CLP to explore and implement more formal mechanisms for engaging the innovative talent of its staff.

Right-Sizing and Creating the Right Mix of Services

Opportunity two: Conduct a rigorous “right-sizing” assessment for the number and size of services and programs and implement the findings.

Provision of the right types, number, and frequency of services and programs to the community is an ongoing process. The ability to demonstrate that these services are the “right size” is a valuable asset in garnering support from stakeholders and funders.

Identifying the right size and mix of services and programs means recognizing new or expanded needs and areas for reductions. Surveys of patrons, forums with community groups, and conversations with other agencies provide the fodder for adjusting service delivery. In an environment of stagnant or declining funding, libraries may supplement this approach with more formal models to identify cutbacks or to justify resource requests.

Traditionally, cost-benefit analysis, which provides the benefits per dollar of support, is an effective means for conveying the management of public tax investments. This analysis could be an attractive approach to assessing the benefits of the various services and programs offered by CLP and the addition of new ones, with programs or services that have a lower ratio targeted for downsizing or elimination. However, this analysis requires that consistent measurements be used, meaning the benefit of each service and program would require a consistent scale of impact. Creating such a scale could prove problematic.

A second approach is contingent valuation, which is a survey methodology used to estimate the “willingness to pay” for public goods (nonmarket services) by presenting participants with various funding scenarios and service levels. Inherent in this approach is the tradeoff that a community is willing to make between accepting fewer services or increasing tax support to retain and/or increase service provisions. This approach is not without drawbacks since it is based on hypothetical actions and thus relies on the careful construction of the survey tool.

Improving Efficiency

Opportunity three: Evaluate ways to leverage existing and new resource multipliers to meet stakeholder needs and implement findings.

Resource “multipliers” quite simply leverage existing resources more effectively. For example, volunteers and technology are frequently used resource multipliers, and interviews suggest that strategic partnerships provide a third possible opportunity to consider.

Library volunteers are a valuable resource and provide effective connections to the community. Like other libraries, CLP relies on volunteers: Nearly 18,000 volunteer hours in 2007 provided services that included, for example, bilingual programs to those who speak Spanish, French, Korean, Arabic, and English as a second language (CLP, *Annual Report*, 2007). There may be opportunities to strengthen volunteer programs, although volunteers are, by definition, participating under their own volition. As such, the mix of activities conducted by volunteers aligns with personal preferences, and volunteering is unlikely to replace significant portions of core operating requirements.

Technology can be a powerful resource multiplier; CLP already uses technology aids for example, for self-service checkout and online reference services. Indeed, CLP has adopted technology frequently used by libraries in its branches in an effort to streamline costs and reach more users. There may be opportunities that still exist to expand technology in each branch. Yet there are cost tradeoffs to consider, notwithstanding the obvious ones, namely, the cost of the upfront investment in technology and the ongoing expense of maintenance and upgrades. The cost of training staff and providing refresher courses is another consideration as hardware and software evolve. Also, increasing technology use may not reduce costs even when it improves efficiency. For example, staffing may remain the same in some (particularly smaller) branches, although technology may increase the amount of time available to staff to provide better customer service.

In conjunction with evaluating its use of technology, CLP may seek to engage with other public or private entities to examine whether strategic partnerships can better address the needs of the population. Partnerships can have a multiplier effect when appropriately applied. One example builds on the report by CED (2006), which details the many economic benefits provided by CLP in the community. There may be an opportunity for CLP to be a strong partner as an agent for neighborhood revitalization as occurred in Chicago. Such partnerships include not only local government and school districts, but businesses, neighborhood associations,

community development groups, religious groups, and area nonprofit organizations. The success of CLP in contributing to stable neighborhoods is heavily dependent on partnering with these organizations since the library has neither resources nor expertise in all facets of such an undertaking.

Advocating Effectively to Generate Community Support

Library advocates can include all stakeholders—from residential and nonresidential consumers of library services, governing boards and library staff to community and regional partners and taxpayers. Advocacy manifests as direct monetary support and via influence over the level of resources.

Connecting Stakeholders to the Mission

Opportunity four: Identify, develop, and use performance measures that provide indicators of progress and uncover areas of need to demonstrate value. Evaluate and implement methods and models for dissemination.

