# Woodstock Public Library FACILITY REQUIREMENTS REVIEW

Final Report November 2014.

#### Prepared by:

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Nov. 21, 2014

Mr. Gary Baumbach CEO Woodstock Public Library 445 Hunter St Woodstock, Ontario N4S 4G7

# RE: Facility Requirements Review

Dear Mr. Baumbach:

We are pleased to submit our final report for the above noted project.

The report recommends a facility provision standard and a facility model for public libraries in Woodstock that will see a major expansion to the Central Library. We have recommended a feasibility study be undertaken to explore building options and costs.

It has been a pleasure to work with you and other senior staff at the Woodstock Public Library to prepare this report. We appreciate your assistance and your input. I trust the report will provide the senior management team and the Library Board with a useful guide as they plan future library facilities in Woodstock.

If we can be of any further assistance, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Jim Morgenstern, MCIP

Principal

# **Table of Contents**

INTRODUCTION	2
STUDY PURPOSE AND PROCESS	2
ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT	2
SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS	3
KEY CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING THE STUDY	4
POPULATION GROWTH	4
WPL BOARD AND STAFF INPUT	4
CONTEMPORARY LIBRARIES - DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES	5
LIBRARY SPACE PROVISION GUIDELINE	7
Introduction	7
WOODSTOCK'S SITUATION – CURRENT AND FUTURE	9
RECOMMENDATION – LEVEL OF PROVISION	12
LIBRARY FACILITY MODEL	14
Introduction	14
WOODSTOCK PUBLIC LIBRARY - COMPARISON TO GENERIC FACILITY MODEL	16
WOODSTOCK PUBLIC LIBRARY - PREFERRED FACILITY MODEL	17
RECOMMENDATION - PREFERRED FACILITY MODEL	18
IMPLEMENTATION – SHORT TERM ACTIONS	21
FEASIBILITY STUDY: EXPANSION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL LIBRARY	21
TRANSITIONAL STRATEGY	23

# INTRODUCTION

#### STUDY PURPOSE AND PROCESS

In July 2014, dmA Planning and Management Services was retained by the Woodstock Public Library (WPL) to prepare a Facility Requirements Review. The review addressed two important questions concerning current and future library facility requirements.

- 1. What is the total amount of library space required now and to serve Woodstock's future population? This information will be used for future planning purposes and as input to the next review and revision of the City's Development Charges bylaw.
- 2. What is the preferred facility model for the Woodstock Public Library? The facility model describes the number and types of libraries that are required in the future. While the assessment only addresses physical facilities, it is premised on the understanding that the WPL will provide virtual services via a digital branch.

This was a preliminary assessment based on a review of background documents, research and the consultant's experience. WPL staff and Board provided input to the study.

#### ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The discussion is organized as follows:

- Summary of Recommendations
- Key Considerations Affecting the Study
- Library Space Provision Guideline
- Library Facility Model
- Implementation Short Term Actions

#### **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1:** The WPL should adopt the space provision guideline of 0.7GSF/capita for the purposes of planning future library facilities.

**Recommendation 2:** The space provision guideline should be regularly reviewed and updated to account for conflicting trends that point to more physical space associated with expanded and enhanced library roles balanced by the growing importance of the digital branch.

**Recommendation 3:** If proven feasible based on further investigation, an expanded Central Library is the preferred facility model for the WPL. The expansion would be a minimum of 10,000GSF.

**Recommendation 4:** The former Art Gallery as a free standing, separate building has no potential to meet the need for additional space at the Central Library.

**Recommendation 5:** If it is not feasible to expand the Central Library, the WPL should compare the costs and benefits of providing a new 10-12,000GSF Neighbourhood Branch and a more innovative approach of securing programming space in the community, ideally in partnership with other agencies.

**Recommendation 6**: The WPL should monitor developments with unstaffed, kiosk type service points and as improvements are made determine if these can complement the Central Library's service by offering additional unstaffed service points at selected locations in the community.

**Recommendation 7:** The WPL should undertake a feasibility study to explore opportunities for expanding the Central Library.

**Recommendation 8:** The WPL should prepare a transitional strategy to retain and expand its community use and support while waiting for the development of new library facilities.

#### **KEY CONSIDERATIONS AFFECTING THE STUDY**

#### **POPULATION GROWTH**

Library facility requirements and the future facility model will be driven in part by population growth and distribution. The following assumptions were adopted for this study.

- The City's total population will grow from 37,800 (2011) to 49,200 in 2041<sup>1</sup>.
- Most of the population growth will be in the new development areas which are an expansion of the
  existing built up area, primarily in the north and east sector of the municipality.
- While no information is available describing the socio-demographic composition of the future population, we should expect a somewhat more diverse, younger and family oriented population in the new settlement areas.

