

MOUNT VERNON
LIBRARY &
COMMUNITY
CENTER

Community Design Brief: Discovering the Needs of Our Citizens

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Executive Summary

Mount Vernon City Library has been the center of our learning community for 102 years. The Mount Vernon Senior Center has existed for 45 years as a key part of senior life in our community. Both institutions realize that the future of our community depends on transformative learning experiences as Skagitonians face a growing need for kindergarten readiness, the requirements of continuing education to stay employable, and the desire to engage in lifelong learning. We believe by combining resources, we can create the best platform for redefined public programs that enhance the lives of all county citizens that use services in Mount Vernon. The two institutions also recognize the need for new types of space to meet this goal. That is why we are working together to create a new learning facility.

This report summarizes research conducted by both institutions aimed at discovering the needs of our citizens. We both believe that the best building design is an extension of great programming. It is through our focus on relevancy to our community and positive customer-focused experiences that we believe we can deliver a truly useful, meaningful, and transformative space to meet the needs of our community.

The goal of this document is to provide an overview of the combined facility, and to answer some common questions that the community has about our service model and new building design.

The purpose of a library and community center is to support the growth of a community through education and enrichment. We believe with the right support, the opportunity to achieve success and prosperity through hard work, education, and initiative is available to all. We aim to design a facility that is a great investment for the people of Skagit County because it meets the needs of people in the county.



- What types of features do people want in a new facility?
- Do we need to build so much parking infrastructure?
- Will we continue to need physical libraries in the future?
- What types of societal trends are significant to this structure? How will those larger changes impact design?
- How much space do we need in a new facility? What factors influence space choices?
- How do we buck the trends and lead the nation in service delivery to best serve Skagitonians?

Methodology

A Space for Everyone Satisfies No One



At the core of study design is the basic realization that we cannot create all things for all people. Instead, we must design with the mission of serving real customers, both our current and future, with positive experiences that will impact them the most. We aimed to discover the ideal primary program spaces, what were the key design elements and technology, and what we could add to create destination features to draw the community together.

Our study process included six elements: community strategic planning, feasibility assessments, design studies, user focus groups, and customer surveys. It was using these multiple methods that we aimed to optimize this report. This document includes learnings from:

- 2018** Library and Community Center Feasibility Study
 Mount Vernon Library/Community Center Proposal
 Library Community Center Consumer Survey
 Library Community Center Focus Groups (8 sessions)
 The Center for the Future of Libraries Report
 South Kincaid Subarea Plan
 Downtown Design Recommendations

- 2017** EDSAC's Social-Emotional Skills in Early Childhood Support Workforce
 State of Children and Families Report for Skagit County

- 2015** Skagit County Agriculture Statistics

- 2014** Library Needs Assessment and Feasibility Study and Survey Data

- 2009** Downtown & Waterfront Area Master Plan

- 2008** Downtown Parking Garage Design and Feasibility Study

As a result of all these efforts, we believe we have thoroughly explored the needs of our customers and have come to a great model for the future.

Community Requests

The Community Requests Our Core Values Extend Through Our Space

Libraries all over the country are introducing new programs and services to execute strategic goals. In the most innovative models, libraries and community centers move beyond their long-held practices, and must have features that allow customers to define what services, programs and activities they want.

We let customers move beyond our current services by asking questions like:

- What types of valuable programs would you be surprised to see a community center offer?
- What times of training/education would you like available in your community?
- What technology training (either use of devices/hardware or online/software) do you want?



Under this line of questioning we discovered people wanted services that followed the same consistent characteristics with our organizational values but they also wanted the following:

A Shift in Our Offerings:

- Focus on community partnership and goal alignment
- Incorporate project-based learning
- Address the root causes of skills and learning challenges
- Integrate our activities into a single platform
- Enhance our promotion
- Add food support and education
- Add a maker/creation space
- Add a rooftop amenity
- Add flexibility
- Build a more open and secure building



While Still Retaining:

- Children's activities and programming (top focus group and survey request)
- Books and materials (42.75 % of people requested more materials)
- Interesting programming (key for both institutions)
- Art classes (especially painting)
- Exercise classes (Yoga, Tai Chi, Dancing)
- Literacy promotion
- A good Help Desk
- Space to meet, gather, and learn
- Access to technology



