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Library of Congress
Before
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On
Oversight of the Library of Congress' Strategic Plan, Part 2
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Good morning Chairman Harper, Ranking Member Brady, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for inviting me to provide testimony on strategic planning at the Library of Congress.

I am pleased to be before you today to share the progress we have made in developing a strategic plan that puts forward a clear and exciting vision for the agency's future and sets the structure needed to drive that vision forward.

My testimony will first provide context on the journey undertaken over the past 15 months, and then share the essence of the resulting Strategic Plan. I will also update you on other key initiatives undertaken to ensure we are ready to move quickly to implement our new plan.

Finally, because development of a strategic plan is one part of a broader system, you will hear about our progress in revising and improving our planning and performance management framework, and so establishing a stronger performance culture across the agency.

Context

In the spring of 2017, the Library embarked on our "Envisioning 2025" initiative, an initiative that included more than 350 staff and managers engaged in opportunities to explore, research, and discuss trends and topics vital to the agency's future. This work was to set the foundation for a new five-year strategic plan that would be engaging, meaningful, and reinforced with measurable outcomes.

Early into this work, a team of more than 45 leaders from across the agency recognized the need to establish core language to help guide our planning work, specifically defining the role of the Library of Congress and its users in a way that transcends the agency's organizational boundaries. This was critical, as we felt an effective strategic plan for the agency must be built on concepts that unify our discrete service units.

In considering the role of the Library, the group 'reached backwards in order to reach forward.' We turned to our history, recalling Thomas Jefferson's offer to Congress to purchase his personal library and thereby reestablish the Library of Congress' collection after the British burned the nation's Capital in the War of 1812. Echoing the organizing principles Thomas Jefferson applied to his personal library, we defined the role of the agency in a way that unites all

of our units using the principles of Memory, Knowledge, and Imagination. **Memory** refers to our work to acquire, sustain, and provide access to a unique and universal collection. **Knowledge** refers to our role in providing authoritative and objective research, guidance, analysis, and information. **Imagination** refers to our role in inspiring and encouraging creativity and promoting and supporting the protection of the work of creators.

In a similar vein, we worked with input from across the agency to determine how best to describe our four main user constituencies. Our first and foremost user is **Congress** for whom we support access to authoritative information and the democratic exchange of ideas. Next are **Creators** who conduct research, create new knowledge, and build cultural capacity, inclusive of and beyond copyright users and stakeholders. Third are **Learners**, those of any age who seek understanding and knowledge through the agency's digital and physical collections and services. And finally, we recognize **Connectors**, those external communities such as libraries, schools, and other groups and institutions that ultimately connect users to the Library.

Most importantly, building from a collective theme that emerged from all parts of the agency, we set a "**User-Centered Direction Forward**," which we define as enriching and enhancing our services to current users, and engaging learners of all ages with our unique and trusted resources.

With this foundation, strategic planning activities were launched in late December 2017 with a team comprised of Library of Congress employees and contractors. The team was constructed to expand our strategic planning capability as well as help further educate staff in planning concepts and activities.

Over the winter and spring, we moved through key planning activities, including structured research and analysis of many different information sources, workshops, and strategy labs. Throughout this process, and consistent with best practices, our approach was highly participative. We continued to engage the Envisioning group of over 45 leaders from across the organization; ensured input from Library staff both here on Capitol Hill and at our Culpeper campus through open staff forums and input exercises; engaged Library users and stakeholders through surveys and interviews; received input from similar information-based organizations; and shared approaches with peer agencies. Additionally, we have remained in continuous contact with and provided briefings to congressional staff throughout the process. In fact, we have recently reviewed the content of the Strategic Plan and the progress of our Digital Strategy development with the staff of this committee and its counterpart in the Senate, the Committee on Rules and Administration.

Let me share the highlights of our plan.

Strategic Plan

Results

Consistent with our user-centered focus, our Strategic Plan will be the agency's roadmap to expand our reach and deepen our impact. It begins with reinforcing our **Mission** statement: "**to**

engage, inspire, and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.”