#### WPL BOARD AND STAFF INPUT

Meetings were held the WPL Board and senior management team. The following summarizes key themes from the meetings:

- Both the Board and senior staff supported a higher level of library space provision. The current Central Library's limitations were noted and the impact on service provision discussed. While the WPL makes the most of available space at the Central Library, there is virtually no program, training or creative space of the type customary in libraries today, and in-library working and reading space is limited.
- There was a general consensus that the existing Central Library as a single physical service point
  is the best option for serving the community in the future, assuming that service constraints
  associated with limited space can be corrected at this location.

These issues are discussed further in the text of the report.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Source: Oxford County. Population, Household and Employment Forecasts and Employment Lands Study. March 2014. Watson and Associates.

#### CONTEMPORARY LIBRARIES - DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PRINCIPLES

The roles and functions of public libraries have changed significantly in the past 10-15 years, largely in response to technology but also due to customer expectations, demographic shifts, a growing appreciation of the library's potential role in a knowledge based economy, an increasing emphasis on partnerships and joint service provision and a growing realization within the library community of the importance of actively participating in a wide range of community initiatives. The major changes include:

- Increasingly, libraries are being thought of as a "centre" or "focal point" of a community. They are spacious, welcoming, highly visible, accessible places where people come together to gather information, exchange ideas and explore their creativity.
- A trend in municipal planning is the development of neighbourhood centres that bring together multiple civic amenities including libraries, government services, daycares, recreation centres, and public parks or plazas. This can enhance sense of place but also create synergies between complementary services.
- Through elements of design, programming, and partnerships, the library is increasingly fostering
  dialogue and exchange with its users. The spaces inside and outside libraries are the ideal
  locations for civic events, celebrations, fairs, festivals, political debates and concerts. Public art
  installations, temporary exhibits, and local history displays help libraries establish a setting for
  social interaction, encouraging people to gather, talk, and learn.
- The library as a space for community knowledge exchange remains paramount and, for such users, the library's digital services are less about computer terminals than about space to have their 'way of knowing and creating' expressed and included.
- Increasingly, support for community social and economic development is becoming a core function
  of the library in an information economy characterized by rapid change. Libraries are providing
  workshops and training in computer literacy, e-technology, and navigation through the information
  age. The library increasingly plays a role in supporting small businesses, home-based business,
  the self-employed and individuals who must continually upgrade skills or search for new careers in
  a changing marketplace.
- To complement the increasing range of activities and services provided in a major library, users have expressed the desire for a more diverse mix of spaces. The provision of space is being

- considered for both user type (children, seniors, level of technical skill, etc.) and activity type (quiet study, group work and collaboration, social interaction and conversation, etc.).
- Increasingly, modern libraries are adopting sustainable building practices. Many developers in Canada are pursuing the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification under the Canada Green Building Council, while still others are building to green standards and incorporating sustainable design principles into their projects, while not pursuing certification.

These facility trends are strongly rooted in the changing roles and functions of public libraries. They envision a library that is fully engaged with the community. The library is home to a wide range of programs and activities and a convenient and comfortable place for residents to participate in recreational reading, research, education and learning, and community events. In addition to a higher level of design, there are implications for space planning and library facility models. These trends support larger libraries and higher square feet per capita provision levels. They also are a major reason why library systems increasingly have fewer but larger library branches.

#### LIBRARY SPACE PROVISION GUIDELINE

#### INTRODUCTION

This discussion addresses overall library space requirements. The recommendations in this section only deal with future library buildings. These physical facilities will be complemented by virtual library space and possibly by other approaches that do not require full facilities or staffing (e.g. kiosks that may provide a limited print collection in a "vending machine" arrangement as well as other electronic services). The following recommendations deal with physical buildings.

For a number of years, the library space planning guideline of 0.6 gross square feet (GSF) per capita has been widely applied in a number of jurisdictions to estimate library space needs<sup>2</sup>. This is a general guideline and applies to the library system as a whole. Community specific considerations will affect facility requirements and in a multi-branch system provision levels may vary for different types of libraries while still achieving an overall average in the 0.6 GSF/capita range.

The appropriateness of the 0.6 GSF/capita guideline is affected by the increasing reliance on electronic information and the changing role of the library in the community. Discussions concerning space planning standards have largely focused on two conflicting influences – less space committed to print materials offset by expanded areas for accessing electronic data, working and reading in the library, and new programs and services. In most libraries areas committed to the print collection are being reduced as more emphasis is placed on electronic data and digital materials. However, this is more than balanced by additional space required for in-library individual and group work, social gatherings and civic events, program areas for adults, teens and children, computer training labs, media labs, creative spaces and amenities such as light beverage and food service areas, comfortable chairs, etc. These trends all suggest larger libraries. As a result the traditional provision standard of 0.6 GSF/capita is increasingly seen as the minimum requirement and library systems are often planning future needs based on higher provision standards.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> dmA has compiled Library planning guidelines from jurisdictions throughout North America, and to a lesser extent, from the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. While variations are apparent, there is also considerable consistency in the guidelines that have been adopted in these jurisdictions.

