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The Road to Innovation

Karen Neinstadt | Senior Reference and Outreach Librarian

Back to the Beginning

Department Plans Central Library – April, 1957

The Highway department has a considerable amount of reading Material available for its employees —books, periodicals, brochures and other items in fields related to highway activities. But heretofore the material has not been centrally located so as to be easily available to prospective readers. The department is moving to remedy that fault so that more profitable use may be made of the available literature.

The department is, in fact, in the process of organizing a library which will assemble and catalogue publications now on hand and obtain additional materials. It will be located, for the time being, in the Personnel section at the Central offices.

Besides planning to purchase additional desirable books and magazines, the department hopes that employees will contribute reading matter which they may have and not now need which they believe would be of interest and service to other department employees.

To organize and operate the new library, the department has employed a qualified, full-time librarian, Joan Peterson. She is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, has done graduate study there in library science and operated the library for a year at the State Braille and Sight Saving school at Faribault.

The library will be for all department personnel, with employees distant from the St. Paul headquarters invited to submit requests for reading materials to be sent to them.

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National Society
for
Crippled Children and Adults
11 So. LaSalle Chicago 3

Named District Foreman

Keith D. Lowrie, district maintenance foreman at Owatonna for the past five years, has been named district foreman there, replacing Milford A. Hagen, who retired recently. Entering the department in 1933, Lowrie was an HMM II at Red Wing for 17 years before his promotion to maintenance foreman.

Employees Will Honor Hoffmann at Dinner

A dinner honoring Commissioner Hoffmann in connection with his impending retirement will be given April 23 at the Prom ballroom. Employees of the Highway department, their wives, and other guests will be welcome to attend.

Proper Use of Annual Leave

(Continued from page 4)

should be instructed in advance and required to reduce their accumulations sufficiently to carry them through a heavy season without absenting themselves to avoid losing annual leave credits. If an employee has been notified to take time off in advance of a busy season, and he fails to do so, he no longer has the protection of the rule that permits taking leave without permission to avoid losing credits.

6. "Short vacations" may be honored occasionally, two or three times per year.

7. Finally, employees should be encouraged to take regular vacations. They may stay at home by choice or necessity but they should get away from the job and relax a minimum of one or two weeks annually.

To summarize:

In the best interests of the Highway department and its employees, regular, periodic vacations should be encouraged and enjoyed as a time of needed and welcome relaxation and rehabilitation. They should be planned by supervisory personnel and the employees sufficiently in advance so that they may be scheduled satisfactorily on a seniority basis. Excessive use of the "short vacation" system should be avoided, as well as repeated taking of "days off" to avoid loss of accumulating vacation credits.

We are happy to report that Ed Christenson, maintenance foreman, Duluth, and Harry M. Ault, mechanic here in the district shop, who have both been on the sick list, are progressing rapidly.

Construction District 2

By ALMA TURNER

Our district engineer, Mr. Henry A. Pabst, passed away Friday, March 22, at the Veterans hospital in Minneapolis. All of us who have worked with him in this district deeply mourn his passing and extend sincere sympathy to the family.

Maintenance District 2

By DON NISS

A party was held on February 28 for John E. Schrum, formerly MM II at Two Harbors, who retired after 35 years of continuous service in Maintenance District 2. Coffee and cake were served and we listened to two nice talks by H. V. Benson, our district maintenance engineer, and by Mr. Schrum, who related some of his experiences in the department. Mr. Benson presented John, on behalf of the employees, a \$25 U. S. savings bond and a cash purse. Again we would like to wish he and his family luck and happiness in the future.

Recent visitors to the district headquarters were two Philippine Republic highway engineers. The visitors were Adelaido R. Encarnacion, assistant mechanical engineer of the equipment and shop division of the Philippine Bureau of Public Roads, and Florentino Montemayor, acting superintendent of the bureau's major shops in Manila. They were accompanied here by A. Scendahl, equipment supervisor. Mr. Benson took them on a tour of the Reserve Mining company's pelletizing plant at Silver Bay. Thereafter a demonstration was given of our big Snozo in operation in the 5 foot deep snowdrifts at our Carlson storage yard. We found these two gentlemen to be very interesting and we all thoroughly enjoyed their visit with us.

R. B. Glewwe, stock supervisor, was also a recent visitor to the District headquarters. Ralph D. Stewart, district foreman; Michael Gannucci, chief mechanic; and John Backlund, field mechanic, attended the safety training course held in St. Paul, March 20 and 21. According to reports brought back, the meeting was very interesting and beneficial in that they may now pass along to other members of District 2 some of the knowledge they gained.

