

WalnutCreekPatch

GOVERNMENT, ARTS

Inside Look at the New Walnut Creek Library

The library opens itself to the media, including to yours truly, and we all seem to like it. (But we'll have to see--gulp--what the San Francisco Chronicle's architecture and design critic says.)

By **Martha Ross** June 7, 2010

With books finding their ways to shelves, city staff, architects and representatives of the Walnut Creek Library Foundation treated members of the media to a tour of the new 42,000-square-foot library. There's a little over a month to go before opening day July 17

The city is billing the library as the community's "family room." Actually, like a lot of the great rooms in some of the more architecturally-forward homes in town, the library feels light, open and spacious. It boasts tall windows that bring in views of the trees around Civic Park; a stylish mix of wood, metal and textiles; eye-catching art and hidden high-tech, eco-friendly amenities; and plenty of comfortable sitting areas and private rooms for kid-friendly projects, work, private relaxation, and socializing--as quietly as possible, of course.

Perhaps the big new thing we all learned was that the library could receive its LEED certification (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). The library is going after silver status.

According to architect Paul Jamtgaard, of Group 4 Architecture, the library's spaces flow in an east-west, north-south manner, creating that sense of a crossroads that arises from Walnut Creek's own history as the crossroads of Contra Costa County.

The two-story building also tries to take advantage of its location in Civic Park. In addition to two-story-tall windows, it also has glass doors leading out onto terraces and balconies. From the balcony off the business center, you essentially walk out onto a view of just trees. You feel a little bit like you've walked out into Tarzan's treehouse.

You can listen to what Jamtgaard has to say about the library's role in the future of Walnut Creek in this accompanying video.

Other features of the library:

- It will have 90 computers throughout the building, including 20 in the technology center.
- There are separate children's and teen areas, with the children's area taking up 5,000 square feet of space (the former library was 9,000 square feet). The children's area is further divided into reading materials and seating areas for pre-school age kids, and then for school-age kids.
- The teen area will have a huge, flat-screen TV for special movie screenings--including of works by local teens--and in order to host Wii and video gaming events. (Grand Theft Auto tourneys? Forgot to ask.)
- The library came in on schedule and under its budgeted cost of \$41.5 million.
- The underground garage--which did add to the cost--will still allow the library to have a total of 150 parking spaces.

The big grand opening is Saturday, July 17 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Stay tuned. We plan many some more stories on the library on Walnut Creek Patch as July 17 approaches.

We recently published this Walnut Creek Patch Primer, which offers [an overview](http://patch.com/A-rB5) (<http://patch.com/A-rB5>) of the timeline, controversies, successes and hopes behind Walnut Creek's newest landmark. Even if you hated the whole idea of this project, you can't avoid the fact that the library's opening is going to be a huge event and Walnut Creek, and this civic building could alter the face of downtown.

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