

Somerville Library Outdoor Wi-Fi Pavilion

Implementation plan

Project description

Since 2017, [CultureHouse](#) has created pop-up community spaces in vacant storefronts. We specialize in creating temporary spaces that are high-impact and community-driven. Since we cannot safely gather inside, we are working with partners in the greater Boston area to develop outdoor spaces as an adaptive response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the past 5 months, everything has gone virtual. While internet platforms have allowed many industries to continue working and family to stay connected they also left many people behind. According to Census data, 86.7% of households in Somerville, MA have internet subscription—leaving 14.3% without ways to stay connected while under quarantine. Additionally, internet speed, size of household, and number of computers are all factors that can limit access to the internet amongst residents.

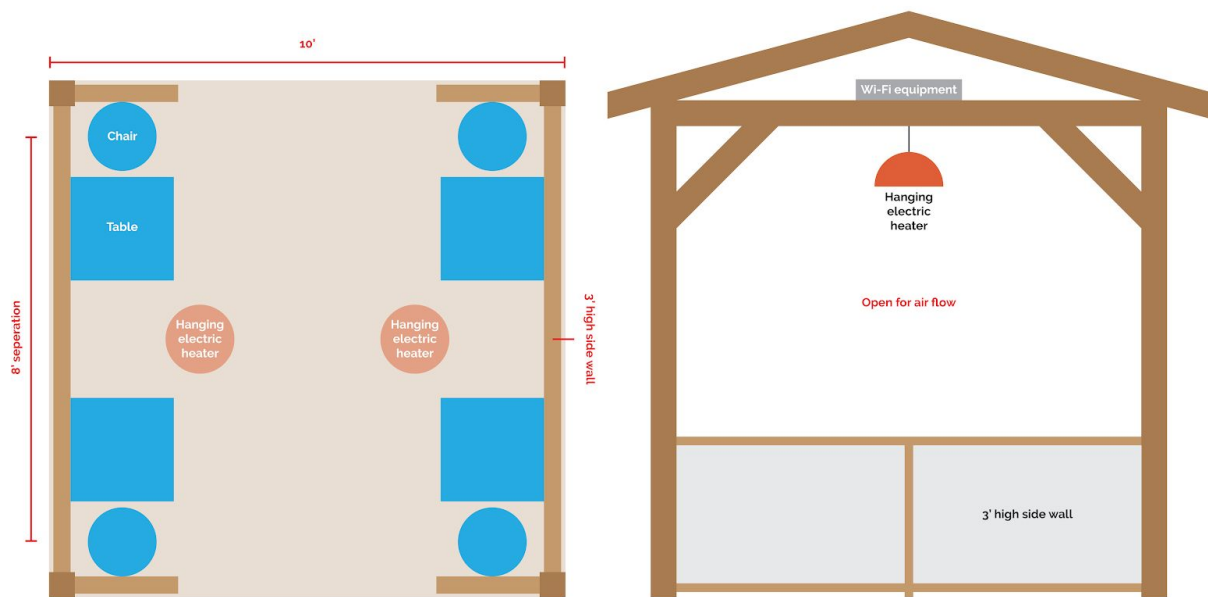
Libraries often fill this access gap by providing free Wi-Fi and computers, a great service to the community. However continuing to offer these resources indoors presents a hazard to health during COVID-19.

To solve these challenges, we are working with the Somerville Public Library to create a pop-up, COVID-safe, outdoor free internet library for the Somerville community. Inspired by a pavilion, the design will provide protection from rain and other elements while remaining open to the air for COVID-19 safety. The library computers will be set up at small tables six feet apart and additional tables will be available for people to bring their own computers and use the Wi-Fi. The mini-pavilion structure will include heat lamps to extend the season for outdoor internet usage.

