

# THE MONTCLAIR PUBLIC LIBRARY & CULTURAL CENTER PROJECT

## SITE TOUR & ARCHITECTURAL BRIEFING



7/29/2026

Presented by Radwa Ali  
Executive Director, MPL

---

\$37M INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT | MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY



# The Largest Public Investment in MPL History

---

- The Legacy
- The Baseline

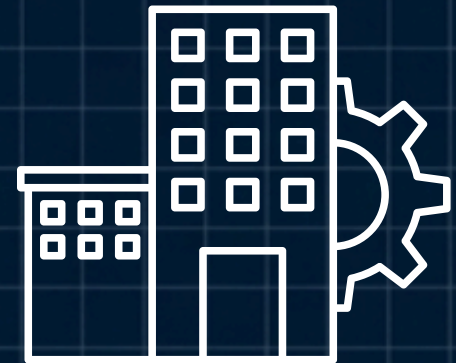
**\$36.6M**

**Montclair is a storied history and it is a township that has long valued and celebrated its public libraries. We want our library facilities to be as ambitious as we are.**



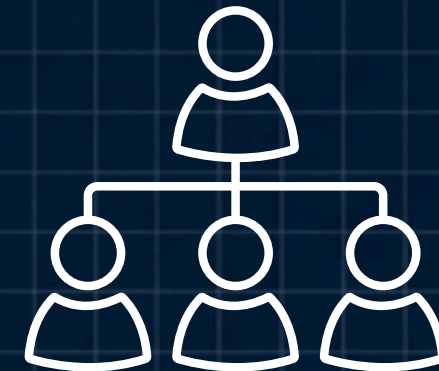
# Operational Scale and Circulation Reality

## System Dashboard



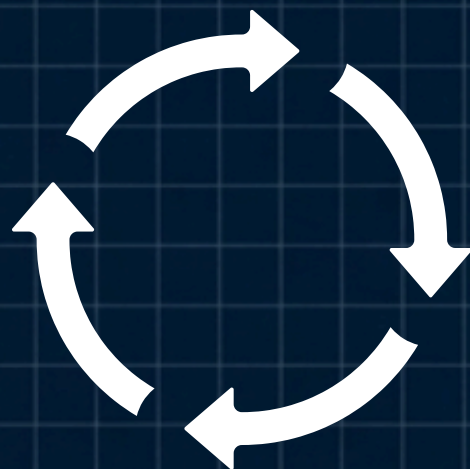
### Infrastructure

- 2 Buildings
- 49,000 sq ft Main Library (3 floors + 6.7k basement)
- Historic Bellevue Branch



### Human Capital

- 50-person staff
- \$5.2M Operating Budget (2026)



### Annual Load

- 200,000 Visitors
- 400,000 Circulated Items
- 45,000 Program Attendees



### Collection Strategy

- Downsizing from 130k to 110k-115k items (100k at Main, remainder at Branch)
- Design for circulation



