

A hand-drawn architectural sketch in black ink on a blue background. The sketch depicts a large, multi-story building with a complex facade of windows and structural elements. The lines are loose and expressive, suggesting a conceptual design phase. The building is oriented horizontally, with a series of vertical lines representing columns or window frames. The overall style is that of a rough architectural drawing.

New Central Library

WHAT WE HEARD

THINKING BIG!
Concept Design Phase

Jan 25 – Feb 19, 2021



**SASKATOON
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

THE DESIGN PROCESS

The design of the new central library will take about 18 months to complete. There will be a series of consultations at each key design phase, which will enable everyone in Saskatoon to help shape the new central library.

COMPLETE

Project Requirements | Functional Plan

The functional plan is a statement of building needs. It articulates the project's vision, details the types of spaces needed and the size of those spaces. The functional plan was informed by community input, library best practices, benchmarking, building codes, accessibility standards, the City of Saskatoon's Plan for Growth and SPL's Strategic Plan.

CURRENT

Thinking Big | Concept Design Phase

In the concept design phase, the design team will determine the general approach to the building design, considering its size, scale and location on the site. A concept design is "the big idea" about what the shape of the building will be. The result of the conceptual design process includes a site plan showing where the building will be located; a preliminary landscape plan; conceptual exterior elevation drawings illustrating the size and shape of the building; a summary of the design approach or philosophy behind the concept design; and a basic overview of the building's structural, mechanical and electrical systems.

UPCOMING – JUN 2021

Digging Deeper | Schematic Design Phase

In the schematic design phase, the design team will dig deeper into the detail of the building's interior and exterior spaces and the landscaping. In this phase, the design begins to take shape. Key decisions about building materials and mechanics are made. During this phase, floor plans will be developed and the description of room characteristics and requirements will be outlined.

UPCOMING – SEP 2021

Design Check-In

As the schematic design phase nears completion, there will be a checkpoint to confirm the design achieves the project vision.

UPCOMING – JAN 2022

Finishing Touches | Detail Design Phase

In the detailed design phase, all of the technical requirements and design decisions are finalized. The design team will take all of the input that they have received and will prepare all of the design drawings and detailed specifications. During this phase, the finishing touches will be decided with regards to furniture and equipment. The design team will produce detailed floorplans and exterior renderings of the building that show the building finishes and detailed landscape design.

UPCOMING – SPRING 2022

Final Design Reveal

The final design of the new central is revealed to the community!

PHASE 1: CONCEPT DESIGN

Between Jan 25 and Feb 19, we engaged the community in conversations for the concept design phase of the new central library.

Concept design is the “the big idea” about what the shape and style of the building’s exterior will look like. We explored high-level design concepts, exploring what “being of this place” means to people who call Saskatoon home. We wanted to understand the values of the community, what residents value about their current central library, what differences they want to see in the new one and what would make the new central library feel welcoming. We also talked about what role the new library can play in fostering reconciliation with Indigenous people in Saskatoon.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, all consultations were completed virtually or via paper responses delivered to the library.

Here’s how we gathered input (so far)

We provided Saskatoon residents with many different ways to provide their thoughts and feedback, as follows.

Virtual Conversations with the Project Team

Residents were able to meet the design team via Zoom while taking part in guided workshops and conversations.

Kitchen Table Kit

Kitchen Table Kits allowed a small group of friends or family to get together and talk about the project in a comfortable and informal setting. Their thoughts were recorded and submitted to the project team.

Surveys, Activities & Discussions

Surveys and other interactive activities were made available on splconnect.ca.

Resident Advisory Committees

Fourteen advisory committees were established, each of which provided input on specific areas that will be critical to the new central library.

Summary of participation

- 160 participants in 14 resident advisory meetings.
- 53 people participating in virtual public meetings.
- 124 online surveys and kitchen table kits.
- 392 registrations on splconnect.ca.

How will we use your input?

All of the feedback and input we received was shared with the design team and will be used to inform the concept design. The design team received all the detailed comments and survey responses.

THEMES

Though we heard from a wide range of people with different perspectives and lived experiences, we found the vision for the new central library was very similar no matter who we spoke with. We heard parallels in the existing spaces that were valued, what will make the library a welcoming place and how the library can meaningfully reflect the city of Saskatoon.

Here are some of the highlights

Saskatoon Public Library has set community leadership goals in reconciliation, sustainability and accessibility. Do these goals align with your vision for the future of Saskatoon?

85.7%

of survey respondents said

YES.

When you think about the design of Central Library as it is today, what would you say are its strengths that should be preserved or reimaged?

- The art gallery, which showcases work by local emerging and established artists.
- Pooh Corner, particularly the specialness of the door and entrance area, which is an invitation to get into story mode.
- A multi-use theatre that can be used for everything from citizenship ceremonies to film screenings.
- Community meeting rooms for programming and for the public to use.
- The Local History Room, particularly the vast archive of historic photos and publications, as well as other resources that assist with genealogy research.

*"I like the variety of seating areas.
My favourite spots are the seats by the windows."*

"We have a very active volunteer community in the city and they are always looking for a space to connect with each other and with the public."

"Books, computers, teen area, children's programs, quiet reading area and archives."

"The local history room could figure prominently."

What do you want it to feel like when you enter the new library? What does it look like? What would make the new library an inviting place for you?