A means for engaging consumers and other stakeholders to become donors and advocates for the library is to make evident its value to users, user groups, and the community. The ability to demonstrate to stakeholders that a library is meeting its mission is a daunting task—while CLP is the most visited regional asset, it is difficult to equate that statistic to a specific mission-related contribution. Yet establishing itself as a core community asset is a key to ensuring stable (or better) revenues even when funding formulas are not linked to metrics. CLP approached the task recently through a study of its economic impact in the region. For example, other libraries have correlated reductions in neighborhood violence with the institution of after-school programs.

Performance measures linked to outcomes that stakeholders value provide some level of validation and insight into areas that require improvement. Identifying and publicizing the *right* measures are powerful tools in fostering advocacy and in developing donor support. CLP might consider a “dashboard” of indicators to illustrate its performance; the indicators could be published more than once annually as a continual reminder of the benefits CLP provides. The libraries we studied tended to use targeted and sustained outreach campaigns to publicize their services, programs, and achievements. Sometimes the campaigns were a prelude to a ballot referendum, other times to solicit donations for special projects. More than one respondent noted that the absence of such a campaign ensured failure among voters, although its presence did not guarantee success.

Although respondents agreed that metrics were necessary to demonstrate libraries’ value, there was equally strong agreement that library funding should not be tied to performance metrics since these unidimensional measures cannot capture the complex environment a library faces in serving its communities. Funding, as it is provided in Pennsylvania, that is tied to metrics can impinge on a library’s ability to be agile in adapting to community needs and other trends.

Internal Promotion of a New Culture and Values

Opportunity five: Assess how to involve library staff as part of institutional changes. Evaluate the costs and benefits of training librarians and staff in outreach and of a dedicated outreach department. Implement new approaches.

Performance measures may also be tied to internal improvement efforts, some of which may reduce costs though others may be linked to improving efficiency and effectiveness and thereby contribute across the spectrum. Although the libraries in this report did not cite internal metrics, several spoke broadly of “trying to encourage librarians and staff to do (X)” where (X) ranged from “being more innovative” to “being better promoters of the library.” These examples suggest a desire for active change on the part of the libraries and their staff. By way of illustration, one director demonstrated a commitment to innovative activities by branch librarians by shielding these individuals from negative fallout, building an environment of trust in which new ideas directed at meeting unique service needs were supported. Several other libraries stressed the importance of training librarians and staff in how to promote the library to stakeholders through the use of professional consultants.

Changing the culture of a library, like any institution, is not without pitfalls and requires significant buy-in to succeed—e.g., librarians and staff may require reassurance that the core mission will remain intact in the face of new programs or professional development.

As part of its exploration for the future, CLP can identify the changes it wants to make as an institution (e.g., to be more entrepreneurial) and how those changes might be translated into actions by its leadership and staff as well as whether and how progress in these areas can be measured.

Advocating with Improved Effectiveness

As with library consumers, there are potential resource multipliers that may improve the efficiency of library advocates, Library Friends groups, and the board of trustees.

Opportunity six (a): Evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of formalizing Library Friends of CLP.

Organize Library Friends. The leadership of Library Friends groups provides the direction and relationship to CLP. Library directors are (largely) unable to have an impact on the selection of these leaders. Some library directors were very active in educating the key leaders, and in educating those with a hand in selecting the leaders, about library programs, services, and plans. The goal of such education is to align the activities of these organizations with the strategic goals of the library. Whether there is an opportunity for CLP to examine this avenue for its future depends on the extent to which it exercises the role currently. Unlike several libraries in the subset we examined, the Library Friends of CLP are strongly associated with individual branches and loosely associated with CLP writ large. In our interviews, libraries with “unified” Library Friends groups (still with branch ties) cited their importance in political advocacy, both locally and with the state. Raising money through donations was less significant than promoting the library and improving access to more stable funding.

Opportunity six (b): Develop measures of board engagement and participation and assess the effectiveness of board members as advocates for and partners with CLP. Develop new governing options to increase financial sustainability.

