
Kalkaska County Library New Building Project

Project Concept Document



Prepared By: Strategic Planning Committee of the
Kalkaska County Library

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Project Concept Document



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Role	Name	Signature	Date
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1. Mission Statement of the Kalkaska County Library

The mission of the Kalkaska County Library is to provide users with open access to technology, information, and ideas covering a broad spectrum of human thought and experience, and to foster the understanding and development of cultures, communities, and individuals.

The Library will strive to protect intellectual freedom, promote literacy, and encourage lifelong learning.

The Library will strive to maintain a diverse collection of materials, and provide access to educational, informational, and recreational resources, including materials outside its collection.

Our clear vision, strong values, and the way we execute our mission will make our Library one that our peers will want to emulate. As we seek to fulfill our mission, our efforts and resources will be directed towards making our vision a reality in the following ways:

- a. Our Library staff will set the standard for customer service among public libraries. Hallmarks of our staff will be professionalism, teamwork, collaboration, creativity, flexibility in responding to patron needs, and pride in our achievements.
- b. Our Board of Library Trustees will enthusiastically advocate for Library services in the community. The Board will be fully devoted to the mission, vision, and values of the Library. Our collections will be progressive and diverse in breadth and form.
- c. Our Library's physical and virtual spaces will respond to the changing needs of our users.
- d. Our patrons will be proud of their Library and consider it as the first and best source to meet their informational and recreational needs.

2. Document Purpose

The purpose of this document is to detail the concept for the Kalkaska County Library (KCL) to relocate to a new site that will meet the current and future needs of the 21st Century and its citizens, through technological advances intertwined with standard print and recorded materials. As technology progresses, the need for KCL to keep pace with society increases, requiring more room for technology and making it difficult to operate within the current small confined space.

In an effort to continue to provide the library services the community has grown to expect, a Strategic Planning Committee has been formed to address solutions to the deficiencies inherent to the current facility.

This document will review four different avenues and determine which avenue is most prudent for the Community. The four options are:

1. New construction on Village Property located across from the Post Office
2. New construction on County Property located near the Kaliseum
3. Remodel the New Life Assembly located within the village limits of Kalkaska

4. Stay at current location

3. Background

KCL was started in 1934 by members of the Academea Club. The library was constructed in 1939 as part of a community building shared with the Chamber of Commerce. The original location has not changed, although additions were completed in 1977 and 1992, bringing the building to its current size of approximately 4,900 square feet.

One decade following the most recent expansion, the library was out of room and had reached its land boundaries with no ability to expand. In 2002 the KCL Board of Trustees contracted The Breton Group, Inc. to conduct a needs assessment. Targeting many deficiencies and evaluating the library based on established standards, their recommendation was to search for a new location and construct a new library to meet the current needs.

To quote "The Needs Assessment & Facility Planning report for the KCL" received from The Breton Group, Inc., "...*The Kalkaska County Library has been forced with the challenge of finding enough space to provide services and resources necessary to meet the community's needs. The library staff has been using limited space strategically to provide a level of service comparable to much large facilities. However, serious space constraints are preventing the library from expanding its collection and services, and offering additional programs necessary to meet the needs of both children and adults in the community.*"

Additional information from this report reveals several serious challenges to the library's ability to deliver programming and services to a community that is statistically growing and deserves at least a standard facility. Among the greatest concerns:

- Children's circulation less than half of average circulation compared to libraries serving the same size communities within the State of Michigan
- Limited public services, including quiet reading areas, study rooms and staff work space
- Surrounding site constrictions prevent expansion of the existing facility in its current location
- Kalkaska County Library is 1/3 the size of libraries that serve similar sized communities throughout the State of Michigan
- Parking is limited to 15 spaces
- No additional land is available for expansion of the existing library
- Kalkaska County Library has approximately 41% less space than industry standards suggested to simply house its existing services and collections
- Northwest Michigan Counsel of Governments recommend the Kalkaska County Library be located on the west side of US 131 due to proximity to schools and pedestrian safety

3.1 Environmental Analysis

Despite predictions that libraries were going to be made irrelevant or obsolete by the rapid developments in technology and digital media, the KCL circulation numbers have remained in a

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steady-state with population fluctuations, and public demand for computer access has not diminished. In fact, despite increased library acquisitions, the demand for public computing hours has stayed on par with availability. Despite increased private ownership, the lack of high speed access has kept the demand and will keep the demand strong. The economic climate of our county has driven more and more need for the kinds of services Libraries provide.

Circulation numbers have steadily increased over the last ten years. This is significant for the fact that we have consistently heard how the proliferation of computers and internet access would mean a decline in library usage and circulation. Since 2004, yearly patron counts have increased by 19% and circulation, or materials checked out by patrons, has increased by 33%. Similarly, computer and internet usage has increased 16% since 2007.