- Large windows and natural light all around the library.
- Incorporation of plants and greenery.
- Lots of books.
- Accessible for people living with visible and invisible disabilities.
- Kids area is a vibrant place where kids can be kids.
- Local art.
- Café.
- Comfy chairs.
- Spaces can be changed and are flexible.
- Intuitive to navigate/easy to find what you are looking for.
- Use of local and natural building materials (wood, natural colours, local plants).
- Want to be able to see what's going on inside the library from the outside.
- Quiet spaces for reflection and study.
- Hotel lobby experience—you aren't rushed to move from the lobby/foyer into the library itself.

“An innovative place that serves the community and brings people from the community together.”

“Bright, natural light; inspiring architecture; a space busy with people; lots of books to discover.”

“Public space, meeting and knowledge sharing, access to internet, public bathrooms.”

“Creation spaces, quiet areas to reflect and work.”

“The design is very open towards the street—it's easy to see inside when you're walking or driving by, which I think encourages more people to go inside.”

“Connectivity. The library is one of those places where lots of different people can be found and it would be good to bring those people together into more of a community. Programming will help with this but also just having the space available and accommodating enough to help everyone feel comfortable spending time together and be relaxed enough to be open to each other.”

Do you have ideas about ways the library's design can honour First Nations and Métis culture and history?

- Shape of the building—look to tipi structures.
- Include space devoted to Indigenous cultures/histories.
- Include space for smudging ceremonies.
- Multilingual signage.
- Robust Indigenous collection of materials.
- Incorporate Indigenous art into the design (e.g., sculptures, murals, beadwork).

“The entire design should consider the First Nations and Métis people.”

“The building should be a megaphone for Indigenous history, storytelling, and be an incubator for a shared and prosperous future.”

“Reconciliation can be furthered by designing a safe and welcoming space for marginalized members of the community. Natural materials and open views can tie the building to the history of the land and people who have been here for millennia.”

“A prominent, primary collection of books, resources, and art in Indigenous languages and contexts.”

“SUSTAINABILITY and BALANCE between indigenous people and non-indigenous (immigrants, and settlers), and the environment.”

When you think about the design of Central Library as it is today, what would you say that needs to be changed so that it can serve the community better?

- Lacking in accessibility.
- Hard to move around — it's tricky to carry children and move around the building.
- Not enough washrooms.
- It's dark.
- Too small.
- Front entrance is too small.
- Not easy to navigate to find things.

"Honestly, the current library's design is pretty lackluster. I think a brand new approach would be great."

"The gallery upstairs is lovely to go to and appreciate art work. The location is fine. The theatre is a nice feature."

"Easy to pick up and check out requested books, top shelves that are easy to reach, lots of computers."

What is uniquely "Saskatoon" that should be captured in the in the design?

- The South Saskatchewan River and river valley.
- The vibrant Saskatchewan sky.
- Bridges — reflects the bridges and the bringing together of communities and cultures.
- Meewasin — The trees, trails and landscape along the river valley.
- Wanuskewin Heritage Park.
- Recognizing and celebrating strength in our diversity.
- Native plants and trees — authentic to the land.
- World-class restaurants and food scene
- Local artists.
- Grasslands/plains.

RESIDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEES

To help ensure the new central library achieves its vision to be a welcoming and accessible place for everyone who calls Saskatoon home, SPL developed 14 advisory committees. The mandate of each committee is to review concepts, ideas and plans, providing feedback to the design team as requested.

Each committee consists of up to 20 members comprised of community leaders, advocates, experts and other residents with lived experience in the committee's focal area. In addition to the many residents who applied to serve on these committees, we would also like to thank the many local organizations who graciously agreed to have an employee representative serve on the committees, as follows:

Accessibility

- Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan Inc.
- Barrier Free Saskatchewan
- Inclusion Saskatoon
- SaskAbilities
- Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission
- Spinal Cord Injury Saskatchewan Inc.

Business

- Broadway Business Improvement District
- Chamber of Commerce
- Downtown XYE
- Tourism Saskatoon

Creation & Innovation

- Canada Learning Code
- Chokecherry Studios
- Saskatchewan Writers' Guild
- Saskatoon Community Youth Arts Programming Inc. (SCYAP)
- SUM Theatre
- The Sound Lounge
- Word on the Street

Employment & Education

- Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools
- Quint Development Corporation
- READ Saskatoon
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic
- Saskatoon Public Schools
- University of Saskatchewan

Inclusion

- Global Gathering Place
- Le Federation des francophones de Saskatoon
- OUT Saskatoon
- Saskatchewan Intercultural Society
- Saskatoon Open Door Society

Local History

- City of Saskatoon Archives
- Genealogical Society
- Saskatchewan Indigenous Cultural Centre
- U of S Archives & Special Collections
- Western Development Museum

Poverty & Homelessness

- Saskatoon Food Bank & Learning Centre
- Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership
- Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership
- STR8 UP
- The Bridge
- United Way of Saskatoon and Area

Public Health & Safety

- Population Health
- Prairie Harm Reduction
- Saskatoon Police Services - Community Support
- Saskatoon Community Clinic
- Student Wellness Initiative Towards Community Health

Program & Service Partnership

- CHEP Good Food Inc.
- Frontier College
- Law Society of SK
- Saskatchewan Environmental Society
- SK Justice and Family Law of SK

The following advisory committees are comprised solely of individuals with no direct links to organizations:

- Children & Caregivers
- Teen
- Older Adults
- Elders & Knowledge Keepers

CONTACT US

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