Leverage the Board Effectively. The board of trustees can have an influential impact on CLP’s future resources. As discussed earlier, boards are the frontline allies of libraries for advocacy and garnering resources. In addition to the important mission of providing fiscal over-

sight for their libraries, board members provide political clout for scarce public resources. They also were active fund-raisers for endowments and special projects for the libraries we reviewed. Given the competition for public resources, some respondents relied directly on their board members to represent the library's interests in budgeting decisions. Respondents stressed the need to properly prepare their board members on key aspects of successes, gaps, and innovative steps that they could take forward into the funding arena whether the members were directly or indirectly making the case for the library.

CLP inherited a legacy of advisors, some of whom are remotely engaged with the library. Respondents concurred that the board as a unit needs to be the champion for the library. A library director, said respondents, should be able to approach the board with strategic goals from the ordinary (e.g., stable funding) to the unexpected (e.g., fostering economic stability) and rely on board members to open doors to the resources that further such conversations.

Organizational Form

The City of Pittsburgh struggled to provide resources for CLP, which was founded as a non-profit organization supported by public dollars. By the 1990s, the funding model changed to a countywide sales tax, which in this century is failing to provide adequate resources to maintain the library. If RAD can commit to providing stable and adequate funding for the library, then the bulk of the problem may be moot, and CLP can pursue opportunities with consumers and advocates to improve its effectiveness. However, in the face of RAD questioning its long-term commitment to CLP and others, we explore opportunities in the organizational form of CLP.

Adopt More Supportive and More Effective Fund-Raising Models

Opportunity seven: Evaluate the costs, benefits, and long-term financial stability of new organizational models, such as a public library district, including an assessment of the costs of a media campaign to garner public support.

As a nonprofit organization, CLP enjoys some advantages, including independence over setting its budget. Yet that autonomy may come at a price when taxpayers are left out of the equation—possibly one stimulus for historical underinvestment of local dollars and the current RAD initiative. One organizational form that has tended to have predictable and steady funding in other parts of the country is public library districts (see, for example, Colorado Department of Education, 2008).

Funded through voter-approved property taxes, library districts are autonomous from the localities in which they exist and may be less vulnerable to cuts when local tax revenues decline. Proponents of library districts argue that the direct connection to taxpayers makes the library more accountable to the public and likewise creates more ownership by the community. Opponents cite a higher cost of doing business stemming from financial and administrative autonomy from a parent municipal or county government—which, as a nonprofit entity, is not the case for CLP. Creating a library district may be an opportunity for CLP to obtain stable and adequate funding, though a key question is whether taxpayers would support a special district.

Right-Sizing Facilities, Labor, and Holdings

Opportunity eight: Conduct a “right-sizing” assessment for the number and size of facilities, staffing, and holdings and implement findings.

Limited hours of operation caused by decreasing revenues make it increasingly challenging to reach consumers, especially those with limited or no access to the library’s Web site. Coupled with determining the right size and mix of services and programs is the opportunity to evaluate the most effective way to employ CLP’s infrastructure, staff, and its myriad holdings. The process begins with understanding the critical programs and services needed by location. It develops further with an analysis of the alternative ways community needs can be met. The analysis would include the impact on groups and communities of changing the locations and sizes of CLP branches, the costs associated with changing business practices (e.g., decreasing individual holdings at some branches and increasing interlibrary loans), and the one-time and sustained cost reductions. As with right-sizing programs and services, the ability to demonstrate that CLP facilities are the “right size” may be a valuable asset in garnering support from stakeholders and funders as the library moves forward.

Reorganize CLP Function and Structures for Efficiency

Opportunity nine: Evaluate the service and resource efficiencies and tradeoffs from a countywide merger of libraries and implement best option.

There have been many studies over many decades that express the benefits of merging CLP and the 44 independent libraries in Allegheny County.² We do not go over the ground of these prior studies since many of the reasons for merging still exist, namely improving the efficiency of the entire system and providing even more services in poorer communities. We do raise the issue here of the impact the current governance system has on the ability to garner resources. Like the 130 towns and municipalities that sit under the umbrella of Allegheny County, the libraries compete with each other for their resources. Each library attempts to demonstrate its value, engage its stakeholders, and respond to its board; all leading to an over-use of resources.

In the economic development literature, “speaking with one voice” was one way to obtain more resources for attracting, retaining, and developing businesses (Archibald and Sleeper, 2008). While some may argue that ACLA is that voice, the benefits of a true merger of the county libraries, with or without CLP, could have an impact on improving regional services, resource efficiency, and funding to all libraries in the county. An evaluation of the benefits and drawbacks of a formal merger would need to assess whether a centralized system sacrifices identity and local control, the composition of a “new” centralized board of trustees, and the sources of revenue and savings.

