

## Meeting Notes

Dec 2, 2024

### Chinatown Branch Library, Boston, MA

Community Meeting #1 (Virtual)

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#### Virtual Attendees (approx. 50)

##### *Utile*

Brett Bentson, Maressa Perreault, Jose Cotto,  
Nicole Reamey, Jon Gregurick

##### *Public Facilities Department*

Carleton Jones, Jay MacNulty, Lisa Guscott,  
Angela Chan

##### *Boston Public Library*

David Leonard, Michael Colford,  
Alison Ford, Priscilla Foley, Khin That  
Mar, Melissa Andrews, Maija  
Meadows Hasegawa

## Meeting Notes

### Agenda

- Introductions
- Schedule and Process
- A Brief History of the Branch & Branch Location
- Building Program

*Brett prompts audience:*

*What types of activities do you see happening in  
multi-generational space?*

*Long term vs. Short term activities?*

- Preliminary Layout
- Next Steps

*Maressa prompts:*

*What do you like to do in the branch?*

*What's your take on adjacencies / space?*

- Q&A Discussion

## Community Comments & Questions

- Ed Flynn reiterates that this library must be safe & welcoming and needs to celebrate Chinese American heritage for all (general patrons / seniors / staff / children).
- Stephanie Fan comments that there is much window space, which is good for the inside but can be a negative. She wonders if there is a way to mitigate between a 'bright and airy' atmosphere while maintaining separation from the street.

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- Vivian Wu Wong: Will there be an opportunity to recognize/reflect community involvement (i.e. commemoration)? Recognize people who were part of making this happen (for example at the Franklin Park Zoo)?
  - Priscilla answers with yes but the form this will take is to be developed, may be local artists, or commemorative building elements, such as tiles or bricks.
- Will there be weekend hours?
  - Priscilla answers yes.
- David Leonard comments: loves the Chicago Chinatown Branch... especially the intergenerational capacity there.
- Lucy Shen: The projected opening is pretty far out, are there more accommodations / hours (i.e. weekend) planned for the current temporary branch?
  - Priscilla answers not currently, it is quite limited by small staffing / resources.
- Ed Flynn: Reiterates safety issues / mitigation facing current temp. branch and stresses their importance.
- Stephanie Fan: Asks about naming the BPL Chinatown branch after someone.
  - Priscilla answers that there is a city process for this.
  - David Leonard elaborates that this is not common, however it may be taken under consideration with a recommendation from Friends group. The general standard is to stay with neighborhood name. Mentions that it is an easier process to name specific rooms after individuals.
- Heang Rubin: Asks if there is a projected date for groundbreaking.
  - Brett answers we are at the mercy of the developer's schedule, may be approx. 2028. Notes it will also take time for BPL to move in once space is finished.

### Program and Adjacencies

- Oscar Chen: Imagines the multi-generational space mirrors some functions of Mary Soo Hoo Park and asks what is the maximum capacity of that space?
  - Brett answers that it is not determined yet but will be set during later phases.
- Community member: How many residences will be part of the project?
  - Alison answers 110.
- Stephanie Fan: As a member of Chinese Historical Society of New England, will there be a room dedicated to local / neighborhood history?
  - Priscilla answers with yes, this may be similar to spaces/archives at other branches
- Diane O'Donoghue comments as a follow-up to Stephanie Fan's above question: "The Chinese Historical Society of NE has a rich collection of objects. Perhaps the area at the entrance could be intended for display, if

