

Stratford Public Library

and the

Grand Trunk Renewal Site

NEW LIBRARY Case Statement

February 2026



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The Need for A New Library

Stratford Public Library (SPL) is a bustling community hub. As a key contributor in our community's wellbeing and quality of life, SPL consistently ranks as one of the Ontario's busiest medium-sized public libraries in terms of circulation, program attendance and number of visitors.

Research shows that people from every neighbourhood within Stratford regularly visit the library. In 2025, an average of 12,500 came through its doors each month, borrowing over 400,000 items, and using the library's services in countless ways.

Since the library's construction in 1903 - 123 years ago - Stratford's population has more than has tripled. A 2022 update to SPL's 2003 space needs assessment, reconfirmed that the library is significantly undersized for both current and future populations. In 2023, addressing this space deficit became a top priority in the Stratford Public Library Board's Strategic Plan.

It's evident that SPL has outgrown its existing building. While there have been two additions, one in 1926 and another in 1975, there has been no significant capital investment in the past 50 years. Since that time, collection formats, technology usage, programming and community usage has grown and changed considerably. More public space is required to accommodate Stratford's growing population. Additionally, accessibility design requirements have progressed well beyond what the current facility can accommodate.

Approximately 34,000 square feet is needed to operate an efficient and effective library for Stratford's current population, and 50,000 square feet is needed for the expected population in 25 years. The current space is only 12,472 net square feet and is located on a landlocked site where expanded services and future growth are not possible. Parking cannot be expanded or placed on a level access. Additionally, the building's multi-level layout has created inefficiencies in staffing and customer service, while presenting significant accessibility challenges for users of all ages.

A 2013 building condition survey showed that by 2030 it would cost \$1.8 million in capital expenditures to upkeep the facility, systems and components, without resulting in any substantial improvement to the library services. Over \$1.6 million has been spent in capital expenditures over the past 10 years, with an additional \$500,000 anticipated in the next five years. The building has been well maintained by the Library and the municipality, but ongoing issues remain, including areas containing asbestos, drafty wood framed windows, inconsistent heating and ventilation, and chronic concerns with the front steps. An updated building survey report is expected in Spring 2026.

A new Stratford Public Library would serve as a vibrant, modern community gathering place in downtown Stratford, potentially welcoming up to 19,000 visitors each month. This new development would become a landmark in the heart of Stratford's downtown - a source of civic identity and pride for future generations.

Vision

A NEW LIBRARY AT THE GRAND TRUNK RENEWAL SITE

A redeveloped Stratford Public Library will be part of the larger vision to repurpose the Grand Trunk site in downtown Stratford. In partnership with the YMCA of Three Rivers and the City of Stratford, this project represents the strongest opportunity to shape the Grand Trunk site as a true community hub for residents.

A shared community facility featuring the Library and the YMCA has immense potential. It would create opportunities to share space and services, strengthen partnerships and deliver a greater collective impact on the community than either organization could achieve alone.



BENEFITS FOR THE LIBRARY

- Sufficient space to build a library which is adequate for today and can properly serve future generations
- Opportunity to work more closely with the YMCA, nurturing both bodies and minds
- Provide space to work more fulsomely with our many other community partners
- Is located downtown which has been communicated to us as being important by the community
- Close to transit for better access and accessibility
- Opportunity to generate revenue streams through a retail space and space rentals

BENEFITS FOR THE GTR

- SPL is a welcoming and trusted community asset. The library would capture resident's imagination and garner significant community support.
- SPL serves everyone in our community: all ages and backgrounds, embracing and advocating for diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging
- Libraries are a year-round destination, with SPL seeing over 150,000 annual visitors
- SPL is a proven community partner and connector. SPL believes community connections are vital in all that it does
- A city with amenities is a vibrant and attractive one and libraries are part of that package
- With 40 staff members and dozens of volunteers, in addition to the thousands of monthly visitors, the halo effect of use and spending will be beneficial to the site and downtown as whole



Toronto Reference Public Library, Calgary Public Library, Bracebridge Public Library

BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY

The library would be accessible and optimized for patron use and material flow. It would have adequate seating and collection space as well as more suitable space for entrepreneurs and local creatives to work in the MakerSpace. The library would provide both public and private space for the community: meeting rooms, reflection space, an auditorium for performances and events, and flexible space for people to be and enjoy being with others in the community. And parking would no longer be a concern for those with accessibility issues or for young families. The Library would not only be energy efficient, but designed with sustainability and environmental awareness at the core. And most importantly, the design will be flexible and adaptable to change over time as our community changes.