We are happy to report that Ed Christenson, maintenance foreman, Duluth, and Harry M. Ault, mechanic here in the district shop, who have both been on the sick list, are progressing rapidly.

Larry Mosack, our chief clerk, and this reporter recently celebrated our birthdays. We were treated to a nice party by the office force. Didn't realize I was working with so much musical talent until they sang Happy Birthday! Anybody want to make bookings?

Notice to you fishermen: The smelt season is not too far off and everybody is welcome! The smelts are free for the taking but bring your own wash tubs.

You will recall that over a month ago three gay young blades, C. C. Colwell, Dave Gilchrist and Lee R. Boyd, left this cold and frozen north to bask in the sunshine of the southwest. They made Phoenix, Ariz., their home while they were gone and from there they flitted like butterflies—they flew to California where each went his separate way for a few days visiting friends and relatives. After their brief California visits they flew back to Arizona, back to their motel which they called home and they winced and they dined and acquired suntans. We don't know if their money ran out or their pep began to run low or if they just missed all of us, but like homing pigeons they finally made it back to home port—many dollars poorer we are sure but much, much happier for having had such a wonderful time! Nice having you back, Mr. Boyd.

Old timers who remember Andrew Willett, a former employee of this district (home was at Plummers, Minn.), will be pleased to learn he is very hale and hardy and has just paid us a visit. He spent one day traveling the highways and by-ways of District 5 with our foreman, Les J. Duckworth. Andy is employed as a field foreman for a large contracting firm in the Cities and as such has been out on jobs far away from home—New Jersey, Bermuda, etc.

Our thanks to E. W. Johnson who so ably filled Mr. Boyd's chair while he was away. Ed is no longer a visitor in this district but one of our District 5 family—at least so we feel.

Cloris Strand, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bennett Strand, was married February 23 at the Fisher Lutheran church to Sheldon Jorgenson. Cloris, who was a former secretary at the First National bank in Crookston, has forsaken her shorthand book and typewriter to become a farmwife. We'd like to congratulate the Strands on gain-

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Maintenance District 5

By PHYLLIS H. SPENCER

We'd like to start our column this time by paying our respects to the memory of Mr. H. A. Pabst, our late district engineer. We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife, son and daughter and family. We have lost a very good district engineer and a fine friend. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

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Movin' on Up!