There is little direction in the professional literature on what we might expect in the next 10-15 years. A recent publication from the Southern Ontario Library Service<sup>3</sup> (SOLS) specifically addresses the issue of space requirements and would seem to suggest that much higher levels of provision are required in the future. The document provides detailed advice for library staff considering new building projects and direction on estimating future space requirements using both a standards approach and a components approach. The limitations of estimating space requirements using standards are acknowledged. Standards are however identified for various types of libraries serving various population thresholds. Higher levels of provision are generally proposed for branches serving smaller populations, presumably because of the inefficiencies inherent in smaller buildings. Three levels of service are identified (basic, enhanced, and comprehensive) with progressively higher standards of provision. For libraries serving 50,000 population (Woodstock's projected population by 2041) at the most basic level of service a standard of provision in the order of 0.83GSF/capita is identified increasing to 1.3GSF/capita at the comprehensive level of service. These would be very generous standards of provision and few libraries in Canada would provide library space at this level. The authors of the SOLS document offer virtually no discussion in support of the identified standards of provision despite the fact that few, if any, libraries would achieve these levels. Nonetheless, they do point to a future direction consistent with higher space provision standards.

Increasingly we expect that an argument will be made for higher levels of per capita provision. This argument will not be based on the manner in which information is stored and retrieved in the library; instead it will be rooted in an entirely different concept of the role and function of the public library. The future library is not simply a physical place to store and retrieve information (regardless of the format); it is a place for the creative manipulation of information and the creation of knowledge. This concept of the library envisions a different role and function and consequently different requirements for space. This is a library where information literacy is taught; music and video is created; residents come together to discuss and debate important issues; and where community is created and fostered. To be this type of library, physical space not traditionally associated with public libraries is required, including computer and multimedia labs; extensive display space; creative space; areas for the community to informally assemble and interact; presentation space, etc. If this is the role and function of the library of the future, levels of provision much higher than the often cited 0.6GSF/capita will be required.

One very important qualification concerning these provision standards should be noted. They predate recent legislation concerning accessibility. Full accessibility (e.g. aisle widths to accommodate the turning radius of a motorized wheelchair; all circulating items shelved for wheelchair access, etc.) will not be accommodated in libraries providing 0.6GSF/capita. The arguments being made for higher provision

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> "Making the Case for Your Library Building Project". Library Development Guide #5. March 2010.

standards are based on changes in the library's role; not new accessibility legislation. The implications of this legislation for existing or new libraries (as well as many other public buildings) may have a major impact of future space requirements.

#### WOODSTOCK'S SITUATION - CURRENT AND FUTURE

The reported size of the Woodstock library is 24,200GSF, resulting in a per capita level of provision of 0.64, based on a 2011 population of 37,800. However, we expect this is over-stated. The Woodstock Central Library is a unique building that represents an extraordinarily successful transition from an older Carnegie building to a contemporary library. The WPL has done an wonderful job of retaining the charm, sense of history, attention to detail and design quality that was characteristic of older libraries, while creating spaces that are inviting and functional for the library user. We are not surprised to hear that the community is strongly attached to the Central Library and values the rather special experience of visiting this library. However, this has been accomplished in part by retaining elements of the original building such as the rotunda and the fireplaces that occupy space that would not be found in most libraries. Consequently, while the library may be 24,200GSF, in a functional sense it likely provides something closer to 22,000GSF.

We will use the 24,200GSF in the discussion that follows because we have no reliable basis to adjust this figure or determine how the unique situation in Woodstock would be interpreted with respect to provincial or national guidelines. However, the fact that this figure overstates the supply of functional library space will be apparent, particularly with respect to the supply of program, training, assembly and specialized spaces that would be customary in a library of this size that was the community's only facility.

Figure 1 provides a perspective on the possible implications of various provision standards based on a projected population of 49,200 by 2041<sup>4</sup> and no change in the supply of library space.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> All population information is from: Oxford County. Population, Household and Employment Forecasts and Employment Lands Study. March 2014. Watson and Associates.

Figure 1: Possible Facility Space Requirements - Various Scenarios

Library Space Requirements (GSF)	O.64GSF per capita  Current Level of  Provision	0.7GSF per capita	0.8GSF per capita	1.0GSF Per capita
Based on Current Population <sup>5</sup>	24,200	26,460	30,240	37,800
Current Surplus/(Deficit) <sup>6</sup>	0	(2,260)	(6,040)	(13,600)
Based on Projected Population - 2041 <sup>7</sup>	31,490	34,440	39,360	49,200
2041 Surplus/(Deficit)	(7,290)	(10,240)	(15,160)	(25,000)

At the current level of provision, the projected 2041 population would call for an additional 7,290GSF of library space. Adopting the more generous provision standard of 1.0GSF/capita, indicates the need for a second library the size of the current facility by 2041.