JOINT FACILITY

There are many mission alignments between the Library and the YMCA, where we could both benefit from colocation, including sharing a lobby, restrooms, flexible auditorium space, café, and other amenities. There would also be shared users, increasing programming opportunities. In addition, the library has dozens of partnerships with other community organizations. The synergies created by these partnerships will generate incredible impetus towards our shared goals and contribute to the financial sustainability of the library.

QUIET SPACE

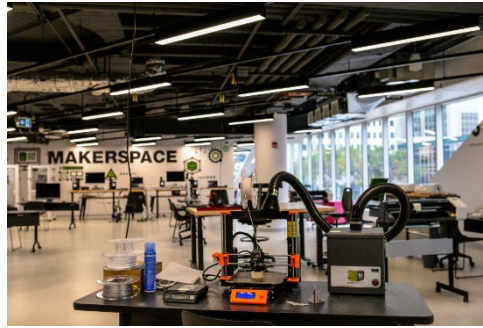
Despite being a vibrant community hub, a library must also serve as a space where the community can find a place of solace. A place where students can find a quiet area to study or entrepreneurs can work, and community partners can meet with clients. Meeting rooms and study pods throughout will serve this need.

COMMUNITY SPACE

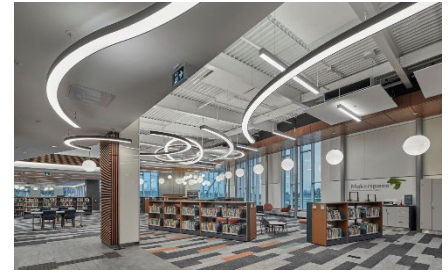
A library needs adequate seating and space for the community to gather and use as their third space. Public seating will grow 400% and will be spread throughout the building, providing both space for groups, but also for people to focus on their work. There will be a children’s area for young families to gather and children to play, as well as dedicated programming space for storytimes and various children’s programming. A teen zone for youth to hang out and build connections through books, games and programming.

ACCESSIBLE

The new library would be properly accessible for young families, people with assistive devices, and all those in between. Shelving of collections will be at an accessible height and aisles will be wide enough for assistive devices. Library materials could be returned easily after hours. Additionally, being close to the transit hub will support active transportation, while also improving our parking situation.



*Edmonton Public Library, Kitchener Public Library,
Calgary Public Library*



EXPERIENCE SPACE

A full-scale MakerSpace and innovation lab will provide greater access to technologies such as 3D printers, laser cutters, sewing machines, podcasting booth, video editing stations, large scale printer and other technologies and tools, allowing us to better serve Stratford’s creatives and innovators. This space will also allow for small business to prototype products, and create promotional materials.

INCLUSIVE SPACE

Public libraries serve all members of a community. The new SPL would offer inclusive spaces for members of local Indigenous communities (such as spaces for Indigenous art and a sharing circle), reflection space (prayer room), and space for new parents (including a space for nursing and stroller parking).

REVENUE POTENTIAL

The retail space would be dedicated to host fundraising activities and book sales. With dedicated programming and meeting space, revenue may be generated through space bookings by the community.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

A joint facility with the YMCA will provide youth with an opportunity to be active after school, and pop over to the library to study, collaborate and hang out with their friends. It will give them a free place in downtown Stratford to just hang out, without the expectation to pay for anything.

ENGAGEMENT SPACE

Imagine a Library with flexible space to engage the community, host speakers and performances, and showcase arts and culture groups. There will be space for community partners and social service organizations to offer complementary programs and services.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

As a public institution, libraries have a responsibility to be sustainable in their design. The library will be built using sustainable design principles, with an aim to be carbon neutral or better.

HOPE

A new library will provide the community with a free and welcoming place of refuge, grounded in the belief of that access to knowledge, creativity, and connection should belong to everyone.

That’s why libraries exist. And when the community comes together, it become something stronger.