Destination Features

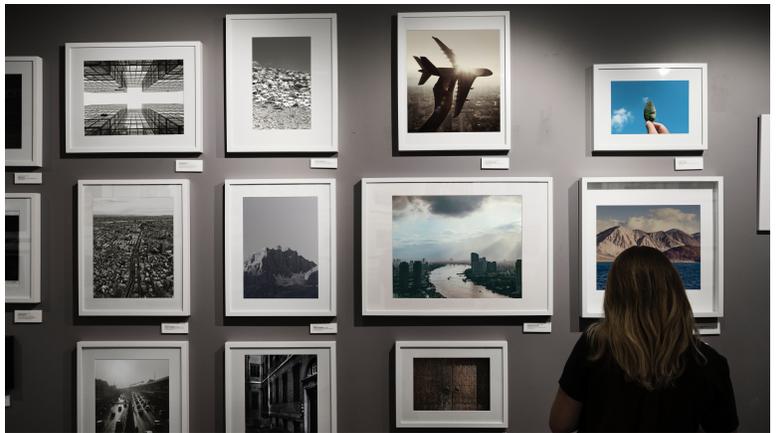
Rooftop Park

Dynamic greenspace in unlikely places is a key element of modern urban life. We want to lead by example by creating a destination pocket park on our rooftop.



Community Gallery

We imagine a museum-like gallery space that gives local and traveling artists a place to display. It also provides a great incentive to visit the library each week.



Whole Food Education and Meal Support

We will continue Meals on Wheels service.

Teaching children how to grow, cook, preserve, and understand nutrition is one of the primary ways we can encourage lifelong success. Plus, food stability and personal health help create lifelong learning success.



Primary Program Spaces

The Right Services Need the Right Spaces



Exercise Room for Yoga, Thai Chi, and Dance

A dedicated space to stretch, move, and get your dance on. This highly requested feature will allow us to integrate exercise into programming because movement helps the brain increase memory and improve its power to make connections.



Enhanced Youth Learning Space

The top requested and priority feature of the library and community center. This space will go beyond a traditional kid's corner and will feature a programming classroom, learning stations, and technology that will allow for children, teens, and parents to learn together.

Maker and Tech Arts Space

A space to encourage high tech and low creation, emphasizing hands-on learning and the power of getting messy.



Welcoming Lobby

A place that is inviting, approachable, and full of services for someone who is willing to ask.



Teaching Kitchen

A fully functional space dedicated to culinary study and meals on wheels. Teaching cooking and preserving skills increases lifelong food security, health outcomes and results in better family food purchases.

Downtown Parking Infrastructure

Parking, along with meeting space, was selected as a key downtown catalyst to spur development. A number of additional projects will benefit from the facility and allow the surrounding community to grow.



Popular Collections

A place for browsing the collection and offering serendipitous discovery in a store-like atmosphere.

Sub-Dividable Great Room

A meeting space for 200, sub-dividable into three rooms of 65 (some space is taken up by dividers) or two rooms with a 65 / 130 split. Located right next to the kitchen for food support.



Video Conference Rooms

A conference room space suited for video conferencing, online education, and webinars as requested by business and educators.

Study Rooms

Small study rooms for one-on-one mentoring, tutoring, and individual quiet study were selected as the most needed gathering spaces in our community.

Design Elements and Incorporated Technology

Space That Encourages Human Interaction

The design of the sections intended for patrons and visitors, including the outdoor areas, should facilitate and encourage communication between people.

A Building That Is a Part of Its Surroundings

The building will occupy a central and conspicuous site in the city. The design of the building should strive to make the most of the area and to appropriately integrate into the neighborhood.



A Pleasant, Inviting Space That Encourages Frequent Use

In the information era, many resources and services are readily available on our digital devices, so the building should be pleasant and represent a local feel. Features like rotating art displays, new materials and new technology offerings encourage returning to the space to discover something new.

Right Technology

The facility will provide great current technology. When available, we favor lightweight, low investment tech that can be replaced as part of normal operation.

Good Acoustic Design

A few areas like Teen Space and Quiet Space are incompatible due to noise and sound. We plan to create distinct learning zones through furnishings, flexible dividers, and good acoustic design.





Adaptable Framework

The library shelving and technology space should sit on floating flooring. The future will require adaptable power setups and places to connect to the web. By literally starting at the ground level, the facility is most suited for an ever evolving future.

Electronic Locking

A 28,000 ft² facility is going to have a number of different users. Electronic locking allows for access to the right users in the right spaces. It also allows for safe use in off hours.



Security-Minded

Lighting, cameras, and attentive staff will work in concert with each other to provide optimal safety. The building will also have the right secure zones in the right places, especially for children.

Flexible Interior Walls

Wall placement is usually the primary catalyst for a community center remodel. Where it makes sense, space will incorporate a more flexible design.

Distinctive Lighting

Warm well-lit spaces create a welcoming and secure facility. Distinctive, yet maintainable lighting, is a defining feature.

