

A large, stylized diamond shape is the central focus of the cover. It is composed of several overlapping geometric sections: a light green top section with a leaf pattern, a dark green right section, a dark green bottom section with a blurred leaf pattern, a blue bottom-left section, a grey bottom-left section, and a yellow-green top-left section. The background consists of a white left side and a light grey right side, separated by a diagonal line.

# SPACE NEEDS ANALYSIS

**MISSISSIPPI MILLS  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ALMONTE BRANCH**

NOVEMBER 2020  
Jane Torrance  
Jim Mountain

---

## Table of Contents

---

Acknowledgements .....	2
1. Executive Summary .....	3
1.1 Recommended Priority Option for Expansion .....	4
1.2 Funding.....	5
1.3 Community Legacy .....	5
2. Introduction .....	6
2.1 Intent.....	6
2.2 Library History .....	7
2.3 Method .....	8
2.4 Background Resources .....	10
3. Community Survey .....	11
4. Focus Groups .....	12
5. Functional Analysis and Space Allocation .....	13
6. Design and Function Consultation .....	21
7. Design Guidelines .....	23
8. Costing Estimates.....	24
9. Lessons Learned .....	29
9.1 Best Practice Noted from Other Areas .....	29
9.2 Lessons Learned from Pakenham Branch Expansion.....	30
10. Conclusions and Recommendations .....	31
11. Appendices .....	33

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The work of preparing this report has been the beneficiary of the time, ideas, and knowledge of many people dedicated to the Mississippi Mills Public Library–Almonte Branch, including:

- Library Space Needs Committee, for astute and wise guidance
- Library Staff — full-time and part-time — for exemplary insights during challenging times
- All who answered surveys: 390 respondents
- Focus group participants — some 50 people — children, youth, adults, community organization representatives
- Municipal Staff, who provided good support and creative ideas
- The design team at The Heritage + Design Company, Alixandra Piwowar and Benoît Maranda, for their inspiration in the making of the Design Guidelines. All design sketches contained in this Space Needs Analysis report are credited to their work, [The Almonte Library Expansion Project: Design Guidelines](#)



(Rod Windover Photography)

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Mississippi Mills Public Library–Almonte Branch has outgrown its current space. For the past decade there has been a steady increase in the municipality’s population and a parallel annual increase in the number of Library cardholders.

The current building is in need of essential infrastructure upgrades — particularly the heating/cooling systems, the plumbing, and the roofing system — to ensure the comfort and well-being of staff and Library users as they use this very busy space.

In the fall of 2019, the Mississippi Mills Library–Almonte Branch, acting on recommendations from a 2017 Strategic Plan, undertook a concerted planning process which focused on the potential expansion of the existing Library facility. The consulting company Big Thinking was hired to review the outcomes of relevant studies, planning documents and a community survey conducted by the Library up to that point in time. The consultants reviewed the input from 390 respondents to the survey and held four focus groups with some 50 participants, in September and October, which provided valuable community input into the expansion planning process.

Subsequently, through late fall 2019 and into 2020, Big Thinking was hired to carry out the Space Needs Analysis work which has further defined options and cost estimates for upgrading the existing Almonte Branch building and adding expanded space to the current structure as well as outdoor programming space.

The scope of this work was to provide the rationale and priority recommendations to guide the Library Board in making its decisions about expansion options that would allow the project to be “shovel-ready” should federal, provincial and other potential funding opportunities arise.

The Library expansion project identified eight phases of work to be undertaken, and this report reflects the outcomes of the work produced from Phases 1 through 3.

The Space Needs Analysis work also determined that the Almonte Branch is:

- A reflection of a community-supported library system that dates back to the 1820s
- A key hub and anchor facility for Almonte’s vibrant downtown
- A centre of knowledge and learning, and a gathering place for the entire community: young children, youth, adults, seniors, people new to the community, those seeking employment, people in business, and visitors to the area
- Advantageously located adjacent to the Ottawa Valley Recreational Trail (former CPR rail line) and the newly created Alameda treed corridor

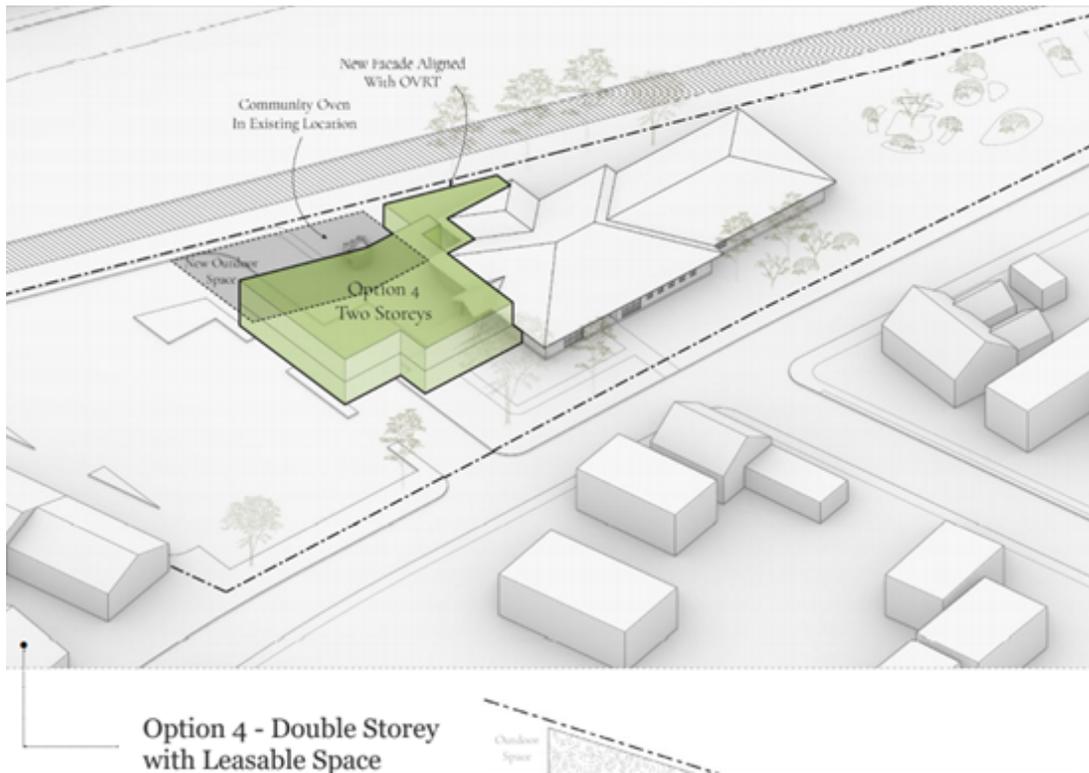
The Space Needs Analysis looks at the Library’s space requirements for the four areas: collections, public service, staff service, and non-assignable space. The four areas are then further broken down into specific space and use, described in more detail in this report. It is extremely important that storage is integrated wherever possible in library.

### 1.1 RECOMMENDED PRIORITY OPTION FOR EXPANSION

The recommended option — supported by the Library Board at its November 19, 2020, meeting — is for a 10,000 square foot addition. The space analysis revealed that the the library is currently undersized. While 7500 square feet would be adequate until 2028, 10,000 square feet will be needed by 2038. This is well within the range of the provincial guidelines, and the Library would be looking for a tenant to lease 2500 square feet for 5 to 10 years.