ESTIMATED SQUARE FOOTAGE REQUIREMENTS

A facility planning tool was created by Lemay Architects as part of the 2022 Library Space Needs study to help determine future square footage needs. This planning tool uses library design standards developed by the Administrators of Rural and Urban Libraries of Ontario as well as provincial and local accessibility design standards. A standard of 1 net square foot (nsf) per capita was recommended when planning a new library. Below is estimated square footage needs by program.

By collocating alongside the YMCA and other potential partners, there are opportunities for shared facilities such as a lobby, café, meeting rooms, and washroom facilities. While a new standalone library would require upwards of 45,000 gross square feet (gsf), sharing such facilities has the potential to reduce the anticipated library space needs by 15-20%.

With a facility at the greater Grand Trunk Renewal site, there would be opportunity for shared outdoor areas such as vehicle parking, bike racks, stroller parking, and exterior engagement space. For the purposes of this report, these numbers have not been included in the space calculations.

	Library Needs	Shared Space
Collections	10,040	
Core program space	2,100	
Visitor Seating	5,920	
Staff Spaces	3,380	
Logistical Spaces	2,800	200
IT & Building Infrastructure	650	1,600
MakerSpace	2,050	
Community Rooms	1,150	2,870
Retail / Café	500	1,000
Circulation Space – 30%	8,580	1,700
Total Gross Square Feet	37,170	7,370

Funding Model, Economic Impact and Benefits

COSTING & FUNDING SOURCES

The cost of a new library is difficult to estimate with precision at this early stage, particularly given the possibility of shared facilities with partners, and an ownership model that has yet to be determined.

Using 2025 Altus building cost data for new public libraries, the average construction cost across Canada is approximately \$650 per square foot.

Working collaboratively with community partners such as the YMCA and the City of Stratford to identify shared spaces and reduce duplication can meaningfully lower both initial capital costs and operating expenses. Preliminary estimates suggest opportunities to share approximately 8,000 gsf, directly reducing the size and cost of the library build, while lowering the facility's ongoing operational needs through shared staffing, maintenance, and building systems.

MUNICIPAL FUNDING

Public libraries are core municipal infrastructure, comparable to recreation centres, roads, parks, and emergency services. As an essential service for Stratford residents, library facilities require the same level of long-term municipal investment, renewal, and stewardship as any other municipal asset.

A new Stratford Public Library is well positioned to align with future federal–provincial–municipal capital programs. These programs typically require municipal sponsorship or cost-sharing commitments, and the Library Board may seek such support when the project advances to a funding-ready stage.

In addition to intergovernmental capital opportunities, Development Charges (DCs) are available to contribute to the cost of a new library. According to the City of Stratford's 2022 Development Charges Report, DC funds may be used for the acquisition of land and the acquisition, construction, or improvement of buildings and related structures. The associated Development Charges Study indicates that up to 5% of eligible new-build costs may be recoverable through DCs.

PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL FUNDING / GRANTS

SPL will be exploring funding sources at the provincial and federal levels. Grants such as the Green Municipal Fund and Canada Community Building Fund are prime opportunities. SPL will also explore other funding opportunities to raise both large and smaller sums.

FUNDRAISING

The Stratford Public Library Board has charitable status and intends to embark on a major initiative to raise funds from the community through a variety of means.

The Library will also conduct traditional fundraising initiatives to attract major private donors and explore corporate sponsors and donors to augment our fundraising potential.

CURRENT ASSETS

SPL's current building and property at 19 St. Andrew Street will need to be leveraged to contribute to the capital cost of the new build space. In Spring 2024 Otto & Company appraised the property with a conservative value of \$2,000,000. Additionally, the library has begun the contribution of funds into a reserve to support the costs of a new facility.

ONGOING OPERATIONAL COSTS

The current library is relatively expensive to operate. Its multi-floor layout and numerous entrance/exit points require higher staffing levels to ensure community safety and maintain a secure working environment. Initial calculations indicate that in a newly designed, efficient facility, staffing needs should remain stable—even with an increase in overall space.

By improving environmental performance and sharing facility staff and operating expenses with partner organizations, it is anticipated that the library's facility-related operating costs will remain cost-neutral, if not decrease, over time.

