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In response to a request from members of the Guelph Public Library Board of Directors, Diamond Schmitt Architects shares the following summary report addressing the architectural incorporation of feedback garnered through the extensive streams of Community Engagement sessions historically conducted in preparation for a new Central Library.

#### Reference Documents:

1. Guelph Public Library  
Report on Community Engagement Sessions for the New Central Library  
June 2021  
Published by members of the Guelph Public Library Board of Directors.
2. Baker District Redevelopment  
Library Engagement Summary  
April 11, 2019  
Published by Urban Equation

The following is a summarized response to the targeted design elements for consideration and inclusion in a design for a new Central Library and drawn directly from the above noted Report on Community Engagement Sessions for the New Central Library memo.

### 1. *An Inviting Design*

#### 1.1. *Capture and enhance Guelph's sense of place*

The location for the new Central Library is such that is adjacent to Guelph's most prominent downtown intersection, St. Georges Square, which itself will see major capital enhancements in the near future. This location will have a significant social and economic impact on Guelph's City Centre while also capitalizing on immediate proximity to the downtown core where library related services will offer the greatest benefit. Anchoring the Baker District Redevelopment and adjacent to approximately 370 new residential units, the new Central Library will be a catalyst to a rejuvenated core reinforcing Guelph's collective sense of place.

- 1.2. *First Nations community members would encourage the library to acknowledge its relation to the land where it stands. They see the Library as a growing tree and would like to see the use of natural elements that could be found locally, such as representations of wood, stone, water and plants.*

The library design will feature a variety of finishes throughout the building including exposed wood surfaces on walls and ceilings. A series of terraces, facing east, west and north will offer opportunities for outdoor plants in movable planters while the design of the urban realm at grade will consider further integration of native plant species. The integration of water elements within the library presents considerable maintenance and operational issues and at this point, have not been considered in the current design.

- 1.3. *Design should reflect the land and the peoples who have lived and safeguarded the land over time, not just respond to the European streetscape and buildings*

The current architectural design creates a visual balance between indoor and outdoor spaces connecting patrons, visitors and members of the community with library activities seamlessly with the adjacent urban realm through a highly transparent grade level facade. Upper level floors are awash in natural light and complement strongly curated views to the east and west at an elevation above the adjacent buildings providing views beyond the surrounding buildings. A third floor terrace further reinforces a connection to the land as well as a platform for participatory engagement with ceremonies, events and community activities in the public realm below.

- 1.4. *First Nations community members want to see the Library be a gathering place that is welcoming, barrier free and whose spaces encourage people to connect with another and work collaboratively*  
A cascading arrangement of meeting spaces throughout the building of various sizes as well as a ground floor, easterly facing meeting space specially designed to facilitate smudging ceremonies are integrated into the current design to ensure considerable flexibility and availability of inclusive, welcoming collaborative meeting spaces to meet the needs of the community. The library has been designed to meet the requirements of the AODA as well as the City of Guelph's Facility Access Design Manual to ensure barrier free access that is superior to the prescribed measures identified in the Ontario Building Code.

- 1.5. *Attention in creating safe spaces in and around the library*

The library is being designed with all principals of 'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design' (CPTED) while also providing a spatial and infrastructural design to support library programming focused on social and community health agency requirements. The open floor plans throughout the library and interconnected double height spaces encourage long, inviting sightlines and will function in an engaging three dimensional manner to draw patrons throughout the building.

- 1.6. *Space throughout the library to display permanent and changing public art*

The library will feature a number of significant wall and ceiling spaces, both internally and externally, to support the inclusion of temporary and permanent art installation.

- 1.7. *A visual acknowledgement of the Indigenous community*  
Further research, discussion and direction from the GPL and the City of Guelph is necessary to determine how best to integrate a visual acknowledgement of the Indigenous Community.
- 1.8. *Indoor and outdoor signage for events and programs*  
Programmable digital signage will be incorporated into the design at both building entry points as well as within the library building.
- 1.9. *Accessible book drop-off locations*  
Book drop-off locations have been integrated into the design at both building entry points, with the eastern drop located immediately adjacent to the 24 hour publicly accessible parking elevator.
- 1.10. *Accessible human drop-off locations for cars or buses*  
A passenger loading zone and a 'Type A' barrier free parking stall are located adjacent to the Baker Street entrance. All building entry points are barrier free accessible.
- 1.11. *Make the library a place of dignity for everyone: e.g., site the computers so that people are not forced to do their private on-line work in a main thoroughfare with the potential of others looking over their shoulders*  
Sight lines and program arrangements have been sensitively considered throughout the library such that dignity and privacy is afforded for those who require it while service locations are highly visible and easily identified and found.