Ideas for a “tenant” might be a municipal service occupying this new and optimal space. Very high level and brief discussions have taken place, thinking about occupancy by municipal staff, emergency management, or Municipal Day Care. The focus groups also identified the youth centre or a service club as possible community occupants.

**Estimated cost @ \$335/sq.ft. = \$3,350,000 (+HST) plus \$455,000 for upgrades to original building**



## 1.2 FUNDING

A key to completing this significant municipal capital project is, of course, how to fund the future expansion.

The 2018 Mississippi Mills Background Study details how Development Charges collected by the Municipality can be used to recover a portion of the capital costs associated with the Library expansion. Development Charges can currently be recovered at 59% of the cost of the addition that is needed because of population growth. The upgrades to the original Library are not attributed to growth.

The estimated full construction cost of the recommended 10,000 square foot addition (plus upgrades to original building estimated at \$455,000) will be \$3,805,000. With \$1,976,500 recoverable through Development Charges (59% of the estimated cost of the addition), the remaining \$1,373,500 will need to be funded from other sources, such as debt, taxes, grants, fundraising, or most likely a combination.

Total cost estimate upgrades plus new construction:	\$3,805,000
Funded by Development Charges:	\$1,976,500
Funded by other sources:	\$1,828,500

## 1.3 COMMUNITY LEGACY

This Library expansion should be viewed as a signature legacy project for the municipality — one that will be a testament to the pride this community takes in lifelong learning and knowledge acquisition — for generations to come.

It has been our pleasure to work with the public, the Library Space Needs Committee, and a variety of professional, municipal and Library staff through the duration of this project.

Best,

Jane Torrance, Principal  
Jim Mountain, Associate  
Big Thinking

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 INTENT

The Mississippi Mills Public Library is a vibrant community hub which provides library and community services to residents of Almonte, Ramsay and Pakenham, as well as surrounding areas of Carleton Place, western Ottawa, and eastern Renfrew County. The concept of the library as a dusty, quiet place of study and reading is a thing of the past. Modern libraries still provide books and study space but have a larger focus on enhanced collections that are responsive to community needs and include everything from books, magazines and DVDs, to musical instruments, seeds, tools and people! The varied available programs — from baby talk with a public health nurse evaluating developmental milestones, to story time for toddlers, STEAM programs (science, technology, engineering, art, math) for school-aged kids, a teen advisory group, adult learning, travelogues, art corridor, senior-specific opening times and information resources for employment seekers, and local businesses — provide something for all residents of Mississippi Mills.

The Library is the community living room and garden, a place to grab a wi-fi connection, print a reservation, enjoy a coffee and book in a comfy chair, meet with a tech tutor, or borrow a museum pass. In 2016, the Mississippi Mills Public Library undertook a strategic planning exercise, and the overarching goal for the Library was to “use every possible physical space to its best advantage” and “invite the public to come”.



(Inside Ottawa Valley News, September 20, 2020)

Libraries are community social and learning hubs of the future and are needed more now than ever! The Mississippi Mills Public Library Strategic Plan 2017–2026 recognized this:

One of the most significant shifts in recent years is the shift in perception of a library from an archive for materials to a gateway to cultural, and social and educational experiences. The library will connect to the community as a central community space for people to meet, share ideas, discover and collaborate in learning activities. Libraries will be physically more open, with multi-use spaces for a variety of learning and entertainment activities. Some spaces could feature digital equipment for creative uses such as self-publishing of manuscripts, photo-editing and maker spaces. Library staff will be trained and available to assist people in using the technologies. (p. 23)

2020 and the impacts of COVID-19 demonstrated the immense need and value of the Almonte Library as a contributor to community wellness. The Library staff were remarkable in providing much-appreciated services to the community at curbside, online, and eventually within the building following all protocols.

## 2.2 LIBRARY HISTORY

The origin of the Almonte Public Library traces back to 1828, when it was first conceived by the town settlers who had arrived 10 years prior. Lord Dalhousie, Governor General of the Colony of Canada at the time, was the first patron, donating money and books. The following year, the Ramsay Library Association was founded and the library collection was housed in a building in Appleton — about 10km southeast of the town of Almonte. The Ramsay Mechanics' Institute, which became the Almonte Mechanics' Institute in 1884, operated the Library in the mid-1800s. The Mechanics' Institute was a provincial organization that encouraged young people to further their education. From 1885 to 1967, the Library moved twice: it was located in the Coates building (on the site of the old post office), then occupied a building downtown (on Mill Street) and eventually, in 1967, relocated to the Old Town Hall.



In 1979, the first purpose-built library in Almonte was constructed, on the site of the original Almonte train station. The Elizabeth Kelly Library, also known as the Almonte Branch of the Mississippi Mills Library, was built on its current site at the end of Mill Street. The building was expanded in 1995 to the current size of 8400 square feet, and in 2020 this space has become too limited to adequately serve the community. The structure is mechanically deficient in terms of heating, cooling, plumbing, electrical, and not leaking! Through information garnered through a series of reviews and reports, including the 2017 Strategic Plan, an engineering review, and a thermographic report, the Library Board knew that changes were needed at the Almonte Branch. The expansion planning process began with a survey to consult the public, through which the Board determined that they wanted the Library to grow but, but needed professional help to figure out what that meant. It was determined that a Space Needs Analysis would be a good place to start, comparing the Almonte Branch’s current space to what is needed to service the growing town.

In the fall of 2019, the consulting company Big Thinking was hired to follow up with the community consultation and to conduct additional focus groups to provide added input into the expansion planning process. Subsequently, through late fall 2019 and 2020, Big Thinking accepted the contract to conduct the Space Needs Analysis of the Almonte Branch. The scope of this work was to provide the rationale and recommendations of options that would guide the Library Board in making decisions about expansion and to conduct the background research and design work that would allow the project to be “shovel-ready” in case of any additional funding opportunities that may arise.

## 2.3 METHOD

A Library Space Needs Committee was struck by the Mississippi Mills Library Board to oversee the Space Needs Analysis project at the Almonte Branch and charged with reporting back to the Board.

The project was broken down into eight phases. Big Thinking was contracted to complete phases 1 through 3, with an offer to freely assist with some document development and presentation in phases 4 and 5. Phases 6 to 8 were not within the scope of the contract.

