



**Halton Hills Public Library**

**Library Facility Needs Assessment:  
Vision Georgetown**

June 4, 2015 (revised July 2015)



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# 1. Introduction

Halton Hills Public Library (HHPL) engaged Monteith Brown Planning Consultants (MBPC) to complete a Library Facility Needs Assessment to assist the Library in its future planning efforts for Southwest Georgetown. This assignment involved the identification of potential library space requirements for Southwest Georgetown within the context of the Library's overall facility model and services.

A secondary plan – entitled Vision Georgetown<sup>1</sup> – is currently being completed for the Southwest Georgetown area and it is anticipated that this Library Facility Needs Assessment will become a valuable resource and input for this planning process. MBPC is part of a larger consulting team that is preparing the Vision Georgetown project, with responsibilities for reviewing community infrastructure needs.

This study builds largely on the findings of the Library's previous studies, secondary research sources, and the work completed to date by the Vision Georgetown team (including public input). Specifically, this study considers current and forecasted population data for the Georgetown area, trends and best practices that may have implications on library space provision, alternate facility provision models that may not have been previously contemplated in Halton Hills, and an assessment of overall library space requirements for Southwest Georgetown. Upon completion, the report will be presented to the Halton Hills Library Board for review and comment.

It bears noting that this is a high-level facility study that is based largely on best practice research applied against known local circumstances. The recommendations of this study are intended to guide future decision-making and will be refined through subsequent efforts. Should the Library pursue this matter further, a number of tasks may be necessary to more fully define the concept, such as site selection, partnership development, cost estimation, detailed design, and business planning (all of which are outside the scope of this report and would take place closer to the time of implementation).

## 2. Strategic Direction

This Library Facility Needs Assessment supports the following Strategic Objectives identified in the Town's Strategic Plan 2031 (2011):

- A.3 To provide a broad range of educational, recreational, and cultural services that meets the needs of our residents.
- G.2 To ensure that new urban areas are appropriately sized and phased relative to planned growth to 2031 and in conjunction with required infrastructure improvements.
- G.11 To ensure the efficient use of urban land and infrastructure in existing communities and new growth areas.
- H.1 To provide infrastructure and services that meets the needs of our community in an efficient, effective, and environmentally sustainable manner.
- H.2 To ensure that infrastructure required for growth is provided in a timely manner.

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<sup>1</sup> Otherwise referred to as the Southwest Georgetown Integrated Planning Project.

This project also supports the following goal and actions from the Library's Interim Strategic Plan (2013):

- Together, we will create great places and dynamic spaces.
  - We will design and continually adapt spaces to attract, engage and respond to our community.
  - We will ensure the same high quality experience whether it be through our physical or virtual space.
  - We will encourage everyone to discover the many benefits of Library spaces.
  - We will evaluate approaches to enhance and optimize hours of service to the community, including addressing the need for Monday openings.

### **3. About Halton Hills Public Library**

Public libraries provide lifelong learning opportunities and their benefits are well known. Even in today's digital age, libraries are proving their worth and strengthening their value proposition through offering new opportunities for learning, discovery, and connecting people and ideas. In Halton Hills, public library use is rising every year – the Library experienced an estimated 170,000 visits in 2013. Several societal and technological changes are also impacting how the Library serves local residents. Where lending and early literacy were once the Library's primary roles, these roles are now broadening to include aspects related to lifelong learning, community collaboration, innovation, curation, and more. These ideas and more are explored in Section 5.

Halton Hills Public Library operates two physical facilities:

- (1) Georgetown Branch (34,400sf), which was renovated and substantially expanded in 2012/13; and
- (2) Acton Branch (9,000sf), which was constructed in 2010/11 as a replacement for a smaller facility.

These buildings have set high expectations for library facilities in the Town as they are contemporary examples of modern public libraries. The facilities are characterized by designs that are barrier-free and energy efficient and that provide an abundance of natural light, a variety of individual and small group spaces, and a blending of the old and new, including digital technologies.

As a result of these projects, HHPL has more than doubled the amount of library space in a few years' time, going from a total of 21,100sf in 2010 to 43,400sf in 2015. With an estimated population approaching 65,000, this translates into a service level of approximately 0.67sf/capita at the present time. Current information suggests that funding attributable to the Library from development charges for the 2012-2021 period is fully committed to the repayment of the Georgetown and Acton Branch projects, along with new material acquisitions. A funding plan should be established closer to the implementation timeframe.