Programming has remained strong in our efforts to provide informational and educational curriculum to the community. In 2012, the KCL took part in a total of 117 programs (children, teen, and adult) with nearly 4,000 people in attendance. However, the ability to do certain programs always presents a challenge due to lack of space; lack of amenities such as refrigeration or running water; or even as simple as having a space for post program cleanup. There is a great need for everyday conveniences which are lacking in the current facility.

Community meeting space is also a challenge at the current facility. Quite often public groups or individuals come into the library looking for quiet meeting rooms or study and tutoring areas which are nonexistent. Those looking for quiet spaces often compete with the everyday goings on such as staff helping patrons or library programming. A larger space is needed to accommodate those looking for quiet spaces.

The dearth of space in the staff area has also posed problems. Currently the staff room is a 15'x12' space that hosts a multiple number of functions. The staff room serves as storage area for media (DVD's, audio books, music CD's) and newspaper archives. Also housed in this room is the desk of the Administrative Assistant, the book processing table, and the staff kitchen which consists of a small refrigerator, a microwave oven, and a chair. The facility has no doors or lockers to protect the personal valuables of the staff. We have had instances of patrons wandering into the staff area and purses being stolen.

The facility restrooms also are inadequate, as there is a single stall each for the men and the women. Staff must share the bathroom with the public and this has been an issue with large groups.

Overall, the current site of the Kalkaska County Library lacks the room that is needed to provide the proper services that are expected of a Class 4 library.

3.2 Problem Analysis

Problem Identification: Inadequate infrastructure:

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The current library, a two story, 75 year old building, has used all of the space available at its current location. It is bounded by a US 131 to the West, a railroad grade to the East, a side street to the South, and private property to the North. The library is unable to increase its use of the older/southern third of the facility (load bearing capacity is inadequate) and in the newer/northern 2/3 of the facility, it has utilized all of the capacity available on both floors. The parking is also inadequate, and even if engineers and architects were able to find a way around the structural deficiency, the fact remains that the parking situation would only be exacerbated.

Problem Remediation

Numerous studies and surveys have demonstrated that the community supports the library in principle, recognizes and sympathizes with the overcrowding dilemma. However, the economic challenges facing the county taxpayers hinder the ability of the community to rally fiscal support for a new facility. At the same time, the community has expressed discontent with the numerous studies and failed attempts. The perception is that the community would like to see “something done” to improve the library’s ability to carry out their mission.

In August 1999, a separate fund called “The County Library Building Fund” was set up by the KCL Board of Trustees. \$100,000 was set aside into that fund with the understanding that fund would be used for the building, land to build and / or moving expenses associated with a new library. This fund has grown to \$230,000.

Heffer fund – New Library Construction Fund has been established with a major donation from the estate of Charles “Chuck” Heffer and gifts and donations from patrons toward a new library. This stands at approximately \$407,000. This windfall gift plus the County Library Building Fund create an opportunity to leverage the money into this project to secure an improved library facility and enhance services.

4. Project Vision

A new facility is necessary to properly serve the residents of Kalamazoo County.

Libraries are an integral part of a community’s infrastructure. Historically, when libraries expand so does their circulation. A new facility would give Kalamazoo a much-needed boost to its cultural and educational offerings. A facility that meets the current needs, with adequate parking, would be a step in the right direction. A new site with an option of future expansion possibilities is the most prudent path. A facility that “only” meets current needs will face the same crowding conditions in the future.

5. Project Objectives

Village Property North of Post Office

Pros

- West of US 131
- Inexpensive building site
- Fulfills downtown location
- Within Downtown Village Limits
- Assumption of ample parking
- Allows construction of one story facility

Cons

- Less than desirable setting
- Requires bond approval by way of a local election and/or Capital Campaign to construct
- Not visible from the highway
- Against Village Grand Vision
- Parking currently used for snow
- Site Hazards determination pending
- Requires mutually satisfying agreement with Village
- Purchase property or a proposed land swap
- Possible zoning concerns
- Not an existing building
- Limited space for future expansion

Water Tower Property

Pros

- Inexpensive leased land
- Walking distance to schools & county complex
- West of US 131
- Attractive setting
- Ready to build site/Vacant property
- No known site hazards
- 3.4 acre parcel
- Ample parking
- Access to Kalkaska Area Recreation Trail
- County Complex area
- Allows construction of one story facility

Cons

- Limited space for future expansion
- Not Downtown Village Limits
- Requires bond approval by way of a local election and/or Capital Campaign to construct
- Not visible from the highway
- Not an existing building
- Lease agreement still pending
- Noisy site due to animal shelter and fairground events

