



What we heard: EPL and Capilano Residents' meeting



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Introduction

On June 1st 2015, the Edmonton Public Library (EPL), together with the City of Edmonton, held a second public meeting for residents of Capilano to discuss plans for the community's new library. The goal of the evening was to ensure that more residents were able to receive the information they need about the library, and for EPL to hear their feedback. The meeting was widely advertised in advance to ensure as many residents as possible knew about the meeting. Approximately 100 residents attended.

"I'm very excited about it. I think that integrating the ravine is a fantastic idea."

Resident

Following welcomes from EPL CEO Linda Cook and Ward 8 Councillor Ben Henderson, there were presentations from Greg Boothroyd with Patkau Architects and Mark Huberman, Principal with Bunt and Associates Engineering. Mr. Boothroyd talked through the design of the library: How the site was chosen because of its proximity to the ravine and the connections that offers to the wider river valley system; the exterior design that will blend into its natural surroundings; and the interior design that will make the most of the natural light while providing space for community groups and readers alike. Mr. Huberman discussed the parking decisions that were made to afford adequate parking for the new library and traffic analyses that have been conducted to assess the impact of increased traffic in the community.

"We don't want the library on this site. We've pointed out a number of other options but we've never been consulted on location options. We've lived here since 1971 and would love to continue to enjoy the ravine from our house."

Resident

Residents were then given the opportunity to ask questions and offer comments at tables staffed by an expert from the City of Edmonton, the Library, Patkau Architects and/or Bunt & Associates and a note-taker. The tables were divided into the following subject areas:

- Design and community fit
- Traffic, parking and transportation
- Zoning and site selection.

Key themes that we heard from residents were:

- Location: while many residents were excited at the prospect of the library situated right next to, and integrating into, the ravine and the opportunities that affords - some others would prefer the library to be located further north, closer to 101 Avenue. A few residents also suggested moving the library east, nearer to the skateboard park.
- Design: accessibility, natural light and a peaceful setting were all aspects of the new library that enthused residents.
- The ravine: many residents are looking forward to the potential connectivity of the ravine with the wider river valley system, offering hiking, biking and cross country ski opportunities. They want to ensure that the City of Edmonton is similarly committed to revitalizing the ravine.
- Traffic: residents were concerned at the prospect of increased traffic, the prospect of a possible neighborhood transit bus in their community and more cars on the side streets as people cut through.

"I love it. The traffic issues can be dealt with perhaps by stricter enforcement of rules about speeding and parking."

Resident

- Parking: some residents are worried about competition for parking between the Korean Presbyterian Church of Edmonton (9920 67 St NW) and the library.

The following are the details of what we heard.

Design and community fit

Most residents were excited by the design of the new library and look forward to it being built in their community. They were particularly pleased at the prospect of:

- An accessible building
- The number of windows and amount of natural light
- The opportunity of connecting with the river valley trail system, potentially extending the natural ravine with a bridge over 101 Avenue.

“I never thought of the ravine as an attraction; you could play that up in your promotion - incorporate environmental education pieces. You could do a 'tree walk'.”

Resident

Some residents also talked about incorporating a coffee shop in the library or encouraging a coffee shop to be built close by. That idea was not universally popular however: Others pointed out that there is other commercial space in the community in need of revitalization that should be more of a priority than developing new space.

“You’re taking away our green space: First the skateboard park and now the library. Is there no consideration for green space?”

Resident

Connectivity was also brought up: residents want to see multi-use trails and pedestrian crossings/ crosswalks connecting the library to other points in the community and the ravine to the river valley trails.

Other questions and answers

Questions	Answers
Will the library be big enough?	The size of the library is based on Capilano’s demographics. However, it will be laid out better than the present library so will feel bigger. If the demographics change in the community in years to come, it could be extended because of the linear design.
Are the windows floor to ceiling facing the ravine?	They are from bench height to ceiling – about 8 to 9 feet tall. They will be sloped to face the landscape. We’ll also be making efforts to accommodate the glare of natural light.
How can the library be designed to avoid birds hitting the windows?	This is definitely a consideration in the design. The sloped glass will help because it will reflect landscape to birds instead of sky. We’re looking at other strategies as well, such as a light frit on the glass.
Will the library have solar panels?	It will be LEED silver, so it will be efficient. The current budget will likely not allow for solar panels now, but we

