

*Building a New Main Branch of the
North Grenville Public Library*



**Case for Support
March 2007**

**NG
PL** NORTH GRENVILLE
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Making the Most of Every Mind

Making the Most of Every Mind

In 2004, the Library Board decided that its mission in North Grenville could be summed up in six simple words – Making the Most of Every Mind.

It underlines our ongoing commitment to ensuring that all members of our community have access to the best in library resources and programming. It also recognizes the important debt we owe to the past.

Like hospitals, churches, and schools – public libraries were seen as an essential ingredient for a thriving and prosperous community. The people of Burritt’s Rapids, Oxford Mills, Kemptville and South Gower certainly believed that it was important.

At a time when money was tight and the future far less certain, residents chose to build public libraries and make the most of every mind.

Their commitment and their courage will be front-and-centre as we strive to build a modern library service that will enrich the lives of all people in North Grenville for years to come.

What Your Public Library Offers

The North Grenville Public Library offers a wide range of services via four small community branches. They include – books, CDs, videos, magazines, public computers, Internet access, electronic collections and interlibrary loan. We also run a series of adult and children’s programs such as Book Chat, Sarah’s Circle, Juice Jam and the ever-popular Summer Reading Program.

Over the past year, library users have been able to browse our entire collection on-line from the comfort of their own homes, as well as renew and place reserves on books. Through partnership arrangements with other libraries across the country, we provide an extensive system of inter-library loans.

Our dedicated staff of largely part-time employees is also involved in a number of community groups such as K.I.D.S. for Tomorrow, the Youth Centre, the Ontario Early Years Centres, and the Leeds and



Grenville Health Unit's Baby Talk Program. As well, they conduct library training at our elementary schools and hold orientation sessions for Sparks, Brownies and local day-care centres.

When it comes to what your library has to offer, things have certainly changed. And the transformation in our library service that has occurred since amalgamation is showing great results. Participation in our children's programming has more than doubled. Circulation has increased steadily by more than ten per cent a year. And, the number of library visits is at record levels.

Our Growing Challenge

The problem is that our facilities have not kept pace with the modernization of our services and the growth of our population.

Three out of four branches in the North Grenville Public Library System are in heritage buildings. That has generally meant cramped quarters, no study space, unreliable heating (except in summer) and regular visits from squirrels, mice and other pests who really want to sink their teeth into a good book!

None of our buildings are fully accessible and major renovations are practically impossible. In fact, a report done by a municipal access committee in 2006 could not put a dollar figure on what it would take to bring our libraries up to code.

Our library users have told us they want regular hours, space to study and do research, as well as larger areas for programming. Above all, they want a library where they can comfortably browse, look and learn – not simply pick-up and drop-off books.

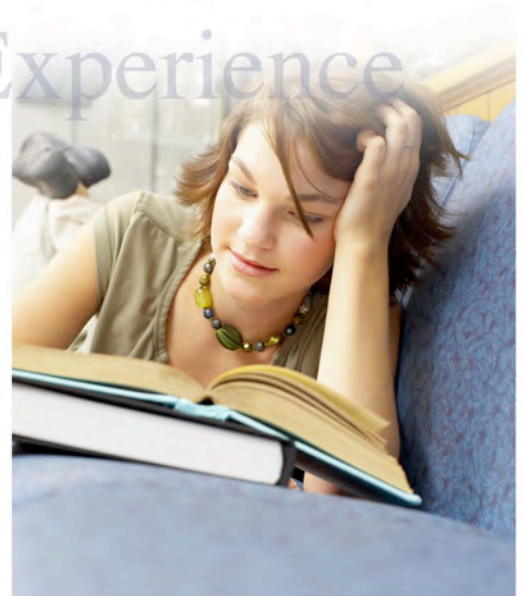
North Grenville is one of the fastest growing communities in Eastern Ontario. Our public library system must grow along with it if we are to meet the needs of future generations.

