Mesquite Library

LAS VEGAS-CLARK COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

MESQUITE, NV

Executive Summary

SCOPE OF WORK

Programming
Planning
Architecture
Interior design
New construction of library facility
Renovation of existing branch to
create new learning center

BUDGET

$6.17M

The projections that led to the Mesquite Library budget were completed three years prior to actual construction and thus relied on outdated numbers. In the time between the Library Distrcit's budget projections and the actual construction period, costs had risen significantly and had to be accounted for in the budget. The design team worked with the Library District to address this circumstance and provide potential solutions. Ultimately, the Library District was able to restructure available funds to account for the increase in construction costs, which totaled $6.3M.

Mesquite Library, a branch within the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, consists of a 13,000-square foot new construction library facility and the renovation of the existing 6,500-square foot branch into a new learning center. The project was sparked by the consistent flow of students in the facility, to the point that the library was noticeably overpopulated during its hours of operation. The programming efforts introduced play areas, makerspaces, and interactive learning spaces, to name a few, driven by the 21st century library model, which inspires organic interaction between people. The library is no longer a place where patrons go just to check out books and study or read in silence.

These programmatic considerations were architecturally translated into forms that took inspiration from the surrounding context: the natural, earthy tones of surrounding land and vegetation and the flat-top mesa surrounding Mesquite. Both indoor and outdoor spaces were designed to accommodate a variety of activities and events like food festivals, art shows, community celebrations, concerts, ceremonies, and the like.

Executive Summary

Mesquite Library is a community library with an expanded resume. Its modernized program fulfills its community's needs because the community members themselves had a large part in its design.

One year after the completion of Mesquite Library, program and class offerings at the branch increased by 26%, which led to a 90% bump in participation.

Community Engagement

Community Engagement

COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

Collaboration between the community members allowed for a freely-flowing exchange of ideas regarding the success of services that the library currently provides and the services and programs the community would like to see provided.

UNDERSTANDING THE SCOPE OF WORK

The initial sentiment was to abandon the existing facility, but the interest displayed in community charrettes and brainstorming sessions made it clear that there was no interest in seeing the existing building go. Rather, the community members were more interested in an evolution and expansion of the library's service model.

The initial efforts at transforming this facility into a modern and contemporary library that adequately addressed the needs of its users focused on the analysis of the existing program and services. While the traditional library is built upon a model that sees the patron visiting the library almost exclusively for checking out books, the 21st century library focuses on a service model that exponentially builds upon that. Libraries have become a community center for patrons, and the staff in charge are limited spatially and functionally when it comes to executing the services, programs, or tasks that patrons request. The shift in recent decades has elevated the library typology; books are still housed and offered in libraries, but the full breadth of services goes much further.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Understanding that Mesquite Library was overpopulated, it became clear that the facility was a popular one in the community, and the most urgent task was to rework the program so that it addressed the evolving needs of its patrons. Upon conducting workshops with the community, interviews with current staff, and receiving feedback from both regarding what was expected of the facility but was not yet developed, the design team synthesized a 120-page program document that explained the expectations held by the community of a library facility and the means and methods to accomplishing the fulfillment of these expectations. The document's strategies and proposals also align with the LV-CCLD's Vision 2020 strategy, which seeks to modernize all its branches in the coming years.

The input collected during community workshops led to the creation of a quantitative and qualitative framework of action through which the library can transform into a contemporary facility supportive of the community's aspirations and ideas.

Community Engagement

Educational Environment

Educational Environment

PROGRAM AS CATALYST

The comprehensive program document outlined the needs of the library and ways in which they can be met. The program itself accounts for numerous facets of community life that can take place within the modern library.

The table of contents provides an introduction into the breadth of information provided to the client and the level of thoughtfulness that fueled the subsequent design process.

Educational Environment

ALIGNING WITH THE FUTURE GOALS OF LVCCLD.

With the development and advancement of the library typology, the design team explored various options for the many hats to be worn by Mesquite Library as a modernized and contemporary facility.