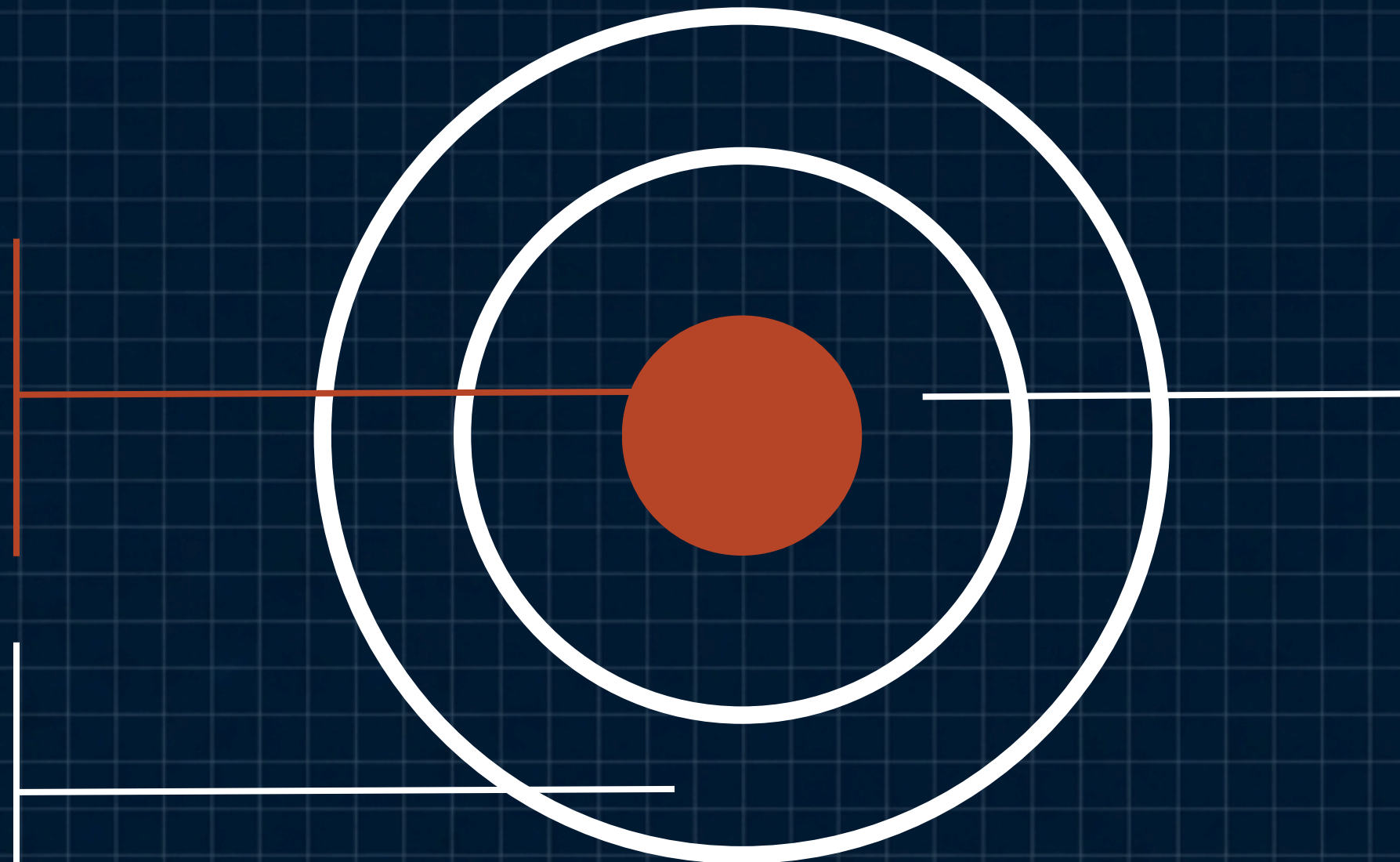
# Pioneering a State-Wide Funding Precedent

## Core (The Epicenter)

Montclair Public Library.  
The first public library in  
New Jersey to receive an  
NJEDA tax credit award

## Outer Ring (The Future)

Making the case.  
Demonstrating that public  
libraries deliver measurable  
economic returns, and that  
New Jersey's aging library  
buildings are worth  
investing in at scale



## Middle Ring (We Prove Ourselves)

Proving the model.  
Demonstrating strict  
compliance, exact budget  
adherence, and schedule  
discipline to the State.





# Rules of Engagement

**Absolute Silence Today:** Zero questions will be answered in this room, on the tour, or in the parking lot.

**Zero Staff Contact:** Do not engage Library staff at any point. They will report all attempts.

**Spoken Words Do Not Modify:** Nothing spoken today alters the RFP. Only written addenda apply.

**Digital Exclusivity:** All questions and proposals move strictly through the BidNet Direct portal. Physical submissions will be immediately rejected.



# The Four Load-Bearing Project Constraints

## THE PROJECT

### Pillar 1: Fixed Budget

\$37.3M total project cost (\$36.6M award). Soft costs are strictly capped at 20% under NJEDA rules. Design ambition must fit this box.

### Pillar 2: Absolute Schedule

4-year clock to Temporary Certificate of Occupancy. Outside forces do not move this date.