New Library Facilities



How it Started

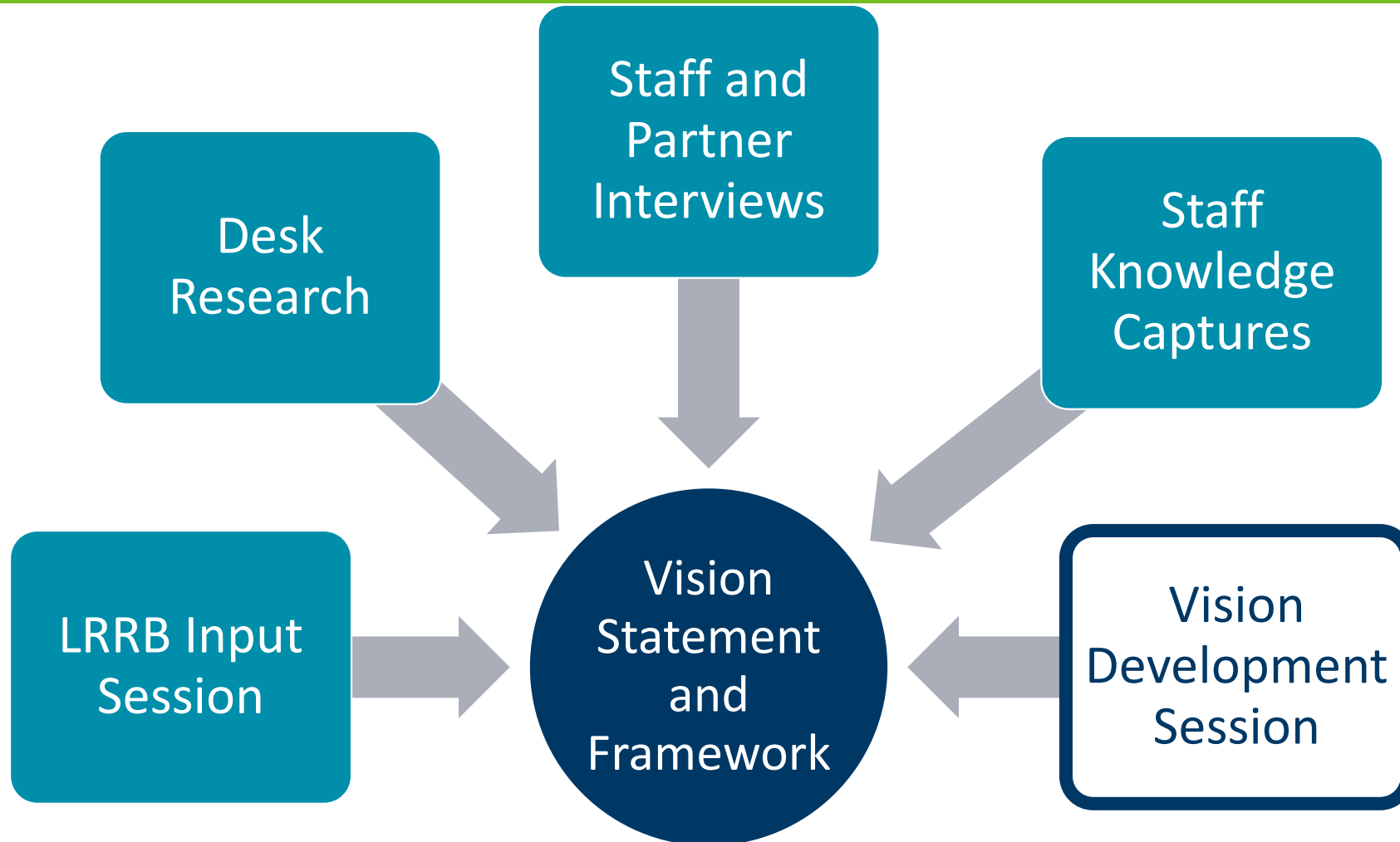
vs. How's It Going



Project Purpose

To create a future forward vision and plan to transition the MnDOT library into a dynamic, inclusive space that meets the evolving needs of our transportation community in an increasingly digital world.

Project Approach



Desk research insights: anticipated future service trends for specialty libraries



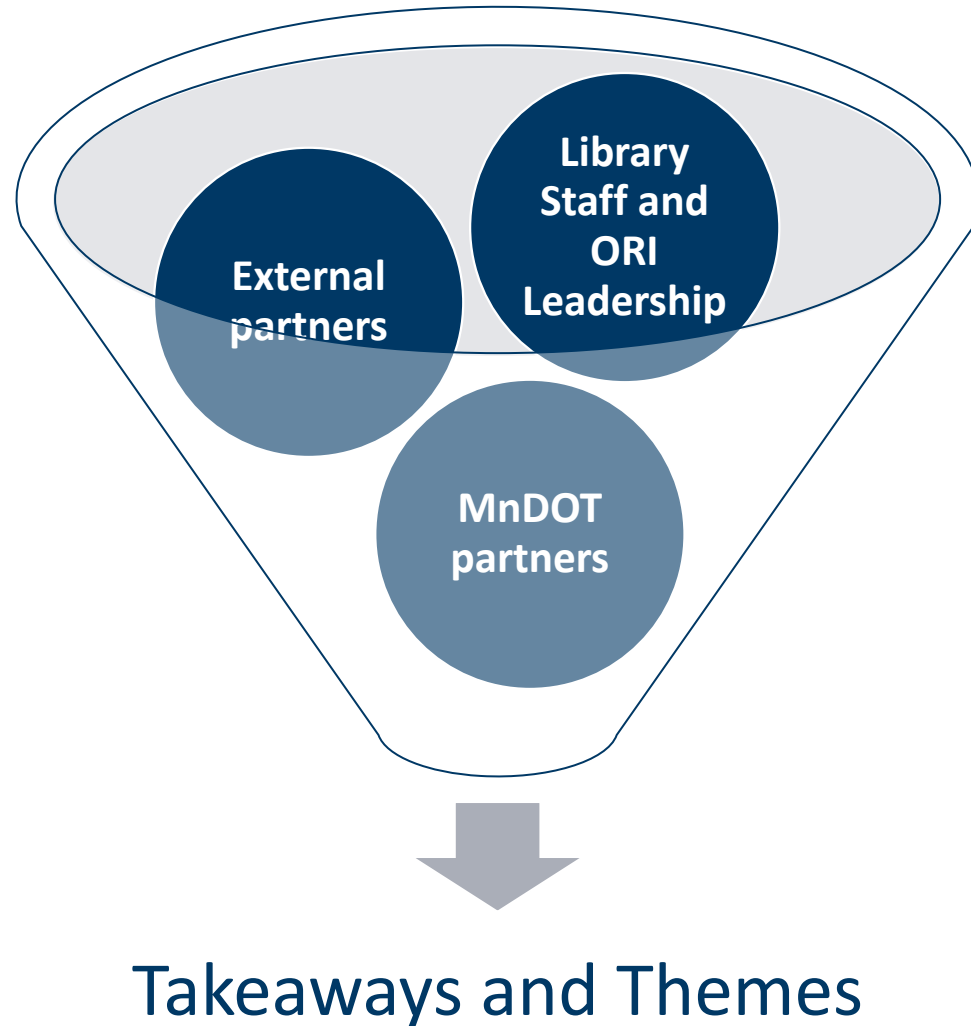
- Coaching around navigating and using artificial intelligence (AI)
- Data visualization services
- Supporting digital literacy for users (how to prompt, searches)
- Educational programming on emerging topics for expert or niche user groups
- Physical items for checkout or shared usage (e.g., VR and AR goggles, 3-D printing, etc.)

