

Media Release

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SPL begins public consultation on new central library project

Saskatoon Public Library (SPL) today launched a public consultation initiative called SPL Connects to gather input and ideas from Saskatoon residents to understand how they would want to use a new central library.

From Mar 1 to Apr 15, 2018, residents are encouraged to share their vision for a new central library through an online survey, and at pop-up consultations around the city. There will be an open house event on Wednesday, Mar 28 from 4 – 8 pm.

“A new central library will belong to the entire community, so we want to make sure we receive and address input,” explained Carol Cooley, SPL’s Director of Libraries and CEO. “A new central library will benefit the entire city through enhanced service delivery, positive economic impact, and it will help fuel the downtown revitalization,” she added.

The information gathered through this consultation will be used to inform the business case the Saskatoon Public Library Board will take to City Council for approval of the new central library project. The first step in developing the business case is to develop a functional program, which is a “statement of needs.” A functional program will make a recommendation about the size of the building required. It itemizes the types of spaces in the building and the sizes of those spaces. An economic impact assessment will also be commissioned to support the business case. Cooley notes the community consultation will inform future decisions about the new library including costs and possible sites.

Frances Morrison Central Library (FMCL) is non-compliant with all significant building codes including fire, mechanical, electrical, and accessibility—with identified life-safety deficiencies dating back over 17 years. Architectural improvements to the building are not possible without addressing the non-compliant building code areas.

Constructed in 1965, FMCL was designed to serve a population of 115,000 people and house under 100,000 books. Since then the city’s population has more than doubled, and there is nearly three times the number of books on SPL’s shelves today.

“Saskatoon’s central library was built for a different time and purpose. People use libraries differently now than they did 50 years ago. SPL wants to be able to meet the needs of our patrons now and into the future, and a new central library will help us achieve that goal,” noted Cooley.

Residents can learn more about the project, participate in the online survey and get dates and times for consultations at saskatooncentrallibrary.ca.

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For more information, contact:

Janna Sampson, Director of Marketing & Communications, Saskatoon Public Library
e. j.sampson@saskatoonlibrary.ca p. 306.975.3494



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Kirk Sibbald, Marketing & Communications, Saskatoon Public Library
e. k.sibbald@saskatoonlibrary.ca p.306.986.1751