Library as Town Center envisions the facility as an economic development engine. Learning Culture perceives the Mesquite community as one that isdedicated to life-long learning – most easily carried out at the library, no matter the learner's age.
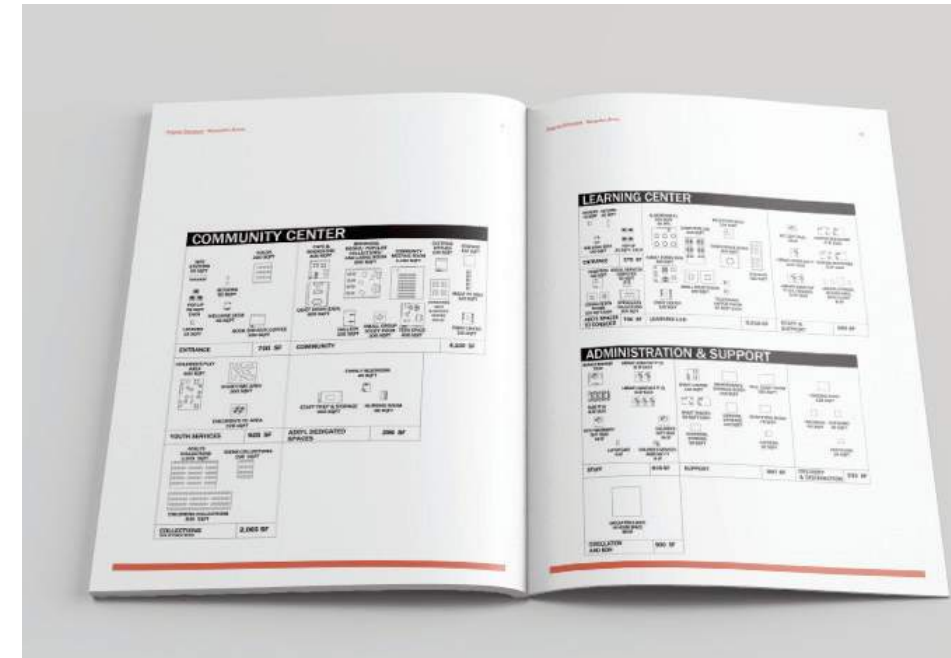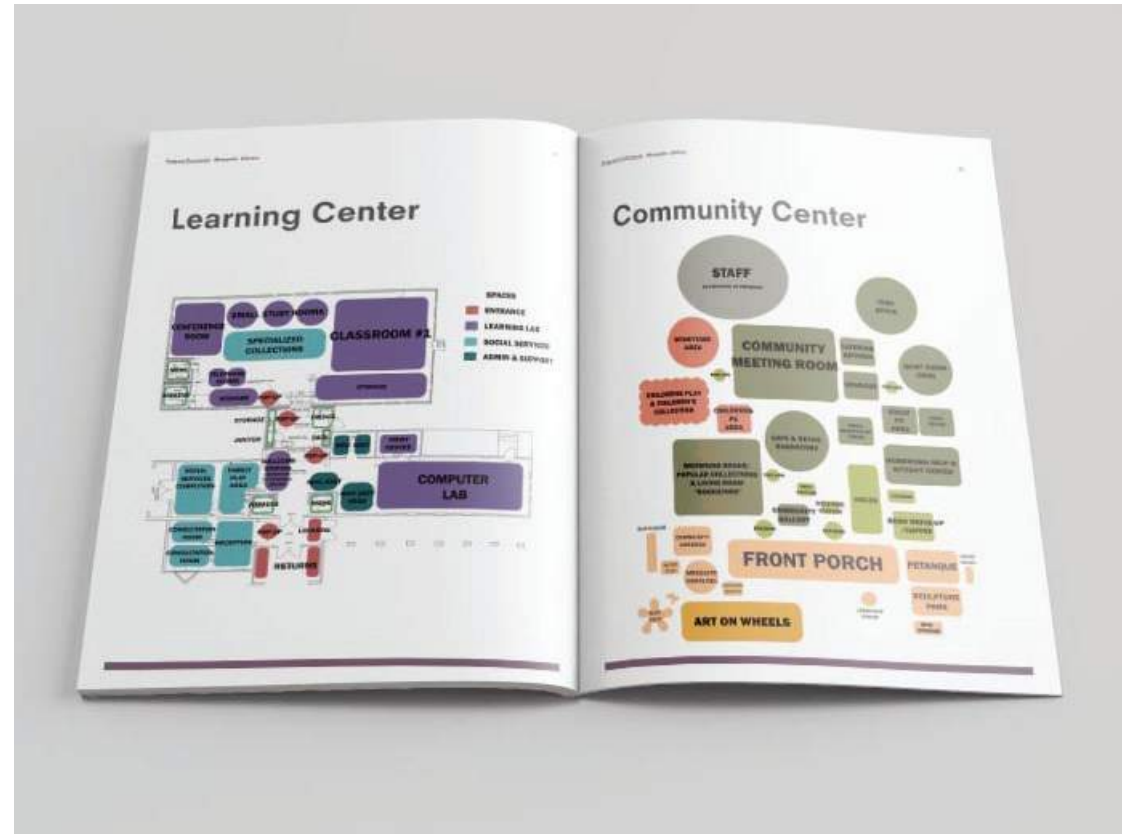
ADAPTING PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The pages above feature the various components that come together to construct a program that is custom-tailored to the Mesquite community. This study, done in tandem with community stakeholders, explores the user, activity, outcome, and purpose of each part of the modern library.