Desk research insights: other trends and notes



- Collaborative models are common – with universities or other state libraries.
- Some other libraries use administrative or research staff in lieu of professional librarians.
- Digitization is increasing and physical space needs are decreasing.
- Continuous focus on the customer experience is a best practice.
- Strategic outreach, marketing, and illustrating value/ROI internally are critical.

Interviews synthesis process



Interviews: Key insights

Current users highly value library resources and staff.

- Library staff expertise, effectiveness and efficiency are valued by current customers.
- Literature searches and digital resources were frequently highlighted by current customers.
- Library staff have strong pride in their work and services provided to customers.

“The librarians are incredibly helpful. We use them to find the resources we need. They know it better than everyone.”

“MnDOT Library’s collection is very important to the state and to their agency. It would be a huge loss if it were not managed well.”

Interviews: Key insights

Evolving approaches are key to increase visibility and convey value

- Current users interviewed expressed concerns that library services and materials are not widely known and accessed inside MnDOT or beyond the agency
- Desire for greater networking and connectedness within MnDOT
- Proactive and strategic engagement with users and primary audiences
- Current lack of clarity on what information lives where at MNDOT.

"I don't think most of our [MnDOT] employees know library services are available to them."

"Libraries need to be a different place; it's not just collecting things and waiting for people to need stuff. It's about being invaluable to your institution."

Interviews: Key insights

Actively communicate how the library adds value for users

- Low awareness (and understanding of value) among many current target users (e.g., MnDOT employees, LRRB members)
- As core users leave through retirements or job changes, strategic marketing and outreach will be critical to long term success
- Tout the added value of engaging library staff and resources available on the library's website
- Enhance proactive interaction and dialogue to better understand and anticipate new transportation topics as well as needs of potential new users

"When someone leaves or retires, I'm not sure that the information [that the library is a resource] gets passed along."

"There is a lot of opportunity to increase awareness of the capabilities and resources."

Interviews: Key insights

Align and refine library staffing and systems

- Filling leadership positions is an urgent need.
- Strong skillset for new director in library science, managing and motivating staff, **AND** strategic communications, marketing, and outreach.
- Make library access/processes as simple, welcoming, and useful as possible.
- Deepen partnerships across MnDOT to enable proactive collaboration (Communications, Human Resources, Information Technology, Districts Leadership, Specialty Offices)

"I hope we don't get rid of the library. I know it needs to change but I don't want to lose it."

"Libraries that are thriving have engaging, energetic, outgoing, proactive, outward facing presence."

Visioning Workshop: October 2025

- Daylong in-person workshop on the capitol campus
- Participants
 - All current library staff (3)
 - Office of Research and Innovation leaders and colleagues (4)
 - CTS library and information services manager (1)
- Agenda:
 - Discussed accomplishments and current state
 - Identified library values and strengths
 - Reviewed insights from desk research and interviews to surface highlights and opportunities
 - Created aspirational “Year 2030 Headlines” describing future library achievements
 - Drafted a set of vision statements

Visioning workshop: Themes (1 of 2)

Library staff and space:

- New people, new ideas (new library director, new senior librarian)
- New physical space and new opportunities
- Digital collection growth, accessibility and access
- Momentum around space and possibilities for the future, including new programming
- Embrace experimentation with space

Varied ways to approach work and services:

- Building knowledge (more active) vs. sharing information (more passive)
- Doer vs trainer

Visioning Workshop: Themes (2 of 2)

Education & events

- Digital library expansion & enrichment
- Outreach and education –sharing out trends and information
- Elevate marketing, including storytelling with examples about library and resources

Importance of partnerships:

- Strategic partnerships as a key strength (CTS, LRRB, within MnDOT, e.g., STEM)
- Connectedness to other state agency libraries and experts (e.g., CALCO, state demographer)
- Opportunities to grow partnerships

