Belmar Redesign
How community input and research shaped services

Julianne Rist, Director of Libraries
Research

- Refreshing JCPL’s Program of Services
- Demographics
- Usage Stats
- Staff Meetings with the Architect
- Staff Field Trips
Community Meetings

• **Concerns**
  • Safety
  • Congestion
  • Noise

• **Wishes**
  • Bring Outside In
  • Flexible Meeting Spaces
  • Intuitive
Online Survey

Pain Points
• Lobby Crowded & Confusing
• Uncomfortable Furniture
• Story Time Space
• Teens

Works Well
• Material
• Check Out
• Staff
Services

- Inclusive
- Family & Kid Friendly
- Comfortable, Welcoming
• Promote Lifelong Learning
• Cutting Edge, High Tech, Innovative
• Flexible, Adaptive
Concept Design
Julianne Scherer. HDR
Concept Design

- PROGRAMMING & ANALYSIS
- COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
- PLANNING CONCEPTS
Program & Analysis

Site Challenges

SITE ISSUES

A. Ped/Car Conflict
B. Book Drop Conflict
C. Pavement Settlement
D. Under-Used Plaza
E. Non-ADA Exit
F. Poor Connection to Adjacent Park
Program & Analysis

Existing Building Zones
Inclusive; Serves all ages, abilities, races, incomes, etc.
Patrons want to have a sense that the library is for everyone - not too fancy or modern to deter people, not too high-tech to be confusing. Many physical and income-related ability conversations arose and accommodating these cannot be forgotten.

Promotes lifelong learning & teaching, discovery & creativity
The library should be a place where you can learn about new things you didn’t even know you were curious about and further your understanding of the things you love. Creativity is important, but turning the library into a maker-space isn’t what people have in mind. Interesting classes or sessions to practice crafts and hand skills were discussed.

Family and Kid Friendly
Many people come with their children to take advantage of programs and want to feel safe and worry free. Good lines of sight, designated areas that are consistent, and things for parents to do in the meantime were all discussions that arose.

Cutting-edge, high-tech, innovative
Patrons recognize that everyone is connected these days. They use the computer labs frequently and would not want to see those go away or turn into tablet-only machines (due to elderly fingers and not wanting to completely learn something new). Good WiFi connectivity, latest books/programs/DVDs offered, printing/scanning services with a help desk, and other smart features like more automated book return options or check-out options were desired.

Comfortable, Welcoming
Patrons do not want to see the library get too sterile feeling: all white, lacking personality, stark fluorescent lighting, too sharp and clean, like a operating room. They talked at length about natural lighting, views to the outdoors, warm woods and other finishes/colors that would reflect the landscape.

Flexible, adaptable
The realization that the library will change over time, as well as the patrons that visit it, was noted. Allowing for things to change, whether it be the services and programs offered, or the furniture arrangement, or how each space/zone is used were mentioned as things to consider when ideating further design ideas.
Community Engagement

Guiding Principles

Safety and Security
Safety and security was a main priority for the meeting participants, survey participants, and staff. Certain areas in the current space are not working well and are a cause for alarm for the community. The parking lot is a tense space and currently does not allow for cars and pedestrians to coexist, the rear deck height and location locate sidewalks for staff. Plan points like these create a negative domino effect on the other spaces and priorities of the Belmar community.

"Libraries should be safe places where we can expand knowledge, explore new worlds, learn, meet, and grow."

"I like that my kids have a safe clean area that is well-skilled."

Inclusive
The library needs to cater to all patrons regardless of age, income level, nationality, etc. The participants envisioned a library shaped by the community. Their request for more bilingual materials, the importance they place on accessibility, and the broad range of ages Belmar hosts all informed the library’s design.

"Everyone is in the same lane. Do celebrate diversity."


"It includes all. It brings a sense to system. Inclusive and diverse people together."

Promote Lifelong Learning
Through the interviews and comments, the priority of the project became very clear. The patrons reminded us of the role of the library within the community. Building should be a center of knowledge focusing on books and media. It should also provide space for improving programming beyond the prints. The library is a place for lifelong learning.

"I think a library represents a freedom to pursue all types of knowledge and explore books that I wouldn't want to buy necessarily, but I still want to read.""I love the community's atmosphere and a place where kids can remember for a lifetime how awesome or funny books are.""Sustainability and Resilience
Belmar’s community has a deep appreciation for the beautiful park they have right in their backyard. And with that, they recognize the responsibility they have to keep it nice. The community expressed their interest in sustainability and green materials as part of the library’s renovation, and the addition of signs to explain to visitors their contribution to the earth and their values.

"Local, small, environmental.
"Natural, built for the future, meets future needs. Sustainability. Change for the better."

"More environmental, mental awareness, and sustainability."

Enhanced Way-finding and Organization
As an initiative to enhance the experience of the patrons, and ease some load off the staff, priority was placed on way-finding and organization. Each iteration of the program was looked at from the stance of the users. A parent holding kids and a bag of books, a patron making a speedy checkout, or a manager overseeing the spaces from their desk.

"Organization within a manner that is not just books on a shelf."

"Efficient flow."

"Open space and organization is key for a great library."

Welcoming Atmosphere
One of the top responses to how a library should feel was welcoming. The participants described an entrance that said "Welcome to Belmar." Words like “rooms” and “comors” were used to describe comfortable reading spaces. Natural lighting and seating were discussed as ways to invite patrons to stay. The residents spoke about spaces that felt separate, though not divided.

"Welcoming and comfortable – a space where visitors feel at home."

"Cozy room. Lots of little nooks, window seats, and desks for places to work, study, and read."

Connection to Adjacent Park and Outdoors
One of the most unique traits of the Belmar library is the adjacent park and lake just outside. The community brought attention to a child’s need to play outdoors and take a break from the quiet environment. The staff mentioned a designated outdoor space for programs and rest. All of these pieces contribute to an effort to make the outdoors an extension of the library and to bring the outside in.

"The outside needs so much TLC."

"I think making better use of the open view would be great."

"We need to them to spend afternoons sitting in the chairs facing the park."

Convenience Factor
One of the most attractive features of the library should be its convenience. Patrons shouldn’t feel burdened by a long visit or view a book return as a chore. Staff access, space adjacencies, and dispersed access points all contribute to an experience tailored to the patrons needs.

"I also value a simple layout with easy to locate sections and signage that makes finding the right section convenient.""The staff is very friendly and the check out machines are so convenient."

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Project Budget

Steve Chestnut, Director of Facilities & Construction
Proactive Approach

- Infrastructure
- Patron Safety
- Facility Master Plan
Capital Project Cost Estimates

Construction $4.66M
Design, Engineering, Equipment, Other $2.38M

Total Estimated Project Cost $7.04M
Approved Project Budget $6.77M
Difference $0.27M
What's driving the cost?

- Rapid Labor and Material Cost Escalation
- Original Architectural Design and Construction Type
- Inclusion of Infrastructure Repair/Replacement
- Sorter Replacement

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<th>Difference</th>
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▲ = Higher Prices  ▶ = Neutral Prices  ▼ = Lower Prices
# Operating Impacts of Belmar Redesign

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<th><strong>Estimated Capital Project Cost</strong></th>
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<td><strong>Start-up Operating Expenses</strong></td>
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*Funded by donations*
Questions