

to succeed alone. Adding on in steps, downsizing the square footage, using a less elaborate design, and reusing existing space in the community with a remodel were suggestions for getting the cost lowered.

What were alternate ideas?

Twenty-three respondents expressly and firmly gave opinion that remaining downtown was the better idea. Adding vibrancy to the downtown area with a new library would help revitalization. Having the library downtown is more convenient to combine with other stops and errands. Others focused on walkability for school children and Village residents. The most noted reason was to salvage unused buildings and spaces instead of building new. One person summed this up by saying, "It is not a judicious use of space to leave good buildings empty and move to a clean spot."

Fourteen respondents felt that locating the library near the Kaliseum, the schools and the county buildings was the best idea. Several suggestions were made including; building on the horse arena site; moving the dog pound and incorporating that space into library building space; and combining efforts with the schools for new buildings.

There were several expressions of remorse that the old Kalkaska County Courthouse had been razed without more consideration given to its restoration and new use. People did not want this to happen to current buildings of historic value including the Library, the Cherry Street School, and the Village buildings.

CONCLUSIONS

Several conclusions can be made from the interview data and information gathered pertinent to this study from other sources.

Positive Factors

- Foremost is the firm commitment that Kaskaska County has to having a good library in the community. Not only is the library seen as an extremely important public service, but satisfaction with the current staff and programs is also very high.
- Secondly, this interview process indicates that the County residents are in agreement that the library needs a larger facility.
- If indeed the Kaskaska area is changing in the direction of a bedroom community and a haven for retirees, a larger library will be a definite asset. Both of these groups need cultural, educational and recreation opportunities where they live; all of which are provided by a quality library. Families and individuals matching these profiles will be supportive.
- Citizens will be willing to financially support a Capital Campaign, although not at a very high monetary level.
- Local foundations such as The Rotary Charities and The Oleson Foundation indicate a high potential of significant support as well if the project can be of a manageable financial size for the County.
- Citizens see the value of green construction.
- If a commitment is made to a green construction plan, there is a possibility the Kresge Foundation will provide funding for the planning stage of the project. A collaborative plan meeting the Foundations criteria will need to be developed.

Negative Factors

- There is not significant support for the Island Lake building site.
- There is not a clear suggestion of an alternate site.
- There is a very low indication that it will be possible to raise \$2,500,000 in a Capital Campaign, millage election or a combination of the two.
- The continued wrangling over the Kaliseum creates apprehension in the community for a similar project.
- A history of lack of cooperation among community members and apathy for growth may be a stumbling block to a library expansion project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the conclusions of the interview process, examination of growth demographics for Kalkaska County (Northwest Michigan Council of Governments data), and conversations with potential foundation funding sources, these are recommendations to consider.

1. The Kalkaska Library Board with the continued assistance of Task Force members should review alternative plans. A lack of significant enthusiasm for the proposed project in the interview process indicates an apparent lack of support in the greater community. More importantly, the resounding message that the proposed \$2,500,000 price tag is way high for Kalkaska precludes continuation with a new 15,000 square foot building.

2. Although the alternate idea of building near the Kaliseum and the schools was a second choice for most Island Lake supporters and many others, this too would most likely require a large financial investment. The popularity of the library remaining downtown, utilizing existing resources seems to be the avenue to explore. The original ideas for downtown locations including the expansion of the current library or a renovation of the old Village facility need to be revisited.

Additional options may be available and a concerted effort should be made to explore them as well.

3. It would be very difficult to pass a millage to fund library expansion at this time in Kalkaska County; a Capital Campaign for a total of no more than \$1,500,000 would most likely succeed.

4. Support for an increase in the operating millage is indicated if a building can be built without a bond issue. A firm plan of action needs to be well underway before the operating millage for the library comes up for renewal. A well thought out budget for operation of the new facility will accurately assess the millage to request on the ballot. Positive movement in a successful capital campaign will encourage support for the operating millage vote.

