

Summary of New Central Library Program & Stakeholder Engagement

2012 Public Engagement

An extensive public engagement process was undertaken in the summer and fall of 2012. Calgarians were asked to “Inspire the Next Chapter” of the Calgary Public Library (CPL) and over 16,000 citizens voiced their opinions online and in person at over 150 events and public forum opportunities. The focus was on understanding what Calgarians want from their library experience and how a new Central Library can contribute to their vision of Calgary as a great city.

In Phase I “Think Big!” (2012 June – August) Calgarians identified their top priorities for the new Central Library as well as for the CPL system, by responding to an Issues and Priorities Survey. Results of the survey led to the identification of four key themes: *Awesome Spaces and Virtual Places*; *Diverse Collections and Inspiring Resources*; *Powerhouse Programs and Signature Services*; and *The Role of the Library in Complete Communities*. These themes were explored in Phase II “Dig Deep!” through large scale public engagement events held between 2012 September and 2012 October.

Regardless of the group engaged or the method of engagement, Calgarians as a whole outlined key themes to guide the development of the new Central Library. The consistency and frequency of these ideas shows that Calgarians have a vision for their city and the role the new Central Library plays in that vision:

- The new Central Library needs to be **Democratic**, a place for everyone;
- Building on the idea of inclusiveness, **Access**, both physical and intellectual, should be a focus for the new Central Library;
- The new Central Library should be a **Destination** and provide inspiration for the city;
- The new Central Library should be a place for **Collaboration**;
- Meeting **Safety and Security** needs is key to enjoying the new Central Library; and
- **Learning and Knowledge** requirements are a key priority and should be a mandate for the new Central Library.

The Calgary Public Library Board unanimously approved the public engagement results on 2012 November 28. The results have informed the Master Program and will continue to shape the planning and programming work.

Public engagement and communication continues throughout the life of the project. Based on conversations with citizens it is clear that the building design is of great interest and citizens are excited and eager to provide input.

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2014 Public Engagement

Background

The 2014 public engagement process was designed to continue the conversation that was started with the 2012 “Inspire the Next Chapter” engagement.

This intensive ten-day engagement was launched to gather input and ideas that will help the Calgary Public Library (CPL) ensure that every library experience throughout the system provides the same quality and appeal as the New Central Library, which will open in 2018.

The process was designed to achieve the following:

- Fulfill the promise of ongoing community engagement throughout the New Central Library Project;
- Continue to build positive community relations and support for the New Central Library Project, as well as for new and refurbished community libraries;
- Communicate out, and solicit feedback on 3 key strategic planning directions as highlighted in the recently adopted Library Strategic Plan;
- Solicit input on the types of experiences Calgarians want to have at their community library, in support of the 2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan and budget request.

Engagement Opportunities

From May 6 – 16th, Calgarians were provided a variety of opportunities to both receive information and provide input:

Event/Method	Number of Participants Engaged	Audience(s)
Online Survey	2,947	All (18+)
Public Events (6 Locations)	853	All Ages
Children’s Activity	431	Children (<12)
Youth Social Media Contest	28	Youth (12-17)

Through diverse activities, over 4,200 Calgarians provided valuable input. Survey responses were received from 91% of Calgary communities. In addition to public events held at two downtown locations, events took place in all four quadrants of the city.

What We Heard

Community input in 2014 confirmed and built on the findings from 2012. Calgarians continue to think of the Library as an essential resource for collections and learning, and view the Library as an important community hub and gathering place.

Consistent themes that emerged included the desire for:

- more robust collections, including digital materials;
- enhanced technologies;

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- flexible, diverse and accessible spaces at each library location that support the needs of Calgarians of all ages, providing both quiet and noisy spaces, places for collaboration and solitary reflection;
- greater variety of programs;
- fewer barriers in terms of fines and fees; and
- greater community presence.

Throughout the 2014 public engagement process there was great enthusiasm and support for the New Central Library Project, as well as for an expanded and revitalized community library system. The CPL is committed to continuing this conversation with Calgarians to ensure we provide the best possible library experience for every citizen, now and in the future.