## **2. Accessible, Flexible, Community Supportive Spaces**

- 2.1. *A variety of quiet spaces for reading, studying and reflecting, e.g. individual studies, group projects and teaching*  
The current library design considers a variety of meeting spaces throughout all three floors of the building to facilitate a variety of activities ranging from quiet study, collaborative work, research and larger, more animated gatherings with supporting infrastructure.
- 2.2. *Performance spaces*  
The 100 person meeting room on the ground floor as well as the Community Living Room on level 2 will have infrastructure in place to support a variety of performance types along with Audio and Visual supporting equipment. Additionally, the central atrium will offer space for performance as well as the rooftop terrace and the Library Square.
- 2.3. *Flexible meeting spaces*  
See response to point 2.1.
- 2.4. *The First Nations Community prefers to gather in spaces that face the east*
- 2.5. *The First Nations Community would appreciate rooms that allow gathering in a circle*
- 2.6. *The First Nations Community would appreciate a room where smudging and drumming is possible*  
A variety of flexible meeting rooms have been included throughout the building design. A ground floor meeting room with after hours access, an adjacent warming kitchen and A/V and technical support infrastructure has been integrated into the design at the eastern end of the building. This room is large enough to support meetings of at least 20 gathered in a circle, has access to eastern daylight with extensive glazing to allow natural light to enter the space. Storage and support spaces are provided adjacent to a small kitchen, the integration of mechanical systems to support smudging ceremonies is currently being investigated. Acoustic treatment of the walls will be considered during latter stages of design documentation.

- 2.7. *Places to create and share art*  
A variety of wall and ceiling spaces will be available throughout the library to share art along with a large 24 person classroom affiliated with the Makerspace studio that will offer support in the creation of art.
- 2.8. *A space for nursing moms*  
A breastfeeding pod has been integrated into the ground floor children's collection. In support of the 'anywhere, anytime' ethos, GPL staff have suggested that one dedicated space is enough in an effort to avoid a misalignment with this approach.
- 2.9. *Gathering spaces should accommodate formal and informal library and community events*  
A 100 Person Meeting space has been designed such that it, an associated catering kitchen and accessible washrooms are available to members of the community after standard library hours. This room will feature acoustic treatment, full audio and visual support equipment and black-out blinds to support a wide array of community events.
- 2.10. *Bullfrog members showed a keen interest in an all-weather, public outdoor space that allows for passive and active programming*  
Library Square and the rooftop terrace have both been designed to support a flexible program capable of supporting a variety of passive and active programming, while both, the east and west terraces provide covered outdoor areas for more passive activity.
- 2.11. *Opportunities to share food would be appreciated by many, particularly cultural groups*  
Sharing and production of food within the library is currently not being formally considered in the new Central Library as a result of spatial constraints. The 100-person meeting space does present an informal opportunity for external community groups to share meals prepared off-site.
- 2.12. *Opportunities for catering services adjacent to large indoor and outdoor meeting spaces*  
A small 'warming' kitchen is provided adjacent to the 100-person meeting room in support of community meetings taking place within this room.
- 2.13. *First Nations Community members would like to see the outdoor spaces available for gatherings*  
Library Square, the proposed rooftop terrace and the east and west terraces considered in the current design are flexibly designed to support a variety of uses.
- 2.14. *Capacity to address the natural volume levels of various activities*
- 2.15. *Attention to acoustical quality for music and speech*  
Acoustic treatment throughout the library for the various proposed uses will be carefully considered at latter stages of design documentation.

- 2.16. *Ample storage space for event resources*  
Storage rooms have been allocated where necessary throughout the library, all furnishings will be selected to ensure the greatest degree of flexibility available and as practically suitable.
- 2.17. *Stroller parking*  
Stroller parking is provided on the ground floor adjacent to the Children's collection.
- 2.18. *Water bottle filling station*  
All drinking fountains will also feature water bottle filling stations.

### **3. A Connection to Nature**

- 3.1. *Natural light is important*
- 3.2. *Bring the outdoors in: Users identified the need for access to indoor spaces that offer lots of natural light, fresh air and greenery*  
The library design considers significant amounts of natural light throughout all floors of the building with direct connections to outdoor terraces available at all levels of the building.
- 3.3. *Community members identified a need for green outdoor spaces*  
The Library Square and balance of the urban realm making up the Baker District Redevelopment will be designed with significant greenery integrated into the publicly accessible outdoor space.
- 3.4. *Showcase Guelph's progressive environmental practices and values*  
The Library and the complete Baker District Redevelopment is being designed to a One Planet Living framework and is one of only two such developments in Canada to receive the international endorsement under the One Planet Living sustainability framework. One Planet Living is a planning and sustainability framework predicated on building communities where people can live happy and healthy lives within the resources of our One Planet. Its principles include sustainable food and water, zero carbon, zero waste, equity and economy.
- 3.5. *Pollinator-friendly species in gardens*  
The Library Square and the public realm throughout the Baker District Redevelopment will consider plant species that are native to our environment and in support of the local ecosystem.
- 3.6. *A place to grow culturally significant plants, e.g. tobacco (if deemed respectful)*  
The library design currently contemplates a variety of outdoor areas for potential moveable planters, in addition to those being considered at grade throughout the urban realm. Further research on culturally significant plant species and their suitability for these spaces will occur at latter stages of design documentation and in consultation with City of Guelph staff members to ensure a sustainable maintenance regime can be established.
- 3.7. *Connection to the outdoors from indoors space is needed with a particular emphasis on spaces facing east.*  
Three separate terrace spaces, including an east facing space, have been included in the current library design, all accessible from public library areas and facilitating a variety of programmatic functions.