	will look at how we might incorporate panels in the future.
Is there the possibility of an outdoor terrace on the ravine side?	There is an outdoor terrace on the south side of the building that is accessible from the program room. Part of the rationale for not putting the terrace in front of the library area was that it would limit the view of the ravine; instead there is a long bench inside along the entire ravine side so people can enjoy it every day of the year.
Where will the sidewalk go?	The sidewalk will go along 67 th street and connect to the skateboard park and to 101 Avenue.
Will the sidewalk accommodate bicycles?	No. It will not be a multi-use trail, but a boulevard sidewalk. Although we don't have the budget for a multi-use trail for this project, it is certainly something that could be considered in the future.
Will there be bike racks?	Yes, at the front plaza near the entrance.
How far is the building from the ravine edge?	About 10 metres.
Is the wood on the inside dark?	No; it will be a lighter natural wood.
Will you consider the lighting in the parking lot? We don't want lights shining into our living rooms.	Yes; this will be considered during the design of the library.
Will there be a quiet, tranquil part of the library for quiet activities like cello or harp performances, similar to at Lois Hole Library?	There will be a study room that will accommodate quiet activities. The program room can also be used by community for quiet activities.
Will there be a drive through book return?	No, there will not be a drive through book return. The site will not accommodate the expanded laneway that would be required.
How will air conditioning be handled?	There will be a basement for mechanical equipment. Nothing will be on the roof.
What is the size of the new program room?	About 800 square feet – roughly big enough for 70 people with adjacent outdoor space for events.
Will the program room have enough space for other organizations to use?	Yes.
What will happen in the Makerspace?	Makerspace is a room with technology for the public to use that will evolve over time.
Won't the library feel like a tunnel?	No. It will feel quite open and lofty inside.
Did you consider designing a square library?	The linear shape of the library maximizes the view of the

	ravine – most people visiting the library will have a view from their seat. It also allows the bookstacks to be a comfortable length – 5 shelving units long. With a square library, this is more difficult to do, particularly on the Capilano site.
Have you thought about aging in place and accessibility to the library for all as the community changes?	Yes, the Library is required to adhere to accessibility standards.
When will it be finished?	We hope to have the design phase finalized in 2015. Construction is scheduled to start at the beginning of 2016. It will take a little over a year to construct, so it will be ready in the summer or fall of 2017.
During construction, how do you make sure kids are safe if they're out playing sports in the field?	There will be construction safety with a good perimeter fence.

Traffic, Parking and Transportation

Parking

It was explained to residents that people using the existing library were surveyed on how they travelled to the library:

- 65% drove
- 23% walked or cycled
- 10% cycled
- 2% were dropped off.

Based on this and other benchmarking data, it was determined that the library would need approximately 45 parking spaces. The exact number will be confirmed with further analysis by Bunt and Associates. Some concerns, however, were expressed that this would not be adequate given the amount of parking needed by the church. Residents felt that church goers would inevitably also use the library parking lot.

Traffic

Increased traffic in the neighbourhood, people short-cutting through the neighbourhood and speeding on 67 Street were concerns that some residents expressed. There was a general plea for increased traffic calming measures: One solution proposed is to change 67 Street to a 40 km/hr zone from Terrace Road to 101 Avenue.

“I bike a lot. Turning this one block into a 2 way street would be way easier.”

Resident

“We see a lot more cars cutting through 67 street. I hope they don’t open 67 two ways.”

Resident

Transportation staff also explained the rationale for changing part of 67 Street into 2 way traffic in order to accommodate traffic going into and out of the library parking lot. 67th Street is currently a one-way street with traffic going north from 98th Avenue/ Terrace Road to 101st Avenue. When discussing the traffic information, Mark Huberman said that he had been unable to find an answer from the City of Edmonton as to why 67th Street had been converted into a one-way street. Residents at the

meeting spoke to the street being changed due to cars shortcutting from 98th Avenue to 101st Avenue as well as people speeding through the neighbourhood and running into a fire hydrant.

Transit

There was some discussion about the distance between the nearest bus stop and the new library: Some residents felt that there should be a bus stop right outside the front door; others felt that less than a block is not too far to walk.

Crosswalks on 101 Avenue were also brought up: it was felt that pedestrians and transit users would benefit from enhanced crosswalks.

“My main concern is crossing 101 avenue: this is a very busy road and there are no safe crosswalks.”

