

Committee: **London Public Library Board**

Organization/Sector represented:

Name: **Anand Desai**

Occupation: **Planning Consultant**

Work experience: **I have been employed at Monteith Brown Planning Consultants here in London for nearly 14 years. I am presently the senior-most Associate in the firm. I specialize in strategic planning, master planning, facility and organizational assessments specifically in the library, parks, recreation and culture sectors. I am also involved in the firm's land use planning practice.**

Education: **I have a Master of Environmental Design in Planning from the University of Calgary, a Bachelor of Environmental Studies and Business Administration Option from Wilfrid Laurier University, and attend both Central Secondary School and Masonville Public School here in London. I am a Registered Professional Planner (RPP) with the Ontario Professional Planners Institute and an accredited member of the Canadian Institute of Planners (MCIP). I belong to Parks and Recreation Ontario and previously served on the City of London Environmental & Ecological Planning Advisory Committee.**

Skills: **I have direct experience working on over 100 plans, studies and assessments relating to libraries, parks, recreation, culture and land use planning. My work has spanned dozens of municipalities across Canada and the United States. My work specifically in the library includes (but is not limited to) large and small library systems (e.g., from Mississauga and Vaughan to East Gwillimbury and Clarington), library systems in rapidly growing and culturally diverse communities (e.g., Milton, Richmond Hill), and library systems that I consider to be progressive/innovative (e.g., Innisfil). Through these and other projects, I am frequently engaging in dialogue with elected officials, Library Board members, Library Staff (management and front-line), stakeholders (e.g., Friends of Libraries, agency partners), and the general public. An example of a library project that I'm especially proud of is our work with Innisfil Public Library. Our collaborative Master Plan with Library Staff researched and justified the provision of "Makerspace", and made it one of the first master plans (that I'm aware of) that recommended it. The Maker concept is now one that a number of libraries have adopted since and has been a part of the shift of library service delivery models towards integrative programming and creative expression beyond the "books and shelves" that many people still associated libraries as being. Just a few months ago, we also completed a couple of projects for Vaughan Public Libraries. One of these studies involved a branch being contemplated for closure, however, our analyses provided Library Board and City Council with much-needed justification to retain it. In fact, the City is undertaking an architectural assessment aimed at enhancing the branch based upon the community-specific needs that we identified. As noted previously, I am frequently engaged in stakeholder and community consultations having facilitated or co-led hundreds of such initiatives. This past April I presented at a major provincial conference about the importance of engaging the public during planning processes and ways in which to do so effectively. I often attend conferences as a presenter and as a participant due to my belief in lifelong learning and remaining knowledgeable about current best practices/approaches. I have experience in high level strategic planning that establishes the necessary framework for libraries to align with, master planning that delves into planning for future library space and service needs, organizational effectiveness assessments, planning and site selection for individual library branches, and working with both short-term and long-range capital and operating budgets. I am fluent in two languages, English and Marathi (India). I have basic proficiency in French, Spanish and Hindi albeit below a conversational level. Through my two university degrees, I spent considerable time in European and Asian countries and became familiar with library systems in those continents as well.**

Interest reason: **I have been a resident of London for over 30 years, coming back to the City immediately after completing my post-secondary education. I have fond memories of my mother taking me to the Sherwood branch library every week to pick up books, and reading has been an important part of who I am. I am a father to two young daughters (ages 3 and 7) and we carry on the tradition of going to the library every week. My daughter has now completed the summer reading program for the past two years for which I am very proud (although I think she did it with the hopes of winning the stuffed penguin)! I want to be able to give back to my City and the library by sharing what I've learned**

through 14 years of work in the sector. That being said, I also want to learn more from others within the London Public Library as I have immense respect for the breadth of facilities, programs and services that are offered by incredibly dedicated staff.

Contributions: I believe that my experience in the library, parks, recreation and culture sector will be a tremendous asset for the board. Through my work with Monteith Brown, we have helped many libraries evolve and innovate, and I have an ability to impart knowledge from other systems into what makes sense for the London Public Library. I strongly believe in evidence-based decision-making, sustainability, inclusivity, and allocating resources where community needs warrant them.

Past contributions: I am a past voting member of the City of London Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee (EEPAC). Over the years I have volunteered with local organizations such as University Hospital, Meals on Wheels, and a number of special events.

Interpersonal: As a Project Manager I am constantly leading multi-disciplinary teams of consultants and working with multi-departmental staff teams for our municipal clients. To arrive at a successful end goal, I am constantly understanding and working with different personalities, skill sets, and areas of focus. I strongly believe in respectful dialogue where healthy discussions lead to an outcome that most, if not all, around the table can understand. I am a professionally and academically trained facilitator, and weigh all opinions of individuals in my decision-making. In closing, I appreciate the consideration of the Selection Committee and hope that I can have the chance to proudly serve my community!

Interview interest: **Yes**