



**Charlotte Mecklenburg Library  
Request for Proposals**

**for**

**Consultation for Exemplary User Experiences in Specialized  
Public Library Technology Spaces**

**Issue Date: January 31, 2025**

**Proposal Due Date: February 28, 2025**

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## INTRODUCTION

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library (the “Library” or “CML”) is seeking a strategic partner to develop an unparalleled user experience for visitors to the new Main Library in Uptown Charlotte. The Main Library will be the community’s public commons: a dynamic destination where people connect to learn, meet, laugh, share, celebrate, grow, access information, participate in civic life, and build a stronger community together.

Upon opening in FY26-27, Main Library will usher in a new era of public technology, with specialized spaces that encourage hands-on experiences. Through an actionable user-experience plan and custom content for these spaces—an Immersive Theater, Digital Visualization Lab, and Innovation Lab—CML will connect the community to technology that expands possibilities and inspires new ideas.

## About

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is one of America’s leading urban public libraries. Located in Mecklenburg County, the library system serves a diverse community of over one million citizens through 21 branches and on-line services. Since our founding in 1891, and as an original Carnegie Library in 1903, our role as a provider of lifelong education and learning in this community has never been more relevant.

CML is beloved by many, with 70% of Mecklenburg County residents stating that they had visited a Library location in the last 12 months.<sup>1</sup> There were well over 2.2 million visitors to the various Library locations in Fiscal Year 2024.

The Library has 458 full and part-time employees, along with an extensive volunteer network that engages more than 1000 people throughout the year. For FY2024, operating expenditures totaled \$53.8 million.

Charlotte Mecklenburg Library is currently in the process of adopting a new strategic direction for FY26-28, with a major component being the opening of a new Main Library. The iconic new Main Library will be the flagship of the system; a free, open, and accessible information hub for all as well as a destination for local, regional, and national engagement.

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<sup>1</sup> 2024 Mecklenburg County Community Survey

## Mission, Vision, Values & More

Our mission is to improve lives and build a stronger community. Charlotte Mecklenburg Library envisions itself as the essential connector of a thriving community of readers, leaders and learners. We value learning, openness, respect, inclusion and leadership. Our brand promise is to be accessible and welcoming to all while celebrating and supporting the joy of reading and learning, fostering exploration and personal growth, and connecting individuals to each other, the community and the world.

We believe wholeheartedly in intellectual freedom. The Library is committed to protecting the First Amendment's guarantee of free and open access to information and ideas—a principle vital to our democracy and to each individual's search for knowledge. We seek to provide our diverse community with a comprehensive collection of materials, services and programs providing a wide range of knowledge and perspectives.



1 Immersive Theater Concept Rendering, Snøhetta

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The new Main Library, located in Uptown Charlotte, will be a dynamic hub for community engagement, information access, and innovation. With its advanced technology spaces, CML seeks to redefine the traditional library experience, encouraging creativity, exploration, and connectivity.

The specialized spaces to be developed include:

	Description	Base Specs	Potential Experiences
<b>Immersive Theater</b>  <i>Open to floor</i>	The Immersive Theater was designed to grab visitor's attention as a main feature on the first floor, encouraging them to engage with dynamic content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large, DVLED tiled video wall</li> <li>• Wall mounted concealed loudspeakers</li> <li>• Wall mounted touch panel for basic AV system presets.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short-form videos</li> <li>• Motion-sensor operated games</li> <li>• Interactive art</li> <li>• Slideshows</li> <li>• Presentations</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Visualization Lab (DigiViz)</b>  <i>Capacity ~20</i>	The data visualization space, named DigiViz, is an adaptable space with 270 degree curved screens that should allow for multipurpose use in a uniquely designed room.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 270-degree tiled DVLED video wall along the front of the space</li> <li>• (3) AV floor boxes located near the front of the space for non-preprogrammed content to be input into the system</li> <li>• AV floor box for central computer station input</li> <li>• Distributed ceiling loudspeakers and subwoofer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentations and programs</li> <li>• Movie screenings</li> <li>• Immersive gaming</li> </ul>
<b>Innovation Lab</b>	As the Main Library's makerspace and prototyping center, this	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3D Printers</li> <li>• Vinyl Cutter</li> <li>• Embroidery Machine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crafting circles</li> <li>• Makerspace programs</li> <li>• Open exploration</li> </ul>

Capacity ~10	lab will hold specialized equipment and crafting supplies that allow for experiential learning, and tactile experimentation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• CNC Router (wood cutter)</li><li>• Laser Engraver</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local creator showcases</li><li>• Artist-in-residence workshops</li></ul>
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## SCOPE OF WORK

The consultant will provide:

**1. Content Strategy Development:**

- Develop a comprehensive plan for experiences and content in each specialized space, aligned with CML's mission and community needs.
- Assess and identify additional hardware and software needed to appropriately equip each space and advise on budget and potential vendors.

