

Main Library Renovation

Public Forum #1 Summary

Huntington Room, Main Library, 325 N Michigan St., Toledo

Wednesday, May 2, 2018

6:00 – 8:00 pm



Meeting Overview

On Wednesday, May 2, 2018, the Toledo Lucas County Public Library (TLCPL) hosted a public forum for the renovation of Main Library. Over 40 people attended and participated in the meeting. Through a show of hands, the vast majority of participants indicated that they were regular users of Main Library, and a few indicated they use TLCPL branches. Library leadership and staff, as well as the local media were also in attendance.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide an overview of the renovation plans; share and seek feedback on the Library's draft plan for accommodating users during the temporary closure; and begin thinking about opportunities to animate new Library spaces that will be available after the renovation. The meeting agenda is included as Attachment A and the presentation materials delivered are available on the TLCPL website.

This meeting summary is structured to reflect the main areas of discussion and provide highlights of the following:

- I. Opening Remarks from TLCPL Director Clyde Scoles;**
- II. Key Points from TLCPL's Renovation Presentation;**
- III. Questions of Clarification, and Responses Provided;**
- IV. Feedback Received During the Facilitated Discussion; and**
- V. Next Steps.**

Nicole Swerhun and Khly Lamparero, third party facilitators with Swerhun Facilitation, facilitated the meeting and prepared this meeting summary. This summary captures the perspectives and feedback shared at the meeting and is not intended to serve as a verbatim transcript. This meeting summary was subject to participant review before being finalized.

I. Opening Remarks from TLCPL Director Clyde Scoles

Clyde Scoles, TLCPL Director, opened the meeting with welcoming remarks and thanked participants for coming. He noted that:

- TLCPL's primary goal, as it was back when the Library was renovated almost 20 years ago, is to maintain the ambiance and architectural integrity of the Library;
- The purpose of the public forum is to get the public's feedback on how to better serve and provide better access to Library customers through the renovation of Main Library.

He introduced Nicole Swerhun as the meeting facilitator, adding that Nicole also helped develop TLCPL's 2016-2020 Strategic Plan. Nicole explained that:

- Her firm works exclusively for governments and public agencies, and their role is to better connect them to the constituencies they serve. The Swerhun team doesn't advocate for any particular outcome of the projects they work on, our role is to help get information flowing between those involved and to help facilitate constructive discussion. The Swerhun team will write a summary of the feedback received and will share that draft with all participants for their review prior to finalizing the summary.
- This is the first of three public meetings that will be held between now and the end of June focused on the renovation, and that each meeting will build on the information and feedback shared at the previous meeting. She also said that Library staff had met in the afternoon today to cover the same material as will be shared and discussed at the public meeting.
- Nicole also highlighted the Renovation Report that was distributed to all participants on their way into the meeting, noting that it includes information that will also be shared in the overview presentation. The Renovation Report is also available online along with a feedback form that can be completed online and includes the same questions that will be discussed in the meeting.

By a show of hands, many participants indicated that they are regular users of Main Library, some are regular users of a library branch, and others use both Main Library and a Library branch. Nicole also asked participants how they got to the meeting, which would be helpful to know when identifying how to get to Library branches during closure. By a show of hands, many participants drove to the forum, a couple participants biked, and one participant walked.

II. Key Points from TLCPL's Renovation Presentation

Jason Kucsma, TLCPL Deputy Director and Meg Delaney, Main Library Manager gave an overview presentation of the Main Library renovation plan. The following points are summary key elements from their presentation.

1. **Reasons for the renovation, and approach to temporary closure: The Library is an important third space to people** – outside of their homes and their work, it's a place where they can come, where the climate is controlled, all are welcome, and nobody is trying to sell them anything. The Library is your space and our space, and in that spirit we're very thankful that you've joined us to discuss the plans we have for renovating Main Library.
2. **Why are we renovating? Main Library is renovating to respond to the rapidly changing needs of the community.** It's been almost 20 years since the last renovation

in Main Library and since then the culture, technology, and how people want to use the Library changed. The renovations in the Library will improve and increase people's use of the Library in the next 10-30 years. Existing spaces will be re-oriented to provide better access to customers, and new spaces will be added to support the economy and the needs of the community. The books will remain and literacy will always be the core service of the Library.