Summary

The libraries examined in Chapter Five have exerted varying degrees of influence over one or more of the factors that affect the stability of their resources. Although there was some commonality in the responses, the examples here are likely the tip of the iceberg about how libraries have responded to the challenges in their communities. Of more importance in these initial

² The introduction of ACLA in the 1990s was a step in the right direction.

findings is that the responses point to potential opportunities for CLP to explore how it might influence a stable and secure funding source for its own future.

A Pathway to the Future

As Pittsburgh attempts to revitalize itself, every publicly supported agency must compete for a relatively stagnant pot of money. As a resource to the community, the library must effectively serve the varying needs of the current demographic. Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh has evolved over the last century and continues to adapt to the changing needs of the communities it serves and embraces technology to keep up with the times. Its financial future is one with stagnate state and federal funding; its primary source of local funding is entering an uncertain future as RAD reconsiders its commitment to CLP and other regional assets. Charting a course for CLP's future entails understanding opportunities that may provide resources for a stable and adequate future.

Charting a Course

Based on our review, CLP has a number of opportunities to consider as it charts its path. Table 7.1 summarizes the opportunities identified in the previous chapter. These opportunities are not mutually exclusive and indeed can be complementary.

The ability of a library to be agile, defined by some libraries as meeting new and emerging demands quickly and effectively, was seen as the linchpin for remaining relevant to communities. CLP needs to be able to recognize, measure, and promote agility in its library system. *Opportunities one, three, and four* provide three areas for exploring how to engage stakeholders and to examine whether CLP's current endeavors are sufficient to promote agility.

The ability to provide existing and pursue new services (to be agile) requires resources, which in part rests on the ability of CLP to promote its role in the community. *Opportunities four, five, and six* contain elements directed at improving the promotional activities of CLP to stakeholders. Partnering with other institutions, a component of *opportunity three*, may also play into strengthening this message.

Demonstrating the value of CLP as a means toward stable funding is the core of *opportunity four*. However, equally important is the ability to show that CLP is a good shepherd of public funding, which is contained in *opportunities two and eight*, with confirmation that CLP has the right number of facilities, programs, and other assets.

As discussed throughout this report, stakeholders contribute to library governance through direct and indirect advocacy for resources and services. From a high level, organizational form dictates how stakeholders may interact with CLP. *Opportunities seven and nine* suggest avenues for changing the current conversation. Number seven would allow stakeholders to express satisfaction about the library and its place in the community through a vote of tax

Table 7.1
Summary of Opportunities for CLP

One	Evaluate and use methods for identifying service demand and for increasing innovative activities to engage users.
Two	Conduct a rigorous right-sizing assessment for the number and size of services and programs and implement findings.
Three	Evaluate ways to leverage existing and new resource multipliers to meet stakeholder needs and implement findings.
Four	Identify, develop, and use performance measures that provide indicators of progress and uncover areas of need to demonstrate value.
Five	Assess how to involve library staff as part of institutional changes. Evaluate the costs and benefits of training librarians and staff in outreach and of a dedicated outreach department. Implement new approaches.
Six	Evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of formalizing “Library Friends” of CLP. Develop measures of board engagement and participation and assess the effectiveness of the board as advocates for and as partners with CLP. Develop new governing options to increase financial sustainability.
Seven	Evaluate the costs, benefits, and long-term financial stability of new organization models, such as a public library district, including an assessment of the costs of a media campaign to garner public support.
Eight	Conduct a right-sizing assessment for the number and size of facilities, staffing, and holdings and implement the new strategy.
Nine	Evaluate the service and resource efficiencies and tradeoffs from a countywide merger of libraries and implement the best option.

support. Number nine offers the chance to provide more uniform services across the county and potentially to engage more citizens in literacy and learning.

Each opportunity is related to the library’s ability to garner and sustain resources. However, no single opportunity provides a “silver bullet” toward this end. Some may be viewed as “low hanging fruit,” meaning CLP can expand existing efforts and draw on resources in the community. For example, CLP can expand existing survey tools or engage student project teams at the local universities to collect data for new performance measures. However, other tasks, such as determining what information needs to be collected and who should be surveyed, require thoughtful reflection by a group larger than the current CLP leadership. Such an endeavor could be a way to engage government and civic elites, funders, Library Friends, and others to identify what is important to them.

