

# MEMORANDUM

DATE: September 15, 2022  
TO: Baldwin Public Library Board of Directors  
FROM: Rebekah Craft, Library Director  
SUBJECT: Updates to Phase 3 project

## CAFÉ

Jaclyn Miller and I met virtually with MCD on Tuesday, August 29 to discuss updates to the café space. MCD reduced the size of the counter originally shown in the image below from the January 2022 renderings because the Board decided against a full service café.



After reexamining the space, they had several objectives:

- Maintain a clear walkway from the front vestibule out to the Nanawall doors on the east side of the café.
- Ensure that any furniture placed in front of the ramp does not obscure the ramp; ideally nothing placed in front of the ramp should be taller than the ramp.
- Maintain sightlines to the artwork installation above the ramp and preserve the original Birkerts spandrel glass windows.
- Provide ample seating for library users.

They adjusted the layout of the café and moved the coffee counter into a newly created alcove on the east side of the café. This would help to save money on a custom, freestanding café counter and will also create a wider walkway from the entrance to the terrace. The backsplash will be fully washable.

The proposed café will have a sink, countertop space, coffee vending machine, built-in cabinets with locks, and a small fridge inside the cabinets. There will be a sign above the café counter saying “coffee” that can be read from either side.

Earlier this year, we surveyed staff and Board members about potential uses of the café and outdoor area. We want to make sure that our café can accommodate the following uses:

- Host an after-hours indoor/outdoor fundraiser in the spring/summer/fall with entertainment (speaker/author/band), food tables, bartender, live music
- Use it for messier programs - like cooking demos, gardening demos, craft demos
- Host an after-hours author talk outside and use the cafe inside for drinks/refreshments
- Consider renting the space for private events hosted by residents who have BPL library cards

We would be able to accommodate the above uses for the café with the new recessed countertop by using the built in café alcove and also pulling 2-3 tall café tables close to the café alcove to use as additional, flexible counterspace for a bartender, food table, or cooking demo.

Not having a permanent fixture that cuts into the middle of the café walkway greatly helps to maximize flexibility.

#### **Café questions, with responses from MCD**

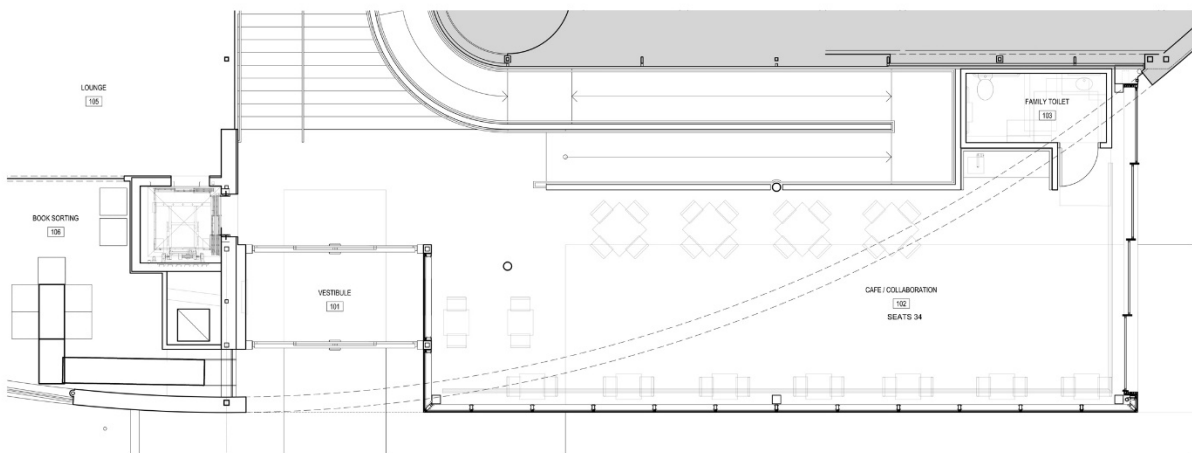
1. **Will there be vending machines in the new space?** There is no wall space for regular-sized vending machines because two walls are windows, one is an elevator door, and one is a ramp. Adding vending machines will reduce space for gathering. If we eliminated the sink, we could put a vending machine next to the countertop coffee vending machine.