These phases include:

### **Phase 1: Planning and Fact-finding, Background:**

- Review the survey and public focus groups documents
- Review the Library’s strategic planning documents
- Complete focus groups and review with Library staff
- Complete high-level functional analysis of space needs
- Review the engineering reports and thermographic investigations
- Examine existing plans on file, and interview Larry Gaines (who completed the 1995 design work for Julian Smith, architect of record)

- Review the Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems
- Discuss heritage area opportunities and zoning implications with town planner
- Host a space needs assessment with opportunities and restraints discussion with Library staff, municipal staff and heritage committee
- Confirm design and function with Library staff
- Engage design professionals to produce design guidelines (Heritage+Design Company) and determine expansion possibilities
- Regularly report back to Library Space Needs Committee

**Phase 2: Concept Planning, working within design protocol determined in Phase 1**

- Review concept plans with functional space allocation, using the design guidelines
- Engage a cost consultant (RPM Construction) to provide preliminary budget figures for concepts
- Report back to committee with draft report Space Needs Analysis to assist in decisions and recommendations

**Phase 3: Final Report, Space Needs Analysis from Consultants**

- Present report to Library Board, and to Council for preliminary decisions
- Make report available to public (marketing material) to initiate fundraising

**Phase 4: RFP**

- Advise on Construction Management Contract for Services and Construction, or Design/Build to be completed by the Town if requested
- Advise on draft RFP with reference to Design Guidelines and Space Needs Analysis, if requested

**Phase 5: Funding**

- Municipal budget
- Grant writing
- Provide background narrative and documents, if requested

**Phase 6: Preparation**

- Award RFP
- Fundraising
- Relocation if needed
- Building committee

**Phase 7: Construction**

**Phase 8: Completion**

## 2.4 BACKGROUND RESOURCES

The following are the background resource documents accessed by the consultants which helped guide the decisions presented in this report. The full documents can be found in the Appendices.

### **Building Condition Assessment for Almonte Branch Library (AECOM Canada Architects Ltd 2014)**

The Building Condition Assessment was prepared for the Town of Mississippi Mills through a visual, non-invasive, non-destructive review of the facilities. The document provides guidance with respect to planning for future facility renewal and potential replacement as well as a life cycle analysis to facilitate the development of a long-term asset management strategy and capital funding plan. The document also provides recommendations to enhance the energy performance of the building.

### **A Strategic Plan for Mississippi Mills Public Library 2017-2026 (Mississippi Mills Library Board)**

The Strategic Plan 2017-2026 is a roadmap for the Library to move forward and expand its community role in a technology-driven and rapidly changing social-economic environment.

### **Planning Discussion Document (Mississippi Mills Public Library, 2016)**

The document summarizing the discussion between Library staff and board members in review of five articles on best practices and current trends for community libraries in Canada and the United States. The subsequent planning discussion analyzed the purpose and function of the Almonte Library and identified a series of priorities for the future expansion encompassing interior and exterior space. The document identifies goals including to “use every possible physical space to its best advantage” and “invite the public to come” that accurately reflect the spirit and intent of the current Library staff and board.

### **Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems, 3rd ed. (Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario (ARUPLO), 2017)**

The guidelines and best practices in this document are expressed as targets for a library to provide an appropriate level of service for its community. The application of these guidelines is important during the planning phase of library projects and can also serve as a benchmarking tool. In particular, the document promotes the connection of libraries as fundamental to rural sustainability. The Library System Guidelines further identify that “Libraries must conform to provisions of the Municipal Act, the Public Libraries Act, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and other relevant legislation, and are accountable to the communities they serve”. It will be important to consider and incorporate all applicable legal requirements in the development and delivery of the Almonte Public Library expansion project.

**Thermographic Investigation (Fishburn Sheridan 2018)**

This study summarizes the observations of a thermographic investigation of the existing condition of the Almonte Public Library. The assessment scope included the existing exterior wall assembly and general roof/wall connection of the building.

**Mississippi Mills Community Official Plan 2005**

First adopted by Council in 2005, and reviewed in 2018, the Community Official Plan (COP) provides a framework for how, where and when the Municipality will grow in a sustainable way while protecting vulnerable resources. Population studies were done in conjunction with the COP, and project future growth.

**Mississippi Mills Development Charges Background Study (Watson and Associates, 2018)**

A Development Charges Background Study is necessary in order to pass a bylaw to collect development charges. The purpose of development charges is to recover a portion of the growth-related costs associated with the capital infrastructure needed to service new development. Generally, development charges are calculated, payable and collected on the date a building permit is issued.

**County of Lanark Sustainable Official Plan Amendment No. 8 Technical Report 2019**

The Technical Report, prepared by Jp2g Consultants, provides the population study that justifies the amendment to the SCOP. The updated population projections were prepared by the firm of Metro Economics which is an economic consulting firm that specializes in the projection of economic and demographic trends.

### **3. COMMUNITY SURVEY**

This survey was designed and conducted by the Library Space Needs Committee, under the guidance of a member with particular skill in this method of information collection. The survey was advertised on social media and in the newspaper, and was available on the Library and Town websites, on social media, at the Library and at the municipal office.

In total, 390 surveys were returned between August 7, 2019, and October 16, 2019. The majority of respondents were from Almonte, with a fair representation from rural Ramsay, rural Pakenham, Clayton, and other (presumably Ottawa). Age representations were children and youth 1-19 (64), adults 20-59 (156), and retirees 60-80+ (170).

Survey respondents indicated that they tended to use the Library in multiple ways, and were most appreciative of the books, the children’s resources and programs, having comfortable chairs in which to read, study, and simply sit, and the beautiful garden view afforded by the rear window area.

When asked about possible improvements, the most common response was: improved patio/outdoor sitting space (178), a larger children’s library including creative space in the children’s area (140), more technology space for computers/printers/computer gaming room (120), creative spaces for adults (93), more lounge areas (93), more quiet reading/study spaces (92), and more meeting rooms, large and small (86). The results of the survey helped guide further space needs discussions.

## 4. FOCUS GROUPS

The Library Space Needs Committee confirmed that, in keeping with a community hub model and building upon the community survey, they wanted to know, in order of priority:

- What space is needed and what do people want to do in that space?
- How will the Library reflect the needs of its users, in terms of space, collection, service?
- How will the Library help build community

Big Thinking conducted four focus groups: Families, Youth, Seniors, and Community Partners. Each focus group had about 15 participants, and the session began with a tour of the Library, featured a focused conversation answering the key questions above, and concluded with light refreshments.

The focus group participants were extremely engaged and willing, which is a testament to the Library and staff. They truly love the Library and want it to succeed. There were numerous “quick wins” identified, including: programming for 5- to10-year-olds, LEGO nights, coding, STEM programs, enhancing and adding to the Library’s toy and games collection, and simply organizing the space differently.

With minor changes and re-organization of existing space, more of the priorities could be addressed, including carving out space for kids aged 5 to10, providing a small Zoom Room in the board room with video conferencing capability, co-working space, ability to program outdoor activities, the installation of a Smart Board, an interactive children’s space separate from the reading space with dress-up/puppets, activities, kids’ computer, and craft centre, and provision of lockers (lockable cubbies for laptops and valuables) could be installed in the cloak room.



Figure 1. Family Focus Group participants.

Major changes would be needed to accommodate the remaining identified priorities:

- Outdoor programming space
- Multi-use space
- Performance space
- Bigger meeting room
- Possible space for Youth Centre or other community partner to co-locate (rentable)
- Commercial kitchen would be a dream
- Community/OVRT connection, including public toilets
- Covered outdoor public space/patio
- Quiet reading room
- A proper technology hub — a ZOOM room with a Smart Board, videoconferencing capability, co-working space that could serve dual purpose as a gaming room after school

### Library Staff Consultation

A consultation was conducted with Library staff, who went through a process similar to the public focus groups. What came out loud and clear was that, in order to make the current building comfortable and maintained, upgrades are needed to the plumbing, electrical, and HVAC systems, and that new windows, roof and flooring are necessary.

