

New Central Library

Q and A - September 2019



Guelph Public Library
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1. What are the economic benefits of a new Central Library?

- \$9.3 million¹ - annual estimated economic impact of the new library.
- \$6 = the Return-on-Investment (ROI) for your local library. For every dollar that communities invest in library services they get almost six dollars back!²
- 61% of visitors to the current Main Library also shop downtown during their visit.³
- 75% of visitors to the current Main Library use downtown services during their visits.⁴

For example, in 2018, there were more than 470,000 visitors to the Main Library and they spent approximately \$5.34 million at downtown businesses. A larger Central Library, with more seating, more programming and more meeting spaces, will attract more people and generate more economic growth. Halifax reports that circulation at their new main library almost doubled, a statistic that is supported by the experience of other, smaller cities. We expect it to be Guelph's experience as well.

2. Would the economic benefits of a new Central Library spread across the whole city?

Absolutely. The Downtown area is one of the City's most important economic engines. Completing the Baker District Redevelopment Project is a significant opportunity to boost economic growth downtown and across the city. The new Central Library is a key to making the whole development happen.

¹ KPMG (2018).

² Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (2018). "Selected Economic ROI: Current Studies for Canadian Public Libraries."

Available here: <http://fopl.ca/news/selected-economic-roi-return-on-investment-current-studies-for-canadian-public-libraries/>

³ Guelph Public Library (2019). "Guelph Public Library Community Survey."

⁴ Guelph Public Library (2019). "Guelph Public Library Community Survey."

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3. What about the social benefits of a new Central Library?

As a community, we need civic space that brings us together, encourages us to work with one another and to move forward on issues that matter most to us. The library provides a place for us to meet, play and learn together, regardless of our age, culture, gender, or economic status. The library welcomes us, nurtures us and encourages our creativity, ingenuity and imagination.

As the population of our community grows, so does the diversity of its members. As an important public institution, Guelph Public Library has embraced the opportunity to foster an environment where everyone belongs and is respected. The importance of this space is compounded by the fact that it is in the downtown core, side-by-side with businesses, social and health services, public transit hubs, green spaces, schools, and neighbours. The Central Library will help ensure that the downtown remains inclusive, safe and vibrant to everyone, including marginalized populations.

4. How will the new Central Library affect the Library's operating budget?

The library's current annual budget would increase by an estimated \$2.2 million upon the opening of a new Central Library. Here's an overview of how that would be spent:

- 29% of that money is for purchasing, including increasing and improving the collection.
- 39% is for staffing. These are quality jobs in our Downtown.
- 32% for operating and maintaining a larger facility and ensuring it's both AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) compliant and includes unassigned space.

It is important to remember that we are more than tripling the size of the current Main Library and this will have implications for the operating budget. However, it is the cost of running an expanded, modern, vibrant library facility that serves a diverse community in countless ways.

The Library will continue to explore operating efficiencies for library services.

5. How much is the Library expecting to raise through a fundraising campaign?

We believe the Central Library will be the heart of our community for decades to come. This is a legacy project. The Guelph Public Library Board is considering a capital fundraising campaign for the Central Library. However, we cannot begin working on such a campaign until the City commits to proceeding with the project.

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6. Has the Guelph Public Library Board taken an active role in developing the latest plan for the Central Library?

It has been a privilege for the Library Board and staff to collaborate with Windmill and its partners on this project. Over the last 12 months, staff have met with Windmill's design team every few weeks. We will continue to work closely with the current team to maximize the vision for an 88,000-square-foot building with all the programming deemed necessary for a library of the future.

7. Can the City and the Library access grants from other sources to help build the new Central Library?

There are grants that we can apply for, but we need a commitment from City Council and a final design before we can apply for any grant. The Guelph Public Library will coordinate with City Staff to apply for funding through the Investment in Canada Infrastructure Program, which has just opened.

8. Can we afford a library this big?

We all agree: a new Central Library has been a recognized and shared goal for years. Everyone involved wants to build the very best library our community can afford.

The business case for the new Central Library, carried out by KPMG and approved by City Council in February 2018, recommended that the building be 88,000 sq. ft. The recommendation was based on industry standards for Basic level services for a city our size and our expected growth. City staff are recommending a Good level of finish for the building, as opposed to Better and Best. So in fact, we are taking the lowest cost route to build a library that will serve our community for years to come.

Questions? Contact:

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