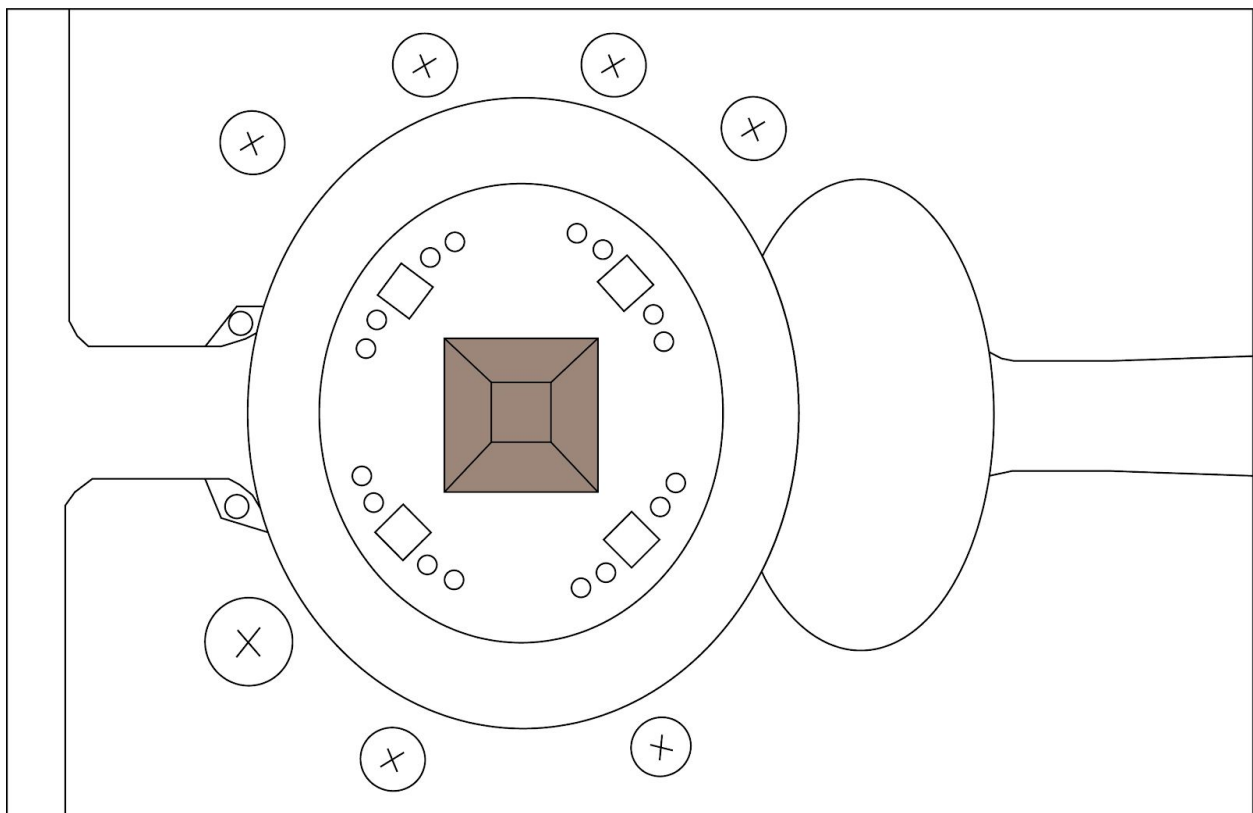
Design

The pavilion structure will be an off-the-shelf model measuring approximately 10' x 10' and rated for 3,500 lb of snow load. On two sides, there will be walls approximately 3' tall to protect from wind. Otherwise, the structure will be open to allow for proper air flow. Inside the pavilion, there will be four tables each spaced at least 6' apart to allow for proper social distancing. Electric radiant patio heaters will be attached to the roof structure as indicated in the diagram below. These patio

heaters will be rated for use in a covered space. For more information on the safety procedures, see the *Safety* section.



The pavilion will be situated in the courtyard in front of the Library, as shown in the diagram below. It will be fully-accessible and easily-removable at the end of the pilot.



Safety

In order to ensure the space operated safely, CultureHouse and the Somerville Library will develop clear procedures and guidelines. High-touch surfaces like laptop computers will be sanitized between use.

Heaters

Access to reliable internet is critical, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic as people attend school, look for jobs, and access essential services online. It is essential to have heat in the pavilion to make it comfortable to use through the winter. To heat the space to a comfortable temperature, we will use electric patio heaters. Unlike gas or propane heaters, electric heaters are designed to operate under covered structures. Because they use radiant heat, they have no flames and so do not pose a threat of ignition. They also include a safety shut-off in case of tipping. The heat lamps will be on **only when the Library is actively staffing the space**. When the library closes, the heaters will be turned off. We will ensure that all power cords and outlets are appropriately rated to safely power the heaters.

Timeline

Provided the designs are approved, we plan to open the pavilion by mid-November. The pavilion will remain active until the courtyard begins construction in the spring.