

deep background

A design intelligence service

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LIBRARY

Final Report - Design Brief

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How To Use These Reports

As originally detailed in our proposal, Deep Background's final deliverable consists of two reports: this **Internal Only** report (Strategic Operations Plan) and a matching **External Facing** report (Creative Brief). While there is some overlap in content between them, they were designed for different purposes.

Strategic Operations Plan: This report **describes Deep Background's strategic recommendations** for the CML New Main media experiences. It details the methodologies and results of the investigations that underpin those recommendations, instructions for how to implement those recommendations in active design development, cost estimates for fulfilling the recommendations, and initial best practices for CML staff regarding maintenance, vendor selection, and future content updates. **This report provides CML staff the necessary details needed to make informed decisions about budget use and operations as it related to The New Main Digital Media.**

The Creative Brief: This document provides the details donors, vendors, and artistic partners will need to **inform donations and/or design directions**. The descriptions of media experiences and technical requirements describe the vision for the final product, not the mechanisms to produce it. **This document provides CML staff with template material and communications examples for fundraising and vendor/artist/partner recruitment.**

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01 Introduction

01.1 CML New Main Digital Strategy

New Main is the crown jewel in the CML branch system. It's architecture, programming, and collection embody the community, curiosity, and culture that make Charlotte such an exciting city and rewarding home. The digital media at New Main directly supports this character and mission, with a **specific focus on four strategic goals** key to that broader mission:

1. Serve library members in Uptown as a best-in-class local branch.
2. Stand as the crown jewel of CML by attracting library members from all around Charlotte with unique features.
3. Draw in non-members with services and amenities so exciting that they convert the visitors into library members.
4. Bring positive attention to CML generally by establishing New Main as a tourist attraction and a dynamic part of Charlotte's overall cultural community.

To those ends, New Main has dedicated two spaces to digital experience. **The Immersive Theater** on the ground floor serves as an interactive canvas for large groups, and the **Digital Visualization Lab (DigiViz)** provides an intimate, enveloping sensory environment with its unique 270-degree display.

01.2 Immersive Theater Overview

The Immersive Theater is the digital town square for New Main.

Located on the ground floor, this installation is visible from the atrium, nested among reading areas and shelving, and designed to draw in visitors as they pass through the main area of the library.

This experience combines a large-scale display with sound and interactivity, allowing it to accommodate any kind of dynamic media. It functions as a platform for public art, a tool for augmenting CML's programs and events, and as a audio-visual backdrop that themes the entire space.

01.3 DigiViz Overview

DigiViz is the secret world hidden in the heart of New Main.

Located on the second floor, this intimate media grotto reveals itself to visitors after they wade their way through a winding, curving entryway, proving the effect of leaving the library and emerging into a new realm of infinite possibility.

Based around a 270-degree curved LED wall, DigiViz provides a cutting-edge stage for smaller events and envelopes visitors in fully immersive digital worlds. Through its unique mixture of wrap around visuals and surround sound, this space creates a unique sensory environment for readers, ravers, and relaxers alike.

01.4 Audience

New Main generally, and the media experiences in particular, are designed to increase the appeal of the library for Charlotte's adult audience. Imaginon, a specifically child- and young adult-focused CML branch and one of the system's busiest libraries, is located only a few blocks away. This frees up New Main to aim at a more mature visitors interested in more sophisticated experiences.

The immediate community, Uptown, mixes daytime business workers who fill the nearby office towers, longtime local residents with families, young professionals moving to Charlotte for their job, and tourists who want to stay in the heart of the city.

01.5 Project Vision

We envision exciting our visitors and activating the library's experience spaces with four distinct story types:

1. **Digital Public Art** - New Main will serve as a gallery and canvas for media artists looking to engage the public with dynamic, interactive pieces that represent Charlotte's distinct culture and history.
2. **Meditative Space Theming** - Hypnotic visuals, unhurried animations, and contemplative content would transform the media areas into unique sensory experiences that are the perfect backdrop for the solitary, reading-oriented, quiet spaces that CML members identified as their ideal library environment.
3. **Programming Augmentation** - We imagine the media spaces at New Main serving a platform for CML staff to make existing programming more dynamic with linear video, dynamic visuals, and interactivity.
4. **Parasocial Content** - In the Immersive Theater, the previous three modes with interstitial moments that speak with the personality of the library. These short, fun, voice-y pop ups will remind visitors about the variety, acceptance, and curiosity CML supports.

