

Planning the Future of the Guilderland Public Library



Architect's Conceptual Plan

Growing for Generations: A Proposal for the Expansion of the Guilderland Public Library

In 1992, at the dedication of the Guilderland Public Library, community leaders celebrated the town's wonderful new Library. Designed to meet the community's needs for a quarter century and beyond, the Library became the cultural center of the growing community. And therein lay a problem: Guilderland grew ... beyond all expectations. Library traffic soared, resources and space became tight, and by 2006 the problem was acute enough for patrons to notice.

Our town had outgrown our Library.

In response to this, the Library's Board of Trustees formed a community-based committee comprising educators, business people, senior citizens, and cultural and civic leaders – the Growing for Generations Committee – to examine the issue. The committee came back with a unanimous recommendation: “The Library should consider an expansion because demographic trends in Guilderland and trends in library services show that the current building is not adequate for the community's future needs.” Accordingly, the Board's Long Range Planning Committee engaged a leading library architect to examine the needs and demographic trends, and develop a concept. This conceptual plan was endorsed by the Board of Trustees, subject to the assessment of community support.

This brochure explains the features and potential benefits of the architect's concept, and is intended to aid community dialogue about the Library's future.

The Challenge: Take What's Good, and Make It Better

The architects recognized the merits of the current Library, and focused their attention on making a great library even better. The most noticeable proposed enhancement is a two-story, light-filled addition housing an expanded adult collection, providing quiet reading nooks and appropriate space for local history and genealogy. Patrons who have been turned away for lack of space at major events will enjoy the enlarged Main Meeting Room. Kids and parents will enjoy a larger, lighter Children's Library.

Improvements in energy efficiency and application of “green” systems – enhancements you can't see – are equally important. The addition can employ the latest in geothermal heating and cooling, and automated, energy-efficient lighting will be used throughout, yielding a more comfortable environment at lower energy cost.

The Solution: A Library that Grows with the Community

A Wider Adult Services Collection and Reading Area

- ❖ The Adult Library will be located within the existing building and a new two-story wing. The Fiction Collection along with informal seating areas will be located in the former Main Reading Room where abundant natural light will come from the existing skylight.
- ❖ The addition will accommodate an Adult Reading Room, a quiet space where patrons can read without being disturbed by the bustle of a thriving Library.

Improved Children's Library

- ❖ The Children's Library will enlarge by allocating more area in the existing building as well as in a modest addition.
- ❖ A new multi-purpose room will be shared by the Children's and Teen Library to accommodate more storytelling activities and library programs for both groups. A dedicated Reading Room will offer a quiet reading space.
- ❖ Expanded Toddler and Tween sections will relieve the current facility's tight confines.

A Snapshot of Growth

The Library has experienced startling growth since 1992:

- ◆ **Program attendance nearly tripled**, from 8,701 to 25,037 a year
- ◆ **Patron visits almost doubled**, from 177,996 to 343,144 annually
- ◆ **Circulation – the amount of materials loaned to patrons – more than doubled**, from 214,446 to 519,426 items annually
- ◆ **Items available in the Library nearly tripled**, from 63,384 to 182,284



- ❖ The current Parenting Collection, a very popular resource for new and learning parents, will be greatly expanded with a variety of materials.
- ❖ An outdoor garden will provide seating for open-air activities.

An Enhanced Teen Library

- ❖ The Teen Library will be in a dedicated, acoustically separate area; it will contain individual and group study spaces.

A New Center for Local History

- ❖ The Local History Collection, now relatively inaccessible, will be housed in an exclusive room affording access and privacy to the casual and serious student of history. This expanded area will host new materials that we cannot now accommodate for lack of proper facilities.

Additional Parking

- ❖ More parking is a key feature, providing ample spaces for patrons and the physically handicapped.

Expanded Exhibits

- ❖ A light-filled exhibit space lining the connection between the existing building and the addition will give patrons the ability to view special displays.