Educational Environment

DIAGRAMS + SYNTHESIS

The spatial diagrams indicate a suggested approach to allocating the program spaces. The new site was proposed to be the community center, and the existing Mesquite Library site was proposed to be the learning center.

While the new building generated programmatic elements from scratch, the program document also discusses ways in which the existing facility could be revamped in order to contribute to the enrichment of its community.

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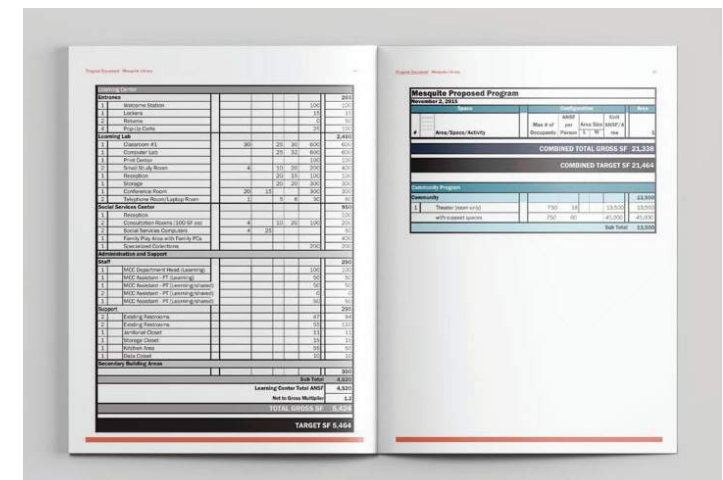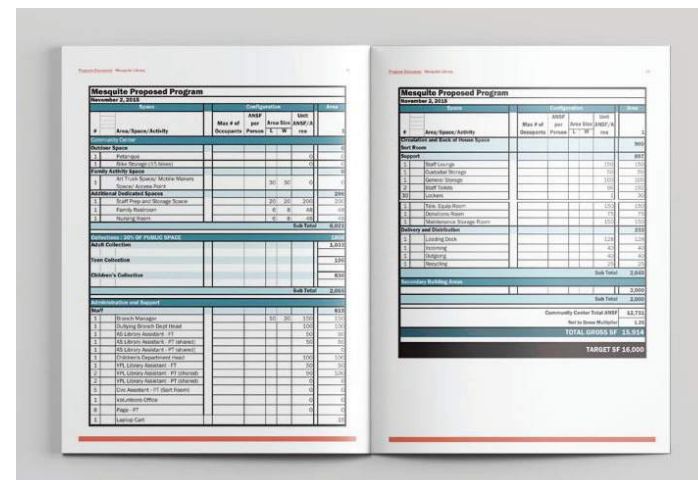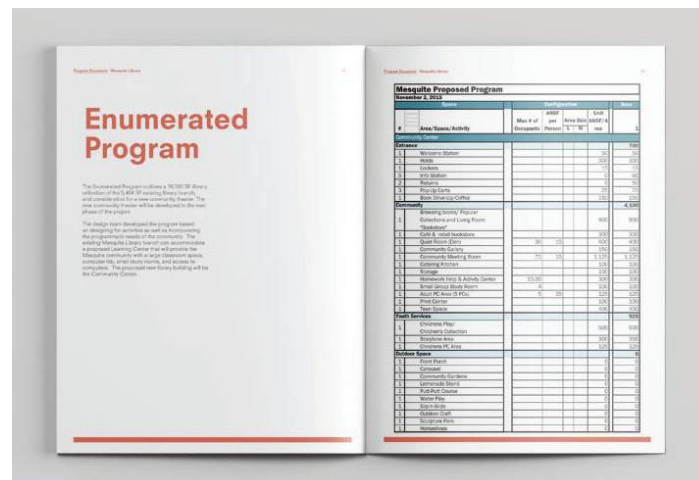
Full enumeration of all programmatic elements.

