

THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC BRANCH LIBRARIES AS COMMUNITY RESOURCE HUBS

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PROJECT BRIEF

Public Libraries

The Chicago Public Library is currently working on a 2026-2030 Strategic Plan and a companion Capital Plan to improve the function and facilities of their 81 locations across Chicago. These plans will outline a vision for the institution, and will influence library choices, spaces, and spending in the coming years.

“Chicago deserves a library system shaped by the people it serves,” said CPL Commissioner Chris Brown.

Our studio process will be firmly grounded in research, evaluating ongoing public engagement, and data analysis supported by a focus on the human experience, generating integrated solutions that address current needs while also anticipating future demand.

The studio will bring a unique perspective which will unlock new opportunities for transformation across all of Chicago's 77 neighborhoods and future branch libraries. Together, we will strategically dream and articulate the vision of what the Library must become to meet the needs of tomorrow.

The studio project will be a 20,000 sq ft new branch library in one of Chicago's neighborhoods. The site selection will be made after the 1st assignment evaluated the data of current branch locations.

The studio will address accessibility, new techniques of inquiry and construction technology, and sustainability with an emphasis on ethical building materials.

A Chicago trip will include a site tour of the new Chicago branch library at the new Obama Presidential Center and the Harold Washington library in the loop.

In addition, the team projects will be submitted for the 2027 ACSA Ethical and Equitable Materials Design Competition, sponsored by Design for Freedom/Grace Farms.

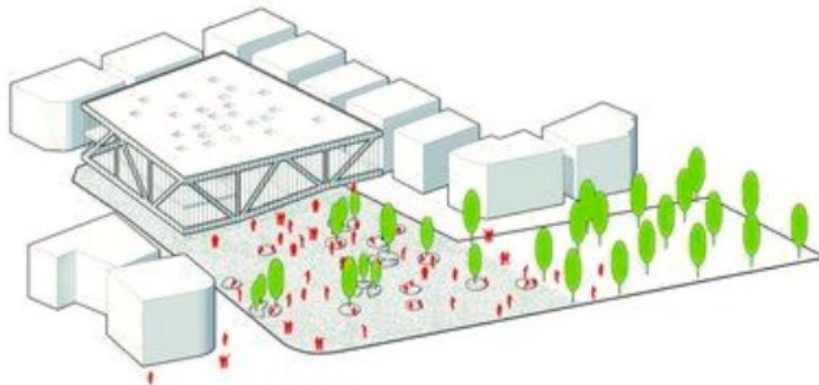
Studio Goals

- The goal is to generate designs that do not merely provide function. The designs must transform the idea of branch libraries as new neighborhood nucleus.
- The goal is to present your materials in order to convey the benefit of your design concepts to the city.
- The goal is to clearly define the terms “ethical sourced materials” as they pertain to this studio project. To have a full understanding of the technologies and the economic benefit of these technologies. The research will be documented in a publishable book form.
- The goal is to meet the studio criteria of design excellence.

NAAB Criteria:

Student Criteria (SC) Student Learning Objectives and Outcomes

SC.5 Design Synthesis—How the program ensures that students develop the ability to make design decisions within architectural projects while demonstrating synthesis of user requirements, regulatory requirements, site conditions, and accessible design, and consideration of the measurable environmental impacts of their design decisions.



MEET AT THE LIBRARY

Key Studio Topics

The list of key issues to be addressed in this studio will include, at a minimum: research methodologies, urban contexts, sustainable building strategies, site analysis methodology, site planning strategies, precedents, use-program development and analysis, integration of building and landscape design, and a special emphasis on ethical and equitable building materials.

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Reading Resources

Sustainability:

1. Design for Freedom – Ethical Material Sourcing

<https://www.designforfreedom.org>

2. Living Building Challenge: Standard 4.0

<https://living-future.org/lbc/>

3. The Practice of Biophilic Design, Stephen R. Kellert & Elizabeth F. Calabrese

http://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/21459d_81ccb84caf6d4bee8195f9b5af92d8f4.pdf

4. Biophilic Design Toolkit

<https://www2.living-future.org/biophilicdesigntoolkit>

5. Early Energy Modeling

Cove Tool: <https://www.cove.tools/>

Sign Up here for one year free: <https://app.covetool.com/login/>

6. Who Builds Your Architecture Publication

<http://whobuilds.org/who-builds-your-architecture-a-critical-field-guide>

Student Work Evaluation Criteria

I. Attitude

- A. Willingness to generate ideas
- B. Willingness to develop ideas
- C. Willingness to respond to criticism
- D. Degree of participation (attendance, group discussion, etc.)
- E. Seriousness of purpose as demonstrated by hard work

II. Methodology

- A. Ability to generate relevant architectural ideas
- B. Ability to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant ideas
- C. Ability to develop ideas in a coherent fashion
- D. Ability to express relevant ideas in a graphic format
- E. Ability to articulate and present ideas verbally

III. Studio Project evaluation

- A. Quality of intentions
- B. Quality of ideas
- C. Quality of formal resolutions
- D. Demonstrated common sense
- E. Demonstrated technical awareness
- F. Completeness of project
- G. Quality of presentation

Comments of the guest reviewers may influence a portion of the grade. The final studio project grade will reflect judgments about individual growth, overall effort, and contribution to the studio's shared learning through discussions in studio project pin-ups.

Grade Weight Distribution:

Attitude and Participation	10%
Research and Presentations	20%
Studio Project	70%