Staff are engaged, dedicated, and positive. They love the long view through the building, and the large bank of windows that provide a big open view of the garden, and the community. They want a library that is bright, open and welcoming. They look forward to more community outreach and see the community and economic development opportunities as the Library is further integrated into the community. They envision revenue generation as part of a new business model, offering rental space and tech space to help offset increased operating cost.

They hope to provide a better community space that is responsive to community needs, including: program and meeting space, storage, outdoor programming, public space, a children's library, technology space, a place to curl up and read, as well as a place to connect — all which are possible in an expanded space!

## 5. FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS AND SPACE ALLOCATION

Employing the **Association of Rural Urban Public Libraries of Ontario (ARUPLO) Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems**, the functional analysis identifies guideline parameters for an expanded Almonte Public Library with respect to the town's current and projected population. Approximate square footage of existing Library spaces was calculated, and additional square footage determined as recommended by the ARUOLO Guidelines.

The Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems are a developmental tool for rural/urban and county libraries. The Guidelines are expressed as targets for a library to provide an appropriate level of service for its community; they have been developed by the Library Administrators of ARUPLO public libraries based on:

- their considerable collective expertise;
- comparative data and research regarding other jurisdictions; and
- trends and changes in rural/urban Ontario.

Guidelines are generally regarded as quantifiable and can be benchmarked. They are recommendations as to how things should be done. Best practices represent what is well done by peers.

Libraries must conform to provisions of the Municipal Act, the Public Libraries Act, Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and other relevant legislation and are accountable to the communities they serve.

To determine the projected population, we looked at the the Lanark County Sustainable Community Official Plan (2012) amended in 2019 with a population study, the Mississippi Mills Community Official Plan, and the Population Forecast contained in the Mississippi Mills 2018 Development Charges Background Study. To note: the forecast period for the Development Charges is to 2028, which is different from the population forecasts to 2038 that is included in both the Mississippi Mills Community Official Plan and the Lanark County Sustainable Community Official Plan.

We used the most current figures included in the 2019 Amendment to the Lanark County Sustainable Community Official Plan. This study forecast a 60% increase in growth in Mississippi Mills, from 13,163 (2016 census) to **21,122** by 2038.

We then subtracted the population served within the catchment area of the Pakenham Branch (estimated at 2500) to determine the planning number for the space needs analysis.

The 2038 population of the Almonte and Ramsay catchment area of Almonte Branch is projected to be **18,622** people, which provides a classification of large branch as per ARUPLO Guidelines.

Figure 2a. Determining branch size (ARUPLO Guidelines, 3rd ed.).

Determining catchment area/population served can be problematic given available data and factors such as municipal boundaries. As a result, this is not the only consideration as to whether a branch is considered small, medium, large or urban. For instance, a branch may serve an immediate population of less than 10,000 people, thereby putting it in the medium category, but be considered a large branch by the system because it serves a strategic role such as having a larger collection, providing enhanced reference services, hosting system-wide functions such as inter-library loan or providing space for enhanced programming opportunities.

<p><b>Small branches</b> Generally serve catchment areas of up to 5,000 population as determined by each system.</p>	<p><b>Medium branches</b> Generally serve catchment areas of 5,000 to 10,000 population as determined by each system.</p>	<p><b>Large branches</b> Generally serve catchment areas of 10,000 to 35,000 population as determined by each system.</p>	<p><b>Urban branches</b> Generally serve catchment area of 35,000 or more population as determined by each system.</p>
--	---	---	--

Figure 2b. Determining best square footage of libraries. (ARUPLO Guidelines, 3rd ed.).

Library facilities should be developed to meet local community needs, library service strategies, projected populations and compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, building standards, other regulations and municipal policies. The following is a general guideline for the range of size for each library type.

	Small	Medium	Large	Urban
Net library space (in square feet)	2,500–5,000	5,000–10,000	10,000–35,000	35,000+

Branch size is also affected by components such as programs, special collections, and other add-on functions attributed to the branch by the library system.

In review of the population projections, the Almonte Branch will be considered a Large Branch by the recognized professional standards. A large branch should be planned at 10,000 to 35,000 square feet in size. In consultation with Library staff, and using all information gathered through community consultation, we determined that the Almonte Branch library space should be planned at a modest 15,900 square feet by 2028, and 18,400 by 2038. When planning a capital project of this size and building complexity, logic dictates that we should plan to 2038 at minimum.

**Therefore, an increase from 8,400 sq. ft. to 18,400 sq. ft. (net gain of 10,000 sq. ft.) plus additional programmed exterior space on the site becomes the working assumption for this Space Needs Analysis.**

For this projected population, we used the standard guidelines for Large Library to be most suitable, with priorities as set by the public consultation, including:

1. Meeting and programming space
2. Community (multi-use, flexible) space
3. Outdoor space with relationship to OVRT/community
4. Quiet space (study, reading)
5. Technology space
6. Community kitchen (commercial, if possible)
7. Storage — integrated storage in every new space

	Current	Large	2038 per ARUOLO	2038 Proposed
Size Sq. Ft.	8410	10,000 – 35,000	20,000	18,400 +outdoor space
Staff	5 FTE	5 – 17.5	8.5	N/A
Hours	45 h per wk	45 – 65	55	N/A
Collection	34,874	24,000 – 50,000	37,000	N/A
User seating	96	60 - 200	130	200 (per focus groups)
Public computers	7	6 - 25	16	N/A

The Almonte Library Branch Space Allocations were then set, based on the priorities of users first, within the ARUPLO Guidelines. We did include a minimum (7,500 in 2028) and preferred (10,000 in 2038) for expansion in these areas:

MISSISSIPPI MILLS PUBLIC LIBRARY – ALMONTE BRANCH

	Current Allocation	ARUPLO Standard	2028	2038	Net Increase
Collections Area Total	2190	3000 - 6200	5500	5500	3310
Collections	1092		1100	1100	8
Local History	18	200 - 400	400	400	382
Children	825		3000	3000	2175
Teen	255		1000	1000	745
Public Service Areas Total	2225		5158	6658	2,933-4,433
User seating/flexible space	906	2100 - 7000	1500	3000	2094
Public computers	263	210 - 875	500	500	250
Program rooms	398	750 - 1500	1500 (3 rooms)	1500 (3 rooms)	1102
Study room	358	330 - 660	658	658	300
Technology space	0	150 - 300	300	300	300
Public toilets	300		700	700	400
Outdoor Space					
Staff Service Areas Total	1003		1440	1440	437
Service/circulation desk	155	350 - 500	200	200	45
Work room, office	660	500 - 800	1000	1000	340
Staff lunchroom and lockers	160	200 - 350	200	200	40
Staff washroom	28	25 - 50	50	50	22
Non-assignable space (storage, mechanical, foyer, corridors, etc.)	2982	1954 - 4671	3802	4802	820-1820
Components Total	8400	9769 – 23,356	15,900	18400	7,500 - 10,000

A meeting to review space allocations in relation to function was held with Library senior staff. The premise was that, in order to think about any design options, decisions needed to be made about where the new areas should be located, and their relationship (if any) to adjacent areas.

The completed functional analysis indicated that an expansion of approximately 10,000 square feet plus outdoor program space would adequately serve the future needs of the Library's Almonte Branch, increasing the current library from 8,400 to 18,400 square feet.