5. A proposed library expansion must have broad based community support; active and involved volunteers; a well planned budget and timeline; a well designed action plan; and a focused and committed vision. Kalkaska County is seen by area foundations as ripe for support. The Benchmarks Northwest, a quality of life index researched and published by the Northwest Michigan Council of Governments, indicates that Kalkaska County is at the bottom of the ten area counties. This encourages funders to help by supporting valid community improvement projects in Kalkaska County. The key to their support however is that *the county has to want it!*

6. Lead donations from within the County will most likely be few and not large. This indicates a need for a very broad base of local financial support of lesser amounts. Projections indicate that \$650,000 to \$700,000 could be raised in local gifts over a three to five year period. This would require 4 – 6 lead donations totaling \$100,000; 10 – 20 large gifts to total \$150,000; 300 – 400 substantial donations to total \$400,000/\$450,000. With approximately 6500 households in the County, this would comprise significant donations from about 5% of local

residents. Fundraisers and programs to encourage smaller contributions could push the projection for local support higher.

7. State grant monies from the Brownfield Cleanup Fund may well be available for either the current location or the Village facility. Collaboration with the Kalkaska County Commission, the Kalkaska Village Council and other organizations that may be interested in sharing a facility will be key for success in securing these funds. The Kalkaska County Extension Service may well provide assistance with the pursuit of this money.

8. The continued involvement and encouragement of the project by the Friends of the Kalkaska Library is imperative. This organization needs to continue to strengthen and expand membership. The Friends organization can be the leadership of a Capital Campaign, educating the community about the project, generating enthusiasm throughout the County and recruiting volunteers for the campaign.

9. Every effort should be made to help County leadership and residents to see that a new library will be a catalyst for economic, educational, cultural and recreational growth for Kalkaska County.

Respectfully submitted to the Kalkaska County Library Board, June 13, 2006

Mandy Gibson, Advisor for Library Development

7300 US 131 N

Fife Lake, MI 49633

(231) 879-4444; mandygibson@charter.net

Feasibility Study Board and Task Force Members

Marilyn Judge, Board member and Task Force Chair

Marge McCully, Board Chair

Harriet Pesek, Board Member

Phil Scott, Board Member

Cindy Nicklyn, Board Member

Kate Mosher, Library Director

Collette Shaner, staff representative

Don Bubar, community member

Sister Augusta Stratz, community member

Lorann Siddall, community member

Ellen Vonalt, Friends of the Kalkaska Library representative

**KALKASKA COUNTY LIBRARY
BUILDING PROJECT STATEMENT OF NEED
APRIL 2006**

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE LIBRARY?

The Kalkaska County Library has been part of our community for over 75 years, beginning as a project of the Acadamea Club which was set up in the balcony of a main street store. The materials for loan were donated by members of this local women's service club. Funds from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) in 1935 expanded the library with the first paid librarian and as the collection grew, the first of many expansions became necessary. From the store balcony to the front of the old bank building to the original part of the current library which was built with local stone and shared space with the Chamber of Commerce, Kalkaska County residents throughout our history could see the importance of the educational and cultural nourishment of a local library. Three subsequent additions have created the library that we use today housing over 26,000 items and offering services such as internet access, a variety of programs for all ages, reference resources and genealogical records, and bookmobile service to the out county areas.

WHAT IS THE NEED?

As the county has continued to grow, conditions have become more and more crowded and consequently the library no longer can adequately address the needs of the county residents. The Kalkaska County Library has been faced with the challenge of offering more with less space. The staff has been creative in making do, sacrificing their work space to keep the public use areas of the library as open as possible. Even so, compared to other libraries in communities the size of Kalkaska County, **we now have only half the necessary space for the current population let alone space to increase library collections and services for the future.** For example, space dedicated to children's programming in the existing facility is 76% less than that suggested by library standards. Library seating is woefully inadequate, in fact 81% less than the recommended standard for our current population leaving a void in encouraging adults, youth and children to spend more time at the library.

Libraries and the materials, programs and services that they provide in a community, enhance the quality of life and educational opportunities of the citizens. As Kalkaska County struggles to find a new niche in the marketplace with several local employers closing their doors and employment opportunities diminishing, creating and keeping abreast of technology and information is critical. Not only do we need to have a top notch library to keep our citizens informed about opportunities and to learn the skills to take advantage of them, we also need to attract new business to our county too which is much easier if public amenities are up to date and have been given an important place in our local culture.

WHAT IS PROPOSED?