Increased Meeting Room Space

- ❖ The existing Main Meeting Room will be expanded from 150 to 300 seats to accommodate larger audiences for events and author visits.

Additional Study Rooms

- ❖ More private and semi-private study spaces throughout the Library will allow for individual and small-group study and tutoring.



A Library Equal to the Needs of Our Growing Community

Adult Patrons

- ◆ New, quieter, more private Reading Room.
- ◆ Greatly expanded Fiction and Non-Fiction collections.

Senior Citizens

- ◆ Fully ADA-compliant facility, including an elevator to the new addition's public spaces.
- ◆ More VisionEyes, devices that make reading easier for those with vision problems.

Students of English for Speakers of Other Languages

- ◆ A dramatically expanded collection as well as new study rooms for private tutor/student sessions.

Local History Buffs and Genealogy Researchers

- ◆ Expanded space and collections, offering both the

casually curious and the serious researcher space to work in quiet and privacy.

Teens, Tweens, and Families

- ◆ A place to go to study, read, get some homework done, and gather for special events.

Younger Children

- ◆ More spaces for storytimes, expanded children's collections, and a place to play and learn.

Parents and Caregivers

- ◆ A more comfortable environment for children, as well as an expanded Parenting Collection.

Patrons of Every Age

- ◆ An enlarged, improved performance space where more people can enjoy our signature special events.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Library considering this expansion now?

The current Library, built in 1992, was designed to serve the community for a quarter century. However, by 2006, with only 14 years of use, it became clear that our programs and services were being squeezed by the lack of space to handle the increasing demands of our community.

As the building has aged, so has its systems. They will shortly need replacement or a major overhaul. This is an opportune time to address and correct all issues at once, and realize the economies of scale this approach affords.

Is this expansion a “done deal”?

No. The Trustees are in the earliest stages of the planning process. This brochure is intended to inform you of the Board’s concept. A bond vote will be held, possibly in 2009, in which you can vote yes or no to this expansion.

If the public approves the expansion, when would work begin and how long would it take?

The Trustees anticipate construction would not begin until 2010. Construction would take about 18 months.

How will this expansion be funded?

Two major potential funding channels are private donations and/or public funding via a bond issue to be paid off over a period of 30 years.

Will the Library have a larger collection?

Yes. The current mix of study and reading areas versus collection space is constrained by available area, thus limiting the size of the Fiction and Non-Fiction collections.

What about special collections, will they be larger?

Yes. This expansion will enable us to increase the Children’s and Teen Collections, as well as expand our digital media offerings.

Collections serving specific interests will also increase, notably the Local History section and the English for Speakers of Other Languages division.

Does this expansion take into account the digital revolution?

While digital media has certainly affected everyone’s reading and research habits, the fact is that the need for print material has increased. Our circulation – the amount of books and other materials we lend to patrons – has *jumped more than 6 percent a year* since the Library opened in 1992.

Concurrently, an ever-increasing number of patrons are bringing their laptops to the Library to work on projects while referring to an assortment of print reference materials and taking advantage of our WiFi service.

The proposed expansion addresses the increases in both print and digital usage.

Will the Library be open during construction?

Yes. One of the challenges the architect met was to ensure construction could be done in stages to minimize reduction of services.

How large is the expansion?

The project increases the current 27,650 square-foot Library to 45,575 square feet.

Does the Library expansion take into account Guilderland’s growth?

Yes. Serving the expanding community is the prime motivator behind the project. It’s why we’re proposing more parking. Further, we have taken steps to ensure that the Library works in harmony with the proposed Glassworks Village development. The illustration below shows you how the two projects interact.

How can I speak out about this proposal?

You will have a variety of methods to share your thoughts about the plan with the Library’s Trustees. Visit our website at www.guilpl.org to learn more, or

- ◆ Call: 518-456-2400 x 12
- ◆ Email: planning@guilpl.org
- ◆ Write: Long Range Planning Committee
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