The Almonte Branch Library functionality is separated into four areas, and the areas are then further broken down into specific spaces and use, as follows:

- A. Collections
- B. Public service
- C. Staff service
- D. Non-assignable space

The following information then informed the design guidelines:

#### **A. Collections**

General Collections:

- The collections space is deemed to be adequate and does not need to be increased

Local History:

- Currently a bookcase and the microfiche reader are located within the general collection area
- Program space will increase to 400 square feet
- Should include:
  - Large worktable

Children's Library:

- Currently 825 sq. ft.; increases to 3000 sq. ft.
- Program space of 500 sq. ft. beside children's area, with glazed walls
- Should be located close to circulation desk and visible
- Should be close to adult seating areas
- Should include
  - Office (for literacy students, summer students)
  - Storage (one wall of cabinets)
  - Family toilets (child-sized)
  - Increased room for collection
  - Open floor space
  - Comfortable seating
  - Sink and counter

Teen Space:

- Currently 255 sq. ft. increases to 1000 sq. ft.
- Program space of 200 sq. ft. adjacent to teen area, with glazed walls, sound-proof, can be used for tech
- Should be located close to circulation desk and visible
- Should include
  - Personal study area
  - Group study area
  - Lots of outlets

**B. Public Service Areas**

User Seating

- Currently 906 sq. ft. increases to 3000 sq. ft.
- Mix of user seating and flexible space, where tables and chairs can be pushed back or regrouped
- Spread throughout the branch with net 2094 sq. ft. increase
- Need more group seating areas
- Needs to include “wired” furniture to plug in laptop, phone etc.

Public Computers

- Allow for 500 sq. ft. throughout branch
- Outlets, charging stations, network jacks

Study Room

- Additional 300 sq. ft.
- Quiet space
- Could contain rentable space, office-on-the-go

Program Rooms — all are multi-purpose

- One in children’s area 500 sq. ft.
- One in teen area 200 sq. ft.
- One large room 800 sq. ft. (doubles the size of current large room)
  - Entry when Library is closed
  - Close to toilets
  - Kitchen attached
  - Needs to be “wired” with projector, sound
  - Needs good air quality
  - Storage incorporated in room for extra chairs and tables

Public Toilets

- Assume additional toilet will be required by building code

#### Technology Space

- 300 sq. ft.
- Rentable space, meetings-on-the-go
- Maker space
- Storage space included within

#### Outdoor Space

- Programming space
  - Possibly fenced in
  - Must have seating space
  - Protection from elements
  - Wi-fi available
- Public space
  - Supported financially/physically by Town staff
  - Connection to community
  - Could contain public toilets
  - Could contain outdoor kitchen space
  - Could contain basic bike repair equipment
  - Seating space
  - Protection from elements
  - Wi-fi available

### **C. Staff Service Areas**

#### Circulation Desk/Service Area

- Modestly increased in size from 155 to 200 sq. ft.

#### Work Room and Office Space increase from 660 to 1000 sq. ft.

- Summer staff and literacy tutor would have office space in children's library
- Storage space

#### Staff Lunchroom

- Would have room for a fridge

#### Staff Washroom

- Increase from one washroom to two
- Must have working fans

### **D. Non-assignable space**

#### Corridors/transition space between areas

- More wall gallery space
- Room for children and teen art display

#### Mechanical areas

Storage

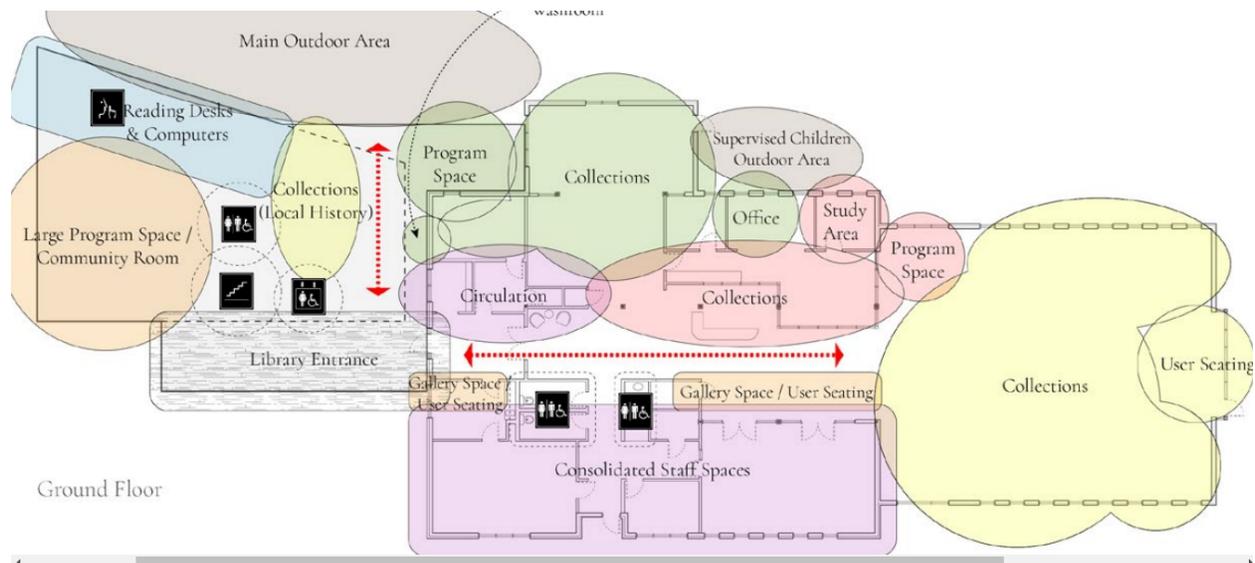
- Integrated

Janitorial

Entrance

- Welcoming
- Bright and open
- Signals that the library is open

The project design consultants took all of the input from all of the sessions and prepared a spatial configuration “map”, as illustrated:



## 6. DESIGN AND FUNCTION CONSULTATION

On March 10, 2020, a key meeting was convened to review “Space-Needs” for the Space Needs Analysis. Participants included representatives from the Library Space Needs Committee, Library staff, representatives from the Town’s Heritage Committee, and municipal staff including Facility Coordinator Dan Cousineau, Planner Nikki Dwyer and Fire Chief Chad Brown.

The meeting included an update on the work to date by Big Thinking, a presentation by the Heritage+Design Company on the approach to Design Guidelines, and a discussion with all participants facilitated by Big Thinking.

The primary focus of the discussion was to explore opportunities and constraints related to the building and site. Participants debated a number of concepts related to the expansion of the

Library through the form of an addition vs. demolition and new construction. These are summarized in more detail below:

### **A. The Site**

- Size of the triangular former CPR lot is 1.537 acres
- As a municipal facility, no re-zoning is necessary to accommodate the Library's expansion
- View to the river is important
- Current parking lot used as a "cut through" to High Street is not effective use of space and is actually not a "right-of-way". The parking lot could be utilized for the proposed Library expansion
- Reduce asphalt, more landscaping on the site is recommended; preserve existing vegetation
- Contaminants may be an issue under the surface for any new construction

### **B. Existing Building Rehab/Retrofit**

- Radiant floor heating is desirable as a heat source
- Resolve existing HVAC, plumbing, windows, building envelope issues as part of upgrade and expansion of the Library
- Investigate the solar panel partnership — roof needs considerable work. Insulation is not effective, causing ice dams, etc.