Assisting Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

Because Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is an important regional asset, regional leaders and funders are dedicated to its continued survival. One means for supporting the library is for elected officials in the city and county to convene a task force that would provide recommendations for a selected set of questions. There are several examples of blue-ribbon panels for libraries in the literature. In our interviews, however, few libraries had used a task force. Those libraries that had, and those that contemplated its use, believed that a task force was most effective when used for very specific, narrow purposes. Drawing upon advice from interviews, the composition of a task force is critical to ensure that recommendations are implemented.

Membership would be limited to a small set (e.g., five to nine) of high-level decisionmakers, including a city and a county executive, who can facilitate change.

With these caveats in mind, we consider which opportunities might be appropriate for a task force supported by regional leadership.

Of the opportunities identified in Table 7.1, all may be appropriate for a task force to explore. However, in light of the recent RAD announcement (RAD, 2008) that it will review whether, and if so how, it will support regional assets past 2010, we believe there is some urgency in finding those opportunities that are most closely linked with stable funding. As a starting point, we would recommend that a task force seriously consider *opportunities seven and nine*. The reason to begin with these is that the resource underpinning of CLP currently is at risk. Accordingly, it is critical to assess whether the current RAD funding model is the best way for the region to support CLP. Such an assessment needs to be made relative to alternative funding models, such as through a model of direct property tax. Merging CLP with the county is a politically charged topic but one that deserves to be revisited given the redundant and inefficient use of many resources and the inequity of services across the county.

Concluding Remarks

With their primary missions of literacy, learning, and access to knowledge, libraries remain a critical resource in society. To ensure that Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh remains relevant to the region requires resources that help it complete its mission in an efficient manner. The key elements all exist in the system. One example is to leverage the recent report conducted for CLP by Carnegie Mellon's Center for Economic Development, which provided concrete evidence of the library's impact on the economy in the region. The library's current position as a partner for community and economic change can be strengthened, particularly in the face of the regional struggle for economic stability and growth. Identifying the right partners to leverage the strengths of CLP requires engaging advocates and board members who can champion the message and garner the necessary resources; information and measures are the facilitators of these conversations.

It is difficult to think outside of the box and look ahead to tomorrow's opportunities when CLP has difficulty meeting the needs in its communities today. Getting that message to the right people is essential and requires an ongoing dialogue with users—both to demonstrate how the library is responding to the intimate needs of its communities and as a conduit to identify those that are unmet and emerging.

The library has demonstrated its ability to understand community needs through informal connections, librarian observations, passive metric analysis, and community meetings. The current trend shows CLP steadily losing resources even as it connects with more stakeholders. Taxpayers benefit from a public library both directly and indirectly: (1) through personal use of library services and programs and (2) because of information and knowledge that is made available in communities that then helps the communities grow and prosper economically, socially, and politically. As such, taxpayers are responsible for the support of programs and services. If CLP wishes to propel itself onto the forefront of Pittsburgh affairs and remain there indefinitely, it requires resources.

Interview Protocol

Introduction: We view you as an expert on public libraries and would like to get your views on recent changes and challenges and future ones as well. Please think of your role in a library system over the past five years as you answer the following questions.

1. What was the basic mission of (your) library? Did it change over the past few years? Why?
2. Did other aspects of the library or its services change, for example:
 - a. Stakeholder demands through population served either because of income, age, immigration, language, or other
 - b. Revenue streams
 - c. Expenditures
 - d. Governance, including regulatory restrictions
 - e. Structure of system (consolidation)
 - f. Technology
 - g. Competition from other sources?
3. Let's focus on the ones you mentioned. Please tell me about _____ and how changes presented a challenge in the past five years.
 - a. What was the specific change?
 - b. What challenge did it pose?
 - c. How did the library and the community deal with changes?
 - d. What tradeoffs were considered?
 - e. Who made the decisions? What was the process?
 - f. Reflecting back, was this a reasonable outcome? Did it solve the problem permanently?
 - g. In hindsight, how would you change it now?
4. In the process of making these decisions, did you ever use a commission or other means to raise stakeholder and community awareness of the issues and gain buy-in for solutions?
 - a. What process did you use?
 - b. How did it affect the outcome?
 - c. In what circumstances would you use it again?
5. Now let's turn to how stakeholders and others can understand whether the library is providing good services. How did you measure performance under these challenging conditions?