As noted above, despite the increasing importance of the digital branch, few would argue for a provision standard of 0.6GSF/capita or less because the roles and responsibilities of libraries are changing in ways that are space dependent.

The ability of the WPL to embrace these new roles and responsibilities is clearly limited by available space. In the CEO's report to the Board concerning the possible acquisition of the former Art Gallery<sup>8</sup>, a number of limitations associated with the existing library are noted, including lack of space for staff, storage and meetings as well as constraints on programming and accommodating youth and local history collections. These constraints primarily deal with operations and traditional library functions. If one also considers the spaces required to effectively meet the needs of the emerging generation of library users (private group

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Based on 2011 population of 37,800. Figure 3-3, p. 8. Oxford County. Population, Household and Employment Forecasts and Employment Lands Study. March 2014. Watson and Associates.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Based on current supply of 24,200 GSF.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Based on a 2041 population of 49,200. Figure 5-2. p. 26. Oxford County. Population, Household and Employment Forecasts and Employment Lands Study. March 2014. Watson and Associates.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Art Gallery Acquisition. Report to the Board from the CEO. May 2011.

study areas; "maker" spaces; enhanced in-library working and reading spaces; partnerships with other allied community service providers, etc.), the needed for an enhanced level of provision is even more apparent.

The Vision embraced by the Board in the 2012-15 WPL Strategic Plan<sup>9</sup> also describes a role for the Library that would necessitate additional space for specialized activities. While the Vision strongly supports an improved and expanded digital branch, it also speaks to the quality and size of physical facilities by suggesting "spaces are inviting, comfortable and designed for kids, for youth and for adults". These are spaces where "people work independently or collaboratively". They position the Library as a "critical element of Woodstock's cultural capital" and facilitate "collaborative partnerships, sharing spaces-sharing services."

These considerations point to larger libraries and consequently a future level of provision higher than the existing 0.64GSF/capita. While one might argue "the bigger the better" - there are three important factors that would support the status quo. First, future financing of capital development will depend to some degree on Development Charges revenue. A higher level of provision will not be fully funded from this source. Second, no one can predict the impact of the digital branch. The WPL has committed to developing a full service digital branch and we can assume the range and quality of services available to library users digitally will expand exponentially in the future. This is of course why libraries can (and must) play different roles and offer new services in their physical space. The appropriate balance between virtual and physical services has a major impact on the recommended level of provision. And finally, with respect to the physical library of the future, public libraries will largely be responsible for creating their market. There is little evidence in Woodstock or elsewhere that residents are demanding a new type of library with different roles and services. The most recent WPL customer satisfaction survey10, does not suggest a demand for a radically different type of public library. While the survey was conducted with existing users, very high levels of satisfaction were reported for all aspects of the library, including seating and workspaces that are space dependent. The respondents to the survey were largely users of traditional library services ("borrowing materials" was the most frequently reported reason for using the library by an overwhelming margin). These results are not unusual. Even amongst users, there is relatively limited familiarity with the bold new directions and innovative services being pioneered by progressive public libraries. Indeed, most research indicates that both users and non-users have a relatively traditional view of the public library and this may be contributing to lower levels of use and support. In addition, many existing users may be very comfortable with the library they have known for years - the challenge for public libraries today is to excite the next

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Woodstock Public Library Strategic Plan. 2012-15. Final Report. Page 4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> WPL Customer Satisfaction Survey. 2009.

generation and to attract (or re-engage) non-users. Consequently, to some extent, the need for more library space is premised on the ability of the WPL to retain existing and attract new users. This requirement was recognized by the Board and is reflected in the 2012-15 Strategic Plan's "Community Top of Mind" and "Connections and Relationships" strategies.

The University of Ottawa is considering establishing a satellite campus in Woodstock, and this was raised as a factor influencing future library space requirements. It is not clear to what extent the University will rely on the public library system to support students. Satellite campuses may provide their own library facilities for students, particularly if the print collection is limited, specialized or requirements are largely met digitally from the main campus. However, in other Ontario communities such as Brantford, universities and colleges have entered into agreements with the public library to provide facilities and services for students. If such an agreement developed with the University of Ottawa, any resulting space requirements would be over and above those discussed in this report.

The issue for this study is the find the appropriate balance between current space limitations at the WPL and trends that suggest larger libraries on the one hand and the realities of financial constraints, the growing significance of the digital branch, and the need to create the demand for a contemporary library on the other.