Through these facilities and other means (e.g., virtual, outreach, and partnered services), Halton Hills Public Library offers a wide range of materials, programs and services, such as (but not limited to):

- Collections: e.g., books (fiction, non-fiction), magazines and periodicals, eBooks, eAudiobooks, DVDs, CDs, eResources (movies, music, article databases, etc.), and local history collections
- Programs: e.g., literacy programming, employment assistance, small business support, cultural, technical and general interest programming
- Services: e.g., WiFi, public access computers, interlibrary loan, community outreach, library on wheels, services for newcomers, room rentals, exam proctoring, genealogy and local history

Comparisons to other library systems in Ontario (2013 data) find that HHPL offers a large number of program opportunities and that they are very well attended, ranking well ahead of many larger systems. Circulation statistics for HHPL also compare favourably to many other library systems (with over 560,000 items checked out in 2013), suggesting strong usage rates in the community. On a year to year basis (adjusting for closures due to recent building projects), HHPL has witnessed growth in borrowing, program attendance, and many other usage categories, which is notable given the Town's slow population growth.

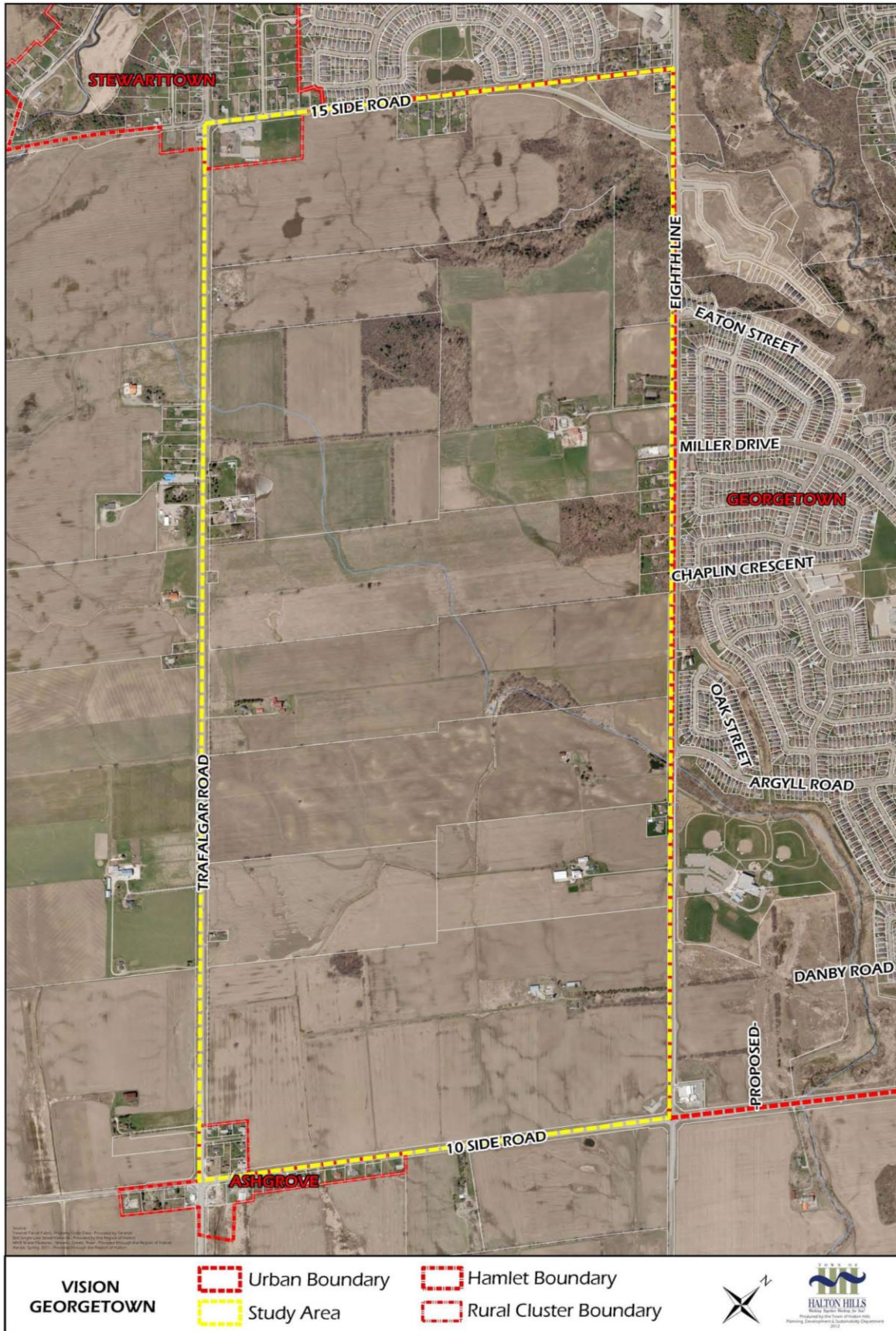
High levels of satisfaction with HHPL's customer service (95%) and library facilities (94%) were confirmed through a random sample telephone survey supporting the Library's 2014 Open Hours Survey. Satisfaction levels were lowest for programs (66%), suggesting that the range of programs could be expanded.