01.6 A New Canvas For Digital Art

Digital Media brings a unique suite of opportunities and challenges that make it distinct from other kinds of public art. Unlike sculptures or murals, digital public art can evolve over time in response to its audience, grow and change in ways that refresh interest in the piece, and encourage deeper audience engagement through interactivity or reactivity.

At New Main, we will establish a digital public art program that highlights local and emerging practitioners, reflects the interests of our visitors and the community, and creates a new must-see cultural destination in Uptown.

The art at New Main will push the boundaries of creativity and technology, providing an attraction to people around the city. During interviews with tourists and residents, we heard that people were willing to travel for over an hour to see an exhibition if it was exciting enough. The digital art at New Main will make that trip worth it.

01.7 The Next Generation Reading Nook

Through hypnotic visuals, unhurried animations, and contemplative content the media spaces in New Main transform into unique sensory experiences that are the perfect backdrop for the solitary, reading-oriented, quiet spaces that CML members identified as their ideal library environment.

These motion graphics will function as the visual analog to ambient music, setting the tone in the space and putting visitor into a relaxed, focused mindset. Neither too distracting nor too forgettable, they become the digital equivalent of a water feature or skylight, something a visitor can stare into in contemplation or simply use as a backdrop for their reading.

To ground these moments in the story of the library and the character Charlotte, the visuals can also emerge from data visualization, with traffic through the library, book checkouts and returns, or data streams from around the city, and more. These data sources would add variety to the visuals, guarantee a level of aesthetic novelty, and ensure that the content of the graphics speak with the voice of the community.

01.8 A Special Place For Special Events

CML's programming is already a major success, and the digital media at New Main provides a platform for deepening those programs with interactivity or dynamic content.

For instance, a Walk & Talk group could preview an upcoming trail, Chronicles Of Yarnia-like knitting program could fill the screen with video instructions or style inspiration, and a themed book group like SugarCube or Books & Bae-gles could add an interactive trivia game to the meet up.

Similarly, the media can adapt to reflect holidays, post content related to special events like Verse & Vino, or reflect themes like "Panthers Opening Day."

With the digital media augmenting programming and retheming the library on a daily basis, New Main will come alive and match the energy and life events of the city, deepening its connection with its visitors on a weekly, daily, and hourly basis.

02 Immersive Theater

02.2

Technical Details

Immersive Theater	
Physical Dimensions of Media Canvas	20' x 9'
Farthest Distance to Canvas	12'
Resolution	[TBC]
LED Tiles Manufacturer & Model	[TBC]
Specialty Computer(s)	To be specced by digital design partner
Interactive Cameras & Processing Computers	To be specced by digital design partner
Monitoring Cameras	To be specced by digital design partner
iPad/Tablet for Show Control	To be specced by digital design partner
16:9 HDMI External PC/Laptop Input Provided	Yes

Please include a final drawing set of the Immersive Theater in the RFP.

Confirmed technical details as of Fall 2025.

02.3

Experience Details - Visitor Journey

The Immersive Theater is an anchor attractor in the main area of New Main, and stands alongside the cafe and performance stage as significant new community space for Uptown.

Visitors will find their way to the Immersive Theater casually and incidentally, with a moderate dwell time. It will be a curiosity for visitors as soon as they enter the building and make their way through the lobby, drawing in the curious with activity and light. It will also serve as a final stop for people on their way out, a place to sit with a book they've retrieved from the upper floors or rest space before they exit and meet the world.

But most excitingly, CML wants to position the Immersive Theater as a building, neighborhood, and city-wide wayfinding element. Like the clock in NYC's Grand Central Terminal or the Water Tower in Chicago, we imagine that everyone who lives in or visits Charlotte will know exactly what someone means when they say "meet me at the screen in New Main."

02.4

Immersive Theater As Digital Art Canvas

The Immersive Theater offers a few unique attractions as a canvas for digital artists.

It is large-scale and highly visible, providing artists a very public platform that will reach a lot of viewers. The Immersive Theater also offers more standard image dimensions than DigiViz, allowing artists to more easily adapt their works for the space.

Most impactfully though, the Immersive Theater supports interactivity. The chance to incorporate dynamic audience inputs opens up the possibilities for an entire class of interactive art that draws engagement and generates excitement from everyone who wants to add their own contribution to something beautiful and meaningful.

02.5

Meditative Media Mode

In the Immersive Theater, the meditative visuals will take on an almost architectural feature, harmonizing with and extending the aesthetics of the build environment around it. Given the scale of the display, these visuals will progress at an especially measured pace, and work as a space theming element from multiple distances.