- some could be a mix of contemporary and historical objects, to show the sustaining role of art and archive in the neighborhood.”
- Anita: Comments the current design feels like the Community Room will always be for community programs. And asks will spaces be flexible enough to serve dynamic demands of the space (e.g. influx of students studying for AP exams in May who could use the space as silent study space)?
    - Priscilla answers with the yes the spaces will take into account as many community needs as possible
    - Brett follows up with storage is key to flexibility, there will be enough storage space to account for diverse activities
  - Zilu Wang: Will there be a space for people to donate and exchange books, especially by Chinese authors?
    - Priscilla answers that many branches have active book sales and places for free book. Chinatown branch staff will find space once we are moved in.
  - Sung-Min Kim: Comments that intergenerational space is to encourage intergenerational interaction, rather than multiple generations existing in a space together. And asks if it is possible to design the space to encourage these intergenerational interactions?
    - Priscilla answers yes, that is the intent
    - Brett follows up with the nuanced interaction of the ‘commons’, community room, and classrooms as interwoven, interactional spaces and reiterates call for ideas from the community
  - Anita: Follows up to Sung-Min Kim (above) by commenting that it would be great to get more examples of multi-generational space looks like at other libraries (not necessarily BPL)-- to better understand the kind of community input you’re seeking. (notes that she doesn’t have clear idea of what this looks like other than it is a space activated by programming)
    - Brett answers we will research additional examples.
  - Michael Colford: Reiterates to chat/attendees to suggest what kinds of activities they would like to happen in these spaces.
  - Lincey Shen: Asks if there will be a kitchen / food prep?
    - Priscilla answers no, but there will be a nutritional librarian and information available
  - Li (“Lee”): Suggests Tai Chi / Yoga please!
  - Anita: Wonders how intergenerational activity like Tai Chi/ Yoga works when it is next to children’s / teen space?
    - Priscilla answers that these activities may take place in the community room
  - Zilu Wang: Follows up by asking “will there be any soundproofing designs internally or externally”?
    - Brett answers with yes. There will be adequate acoustic separation between library and residential zones of the building at the macro scale. Internally there will be an understanding regarding which

program areas generate more noise and will be sound proofed accordingly. However, there will be a deeper through around acoustics to determine areas that may have more sound, so it is not totally quiet. There is an acoustic engineer on the team to consult.

- Baolian Kuang: Asks if there is a place for a community bulletin board and notes that there are so many holidays it would be nice to use these as thematic influence. Also asks how to incorporate 'journey' / memorial to neighborhood and people.
  - Priscilla says absolutely yes to bulletin board. Open to suggestions regarding 'memorial' and will speak about it next meeting.
- Angela Soo Hoo: Asks will there be a maker space (two people hearted this)?
  - Priscilla answers these types of items may be included in the 'library of things' as items to check out.

### Library Design Approach

- Stephanie Fan: Asks where the second floor corridor leads.
  - Priscilla answers: to back of house / storage.
  - Brett follows up that it also leads to emergency stairs / secure doors and the intent is to provide clear sight lines and no hidden corners.
- Angela: Asks if the entry is set on Hudson St. (vs. Tyler St.)
  - Brett responds yes, we are at the mercy of the developer / residential entrance, and that we have been working with ACDC to benefit from an exterior 'porch', with trees / bike rack / accommodations towards that end.
- Stephanie Fan: Notes that she is happy with Hudson entrance but reiterates a focus on safety. Notes that there is no traffic signal / ability to cross Kneeland safely at Hudson St.
  - Jay MacNulty notes he is aware of this concern and will discuss with the appropriate departments.
- Li ("Lee"): Asks will there be library parking?
  - Angela answers no.

### Next Steps

- Angela: Would love to hear a recap from the 2017/18 meeting and if there are notes available. She is curious as to how the needs / wants have changed since.
  - Priscilla notes that meetings and information from 2017 are on the BPL website. Adds that some of the feedback from 2017 that BPL is including in the design of the new branch include computer use and access, longer hours, weekend hours, need for additional programming to keep people connected and combat epidemic of loneliness

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- Heang Rubin notes that the flyer that went out was not descriptive enough to let people know we were looking for feedback on interior design of the library.
- Written comments or questions can also be directed to: Priscilla Foley ([pfoley@bpl.org](mailto:pfoley@bpl.org)), 617-859-2233

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This memorandum represents our understanding of the events which transpired and the actions which were taken. If they do not conform to a recipient's understanding, prompt written notice must be communicated to the writer within 5 days of receipt for incorporation or revision. If no corrections or objections are made, this memorandum will be relied upon as a factual interpretation of this meeting.