### **C. New Construction/Expansion and Design**

- Do not replicate the former station — contemporary design is recommended.
- It would be easier and efficient to "go up" for expanding the building — upper space could be a revenue generating meeting space (not for collections)
- Be bold with the new design — make this a signature project, architecturally
- North Grenville Library is a comparable model
- Compare costs of substantial retrofit vs new construction with state of art HVAC systems
- Entry into Corridor Art Gallery is a unique feature as part of the entrance into the Library — keep interior features that are "liked" by staff and patrons
- Discuss with the County that planting new trees as part of the Alameda project take into consideration proposed design changes to the Library. In particular, the view to the river should be optimized
- Consider co-housing municipal services/staff in the expanded facility

### **D. Commemoration and Community History**

- An expansion could be connected to the 200th anniversary of Ramsay Township in 2023

The Library site's views to downtown, the river and neighbourhood are important considerations. The input from this meeting was invaluable for informing the remaining work for completion of the Design Guidelines report.

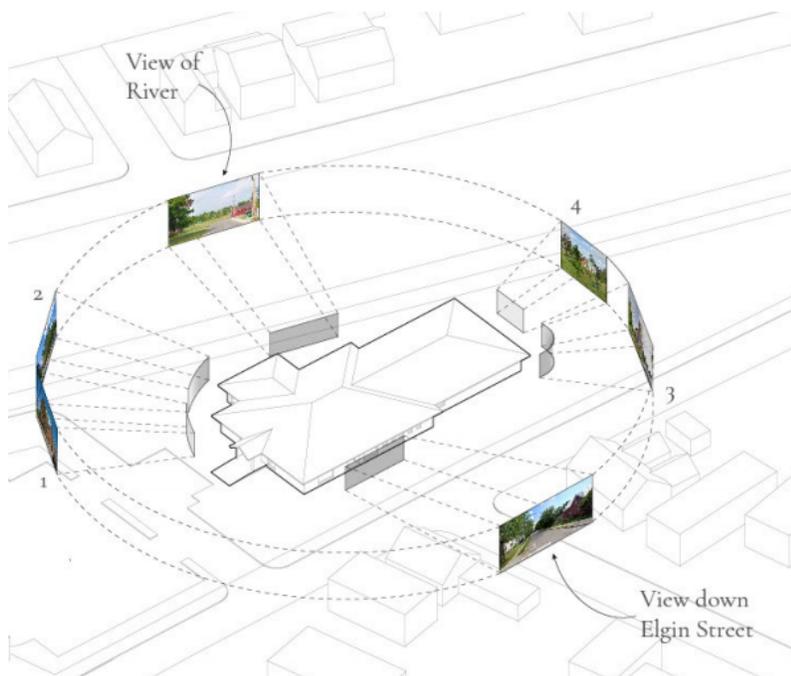
## 7. DESIGN GUIDELINES

For any building project, particularly one which involves expanding an existing structure, it is important to understand the context and the architectural, environmental, and community values associated with the site. With these in mind, and in order to inform the planning discussions and decision-making process for the Library Space Needs Committee and eventually Mississippi Mills Council, the need for professionally prepared Design Guidelines was identified.

The design team from Heritage+Design Company, consisting of Ali Piwowar, award-winning graduate of Carleton University’s School of Architecture, and colleague Benoit Maranda, graduate of Harvard University’s prestigious architecture program, were engaged to undertake this work. Their role was to produce the deliverable “**Almonte Library Branch Design Guidelines**”.

This report summarized existing information, including:

- The history of the Library and its role in Almonte’s community development
- Condition reports on the building infrastructure
- The site’s physical layout and its relationship to downtown Almonte
- Community engagement reports
- Library user feedback
- An articulation of values and principles for the project



They then put this information into a graphically-illustrated document for future reference by a Project Architect who will eventually be contracted to produce the full designs and working drawings for the Library's expansion.

The design consultants undertook two (pre-COVID-19) visits to the Library which enabled them to assess the current space use of the building and identify opportunities for improvement through expansion, both inside and outside the building, through maximizing the site's potential. This investigative process was aided by the municipal office providing complete sets of the working drawings for the original 1979-80 Library structure, and its expansion in 1995.

The Heritage+Design Company team presented its initial work to the Library Space Needs Committee and municipal staff members in mid-March and received additional feedback which they incorporated into their final **The Almonte Library Expansion Project: Design Guidelines** report, submitted June 12, 2020 (see Appendices for the complete report). The Guidelines report presented four possible options for the Library expansion, one of which (option 2) was ruled out by the Library Space Needs Committee.

## 8. COSTING ESTIMATES

Big Thinking engaged a cost consultant, an experienced Almonte-based contractor/builder, to provide high level costs to complete this project, for budgeting considerations. He provided cost options from the Design Guidelines report. Option number 2 was rejected by the Space Needs Committee.

To start with, a cost for renovation and upgrade of the existing Library facility that would address a leaking roof, HVAC concerns, window upgrades, and electrical upgrades was requested. These costs were estimated at \$455,000 (+HST).

All further estimates include the heritage design features of the existing building, built-in millwork, outdoor space and a reconfigured parking lot. Cost estimates include pricing in the current highly volatile market (2020) but will need to be reviewed and revised at that point of budget decision-making by Council. For this high-level purpose, we used the \$335 per sq. ft.

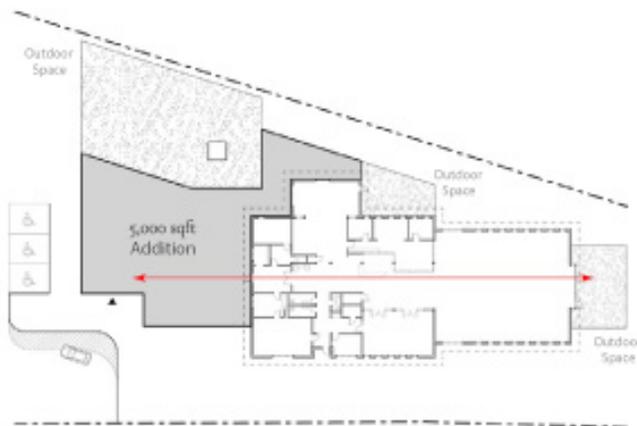
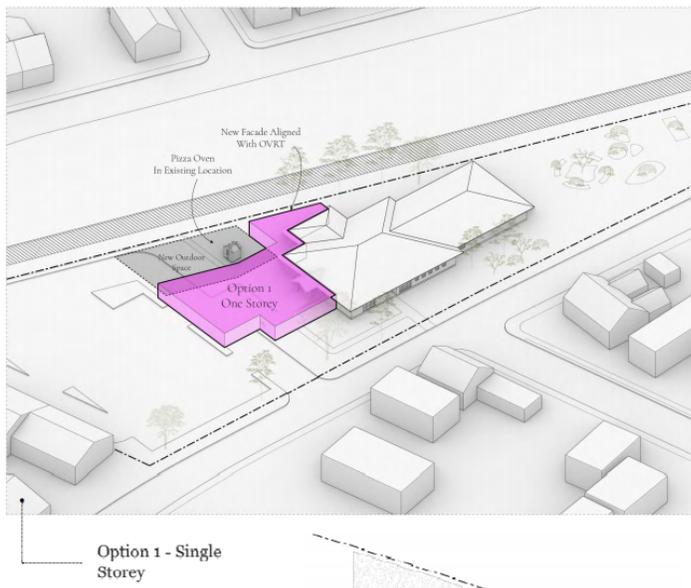
The options considered by the Library Space Needs Committee were as follows:

**Option 1: Single Storey (5000 square feet) to meet current needs**

Estimated cost: \$1,675,000 (+HST) plus \$455,000 upgrade costs of original building

Opportunities and Constraints:

- All new spaces on a single level
- Design works around the current location of the friendship oven
- Allows for a larger outdoor space
- Fewer opportunities for views
- New entrance would create visual continuity to existing garden picture window
- Keeps footprint relatively shallow to allow for adequate light penetration throughout



**Option 2: Ruled Out**

This option was unanimously ruled out for consideration by the Library Space Needs Committee, and so is not illustrated here.