SPACE DIAGRAMS

The final (and largest) portion of the program document describes the functional objectives of the individual spaces represented in the program. They were intended to be diagrammatic as they would be implemented and expanded upon during design.

Physical Environment

Physical Environment

21ST CENTURY LIBRARY

The programming efforts for Mesquite Library introduced play areas, makerspaces, and interactive learning spaces, to name a few. The driving force behind such modern spaces is that the modern library is becoming a place where interaction between people happens naturally. It is no longer a place where patrons go just to check-out books and study or read in silence. These programmatic considerations were architecturally translated into forms that took inspiration from the surrounding context - the natural, earthy tones of surrounding land and vegetation and the flat top mesa surrounding Mesquite.

ENVIRONMENTAL GRAPHICS

Part of the interior design included a wayfinding system that the design team included by using iconography of various classes and programs the library would now offer. The design of the graphics matched the vibrance of the library's color palette.

TACTILE + VARIED

The children's area allows for free and organic play as well as group storytime.

A PLACE TO JUST BE.

The addition of the cafe within the library environment sets the facility up to be a true third place for all generations and community members from all walks of life. The opportunity to grab a refreshment as you're waiting for chess club to start or for your tutor to meet you for homework help creates a welcoming, safe, and most importantly, accessible place outside of the home, work, or school.

Physical Environment

It was determined that an addition would be necessary to resolve the issue of overcrowding. Sitting on a large 3.2-acre site, the new building will sit between Mesquite Boulevard and the existing library site to the north. During site design, it was decided that the new facility would be placed as close as possible to the existing library in order to maintain the physical and visual link between the two buildings. The west side of the new building will engage Desert Road, conveniently leaving space for the parking lot on the east side of the site against the existing drainage channel and community trail.

A 20-foot wide utility easement runs east to west along the north side of the property, necessitating breathing room between the north border of the site and the building. This space allows for the design of an open plaza that would accommodate both community and library functions as necessary.

Physical Environment

The plaza is envisioned as a multi-functional space, most importantly one which will provide unity and engagement between community members. Programmatically, it will serve as a multipurpose space to be used for food festivals, art shows, community celebrations, outdoor concerts, ceremonies, and the like. Alternatively, it can be used as a quiet are, outdoor reading space, or active play area.

The bosque of trees that lines the plaza provides shades and simultaneously softens it through the introduction of natural elements into a designed environment. It also pays homage to the history of Mesquite and the natural Bosque of trees that existed along the river running through the city.

The orientation of the building is purposefully north to south in order to mitigate harsh daylighting conditions but also to ensure that interior spaces can be daylit as much as possible. The east and west walls have minimal openings so as to protect from direct penetration by the harsh desert sun.

Results

Results

WE DON'T LIBRARY LIKE WE USED TO

In the first year after Mesquite Library's grand opening, the following milestones have been met:

- the number of library cards issued tripled
- total visits jumped by 15%
- program/class offerings increased 26%
- overall participation in program/class offerings increased by 90%

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