Service to Congress has historically been and remains at the core of our mission. As stewards of America’s ever-growing, unique, and universal collection, the mission continues to reflect the Library’s role in inspiring, informing, and serving the American people by engaging their cultural and intellectual curiosity and creativity.

Grounded in our Mission, we have crafted an aspirational vision statement that speaks to a sense of connection to the people – your constituents. Our **Vision** is that “*All Americans are connected to the Library of Congress.*”

The vision reflects our commitment to focusing on our users, making our universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity more discoverable, accessible, relevant, and useful. Improving our understanding of the many ways users interact with the Library’s collection, experts, and services is fundamental to delivering on our mission. Each interaction is an opportunity to move users along a path from awareness to discovery to use of the Library and ultimately, to feeling connected to the Library, so that all Americans have a sense of ownership and pride in this national treasure.

Building from our Vision, our Strategic Plan conveys a direction forward that is **user centered, digitally enabled, and data driven.**

We made a choice early in the planning process to focus on a **user-centered** strategy. Therefore, our strategic decisions must consider what users desire from the Library. Improving user experience is not a one-time event. Rather, it represents a fundamentally new way of operating. It requires our leadership to build the capabilities and infrastructure that will enable this transformation. Our staff are some of the Library’s best ambassadors. The new strategy seeks to harness staff insight and their contributions to elevate the user experience. All staff, including those in internal-facing roles, have a part to play in this effort.

We also addressed digital use. As much as desire that every American come to DC to visit the Library, that is not possible. This is why being digitally enabled is paramount to our success. Realizing a **digitally enabled** Library of Congress will be an ongoing process as technology advances, new business models emerge, and user expectations evolve. We will take a long view, developing strategies that account for what is on the horizon. Our Digital Strategy will be closely aligned with and a critical enabler of the Strategic Plan.

Finally, a **data-driven** organization is one that embeds analysis, data, and reasoning into the decision-making process. Efforts to embed analytics already occur in pockets throughout the agency. Becoming a more data-driven organization, however, means determining how best to scale these projects across the Library to drive greater impact. Moving forward, we will increase our investment to take advantage of the tremendous amount of data associated with our vast collections. We will also build upon previous efforts to learn more about our users in order to tailor our services for greater relevance and impact. Data will help to improve the speed and quality of performance measurement and decision-making. Through this evidence-based

approach, the Library will provide a more meaningful experience and ultimately help build a lifelong connection with each of our users.

The goals and objectives presented in the Strategic Plan were created to drive to our vision of connection. Building awareness of the Library's offerings, improving discoverability of those resources, and increasing usage through a suite of services that meet diverse needs will connect more people to the Library in more meaningful ways. With a strong emphasis on digital enablement, the Strategic Plan will further the agency's reach among users.

We have determined **four strategic goals** for the Library over the coming five years:

Our first goal is to **expand access**, making our unique collections, experts, and services available when, where and how users need them. This includes ensuring our collections are more readily discoverable and available for users whether visiting Capitol Hill or accessing the Library remotely. It means working with partners in new ways to promote our collections, experts, and services to their networks. It also includes expanding our physical presence by proactively bringing the Library to the American people and enabling broader use of our collections and services.

Our second goal is to **enhance services**, creating valuable experiences for every user by elevating digital experiences, transforming in-person experiences, and developing more user-centered content. Whether providing policy consultations with Members of Congress via Skype, launching a crowdsourcing project inviting users to create a database of historic newspaper images, or debuting "touch history" tours that allow visually impaired visitors to experience the magnificence of the Jefferson Building – the Library will continue to innovate and rethink the way we engage our users. By delivering superior services and valuable experiences we want users to return regularly and become lifelong learners and Library contributors.