The meditative mode would also pair with equally calming music, providing a visual and audio sound track that sets the pace and mood of the ground floor.

The visuals can also leverage the interactive elements of the Immersive Theater, subtly reacting to the movement of people in the space to ensure that the animations perfectly patch the energy of the environment.

02.6

Programming and Special Event Mode

For programming and special events, the Immersive Theater becomes a stage, a collaborator, and a smart board at the same time.

When serving as an aid to programming, program leaders can conduct realtime quizzes or broadcast participant input either through the interactive sensors built into the system or by using a show control tablet. Pop quizzes and games, polls and co-creation, they all become new tools for increasing engagement and enjoyment for the program participants.

During special events, the Immersive Theater is nothing short of a dynamic billboard. When Verse & Vino comes around on the calendar, when everyone's counting down to Christmas or the Fourth of July, when the Panthers win the Super Bowl, content about those events will surface in large scale on the giant display and set the tone for the entire ground floor.

02.7

CML Personality Mode

When we asked 1,700 CML members how they thought about the library, they replied that they saw it as a friend, a place they associated with safety and choice. CML has already succeeded in creating this unique bond with its members, and the transition moments in the Immersive Theater will deepen that bond by periodically surfacing CML-generated content.

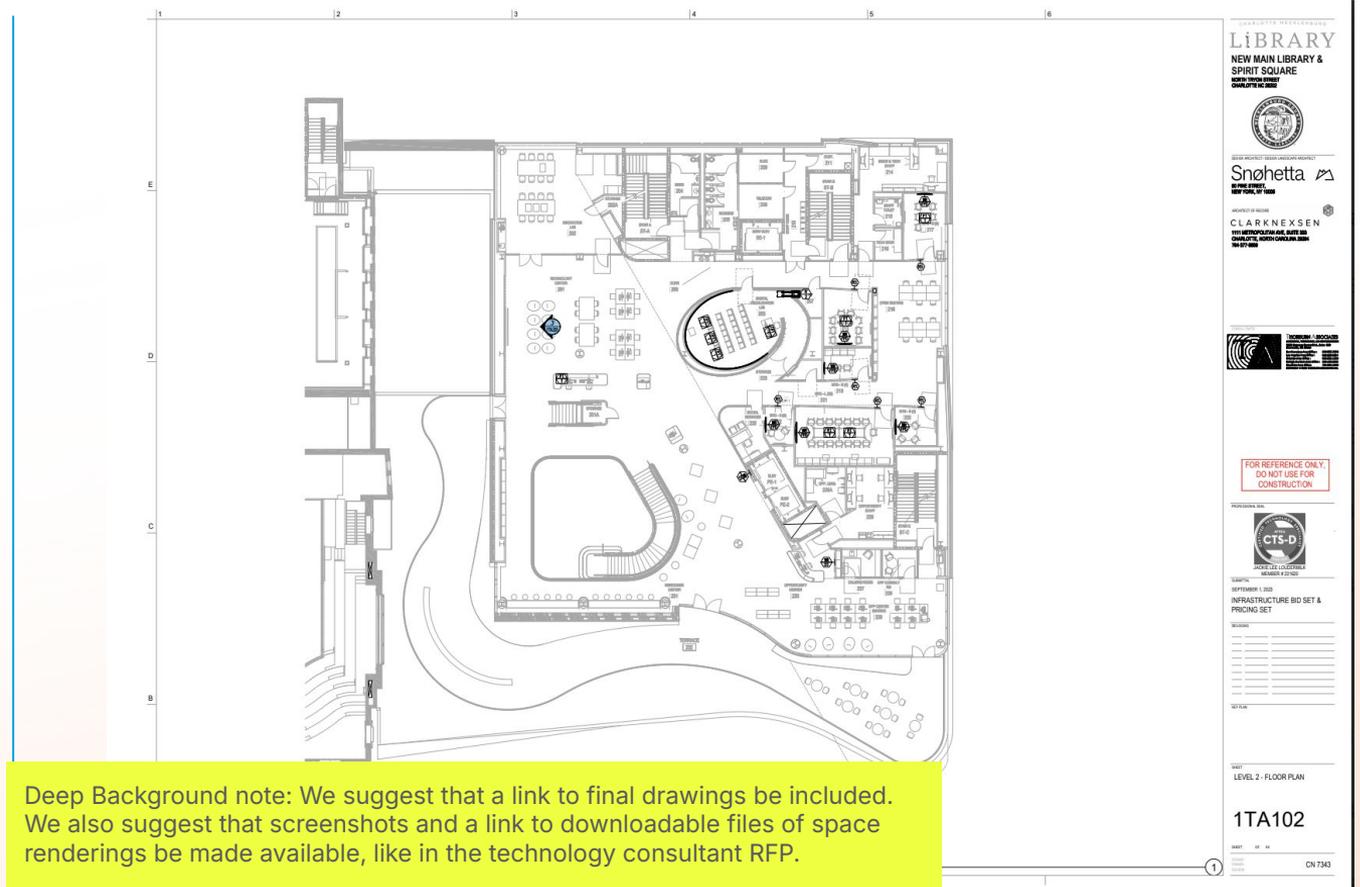
During transitions between modes or occasional breaks during long programming blocks, the Immersive Theater will feature short moments that speak directly to visitors with the voice of the library. These moments will highlight upcoming programming, reference non-library events around Charlotte, or just serve as moments of levity or daily affirmations.