**Option 3: Single Storey (5000 square feet) to meet current needs**

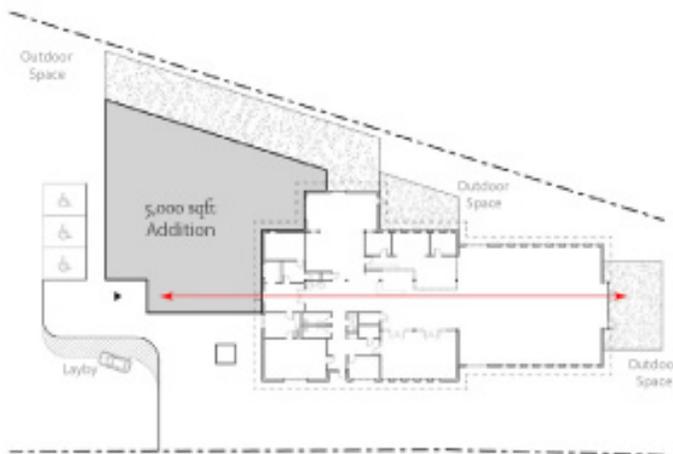
Estimated cost, including relocation of Friendship Oven: \$1,675,000 (+HST) + \$40,000 plus \$455,000 upgrade costs of original building.

Opportunities and Constraints:

- Offers the most compact and internally flexible footprint
- Friendship oven would need to be relocated
- Outdoor space between addition and OVRT boundary is smaller
- Fewer opportunities for views
- New entrance would create visual continuity to existing garden picture window
- May be harder for natural light quality to be maintained in innermost sections of footprint



Option 3 - Single Storey

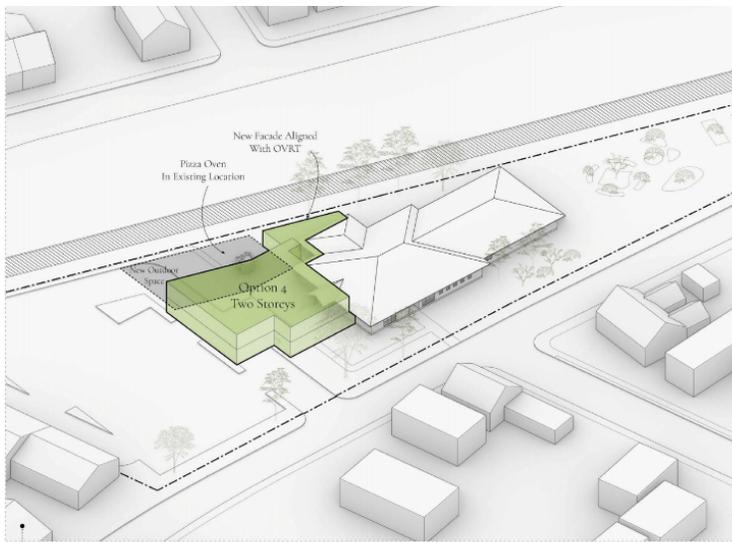


**Option 4: Double Storey with Leasable Space (10,000 square feet over 2 stories) to meet needs to 2023**

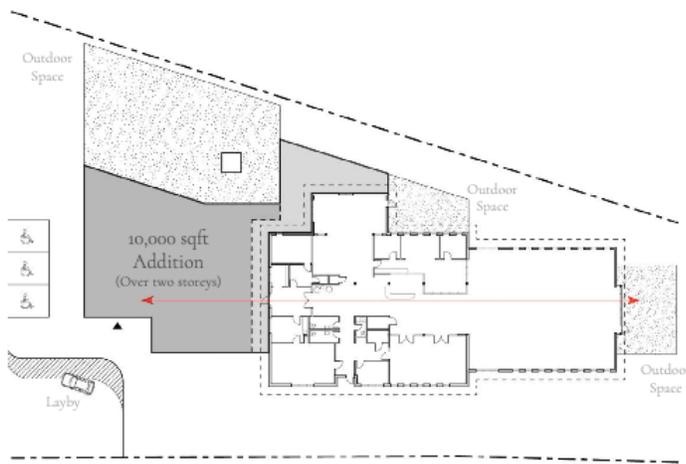
Estimated cost: \$3,350,000 (+HST) plus \$455,000 upgrade costs of original building

Opportunities and Constraints:

- Entire library collection located on the lower, single floor
- Second floor holds additional community program space, and additional space available for lease
- Largest expansion option
- Design works around the current location of the Friendship Oven
- Allows for a larger outdoor space
- New entrance would create visual continuity to existing garden picture window
- Keeps footprint relatively shallow to allow for adequate light penetration throughout



