

New Central Library

Community Engagement Report

Executive Summary

Between March 1 and April 15, SPL engaged in a public conversation to learn what spaces Saskatoon residents would like to see as part of their new central library.

Nearly 2,000 residents participated through stakeholder interviews (17), pop-ups (23), a community workshop and through the online survey. An employee workshop was also held in September 2017.

Participants showed interest that a new central library showcase architectural innovation, mixing world-class design with items of local significance. Connections to nature, natural light and green space were seen as important.

The themes identified as community priorities for a new central library are:

- Welcoming & accessible hub for the community to gather.
- Flexible spaces that can meet the demands of diverse user needs.
- A place for learning & innovation.
- And a large and diverse collection of materials.

Community Space Priorities (in descending order of priority):

1. Individual quiet spaces
2. Computers, laptops & WiFi
3. Spaces for new technology
4. Group spaces
5. Local art installations
6. Events & performance space
7. Green space
8. Private & bookable meeting rooms

The top spaces that the community wants to see preserved in a new central library are Pooh Corner and Local History.

Getting There (in descending order of priority):

1. Transit
2. Car
3. Bicycle

Comfort & Ease of Use (in descending order of priority):

1. Natural light
2. Collection
3. Easy to navigate
4. Sustainable
5. Modern & spacious

Amenities (in descending order of priority):

1. Comfortable seating
2. Community information
3. Food & beverage
4. Stroller parking
5. Lockers

Experience (in descending order of priority):

1. Welcoming & inclusive
2. Life-long learning
3. Community connections
4. Flexible spaces
5. Inspiring space

Support for a New Central Library:

- 67% of survey respondents were supportive of a new central library. 23% were unsure and 10% indicated they were not supportive of a new central library.
- Those under 18 and between 45 and 64 had the highest levels of support, with over 72% of each age group responding that Saskatoon does need a new central library. In contrast, 17% of participants over the age of 65 felt that Saskatoon does not need a new central library. Amongst participants aged 18 to 24, over 30% were unsure about the need for a new central library.
- Reasons cited for not supporting the project included the potential cost of project, and the perception that the library is no longer relevant in digital age.