**4. An Opportunity to Preserve and Learn from the Past**

- 4.1. *Space to grow, acknowledging that our concept of the past will expand*  
The library has been designed with complete flexibility in mind in order to accommodate an evolution of library services. Height and spatial limitations are such that the current proposal cannot physically get larger but the flexible approach to the current design will facilitate future reconfigurations of space.
- 4.2. *Space to allow the sharing of knowledge and experience that is not confined to the printed word*  
A variety of open, non-programmed spaces internal and external to the library building have been defined within the design and can facilitate a broad spectrum of engaging uses.
- 4.3. *Inclusion of a small memorial for those buried under the parking lot*  
Further identification of a potential memorial will take place with the City of Guelph and their archaeological consulting team to determine possible memorial gestures to those buried on the site.

**5. Technology That is Accessible to Everyone**

- 5.1. *Adequate space to fully explore and use all technologies for all users, e.g., music recording rooms, green rooms for animation*  
A fully equipped makerspace studio inclusive of 3D Printing, laser cutting, sewing, audio and video recording and production as well as technology specific education is incorporated into the current design.
- 5.2. *Room to grow to meet new developments in technology*  
The makerspace studio has been considered as a flexible use space, designed to adapt to changing technologies and equipped with the appropriate infrastructure to support these changes in the future.
- 5.3. *Acknowledge that some people like/need to stand at their computers*  
Systems furniture specified during the tender process will consider sit/stand work stations for administrative staff. Publicly accessible computer stations will be designed to consider a variety of different design heights ranging from barrier-free access to standing positions for able bodied patrons.

In addition to the above noted summary provided by members of the Library Board, Diamond Schmitt Architects have also referred to and responded to similar summaries developed by Urban Equations in response to a series of Community Engagement sessions conducted at the River Run Centre. Lastly, DPAI have furnished a comprehensive summary of various community engagement efforts which have subsequently been integrated into a library spatial needs assessment document and integrated into the current design.

The above noted responses address community comments that have a direct impact on the architectural design of the library, it's important to note that, a majority of comments provided through the Community Engagement process relate directly to the specific program offerings presented by the Guelph Public Library. Efforts should be made to ensure that these elements are incorporated into day-to-day operational approaches within the library and fall outside of what can be integrated into the architectural design of the building.

We trust that the above responses capture the extent to which Community Engagement has been incorporated into the current design. The Library Board can rest assured that the insights shared by the community of Guelph have also guided the types of service offerings provided in a new facility in a parallel act to reinforce these same civic ambitions identified in the architecture of this building.

We thank the Guelph Public Library Board of Directors, Guelph Public Library Staff and all members of the Community who have contributed to an amazing opportunity to effect significant positive change to Guelph through the construction of a striking new Central Library at the Baker District Redevelopment.

Regards,

Duncan Bates



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City of Guelph  
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**Guelph Public Library**  
**Report on Community Engagement Sessions for the**  
**New Central Library**  
**June 2021**

In this review of the community engagement sessions, it was apparent that much of the comments pertained to programming. This summary is confined to feedback about the space and building.

**Documents referred to:**

Guelph Public Library, Insights Report (community engagement that informed GPL's 2018 – 2022 Strategic Plan, carried out by Overlap), 2017

Baker District Redevelopment, Library Engagement Summary, (City of Guelph, GPL, Windmill Development Group, Urban Equation) 2019

Public Engagement, Programming & Schematic Design Documents Review, Invizij, March 2019

Ongoing discussions with the local First Nations community and the late Nancy Clarke of GPL, contained in the DPAI Report, 2020

**Overview:**

A number of community engagement sessions came up with the following themes or attributes of the new Central Library:

1. An Inviting Design
2. Accessible, Flexible, Community Supportive Spaces
3. A Connection to Nature
4. An Opportunity to Preserve and Learn From the Past
5. Technology that is Accessible to Everyone

Specific comments made by the community include:

**1. An Inviting Design**

- Capture and enhance Guelph's sense of place
- First Nations community members would encourage the library to acknowledge its relation to the land where it stands. They see the Library as a growing tree and would like to see the use

of natural elements that could be found locally, such as representations of wood, stone, water and plants.

- Design should reflect the land and the peoples who have lived and safeguarded the land over time, not just respond to the European streetscape and buildings
- First Nations community members want to see the Library be a gathering place that is welcoming, barrier free and whose spaces encourage people to connect with another and work collaboratively
- Attention in creating safe spaces in and around the library
- Space throughout the library to display permanent and changing public art
- A visual acknowledgement of the Indigenous community
- Indoor and outdoor signage for events and programs
- Accessible book drop-off locations
- Accessible human drop-off locations for cars or buses
- Make the library a place of dignity for everyone: e.g., site the computers so that people are not forced to do their private on-line work in a main thoroughfare with the potential of others looking over their shoulders

## **2. Accessible, Flexible, Community Supportive Spaces**

- A variety of quiet spaces for reading, studying and reflecting, e.g. individual studies, group projects and teaching
- Performance spaces
- Flexible meeting spaces
  - The First Nations Community prefers to gather in spaces that face the east
  - The First Nations Community would appreciate rooms that allow gathering in a circle
  - The First Nations Community would appreciate a room where smudging and drumming is possible
- Places to create and share art
- A space for nursing moms
- Gathering spaces should accommodate formal and informal library and community events
- Bullfrog members showed a keen interest in an all-weather, public outdoor space that allows for passive and active programming
- Opportunities to share food would be appreciated by many, particularly cultural groups
- Opportunities for catering services adjacent to large indoor and outdoor meeting spaces
- First Nations Community members would like to see the outdoor spaces available for gatherings
- Capacity to address the natural volume levels of various activities
- Attention to acoustical quality for music and speech
- Ample storage space for event resources
- Stroller parking
- Water bottle filling station

