



# Altadena Library District

Strategic Visioning  
and Framework  
Executive Summary



## **Board of Trustees**

Terry Andruess  
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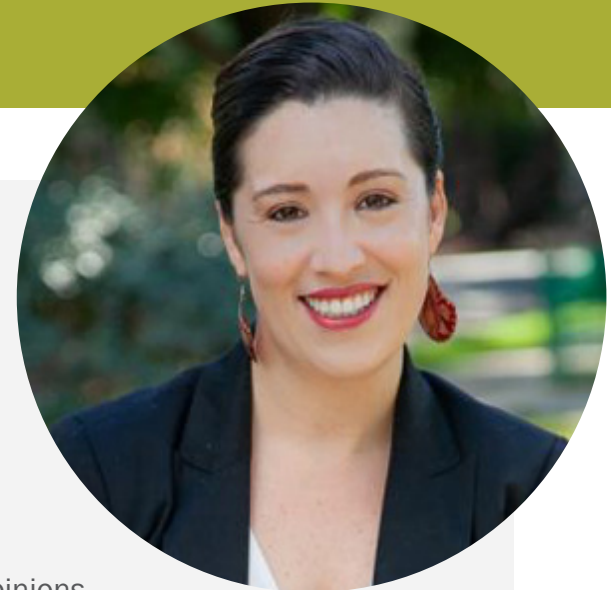


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# Letter from the Board



The Altadena Library District is remarkable in so many ways - as the oldest special library district in the state of California, we're used to being on the frontiers. And since the 1920s, Altadena has had a unique and important place for our library - nearly a century later, that could not be more true or more relevant. As we approach 2020, Altadena today is vastly different than the Altadena of a hundred years ago, yet profoundly similar - we are still a vibrant, diverse, interesting community with strong opinions, deeply-held beliefs, and a shared love for our mountain town. As Trustees of a special district, we have a special responsibility and a special relationship to uphold, which means ensuring that our Library District is focused on serving our entire community, and meeting the needs that we have in a real and sustainable way. It means finding and securing a strong financial footing for the future, addressing our facilities and services so that they are truly accessible and welcoming to everyone, and measuring our performance in a real, transparent, and public way. This strategic framework is the first step in a much larger conversation with the entire community, and I look forward to meeting with more of my neighbors to hear from you in the coming year. My fellow Board members and I are deeply honored to be entrusted with the care of our much-loved Altadena public libraries. We are proud of the improvements we have seen in the last year, and profoundly optimistic about our path forward. Thank you for allowing us to watch over this remarkable public agency on your behalf.

**Katie Clark,**  
**ALD Board of Trustees**



# Letter from the Director



As the newly appointed District Director, I am excited to lead the Altadena District Library into a new era of community-driven services. As we launch this strategic plan, you will see us practicing our values - empathy, innovation, and equity - and you will see our strategic priorities executed with intention, joy, and a renewed commitment to all of our neighbors. This strategic plan is bold, inclusive, and optimistic. It positions ALD as a central anchor and leader of the community's aspirations. We will work differently in the years ahead – learning with the community, planning with the community, and co-creating services with the community to break down barriers and provide opportunities for all to enjoy what our unique town has to offer. We are curious. We are connecting. We are neighbors. I am thrilled to lead the years ahead, as we activate and honor this promise to you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nikki Winslow'.

**Nikki Winslow,  
ALD Director**

# Introduction



In late 2019, the Altadena Library District (ALD) undertook a comprehensive strategic planning process facilitated by Margaret Sullivan Studio (MSS). Over the course of four months, MSS conducted a highly participatory process that included the contributions of the Board of Trustees, the community-based Strategic Planning Committee, all members of the Altadena Library District Staff, representatives from the Friends of the Altadena Library, and the Altadena Library Foundation. The plan incorporates specific community input from a diverse cross-section of Community members, Town Council members, and Altadena Library District patrons. This input was gathered through a series of community engagement sessions, focus groups, one-on-one conversations, and a community survey.

The goal of this process was to develop a flexible strategic framework for the future of the Altadena Library District. ALD will continue to be a central organizing hub that serves a diverse set of patrons, provides a wide range of services, and overlaps with many other community assets, institutions, and groups in Altadena.

This document encapsulates the results of the strategic process. It sets out a strategic framework for the Altadena Library District's future that prioritizes the community's needs and aspirations while honoring the unique characteristics that make Altadena a special community. The next-generation Altadena Library District will be a powerful contributor to the civic, cultural, economic, and educational health and well-being of all Altadena's residents. Our library district can and should be a national example of how a public library creates a stronger community.



ALD staff serves Altadena with great enthusiasm.