**2. Hiring and Collaboration:**

- Assist in identifying and/or hiring creators and experts to produce custom content for the Immersive Theater and DigiViz spaces.
- Identify and recommend collaborators for makerspace and other program activities.

**3. Programming Models:**

- Advise on example programming for each space, tailored for diverse teen and adult audiences, and assist with developing specialized content.

**4. Sustainability and Refresh Plans:**

- Create guidelines for updating and maintaining content, ensuring relevance and engagement over time.

**5. Community & Stakeholder Engagement:**

- Facilitate prototyping, test groups, feedback sessions, and other methods of community engagement as needed.
- Incorporate feedback into final plans.

**6. Technology Integration:**

- Recommend innovative technologies to enhance user experience.
- Ensure accessibility and inclusivity in all solutions.

## Project Leads

Emery Ortiz – Chief Strategy & Innovation Officer  
[eortiz@cmlibrary.org](mailto:eortiz@cmlibrary.org)

Christine Keitt – Library Project Manager  
[akeitt@cmlibrary.org](mailto:akeitt@cmlibrary.org)

## PROJECT CONSIDERATIONS

Excellent foundational work has been done in envisioning Main Library's new technology spaces, which include documents found in the appendix. However, the ideal consultant or firm will be highly adaptable, flexible, and creative throughout the development process, as construction is ongoing and variables are likely to surface. The Main Library is also an incredible testament to public-private funding and will involve stakeholders across a variety of groups.

CML is also dedicated to the highest standard of user privacy and data security, and through its partnership with Mecklenburg County Government has a set process in place to vet and approve new technologies. Once a final proposal is accepted and approved, additional time may need to be integrated into the proposed timeline to account for new technology approvals.

Funding for this phase of the project has been generously granted by the Knight Foundation; however, additional funding for full creative development and/or additions to the project scope may be needed. When presenting a full proposal, it is advised that any content creation estimates be separated from the consulting, strategy development, and other administrative work involved in the project scope.

## Target Audience

While the library system serves residents of Mecklenburg County across all ages and demographics, the Main Library will have specialized services focused on adults. With these immersive technology spaces CML hopes to capture emerging adults (ages 18-25), young professionals, students, and technophiles of all ages. We also want to maximize accessibility across various user needs and abilities, along with reducing hesitation or reluctance to engage from audiences who may be less comfortable with technology.

### 2020 Census Data for Mecklenburg County

- 1.15 million population (projected to add more than 600,000 new residents and reach a total population of 1.7 million by 2050)
- 35.5 median age
- \$80,365 median income
- Nearly half of the population has a bachelor's degree or higher
- 69.2% are employed

### Possible Uptown User Groups:

- Visitors to Charlotte
- Students from nearby campuses (UNCC, CPCC, Johnson & Wales, JCSU)
- Corporate employees (Bank of America, Honeywell, Truist, Lowe's, etc.)
- Culture seekers (museums, arts, parades, sports)
- Support Services seekers (unhoused, re-entry, government and nonprofit services)
- New residents
- Current residents

## DELIVERABLES

1. Full user experience plans for the 3 primary technology spaces in the new Main Library, including recommendations and budgets for content creation, equipment, and any additional items needed.
2. List of recommended creators and vendors to fulfill outlined plan.
3. Sustainability and refresh plans for each space.