### **3. A Connection to Nature**

- Natural light is important
- Bring the outdoors in: Users identified the need for access to indoor spaces that offer lots of natural light, fresh air and greenery
- Community members identified a need for green outdoor spaces
- Showcase Guelph's progressive environmental practices and values
- Pollinator-friendly species in gardens
- A place to grow culturally significant plants, e.g. tobacco (if deemed respectful)
- Connection to the outdoors from indoors space is needed with a particular emphasis on spaces facing east.

### **4. An Opportunity to Preserve and Learn from the Past**

- Space to grow, acknowledging that our concept of the past will expand
- Space to allow the sharing of knowledge and experience that is not confined to the printed word
- Inclusion of a small memorial for those buried under the parking lot

### **5. Technology That is Accessible to Everyone**

- Adequate space to fully explore and use all technologies for all users, e.g., music recording rooms, green rooms for animation
- Room to grow to meet new developments in technology
- Acknowledge that some people like/need to stand at their computers

# What do you want your new central

District  
ment ••••• [guelph.ca/bakerdistrict](http://guelph.ca/bakerdistrict)

more books! YES! → more → books!  
community Theatre Space ✓  
Lectures + Music Performances  
- by Baker's, Police, Student  
- by Baker's & City

No FOOD - in 78 CAFE/10  
OUTSIDE  
book reading area!  
keep social media  
social media like in the R

space!  
space!

A community hub  
- a meeting place  
- an attractively  
- some welcoming  
- and central  
- available for all  
- available for all  
- available for all

larger community  
rooms for various  
activities  
good study spaces  
w/ whiteboards!  
lots of shelf space  
- library pages!  
invites  
interaction  
community members  
Anything but grey!  
(bright, beautiful, and  
full of books)

GREAT!  
Fully accessible  
YES!! → (lots of LIGHT / GREAT VIEWS)  
Lots of  
DND's  
like NOW!

A place where  
everyone (ages,  
stages, genders, heritages)  
feels comfortable  
and welcome.

Light - lots of  
Accessible to  
care to small  
library is small  
etc → End!

modern  
- Wipeable / clear  
- for service

Community Hub!  
- friendly  
- look to the  
Kitchen Pick  
Library Venues  
what a great  
library should

live  
is more  
virtual reality  
A separate area for VR  
away from main library space  
So it's quieter  
- second floor!  
- YES!!  
a for games and computers please!

Somebody  
with a  
View  
Maybe have board games  
to sell out Expanded use location of  
gaps in walls/ corners.  
Quiet rooms for small group  
meetings or study that can be reserved

social worker  
or  
community worker for  
people with mental illness  
like this  
Theatre for STATIONS  
Performances  
Incorporate a huge SUNDIAL  
into the building's design

PARKING  
with 1st  
STREET

# BAKER DISTRICT REDEVELOPMENT

## LIBRARY ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY



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# 01. City of Guelph Engagement Process

The Baker District redevelopment engagement strategy (including the new central library) is being led by the City and will follow the City's Community Engagement Framework. Windmill is providing tactical engagement support for the overall Baker District, and Invizij is providing tactical engagement support for the library and adjacent urban square.



Figure 1. Diagram of the engagement phases for the Baker District Redevelopment project.

## Sustainable Decision-Making

A coordinated approach to community engagement fosters understanding between individuals. Through this approach, City employees will build on common ground and strive to develop sustainable decisions.

**Financial sustainability** means we can afford to implement the decision or that the decision will have a financial benefit.

**Cultural and social** considers how a decision may impact the culture of an individual or society as a whole.

**Environmental** refers to our natural environment.

**Technical considerations** determine if an alternative can be built or used.

**Stakeholder input** refers to participant's opinions about the decision to be made.



Figure 2. Relationship between the five components of sustainable decision-making.

## 02. Library Pop-ups

Between November 20th, 2018 and March 20th, 2019, the Baker District project team, represented by Martin Jewitt and Kate Bishop, held pop-up events at a number of Guelph libraries. The pop-up events were designed to solicit feedback on the new central library. Through informal engagement, the project team interacted with over one hundred residents of Guelph. This section outlines the feedback received during these events.

### **Accessible, Flexible, Community-Supportive Spaces**

The public continues to reinforce the importance of spaces and services that cater to the entire community. Respondents noted a desire for a variety of spaces, including:

- Warming/cooling centre;
- A calm, quiet space;
- Learning spaces (classrooms, crafting tables, and/or 'artisanal' workspace);
- Big spaces for gathering and meeting.

In addition to community spaces, the pop-up participants suggested services to be operated out of the new central library, including:

- Short story making workshops;
- Programming aimed at all age groups, including seniors;
- Counselling (career).

### **A Library that Closes the Technology Gap by Reducing Barriers to Technology**

Library users want access to new and emerging technologies. Participants articulated a desire for updated computer technology and software, faster internet speeds, and self-learning digital material. They are also keen to have access to diversity in the medium of materials for people with disabilities.