Why a New Main Branch

In searching for the best way to meet our growing challenges, your Library Board systematically investigated a variety of options including – renovating existing branches, partnering with local schools and businesses, and possibly moving into other available buildings in North Grenville.

It quickly became clear that the only option that made any real sense for library users and the community was to construct a new, modern, main branch.

Experience



The North Grenville Municipal Council agreed and in 2005, transferred control of the Courthouse site in downtown Kemptville to the Library Board.

A new main branch will allow us to start from scratch and create 10,000 square feet of dedicated library space. This means places to study, programming areas and expanded collections – with regular hours and operating efficiencies.

In short, a new main branch would finally give us the facilities to match the quality of our programming and the dedication of our staff.

The Site

The Courthouse at Prescott and Water Streets is in many ways a jewel of Kemptville's historic downtown and the existing building still provides an important service to the community.

For this reason, the Library Board developed a construction plan that leaves the Courthouse untouched – saving the Municipality a potential increase in its policing budget and preserving our heritage.

Given that parking is at a premium downtown, the new main branch has been designed so that the loss of parking spaces is kept to a minimum. In fact, there will only be seven less spots than there are currently.

The Benefits to the Community

Along with immediate benefits in access and expanded service for users, a new main branch of the North Grenville Public Library will also be the anchor for revitalizing downtown Kemptville.

In the 2006 Strategic Plan, residents of North Grenville made downtown revitalization one of their top priorities and called on the Municipality to do what it could to attract people, investment and development to this historic part of our community.

Study after study has shown that vibrant, modern libraries attract both people and substantial economic spin-off. This is why cities like London, Waterloo, Brantford and Ingersoll have all made new or restored library buildings the centrepiece of efforts to revitalize their downtowns.

North Grenville is no different. The vast majority of our library users drive to their branch and usually combine that trip with shopping and other activities. A new main branch will bring those users and their dollars downtown.

Residents also said in the Strategic Plan that they wanted a “preserved and improved” natural environment that enhanced community assets like the South Branch of the Rideau River.

The new library will be built to the highest environmental standards and take full advantage of its location on the banks of the South Branch at the entrance to historic downtown. The site will reclaim parkland and include ample green space for outdoor programming.

In short, it will be a public building that North Grenville can be proud of for years and years to come.

What will happen to my existing branch?



There will be changes and many existing branches will be phased out of service, but the Library Board is fully committed to maintaining a comparable level of service in each of the communities that currently have a branch.

Along with the obvious improvements that will come with a new main branch and our expanded on-line capabilities, book drop-off and pick-up points may be arranged with local businesses and service clubs. The Library Board will also investigate the feasibility of offering a bookmobile in the future.

The Burritt's Rapids branch, however, will remain open since it is the furthest away and the existing building is rented from Parks Canada at a cost of \$100 per year. If this leasing agreement changes in the future, the Library Board will work with the community to develop practical alternatives.

Looking Ahead

Taking our new main branch from a dream to a reality is going to require a lot of work and support, but things are well on their way.

The Library Board has studied the feasibility of the Courthouse site, developed a fundraising strategy and secured the services of CSV Architects of Ottawa – who are currently working on design concepts. The Board, in conjunction with Municipal staff, has examined the best way to finance this project also.

The new building is estimated to cost approximately \$4-Million to build, furnish and equip. The money will come from fundraising, asset sales, government grants and future development fees.

The entire project should be completed by 2010.

How you can help

The new main branch of the North Grenville Public Library is being built for the community, but it can't be done without you. We need you to invest in this worthwhile project.

There are many ways for you to get involved. You can volunteer to help with our financial and construction planning; organize a fundraising event; and – of course – make a generous donation.

To find out how you can help, please contact our Chief Librarian Sue Higgins at (613) 258-4711, email shiggins@ripnet.com or go to our website at www.ngpl.ca.

Thank-you for *making the most of every mind!*