### Deliverables Timeline

Item	Date
Contract Award	March 21, 2025
Initial Meeting with CML	April 2025 (in-person preferred)
Initial Concept Development Completed, including estimated budgets	June 2025
All Final Deliverables Due	No later than December 31, 2025
Main Library Opening	TBD FY2026-2027



## EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

The Library shall be the sole judge of the services offered in its determination of the successful vendor. The sole basis for selecting a proposal will be the responses to this RFP and the interview/presentation. The first phase of the evaluation process will be the review of all submitted proposals. A short-list of individuals/firms may be invited to move forward in the process to an interview and presentation. This will be an important aspect of the evaluation process that offers the Library an opportunity to see how the proposer's solution meets the critical components of the RFP, along with showcasing relevant work. A committee will evaluate the responses and select the top proposal. The Library may elect to make a final selection without holding an interview/presentation.

Every submitting vendor must meet the following requirements:

- Complete Proposal Certification
- Full response to Proposal Components

Short list selection will be based on the criteria listed below:

<b>Evaluation Categories</b>	<b>Possible Points</b>
Written Project Work Plan that responds to the Scope of Work defined in RFP	40
Proposed budget and expenditure plan	20
Demonstration of vendor's past success	20
Qualifications of key personnel	10
References	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

The award will be made pending evaluation of all proposals submitted and approval by the Library's Board of Trustees, anticipated in late March 2025. The successful vendor will be determined based on both the cost and the criteria list above as providing the best value to the Library.

The Library reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, to waive any non-material irregularities or informalities in any proposal, to request additional clarification of proposals, to be the sole judge of suitability of the services for its intended use, and further, specifically reserves the right to make the award in its best interests. Proposals received become the property of the Library and shall be used as the Library sees fit. All information contained in the proposals will remain confidential until after the award and signing of the contract. If a vendor has included any trade secrets, those proposal items/pages should be marked as such.



## **Contract Required**

The successful vendor will be required to enter into a written contract with the Library, setting forth the conditions specified in this RFP, as well as other standard terms and conditions. The successful vendor shall be solely liable for compliance with all specifications contained herein.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

### **Conditions**

It shall be the proposer's responsibility to read the instructions, the terms and conditions, specifications, and other parts of this RFP, and comply with all requirements and specifications herein. Proposers are responsible for complying with all changes, additional information or corrections that may result from questions at the Pre-Proposal Meeting.

### **Terms**

All prospective providers shall meet all specifications and terms and conditions. By virtue of the proposal submission, the provider acknowledges agreement with and acceptance of all specifications except as expressly qualified in the proposal. Non-substantial deviations may be considered, provided that the provider submits a full description and explanations of, and justification for, the proposed deviations and shall note as an exception on the Exceptions to Proposal page included with this RFP. Whether any proposed deviation is non-substantial will be determined by the Library in its sole discretion.

Any and all costs associated with the preparation of a response to this RFP are the responsibility of the responding proposer and are not to be passed on to the Library.



## RFP TIMELINE

The following is the intended schedule for this RFP:

Action	Date
Issue RFP	January 31, 2025
Pre-Proposal Meeting	February 14 at 2:00 p.m. EST
Submit Written Questions	February 17, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. EST
CML Provide Responses to Questions	February 21, 2025
Proposals Due	February 28, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. EST
Committee Review and Finalists Selection	March 3–7, 2025
Finalists Notification	March 13, 2025
Final Board Approvals	March 17, 2025
Contract Award	March 21, 2025

## Pre-Proposal Meeting

The Library will host a virtual Pre-Proposal Meeting at 2:00 p.m. EST on February 14, 2025. CML staff will provide a review of the RFP and answer initial questions potential bidders may have. The meeting will occur via Zoom. All firms attending the meeting must register at [www.cmlibrary.org/rfp](http://www.cmlibrary.org/rfp) by 12:00 p.m. EST on February 13<sup>th</sup>. The Pre-Proposal Meeting link will be sent to the email address provided during registration. All interested firms are encouraged to attend the conference; however, the meeting will be recorded and be posted online at [www.cmlibrary.org/rfp](http://www.cmlibrary.org/rfp).

Any information resulting from the Pre-Proposal Meeting that conflicts with, supersedes, or adds to requirements in the Request for Proposal, will be confirmed by email to all those attending the pre-proposal conference and will be posted as an addendum to the RFP. The confirming email constitutes the official inclusion of the additional information or changes as part of the RFP.