### **A Library that Preserves and Celebrates the Past**

Respondents want the new library to pay homage to the past, both in form and function. The project team heard a desire for the new library to pay tribute to the Carnegie Library, and to provide access to archives that celebrate Guelph's history.

## **A Welcoming Design**

The pop-up participants want a District predicated on social, economic, and cultural inclusivity and health, including:

- A focus on accessibility;
- Spaces for Indigenous art and culture;
- Provision of supportive and affordable housing;
- LGBTQ resources, staff, and gender-neutral washrooms;
- Natural lighting to help combat seasonal affective disorder;
- Access to therapy animals.

## **Parking**

The provision of parking continues to be an important element. Respondents asked for accessible and free parking for the library and nearby churches.

## **Public Realm**

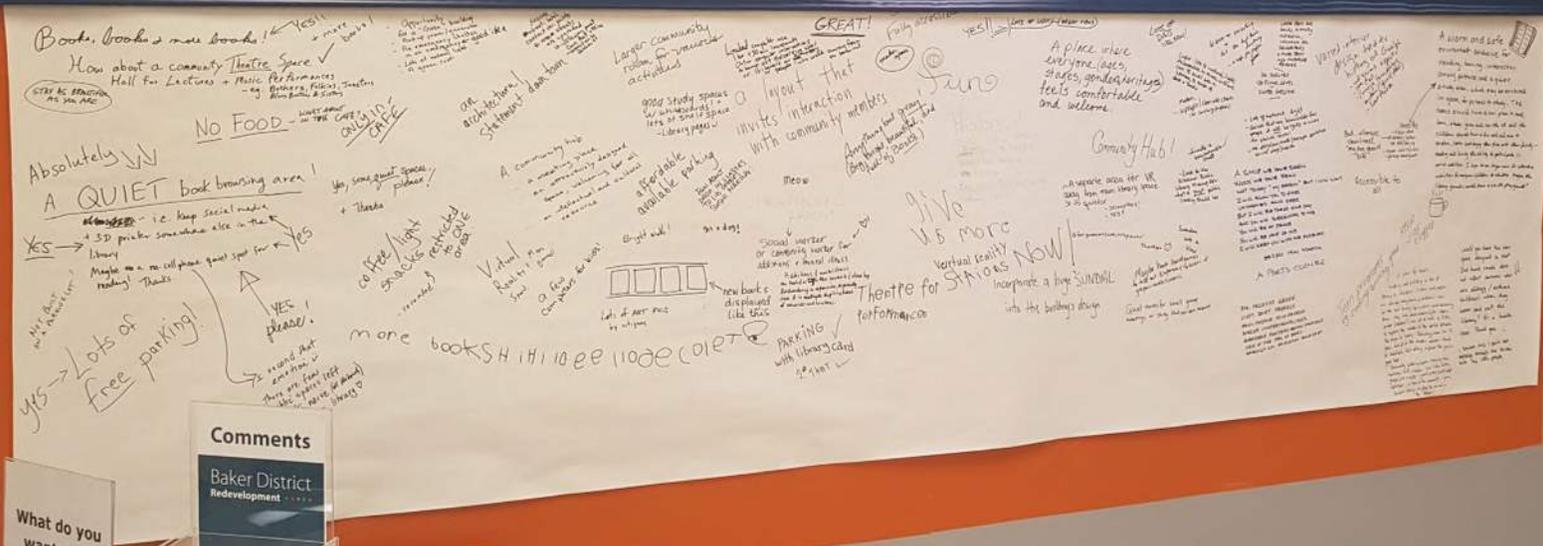
Participants provided feedback about all components of the public realm. Many participants favourably responded to the inclusion of the urban square, particularly as it relates to opportunities for public events and festivals. Rooftop agriculture was also earmarked as an important element for consideration. Finally, we heard that the public realm should be outfitted without hostile architecture that limits people's ability to lie down, relax, and seek refuge from the elements.

# 03. Graffiti Walls

## What do you want your new central library to be?

Baker District  
Redevelopment

[guelph.ca/bakerdistrict](http://guelph.ca/bakerdistrict)



In order to provide an ongoing opportunity for public feedback, the project team erected a graffiti wall at the Main Library. The graffiti wall asked library users to record their answers to the following question: "What do you want your new Main Library to be?" The graffiti wall was operational from December 14th, 2018 to March 19th, 2019. This section summarizes the 245 comments received from library users during this time period.

## **Accessible, Flexible, Community-Supportive Spaces**

Library users recorded their desire for a variety of space types. Generally speaking, this feedback can be categorized under the following headings: quiet spaces, performance spaces, and flexible meeting spaces.

### ***Quiet Spaces***

- Designated quiet spaces;
- Quiet spaces with comfortable chairs and daylight;
- Spacious reading nooks.

### ***Performance Spaces***

- A venue for local authors to read their works;
- Music room;
- A rentable performance space.

### ***Flexible Meeting Spaces***

- Bookable (small) meeting rooms in a highly visible area;
- Flexible, multi-use spaces designed to be expanded in the future;
- Workspaces;
- Maker spaces.