Additionally, whatever we put in the café will be visible from the street and the sidewalk and will be a visitor’s first impression of the library. If we add a row of vending machines to the café, visitors will see a line of brightly lit machines that look more like a stadium or college cafeteria than a stately library.

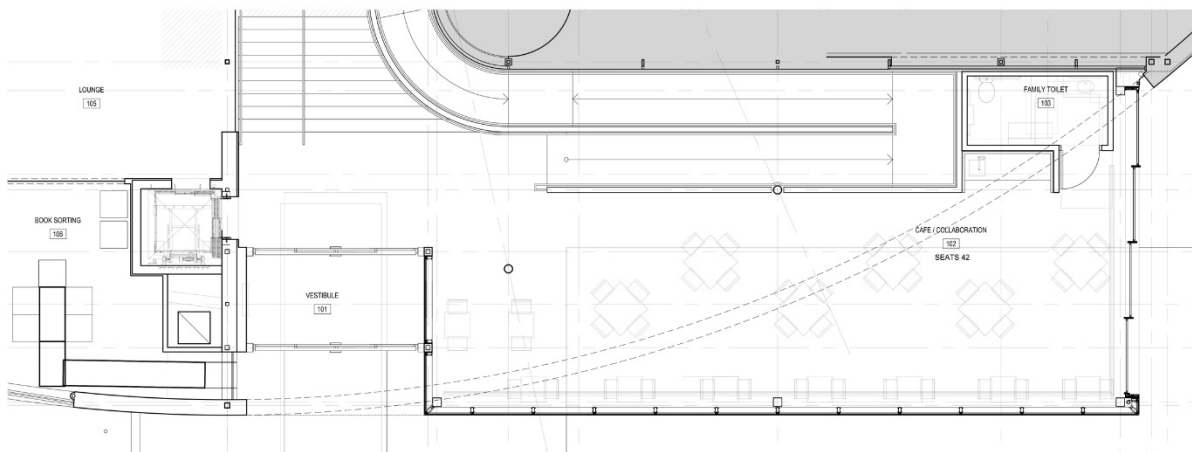
2. **What is the cost differential between a built-in bar and a larger custom piece?** The half circle counter option is about 2/3rds more expensive the built-in counter shown.
3. **Is this location too close to the restroom?** Often times you have drinking fountains and vending machines right outside of restrooms. With the way the door to the bathroom has been adjusted and the wing wall has been added to the side of the coffee bar, we have created enough of a separation between the restroom and the café counter. The millwork for the coffee area has been designed to look like it is a separate little space. The bathroom door will swing out and have an automatic closer on it, so a person will never be looking into the bathroom.

From a practical perspective, it shifts the coffee away from the main entrance and moves it firmly within the gathering space. It's a destination counter that makes it intentional to go into the coffee area to get coffee, rather than walk by a coffee machine and then continue walking into the library. Signage will make it clear where the coffee service is available. You would be able to see the coffee sign from inside the front door and from the terrace.

4. **What are the dimensions of the counterspace?** 6'8" wide and 28-30" deep
5. **Can you confirm that the café with this smaller counter fits 32 people?** MCD has developed two furniture layouts. The first has chairs and tables for 34 people. The second option has chairs and tables for 42 people.



*Option A, shown above, with chairs and tables for 34 people.*



*Option B, shown above, with chairs and tables for 44 people.*

**Here are some items to discuss at the September 19 meeting related to the café:**

1. What is your vision for this café space? What can be improved or changed about this proposed design that would help the café to better fit your vision?
2. Do you want to offer a café counter with a refrigerated section for sandwiches and baked goods? This would require health department oversight.
3. Are you happy with the café alcove or do you want to explore a different furniture layout?
4. Do you want to keep the sink in the current design? Or do you want to have space for a full-size vending machine and a countertop coffee vending machine?
5. Do you want to offer snacks and beverages on a freestanding countertop on the honor system? Library staff would be responsible for ordering and restocking these items.

**STAIRCASE**

MCD has been able to incorporate a \$10,000 cost-saving measure to the front entry by moving the location of the staircase forward a few feet. The staircase position from their initial design would have required contractors to cut into the existing foundation to create a base for the stairs, and then would have required reconstruction of the foundation to fit around the stairs. The updated staircase design will butt up against the existing foundation and would not require extra excavation and reconstruction fees. This will also allow the top of the ramp to be pulled back to the south, making it less expensive to install the security gate into existing columns instead of adding two little columns to store the gate. About 15 square feet of space will be added to the main level, giving more space to the circulation desk and main lobby on the main floor at the top of the steps.

