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# Kalkaska County Library New Building Project Phase II Concept Document

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**Prepared By:** Strategic Planning Committee of the  
Kalkaska County Library

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# Project Concept Document

## Document Control

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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 continue where the first Kalkaska County Library New Building Project Concept Document left off. In that document, the recommendation from the Strategic Planning Committee was to purchase an existing building within the Village of Kalkaska.

On May 14, 2014, the Strategic Planning Committee went to the Kalkaska Library Board of Trustees to recommend purchasing the New Life Assembly Church. Due diligence prior to making an offer on the property included:

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- Determine possible grants that could be applied for to assist with the purchase/renovation of the church
- Confirm clear title on existing library (accrued legal fees from Sondee, Racine & Doren PLC)
- Investigate commercial comps sold in the Kalkaska area over the past few years to determine a solid offer to be submitted
- Utilize Fishbeck, Thompson, Carr & Huber, Inc to perform a high level inspection/assessment of the church

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
- A commercial appraisal was completed on the church property by Gotshall & Stelzer, LLC

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 Strategic Planning Committee chose to regroup and review other options to construct a 21st Century library to better serve the county of Kalkaska. The focus of this document will be on locations for new construction and comparing those options with our existing library.

In this document five options will be reviewed to determine the feasibility of going forward with building a new library for the county of Kalkaska. These options are:

1. New construction on County Property located near the Kaliseum
2. New construction on Village Property known as "Railroad Square"
3. New construction on property located behind Shopko
4. New construction on property located on First Street
5. 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

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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 faced 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 larger 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 that 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:

- Kalkaska County Library is 1/3 the size of libraries that serve similar sized communities throughout the State of Michigan, with approximately 41% less space than industry standards suggested to simply house its existing services and collections
- Surrounding site constrictions prevent expansion of the existing facility in its current location. No additional land is available for expansion of the existing library
- Parking is limited to 15 spaces, ¾ of which are leased spaces and subject to lease options being withdrawn should a change of ownership occur
- 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
- Multiple surveys, including the Northwest Michigan Counsel of Governments, indicate that the community prefers that the Kalkaska County Library be located on the west side of US 131 (proximity to schools and pedestrian safety)

### **3.1 Environmental Analysis**

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. 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 steady-state with population fluctuations.

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

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Since 2004, yearly patron counts have increased by 19% and circulation (material 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, cultural and educational curriculum to the community. In 2012, the KCL took part in a total of 117 programs (children, teen, and adult) with a total of nearly 4,000 people attending. 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 that 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. There have been 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 Kaskaska 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:**

The current library, a single story, 75 year old building consisting of a main floor and a basement, utilized the available capacity on all levels. The location is bounded by 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.

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## **Problem Remediation**

The perception is that the community would like to see “something done” to improve the library’s ability to carry out their mission and has expressed discontent with the numerous studies and failed attempts. 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.

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. Careful planning has allowed this fund to grow to \$237,000.

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 \$411,000. 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 Kalkaska County.

Libraries are an integral part of a community’s infrastructure. Historically, when libraries expand, so does their circulation. A new facility would give Kalkaska 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**

### **County Complex 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 ancillary parking
- Access to Kalkaska Area Recreation Trail

#### **Cons**

- Limited space for future expansion
- Not “Historic Downtown”
- Not visible from the highway
- Lease agreement still pending
- Noisy site due to animal shelter and County Complex area fairground events



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Allows construction of one story facility  
 Potential for increased library use  
 DNR “recreational use” approval  
 Survey & title search completed  
 Possible bulk purchasing of utilities w/County  
 Within the Village limits

## Downtown “Railroad Square”

### Pros

Within “Historic Downtown” District  
 Collaborative effort with DDA/Great Lakes Rail  
 Meets Grand Vision of the Village  
 High Visibility  
 Ample parking  
 Location allows for construction of one story facility that meets industry standards  
 May present attractive railroad "design" look  
 Easily accessible via crosswalk at lighted intersection  
 "Green park" area attractiveness / public draw

### Cons

East side of 131  
 Limited room for future expansion  
 Requires mutually satisfying agreement with Village  
 Purchase cost may be significant  
 Surrounding properties less than desirable curb appeal  
 Adjacent to railroad tracks

## Property available behind Shopko

### Pros

Generous size  
 West of 131  
 Nature trail potential (Boardman river access)

### Cons

Cost prohibitive (exceeds SEV)  
 Not visible from highway  
 Costly utility grid connectivity  
 Not “Historic Downtown”  
 Easement costs to get access to  
 Walkability in question

## Property available on First Street

### Pros

Generous size  
 West of 131  
 Nature trail potential (Boardman river access)  
 Proximity to KART Trail, some schools, medical center

### Cons

Cost prohibitive (exceeds SEV)  
 Not visible from highway  
 Costly utility grid connectivity  
 Not in “Historic Downtown”

## 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 traffic hazards  
US 131 hazards for pedestrians  
East of US 131  
Maintenance costs for aged facility  
Inadequate restrooms  
Hazardous material storage and/or transported on active railroad tracks within 27 feet of library  
Risks losing talented staff to Discouragement  
Noncompliance with donors' wishes