- a. By traditional means, such as circulation per capita and of children's material, material expenditures per capita or as a percent of revenues, hours of operation, etc.
- b. By nontraditional means such as (1) the introduction of new technologies and media (e.g., podcasts, cd/dvd); (2) development of new users; (3) support for bond issues and revenues?
- c. How did you inform stakeholders of your measures of performance?
6. For selected libraries: My understanding is that your system faced a major issue of whether and how to consolidate across different libraries in the region. In similar circumstances some libraries remain unaffiliated; others join a "federation" of libraries, in which membership provides access to specific local dollars or services; and others created a formal merger system.
 - a. Which choices did you consider? What were the pros and cons?
 - b. Which did you choose? Why?
7. Now looking ahead, what are the major challenges you are facing now or will soon?
 - a. What is bringing this challenge to the fore now?
 - b. What are the major issues?
 - c. How are you thinking of dealing with this challenge?
 - d. What did you learn from the past that is helping you now?
 - e. How will you measure performance?
 - f. How will you convey the issue and results to the public and specific stakeholders?

CLP Branch Libraries and Hours

Table B.1
Library Branch Hours

Library	Total Hours per Week	Days per Week	% Hours After 9–5 Business	Weekend Hours
Main	62.5	7	35.20%	14
Allegheny Regional	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Beechview	37	5	24.32%	7
Brookline	46	6	17.39%	6
Carrick	37	5	21.62%	6
East Liberty	48	6	20.83%	7
Hazelwood	36	5	22.22%	6
Hill District	37	5	24.32%	7
Homewood	39	5	23.08%	7
Knoxville	38	5	21.05%	6
Lawrenceville	39	5	17.95%	7
Mt. Washington	38	5	21.05%	6
Sheradon	37	5	21.62%	6
South Side	38	5	21.05%	6
Squirrel Hill	51	7	25.49%	11
West End	30	4	26.67%	6
Woods Run	41	5	21.95%	7
Downtown & Business	46.5	5	0.00%	0
Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped	40	5	0.00%	0

NOTE: N/A is "not available."

ACLA Libraries and Population Numbers

Table C.1
Allegheny County Library Association Member Population

Allegheny County Library Association Member	Municipality Name	Census Population
Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh	Pittsburgh City	334,563
Northland Public Library	Bradford Woods Borough	1,149
	Franklin Park Borough	11,364
	Marshall Township	5,996
	McCandless Township	29,022
	Ross Township	32,551
William E. Anderson Library	Penn Hills Township	46,809
Lauri Ann West Memorial Library	Aspinwall Borough	2,960
	Blawnox Borough	1,550
	Fox Chapel Borough	5,436
	Indiana Township	6,809
	O'Hara Township	8,856
	Sharpsburg Borough	3,594
Bethel Park Public Library	Bethel Park Borough	33,556
Mt. Lebanon Public Library	Mt. Lebanon Township	33,017
Shaler North Hills Library	Shaler Township	29,757
Monroeville Public Library	Monroeville Borough	29,349
Plum Borough Community Library	Plum Borough	26,940
Carnegie Library of McKeesport	City of McKeesport	24,040
Knowledge Connection	West Mifflin Borough	22,464
Moon Township Public Library	Moon Township	22,290
Northern Tier Regional Library	Pine Township	7,683
	Richland Township	9,231
Upper St. Clair Township Library	Upper St. Clair Township	20,053