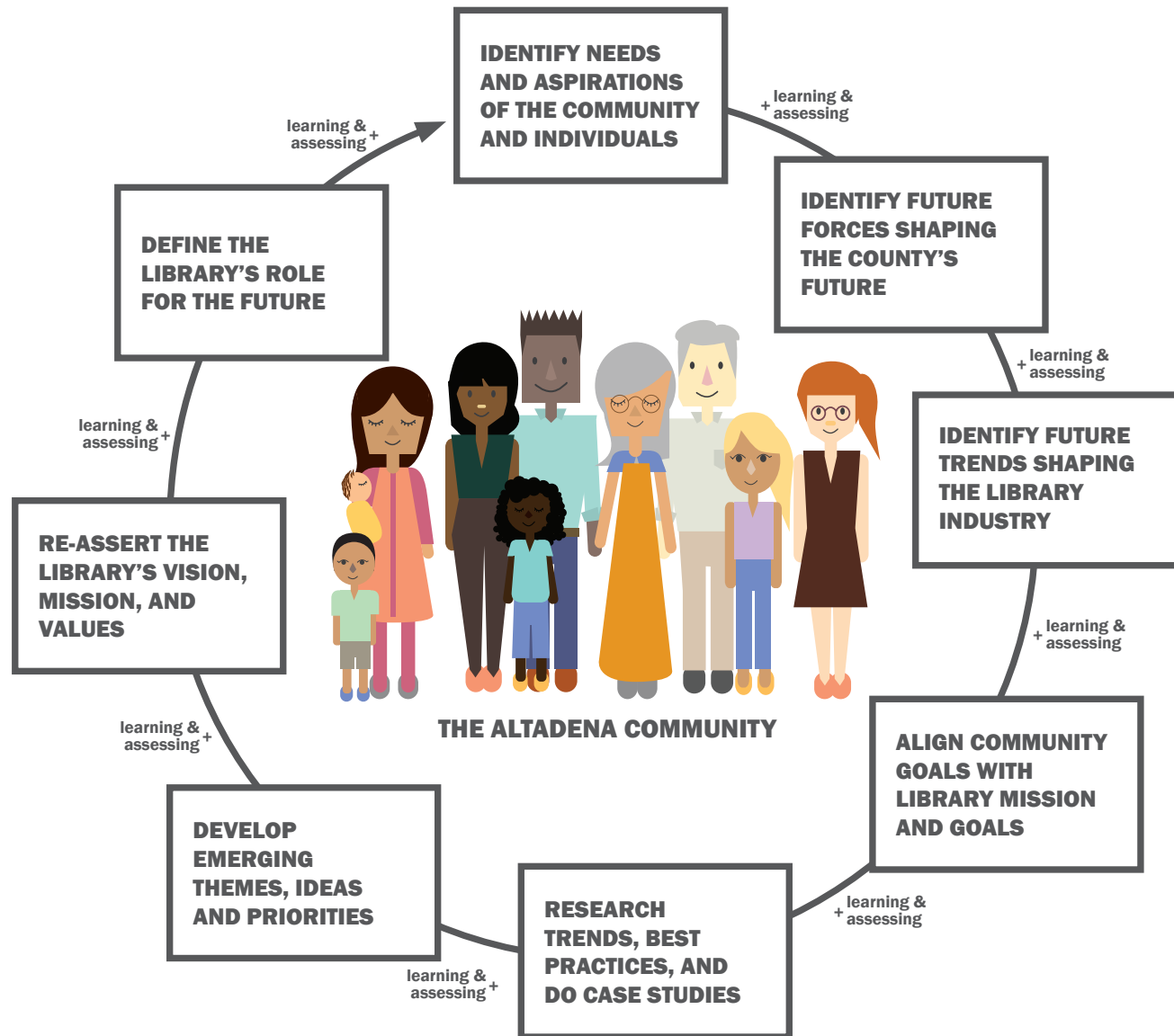
# The Strategic Process

Our work always begins and ends with the community. In years past, libraries have been more passive resources, providing information in a world that lacked other options. Our world today - and the world we will face in the coming years - is changing rapidly, and so are the needs of our community. Our core mission has always been to connect people and ideas, and while the methods by which we do that may change, the mission will not. We undertook this work in the belief that the key to successful strategies is listening to, and learning from, our neighbors.



Town council member focus group.

## THE STRATEGIC PROCESS



With every new initiative, new program, new idea, and new venture (as well as our old ones!) we will ask ourselves: does this help build an Altadena where all of us can learn, grow, and thrive together? We are a special district, in a unique community, and we are eager to continue learning from and listening to our neighbors in this next chapter of our public library.



# Our Mission

**We bring people and ideas together.**



Exploring astronomy at the library.

Partnerships fuel educational experiences for our community.





# Our Vision

**An Altadena where all are learning, growing, and thriving together.**



# **Our Values**

The image features a solid green background with three large, white, overlapping circles. Each circle contains one of the organization's values in a bold, green, sans-serif font. The circles are arranged in a triangular pattern, with 'Innovation' in the top-left, 'Equity' in the top-right, and 'Empathy' in the bottom-right. The title 'Our Values' is positioned at the top left, with a white wavy line underneath it.