Visioning Workshop: Library Values

- Customer service
- Service, equity, collaboration, innovation
- Commitment to quality and continuous improvement
- Integrity and expertise
- Lifelong learning
- Helping customers do their best work

Visioning Workshop: Top “Year 2030 Headlines”

Innovation Drives MnDOT Library to Survive and Thrive: *While other states closed or severely reduced their libraries, MnDOT transformed theirs through innovative use of AI, outreach and community partnerships.*

MNDOT Library – where knowledge meets innovation in a hub/beehive of learning

MnDOT Library Saves Taxpayers Millions! *Valuable research provided by the award winning MnDOT library changed the course of a project that would have had a major impact on the local community.*

MnDOT Library Navigated me to the Right Resource: *In an age of too-much information they helped me find up-to-date resources and taught me how to stay current and build knowledge through research, programs and partnerships.*

MnDOT library is a Hub of Innovation and Learning for our Transportation Community: *To foster a culture of Innovation, the MNDOT Library provides the space, support and service for our transportation community.*

Visioning Workshop: Draft Vision Statements Created by Small Groups

MnDOT Library thrives with innovative use of technology, customer-focused outreach and strategic partnerships.

Developing resources to educate and inform transportation practitioners.

To be the premier hub for learning and innovation, empowering transportation professionals with seamless access, fostering collaboration and driving transformative solutions.

What Are We Looking For?

- **Vision Statement (Where we want to be):** A mental image of the ideal future state, describing what the organization hopes to achieve or become long-term.
- **Mission Statement (Why we exist):** Defines the purpose, core activities, key stakeholders, and values that guide actions today. It answers "What do we do, and why?".
- **Goals** represent the final, desired end-states that we aim to achieve.
- **Strategies** actionable initiatives that bridge the gap between the current state and the goal.