The same survey estimated that 51% of all residents have visited a physical location of the HHPL within the past 12 months. While users are spread throughout the Town, some localized differences are identified through cardholder data that identifies active patrons by their general location of residence (note: one does not require a library card to visit the Library or use some of its services). Of particular interest to this Study, residents of Georgetown South account for 21% of all HHPL cardholders.

## **4. About Southwest Georgetown**

### **Project Status**

The purpose of the Vision Georgetown project is to create a land use plan for Southwest Georgetown. This new community will play a key role in accommodating the Town's projected population growth to the year 2031. The 1,000 acre study area is bounded by 15 Side Road to the north, Eighth Line to the east, 10 Side Road to the south, and Trafalgar Road to the west (see following map) and is anticipated to be home to approximately 19,000 people.



In May 2012, Town Council approved the Vision Georgetown project Terms of Reference. Vision Georgetown is to be carried out in five phases over the course of four years. Phase 1 was completed in 2013 and included preparation of a Community Engagement Strategy, Project Charter, and Detailed Work Program.

The following Vision Statement has been prepared to form the framework for decision-making when planning and developing Southwest Georgetown:

To be the New Community of Choice – The Vision Georgetown community is an inspiring new urban community; distinctive in the way it looks and functions, fostering healthy lifestyles, neighbourliness, economic prosperity, and local pride. It is a resilient, sustainable, complete, and compact community, with a thriving natural heritage system. It feels like a small Town and is physically connected to the broader community of Georgetown and the Town of Halton Hills. It honours the rich heritage of the Town, emphasizes people, and provides choices for day-to-day living. Overall, the Vision Georgetown community is an exceptional, forward thinking, and innovative model for new community development.

Fourteen Guiding Principles have been established to help achieve the Vision. The following principles are directly relevant to this Library Facility Needs Assessment:

2. To provide wide range of residential, commercial, and institutional uses, in a manner that reduces the need for an automobile to meet the daily needs of life.
4. To create distinct neighbourhoods that feature community focal points and bring people and activities together.
8. To ensure convenient access to a range of types and sizes of parks and public spaces, which provide opportunities for recreation, neighbourliness, community events, and cultural activities.
9. To provide a range of accessible community facilities in a timely manner and to co-locate these facilities where possible.
12. To ensure new infrastructure is developed in a manner that minimizes social and environmental impacts, and considers long-term maintenance, operational, and financial requirements.

To date, a Background Discussion Paper, Vision and Guiding Principles, and Land Use Concepts have been completed. Three preliminary land use concepts were prepared and presented to the public: a) Main Street/Community Hub; B) Neighbourhood Centres; and C) Main street/Neighbourhood Centres. Each concept contains a mixture of residential densities (predominantly low density) and employment areas (largely office and retail), along with schools, transportation networks, public parks, and natural heritage system linkages. **While it is too early to say what the demographic profile of this new area will be, evidence from other growing communities at the periphery of the GTA suggests that it is likely to be attractive to young families seeking more affordable and varied housing options, including newcomers to Canada (39% of Milton's growth between 2006 and 2011 can be attributed to**

**immigrants).** There is a strong link between library usage and households with children ages 12 and under, as supported by recent research conducted by HHPL (2014 Open Hours Survey).