Resident

Other questions and answers

Questions	Answers
Why do we need so many parking stalls – when visits to this library have gone down?	There have to be a certain number of spots relative to the size of the library. We wish to try to accommodate library patrons on site and to not have them park on the street.
How are you going to stop people flying down 67 Street at 70 km/hr?	The speed limit for 67 Street will not change. The City does not anticipate a speeding problem with the implementation of a library at this location.
Will there be competition for parking between the library and the church?	No – the library doesn’t open until noon on Sundays and closes at 6pm on Fridays. The church has the opportunity to arrange for a shared parking agreement with the Library to use the library parking lot when it is closed.
Why won’t there be traffic/ pedestrian lights at the intersection of 101 Avenue and 67 Street?	We collected intersection turning movements and then added in new traffic for the library: Intersection movements will grow, but not sufficiently to trigger a need for full traffic lights. The offset intersection configuration makes the implementation of full traffic signals at this location difficult. The potential for pedestrian crossing upgrades will be evaluated after the Library is open.
What about pedestrian crossing lights?	A pedestrian flasher light at 67 Street and 101 Avenue might be possible. It will be evaluated after the Library is open.
Will there be an on-demand light for left-hand turns on 67 Street and 98 th Avenue?	We have requested that our Transportation Operations group review the location for signalization. There is a warrant process that must be met and a potential public engagement process.

Can you put a light in at 98 th avenue and 67a th street?	We have requested that our Transportation Operations group review the location for signalization. There is a warrant process that must be met and a potential public engagement process.
Which stretch of 67 Street will become 2 way? Will there be sufficient room for 2 way traffic and parking?	Yes, 67 Street will become 2 way to 99 Avenue. Parking will be banned on the east side of the roadway.
Why would the 2 way go so far?	We need to give people an exit and don't want to route them through the parking lot. We want to keep them on public roads.
Did you ever consider having only north access to the parking lot? 	<p>We considered a few options. Access locations, the desire to reconnect the ravine, the impact of surrounding buildings on the site, were all considered in determining the location of the library and parking lot.</p> <p>We are exploring sliding the north Library parking lot access slightly to the north such that it is located opposite the existing alley on 67 Street. We are also exploring options on an alternative parking layout, keeping in mind that residents are keen to preserve the landscaping in the parking lot.</p>
Can access to the parking lot be moved so that headlights don't shine into residents' windows?	We are exploring sliding the north Library parking lot access slightly to the north such that it is located opposite the existing alley on 67 Street. We are also exploring options on an alternative parking layout, keeping in mind that residents are keen to preserve the landscaping in the parking lot.
Why can't the parking lot have access on to 101 Avenue?	We considered this. However it would add a 3rd offset intersection to 101 Street.
How far is access to transit with this plan?	Comparable to the current distance. The 307 (a community route) was under consideration to serve the library. It was determined by Transit that it would not be possible to bring direct service to the Library and that the existing service along 101 Street is sufficient to service the library.
Why is the bus stop moving?	Existing bus stop #2237 must be relocated to the far side of 67 Street NW on 101 Avenue. This is due to the poor stopping sight distance for pedestrians crossing northbound. The proximity to the existing crosswalk is unsafe.

Zoning and site selection

Some residents who came to the meeting voiced their opposition to the site that has been selected for the library. Some of them live across the road from the site: Their view of the ravine, they fear, will be ruined. They and others are concerned about increased traffic and cars cutting through the neighbourhood; and they fear that a commitment from the City of Edmonton to revitalise the ravine will not be realized. Fundamentally, however, they feel passionately that they should have been consulted; that this decision has been made without community input.

“Please review location to 101 Avenue and save the neighbourhood views and greenspace.”

Resident

Other residents, however, were enthusiastic about the site that has been selected, particularly its proximity to the ravine. It will be critical, they felt, to ensure that commitments to re-forest and clear up the ravine are followed through.

“I love the way the library building blends in the environment. The ravine needs to be nurtured and cared for. I love walking so please develop trails.”

Resident.