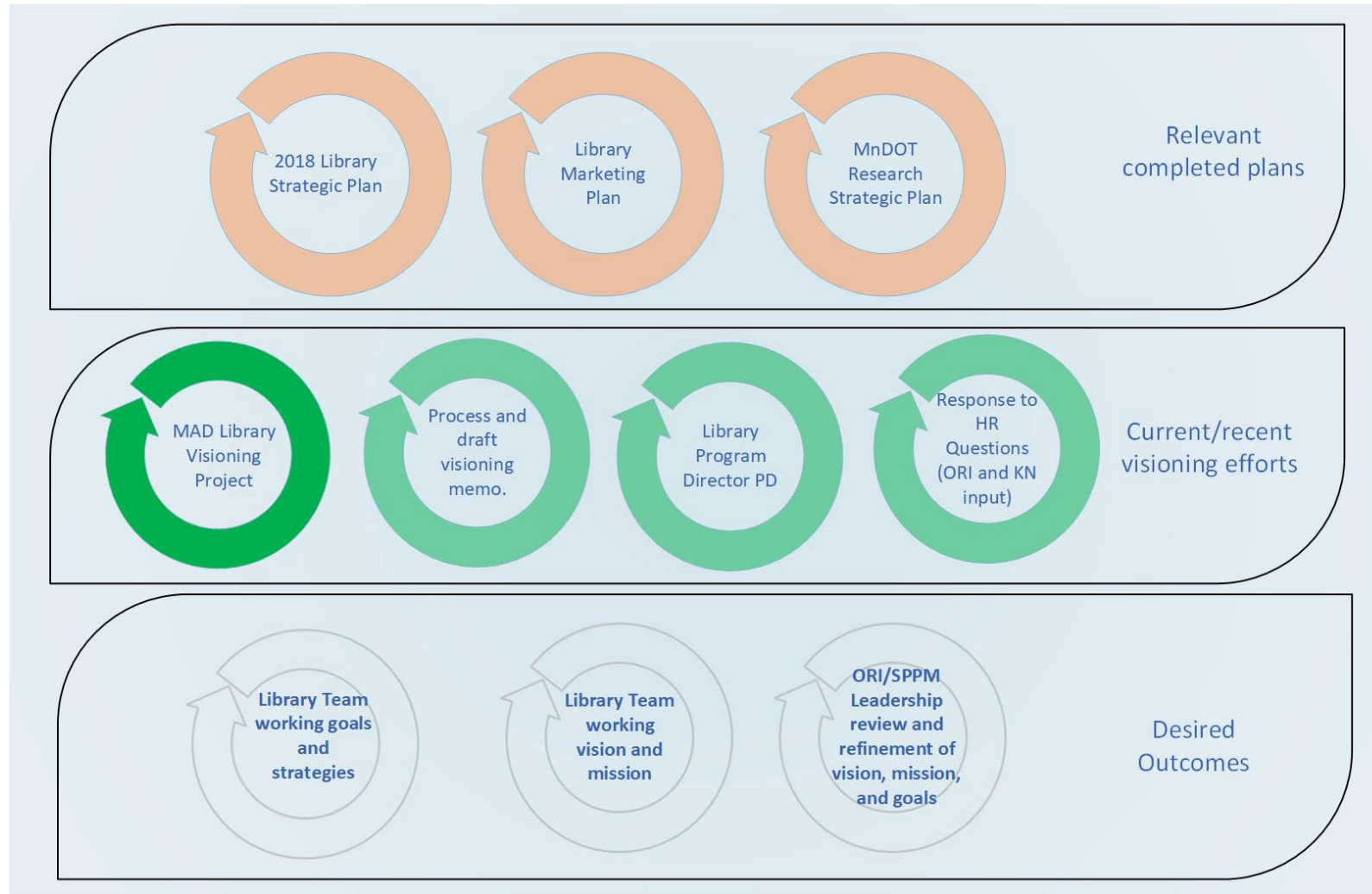
Synthesis: Draft Vision Statement #1

MnDOT Library is the premier hub for transportation-related learning and innovation. We thrive by leveraging technology, customer-focused outreach, and strategic partnerships. We empower transportation professionals with the knowledge, resources, and collaboration needed to drive transformative solutions.

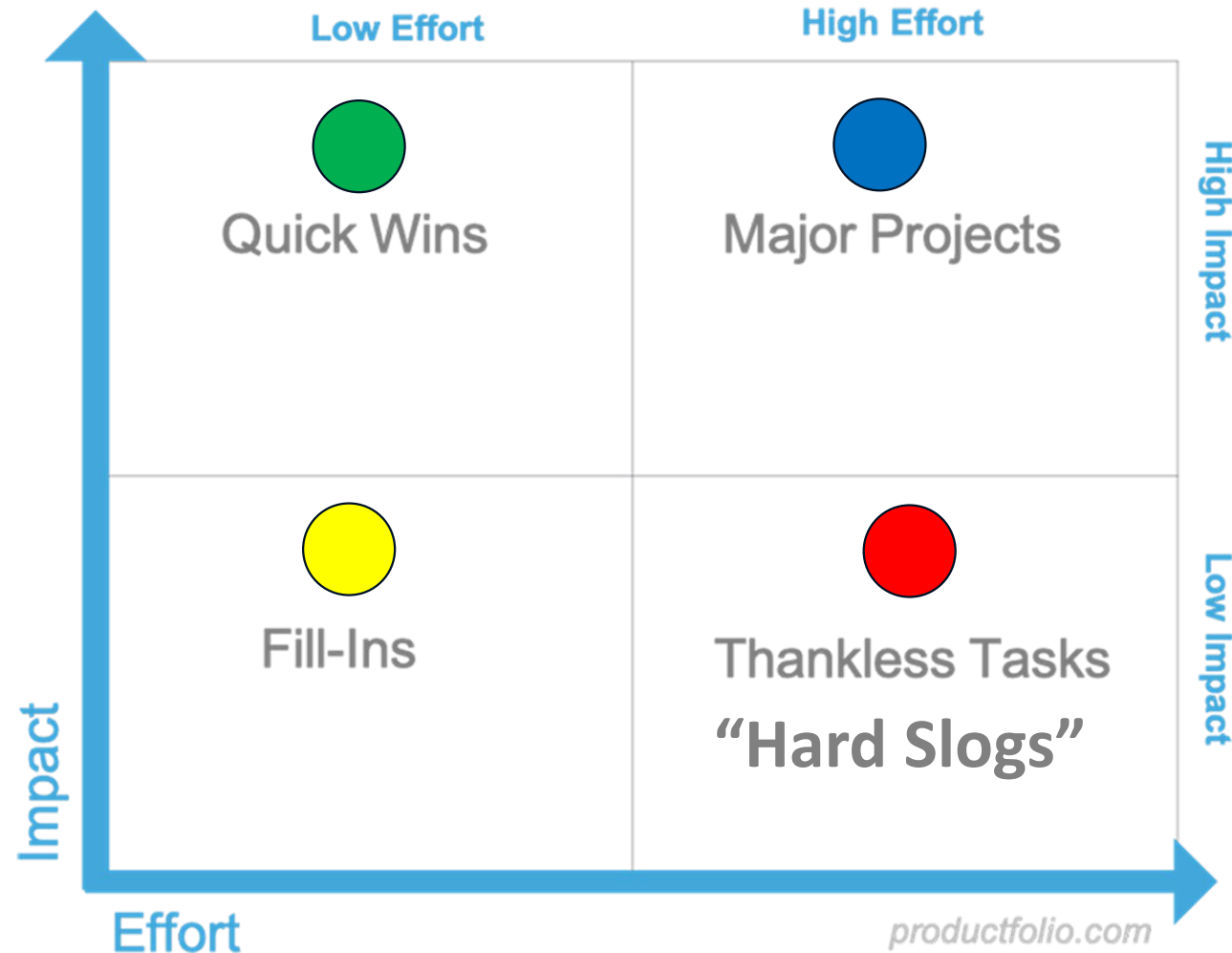
Five Focus Areas: Draft

- Library capacity and people
- Near term tasks
- Physical space
- Outreach and reintroducing the library
- Assess investments and planning to support future growth