3. **The renovation process is guided by a number of core principles**, including: respecting the existing architecture and art deco features of the building; responding to Toledo community's needs; making conscious and responsible use of funding; being informed by the trends in other libraries around the country (i.e. building a space that is flexible enough to accommodate the community's needs today and the change in the coming years); exploring new partnerships; ensuring the safety of the public and staff; and attention to the inevitable disruptions caused by such a major project.
4. **In terms of how the Library is funded, it receives about 50% of its funding from the State, with the balance covered by local taxes.** Funding for the renovation is coming from a \$25 million loan that is being used to renovate Mott, Sylvania, and Main Library.
5. **During the temporary closure for renovations, the Library is exploring ways to ensure customers are able to access as many Main Library services as possible.** We're looking at expanded hours in branches, having Library staff do more outreach work to enable them to continue providing their expertise to the community; providing continued access to Local History and Genealogy collection; providing the passport service at other Library branches; and working with community partners to support downtown residents and people experiencing homelessness especially in winter.

Highlights from Meg's review of the architectural floor plans:

1. **Starting from the Parking Garage level**, the renovations will transform the Friends of the Library Gift Shop and the current café into two community spaces. One will be a boardroom-like room where organizations can have meetings, and the other will be a space dedicated to supporting entrepreneurs, organizations, training, and other uses on a short term or medium term basis. Access before and after the Library opens is being explored. Also the wall facing the rooms will have digital displays that can be used to tell the Library's story and orient people to Main Library, including where and how to find the services they're looking for.
2. **The first floor renovations** include the creation of a "Main Street" from the front door right through to the new addition. The café will be relocated to the general area of the Huntington Room, and be accessible to the courtyard. Beside the café will be the gallery that was formerly located on the second floor (prior to its temporary closure). The Friends of the Library Gift Shop will also be located across from the café off of Main Street.

At the end of Main Street there will a new community meeting room created that has the flexibility to hold as many people as the Huntington Room, or it can also be transformed into a smaller space. The Maker Space will also be on the first floor, along with an expanded computer area. A few services will be shifting – including Teen, AV, and the Customer Service Desk (which will shift to the opposite wall so it is easier for customers to see when they walk through the front door.) Shifting these services now allows us to upgrade the infrastructure. As a result, future modifications will be much less disruptive.

3. **The second floor renovations** are dependent on the Library raising additional funds. If the funds are raised, the plan is to transform the existing Toddler Room into a getting Ready for Kindergarten area, and the Play-and-Learn area would be expanded.
4. **There are no renovations planned for the third floor.**

Details of the renovation plans can be found on page 3 of the Renovation Report which was distributed in hard copy at the meeting and is also available on the Library website.

III. Questions of Clarification

Following the presentation, participants asked questions of clarification regarding the presentation. Questions and responses are summarized and categorized by topic below with responses from TLCPL noted in *italics*.

Questions about the reasons why the Library is renovating and how much it costs

- Can you take a couple steps back and explain how the Library came to the conclusion that Main Library needed to be renovated? Were there community meetings to discuss it? Were communities of color engaged? How did the Library decide? *Two years ago the Library completed a 10 year Facilities Master Plan. During that process there were a number of discussions with community members, as well as work with the Library Administration. The recommendations in that Plan included direction on renovations required at Main Library, and those have informed our decision to renovate. We also keep statistics on the use of our existing spaces at Main Library, and we know the number of times rooms are booked and for what purpose, which revealed a need to introduce new spaces to respond to the priorities of Library customers.*
- Who made the decision to renovate and how much will it cost? *Ultimately the responsibility for that decision lies with the Library Board and Administration. A number of Board members are in the room today. The budget for the renovation is \$10 million for construction.*
- You said it's going to cost \$10 million – is it because you have \$10 million to spend, or because the plans you've drafted will cost \$10 million? *We didn't have a bucket of \$10 million to spend. When we started working on this project, there were multiple scopes that we had to pared down over a series of meetings to what we think are essential things to do to make the library functional in the next 10-20 years.*
- I was part of the team that worked on the renovations 20 years ago, and I can tell you that we left the building in good shape. We also preserved all the Vitrolite.

