

YOUTH SPACE PLANNING

Consultation Report



In West Vancouver, we are so lucky
to have families, kids, teens, and caregivers who want to

Read • Study • Explore and Play in our Library. It's time to grow.

OVERVIEW

In the Fall of 2023, the WVML Youth Department undertook a robust space planning consultation process. Hundreds of kids, teens, caregivers, and educators told us about how changes to our existing space could help them learn better, use the Library more, and discover the world of imagination.

"Libraries are one 'everyday space' involved in transforming families' everyday experiences into high quality learning and engagement opportunities."¹

1 – Hassinger-Das, Brenna et al. "Play-and-learn spaces: Leveraging library spaces to promote caregiver and child interaction." Library & Information Science Research, vol. 42, no. 1, 2020. Science Direct, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2020.101002>.

424

survey
responses



350+ participants
in weekly votes on topics
like seating and design



3 focus
groups



WHAT DO WEST VANCOUVERITES WANT in an Expanded Youth Department?

MORE SEATING



60% stay for 1 hour+

We had the most feedback on the current lack of space available for studying and reading:

"It's often too crowded so I can't find a place to study."
"More spaces to read books in a free way."

And as the survey results show, kids and teens mostly use the Library to enjoy collections and study. These activities ranked ahead of attending a library program, getting help from a Librarian, and using a computer.

Research shows that **3 – 6 p.m.** is a vulnerable time for school-aged kids

"Providing children with access to quality programming, safe spaces, and supportive adults during the after-school hours presents opportunities to support and improve children's well-being." ²

What do you do the MOST when you're in the Youth Department?				
Browse the shelves	Look for a particular book or pick up a hold	Study or do homework by myself	Study or do homework with others	Read by myself
55%	52%	35%	28%	27%



MORNINGS + EARLY AFTERNOONS



AFTER SCHOOL



EVENINGS

2. UBC Human Early Learning Project. Use of Out-of-School Time, 2019. <https://discovermdi.ca/use-of-after-school-time/> Accessed 25 Jan. 2024

MORE SPACE for Different Ages and Noise Levels

The Youth Department serves a diverse range of ages; the needs of our patrons vary wildly over a typical day.

We heard that we need more zones within our existing space to meet all these needs.

"Sometimes, since the space is not really divided completely, it is hard to focus in the spaces provided."

"Comfy area for pre-teens, like [the] teen lounge. My Grade 2 kiddo loves to read and wants independence."



A Space that Meets WEST VANCOUVER'S GOLD STANDARD



West Vancouverites want an updated space that's on par with similar Library facilities:

"VPL Central Branch: The space is playful and explorative for children its magical."
"More activities for building and puzzles/ structures like the Toronto Public Library has in North York."



CALGARY PUBLIC LIBRARY

This is what respondents said about the look and feel of our current space:

"Some of the toys seem pretty old/worn down compared to other libraries."
"The overhead lighting is terrible."
"It's cluttered, the metal shelves are ugly."
"Libraries in Calgary where there was often a play area within youth department."



3 – Play Today: BC Handbook. British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2019, <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/early-learning/teach/earlylearning/play-today-handbook.pdf>. Accessed 25 Jan. 2024.

PLAY AND WONDER

"Play should have a central role in the lives of young children—from infancy into middle childhood and beyond." ³

Survey respondents of all ages said learning and play is important to them. We have so much potential in our space for engaging, fun, interactive, and curiosity-sparking educational experiences.

"There would be a place for little kids to play and energy generating swings or bicycles."
"More comfortable and colourful areas and more hands-on activities."
"Somehow enhance the physical space so it feels more magical—transport the kiddos!"



ENERGY BIKE



PLAY

SAFER AND MORE ACCESSIBLE SPACES

We know how important safety is to everyone in the Youth Department:

"Generally, the youth area does not have very good visibility"

"Would love a place for the kids to get books and also hang out. Safe space for kids in the community."



We heard that the current height, configuration, and organization of our Collections makes it hard for people to find what they're looking for.

"I find the book layout a bit difficult to navigate and find material. It's not overly attractive either. However, I LOVE the book collection you have!!!"

While our current space meets general physical accessibility standards, we want to do more to make everyone welcome:

"I'm impressed with public-service organizations that incorporate sensory rooms into their facilities to support and engage neurodivergent kids."

HOW CAN WE EXPAND EFFICIENTLY?

2005

Last renovation

2013

Administration becomes Room 14 teen space

2024

TIME TO GROW!

We want to maintain the solid foundation of our existing space. Our location on the Second Floor, with high ceilings and lots of natural light, is ideal for giving young people the space they need without interrupting other adult patrons.

"like the separation from adult areas. It makes it feel more like a space for kids and less like an afterthought."

"I love that the youth department is all on the same level."



The Youth Department already does a lot with 4.2 FTE

18,000

people attended programs



10,000 +

questions answered by Youth staff



2,000

kids and teens participated in Summer Reading Club



300,000+

Kids and Teens materials circulated



We received so much feedback on our amazing staff: almost 50 unprompted survey comments, to be exact. Here's a taste:

"This library has the best librarians that make me feel welcome."

"We appreciate all the librarians, thanks for awesome book recommendations and warm approach with our children."



We want our innovative staff to maximize their potential with a more flexible, adaptable space to serve our community.