For several years now, the library board has been investigating expansion opportunities to accommodate the growing population of the county. In 2002 a needs assessment was conducted by the Breton Group to not only quantify the current library space and services but also to create a picture of need within the next twenty-five years considering county growth and added services expected by constituents from the library. Over the past several months, the board and a community leadership task force have been considering **all of the growth ideas that have ever been proposed.** After very particular consideration of each idea, the group has narrowed to consensus of an ideal plan for a new facility that will provide not only for a comfortable and

welcoming library experience for today, but for several years into the future. An exciting part of the plan is to build using green construction techniques, minimizing impact on the environment and lowering utility and maintenance costs for the future.

The plan is to build a 15,000 sq. ft. building on county property next to the county office annex on Island Lake Rd. The total property owned by the county is in excess of 11 acres; the library would utilize about 4 acres with the building, nature landscaping, outdoor use areas, and trails to access the KART trail. This will also allow space for expansion of the library when needed many years down the road.

The proposed project will result in:

- A facility three times larger than the current library which will be appropriate by state standards for a population of 20,000 (Current population of the county is just over 16,000)
- A building easily accessible by car, public transit and walking trails
- An energy conscientious building, having minimal impact on the property and creating environmentally stable systems for lower operating expenses and good stewardship of our resources

The new facility will provide not only the much needed additional space, but it will also be more user-friendly to encourage increased use of library programs and materials. This will enhance the educational and cultural experiences of county and neighboring residents. The new library will include:

- A welcoming and comfortable reading area for periodicals and general browsing
- A spacious children's area, designed especially for them including activity space for crafts, story time, cozy reading and programs
- Adequate and efficient space for staff work areas placed throughout the library so supervision and patron assistance will be readily available
- Barrier free access for patrons and staff
- Adequate and comfortable restrooms including a family restroom near the children's area
- Expanded genealogy department with support technology nearby such as copy machines, computers and microfiche
- Expanded space for increased collections of books, periodicals, movies, DVD's, (primarily educational and classics), music CD's, and reference materials
- Computer/internet area with space for additional workstations and classes for residents on their use
- Quiet work rooms for individual or small study groups or listening to musical selections
- A space specific for older youth including study space, computer access and appropriate materials
- An efficient and convenient circulation desk including a security system to assure that all materials that leave the building are properly checked out
- Easy access to the building including a convenient book drop
- Multipurpose meeting areas which can be opened with portable dividers to create a spacious community meeting room
- Outdoor spaces for contemplation, quiet reading and children's activities
- Space for energy saving systems of the future including recycling of paper materials, water and heat

The proposed new facility will be an ambitious undertaking for Kalkaska County. The cost is daunting, the project fairly large, but it represents an opportunity to make an investment in the educational, cultural and social good of people in our community. The added component of a public building using green technology will give our county pride and will be an example of responsible stewardship and innovative design throughout the area.

PLAN FOR FUNDING

The Kalkaska County Library Board with the assistance of a community leadership task force has developed a budget and funding plan for the new library. The total project cost has been estimated at \$2,500,000. This includes not only the actual cost of the building, but also the value of in kind and donated items such as the county property and volunteer labor for various portions of the project. It also includes the project costs such as fundraising expenses, architect and engineering costs, new furnishings and updated technology.

Including the land available from the county for construction and current library building fund savings, the task force has set a proposed fundraising goal of \$2,500,000. This includes cash and in kind donations of materials and services. Work has already been started on developing a capital campaign plan which will include grant seeking, major donor development and community opportunities for financial support of the library. Experience has shown that this community is ready to rally around a great growth idea with sweat equity such as with the construction of the Imagination Station and the Springfield Township Park. We will be relying heavily on that same community "can do" spirit with this project to keep the cash needed as low as possible.

An increase in the current .25 operational millage will be a necessity to operate a library with three times more service to the county, but at this point the library board does not anticipate asking county residents for a building millage.

THE QUESTION

Before making a final decision on this building plan, the library board and the community leadership task force is seeking input from area residents to determine the level of commitment for support of the project.

Will Kalkaska County and the greater Kalkaska area support ideally and financially the construction of a new library as proposed?