VALUE OF THE LIBRARY

In 2025, a Value of the Library study found that for every municipal dollar invested in Stratford Public Library, there is a Social Return on Investment (SROI) of \$6.64 per person, generating a total economic benefit of \$19,343,872.

The largest area of impact – unsurprisingly – was entertainment and leisure, valued at just over \$10 million. Significant benefits were also identified in local economic development (just over \$3 million), educational development (\$3.2 million), and inclusion and wellbeing of (\$383,000).

Public libraries continue to generate economic value long after construction is complete. They support Stratford's economy by:

- Providing the mechanism for life-long learning to support a knowledge-based economy
- Bringing thousands of people each day into the heart of the city to create a vibrant retail and service environment
- Delivering programs and services that support caregivers and give children the tools they need to learn and be ready to go to school
- Engaging small business in the potential of greater success through access to information
- Supporting employment and career development with the opportunity to use technology and information resources to enhance skills.

Background Information

PAST PLANS AND STRATEGIC HISTORY

2003: Space Needs Study, prepared by the Ventin Group

This report found that at the time, SPL required a facility which was 60% larger than it currently was. Looking ahead, Stratford would require a library facility which was 27,000 nsf or 35,100 gsf to meet the needs of the population of Stratford in 2027.

2022: Space Needs Report, prepared by Lemay Architects

This report found that SPL requires a library facility of 34,000 gfs to meet the needs of the current population. Looking at the population forecast for Stratford 20 years, the report recommended a 44,000 gsf facility. The report additionally endorsed the library provide space for social services agencies to co-locate at a joint facility, resulting in an overall recommendation of 60,000 gsf. Recommendations included a new build with affordable housing, a retail conversion, or a heritage site transformation.

2023: 2023-2026 Strategic Plan

The library board made it a priority to address the space needs of the Library in these Strategic Plan. One of the primary directions is “Align Space with Demand” where SPL will plan for enough space to accommodate the program, services, and resources offered, with room for the library to continue to grow in the future.

February 2024 – The Library requested City Council consider them as an anchor tenant at the Grand Trunk Renewal site. The Library was referred to the Grand Trunk Advisory Committee for consideration.

March 2024 – The Library shared their request with the Grand Trunk Advisory Committee.

July 2025 – The City of Stratford directed staff to conduct detailed costings and feasibility studies for a shared community facility, evaluating:

- A potential renovation of the existing YMCA
- A new build on the Grand Trunk site

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[2003 Ventin Space Needs Study](#)

[2022 Lemay Space Needs Study](#)

[2023 – 2026 Stratford Public Library Strategic Plan](#)

[2023 ARUPLO Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems](#)

WHO USES THE LIBRARY?

Stratford Public Library is used by a wide range of community members for an equally wide range of reasons. With no cost to enter or participate, it is often described as a community's "third space" - a place outside of home or work/school where people gather, connect, and experience a sense of belonging.

Every day, SPL welcomes an average of 500 visitors, totaling 151,000 in 2025. Visitors include parents and caregivers attending programs with young children; teens working on group assignments; newcomers accessing settlement support; seniors reading the paper or playing chess; tourists using Wi-Fi or printing tickets for local performances; and the vulnerable accessing a warm safe spot to sit.

SPL currently has 11,733 active library card holders, evenly distributed across the City of Stratford. Of these, 10% are children, 6% are teens, 75% are adults, and 8% are seniors. It is important to note that often children use their parents' cards and many families share a single card. Additionally, a library card is not required to enter the building, use Wi-Fi, or attend programs. As a result, the number of active card holders understates the true number of people who rely on SPL and its services.