## Proposal Questions

Interested firms who are unavailable for the Pre-Proposal Meeting or have additional questions regarding the RFP may submit questions at [www.cmlibrary.org/rfp](http://www.cmlibrary.org/rfp) for the purpose of submitting the best proposal possible. Questions should be submitted at [www.cmlibrary.org/rfp](http://www.cmlibrary.org/rfp) by 5:00 p.m. EST on February 17, 2025. Questions submitted should include the applicable RFP section. The Library will not accept any questions after this date and



time. All questions received and the associated responses will be posted on the Library website at [www.cmlibrary.org/rfp](http://www.cmlibrary.org/rfp).

## **Proposal Submission**

Five (5) paper copies in a sealed envelope/package and one (1) electronic copy of the proposal by way of a USB drive, including all required forms, must be submitted to the attention of Emery Ortiz, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, Library Administration Center, 510 Stitt Road, Charlotte, NC 28213 by 2:00pm EST on February 28, 2025. Emailed and faxed submissions will not be accepted. All risk of late arrival due to unanticipated delay – whether delivered by hand, US Postal Service, courier or other delivery service is entirely on the submitting proposer. It is the sole responsibility of the proposer to have the proposal physically in the Library's office by the specified time and date. The time of delivery will be marked on each proposal when received, and any proposal received after the proposal submission deadline will be rejected.

## **Proposal Instructions**

Each proposal package (5 paper copies and 1 electronic) must include the following:

- The Proposal Certification which includes general information about the proposer.
- The Proposal Components listed later in the RFP, which include a proposed project work plan, a proposed budget and expenditure plan, demonstration of the applicant's past performance, qualifications of key personnel, and references.
- A USB with digital copies of all required documents.

All proposals will remain in effect and shall be legally binding for at least one hundred twenty (120) days after the proposal submission due date.

## **PROPOSAL COMPONENTS**

### **1. Proposed Project Work Plan (40 points)**

Please provide a detailed written Project Work Plan with clearly defined tasks and services that responds to the Scope of Work of this RFP defined above and includes these specific elements:

- Approach and methodology
- Research and execution plan
- Timeline with milestones
- An outline for post-implementation evaluation metrics and sustainability
- Any plans or expected processes for client communication, reporting, and approval.

### **2. Proposed Budget and Expenditure Plan (20 points)**

Please provide a proposed budget that includes costs for each element of the Project Work Plan and an accompanying expenditure plan.

The total cost of all items must not exceed \$70,000 for the scope of work as defined. The vendor will be responsible for staying within the budget presented in the proposal and as outlined in the contract. It will be expected that the successful applicant will be able to achieve all the goals set out in the proposal and within the approved timeframe, with any additional funding for content creation or work outside of this project scope being the responsibility of the Library.

### **3. Demonstration of Applicant's Past Performance (20 points)**

Please describe your experience in providing technology and/or planning services for other public libraries or community institutions within the last five (5) years. Specifically cite your roles and responsibilities for each project or contract. Please list the following:

- Project title, location, year completed and scope
- Client's name
- Successful project elements
- Project challenges and how they were overcome including corrective actions and other responses to notices of deficiencies, if any
- How successes or lessons learned can apply to this contract

All submissions are allowed and encouraged to provide any other information which might aid the Evaluation Committee in ascertaining appropriate qualifications and experience. This



includes collateral from completed projects, such as media, that may be used to demonstrate relevant history and/or experience required to successfully complete CML's project.

The firm must disclose any lawsuits or any other type of proceedings – such as arbitration – resulting from any project undertaken by you that is still pending or has occurred on projects within the last five (5) years. Provide related details and outcome of the lawsuit or proceedings.

#### **4. Qualifications of Key Personnel (10 points)**

Identify key employee(s) who will conduct the Proposed Project Work Plan. Include:

- Name, title, resume
- Role and responsibilities for this project
- Describe their experience in providing the services required in this RFP with specific examples

#### **5. References (10 points)**

Please provide a reference list of at least three (3) clients with which you currently have or have had contracts of similar scope and/or complexity within the last five (5) years. Include the client's name, address, telephone number, and email address of the contact person.



## Proposal Certification

This proposal must be submitted to Charlotte Mecklenburg Library, Attn: Emery Ortiz, at 510 Stitt Road, Charlotte, NC 28213 no later than 5pm EST on February 28, 2025

### Proposal Certification

By signing below as an authorized representative, the Proposer agrees to be bound by the representations, terms and conditions contained in its proposal and agrees to enter into a contract based upon the terms, representations and conditions contained in the proposal with the Library if this proposal is approved and awarded by the Library.

