

**Statement of Carla Hayden
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Before
The Committee on House Administration
U.S. House of Representatives
On
Oversight of the Library of Congress' Strategic Plan, Part 2
July 25, 2018**

Good morning Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me to testify before the Committee on the topic of strategic planning at the Library of Congress. I am pleased to be before you today to provide an update on all that has been accomplished or is in process since last year's hearing.

Let me begin with thanking the Committee for your support and commitment as the Library continues its more than 200-year history as the steward of the nation's universal and enduring source of knowledge and shared cultural heritage. This library – your library – has the unique honor and responsibility of collecting, preserving, and making accessible an unequalled collection for the use of the Congress and the American People.

I am proud to be part of such a noble purpose. Now in my second year as Librarian, I am even more committed to doing all I can to share our resources, the strongest of which I believe are the expertise and commitment to public service of our dedicated staff.

The Library remains the world's largest library, a premiere research institution, and a destination for Members of Congress, congressional staff, and researchers. It holds enormous potential for reaching more Americans of all walks of life who can find information and inspiration from this remarkable national institution.

Today, the Library holds more than 167 million items in all formats and languages and has the world's largest collections of legal materials, films, and sound recordings. In fiscal 2017, the Library welcomed nearly 2 million in-person visitors and there were 110 million visits to our website. CRS provided custom services to 100 percent of Senate and House member offices and standing committees. The U.S. Copyright Office registered more than 450,000 claims. Over 10 million preservation actions were undertaken on collections; over 20 million audio/braille books and magazines were circulated via partnerships with more than 100 network libraries throughout the United States; and the Library responded to more than 1 million reference requests from the Congress, the public, and other federal agencies.

The Library continues to make significant strides in meeting our goal to increase access for Congress and the American people. CRS worked to modernize its service to Congress by joining the Skype for Business Federation, which this year enabled instant messaging and teleconferencing with congressional staff. The Library launched LC Labs and, working with the Serials division, rolled out a new crowd sourcing app inviting users to help create a database of historic newspaper images from the Chronicling America database. New “touch history” tours allow visitors who are visually impaired to experience the magnificence of the Jefferson Building. The Law Library further expanded online content with fully indexed and searchable U.S. Codes going back to 1925. We have also made new collections available online, such as the papers of Alexander Hamilton and James Buchanan, and new high-resolution scans of original documents in the Abraham Lincoln papers.

As you can tell, the Library has been full of purposeful activity this year making resources more available to our users, and we’ve been similarly busy on the strategic planning front.

It was just a year ago that I addressed this Committee and stated my intent to engage in a comprehensive strategic planning process, with the goal of having a dynamic and forward-looking Strategic Plan in place for fiscal year 2019. I am here today to inform you that we are on track to publish by October 1st a plan to guide our activities in FY 2019 and over the next five fiscal years.

The new strategic plan establishes a strategy framework for the entire agency that is driven by its mission to serve Congress and the American people. The Library’s mission statement is at the core of this institution’s planning. It provides the foundation for the Library’s work generally, and for our strategic planning efforts specifically. Our mission incorporates the key elements of what we do, why we do it, and for whom: “to engage, inspire, and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.”

With our core mission reinforced, the new strategic plan takes shape around unifying concepts important to every part of the organization - the most critical of which is a clear and persistent focus on users.

We have established a “user-centered direction forward” that defines our objectives and activities around value and benefit to our users. In practical terms, the user-centered direction forward means we will enrich the Library experience for all users, including first and foremost Members of Congress who may engage the Congressional Research Service or read books from our stacks; ‘creators’ who draw inspiration from our collections or use the Copyright Office to protect their creative works; institutions like local schools and libraries who serve as ‘connectors’ between users and the Library of Congress; and ‘learners’ of all ages who use our unique and trusted resources to learn about history, civics, and any other part of America’s cultural heritage you can imagine. I want to note that, while our priorities will be chosen to best serve the nation, we know the benefits will be felt by all who use the Library of Congress. With this in mind, we have also crafted an aspirational vision statement that “all Americans are connected to the Library of Congress.”

As I testified last year, establishing a strategic vision and structure for the agency's future has been a top priority. To date, we have taken several important steps to make that happen.

The Office of Strategic Planning and Performance Management reports directly to me and is headed by its director Dianne Houghton. The Office has been hard at work over the last 15 months strengthening the agency's strategic, directional, and operational planning. Consistent with best practices, the Library has developed the strategic plan through a participative initiative, with input and feedback from hundreds of Library employees, managers, and leaders. All Library service units have played a key role, as have external stakeholders and users. We have also regularly consulted congressional staff throughout the process.