### Pillar 3: Mandated Program

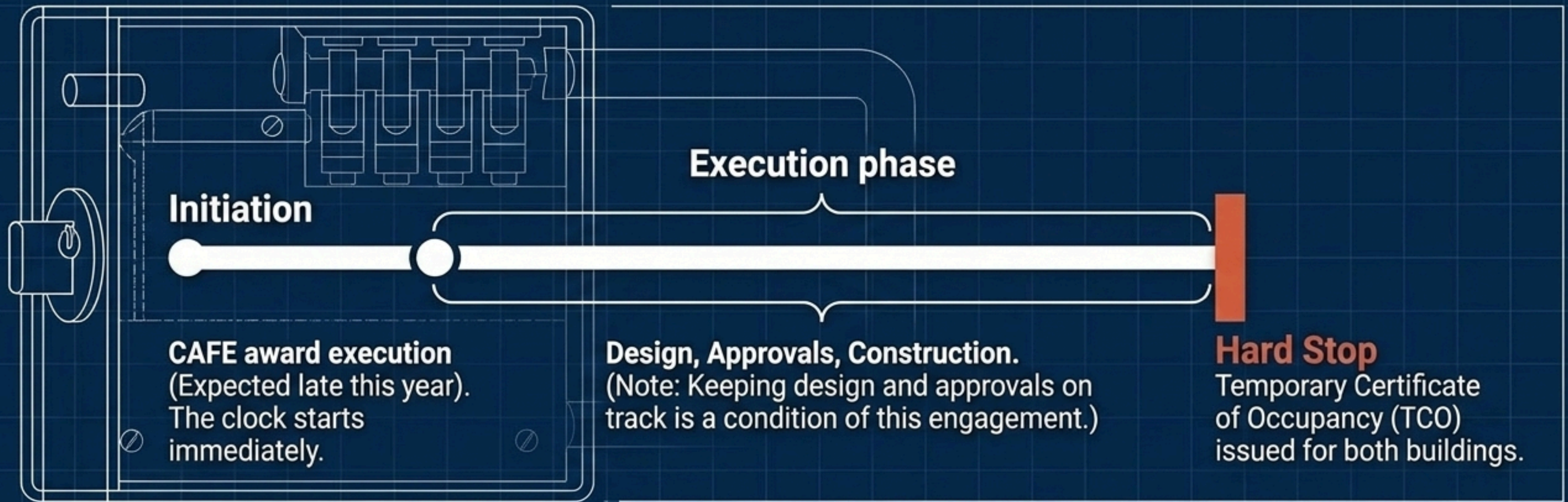
Required spaces (teaching kitchen, makerspace, fabrication lab, etc.) are locked by the grant. Their locations and adjacencies remain flexible

### Pillar 4: Locked Team

The specific personnel proposed in your exact bid are the exact people required through design, construction, and closeout.



# The Four-Year Clock Remains Fixed



Build a **real delivery schedule** into your proposal.  
The deadline does not shift for external factors.



The background of the slide features white line drawings of two architectural plans on a dark blue grid. On the left is a circular building with a complex, multi-lobed perimeter and internal radial divisions. On the right is a more rectangular building with a large, semi-circular section on its right side, also featuring internal divisions and concentric arcs. Various dimension lines and arrows are scattered throughout the drawings.

# Two Buildings. Two Mandates. One Master Firm.

Executing concurrent, diametrically opposed architectural philosophies within a single unified project timeline.



# The Dual Mandate

## Main Library

## Bellevue Branch

Original  
Architect & Year

1955 | Voorhees, Walker, Smith & Smith

1914 | F.A. Nelson (Carnegie)

Core Mandate

The Innovation Project

The Preservation Project

Design Latitude

Broad (Engage and elevate)

Restrictive (Respect and comply)

Key Design  
Drivers

Maximum daylight, indoor/outdoor flow,  
modernized performance spaces, showcase  
library and blueprint on a national scale

Absolute historical respect, achieving  
total first-time accessibility

Governing  
Standards

Modern Building Code & Grant stipulations

Secretary of the Interior's Standards,  
Montclair Historic Preservation  
Commission, SHPO



# Main Library: Elevating Mid-Century Innovation

## Curved Front Facade

Must remain curved.  
Dramatically increase daylight.  
Introduce large ground-level glass doors for indoor-outdoor programming.

## Cylindrical Tower

Retain and enhance. Study expanding the footprint to house the working cafe and teaching kitchen.

## Front Portico

Rebuild and modernize to serve as a roof over an outdoor stage in a redesigned front plaza (full performance infrastructure required).

## Main Staircase

A signature community feature. Restore, relocate, reconfigure, or rebuild to bring up to code, ensuring a grander and more functional result.



# Bellevue Branch: Preservation Meets Progress

**The Pedigree:** National Register of Historic Places. 1 of only 17 Carnegie libraries remaining in New Jersey, and one of the best preserved.

**The True Driver:** Historic significance is essential, but it is not the primary driver. The driver is moving the library into the future so we can serve our community more effectively.

**The Accessibility Mandate:** The building has never been accessible. The primary design challenge is achieving first-time accessibility while respecting historic fabric, satisfying SHPO constraints, and delivering function.



# Navigating Operational Realities and Conditions

## Site Availability

Both buildings will be entirely empty and available for unimpeded construction. (Optimize phasing accordingly)

## Environmental Factors

Hazardous materials are anticipated. Factor asbestos abatement into overall budget and schedule planning.

## Sustainability Standard

LEED Silver is a strict condition of the grant. A LEED-accredited professional is required on the team.