Proposer (Firm Name) \_\_\_\_\_

Federal Tax ID # \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

This form must be completed legibly in ink or typewritten. An original, manual signature is required.



## **Acknowledgement of Addenda**

If issued, Proposer hereby acknowledges receipt of the Addenda issued. Provide the number of the addendum you received, and the date received.

Addendum No. \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Addendum No. \_\_\_\_\_ Dated \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

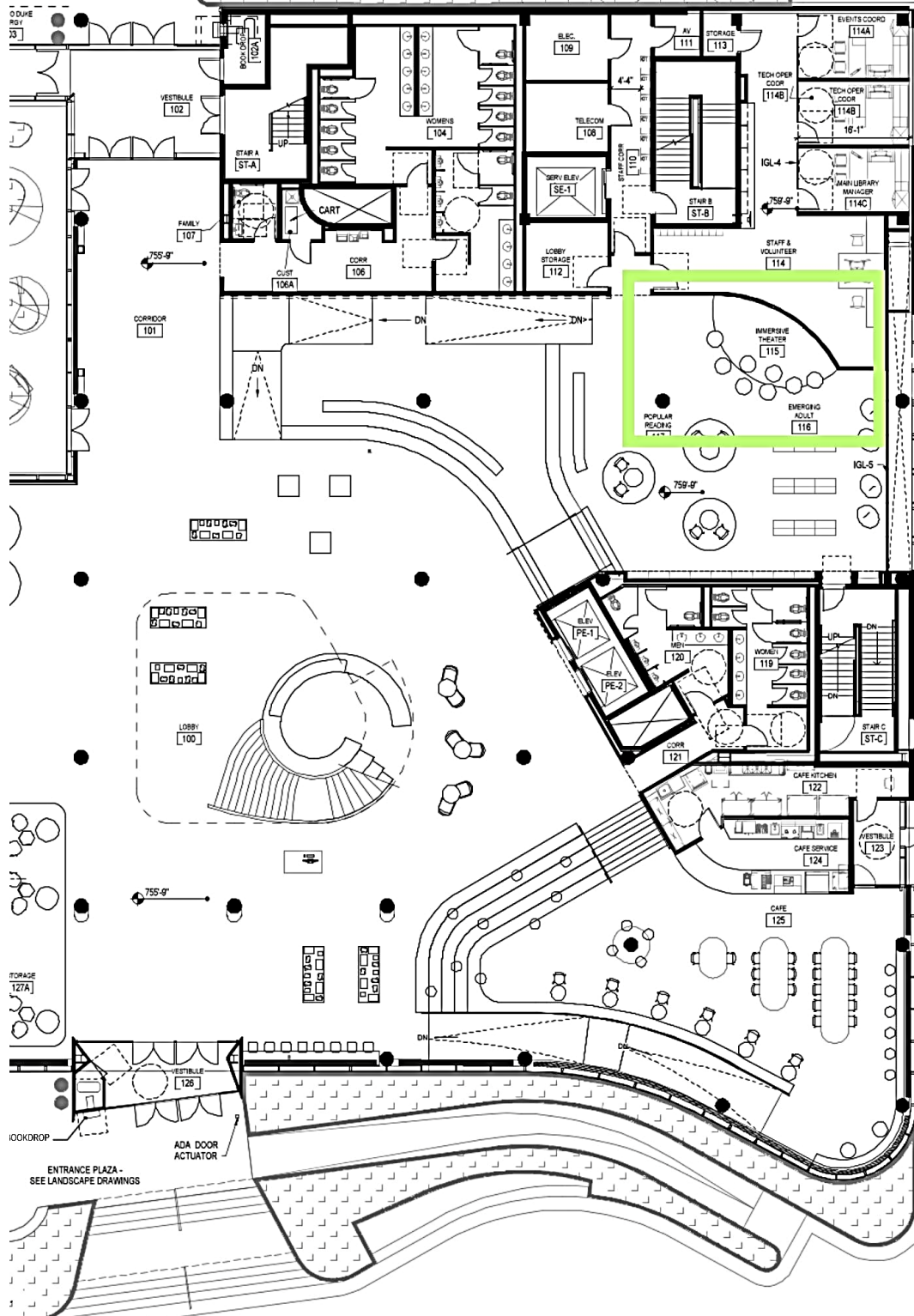
Note: Please print clearly



CHARLOTTE MECKLENBURG  
**LIBRARY**

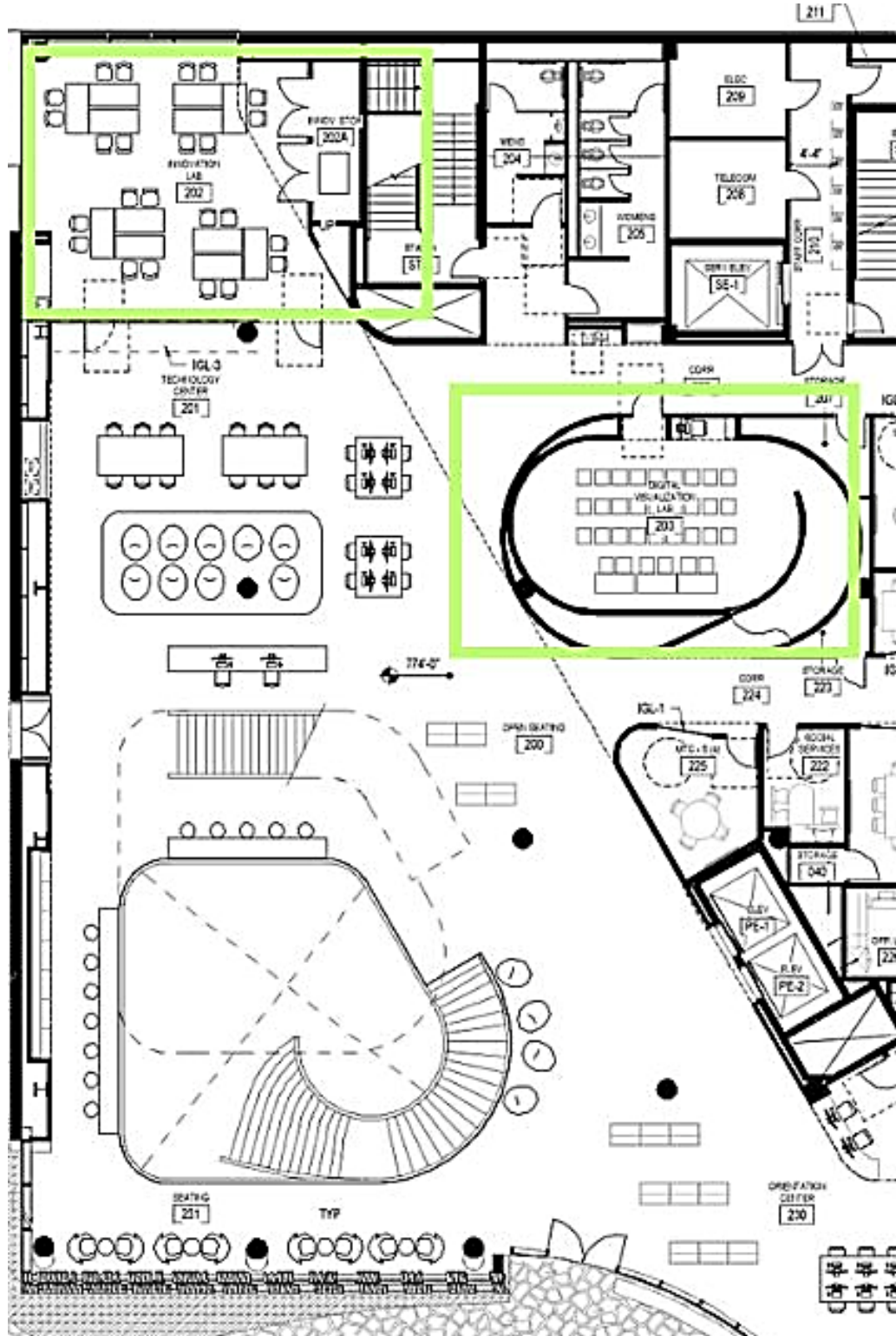
**APPENDIX A**

*Level 1 of New Main Library with Immersive Theater location, Snøhetta*



## APPENDIX B

*Level 2 of New Main Library with Innovation Lab & DigiViz Lab locations, Snøhetta*



## APPENDIX C

### Public Commons Overview

## Library as Public Commons: Building a Stronger Community