Beginning in the spring of 2017, the Library embarked on the first phase of its "Envisioning 2025" initiative, with the aim of setting the direction for the Library's future. This phase explored trends and topics related to the Library's services. The Library's leadership established core language around the role of the Library and its users in a way that transcends organizational boundaries, and by the end of the year, the user-centered direction had been set.

With this foundation, the drafting of the strategic planning launched in December 2017. Four agency-wide principles emerged as our unifying goals: expanding access, enhancing service, optimizing resources, and measuring impact. The plan, now near completion, will be accompanied by new or revised service unit-level plans. Each unit is on track to complete its plan by January 2019 and will speak to each unit's mission-specific goals. These plans will align with the overall Library strategic plan as well as help to prioritize new programming initiatives and investments.

We will ensure accountability by tracking our progress in meeting goals under the Strategic Plan with the creation of an Implementation Roadmap. This roadmap will identify a sequence of specific priority initiatives – informed by the central Strategic Plan and the service unit-level plans – to be implemented over the next five years. This roadmap will be used to set and track progress to the Strategic Plan's goals, as well as prioritize budgeting. Unlike the Strategic Plan, which will not change, the Implementation Roadmap can be adjusted over time to better reflect new priorities and changing situations.

Ultimately, the Library will develop a culture that views planning as a never-ending, iterative process, where operations and services are reviewed and analyzed continuously, so that we may regularly improve our efficiency and our value to users.

The Library's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) has recently evaluated our strategic planning and performance management, noting key improvements over the last two years and also identifying practices to further strengthen the Library's strategic planning and performance management.

We thank the OIG for acknowledging our progress and agree with the essence of the report. It is essential for the Library to build a mature, data-driven, and impactful planning and performance management system. It will take years along a carefully planned trajectory to achieve this result, but the report certainly provides helpful guidance as we continue to make progress.

While there were no formal recommendations made, we are taking steps in several areas identified by the OIG as needing a continuous focus. Our efforts to revamp our strategic plan conforms to best practices and the spirit of federal government standards applied to the Executive Branch. There is still much work to be done, but I have confidence we are headed in the right direction. As a part of strategic planning, we are already increasing our focus on users which both makes sense from a strategic planning standpoint and will also be critical in increasing the access of our collections to users onsite and online.

Last year, I told the Committee about the strides we are making in performance management, including the launch of a new performance management system in FY2016. Our motto when it comes to performance management is to "make performance matter." The Library has invested significantly in moving this work forward across the organization. We began by focusing on developing and tracking key, impact-driven performance metrics; developing a new reporting system to support the setting and tracking of goals across and within the Library's service units; and incorporating progress to goals as a standing agenda item at monthly Executive Committee meetings and quarterly performance reviews. For the first time, the agency is working to instill a performance culture that is grounded by the regular review of performance at the executive level. Good performance management is fundamental to success.

In addition, internal risk control and management continue to be of central importance. The Library designed, piloted, and launched our first agency-wide risk management process nearly a year ago. The Library's Integrated Risk & Internal Control process is intended to identify, assess, and facilitate leadership response to strategic and operational risks in a way that aligns with our Strategic Plan, performance goals, and key business initiatives. We will continually review, tailor, and improve this process over time, recognizing the value that such a program provides.

Lastly, while the Library's Strategic Plan sets the agency's goals and direction forward, we are formulating a Digital Strategy that focuses on the digital manifestations of the Library and how the Library should evolve to better meet our diverse user expectations.

Our strategic planning and digital strategy development work has been closely integrated. The Digital Strategy complements the Strategic Plan, describing what the Library would like to accomplish in terms of digital transformation over the next five years. This plan will guide how we leverage digital capabilities to connect with users, using technology to reach farther and to be more available.

The Digital Strategy will also guide how we invest in our future, creating mechanisms for experimentation, enabling a culture of innovation, and ensuring enduring access to content. The modern user, whether it is Congress or a copyright holder, requires an increasingly digital Library of Congress.

As with the Strategic Plan, our Digital Strategy is being developed through an inclusive, cross-Library process. The strategy will be complete and ready to guide all things digital at the Library in the coming fiscal year.

In closing, the Library is poised to implement a unifying strategic plan that is user-centered, forward thinking, and will facilitate measurable outcomes as we continue to make advances in planning and performance measurement.

Thank you for inviting me to provide testimony on this important topic. I look forward to taking your questions.