Movable Storage

Storage, like other elements, needs to be flexible. Rolling chair carts, group bins, and mobile cabinets create success.

Natural Light Placed Right

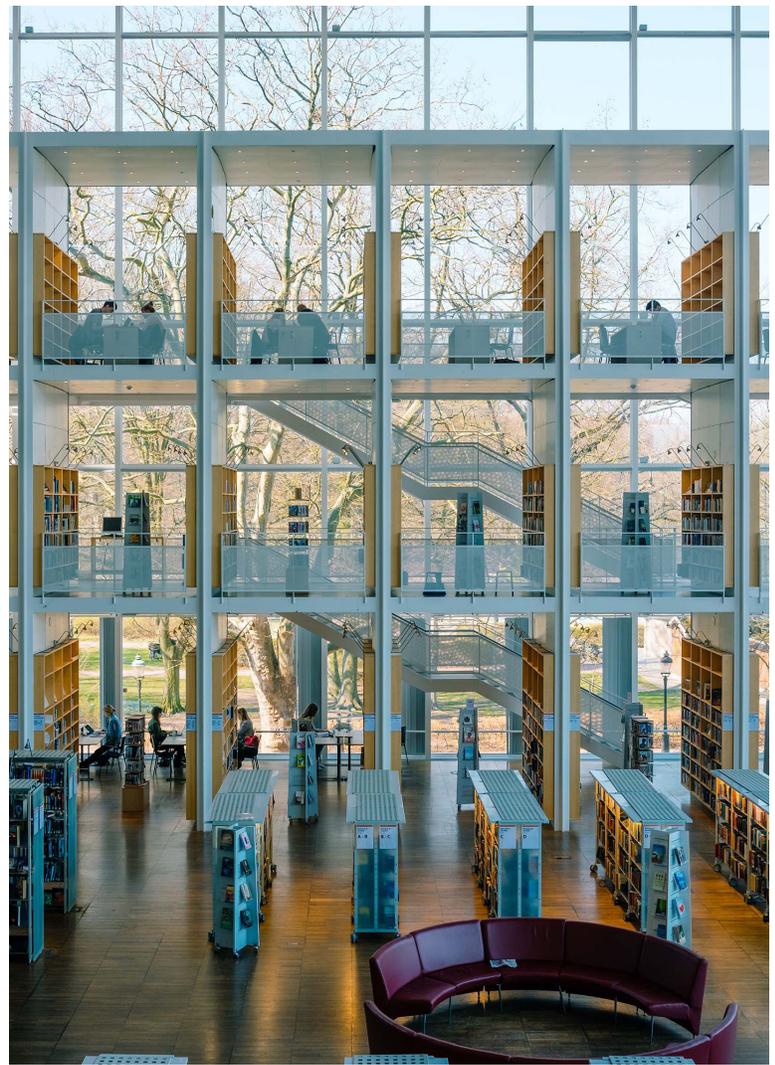
High windows that remove UV light and create a bright space where materials don't fade.



Access to Spaces

Designing with Access Control in Mind

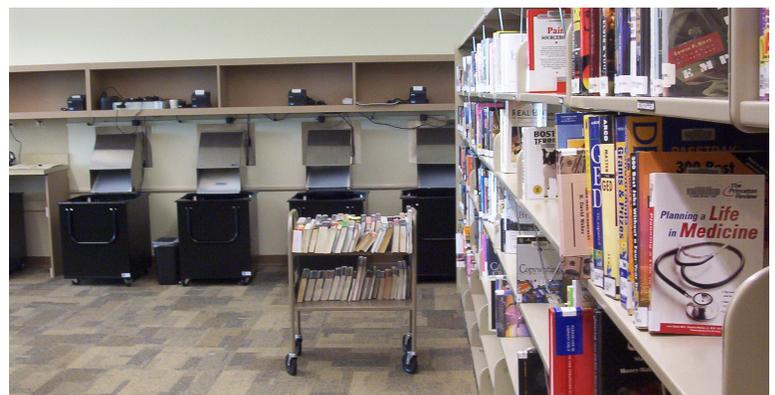
Public Area Open to All
Area which allows unrestricted movement. Will require staff management at all times.



Controlled Public Areas
Area where traffic is under the center's security control and may include semi-supervised exposure of the center's resources and equipment. Entry will be controlled via electronic locking.



Staff Area
Limited public access by appointment. Generally restricted during business hours.



For more information, please visit
www.mountvernonwa.gov

or call the Mayor's Office at
360-336-6211.



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Mount Vernon Senior Center

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