**Innovation**

**Equity**

**Empathy**





Promoting a love for life-long learning  
at the Altadena Library District.



# Strategic Priorities

**We are... curious.**

**We are... connectors.**

**We are... neighbors.**

# We are... curious. ~~~~~

We are teachers, learners, and seekers. We are interested in you, your life, your needs, and how we can help. We want to learn from and with our community, and we want to constantly develop, improve, and build our skills to serve you better. We value curiosity and are open to new ideas.



*Some of our neighbors learning Final Cut Pro.*



# We are... connectors. ~~~~~

We lead constructive collaborations and partnerships, break down barriers, connect groups of neighbors, and centralize communication to improve the quality of life for all of us.



*A conversation about shared values during a community town hall at the Main Library.*



# We are... neighbors. ~~~~~

We are more than eight square miles. We are neighbors helping neighbors, whether it's on the next block or in the next city. We embody the best of our unique town and our diverse community.



*All smiles at the Altadena Library District.*

# Moving Forward



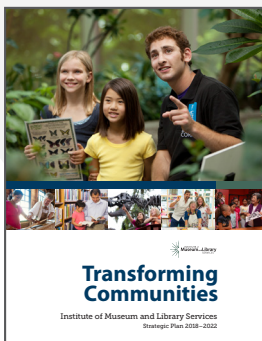
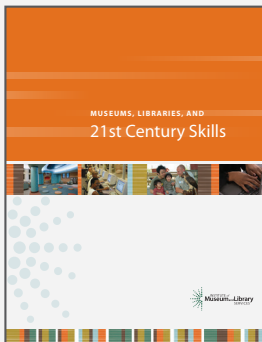
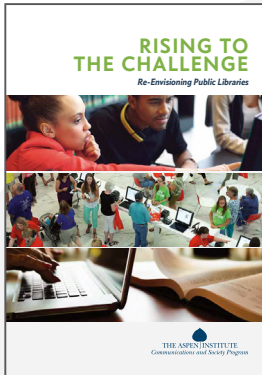
In the coming years,  
you will see ALD  
provide services  
that are...

- Enhancing local communication and access to information, in ways that ensure better access for all residents.
- Meaningfully engaging a wider swath of Altadena in events, programming, collection growth, and services.
- Finding ways to contribute intentionally on serious problems facing our community, including homelessness, mental health, affordable housing, income gaps, and a shrinking middle class.
- Improved transparency and accountability at all levels.
- Acting as a reliable and good-faith partner with local institutions, organizations, and community groups.
- Continuing to advance our available technology.
- Promoting local industries and enterprises.
- Promoting the library and library services in new and different methods.
- Seeking equity in provision of services across neighborhoods, populations, and areas of Altadena.
- Continuing to build the relevance of our work into the future and communicating it effectively to all of Altadena.
- Approaching all patrons, experiences, opportunities, and situations with compassion.
- Constructing and nurturing viable community feedback loops, to consistently improve the provision of library services.

# Additional Reading



In imagining a renewed and re-engaged Altadena Library District, these were a few of the key resources which guided our thinking. Please see the Strategic Visioning and Framework for additional detail.



1. Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries, a report of the Aspen Institute
2. Museums, Libraries, and 21st Century Skills, produced by the Institute of Museum and Library Services
3. Transforming Communities, a Strategic Plan produced by the Institute of Museum and Library Services
4. Library as Movement, article by David Lankes



# Thank You

We are profoundly grateful to all of our neighbors, friends, peers, and colleagues who gave so generously of their time, insight, and experience throughout this process. Over three months, we had the opportunity to hear from more than 300 of our neighbors about what they wanted in a public library, and in a community. We appreciated the chance to take this first step together, and are looking forward to engaging a much wider range of our diverse, interesting, vibrant Altadena in the months to come. We don't see our work as finished, but only as grounded in a set of principles and a vision that will guide us forward and allow us to incorporate an ever-increasing set of voices into our plans for the future.



Patrons participating in the "Poetry and Cookies" event.





Creating Altadena's Community Asset Map during Strategic Planning Workshop.



So to all of you who have been part of this process, to all who are joining this conversation now, and to all who will help us grow and evolve in the future: thank you! We can't wait to hear your thoughts as we move forward. What we have come to understand over the course of this process is that developing a strategic framework is not a final, static, finished product, but rather a flexible architecture that will let us imagine and create together, as a community, the public library system that we want.