Site discussions

1. Move the library further north, closer to 101 Avenue, within the property lines of the old fire hall, and consider situating the library diagonally, east/west, so the front is at the corner of 101 Avenue and 67 Street with parking off 67 street
 - Some residents favoured this move as a way to facilitate access from public transit to the library
 - Others pointed out that it would not fit into the continuous ravine plan
 - The City of Edmonton experts explained a number of issues that preclude using the location of the old fire hall:
 - It wouldn't fit within the current “US” zoned property lines: The site cannot accommodate the library and parking. Once the necessary setbacks are put in place, you would be left with a footprint of a third of the size of the current library, not including the parking.
 - Moving the parking lot to south of the new library would pull more traffic further into the community.
2. Move the library to east of the skateboard park on Terrace road
 - Some residents suggested that if the library was located on the east side of the ravine it would be closer to retail outlets, which would make it easier to incorporate a library visit into shopping trips.
 - Others felt that co-locating with the skateboard park would cut costs on snow clearing etc. and there could be shared parking.
 - Other residents disagreed: They felt that the proposed location adjacent to the ravine is entirely suitable for a community library.
 - The City of Edmonton experts informed residents that the land east of the skateboard park is currently planned for a parking lot.
 - To move the library to the site beside the skateboard park would involve upgrading the intersection at Terrace road and 98 avenue, which would cost \$1 million.
3. Current site on 67 Street

“I grew up in this neighborhood. I understand concerns about cutting through and concerns about the road access. I think there are ways around that. The ravine will be even better used when this library is built.”

Resident

- Many Capilano community residents were strong supportive of the current location for the library. They feel it will add value to the community.
- Residents are also excited at the prospect of leveraging the library development to advocate for better integration of the ravine into the wider river valley system: for hikers, bikers and cross-country skiers. It would give people a great opportunity to access the library by modes of transport other than car.

Other questions and answers

Questions	Answers
Whose choice was it not to put the library on the corner of 101 Avenue?	<p>The architect team presented this as the preferred option to the building committee and ultimately EPL agreed to proceed to investigate the feasibility of placing the library along the ravine.</p> <p>The City of Edmonton Transportation department advised the design team early on in the process that access to the library from 101 Avenue was not the best option.</p> <p>Additional factors such as maintaining the opportunity to reconnect the ravine in the future and the impact of large structures to the east of the site were also considered.</p>
Can we change the City bylaw that forbids road access off 101 Avenue if we move the library further north? So the entrance to parking could be off 101 Avenue and the exit could be on to 67 Street. Then 67 Street could remain one way.	Transportation has certain design guidelines that must be followed to ensure both traffic and pedestrian safety. The City of Edmonton Transportation department feels that access from 101 Avenue is not the best alternative because of proximity to other accesses, busses, pedestrians, and traffic.
Have you done studies to make sure the ravine embankment isn't eroding?	Yes: Geotechnical studies have been conducted. The studies have also looked at groundwater levels, which have the potential to make the edge unstable, and safety factors have been built in. It has been deemed safe to build on as long as we meet the minimum setback from the top of bank/edge of ravine.
How would you connect the ravine to the wider trail system over 101 Avenue?	A sidewalk will be constructed on 67 Street from 101 Avenue to the skateboard park. There is a pedestrian crossing at 101 Avenue – 67 Street.
Did the zoning have to be changed to put the library here?	No. Zone A, which this is, allows for discretionary use, and that includes libraries.
What point of the decision making process are we at right	We haven't applied for the development permit yet, so the development officer has not yet approved the new

now?	library. We plan to apply in the next few months. When the development officer makes a decision on the application to build the new library on the proposed site, notification will go out to the neighbouring property owners within 10 business days and a notice is placed in the Edmonton Journal. The decision can then be appealed at the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board.
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Conclusion

The goal the meeting was to ensure that all residents in the immediate vicinity of the new library area had an opportunity to receive information on the new library, to ask question and to receive updated information on the Transportation Survey and the Geotechnical information about the site. The format of the meeting was designed so that residents had direct access to the experts for answers to their questions. With over 100 residents attending, the goal was clearly met.

Judging by the comment cards filled out, a majority of residents left feeling excited about the prospect of the new library, with many of their concerns allayed by the explanations they had heard. Others, particularly those closest to the proposed site, remain concerned about traffic, parking and the loss of green space and (for those living across the road) views from their residences.

Edmonton Public Library thanks the residents of Capilano who took the time to attend the meeting and provide their thoughtful advice on the library as it moves forward, advice which will be considered as plans evolve.

“I think it’s wonderful – the best thing that’s happened to this community. I’ll probably spend more time there as the outdoor atmosphere will be quiet and conducive to reading.”

Resident

“People do seem concerned that they weren’t consulted. I hope that’s not a big obstacle.”

Resident