As of early 2015, the project team is finalizing Phase 2, which will consist of a Preferred Elements Plan. Preliminary discussions with the Town’s Planning, Development & Sustainability Department suggest that land for community infrastructure such as libraries will be at a premium given the desire to achieve population and employment targets while respecting the area’s natural heritage system and associated setbacks. This Library Facility Needs Assessment will inform the Preferred Elements Plan and be considered within future phases of the project.

### **Population Forecasts**

Population forecasts from the Town’s 2012 Development Charges Background Study<sup>2</sup> (adjusted to include Census undercount) are presented in the following table. These forecasts identify a population of approximately 94,000 in 2031, which is consistent with the forecast put forth in Regional Official Plan Amendment 38.

#### **Population Forecasts, Town of Halton Hills, 2011-2031**

| <b>Year</b> | <b>Projected Town-wide Population</b> |
|-------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>2011</b> | 61,300                                |
| <b>2016</b> | 65,100                                |
| <b>2021</b> | 66,900                                |
| <b>2026</b> | 80,000                                |
| <b>2031</b> | 94,000                                |

Source: Halton Hills Development Charges Background Study, 2012 (adjusted to include Census undercount).

Growth in Halton Hills is anticipated to remain fairly moderate between the years 2011 and 2021 when the Town’s population is expected to be 66,900 residents. After the year 2021, population growth will accelerate considerably and it is at this time when Southwest Georgetown is expected to commence development. As shown in the previous table, the 2031 population for the Town as a whole is forecasted to reach 94,000, the large majority of which will be in the Georgetown area.

**A population of approximately 19,000 people is currently being forecasted for Southwest Georgetown. It is our understanding that the Town is planning for development in Southwest Georgetown to begin in 2021 with build-out being the end of 2031.**

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<sup>2</sup> Town of Halton Hills. May 2012. Development Charges Background Study. Table A.4.



## **Community Infrastructure Needs**

In terms of library infrastructure, no specific requirements for Southwest Georgetown have been identified to date, although – as illustrated by the trends research in the next section – libraries are an essential component to complete communities. A public input session held for Vision Georgetown expressed a preference for a library and other civic buildings to be integrated into centrally-located activity hubs. Overall, there was some support expressed for school/library partnerships (e.g., multi-use facilities). In particular, the public input session held with area youth found support for shared and co-located facilities, such as a satellite library in a future Secondary School. Currently, each preliminary concept plan provides for a number of elementary schools and one secondary school.

In planning for future public libraries, it is important to be aware of other community infrastructure requirements and to identify opportunities for partnerships. Based on experiences in other communities, the most likely candidates are public sector agencies, such as the Town’s Recreation Department and Boards of Education, although other options with non-traditional partners may also materialize over time.

The Town’s 2007 Strategic Action Plan recommended expanded space for recreational activities at the Gellert Community Centre to support growth to 2021. The Gellert Community Centre is located at 10241 Eighth Line and sits immediately adjacent to the Southwest Georgetown secondary plan area boundary. The updated needs assessments undertaken for the Vision Georgetown project confirm this direction and support the addition of a gymnasium, youth and seniors space, and an enlarged fitness centre at the Gellert Community Centre. The proposed timing of this project will depend on growth forecasts and funding availability. The possibility of adding a library branch at the Gellert Community Centre was explored with the Town but was not deemed to be a viable option given the other demands on the site.

## **5. Best Practices & Trends in Library Space Provision**

Great public library spaces are designed first and foremost with the user in mind, and often through extensive community engagement. For a library branch within a new community, public engagement opportunities are limited, so we must learn from the experiences and best practices of other communities.

The Library is both a place and a service, both physical and virtual. Although the Library’s virtual services will become increasingly important over time, libraries continue to be strongly associated with the physical – books and buildings. The physical space itself remains vital as it is both a destination and a community anchor through which countless services are accessed and experiences are created. The “Library as Place” concept is rooted in the recognition that libraries are the last bastion of free, equitable, open, public space.

In planning for the future, it is important to understand the many changes that are occurring in public libraries as these will influence how spaces are conceived, designed, and used. To create an appreciation

of the many societal and technological changes that are impacting library spaces, summarized below are a number of the latest trends, best practices, and thinking in the public library sector, with a focus on those aspects that may impact space needs.

### **The Importance of Libraries**

While the rapid pace of technological change is a large part of the discussion around the future of public libraries, equally important are societal trends emphasizing literacy (including digital literacy), creativity and discovery, experience, collaboration, community connectivity, and lifelong learning. While there is uncertainty about the precise services and formats that the library of the future will provide, the future library as an accessible and universal institution is as full of promise and opportunity as ever.

