

# Library Design and Community Development: A Socio-Spatial Analysis of Calgary and Halifax Central Library Projects



## Halifax Public Library

Over 1,000 people attended all five public consultation meetings  
Themes: Culture, Learning, and Partnership

- Five public consultation meetings consisted of:
- Surveys
  - Focus groups
  - Q&A

Phase 1: February 2008  
• Public and other stakeholders invited to share what they envisioned and needed from their library

Phase 2: April 2008  
• Themes decided through analysis of public input

- Phase 3: June 2008  
• Building program and space requirements presented  
• Benefits of new library presented  
• Increased physical collection  
• Civic performance space  
• Increased activity along main road

Through review of academic literature as well as reports from both the Halifax and Calgary Central Libraries, our aim is to illustrate the multiple interactions between "space" and "community", and how this influences the design/architectural process of 21st century libraries.

The result is a collection of ideas about community-centred engagement and designing library spaces.

### Space as Political

"Space affects and effects social relations in the most profound ways"  
- Nishat Awan, Tajana Schneider, and Jeremy Till

### Space vs. Place

"Space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value"  
- Yi-Fu Tuan

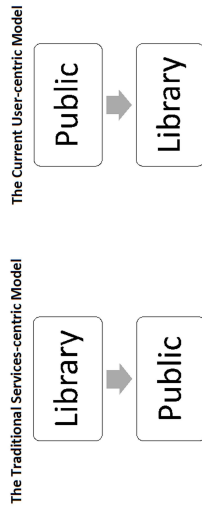
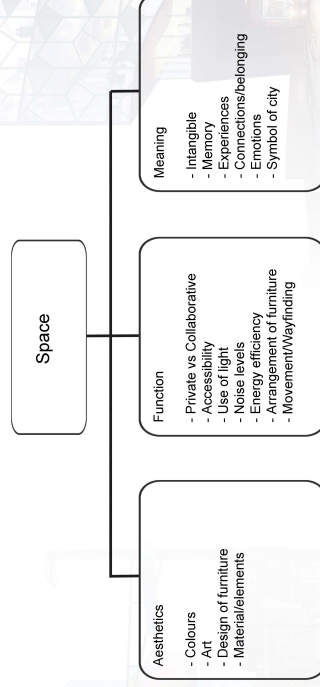
Library spaces should be designed to adapt to future trends:

- movable fixtures and furniture
- multipurpose rooms
- open concept spaces
- Meredith Schwartz

The "Third Space"  
The library is a place to go that is outside or between home and work:  
a gathering place for people from a diverse set of cultures, identities, abilities, and experiences. Planning space should be inclusive of these differences. Everyone needs to be involved in the discussion.

"Planners ask the wrong questions... Instead of assessing "what" should be in a space, perhaps a more meaningful question might be "what should happen in the space?"  
- Tiffany Chow

## Library Design



## Calgary Public Library

Reached 16 000+ community residents  
Themes: Creativity Collaboration, Participation

Phase 1: Think Big!

The bulk of information gathering, including:  
• Surveys  
• Public presentations  
• Children's activity sheets  
• Youth art events (poetry, collage, etc)

Phase 2: Dig Deep!

Highlight Strategies:  
• Created a "Youth Engagement Working Group" consisting of 11 high school students who were responsible for facilitating a variety of teen events  
• During a large public event, they created a series of fun interactive workstations which revolved around four major themes that emerged during the initial stage. These stations encouraged creative exploration through brainstorming, letter-writing, and role playing

"It will strengthen the fabric of community life by weaving East Village, the original heart of Calgary, back into the story of Centre City."  
• Calgary Municipal Land Corporation

Community Key Visions for Design & Space:

- Comfortable, homey spaces with ample natural light and flexible seating options
- Art spaces including studios, performance space, gallery space and "messy" makerspace
- Areas clearly delineated from the main library by colour, textures and clear wayfinding
- A building façade that incorporates greenery and transparent surfaces