# Community Stakeholders



The Altadena Library District sought community engagement at every turn. Participants from across the community, including members of the Friends of the Altadena Library and the Altadena Library Foundation, as well as our colleagues from the Altadena Town Council, shared their thoughts and vision with us. The opportunity to gather a deeper understanding of the needs, challenges, and aspirations of Altadena residents was invaluable. In addition to focused conversations, staff conducted 30 individual patron interviews, and we received more than 200 responses to our online survey. For a deeper dive into the data, please see the Strategic Visioning and Framework. (Note: all materials for meetings and surveys were available in English and Spanish.)

**“Collaboration makes  
our library and our  
community stronger.”  
- Bridget B.**

## **Altadena Library Foundation Board of Directors**

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**Jason Capell**

**Cynthia Carmona**

**Anne Chomyn**

**Katie Clark**

**Cindy Cleary**

**Sharon Collins**

**Juanita Gutierrez**

**Monica Hubbard**

**Veronica Jones**

**Cherri King**

# Strategic Planning Committee



The Strategic Planning Committee was composed of long-time library and community advocates, local leaders, and diverse voices from Altadena. They met regularly to think deeply about the process, results, and opportunities available to the Altadena Library District, and assisted the Board in outreach, communication, vision, and structure. The committee, chaired by Trustee Katie Clark, was a tremendous asset throughout this process, and we look forward to their continued involvement, advice, and insight as we move forward.

**“As a team, we have laid the groundwork for a bright future for ALD and our community.”**

**- Cindy C.**



# Leadership Working Group



The Leadership Working Group is comprised of ALD's Leadership Team and provided valuable insight into the process, and synthesized the interviews, research, and observations to inform strategy, goals, and objectives. They learned the techniques of community-centered design, and built on existing institutional skill-sets of community conversations. In the future, these leaders will work closely with the District Director to create the implementation plan for each year. These leaders are visionary, innovative, and committed to Altadena. They are emboldened and empowered to lead the community!

**“Our strategic plan will  
guide and empower  
us to respond to our  
community’s needs!”**

**- Nicole F.**

**Nikki Winslow**  
District Director

**Jonathan Arevalo**  
Facilities Manager

**Chloé Cavelier d’Esclavelles**  
Marketing & Community Engagement Manager

**Carlene Chiu**  
Library Manager  
Technical Services

**Cindy Cleary**  
Interim District Director

**Nicole Fabry**  
Business Manager

**Christopher Kellermeyer**  
IT Manager

**Jesse Lopez**  
Library Manager  
Adult Services

**Estella Terrazas**  
Public Services Director

**Amanda Toledo**  
Acting Library Manager  
Children’s & Family Services

**Diana Wong**  
Library Manager, Bob Lucas  
& Literary Services



Leadership Working Group members working on a community needs and aspirations worksheet.



# Our Staff



ALD Staff functioned as an energized, collaborative team ready to work differently, to listen and learn from the community, and create scenarios for intentional elevated patron experiences. With a unified purpose, shared language around values, mission and vision, this team will improve opportunity, and instill joy and vibrancy into the lives of all who engage with the Altadena Library District.

**“Deeper engagement  
with our community will  
enrich ALD’s resources  
and services for years to  
come.”**

**- Melissa**

**Hector Acosta**  
Library Clerk

**Antonia Aguilar**  
Library Associate

**Melissa Aldama**  
Library Clerk

**Selena Alegria**  
Library Clerk

**Jonathan Arevalo**  
Building Projects Manager

**Mikayla Arevalo**  
Library Clerk

**Gerardo Avila**  
Custodian

**Isabelle Briggs**  
Librarian  
Teen Services

**Helen Cate**  
Library Associate

**Chloé Cavellier d’Esclavelles**  
Marketing & Community Engagement Manager

**Kylynn Chaney**  
Administrative Assistant

**Carlene Chiu**  
Library Manager  
Technical Services

**Sue Colasurdo**  
Library Associate

**Ben Eisen**  
Library Page

**Vicky Escobar**  
Library Associate

**Nicole Fabry**  
Business Manager

**Anthony Green**  
Library Monitor

**Deborah Gueringer**  
Library Clerk

**Natalie Herrera**  
Library Clerk

**Michelle Hoskins**  
Library Associate

**Christopher Kellermeyer**  
IT Manager

**Aaron Kimbrell**  
Library Clerk

**Yuni LaFontaine**  
Volunteer Coordinator

**Jesse Lopez**  
Library Manager  
Adult Services

**Ricardo Loza**  
Gardener

**Quarece Martinez**  
Library Page

**Helen Milner**  
Library Associate

**Modesta Nava**  
Library Clerk

**Lori Newfang**  
Library Clerk

**Mark Parsons**  
Library Associate

**Estella Terrazas**  
Public Services Director

**Cynthia Teyolia**  
Library Associate

**Amanda Toledo**  
Library Associate

**Nikki Winslow**  
District Director

**Diana Wong**  
Library Manager  
Branch & Literacy Services

**Alice Wynne**  
Library Clerk





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