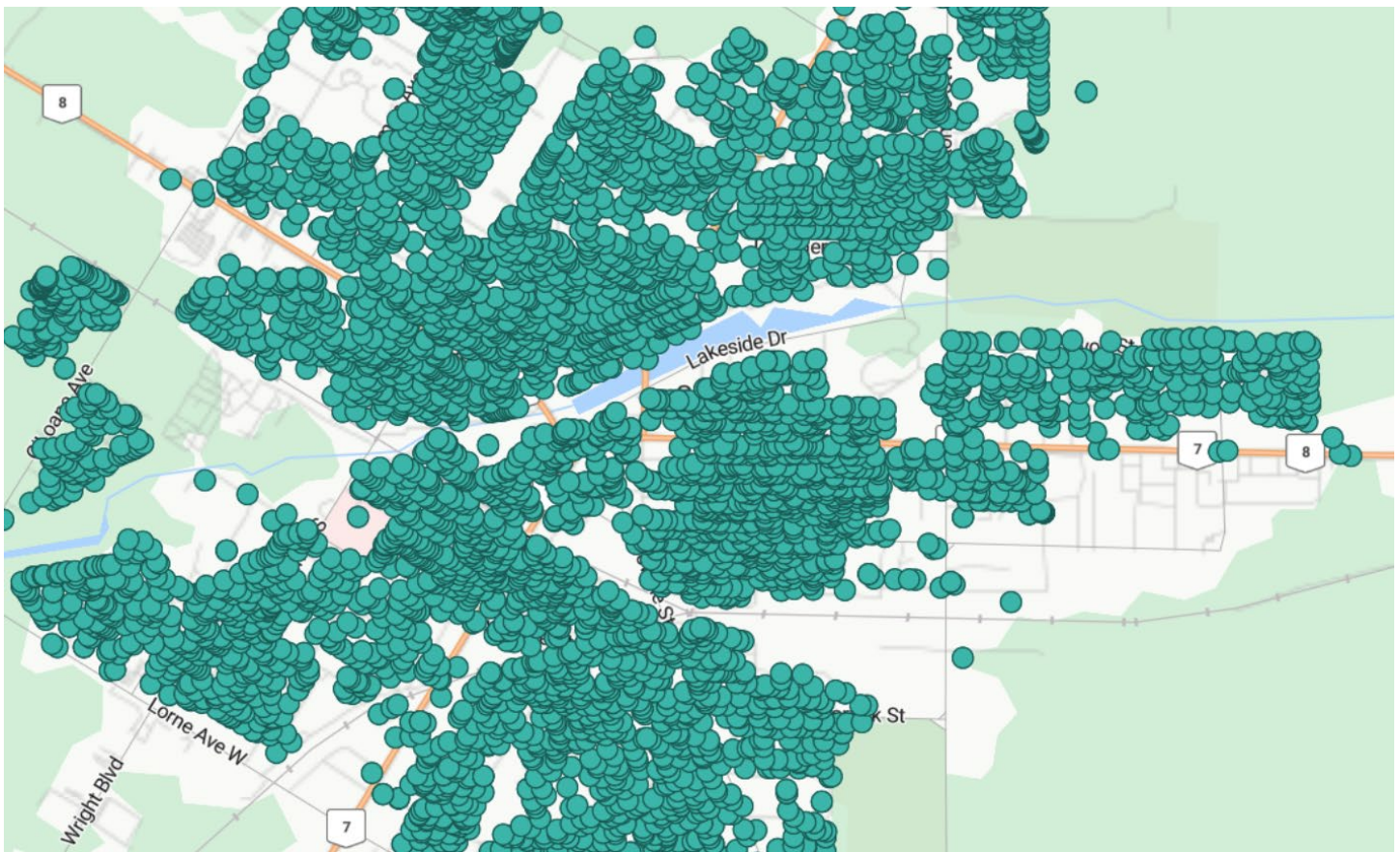


Figure 1 Map of active library card holders, Feb 12, 2026

SPACE COMPARISONS

SIZE OF THE LIBRARY BY SCENARIO

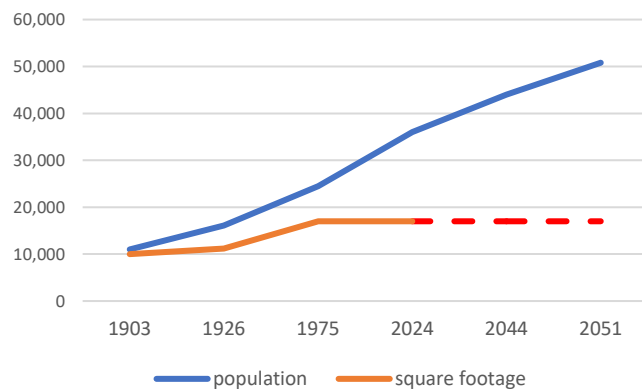
	Status Quo Scenario	Scenario 2	Scenario 3
Description	Status Quo – St. Andrew Street location	New Standalone Library at GTR	New Library at GTR with shared space ⁺
St. Andrew Street	17,202 gsf		
Grand Trunk		44,500 gsf	37,170 gsf
Shared Space			7,500 gsf
Total	17,202 gsf	44,500 gsf	44,650 gsf
2026 Population Served	33,232	33,232	33,232
Space Deficit *	-16,028 gsf	11,268 gsf	11,418 gsf
2044 Population Estimate [%]	44,000	44,000	44,000
Future Space Deficit *	-26,798 gsf	-500 gsf	-650 gsf