## **Community Services**

Several respondents described the library as a public space that should provide community services. The ideas advanced imagine the library as a community hub that stimulates learning, sharing, and equitable outcomes by way of community services, including:

- Social workers/community navigators available to connect library users with community resources, including housing support, mental health support, food banks, and crisis centres;
- Employment training and networking, including practical skills like knitting, sewing, and cooking;
- A tool library;
- A seed Library;
- Services for all age groups, including children, teenagers, adults, and seniors.

## **A Library that Closes the Technology Gap by Reducing Barriers to Technology**

Library users want the new central library to be outfitted with advanced technology. The most common request was access to virtual reality headsets via a tech bar. Other library users suggested the inclusion of a 3D printer, more electronic devices, multi-media spaces for creativity and design, enclosed sound booths for voice recording, and access to Information Technology professionals.

## **Parking**

The provision of parking continues to be an important issue. Library users asked for sufficient underground, accessible and free parking.

## **A Library that Preserves and Celebrates the Past**

Comments received on the graffiti wall suggest that there is a desire to weave the past into the present and future. Library users imagined a new central library that translates 19th Century design into something modern, primarily through materiality (e.g. steel, glass, and limestone). We also heard that the definition of history should expand to include Indigenous

histories. Finally, a number of users requested inclusion of archives to celebrate local history, including newspapers and microfiche readers.

## **A Welcoming Design**

More than any other topic, the notion of a welcoming design generated significant interest from library users. The responses can be organized into the following three categories: accessibility, inclusivity, and naturalization.

### *Accessibility*

The topic of accessibility primarily emerged around interior design features. Library users requested large, accessible elevators; main floor washrooms that accommodate wheelchairs; and rest areas for visitors with mobility devices.

### *Inclusivity*

Library users noted the importance of developing spaces that are inclusive of all residents, workers, and visitors, regardless of gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, or age. Requests included gender neutral washrooms, spaces for all ages, and establishing a comfortable, welcoming sense of place.

## ***Naturalization***

The theme of naturalization garnered the greatest amount of feedback. Several respondents requested that the interior of the library provide natural light and natural elements including plants and gardens. In addition to bringing the outdoors in, users identified the mental health benefits of providing access to sufficient sunlight, and the enhanced air quality generated by plants and greenery.

## **A Place for Art**

Library users identified the new central library as an ideal location for displaying local art work. Ideas included the provision of a community art wall and exhibition space for local artists and photographers.

## **Public Realm**

The comments left on the graffiti wall indicate that users want a public realm that is as accessible and welcoming as the library itself, including:

- Programmable green spaces, including community gardens with related gardening workshops;

- Accessible green spaces at grade;
- Accessible green spaces on roofs and upper terraces;
- The provision of new street level connections, and the upgrade of existing ones including the walkways to Wyndham Street and the post office.

## **Sustainability**

Library users identified sustainability as an important consideration for the design and function of the new central library. Comments ranged from general sentiments about the importance of environmental friendliness to specific interventions, including:

- Integrating design measures that reconnect us to the natural world, including greenery, natural forms and patterns, and natural light;
- Treating windows with bird-friendly glazing and fritting;
- Achieving carbon neutrality across the site;
- Supporting active transportation, including covered bike-parking;
- Installing back-up generators and emergency shelters to enhance resiliency;
- Installing green roofs.

## 04. Focus Group A: Downtown Businesses

On March 7, 2019, members of the project team met with representatives from nine downtown businesses. The focus of the meeting was to engage with a sample of business that will be most impacted by the development. The agenda included a section in which the participants were given background information on the project (summary of previously completed work and outcomes and current status of project). Participants were asked to define their specific hopes and concerns for the Baker District redevelopment. Participants were asked to write their hopes and concerns on Post-it-Notes and share their priority hopes and concerns with the group. Afterwards, the group shared their additional 'secondary' concerns.

### Priority Hopes

The priority hopes delineated by the participants can be organized into four categories: the public realm; accessible, flexible, community supportive spaces; connectivity; and a welcoming design.

#### *A Welcoming Design*

Participants noted the following priority hope related to a welcoming design:

- A development that has something for all, including seniors, children, and adults.

#### *Public Realm*

Participants noted the following priority hopes related to the public realm:

- Upper Wyndham revitalization in the context of the existing downtown fabric;
- Delivery of an urban square that is green, active and vibrant;
- Provision of beautiful and functional public space for community use;
- Maintain permeability of pedestrian realm.

### ***Accessible, Flexible, Community Supportive Spaces***

Participants noted the following priority hopes related to accessible, flexible, community supportive spaces:

- The library should satisfy the needs of the community;
- Great coffee shop and lunch options;
- Spaces for community events;
- The library should provide community-oriented gathering spaces;
- Establish a diversity of uses and programming.

### ***Connectivity***

Participants noted the following priority hopes related to connectivity:

- The Baker District should provide and maintain a strong draw to the Downtown for the entire City;
- The library should connect to all other aspects of the community, including the other branch libraries;
- The project needs to fulfill the first stated purpose of 'increasing downtown visitation';
- The project should contribute to creating a more vibrant and viable downtown, making it a destination for the whole City;
- Enhance the downtown's viability by established a mix of uses;

- The development will help reduce 'South Enders' fear of Downtown;
- An increase in daytime foot traffic and positive nighttime activity;
- That the project seamlessly integrates into the existing and evolving downtown;
- Spur future redevelopment in the rest of downtown.