The original design had 5 steps, a landing, and then 5 steps, for a total of 10 steps.

MCD is now proposing two different staircase options:

- **Option 1:** Eliminate the center landing and continue to use 10 steps. Lengthen the treads to be 12" deep and the risers 6" tall.
- **Option 2:** Create a new staircase with 5 steps, a landing, then 4 steps, for a total of 9 steps. This option keeps the original landing, but will shorten the length of the treads to be 11" and increase the height of the steps to be 7".

For comparison, the front steps of the library are currently 11" treads, with 5.5" risers.

**Stair questions, with responses from MCD**

1. **What was the original thought behind the landing in the middle of 10 steps? Is anything taken away by changing the design?** The landing was added initially to emulate what is already present in the Birkerts addition. The front entry currently has 6 steps, then a landing, then 5 steps. Throughout the project, we have been trying to pay homage to the existing building and in the case of the stairs, we were sticking with similar proportions.
2. **Why have 10 steps without a landing?** 10 steps without a landing are very common. A typical floor to floor height of stairs in a commercial building would be 14 feet. In the proposed staircase, the total height of Baldwin's entry stairs is 5 feet. The maximum riser height you can have on a stair is 7". You might have 24 steps (12 steps, landing, 12 steps) in a commercial building.
3. **Is a staircase with no middle landing more dangerous than a regular staircase?** There may be a higher instance of people tripping on a staircase with ten steps and a landing in between, because it is unexpected and people would be surprised by it. There will be a contrasting strip along the nose of each step for a visible differential between each step. By adding a landing, you may also find that people stop to chat on the landing in the middle of the staircase and block others from using the stairs.
4. **Are there railings on both sides and down the middle of the stairs?** Yes, there is a central railing and there are railings along both sides of the staircase.

### **OTHER COST SAVINGS**

MCD has been slightly modifying the placement of various items in the lobby. The Birkerts addition used a system of columns and horizontal braces to create structural supports that are similar to a lattice grid. They were able to move the elevator 8" closer to vestibule so that it does not interrupt the structural lattice.

*This will probably save \$20-30,000 in structural work.*

MCD adjusted the design to keep an existing column and paint it white rather than removing it and structurally reinforcing the wall elsewhere. This will break up the glass in the entryway (close to where the existing sorter room is) and will also make the glass less expensive, because it will not be as wide.

*Keeping the existing column with the glass will save \$10,000.*

### **WATER RETENTION STORAGE**

Nowak and Fraus, civil engineers, completed a site survey during the design development phase where they determined the coefficient of storm water runoff for the proposed addition. City

engineering conducted a review of the site plan submitted by Nowak and Fraus in August. City staff notified MCD that an extensive water storage basin will need to be added to the Phase 3 project due to a decrease in permeable space from the proposed addition. MCD estimates this will cost around \$80,000.

City code requires that commercial buildings occupying a certain percentage of space must install water retention storage for storm water runoff. This City code has been in place for many years and has been waived for City buildings and the Phase 2 addition in the past. Due to changes in leadership at the City, new City staff members are requesting that all City buildings comply with the City code for permeability standards.

MCD asked that I reach out to the City engineering department to see whether or not this requirement could be waived. The engineering department will speak with City Manager Tom Markus to see if the City will consider waiving this requirement. With the increase in heavy rainfall events due to climate change and in light of our recent water damage, I believe it is prudent for the library to provide the recommended amounts of storm water runoff storage.

In the meantime, City Engineer Melissa Coatta reviewed the drawings and suggested the following value engineering:

- On the existing drawings of the roof of the proposed addition, there is 4" drain tile in the front and 6-8" roof leads. These could be upsized to 24-30" pipe to provide for more storage. Storage available in the pipes can count for the total storage requirements. The current plan from Nowak and Fraus requires 142 feet of 30" storm sewer, so you might not need a basin.

I passed along Coatta's suggestion to MCD and they will be reviewing alternative storm water storage solutions to meet the City's requirements. MCD will be able to slightly shift the three trees on the terrace to the south to accommodate an underground basin. Another option that would help to reduce the coefficient of runoff would be to expand the garden or planting space included in the terrace.