These moments are united more by attitude than media type, and will be a mix of template-backed content, linear video, or even generative data visualizations relating to library visitation or book popularity.

03 **DigiViz Room**

03.1

Experience Details - Floor Plan



Deep Background note: We suggest that a link to final drawings be included. We also suggest that screenshots and a link to downloadable files of space renderings be made available, like in the technology consultant RFP.

03.2

Technical Details

DigiViz Lab	
Physical Dimensions of Media Canvas	7' high
Farthest Distance to Canvas	26'
Resolution	[TBC]
LED Tiles Manufacturer & Model	[TBC]
Specialty Computer(s)	To be specced by digital design partner
Monitoring Cameras	To be specced by digital design partner
iPad/Tablet for Show Control	To be specced by digital design partner
16:9 HDMI External PC/Laptop Input Provided	Yes

Please include a final drawing set of the DigiViz Lab in the RFP.

Confirmed technical details as of Fall 2025.

03.3

Experience Details - Visitor Journey

Visitors find DigiViz as a result of their deliberate focus on attending the event inside, as a return to their special reading area, or as a result of an irrepressible curiosity that leaves them having to know “what is in that room?” As they pass through the winding entry, visitors emerge into a new world, an immersive digital space where the boundaries of the experience are limited only by imagination.

For presentations and certain kinds of programming, seating will ensure visitors sit down in the area most fully wrapped in LED displays. And during art or meditative programming, comfortable furniture allows visitors to fully float away into the digitally rendered world that envelopes them.

03.4

Digital Art Canvas

DigitViz presents a unique canvas for an artist, the perfect creative platform for someone literally thinking outside the box. This isn't just another screen on a wall, another rectangle to fill, it's an environment, a world for an artist to build so their viewers can fully immerse themselves in something new.

More intimate and less active than the Immersive Theater, art in DigiViz naturally suggests a content approach that is at once more internal and more expansive. When an artist uses every inch of the 270-degree display, they know they are building a one-of-a-kind pieces rooted in this specific room. And when the visitors experience that, they know they're seeing something they can't see anywhere else.

03.5

Meditative Media Mode

While the Immersive Theater may provide a meditative backdrop, DigiViz allows for complete sensory transportation. Taking advantage of the 270-degree wraparound screen and surround sound, meditative mode in DigiViz is more about maximalist sensory input than theming a backdrop for an atrium.

Like a floating in a sensory deprivation or dancing at a rave, this media experience allows visitors to block out the external world. In this heightened state they are free to dive fully into a book without any distraction, or simply let their mind float off into the animated world around them.

03.6

Programming and Special Event Mode

Program and event support in DigiViz face opportunity and challenge from the same source: the display's unique size and shape.

The curving screen and immersive experience make it unwieldy to simply import a slideshow or video. To fully take advantage of the space and prevent the content from appearing to simply float in the middle of the wall, the content here must nest inside a visual wrapper.

This wrapper, custom designed to the space, integrates standard-sized content into the room at large, braiding an otherwise straightforward piece of material into a digital expanse that almost entirely surrounds the visitors.

04

Content Management & Show Control Platform

04.1

Content Management System

The digital design partner shall create an easy-to-use content management system (CMS) that the NML team will use to author and schedule Programming and Parasocial content.

We recommend the following functional assumptions be accounted for:

- Single, web-based CMS portal, including media storage/asset library, to drive content for both Immersive Theater and DigiViz Lab
- Integrated with a TBD number of design templates to support Programming and Parasocial content
- Must support images, video, and text fields
- Cloud-hosted (i.e. AWS or GCP) for convenient, yet secure access
- Scheduling methodology will be defined during the concept definition phase (i.e. manual scheduling fields of content start and end times in CMS versus hands-free custom scheduling algorithm with "takeover" modes)

04.2

Show Control System

The digital design partner shall create an easy-to-use Show Control application that can be implemented by an NML staff member with an iPad.