## Labor Requirements

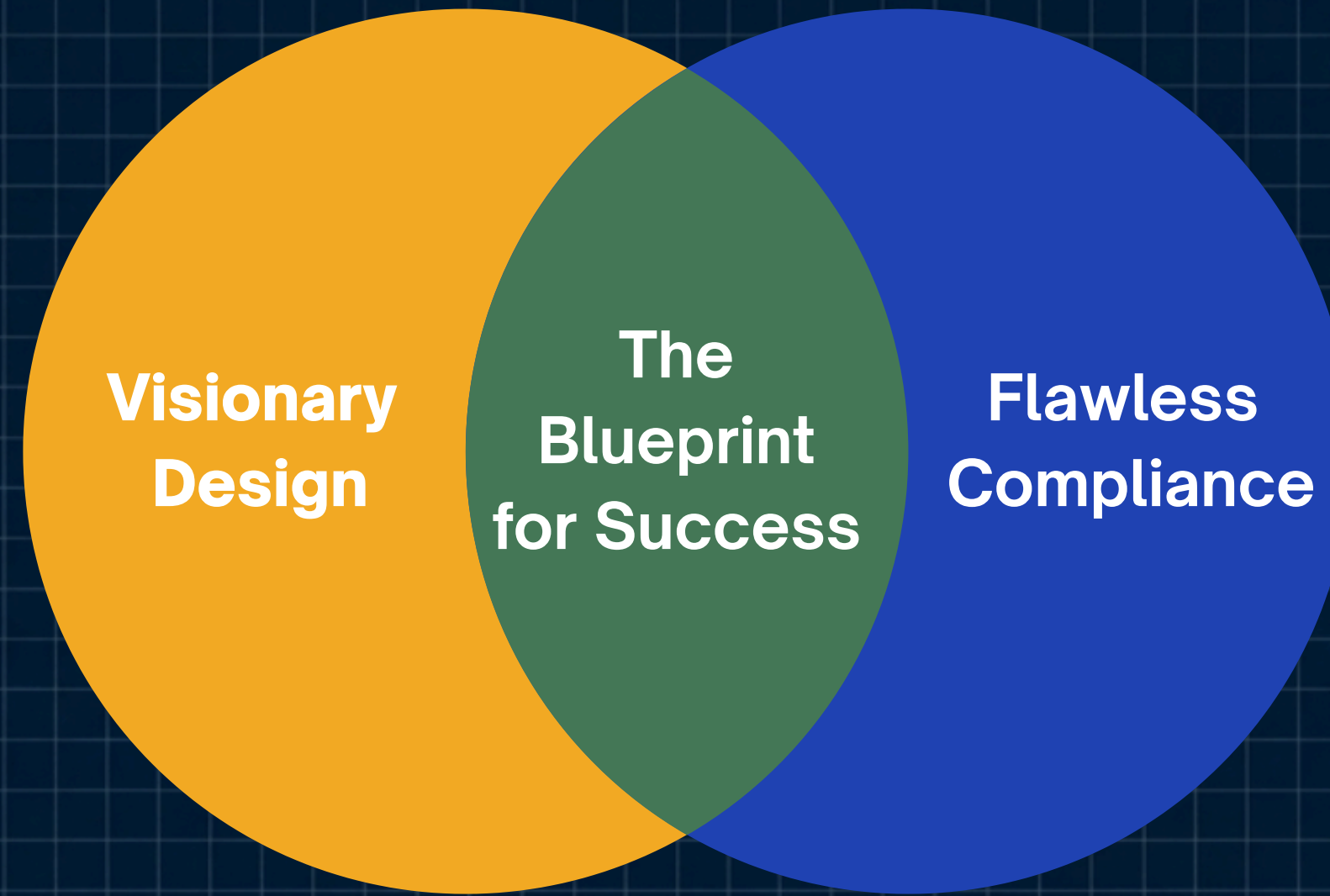
Subject to New Jersey Prevailing Wage and a formal Project Labor Agreement (PLA)

## Technological Integration

Tech / AV infrastructure (raceways, cabling, built-in supports) is a required architectural design element with strict budget implications.



# Your Team: Ambition Meets Absolute Discipline



The design challenge: innovation and preservation, delivered on budget, on schedule, and in full compliance with every NJEDA condition



# The Path Forward

Submit early and often.

Answers to questions will be issued as addenda on a rolling basis depending on volume.

Let's proceed to the physical site review.



**August 7 (12:00 PM)**

Portal closes for questions.  
(Submit via BidNet Direct only).

**August 19 (10:30 AM)**

Final proposals due.  
(Electronic submissions strictly  
via BidNet Direct only).