### **Secondary Hopes**

Similar to their priority concerns, the participants secondary concerns can be organized into four categories: the public realm; accessible, flexible, community supportive spaces; connectivity; and a welcoming design.

#### ***Public Realm***

Participants noted that the permeability of pedestrian realm should be maintained.

### ***Accessible, Flexible, Community Supportive Spaces***

Participants noted the following secondary hopes related to accessible, flexible, community supportive spaces:

- Library as gathering space, active, community oriented and vibrant;
- Keep diversity of uses/programming (i.e. Library, YMCA, Educational and Residential).

### ***Connectivity***

Participants noted the following secondary hopes related to connectivity:

- That the project seamlessly integrates into the existing and evolving like of Downtown Guelph;
- Spur future redevelopment in the rest of Downtown; rising tide raises all ships;
- That it will offer an attraction for participation from 'outside' Downtown community members (West end, South end, etc.).

### ***A Welcoming Design***

Participants noted the following secondary hope related to a welcoming design:

- Indigenous presence recognition.

## **Priority Concerns**

The business representatives articulated a series of priority concerns related to the Baker District Project. These concerns can be organized into the following categories: parking, the public realm, connectivity, synergies, and construction impacts.

### ***Parking***

Participants noted the following priority concerns related to parking:

- Long-term function of parking if not designed with the possibility of adaptive re-use;
- Access to parking needs to be sufficient so congestion is manageable at peak times;
- That the development will grid lock parking until 2030;
- Parking, both during the development and after.

### ***Public Realm***

Participants noted the following priority concern related to the public realm:

- That the district be porous and flexible for future changes (new uses, transportation access, etc.)

### ***Connectivity***

Participants noted the following primary concern related to connectivity:

- Important to integrate Baker to the Centre of town; perhaps St George's Square becomes a main access point.

### ***Synergies***

Participants noted the following primary concerns related to synergies:

- Library programs and partnerships: accessibility and usability of library by the entire community with integrated social services;
- Connectivity between anchor tenants in order to have interactive space for all.

### ***Construction Impacts***

Participants noted the following primary concerns related to construction impacts:

- Immediate/short term impact of construction (access/congestion);
- Disruption to existing business during construction.

## **Secondary Concerns**

The business representatives also articulated a series of secondary concerns related to the Baker District Project. These concerns can be organized into the following categories: parking, the public realm, connectivity, viability of retail and commercial services, and construction impacts.

### ***Parking***

Participants noted the following secondary concern related to parking:

- That the parking situation will get worse.

### ***Public Realm***

Participants noted the following secondary concern related to the public realm:

- Concerned that the green space component is not large enough and is removed from rest of Downtown.

### ***Construction Impacts***

Participants noted the following secondary concern related to construction impacts:

- That it becomes an endless boondoggle of construction delays.

## ***Connectivity***

Participants noted the following secondary concerns related to connectivity:

- That it will be another eyesore that fractures rather than creates a community;
- That it is seen as a library project versus a broad-spectrum project.

## ***Viability of Retail and Commercial Services***

Participants noted the following secondary concerns related to the viability of retail and commercial services:

- How will the mix of uses affect vacancy rates that already exist?
- Viability of long-term anchor partner - is there one?
- Vacancy in existing properties (relating to private partners/tenants).

## 04. Focus Group B: Residents

On March 7, 2019, members of the project team met with seven local residents and representatives from nearby churches/service organizations. The focus of the meeting was to engage with a sample of those residents and surrounding churches/service organizations that will be most impacted by the development. The agenda included a section in which the participants were given background information on the project (summary of previously completed work and outcomes and current status of project). Participants were asked to define their specific hopes and concerns for the Baker District redevelopment. Participants were asked to write their hopes and concerns on Post-it-Notes and share their priority hope and concern with the group. Afterwards, the group shared their additional 'secondary' concerns.

### **Priority Hopes**

The residents' priority hopes can be organized into four categories: the public realm, heritage, downtown viability, and parking.

#### ***Public Realm***

Residents noted the following priority hopes related to the public realm:

- Vegetation returns to Downtown;
- Maximized outdoor public space;
- The area becomes a gathering place of the community and provides community gardening and meeting places.

#### ***Heritage***

Residents noted the following priority hopes related to heritage:

- That 'style' will not detract from functionality or from the 'charm' that Guelph has built into its heritage;
- Inclusion of a small memorial for those people buried under the parking lot.

## Secondary Hopes

The residents in the focus group provided secondary hopes that speak to Baker District's role in the broader community, including:

- Attracting people to come downtown again;
- Providing community-supportive, unique commercial shops;
- Development captures and enhances Guelph's sense of place.

## *Downtown Viability*

Residents noted the following priority hopes related to downtown viability:

- Increased 'hustle and bustle' in downtown core;
- The Baker District will include commercial areas that satisfy some of Downtown's core needs (e.g. grocery store).

## *Parking*

Residents noted the following priority hopes related to parking:

- Sufficient supply of parking spots;
- Convenient and accessible parking for Chapel Lane.

## Priority Concerns

Participating residents articulated a series of priority concerns related to the Baker District Project. These concerns can be organized into the following categories: parking, community service provision, building design, and construction impacts.