#### RECOMMENDATION - LEVEL OF PROVISION

We recommend that 0.7GSF/capita be used as a minimum guideline for the purposes of planning future library space requirements. Despite conflicting pressures, on balance the trend today is towards larger libraries accommodating a much wider range of community uses and specialized functions such as dedicated training facilities, media labs, maker spaces, and social and community space.

The recommended guideline of 0.7GSF/capita must be reviewed and adjusted on an ongoing basis. It is not possible to reasonably predict the impact of technology on the requirements for physical library space. The increasing popularity of digital branches and the use of personal devices instead of in-library computers are two trends that suggest less need for physical space. To date, these trends have been more than offset by expanded programs and services that have contributed to more visitors, staying for longer periods of time in libraries and the demand for new, specialized spaces. The impact of these conflicting trends is not yet clear and consequently guidelines may increase or decrease in the future. In addition, legislation, such as the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), can have a major impact on space requirements. Guidelines such as 0.6GSF/capita have been used since the 1970s and consequently

did not accommodate full accessibility. Our recommendation to adopt a higher standard of provision is based on the changing role of the public library, not enhanced requirements for full accessibility. Consequently, depending on how AODA is interpreted with respect to library design (height of shelves, width of aisles, wheelchair accommodation in meeting or training rooms etc.) - the implication for library space could be very significant and almost certainly not accommodated within the recommended 0.7GSF/capita.

**Recommendation 1:** The WPL should adopt the space provision guideline of 0.7GSF/capita for the purposes of planning future library facilities.

**Recommendation 2:** The space provision guideline should be regularly reviewed and updated to account for conflicting trends that point to more physical space associated with expanded and enhanced library roles balanced by the growing importance of the digital branch.

## LIBRARY FACILITY MODEL

#### INTRODUCTION

In addition to evaluating the overall supply of library space, the WPL must determine a preferred facility model. The model describes how the total amount of library space will be distributed among different types of facilities. To date, WPL has always operated from a single, city-serving library and consequently has not adopted a facility model or a library classification system to guide the planning of its libraries.

Figure 2 describes a generic facility hierarchy, based on guidelines compiled from various Provincial and State libraries across North America. Four types of libraries are described in this generic model – Central, District, Community, and Neighbourhood. These physical facilities would be complemented by a digital branch and in some cases other non-facility approaches to service delivery (such as vending machine type kiosks). Many libraries serving rural populations will include satellite branches or deposit stations that are smaller than neighbourhood branches; however, these are less common in urban systems and are therefore not represented in the generic facility hierarchy. Indeed, the wisdom of providing neighbourhood branches at the lower end of the size range (5,000GSF) would be questioned by many library planners. Increasingly neighbourhood branches more in the order of 10,000GSF would be seen as a minimum to provide the functional areas and amenities of interest to users.

All types of libraries shown in the hierarchy are not represented in every municipality's library system. Furthermore, municipalities across Canada with similar populations, demographic profiles and settlement patterns have adopted very different facility models. Some have adopted a highly centralized approach with central or district libraries, while others provide library services on a more decentralized basis with a number of community and/or neighbourhood branches. Woodstock has opted for a very centralized model to date.

The service characteristics noted in Figure 2 (size, collection, circulation, hours of operation, reading, working and program space) are mutually dependent. Consequently, these characteristics, when taken together, describe both the space requirements and selected service characteristics for a particular level of the hierarchy. It must be emphasized however that these service characteristics vary widely among libraries of similar size and serving similar populations. They are therefore general guidelines and variations should be expected on a case-by-case basis.

Figure 2: Generic Facility Hierarchy

Key Characteristics	Central Library	District Library	Community Library	Neighbourhood Library
Population Served	City wide	40,000-70,000	20,000-35,000	5 - 10,000
Size GSF (gross sq. ft.)	Based on population served	30,000-45,000	12,000-24,000	Minimum of 5,000 up to 10,000
Operating Hours (per week minimum)	70 plus	65	50-55	35
Collection (minimum items)	300,000 or more depending on population served and GSF	150,000	75,000	25-35,000
Circulation (annual)	Based on population served	400-560,000	200-240,000	40-75,000
Program/Meeting Space (sq. ft.)	Minimum 4-5,000, plus specialized program/ presentation spaces	3-4,000 plus some allowance for specialized service areas	1,500 – no or limited specialized service areas	300-500
Possible Specialized Service Areas	Auditorium/ assembly space; Local history/ genealogy; Computer training facilities; Community information services; media lab	Computer training facilities, community info, employment	Local community information/ employment services	none
Internet Workstations	Minimum 50-75 based on GSF Wireless	35-60 Wireless	25-30 Wireless	5-10
Reading Areas/ Workstations <sup>11</sup>	Minimum 250-300 based on GSF	100-200	75-130	20-35

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Based on public reading area and workstations; does not include seating in program rooms.