Our third goal is to **optimize resources**, continuing our work to modernize, strengthen, and streamline our operational capabilities. The Library as an organization must keep pace with the growth of its collection and the needs of its users. Through this goal we will align core agency activities to achieve new operational efficiencies; modernize operations and use data to drive enhancements that will deliver the highest returns while balancing staff workloads. We also strive to better articulate the value of our offerings in order to diversify and expand funding; invest in talent for the future by addressing capability gaps, training and retaining our experts; and recruit new talent to augment our knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Our fourth and final goal is to **measure impact** by committing to use data to measure our impact in the world around us. To measure our true impact, we must go beyond counting discrete items and activities to focus as well on increasing usage, and perhaps most importantly, measuring the impact of the collection, services, and experts on our users.

Strategic Planning -- Next Steps

Moving forward, the Library's strategy will come to life in **Directional Plans** each Service Unit will develop to identify and prioritize key initiatives. The Directional Plans, to be complete by January 2019, will identify direction and operational priorities and define specifically how each unit will contribute to the agency's collective goals and objectives. They will speak to what each unit is doing to track progress to and ultimately realize our central strategy.

As a next step following the implementation of the Strategic Plan, we will elevate priority aspects of each unit's Directional Plan to develop our central **Implementation Roadmap**. The Implementation Roadmap will identify and describe a sequence of priority initiatives to be implemented over the next five years to execute on the Strategic plan. This roadmap will be used to set, track, and report on progress to the Strategic Plan's goals and objectives, and prioritize budgeting and investments.

Our approach to achieving the goals and objectives outlined in our Strategic Plan must be integrated across the organization. This means promoting shared outcomes and resource planning, while still allowing for our Service Units to fulfill their mission-specific goals. As planning shifts to implementation, we are committed to making the changes necessary to effectively measure our impact and to promote an agency-wide culture of performance and continuous improvement.

Planning & Performance Management More Broadly

As noted previously, our strategic planning work is one part of a more complex planning and performance framework. Under the leadership of the Librarian, we are determined to make performance matter and are investing significantly in improving our planning and performance management framework. Our task at hand is to develop a culture that views planning as an ongoing, iterative process where operations and services are reviewed and analyzed continuously, allowing us to regularly improve our efficiency and our value to users.

I want to report that we have continued our improvement efforts, deepening the connection between planning, controls, risk management, and performance management. We continue to focus on setting stronger, impact-based goals; we use staff feedback to continually enhance our system used to track and report on progress towards goals and targets; and we are having more meaningful performance discussions from an enterprise perspective at the executive level by embedding performance review discussions of priority goals and targets into our Executive Committee's monthly meetings.

Internal controls, risk management and risk mitigation are also of central importance as the agency becomes more skilled in anticipating and dealing with challenges. The Library took note of the Executive Branch's recent focus on risk management, and launched the Library's Integrated Risk & Internal Control process (iRIC), designed with input from other small agencies to help us identify, assess, and facilitate leadership response to strategic and operational risk, both within organizational units and across the agency. Nearing the end of its first year of operation, the program will be continually reviewed, tailored, and improved over time.

As our planning matures, we will explore avenues to connect established goals with available resources and link disparate programmatic elements and data. For example, we are beginning to explore alternatives for an enterprise business planning and management solution to capture planning data gathered in major business segments and then integrate the data to enable sharing, comparison, and evaluation.

In short, we are pleased with the progress made with our planning and performance work. Though we still have much to accomplish, we are advancing the cultural changes needed to focus on performance.

Conclusion

In closing, the Library of Congress is on track to release our user-centered Strategic Plan and Digital Strategy to guide our work, investments, and success over the next five years. The coming months will hold important milestones in our planning efforts, including communication and release of the Strategic Plan at the start of the fiscal year, completion of the unit-level planning, and elevation of key work and initiatives from unit-level Directional Plans to an agency-level Implementation Roadmap. With these elements in place, the agency will have transformed its strategic planning as well as put in place the means to track the fulfillment of our strategic plan commitments.

I thank the Committee again for inviting me to provide testimony on this important topic.