Questions about the Library collection and digital services

- I'm concerned that the number of books in the Library has decreased dramatically over time. The Library is a repository for the past, and sticking to the nuts and bolts is important. Please preserve access to physical books and maintain the collections, especially books that are not available or difficult to access elsewhere. *We work together with other libraries to not duplicate each other's collections. This type of resource-sharing and efficiency enables us to make better use of the resources we have.*

- You talked a lot about improving the building during the renovation, but what are you doing to improve and increase the collection, especially for college students who rely on free access to databases and materials? *We're consistently working to grow our collections and making them more relevant. We do offer databases that are often expensive to subscribe to individually, but we face a huge marketing challenge in getting-the-word out to people who would benefit from access to these databases and who may not know about them. We would appreciate receiving suggestions on how to improve promotion of these existing databases.*
- Does part of the plan for Main Library include providing services to help people (including the elderly) keep up with and get comfortable with new technology? *Yes, the Library will continue to provide a welcoming and judgment free space to learn new things and technology. Our staff is available to customers to bridge their technology needs. We also can't forget that one-third of our customers go home to no broadband internet, so they rely on the Library for this service.*

Question about accommodating Library users during the temporary closure

- Why does Main Library need to temporarily close for the renovations? *It was very clear to us that there are many different phases for the renovation, and we wanted to put forward a competitive bid that will reduce the duration of the renovation, be an acceptable use of the budget, and will secure safety. We've also learned from lessons from other libraries who did renovations and stayed open but had to close mid-way through construction because staying open was untenable. We're using these community forums, which are taking place six months before the renovations start, to identify and address community concerns, and to not repeat the issues faced by other libraries.*
- There are many genealogy groups in Toledo. How are you're going to accommodate people who want continued access to the Genealogy department during the closure? *We're putting a plan together that would have hours by appointment to access the Local History department, as well as outreach to local genealogy groups. We are planning to advertise it widely on our website, and also maybe in local and regional publications to let people know of those services so they will not make a trip to the Library only to find out that they're not able to access the Local History department. (A participant suggested that the Family History Library in Perrysburg has computers, microfilm readers, etc. that could potentially temporarily accommodate the needs of genealogy groups during Main Library closure).*

Question about the public forum

- We received a leaflet saying that there will be three separate meetings with similar content, so if people miss it, they can go on the next. But we are now learning that the meetings are progressive. Future communications should be made clearer so people can understand the process. *We are unsure with what the flyer you received said, but the intention for the three separate meetings is for each meeting to inform the next. For example, the advice collected today will inform the Library renovation team on finalizing the draft plan for accommodating customers during the temporary closure. The second meeting will report and demonstrate how the Library used that feedback. We also know that not everyone can attend any or all of the meetings, which is why we will document*

what we heard, and make this information online. We will also continue to solicit input from people online who were not able to join us today.

IV. Facilitated Discussions

Following the questions of clarification, participants were asked to discuss, at their tables in groups, the Library's draft plan for accommodating customers during the temporary closure, and early thoughts on animating spaces after the renovation. Participant feedback shared during the group report back and written feedback on worksheets have been organized by question and by theme below. Responses from TLCPL leadership, where provided, are noted in *italics*.

Thoughts and Suggestions on Plans for Accommodating Customers during the Temporary Closure

Informing the Public about the Closure

- Develop a massive promotional campaign to effectively inform people about the closure.
- Break down the approximately 2000 people who come to the Library daily and clearly state the alternative options and places they can go to during closure.
- Provide a list of library services and materials that will continue at another branch or with a community partner, as well as services that will be paused. *The staffing plan will be final around June 1st. Once the staffing plan is finalized, we'll be able to produce a final plan for where, when and how long services will be provided during closure.*

Accessing Collections

- Keep supervisors and experienced staff at Main Library daily to allow continued access to the Local History and Genealogy department from a different entrance at any time, instead of making an appointment.
- Consider allowing customers to request and pick-up materials at Main Library to accommodate urgent need to access materials.
- Relocate reference manuals (i.e. automotive manuals) to a branch where customers can have access on a regular basis.

Travelling to Library Branches

- Use Toledo Area Regional Transit Authority (TARTA) to provide a free shuttle or bus service paid by the Library to help customers get to other library branches. A free shuttle service would be helpful for people with disabilities and people from shelters who can't afford to pay for transportation.