* based on standard of 1 nsf per resident per Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems

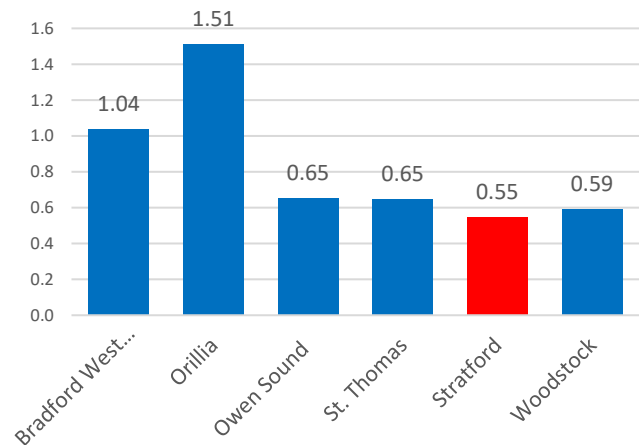
⁺ including sharing lobby space, washrooms, auditorium, reflection room

[%] based on Statistics Canada projections in Lamay Space Needs Report

Growth of Stratford Population vs Library Square Footage



Gross Square Footage per Resident of Libraries Serving Communities 30-40,000 Population



JOINT LIBRARY / YMCA / MUNICIPAL FACILITIES

Collocating libraries with other facilities is a well-established practice. By sharing spaces such as lobbies, restrooms, and meeting rooms, as well as joint maintenance staff, libraries can significantly reduce operational costs. Moreover, this proximity facilitates collaboration on programming and services, enhancing community access and fostering stronger connections. The synergistic effect of shared resources not only improves efficiency but also creates a more dynamic and accessible community hub.

1. **One Stop Community Destination:** a single, vibrant destination where residents can access learning, wellness, recreation, and community services all in one place.
2. **Improved Accessibility and Equity:** Removes barriers for people who struggle with transportation, mobility, or cost. Families can attend a swim class, join storytime, access settlement support, or use digital resources all in one trip.
3. **Stronger Youth and Teen Engagement:** After school, youth can transition easily between homework spaces, creative labs, sports programs, leadership activities, or just a safe place to be themselves.
4. **Cost Savings and Operational Efficiency:** Efficiencies through shared space and facility staff translate into long-term municipal savings and more responsible use of taxpayer dollars.
5. **Expanded and Innovative Programming:** In working together, both organizations can offer programming that neither could provide alone. Collaboration could include health and literacy programs, technology and wellness sessions for seniors, newcomer family recreation nights, early-years literacy paired with active play opportunities. This kind of cross-programming increases participation and deepens our impact.
6. **Community and Economic Impact:** A modern, multi-use facility is a proven catalyst for neighbourhood revitalization, foot traffic, and local economic activity. Libraries already deliver one of the highest social returns on municipal investment, and pairing with a YMCA strengthens that impact even further.

<https://perkinswill.com/project/carrville-community-centre-library-and-district-park/>

A number of recently built community facilities include:

Startech.com Community Centre, YMCA & Library (opened in 2018, 166,840 gsf, cost \$55,000,000)
501 Southdale Road West, London

Includes numerous multi-purpose rooms, community kitchen, an indoor pool and gymnasium and a double pad ice arena, a YMCA fitness center and the Bostwick branch of the London Public Library.

John M. Harper Branch Library Branch and Stork Family YMCA (opened in 2012, 77,600 gsf, cost \$22,000,000)
500 Fischer-Hallman Road North, Waterloo

Includes a swimming pool, gym, fitness centre, track and a 21,000 sf library.

