

Project Narrative

The project site is currently an undeveloped section of the Eastmark Great Park (at 5036 S. Eastmark Parkway, Mesa AZ 85212), where the Southeast Mesa Library will emerge as a new amenity – an open marketplace woven into the fabric of the overall park and community. Adjacent to the site are Basis Mesa, a K-12 charter school to the north, the Kinetic Park neighborhood to the east opposite South Eastmark Parkway, the lake, Event Pavilion and existing park parking to the south, and an open grass play field to the west. The pedestrian crosswalk over South Eastmark Parkway, and the existing park sidewalk to the south define the main force lines for the building, laying out the major cross axis of the site, and subsequently the building, and locate the central market around which the program spaces are developed. These entry points to the site reinforce the library market as an amenity of the park, as the library and access are seamlessly integrated with the existing park. Main entry to the site and building is defined by a pedestrian plaza lined with and shaded by date palms, which can double as a pedestrian plaza during special events, or as a patron parking lot during typical use. This palm grove reinforces the library as a park amenity, mirroring the landscape language of the southwest park entry at Ray Road and Inspirian Parkway. A walk-up exterior bulk book drop is provided on the exterior of the building at the main entrance, alongside 24-7 access exterior hold lockers for book pickups for patron convenience.

Primary patron vehicular access is provided to the southeast – through connection to the existing park parking. Patrons can drive through the plaza, and for convenience, temporary parking spots are provided for book or patron drop-off at the main entry. As agreed with the City of Mesa, the library is taking advantage of the existing park parking spaces, supplementing with (28) patron spaces and providing more room for community programs on site. Separately, patrons who have parked in the existing park parking lots, or who are visiting the library from the park, can make their way into the building from the secondary south or west entries as well. Staff and service vehicular access is separated from the patron experience, with a lot to the north of the building providing (20) staff parking spaces, and turnaround space for trash collection and delivery service vehicles. A low site wall around this parking lot separates the lot from the Basis Mesa site, discouraging parent pickup from the staff parking lot. The building itself is elevated two feet from the existing site grade, with openings in the exterior volumes emphasizing and taking advantage of views from the building to the lake and adjacent park. The lifted floor allows for further collaboration between architecture, landscape, and interiors, with open access from exterior to interior secured by selectively navigating patrons between this grade separation and with landscaping, and with large sliding glass walls that can open and break down the barriers between exterior and interior, allowing patrons to enjoy the experience of the library in a park. We are requesting a reduction in the quantity of required parking spaces on-site to a total of (48), with additional spaces shared with the existing adjacent Great Park parking.

Evocative of open air markets around the world, the library is enveloped by the high-volume market roof. The underside of the market roof is lined with a slatted acoustical ceiling spanning over top of smaller ‘market stall’ volumes – the featured elements of each program area. This high roof bends and folds in a nod to the collecting tent structures of markets, with intention to direct rainwater to the landscape in thoughtful ways. The library is focused inward on the open market space, with five distinct zones at the perimeter that each contribute to the vibrancy and activity around this space. Starting at the east entry, patrons are greeted by the central service desk, and with the most popular and used functions – holds pickup, book drop, volunteer book sales, and adult media. Moving clockwise, patrons are then exposed to a feature element that is unique to Mesa Public Library’s program offerings

– the THINKspot maker space – in a prominent location adjacent to the main entry. With glass walls, and the ability to open to the exterior shaded plaza on two sides, patrons can showcase their creativity and produced work for other guests to see. Continuing to the Community zone, patrons can either make their way through the open Market, or from the southern entry, to the meeting room and multipurpose space. Support functions are located on the exterior, allowing the programmed activities in these spaces to engage and enliven the open market. On the south of the multipurpose room, a sliding glass wall allows for activities to exceed the space footprint, opening up to an exterior deck. The adult collection area contains two major feature elements – on the perimeter several smaller huddle spaces and zoom rooms, and to the north across from THINKspot the young adult lounge. As more active spaces, these are focused with openings towards the main market, with quieter more reflective reading spaces located along the western exterior wall, which is shaded by roof overhangs to the west. Similarly to the multipurpose room, the south wall of the adult area is a sliding glass wall that opens to a reading deck overlooking the lake and pollinator gardens, allowing patrons to move seamlessly from interior to exterior to enjoy the park from within the library.

To the northwest, the featured element of the children's area is the storytime program room, with an operable wall allowing the space to flex with attendance – opening to the market as needed for larger events. Reading nooks are built into the perimeter exterior wall, and an exterior play area is located along the eastern wall, in a shaded area between the children's collection area and the storytime program room. Lastly, the staff and service zone is located at the northeast corner of the library, backing the automated sorting room up to the interior and book drops for patron convenience, and with service and staff access provided through the north entry into the staff parking lot. Patron services including vending and restrooms are accessed off of the market space, while staff offices and meeting rooms are pushed away from the market, taking advantage of both northern light, and separating from the activity of the main central space for quieter, focused work. A staff patio and hub is located on the west corner, providing staff a quiet, shaded exterior space for breaks.