Table C.1—Continued

Allegheny County Library Association Member	Municipality Name	Census Population
Baldwin Borough Public Library	Baldwin Borough	19,999
Wilkinsburg Public Library	Wilkinsburg Borough	19,196
Western Allegheny Community Library	Findlay Township	5,145
	North Fayette Township	12,254
	Oakdale Borough	1,551
Hampton Community Library	Hampton Township	17,526
Scott Township Public Library	Scott Township	17,288
Community Library of Allegheny Valley	Harrison Township	10,934
	Tarentum Borough	4,993
	Castle Shannon Borough	8,556
Whitehall Public Library	Whitehall Borough	14,444
South Park Township Library	South Park Township	14,340
C. C. Mellor Memorial Library	Braddock Hills Borough	1,998
	Churchill Borough	3,566
	Edgewood Borough	3,311
	Forest Hills Borough	6,831
Robinson Township Library	Robinson Township	12,289
South Fayette Township Library	South Fayette Township	12,271
North Versailles Public Library	North Versailles Township	11,125
Brentwood Library	Brentwood Borough	10,466
Jefferson Hills Public Library	Jefferson Hills Borough	9,666
Carnegie Free Library of Swissvale	Swissvale Borough	9,653
Dormont Public Library	Dormont Borough	9,305
Andrew Bayne Memorial Library	Bellevue Borough	8,770
Clairton Public Library	Clairton City	8,491
Pleasant Hills Public Library	Pleasant Hills Borough	8,397
Andrew Carnegie Free Library	Carnegie Borough	8,389
Knowledge Connection	Duquesne City	7,332
Bookmobile	West View Borough	7,277
Oakmont Carnegie Library	Oakmont Borough	6,911
Crafton Public Library	Crafton Borough	6,706
F.O.R. Sto-Rox Library	Mckees Rocks Borough	6,622

Table C.1—Continued

Allegheny County Library Association Member	Municipality Name	Census Population
Coraopolis Memorial Library	Coraopolis Borough	6,131
Bridgeville Public Library	Bridgeville Borough	5,341
Avalon Public Library	Avalon Borough	5,294
Green Tree Public Library	Green Tree Borough	4,719
Sewickley Public Library	Sewickley Borough	3,902
Springdale Free Public Library	Springdale Borough	3,828
Carnegie Library of Homestead	Homestead Borough	3,569
Braddock Carnegie Library	Braddock Borough	2,912
Knowledge Connection	Rankin Borough	2,315
Bookmobile	Wilmerding Borough	2,145
Knowledge Connection	East Pittsburgh Borough	2,017
Bookmobile	Ben Avon Borough	1,917
ACLA	Total	1,098,731

Performance Metrics

Table D.1
Performance Metrics for Select Libraries in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, and Kentucky

Metric	Pennsylvania		Maryland		Ohio		Kentucky
	Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh	Free Library of Philadelphia	Baltimore County Public Library	Cincinnati and Hamilton County Public Library	Cleveland Public Library	Columbus Metropolitan Library	Louisville Free Public Library
Number of ALA-MLS librarians	97	225	48	219	140	113	65
Total number of librarians	143	239	149	220	140	114	69
ALA-MLS librarians as % of total staff	27.60%	33.10%	10.20%	25.50%	23.20%	18.10%	20.30%
Total staff	351	681	471	860	602	624	320
Total collection expenditures per capita	\$7.35	\$5.22	\$8.47	\$10.13	\$26.57	\$8.66	\$4.02
Total staff expenditures	\$13,773,298	\$51,490,395	\$20,630,599	\$34,982,720	\$35,832,437	\$29,871,123	\$10,525,278
Total operating expenditures	\$26,041,910	\$71,369,332	\$33,990,364	\$50,995,506	\$59,098,880	\$45,614,250	\$16,651,277
Total operating expenditures per capita	\$57.74	\$47.82	\$45.07	\$63.22	\$127.16	\$59.16	\$23.79
Print materials	1,547,520	5,086,997	1,350,409	4,297,346	3,799,035	2,175,374	1,348,846
Print materials per capita	3.43	3.41	1.79	5.33	8.17	2.82	1.93
Current print serial subscriptions	3,554	13,946	3,895	11,274	14,387	4,222	2,545
Total program attendance	185,557	575,120	124,228	317,542	164,299	294,060	234,293
Total circulation	3,204,651	6,294,315	9,526,720	14,344,449	5,011,399	16,503,822	3,827,835
Total circulation per capita	7.11	4.22	12.63	17.78	10.78	21.4	5.47
Circulation of children's materials	725,053	1,725,312	2,810,487	3,619,598	852,358	5,370,574	1,319,471
% circulation of children's materials of total	22.60%	27.40%	29.50%	25.20%	17.00%	32.50%	34.50%