Purchase and Remodel New Life Assembly Church

Pros

- Setting is acceptable
- Satisfies community's preference of using an existing building
- Would not require election bond funds
- Within Village Limits
- No known site hazards
- Focal point for the community

Cons

- Unknown costs for utilities
- Cost of renovations unknown

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- Steel building construction
- Ample parking
- Possible room for expansion
- West of 131 satisfy patrons/employees safety concerns
- Set back from highway by 100 feet
- Less than the cost of new construction
- Double the size of current location
- Adequate restrooms

Current Location

Pros

- Historic location
- Downtown visible location
- Saves Capital
- Known operating costs

Cons

- Inability to expand
- Inadequate parking
- Inadequate room for collection
- Inadequate room for technology
- No private study areas
- No private meeting areas
- No room or facilities for programs, children's story time with activities, visiting authors, demonstration classes, tutoring
- Poor energy efficiencies
- US 131 hazards
- US 131 pedestrian hazard
- East of US 131
- Maintenance costs for a 75 year old facility
- Risks losing talented staff to discouragement
- Inadequate restrooms
- Hazardous material storage or transported
- Active railroad tracks within 27 feet of library
- Noncompliance with donors' wishes

6. Scope

The purpose of the Strategic Planning Committee Project Concept document is to investigate and clarify the options available, and to narrow the focus to one specific option, and make a formal recommendation to the Library Board of Trustees.

The goal is to remodel an existing single story location or to build a new facility of at least 10,000 square feet. The facility, whether it is remodeled or new would:

- Incorporate green or energy efficient features
- Be located on the west side of US 131
- Have sufficient parking and handicap accessibility
- Be within the downtown area or within easy walking distance
- Be furnished and equipped by using existing funds, money from penal fines, grants, donations and a possible capital campaign

7. Budget and Financials

Village Property North of Post Office

According to information received from the engineers at Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc, the cost of new construction of a modern library with the size of 10,000 square feet would run an estimated \$250 per square foot. This estimate includes site preparation, construction, fixtures, furnishings, project support and “soft costs” with an additional 10% contingency factor. This would put the cost of a new library building on the property north of the post office at approximately \$2,500,000. This only includes the building and not any agreement with the Village regarding the property.

Water Tower Property

According to information received from the engineers at Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc, the cost of new construction of a modern library with the size of 10,000 square feet would run an estimated \$250 per square foot. This estimate includes site preparation, construction, fixtures, furnishings, project support and “soft costs” with an additional 10% contingency factor. This would put the cost of a new library building on the water tower property at approximately \$2,500,000. This only includes the building and not any lease agreement with the Kankaska County Board of Commissioners regarding the property.

Purchase and Remodel New Life Assembly Church

Acquiring an existing empty building within the Village Limits of Kankaska would satisfy the community’s preference as identified in the Lessons Learned document created after the defeat of the millage increase in May 2013. Although listening to the public cannot be quantified monetarily, the committee believes this support will assist with the overall success of the project.

The New Life Assembly Church has been empty for six years. The current loan on the property is near \$500,000. However, due to the committee’s research of similar size sold commercial property within the Village limits, the market value of the church property is significantly less. If the committee could obtain the property for less than the amount currently in the Library Building Fund, it would then have the opportunity to remodel the building utilizing the New Library Construction Fund and pursue grants, endowments, and donations.

According to information discussed with the engineers at Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc, furnishings, interior design, fixtures etc. were estimated to run \$50 per sq foot, and “soft costs” would add an additional 10%. Key costs not factored in are cost to repair the roof (unless this could be used as a bargaining tool with the current seller), upgrading the insulation and lighting.

Hypothetically speaking, if the acquisition of the NLA church could be obtained for \$250,000 and the remodel of the structure cost \$600,000 the total cost of the purchase of property and remodel would be \$850,000; significantly less than new construction of a modern library.

Current Location

As responsible stewards of public funds and to comply with the benefactor's (Heffer Trust) request, the SPC recommends the current library building's inadequacies do not merit additional monetary investment.

8. Project Recommendation

The Strategic Planning Committee has come to the conclusion that it would be in the best interest of Kankaska county residents and of the Library to pursue acquiring the New Life Assembly property located on South Cedar Street in the Village of Kankaska.

The Strategic Planning Committee recommends that the KCL Board of Trustees, using due diligence, pursue the purchase and remodel of the New Life Assembly (NLA) building.

Relocating the Kankaska County Library to a remodeled New Life Assembly building would give the library an infrastructure upgrade that:

- Is a single story facility
- Doubles the floor space of the current facility
- Includes adequate parking and is handicap accessible
- Is on the west side of US 131, within the Kankaska village limits, downtown and on the county's main thoroughfare
- Repurposes an existing village building that has been vacant for six years
- Could be purchased, furnished and equipped with existing funds, money from penal fines, grants, donations and a possible capital campaign.