# WOODSTOCK PUBLIC LIBRARY - COMPARISON TO GENERIC FACILITY MODEL

Woodstock's Central Library is compared to the generic facility model in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Selected Characteristics - Woodstock Public Library

Characteristics	Woodstock Library	Relationship to Generic Model
Size (gross sq. ft.)	24,221	Straddles the classification as either a large community library or a small district library.
Operating Hours (per week min)	63.5 56 (summer)	Consistent with a district library and appropriate for a single service point
Collection (total volumes - print)	129,810	A smaller collection than a district library – likely reflecting the space limitations
Circulation (annual)	510,400	Well within the range of a district library. Indicating a high level of circulation given the limited space and, for a district library, small collection.
People Entering the Library	413,928	No comparable measure in the generic classification, but likely reflects a well used library.
Virtual Visits	93,371	No comparable measure in the generic classification, but likely reflects a well used library.
Program/Meeting Space (sq. ft.)	540	Extremely limited. This is a very low level of provision, more in line with a neighbourhood branch than a city serving district library.
Other Specialized Service Areas with dedicated space (e.g. Auditorium/ assembly space; Local history; computer training lab; community information services, etc.)	Generally not provided	Some of these spaces would be customary in a district or central library; particularly if it was a single service point.
Internet Workstations	15	Very limited; more in line with a neighbourhood library
Other Reading Areas/ Workstations (Number of Seats)	140	Consistent with a community library.
Wireless Service (yes/no)	Yes	Yes
Barrier Free Access	Yes	Yes

The information in Figure 3 substantiates the position taken by the Board and staff that current space limitations are a major issue at WPL. However, despite these limitations, the WPL appears to achieve relatively high levels of use.

# WOODSTOCK PUBLIC LIBRARY - PREFERRED FACILITY MODEL

When determining a preferred facility model, planners generally attempt to strike a balance among three key considerations – access for users, level of service and cost. Different library systems will strike this balance in different ways to best reflect their communities.

Access: Most library planning guidelines indicate that the maximum driving time to the closest library should be 15 minutes in urban areas and as much as 30 minutes in rural areas. Based on these guidelines, we expect most residents currently have adequate access to the Central Library. In some municipalities, due to unique and specific access barriers associated with distance; physical or social boundaries within communities; socio-economic or cultural characteristics of the users; or other unique circumstances small branches are provided in close proximity to specific user groups. These unique circumstances are not a factor in Woodstock and most current and future residents will be within a 15 minute drive of the existing library. Access, therefore, is not a major constraint in Woodstock and a more centralized facility model would be supported on this criterion.

<u>Cost:</u> Costs generally increase with the more branches in the library system. Higher capital costs can be anticipated because of the inefficiencies associated with land assembly and duplication of non-public space in multi-branch systems. However, a more significant concern is much higher operating costs. Because even a small library serving a limited population must be open a minimum number of hours to provide an acceptable level of service, multi-branch systems will generally provide more total operating hours with a less convenient schedule of open hours. More staff is required to accommodate longer total hours of operation and this is a major contributor to higher operating costs in multi-branch systems. In addition, each building must be staffed at a minimum level even if this is not justified by use. Additional costs are also incurred due to duplicate collections, technologies and equipment, higher costs for insurance, service contracts and other office functions, transportation of materials among branches etc. Finally, there are practical operational considerations adversely affecting cost in multi-branch systems, such as the challenges of covering for individuals due to sickness, vacations or other absences. Consequently, fewer service points are preferred from a cost perspective.

Cost considerations would support the continuation of a single service point in Woodstock. Securing adequate resources is always a challenge for library systems and Woodstock is no exception. The staff management team is fully occupied with existing duties and keeping pace with new developments and service improvements (such as those envisioned in the Strategic Plan) is a challenge. Staffing and equipping a new branch would add considerably to these costs.

<u>Level of Service</u>: Finally, in addition to being more cost effective larger branches can generally provide higher levels of service. In addition to more open hours, larger libraries can include more of the types of amenities that people are looking for in contemporary libraries, including more workspace, comfortable seating areas, more Internet workstations, dedicated program space, and in some cases, specialized services. The relationship between the size of the branch and level of service is illustrated in Figure 2 discussed earlier.

Virtually none of the specialized spaces associated with a contemporary library are available at the Central Library, and this is a key concern. Based on the space provision guideline, WPL requires about 10,000GSF of additional space by 2041. This would represent a neighbourhood branch and therefore would not provide the spaces, and supporting services, characterized by large community or district Libraries. These are the spaces required in Woodstock and the best option to provide them is at an expanded Central Library.