Working with Community Partners to Continue Services

- Use local community partners to continue providing library services downtown. Library branches are too far away from downtown residents to easily access. *We're currently working with many community partners to continue supporting community needs during closure. We will share a more detailed plan to the public at our next public meeting at the end of the May.*
- Collaborate with Toledo Public Schools and University of Toledo to accommodate customer needs, including a safe place to stay warm. *The Library is also working with these institutions.*
- Collaborate with Toledo Blade to provide public access to their archives during library closure.

Thoughts and Suggestions on Animating the New Spaces

Overall

- The design of the spaces should continue the art deco style, feel warm and inviting, and portray the history of the building so other generations will have a connection to the past. Connect with Toledo Museum of Art to get advice on how to highlight the history of Toledo in the renovated library.
- Design the space to make it visually attractive, and will inspire kid's imaginations through books, hands-on learning and other interesting things in the library.

Main Floor

- Display resources and demonstrate materials from other library departments in the main space on the first floor to promote resources that library customers might not be aware of. This could be especially useful for people who may want to use the technology and software, like 3D-printer or Photoshop, but do not know what it is for or how to use it.
- Create a wayfinding display on the first floor to help orient and navigate customers who are coming to the library through the main entrance (so that this service is not only available to those who enter through the parking garage).

Maker Space/Idea Studio, Main Floor

- Ensure that noisy and disruptive equipment are enclosed and has sound proofing so other library users are not disturbed.

Other

- Provide a storage space for groups or individuals who regularly use some of the community spaces and who have resources that are difficult to move back and forth easily.

Other Thoughts and Suggestions

Renovation Related

- Do simpler designs that are not very busy which could help save money. For example, the rendering of the Children's Library is very busy in the eyes and wouldn't seem like a place to relax in.
- Invite more people from the Toledo community and library users to the next meeting to have a broader range of perspectives. Inform people walking through the library, and go to places where library users go, including schools, churches, Cherry Street Mission, Black Ministers Alliance, etc.

Post-renovation Related

- Participants expressed support for partnering with other organizations to promote the library to the community. They suggested partnering with literacy agencies, senior's centers, arts organizations like The Arts Commission and Toledo School for the Arts. They also suggested fostering partnerships with businesses and resources around entrepreneurship in the community to create something similar with the Roxbury Innovation Center in Boston.
- Improve promotion of library programs by advertising through posters, newspapers, etc. The library has a lot of great programs and speakers but receives low public attendance.
- Improve and increase collections and database access, including Ancestry.com, FamilySearch.org, e-book licenses, etc.
- Teach customers how to properly take care of computers, including sharing computer hygiene tips.

V. Next Steps

Nicole Swerhun thanked participants and committed to sharing the meeting summary to participants in draft for review before finalizing.

Jason Kucsma also thanked participants for taking the time to attend the forum and providing feedback and suggestions. He said that it was very valuable to hear the different perspectives participants shared. Jason noted that a copy of the Renovation Report is available online at toledolibrary.org/construction/mainrenovation, as well as at Main Library.

Attachment A. Meeting Agenda

Renovation Report
Public Meeting 1 of 3
Wednesday, May 2, 2018
Main Library, Huntington Room



AGENDA

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Provide an overview the renovation plans;
 - Share and seek feedback on the Library's Draft Plan for accommodating users during the temporary closure; and
 - Begin thinking about opportunities to animate new Library spaces.
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6:00 pm	Welcome Clyde Scoles, Director, Toledo Lucas County Public Library
6:05	Introductions & Agenda Review Nicole Swerhun, Third-Party Facilitator, Swerhun Inc.
6:15	Renovation Report Jason Kucsma, Deputy Director, TLCPL Meg Delaney, Main Library Manager, TLCPL
6:40	Questions of Clarification
7:00	Facilitated Discussion <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How well do the Library's plans for accommodating customers during the temporary closure meet your needs?2. Do you have an ideas or suggestions for the Library team to consider as we continue refining plans to accommodate customers during the temporary closure?3. What ideas or suggestions would you like the Library to consider regarding how best to animate the five new spaces that will be available after the renovation? <p>Do you have any other thoughts or suggestions?</p>
7:55	Wrap-Up and next Steps Jason Kucsma, Deputy Director, TLCPL
8:00 pm	Adjourn

toledolibrary.org/construction/mainrenovation