Kalkaska County Library, Feasibility Study Interview Participants

Helen Artress	Jody Hine	Mike Winter
Natalie Andrews	Vicki Hogerheide	Lorraine Wolcott
Mike Ascione	Lon Husbands	Dave Wolfe
Vida Ascione	Ann Kirtley	Vicki Wolfe
Alice Babcock	Marilyn Larsen	Craig Wood
Donnie Barrett	Mark Larson	Frank Wright
Bob Bergen	Rod Lawrence	
Ellen Besaw	Sue Lawrence	
Doug Burns	Dan McKenzie	
Sue Burns	Tony Miller	
Kim Cairy	Tina Norris Fields	
Jean Chadwick	Juanita Persons	
Ron Conway	Laura Purtill	
Mel Cooke	Rose Rodgers	
Sue Cornell	Judith Sechler	
Bill Cousins	Phyllis Senske	
Marilyn Coville	Annie Shetler	
Mike Cox	Troy Stobert	
Patty Cox	Cari Stobert	
Walter Derylo	Virginia Thomas	
Al Dimon	Karen Thomas	
Rose Dunlap-Gist	Marge Thompson	
Harold Eichkolt	Jackie Thorsburg	
Ed Fisher	Shirley Thurlow	
Shirley Fisher	Francis Trombley	
Mark Galea	Sue Vowels	
Lori Gelinas	Mary Walker	
Glory Giles	Dick Walker	
Jane Goethals	Shirley Whipple	
Nola Greenman	Ruth Ann Willison	

Kalkaska County Library

Feasibility Study Interviews, May 2006

Background:

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself – your family, and how you are part of the Kalkaska community.

Age **Single/Married** **Children status** **how long a resident,**
what township? **Where from originally?**

Community issues such as the economy, growth, and personality of Kalkaska.

Knowledge of the Library:

2. Are you familiar with the Kalkaska County Library? **Very, somewhat, not**

3. I want to ask you for your impressions of the Kalkaska Library --- what do you think is its image? Do you use the library or have you used it in the past?

Yes, no, and how often. **What do you use it for?**

4. Do you think the library is an important part of this community?
If so why.

5. Do you think the library offers the appropriate services and programs for the community? **Adequate, not, more than adequate.**
What more would you like to see or do you think could be eliminated?

5. Do you use another library? Which one and why

6. Additional comments about current library.

Thoughts and Insights on Proposed Project:

We sent you some information about the proposed new library and we would like your thoughts and ideas about it. At this point I want you to NOT be thinking of the costs, (we'll talk about the money in a few minutes), but the service side.

7. Do you think that the need for an expanded library is supported? **Yes no**

8. What do you personally think about the proposal? **Lengthy comments**

9. What do you think other people in this community will think about the idea?

10. Would you change the proposal in any way? If so, what are your suggestions?

Funding:

As you can see from the proposal package, the Kalkaska Library Board is committed to building a new facility with a capital campaign. They do not want to use taxes to build, but will want taxpayer support for operation. Currently county property owners pay about \$12 a year for each \$100,000 of property value (\$50,000 sev). The increase for operation could go to \$25 or \$35 per year.

11. Would you be in favor of increased operating millage if there was no increase in taxes to build a library? **Yes No Maybe**

12. Do you think the projected cost is valid for the library project?
Yes no don't know

13. Do you think this amount can be raised with private fundraising, grants and foundation backing?

14. Do you think the Kalkaska community will support a campaign for funding the project? Rate the potential for success - **Excellent Very good good poor impossible.**

15. Would you personally be open to financially supporting this project in some way? **Definitely, probably, not sure no. If yes, what would be your expected level of commitment over a three to five year period?**
Over \$5,000, Between \$1,000 and \$5,000, Less than \$1,000.

16. If the money could not all be raised in a capital campaign and a bond millage for part of the cost of the project was on the ballot, would you support it? **Definitely, probably, not sure, no.**

17. Would you take an active role as a volunteer in a fundraising campaign?
Definitely, probably, not sure, no.

18. If yes, do you have ideas on where you would most likely be helpful and enjoy being involved?

19. How do you think others in the community would respond to the above questions concerning involvement and funding?
**Many would support financially, Not enough support financially,
Many would support as volunteers, Not enough volunteers. Unsure.**

20. Who in the community do you think should be part of this campaign to assure its success (organizations and/or individuals)?

21. Are there any other issues that you think pertain to this proposed project for Kaskaska County that the Library Board should be aware of when making a decision to proceed or not?

Thank you for your time and your input. Your confidential answers will be compiled along with the other interviews and the results will be used for decision making of the Kaskaska Library Board.