#### RECOMMENDATION - PREFERRED FACILITY MODEL

Woodstock has been served by its Central Library as a single service point for many years. The Central Library is an extraordinary building and notwithstanding the challenges inherent with any old building, it is functional, well used and highly valued by the community. The City and the Board continue to invest in the facility – the current façade upgrades being the latest example. The location is accessible and operating a single facility is by far the most cost effective option available to the Board. The Central Library's only drawback is size. It is simply too small to accommodate the specialized spaces required to serve current, and more importantly, future users.

The preferred facility development strategy therefore is to restructure the internal space at the Central Library and expand the size of the building by 10 -15,000GSF. This would be a major undertaking and its feasibility, including financial feasibility, must be established. We have recommended a study for this purpose (discussed in the next section of the report).

We note that the 2008-10 WPL Strategic Plan made specific reference to additional physical space both with respect to a possible acquisition of the former Art Gallery and a new branch in the eastern sector of the community. The 2012-15 Strategic Plan is not this specific, but as noted above clearly supports a role for the WPL that will require additional space. There are no other planning documents that discuss the manner in which WPL will provide additional library facilities.

We do not support the directions indicated in the 2008-10 Strategic Plan.

The Art Gallery Acquisition report<sup>12</sup> points to the significant challenges associated with acquiring this building for library uses. There are major functional limitations and perhaps more importantly financial and operating constraints associated with two adjacent but separate buildings. In addition to these constraints, within the existing building envelope, there is no possibility to capture enough space to make much of a difference in the WPL's long term needs. Consequently, simply acquiring the former Art Gallery as library space in an adjacent, free standing building is not an option worth pursuing.

The suggestion in the 2008-10 Strategic Plan that a new branch be considered is also not one that we would support. As noted above, our preferred strategy is the expansion of the Central Library as a single service point for Woodstock. However, if that is not feasible, there are two options. The first would be to simply build a new neighbourhood branch of 10-12,000GSF. While this may have some appeal, it is unlikely to provide the physical facilities that will best support the WPL's services. For reasons discussed earlier, neighbourhood branches are becoming less relevant components of facility models and may have a diminishing role in the future. Investing resources in this type of facility space may not be the best option. The alternative is less clear because it would not involve building a branch library. Instead, the WPL would secure spaces to complement the Central Library – ideally through partnerships. These spaces would become satellite locations with very specialized functions. The key challenge is operational – effectively managing and programming a space outside of the Central Library is not the ideal situation. However, this option is worth investigating to determine relative costs and benefits compared to opening a traditional neighbourhood branch.

There is one final facility model consideration. As facility models have become more centralized, libraries have experimented with options for delivering services without staffing buildings. Library service kiosks, similar in concept to vending machines, are an increasingly common example. These kiosks can hold more than 1,000 items and users can retrieve, return and place holds on material. Returned items are checked in by the machine and immediately returned to public circulation. Users can also search and place holds on the full library collection from the kiosk. These kiosks are frequently located in high traffic areas (such as the Woodstock Recreation Complex). As they become more sophisticated and provide access to an increasing supply of physical and downloadable digital resources, they will create an entirely new layer of decentralized service access independent of traditional staffed branch libraries. These options should be a part of the WPL future facility model.

**Recommendation 3:** If proven feasible based on further investigation, an expanded Central Library is the preferred facility model for the WPL. The expansion would be a minimum of 10,000GSF.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Art Gallery Acquisition. Report to the Board from the CEO. May 2011.

**Recommendation 4:** The former Art Gallery as a free standing, separate building has no potential to meet the need for additional space at the Central Library.

**Recommendation 5:** If it is not feasible to expand the Central Library, the WPL should compare the costs and benefits of providing a new 10-12,000GSF Neighbourhood Branch and a more innovative approach of securing programming space in the community, ideally in partnership with other agencies.

**Recommendation 6**: The WPL should monitor developments with unstaffed, kiosk type service points and as improvements are made determine if these can complement the Central Library's service by offering additional unstaffed service points at selected locations in the community.

# IMPLEMENTATION - SHORT TERM ACTIONS

Our facility development strategy calls for the addition of a minimum of 10,000GSF of library space by 2041 to correct current deficiencies and provide for future population. Expansion of the Central Library is the preferred approach to meeting this need.

The following are two key short term implementation activities that the WPL should undertake to pursue this facility development strategy.

# FEASIBILITY STUDY: EXPANSION AND REDEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL LIBRARY

The scope of this study does not include architectural or site planning studies to assess the feasibility of expanding the existing library. Based on the CEO's report to the Board concerning the possible acquisition of the former Art Gallery, we understand a detailed investigation of expansion possibilities has not been undertaken and, in our view, this should be done. The proposed feasibility study will investigate opportunities to expand the Central Library at the current location.

Given that the study will address Woodstock's only library and a library that must provide spaces, technologies and services appropriate for future generations of library users, it must be more than an architectural review that investigates building options and site development capacity. The study must also articulate a Vision for physical spaces that is consistent with the library's changing role, trends, and the service priorities and directions identified in the WPL Strategic Plan.