David Braley Vaughan Metropolitan Centre of Community (opened in 2022, 109,000 gsf, cost \$35,000,000)
200 Apple Mill Road, Vaughan

Features a YMCA health and fitness centre, Vaughan Studios & Events Space Centre with a rooftop terrace and gourmet teaching kitchen, the VMC Library offering a suite of resources and interactive programming.

Cornell Community Centre (opened in 2012, 129,000 gsf, cost \$77,000,000)
3201 Bur Oak Avenue, Markham

This large site includes a multi-level health and fitness centre, an indoor playground, a youth centre, three pool areas, and a multi-sensory room. There are also many all-purpose rooms and a 200-seat rehearsal/performance hall available for rent. Cornell also includes a state-of-the art Library.

Bracebridge Muskoka Lumber Community Centre (opened in 2024, 113,000 gsf, cost \$78,000,000)
34 Salmon Avenue, Bracebridge

Includes an arena, multi-sport field, outdoor courtyard and play space, and a 23,000 sf library. The property includes space for future expansion to grow with the community.



D

Figure 2 David Braley Vaughan Metropolitan Centre of Community

BRANCH LOCATION

A multi-branch library system has been suggested as a potential solution to the Library's space constraints, however it is **not recommended** at this time. The Library Board's position is that the community's needs are best served by developing a modern, efficient, single-site library with centralized administrative functions and integrated service delivery.

There are a number of reasons for this:

- Current staffing is designed for a single location. Establishing an additional branch would require additional staff, as well as expanded collections and technology infrastructure. These additions would significantly increase annual operating costs without addressing the core functional limitations of the existing facility. Annual operating costs for recently opened branches across the province range from \$850,000 to \$1,300,000.
- A second facility would create substantial new capital and maintenance obligations. Beyond initial leasehold or construction costs, a branch would add a second building to the City and Library's long-term asset management responsibilities, increasing the demand on municipal infrastructure and future capital budgets.
- The Carnegie building would still require long-term investment. Even with a satellite branch, the original library would continue to need ongoing maintenance, accessibility upgrades, and operational staffing. A branch does not eliminate these obligations.
- Existing challenges at the Carnegie site would remain unresolved. Issues related to accessibility, building safety, limited parking, and layout inefficiencies would persist regardless of the addition of a nearby branch. A satellite location would not address these core barriers to service.

WHY INVEST IN THE LIBRARY?

There is robust academic literature demonstrating the value of well funded public libraries to the community. Investing in libraries is a direct investment in community building, public safety and the future of our workforce.

Community Building

A wide range of studies by a diverse set of authors (Chow and Tian 2021, Dalmer 2022, Johnson 2009, Oliphant 2014) concludes that the public libraries are among most effective community building institutions in municipalities. Their ability to build social capital is unmatched due to the diversity of free, barrier-free services offered to all residents.

Many institutions—churches, sports teams, volunteer groups—build social capital, but often within narrower social or economic circles. Libraries are unique: they bring together residents across social, economic, and cultural lines because membership and participation are free and accessible. Social capital, alongside physical and human capital, is recognized as a core pillar of community well-being. In Stratford, strong social networks are essential for employment, housing, civic engagement, and quality of life.

Studies consistently show that library users are more likely to join clubs, vote, donate to charity, report higher levels of trust, and feel a stronger sense of belonging. This is particularly important in Stratford, where retaining skilled labour depends on building social bonds that connect residents to the community.

Investing in our People

Investments in public libraries have long-lasting, measurable impacts on people's lives, especially children and youth. Bhatt (2010) found that children who live closer to a public library spend more time reading and less time watching television. Gilpin, Karger, and Nencka (2021) demonstrated a strong correlation between higher library investment and improved reading scores in nearby school districts.

Physical proximity remains the strongest predictor of library use among children (Oliphant 2014). Chow and Tian (2021) found that increased library funding correlates with higher high-school and college graduation rates, higher median household income, and lower poverty rates. Karger's 2021 longitudinal study further confirms that access to a public library improves educational attainment and long-term labour market

outcomes. In short, investing in public libraries is an investment in the future success of children and youth.