Assumed use cases for the purposes of an RFP are:

- Special events or group programs where an NML staff member would want to override the content schedule from the CMS
- Switching applications manually – e.g., from Programming or Parasocial CMS-driven modes to meditative/space-theming pieces to TED Talks-style presentations where an external laptop may be used for a presentation
- Using the iPad as a controller for stopping and starting video to augment programming

05 Designer Recruitment

Capabilities & Requirements

The selected design and technology firm shall demonstrate:

- An ability to execute premium design for a variety of brands, entities, and aesthetics
- A proven track record of creating and maintaining software as permanent infrastructure over the preceding 5-10 years
- Experience with projects requiring a balance of design for didactic messaging and art-forward media
- Experience leading design initiatives with non-profit, public, government, or other large, bureaucratic organizations with complex stakeholder relationships and approval processes
- A strong project management/production team who will run the project and serve as a dedicated point of contact with the library client team and stakeholders
- Senior leadership in design and technology disciplines to provide domain-specific direction
- Experience working on projects with a variety of funding streams and cycles
- An ability to tailor approach, execution, and functionality to targeted budgets, and value-engineer where necessary

05.2

Capabilities & Requirements

The digital design partner shall have experience leading software projects and applications that can functionally integrate with existing hardware/AV systems, as well as easily tie into internal IT and operations workflows.

This partner must be able to:

- Design/spec speciality computers and equipment such as interactive cameras and sensors
- Create hardware/software integration diagrams for AV integrators and NML client team as necessary
- Create project documentation and oversee vendors to supply shop drawings if necessary
- Lead project coordination status meetings/calls with necessary partners and stakeholders

Portfolio Details

The digital design partner shall have extensive experience in creating premium, motion graphics-based, software-driven experiences for large media spaces.

Competitive portfolios will demonstrate a range of work in aesthetic, client sector, audience, and type of immersive media (e.g., presence-based interaction; generative data visualization; digital signage).

Because a design concepting phase will mark the beginning of the engagement, the selected firm should demonstrate an ability to be flexible in execution, since they will start the relationship before a defined design and technology concept is selected.

Firms selected to bid/interview for the contract should be able to demonstrate through their portfolio a rigorous process that deeply engages their clients as true partners in their work.

05.4

Design & Development Timeline

Below is a sample timeline with an estimated range of working weeks by phase.

- I. **Concept Refinement & Requirements Definition: 6-10 weeks**
 - Final use cases and client operating requirements
 - Identify content and media types to inform design and dev
 - Identify a target number of design templates
 - Define initial functional requirements of the CMS and show control apps, and rules for scheduling content
 - Finalize AV equipment list, AV construction/fabrication documentation, and final AV budget for purchase approval
 - Explore 2-3 visual design directions for all content modes

05.5

Design & Development Timeline

Cont'd

- II. Visual & Motion Design Graphics Guidelines: 8-12 weeks**
 - Moodboards for digital design identity
 - Creation of graphics guidelines package for digital media
- III. Programming Template Design & Motion: 8-12 weeks**
 - Styleframes, design frames, motion tests, production
- IV. Meditative / Space-Theming Design & Development: 12-20 weeks**
 - Styleframes, design frames, motion tests, production
- V. CMS & Show Control Design & Development: 12-16 weeks**
 - UX, design, development, QA, integration
- VI. System Testing, Installation, and Launch: 1-2 weeks**
 - On-site integration and testing, final QA and tweaks
- VII. Training and Documentation Handoff: 1 week**

05.6 Design & Development Timeline

Sample Gantt overview to show potential concurrent work streams against a ~9-month timeline.

Phase	Wk 2	Wk 4	Wk 6	Wk 8	Wk 10	Wk 12	Wk 14	Wk 16	Wk 18	Wk 20	Wk 22	Wk 24	Wk 26	Wk 28	Wk 30	Wk 32	Wk 34	Wk 36
Concept Refinement & Requirements Definition	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active													
Visual & Motion Design Graphics Guidelines				Active	Active	Active	Active	Active	Active									
Programming Template Design & Motion								Active										
Meditative / Space-Theming Design & Development								Active										
CMS & Show Control Design & Development: 12-16 weeks								Active										
System Testing, Installation, and Launch										Active								
Training and Documentation Handoff																		Active

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Thank you.