The study, therefore, would have two parts. The first part would be a space planning exercise that results in a desired functional space program directly tied to the WPL service model. This would be followed by a building and site assessment that explores options for accommodating the functional space program.

Part One: Space Planning Exercise

<u>Objective</u>: to describe in detail the WPL's service delivery model and the types of physical spaces necessary to accommodate the service delivery model. For the purposes of this discussion, a service delivery model refers to library outcomes and the services, programs and activities that must be provided to deliver these outcomes. Our primary concern is the spaces required to achieve the outcomes. A service delivery model would also link outcomes to the WPL's staff complement and competencies, organizational structure, governance and other issues, but these components of the service delivery model will not have a major impact on physical spaces, and consequently are not our focus.

#### Tasks

- Review available documentation, such as the Strategic Plan, describing the WPL service delivery model. As necessary revise or expand the service delivery model through discussions with the Board and staff
- Research trends and best practices with respect to library design, technology, and space planning to identify issue and opportunities for the WPL
- Identify the physical spaces, technology, and equipment that must be provided to support the WPL service delivery model
- Consider opportunities to achieve library outcomes in conjunction with other partners or using other resources in the community and the implications this may have for bringing other service providers into the library, or offering library services outside of the library
- As possible, establish priorities for library spaces
- Prepare a preliminary space program indicating areas required and size as well priorities and possible trade-offs.
- Identify design guidelines based on the literature, best practices, and the experience of other libraries as well as the unique characteristics and constraints of the Woodstock Central Library.

Part Two: Building and Site Assessment

<u>Objective</u>: to determine options and implications of expanding the Central Library to accommodate the results of the space planning exercise.

#### <u>Tasks</u>

- Identify the site potentially available for building expansion (e.g. does it include the former Art Gallery property, a portion of the adjacent parking, etc.)
- Identify other building and site development opportunities and constraints relevant to the assessment (e.g. heritage designation, site services, required emergency access etc.)
- Prepare a building audit to describe existing conditions (current layout, allocation of space, structural and mechanical considerations, etc.) and development considerations (zoning, traffic and parking, etc.)
- Review and further refine the results of the space planning exercise based on the previous tasks
- Identify and illustrate options for restructuring internal space and adding external space to address the results of the space planning exercise
- Select a preferred option and prepare a site plan, initial concepts and key elevations to illustrate

#### Provide a preliminary estimate of capital costs

There is considerable latitude in the possible scope of work for some of these tasks. The level of detail associated with illustrating concepts, elevations and estimating costs, in particular, can have a major impact on the scope of work and the budget. The intent of the study is to provide sufficient detail to allow the Library Board and Council to determine if this is a feasible project worthy of pursuing. The terms of reference for the study will specify this required level of detail and that will drive the budget and timetable for the study. However, based on our experience with similar studies, we would expect a minimum budget of \$75,000 and a 4-6 month time frame. The necessary budget will also be influenced by any requirements for stakeholder consultation and meetings and presentations. A \$75,000 budget will not accommodate extensive community and stakeholder consultation or a long list of mandatory meetings and presentations, and in our view these are not necessary to meet the study's key objectives.

#### TRANSITIONAL STRATEGY

The feasibility study will determine whether the WPL will expand the Central Library to fulfill facility requirements to 2041. If feasible, the strategy is unlikely to be implemented in the short term.

The WPL cannot afford to wait for 10 or 15 years for a new or expanded library. As discussed above, the existing Central Library will increasingly fail to provide the specialized facilities, equipment and technology that the emerging generation of users will expect in their public library. Indeed, the current library already falls far short of meeting expectations in this respect. Improved physical facilities are required immediately or WPL will lose existing users, fail to attract new users, and see the erosion of its public support.

A transitional strategy is required to bridge what we believe will be a growing service, satisfaction and expectation gap between now and the opening of an expanded Central Library. This strategy might have a number of components, such as securing other spaces in Woodstock to offer new services that cannot be accommodated in the Central Library (e.g. a media lab or creative space centred on technology in a storefront on Main St., or as a partnership with municipal art and cultural services at the recreation complex); fast-tracking the development of the digital branch to engage non-users and keep them involved with the WPL; expanded partnerships to capitalize on the resources of other community agencies and reach out to new sectors of the community; a communications and marketing program to increase interest, enthusiasm and commitment for the exciting "new" library in Woodstock's future. A transitional strategy incorporating these and other initiatives is required in the short term.

**Recommendation 7:** The WPL should undertake a feasibility study to explore opportunities for expanding the Central Library.

**Recommendation 8:** The WPL should prepare a transitional strategy to retain and expand its community use and support while waiting for the development of new library facilities.