9. Outcome

On May 14, 2014, the Strategic Planning Committee went to the Kankaska Library Board of Trustees to recommend purchasing the New Life Assembly Church. The board decided to perform some additional due diligence prior to making an offer on the property which included:

- Determine possible grants that could be applied for to assist with the purchase/renovation of the church
 - Cost - \$300.00
- Accrued legal fees from Sondee, Racine & Doren PLC to confirm clear title on existing library
 - Cost - \$1,954.50
- Investigate commercial comps sold in the Kankaska area over the past few years to determine a solid offer to be submitted

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- Utilize Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc to perform a high level inspection/assessment of the church
 - Cost - \$2,526.20

Two offers were then submitted and countered. The board then decided to execute further due diligence to determine if the concerns with the roof, insulation and water damage were cost prohibitive.

- An inspection of the roof was completed by RBEE's Construction
 - Cost - \$150.00
- A commercial appraisal was completed on the church property by Gotshall & Stelzer, LLC
 - Cost - \$1,500.00

A final offer was given to AG Financial Solutions on August 26, 2014. This offer was rejected and AG Financial Solutions chose to sell the property to Coldsprings Christian Church.

With the door closing on the NLA property, the Board of Trustees chose to meet with Roscommon Area District Library's (RADL) director and board to discuss lessons learned from their newly constructed library. Out of that meeting it became apparent that to serve the county of Kankaska, a two acre minimum parcel would be necessary. Here are a few other lessons learned from RADL:

- Original plan was for an 11,000 square foot library. FTC&H, hired as a consultant by the architect, recommended 8800 sq ft, (1.353 ft per capita) but RADL compromised by cutting back to 9077 thinking the community might resist a millage for the bigger facility. RADL is VERY happy with their new L.E.E.D. certified "green" facility.
- RADL now wishes they had stayed with their original plan of 11,000 square feet. Within one year of opening RADL realized the facility barely meets their needs, and requires shuffling of furniture when there is a popular program. There is zero room for growth built in; there is a small, limited area available on the location for future expansion.
- Areas of improvement:
 - Create a bigger community room to accommodate larger programs more comfortably
 - Provide more space for the Children's area to include space to play; possibly add a "soft" space for infants and toddlers
 - Ensure Children's area is not located by the front door which poses a potential safety issue
 - Provide larger teen area; currently inadequate, holding a very small collection and is not welcoming or inviting to teens
 - Provide defined "special" spaces just for the youth. Sound carries significantly with the open concept of RADL. Possibly enclose spaces with glass which would reduce noise and allow staff visibility

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- Add an additional study/tutoring room
- Ensure enough parking. RADL thought fifty parking spaces was adequate for day to day operations, but found to be inadequate for special events
- RADL stressed it is important to design the library based on library industry standards for a Class IV library
- RADL was pleasantly surprised by the level of volunteer support once the community was on-board with the final plans. For instance, RADL accomplished the move from the old building to the new one using 100% volunteer help and has benefited from generous donations for facility amenities
- Roscommon’s frugal design incorporated construction over a partial basement; the stacks are over slab-on-grade, but under other parts of the building the basement provides extra storage space, room for “Mechanicals”, necessary for utilizing the geothermal HVAC system
- RADL is very pleased with the return on investment for the geothermal HVAC. The \$800 per month utility bill (electricity) is below the projected cost of heating and cooling

With the door closed on the option of utilizing an existing building in Kankaska, and the recognition of the need for “Room to Grow”, the Strategic Planning Committee recommends:

1. Further review of vacant property (2+acres) within Kankaska Village limits
2. Pursuit of Foundation gifts, grants and a Capital Campaign

These recommendations will be reviewed in further detail in the Project Concept Document called: Kankaska County Library New Building Project Phase II.

10. Appendix

10.1 Supporting Documentation

2002 Breton Group Needs Assessment Report and Executive Summary

2006 Community Survey, parts I and II, and Synopsis

2010 Capital Campaign Study

2013 NMCOG Recreational Plan Survey with comments and Summary

2013 Kankaska County Recreational Planning Questionnaire Report

2013 Draft Kankaska County Recreational Plan (NMCOG)

2013 Lessons Learned New Kankaska Library & Millage

Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc – Assessment of Existing Church Facility

Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc – Preliminary Space Needs Worksheet

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Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc – Library Option

Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc – Library Perspective

Parcel Descriptions

Parking Lot parcel information and photo

Water tower property and photo

New Life Assembly parcel information and photo

Current parcel information and photo