Table D.1—Continued

Metric	Pennsylvania		Maryland		Ohio		Kentucky
	Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh	Free Library of Philadelphia	Baltimore County Public Library	Cincinnati and Hamilton County Public Library	Cleveland Public Library	Columbus Metropolitan Library	Louisville Free Public Library
Number of library visits	1,910,522	5,517,569	5,513,513	3,373,396	3,769,636	8,457,644	3,541,961
Number of library visits per capita	4.24	3.7	7.31	4.18	8.11	10.97	5.06
Total library programs	10,848	18,268	N/A	15,546	9,831	9,549	8,584
Reference transactions	1,393,616	2,780,389	1,735,638	1,762,488	1,080,144	1,975,116	990,092
Interlibrary loans received	231,301	3,629	4,986	27,077	587,655	2,830	2,042
Interlibrary loans provided	220,725	5,951	16,107	14,848	670,989	1,700	1,345
Net loan rate	0.95	1.64	3.23	0.55	1.14	0.6	0.66
Users of electronic resources	1,468,000	880,812	725,407	N/A	1,873,508	N/A	1,165,079

SOURCE: NCES, 2007.

Table D.2
Performance Metrics for Select Libraries in Indiana, Oregon, Washington State, and Missouri

Metric	Indiana	Oregon	Washington State		Missouri		
	Indianapolis–Marion County Public Library	Multnomah County Library	Seattle Public Library	King County Library System	St. Louis Public Library	St. Louis County Library	Kansas City Public Library
Number of ALA-MLS librarians	126	93	145	197	51	75	51
Total number of librarians	130	93	145	197	51	77	57
ALA-MLS librarians as % of total staff	34.00%	20.60%	30.30%	27.20%	12.80%	14.40%	27.30%
Total staff	371	450	478	725	399	520	187
Total collection expenditures per capita	\$4.76	\$6.91	\$8.41	\$8.71	\$7.99	\$4.58	\$6.94
Total staff expenditures	\$21,876,124	\$27,685,974	\$31,284,193	\$43,541,262	\$11,020,614	\$18,753,266	\$7,986,691
Total operating expenditures	\$32,362,086	\$44,473,684	\$42,957,521	\$74,357,583	\$17,400,851	\$26,643,028	\$14,074,537
Total operating expenditures per capita	\$39.70	\$64.84	\$75.02	\$62.86	\$50.00	\$30.52	\$58.79
Print materials	1,718,614	1,405,144	1,821,799	3,103,234	2,796,579	2,276,433	1,605,301
Print materials per capita	2.11	2.05	3.18	2.62	8.04	2.61	6.71
Current print serial subscriptions	3,350	3,077	4,982	11,753	6,935	6,527	1,832
Total program attendance	235,619	367,319	136,162	211,609	198,766	149,020	40,504
Total circulation	12,201,665	19,462,344	7,449,761	18,370,679	2,501,285	9,096,309	2,276,383
Total circulation per capita	14.97	28.37	13.01	15.53	7.19	10.42	9.51
Circulation of children's materials	N/A	5,647,620	2,104,827	1,879,315	649,646	3,727,038	604,029
% circulation of children's materials of total	N/A	29.00%	28.30%	10.20%	26.00%	41.00%	26.50%

Table D.2—Continued

Metric	Indiana	Oregon	Washington State		Missouri		
	Indianapolis–Marion County Public Library	Multnomah County Library	Seattle Public Library	King County Library System	St. Louis Public Library	St. Louis County Library	Kansas City Public Library
Number of library visits	5,432,388	4,435,377	10,033,875	10,694,042	2,224,323	4,389,539	2,163,729
Number of library visits per capita	6.66	6.47	17.52	9.04	6.39	5.03	9.04
Total library programs	8,904	16,513	3,988	6,626	7,300	8,225	2,334
Reference transactions	773,760	1,054,026	1,155,718	1,540,451	540,277	535,405	529,310
Interlibrary loans received	2,221	14,746	11,692	20,213	2,085	6,044	44,016
Interlibrary loans provided	5,815	7,285	6,637	13,949	6,043	10,941	67,794
Net loan rate	2.62	0.49	0.57	0.69	2.9	1.81	1.54
Users of electronic resources	39,104	N/A	N/A	N/A	898,094	N/A	740,026

SOURCE: NCES, 2007.

NOTE: N/A is "not available."

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