

KEY POINTS FROM SHERIDAN LIBRARY PUBLIC MEETING

Wednesday April 15, 2009 - 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Recurring Themes:

- Closure of the Library
- Location
- Space
- Hours of Operation
- Collections
- Services
- Computers

Closure of the Library:

All speakers opposed the idea to close the Library. The Mayor who attended the meeting assured everyone that the Library would not close

A few members of the public shared their concern about staff losing their jobs if the Library were to close.

Location:

The public was adamant about the need to keep a community presence such as a Library in this vicinity. As transportation is a big issue in the area (availability and cost), many residents walk to the mall and library.

Some commented on the fact that the Library moved to the back of the mall, an inconvenient and less visible location. It is also a smaller space

A few people referred to the lease issue—there is a sense that they may lose their Library due to a lease versus a City-own situation—this is not reasonable for some.

Space:

The public commented on the need for more space. The previous location of the Library within the mall had lots of space. A few compared the size and layout of this facility to other adjacent libraries, observing that this one has next to no quiet space area, meeting space or enough space for children. There is insufficient space for more workstations and group study required by students. Youth identified their need for a space to “just hang”.

This “space” is also defined as a safe place, especially for after school youth.

Libraries in Transition

Hours of Operation:

A highly contentious issue, the public questioned why this library was subject to reduced hours. There seems to be little agreement on the most ideal hours-- the Library needs to be open more hours, in the morning for programming for children, after school and into the evening for students, and Sundays

Collections:

People want “more” and more up-to-date collections, generally speaking.

One or two attendees believe the collections are not as “relevant” to this community. There are not enough materials in other languages for all age groups.

A few attendees referred to specific collection needs and gaps. The following areas were mentioned:

- youth (graphic novel) collections
- more up-to-date non fiction youth collections
- dual language kits
- Toefel books (Test of English as a Foreign Language materials)

Services:

Not all services suggested by attendees are services that would be found in most branch libraries. Services mentioned that fall into that category include: employment services, ESL and language training, interpreters, music room.

More traditional library services mentioned by attendees include: orientation program to the library and its services; homework centre; programming for children.

Some attendees suggested that one reason circulation at Sheridan is low is the fine system. Users here are reluctant to take materials out for fear of fines they cannot afford. Some therefore prefer to use materials in-house

Computers:

Those who commented on computers identified these shortfalls:

- too few computers
- out of date
- slow response/limited bandwidth
- not well “organized” to allow group/homework study by youth

For the most part, reference to computer shortfalls came from the target community, namely youth. They expect the public library to have computers with features and ease of use like the ones they access in schools or at home.

However, many residents within this area may not have computers at home and rely on the library’s computers. Some adults (and youth) referred to the need for computers such as those in the Polycultural Centre to help create resumes and to explore employment opportunities