Option 4 - Double Storey with Leasable Space

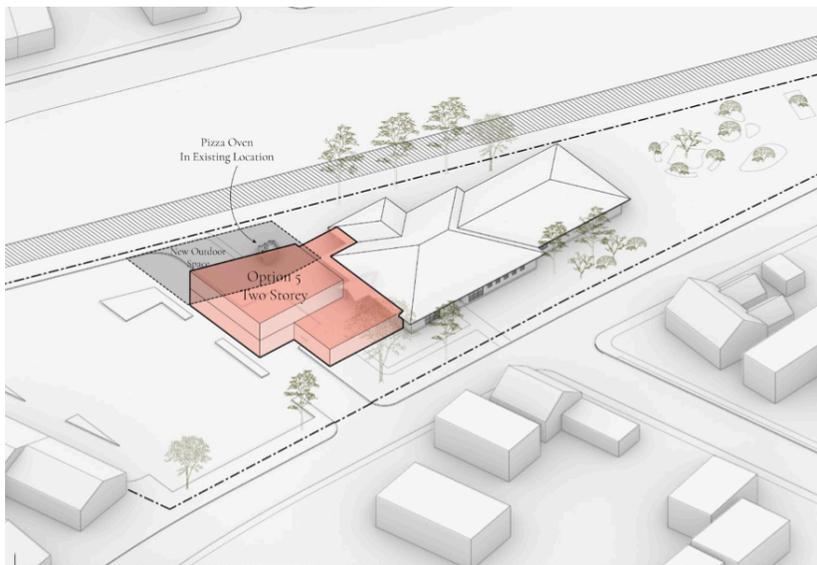


**Option 5: Double Storey (7,500 square feet over 2 stories) to meet needs to 2028**

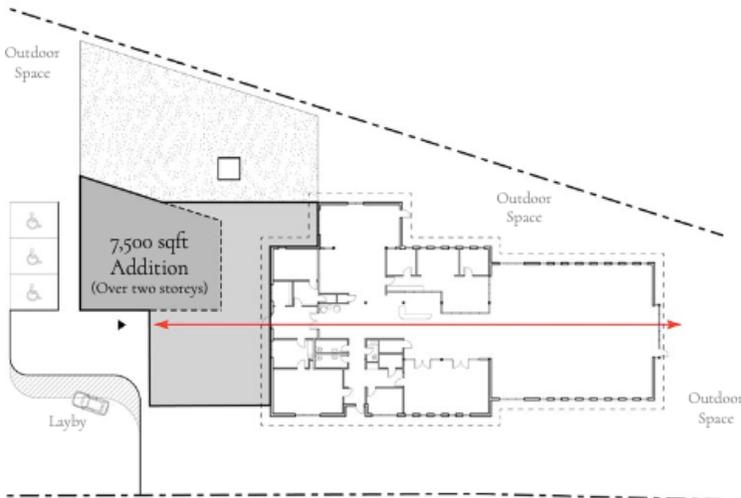
Estimated cost: \$2,512,000 (+HST) plus \$455,000 upgrade costs of original building

Opportunities and Constraints:

- Smaller second storey would impact how that space is programmed
- Design works around the current location of the friendship oven
- Allows for a larger outdoor space
- More opportunity for views
- New entrance would create visual continuity to existing garden picture window
- Accessibility and egress standards pursuant to the addition of fire stairs and elevator



Option 5 - Double Storey



**Option 6: Demolition and Reconstruction ruled out because of cost**

\$4,355,000 (+HST) to \$6,700,000 (+HST) at 2020 costs — with the caveat that demolition costs/recycling/landfilling costs will need to be considered at the point of decision.

The option of demolition of the existing Library facility was considered, with subsequent construction of a new 2-story 13,000–20,000 square foot building, the design of which would be informed by the Design Guidelines outlined in this report.

## 9. LESSONS LEARNED

### 9.1 BEST PRACTICE NOTED FROM OTHER AREAS

#### North Grenville Library Case Example

As part of the planning work for the Almonte Branch of the Mississippi Mills Library, the North Grenville Library located in Kemptonville was contacted. Rachel Brown, current CEO of that facility was most helpful with information, and also with making the connection to Jim Armour, long-time library Board member who was credited with helping lead the fundraising process and also in inspiring broad community and municipal council support for this significant capital project. The full account of the interview with Mr. Armour and his Top 10 Strategies That Worked is included in the Appendices section of this report.



#### Arnprior Case Example

Staff identified the Arnprior Library as a model, particularly their outdoor programming space. The concept is that the outdoor patio space can be formally programmed or simply available for public use, with wi-fi, and acts as a bridge between downtown and the trails — quite similar to how the Almonte Branch's outdoor space could function between the OVRT and the downtown.



from Inside Ottawa Valley, May 15, 2019)

## 9.2 LESSONS LEARNED FROM PAKENHAM BRANCH EXPANSION



(The Millstone, December 1, 2017)

The Pakenham Branch of the Mississippi Mills Library underwent a renovation and expansion in 2018. As part of this report, we contacted the members of the Building Committee for that project — Denzil Ferguson, Chair of Building Committee, Mary Lou Souter, Chair of Library Board, Diane Smithson, CAO of Mississippi Mills, Pam Harris, CAO of Mississippi Mills Library, and committee members Elizabeth Mears, John Edwards and Jane Torrance — for their comments and lessons learned. They were asked the following questions:

1. What do you remember from the Pakenham expansion in terms of highs and lows?
2. What did you learn from the Pakenham expansion?
3. If you were able to have a “do-over”, what decisions would you have made differently?
4. What advice might you have for a municipality undertaking a library expansion?

Key lessons learned from the Pakenham project were to:

- Make sure the project is adequately funded, especially if a renovation is involved
- Have a good working relationship between the Building Committee, the Library Board, Library staff, and the municipal council
- Have clear expectations and leadership to drive the project
- Get community support
- Have an excellent contractor and architect

The full responses from the Pakenham project are included in the Appendices section of the report.

## 10. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Libraries are important to the long-term economic and social well-being of a community. Libraries mobilize communities. They are a safe environment (both quiet and social) to research, transfer and develop knowledge, expertise, and social/professional networks in various hard, digital, and personal/experiential formats. The central tenets of a library as a safe place, which is affordable and accessible by all, remain intact and immutable. — Strategic Plan, 2016–2028

The process followed in this Space Needs Analysis invited public consultation, relied on the expertise of municipal staff, as well as external experts and resources, and plans for the next generation of Library users. There was an incredible breadth of background work already undertaken, and this report gathers all the pieces to reach recommendations and conclusions. The members of the Library Space Needs Committee, including Cathy Peacock, Warren Thorngate, Marie Traversy, Jeff Fraser, and Mary Lou Souter, along with staff members Christine Row, Monica Blackburn and Jill McCubbin, worked diligently through a year-long study to develop the following recommendations.

The recommended sizing, in preferred order:

**Option 1** (option 4 in Design Guidelines): 10,000 square foot addition. This is the maximum amount of space per guidelines, and the Library would be looking for a tenant to lease 2500-5000 for 5 to 10 years. The 7500 square feet would be adequate until 2028, but the 10,000 will be needed by 2038.

**Option 2** (option 5 in Design Guidelines): 7500 square foot addition. This is 2500 square feet less than the guidelines, but the Library staff believes this moderate addition would be sufficient to 2028, and perhaps beyond. It fits within the Development Charges Background Study timeframe.

The Library Board voted in favour of Option #1, a 10,000 square foot addition, knowing that the size may seem large now, but that they are building for the future. They see the value of partnership to take up the additional space until it is absolutely needed.

The opportunity is now!

*After consultation with the Space Needs Committee and the community, it is clear that any future addition should be open, exciting, accommodating, sustainable, energy-efficient, integrated with the downtown and the Ottawa Valley Recreation Trail, and be a true signature civic building and cultural space.*

*Attention to both interior and exterior space, with views and connection to the community, and respecting the site's historical context and its living heritage will be embodied in design excellence and innovation. The future expansion should reflect the community and instill pride in the residents of Mississippi Mills for generations to come.*  
— Design Guidelines

## 11. APPENDICES

### **Reports**

[Public Consultation - Focus Groups Report](#)

[Functional Analysis and Space Allocation](#)

[Design Guidelines by Heritage + Design Company](#)

### **Contributing Background Documents**

[Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems](#)

[Building Conditions Assessment](#)

[Thermodynamic Report](#)

[Strategic Planning Mississippi Mills Public Library](#)

[Mississippi Mills Community Official Plan](#)

[Mississippi Mills Development Charges Background Study 2018](#)

[Using DC Study to Inform Space Needs Analysis](#)

[Heritage Conservation District](#)

[Lanark County Sustainable Community Official Plan Amendment 2019](#)

### **Best Practice Examples**

[Arnprior Example](#)

[North Grenville Example](#)

[Lessons Learned from Pakenham Expansion](#)