Desired Outcomes and Process



The Process: Effort-Impact Matrix



Where Are We?!

- **WORKING VISION**

The MnDOT Library empowers MnDOT and transportation stakeholders with exceptional access to knowledge, innovation, and trusted information—advancing a safe, equitable, and future-ready transportation system for all Minnesotans.

- **WORKING MISSION**

The MnDOT Library connects the agency and transportation stakeholders with high-quality information, expert research support, and modern digital services. We preserve institutional knowledge, foster a skilled and innovative team, strengthen operational excellence, and build strategic partnerships statewide. Through trusted resources and forward-looking leadership, we help MnDOT make informed, evidence-based decisions that enhance transportation for Minnesota.

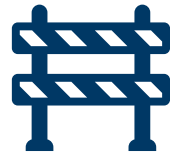
Where Are We?!

Six MnDOT Library working goals outline:

- Modernize and expand Digital Access
- Reduce Risk
- Strengthen Library Team
- Advance operational excellence
- Evolve library Space
- Foster strategic Partnerships



Still wordsmithing...



So What IS Innovation?!

- “Innovation means to **convert concepts** into **new processes** or **products**, or to make existing processes or products **more effective or efficient**”.
- “Innovation is a ‘core renewal process’ that enables organizations to **evolve** their products and services continuously to lead or **align with** consumer markets, or, in the case of libraries, **user needs**”.

So What IS Innovation?!

- *Collaboration spaces...adding jacks so that more than one laptop can be connected, adding more than one computer monitor or touchscreen, and adding whiteboards or smartboards so staff can scrawl to visualize complex ideas and plans. Huddle rooms- small spaces for impromptu meetings and equipped with technology-are essential for teams”.*
- *Equip collaborative spaces with tools for remote collaboration”*

“Inspo” Pics!



“Inspo” Pics!



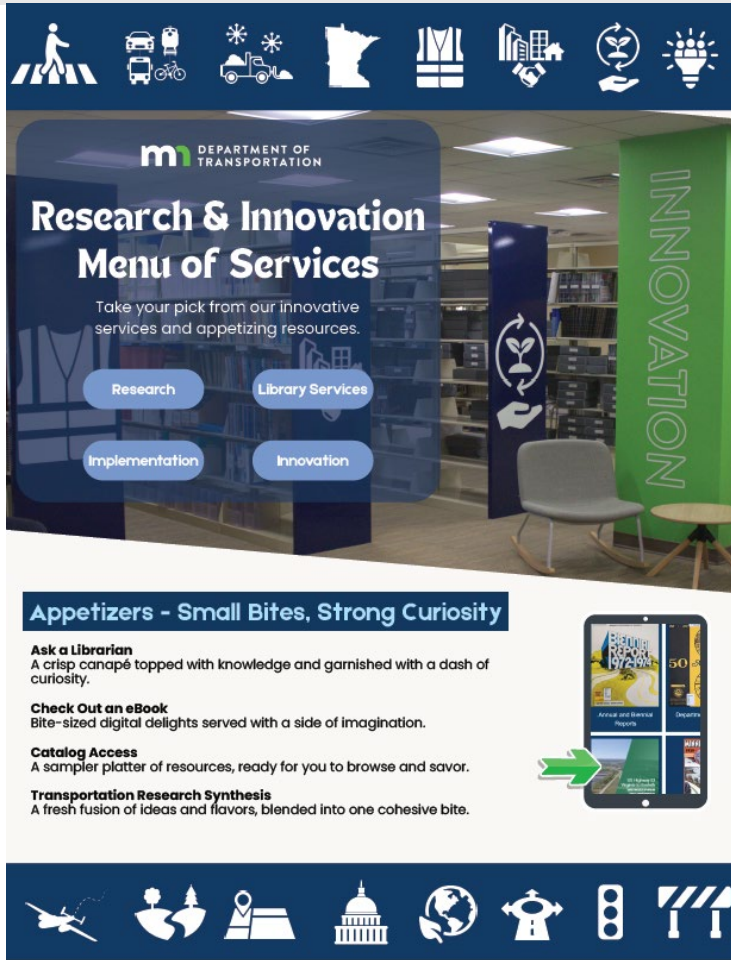
Here We Are Today....For Now!!!