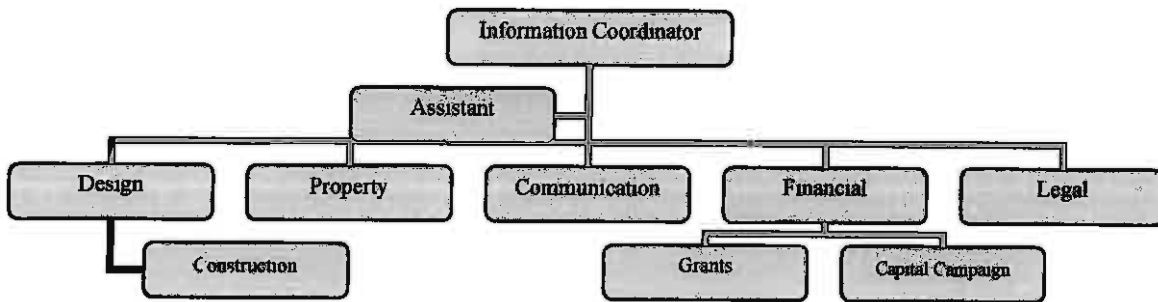
## 6. Scope

With the door closed on the option of utilizing an existing building in Kankaska, (see document KCL New Building Project Concept document), and with the recognition of the need for "Room to Grow", the Strategic Planning Committee will investigate potential vacant land available, narrow the focus to a specific option(s), and make a formal recommendation to the Library Board of Trustees.

The goal is to find vacant land to accommodate a facility that meets industry standards. Key factors to consider are:

- Cost
- Proximity to Historic Downtown area
- Located on the west side of US 131 or safely accessed by foot/bike
- Sufficient room for parking

Once a recommendation has been made and approved by the KCL Board of Trustees as to which property to pursue, continuing due diligence would be accomplished in the following committees:



The above list of committees is NOT all inclusive. It is a list of preliminary committees.

## 7. Budget and Financials

### County Complex Property

Locating the library in the heart of the County Complex would be considered a prime location for the library, with ease of access for foot traffic from the schools, governmental buildings and the hospital complex; due in part to the proximity of the KART Trail.

This property is large enough (3.4 acres) to build a library that meets industry standards with ample ancillary parking. Since this location was previously considered, some of the due diligence has already been completed such as:

- DNR “recreational use” approval
- Survey & title search have been completed

However, a key factor still pending is a lease agreement with the Kalkaska County Board of Commissioners regarding the property. It is assumed the two entities (County and KCL) would again be able to come to favorable terms regarding the available property.

Possible incentives for a County/KCL agreement may be:

- Lease option would allow more capital library funds to be utilized for structural expenditures
- Property plus capital asset savings assists with grant opportunities
- Sale of current property would increase available capital for structural expenditures
- Proximity to County Complex would facilitate shared usage, ie: depositions, Law Library, Board of Commissioners and other governmental/community organizations meetings and gatherings

One of the main disadvantages of relocating away from downtown is the loss of visibility and the potential to assist the Village with their “Grand Vision”.

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## **Downtown Railroad Square**

Building a library on “Railroad Square” would be a prime location, due to the high traffic, visibility, and public support for keeping the facility within the “Historic Downtown” area. The available land is large enough to meet industry standards (including parking requirements).

To acquire/lease the Railroad Square Property, an agreement would be necessary between KCL and the Village. It is assumed the two entities (Village and KCL) would be able to come to favorable terms regarding the available property.

Possible incentives for a Village/KCL agreement may be:

- Having the library as a main focal point in the downtown area
- Collaboration on a design that favors the “Grand Vision” of the Village
- Exploring dual grant opportunities related to the “railroad” and/or Hemingway Trail theme

Moving to “Railroad Square” would also open up the historic building that currently houses the library for additional business opportunities.

Major disadvantages include: the property is adjacent to the railroad tracks, the current esthetics do not enhance the vision of a new “Railroad” library, and the facility would be hemmed in on all sides by roadways.

## **Property available behind Shopko: not recommended**

Priced outside of the market value, at \$200,000:

- There is a considerable disadvantage in the lack of utilities to the property, which are not factored into the FTCH budget
- Easement is not guaranteed for access via the existing mall

## **Property available on First Street: not recommended**

Priced outside of the market value, at \$200,000:

- There is a considerable disadvantage in the lack of utilities to the property, which are not factored into the FTCH budget
- Additional cost for demolition of existing structure

## **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 beyond basic upkeep.

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## 8. Project Recommendation

After much review, the Strategic Planning Committee recommends the property behind Shopko and the property on First Street not be considered for the new “home” of the library due to the monetary impact on the project.

However, the Strategic Planning Committee does recommend the KCL Board of Trustees, using due diligence, pursue a lease agreement with the Kalkaska Board of Commissioners for the County Complex property. Simultaneously, an agreement with the Village on the “Railroad Square” property would be wise.

Acquiring one of these two properties would allow the Strategic Planning Committee, KCL Board of Trustees and appropriate committees to pursue the construction of a new Kalkaska County Library that:

- Meets the industry standards for Kalkaska County
- Includes adequate parking and is handicap accessible
- Is within the Kalkaska village limits
- Incorporate green and energy efficient features
- Could be purchased, furnished and equipped with existing funds, money from penal fines, grants, donations and a possible capital campaign.

## 9. Appendix

### 9.1 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 Kalkaska County Recreational Planning Questionnaire Report

2013 Draft Kalkaska County Recreational Plan (NMCOG)

2013 Lessons Learned New Kalkaska Library & Millage

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

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

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

### Property Descriptions

Downtown “Railroad Square” property

County Complex property and photo

Property behind Shopko

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Property on First Street

Current parcel information and photo