Public Safety

There is strong evidence that libraries reduce crime, both directly and indirectly. Studies by Porter (2014), Borges et al. (2021), and Floyd (2016) identify statistically significant correlations between proximity to a public library and reductions in burglary, robbery, assault, and vandalism. Crime reductions are especially pronounced during the hours the library is open.

Libraries deter crime by serving as welcoming public gathering spaces where consistent community presence discourages criminal activity. They also contribute indirectly by strengthening social capital—an essential component of social cohesion and collective action. Neighbourhoods with low levels of social capital consistently experience higher rates of crime, and libraries are identified as key institutions for building that social infrastructure.

Survey Data

Public support for libraries across Canada and the U.S. is extremely strong. Oliphant's 2014 survey found that 86% of respondents view public libraries as essential to a strong community. Remarkably, 89% said they would pay an additional \$30 per year in taxes to support their local library—regardless of whether they personally used it or their income level.

Pew Research Center's 2013 national survey reported that 90% of residents believe closing their local public library would significantly impact the community, with 67% saying it would directly affect their household. Ninety-five percent said library materials help give everyone a fair chance to succeed, and 81% noted that libraries provide services hard to find elsewhere. Among job seekers, 47% described library support as "very important," and 40% of people with disabilities said help with government services at the library was "very important." Overall, 94% reported that having a public library in their neighbourhood improves their quality of life.

The Canadian Book Consumer Study (2022) found that 20% of Canadians regularly borrow books from the library, averaging 4.8 books per month. At an average cost of \$15.86 per paperback, this represents annual savings of more than \$913—before accounting for the value of programs, technology access, or other services. In 2022, most Canadian library users visited both online (77%) and in person (70%), illustrating the need for both high-quality digital services and modern, flexible library buildings.

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COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

"I truly don't know how I'd live without the Stratford Library. Each and every staff member is kind and helpful."

"Stratford Public Library is well known for punching well above its weight. From its good selection of books to its varied programming for all ages. It's a great resource for the city."

"Stratford library is wonderful but Stratford is too big for it!"

"There are things for your kids to do while you're finding books. There are computers with only educational games. Also a reading program. I highly recommend."

"Excellent public library!!! Wonderful staff and selection of books. Wonderful adult and children's collections of books & DVDs."

"The library is a great space to be able to complete homework, etc. At home it can sometimes be hard to focus and that makes me late to turn in assignments, and projects for school."

"Irreplaceably great. My children grew up reading here. Superb staff and wonderful resource for films and series DVDs."

"Such a friendly place with helpful staff and a strong sense of community. Good collection and they even have seeds for planting! Love the DND stuff they run and the Maker Space. They also save me from needing to have my own printer with the affordable printing/scanning system."

"Reading Buddies on Tuesday evening is difficult. Requires parking on side street, circling the block and a long walk. Even paid spots are full at this time."

"I think physical space is an issue making physical access difficult at times. As a user of mobility scooter it is limited by small elevator and width of shelving. I am lucky I can get by with a cane a bit but what about others? Library feels small and crowded."

"I am thankful for our library I just wish it had a sensory room so my son could start going to the library."

"Small staff room means we are all forced to hang out together when, sometimes, what we want is to have space from one another. There's a lack of privacy for anyone who wants to use the staff room bathroom while others eat/take a break."

"Generally, I feel like the competition for storage AND work space around here causes a lot of fighting that can make some staff feel undervalued when they have to give space up to something else."

"The Stratford Public Library is a community hub that connects patrons in ways well beyond traditional book lending. As a community service provider, I meet occasionally with clients in the Stratford Public Library to provide adult learning instruction. The nature of this work ideally requires a quiet, private space to allow our learners not only to concentrate, but to feel safe. It is a vulnerable thing to learn as an adult. As the library is now, there is a lack of available private meeting space. The Stratford Library would benefit from a larger space with many meeting rooms available to agencies like ours. What we love about meeting with clients in the Stratford Public Library is that they can come and be part of a community. They can get a coffee, grab a magazine, use a computer, print something, browse the stacks, use the washroom, and take a snack. It is such a beneficial hub, and its offerings can only be improved upon by adding much needed space. "

A library outranks any one thing a community can do to benefit its people.
It is a never-failing spring in the desert.

Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919)

Ever. Wonder. 