Here We Are Today....For Now!!!



If You're Not at the Table...You're On the Menu!



The graphic features a top header with icons for various transportation modes and a bottom header with icons for research and innovation. The central image shows a library interior with a large blue sign that reads "Research & Innovation Menu of Services". Below the sign are four buttons: "Research", "Library Services", "Implementation", and "Innovation". To the right of the sign is a green vertical banner with the word "INNOVATION". Below the main image is a section titled "Appetizers - Small Bites, Strong Curiosity" with four items: "Ask a Librarian", "Check Out an eBook", "Catalog Access", and "Transportation Research Synthesis". To the right of this section is a smartphone displaying a website with a green arrow pointing to it.

Research & Innovation Menu of Services
Take your pick from our innovative services and appetizing resources.

Research Library Services
Implementation Innovation

Appetizers - Small Bites, Strong Curiosity

Ask a Librarian
A crisp canapé topped with knowledge and garnished with a dash of curiosity.

Check Out an eBook
Bite-sized digital delights served with a side of imagination.

Catalog Access
A sampler platter of resources, ready for you to browse and savor.

Transportation Research Synthesis
A fresh fusion of ideas and flavors, blended into one cohesive bite.



The graphic features a top header with the title "Entrees - The Main Course of Discovery". Below this are four items: "Research Need Statement", "Research Project", "Research Implementation Project", and "MnDOT Digital Library". To the right of these items are two images: a roundabout and a highway. Below the entrees section is a section titled "Desserts - Sweet Conclusions" with four items: "Research Report", "Research Video", "Research Webinar", and "Topic Alerts". To the right of these items is a lightbulb icon. Below the desserts section is a QR code and a button that says "Scan the QR Code to View Our Full services". At the bottom are the logos for the Minnesota Department of Transportation and the Local Road Research Board.

Entrees - The Main Course of Discovery

Research Need Statement
A fresh, clear starter for inspiration, thoughtfully seasoned with opportunity.

Research Project
A hearty dish crafted with layers of detail, analysis, and collaboration.

Research Implementation Project
Savory results brought to life, simmered until practical and ready to serve.

MnDOT Digital Library
A full course feast of transportation research, served online for your convenience.

Literature Search (Chef's Choice)
A helping of resources carefully selected to appease your palate.

Interlibrary Loan
A generous helping of resources from near and far because sharing is delicious.

Desserts - Sweet Conclusions

Research Report
A structured confection, neatly layered and elegantly presented.

Research Video
A visually decadent treat, designed to be both rich and shareable.

Research Webinar
A classic webinar series with timeless notes, layered with expert insights, offering guidance in every bite.

Topic Alerts
A delicate soufflé of updates, rising with your interests.

New Library Materials
Fresh-from-the-oven titles, ready to satisfy your curiosity.

Scan the QR Code to View Our Full services

m MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

LOCAL ROAD RESEARCH BOARD

Paradigm Shift?!



Future Transportation Library Innovations

Trend	Therefore, library will need to
Breadth and scope of available information continues to expand dramatically, particularly in electronic formats	▪ Provide new and improved tools for screening and searching ▪ Integrate information (networking) to focus on specific client needs ▪ Define value of resources to include ease of access
User expectations become increasingly higher for ease of access and timely delivery of the “right” information	▪ Focus on customer needs: who are the customers, what exactly do various customers need; what is the best response ▪ Create new services and products that respond directly to identified customer needs ▪ Work on ways to speed user access to data ▪ Develop ways to point users to the most appropriate applied research for their needs ▪ Develop and communicate explanations and measurements for the value of library services for specific identified customer groups
Continually increasing emphasis on user self-help, along with increasing user capabilities	▪ Enhance efforts for outreach, user training, and self-service such as through Web tools and focused/organized Website information ▪ Help users to know when their work effectiveness, given their preference for self-help, could use a boost from professional library staff
Basic library services continue to be critical to effective and efficient service delivery	▪ Continue to improve processes for key support functions, including use of software tools, etc. ▪ Evaluate best mix of support services to maximize value to library customers
Research questions become increasingly complex	▪ Continue to increase capabilities for research – sophistication and effectiveness – both for library staff and customers

Library of the Future

The library of the future will be much like the library today.

We will continue to provide the highest quality information possible in whatever format available in a timely and cost-effective manner!

Thank You!

Karen Neinstadt, MLIS

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