### *Parking*

Residents noted the following priority concerns related to parking:

- Knox Church parking;
- Too much emphasis is on cars and parking;
- Paid parking means people make other choices.

### *Community Service Provision*

Residents noted the following priority concern related to community service provision:

- Gentrification may result in pushing out of specific and vulnerable populations.

### *Building Design*

Residents noted the following priority concerns related to building design:

- Existing view from the Yarmouth buildings will be blocked;

- Buildings will dominate and detract from the elegant character of the downtown;
- The design of the development feels generic and sterile.

### *Construction Impacts*

Residents noted the following priority concerns related to construction impacts:

- Access to Knox Church from Chapel Lane during construction;
- Disruption of neighbourhood during building (i.e. noise, traffic congestions, limited parking);
- Loss of housing for vulnerable folks during construction;
- Access to parking on Chapel Lane during the construction process.

## Secondary Concerns

The residents' secondary concerns were minimal, relating solely to the public realm:

- Deep shade west of the buildings;
- The creation of alleyways on Chapel Lane and Baker Street by new residential towers.

## 05. Library Comment Boxes

Comment boxes were stationed at a number of Guelph's libraries, including Westminster, Bullfrog, the West End, and the Main Branch as another means of feedback capture. Respondents were asked to provide feedback to the question, "What do you want the new central library to be?" This section summarizes the feedback received, organized by library.

### **Westminster Library**

The comment box at Westminster Library was stationed from December 2018 to March 2019. 18 comments were submitted during this time period.

#### ***Accessible, Flexible, Community Supportive Spaces***

Commenters at Westminster Library focused their responses on child-oriented spaces and services, including:

- Programs for kids that get them more involved with the library;
- A large kid's section that is easy to navigate.

#### ***A Library that Closes the Technology Gap by Reducing Barriers to Technology***

Westminster Library users requested that the new central library include access to printers, copiers, fax machines, and more advanced computers.

#### ***A Place for Art***

The comments received at Westminster indicate a desire for the inclusion of opportunities for making and showcasing art. One respondent advocated for workshops and studio space that cater to local artists and "makers," including gallery space and opportunities for art to be displayed throughout the library.

## **Bullfrog Library**

The comment box at Bullfrog Library was stationed from December 2018 to January 2019. 13 comments were submitted during this time period.

### ***Accessible, Flexible, Community Supportive Spaces***

At a macro scale, we heard that the new central library should serve and meet the public's needs. Noted examples of community-centric spaces include a community kitchen, an entertainment centre, and a multi-purpose space to accommodate events of varying scales.

### ***Sustainability***

We received comments from library users asking for pedestrian and bike friendly design elements, and infrastructure to support electronic vehicles.

### ***Parking***

Insufficient parking was highlighted as a critical issue. Library users noted that adequate parking will be paramount for residents, workers, and visitors of Baker District and the downtown more broadly.

### ***Public Realm***

We heard that connecting the library to the adjacent public realm in a meaningful way is important to Guelph residents. Bullfrog Library users showed a keen interest in all-weather public outdoor space that caters to all ages and allows for passive and active programming.

## **West End Library**

The comment box at the West End Library was stationed from December 2018 to March 2019. 12 comments were submitted during this time period.

### ***Accessible, Flexible, Community Supportive Spaces***

Comments received at the West End Library included requests for a meeting room, a café, quiet spaces for studying, dedicated space for children's programming, and space for nursing moms.

### ***Sustainability***

Users of the West End Library indicated a desire for the new central library to showcase Guelph's progressive environmental practices and values. Specifically, we heard that the development should have a low carbon footprint.

## **Main Library**

The comment box at the Main Library was stationed from January 2019 to March 2019. 55 comments were submitted during this time period.

### ***Accessible, Flexible, Community Supportive Spaces***

The comments received at the Main Library demonstrated a desire for a variety of spaces, including:

- Quiet study zones and study rooms;
- Gaming areas separated from quiet spaces;
- Areas to work in, including private desks throughout the library;
- A boardroom and multi-purpose room that can be booked for meetings and events.

In addition, a number of comments advanced the idea of the new central library as a community hub. The hub would allow people to meet, visit, attend community events, and access community services including:

- Community cooking classes;
- Community gardening classes;
- Youth engagement and volunteer opportunities;
- Skill training.

### ***A Welcoming Design***

The Main Library comments suggest that library users want a District predicated on social, economic, and cultural inclusivity and health, including:

- Design to support independent use by folks with physical, visual or cognitive impairments;
- Bathrooms on the main level;
- Designed for all ages and abilities;
- Provision of affordable housing;
- Inclusion of plants in the library;
- Seasonal Affective Disorder lights.

### ***Sustainability***

We received a number of comments asking for the library to be environmentally sustainable, green, and modern. More specifically, commenters requested bike share infrastructure, living gardens, and pollinator-friendly species on the roof.

### ***A Place for Art***

Focusing on opportunities for art emerged as a key takeaway from the comments received at the Main Library. Commenters requested a number of art-oriented spaces, including:

- An artists-only area;
- A maker space;
- A designated art gallery space;
- Spaces that cater to children and teenagers.

### ***Public Realm***

The feedback received indicated enthusiasm for public spaces that can be used by the entire community. Specific ideas include green spaces with trees and a farmer's market.