Although financial challenges are ever-present, there is excitement surrounding the many opportunities presented to today's public libraries. The movement from consumption (i.e., passive observation) to creation and collaboration (i.e., active participation) is a leading philosophy that many libraries are promoting and nurturing. This trend fits well with younger generations and those who may be artistically-inclined, and is becoming more prevalent in Northern Europe at the present time. This convergence of information, creativity, and technology are leading to the emergence of new public experiences.

A recent study undertaken by Halton Hills Public Library estimates that the Library creates over \$15 million in total annual economic impact and that for every dollar invested in the Library, local residents receive \$4.23 in direct and indirect benefits. For those who use Library services, the total direct benefit is as much as \$502 per Library member. In 2013, Toronto Public Library completed the same exercise and found very similar results. These figures indicate a very strong return on investment for Library service.

Furthermore, during this latest economic downturn, libraries have become more valuable to their communities. Free Internet and computer access, supporting literacy, and providing information support to the less fortunate are some of the Library's most important roles.

“No longer a nice-to-have amenity, the public library is a key partner in sustaining the educational, economic and civic health of the community during a time of dramatic change. Public libraries inspire learning and empower people of all ages. They promote a better trained and educated workforce. They ensure equitable access and provide important civic space for advancing democracy and the common good. Public libraries are engines of development within their communities.”

- Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries. [Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries](#). 2014.

Nevertheless, the range of potential library “competitors” is widening as new technologies are introduced, making it all the more critical for libraries to be strategic when it comes to their service mix, target markets, and competitive advantages. Historically, students, young families, well-educated seniors, and people for whom English is a second language have been core users of the public libraries. While these may continue to be key markets for libraries, the next few years will provide an excellent

opportunity for libraries to reinforce their value to their community. Where there was once considerable trepidation around the rise of technology within the library sector, there is now optimism for the future.

### **The Changing Face of Libraries**

This is a period of rapid technology innovation, especially for mobile and wireless devices. With modern technologies, content is no longer limited to what is on the shelf, but has been expanded to all sectors ranging from local to international arenas. Ubiquity and mobility of information has created many new challenges and opportunities, too many to consider within the scope of this Study.

Many of Halton Hill's future residents will have migrated from larger cities, bringing with them high expectations for library service and innovation. Current and future residents will want both high quality experiences and on-demand services. With libraries no longer being the only source of information in our society, it is important that libraries continue to add value through their services and experiences that they create. The need for public space will become even more critical given greater urban densities and the heightened importance placed on socialization. Flexibility, visibility, and accessibility are central tenets in creating services and facilities that are responsive to changing needs.

Futurists predict that technology will continue to get faster, smaller, and more mobile and that information will become freer and easier to find and share. As a result, the focus for public libraries – which will still have books amongst other media – will likely shift from “access” to “service”. Physical spaces will continue to be required, in part to fulfil current roles and in part to support emerging ones. Canadian public libraries have endured many radical changes over the past hundred years, and they have emerged stronger each time...they are now becoming places more dedicated to the concept of personal discovery than to simply lending materials.<sup>3</sup>

“The physical library will become less about citizens checking out books and more about citizens engaging in the business of making their personal and civic identities. As more information moves to digital formats, public libraries will hold less material locally in their physical collections. Library users will be able to access information digitally wherever it resides through library networks. While traditional computer work stations remain important and in demand, personal or shared mobile devices that provide easy connections to library Wi-Fi and high-speed broadband networks are becoming a dominant form of connection. The reduction in physical materials, greater customer mobility and the desire for more collaboration and creation are changing the nature of the public library's physical space.”

- Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries. [Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries](#). 2014.

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<sup>3</sup> Royal Society of Canada Expert Panel Report. [The Future Now: Canada's Libraries, Archives, and Public Memory](#). 2014.

## **Libraries as Community Hubs**

A large part of the evolving role of public libraries is how facilities are designed and used. Many library systems are beginning to view physical space not just as a place to accommodate services, but rather as a service in its own right.

Libraries are most effective when they are positioned to serve as community hubs for learning and community connections, supporting entrepreneurs and job seekers, building literacy skills, providing access to training, collecting and disseminating community information, preserving local history, and hosting community events. In keeping with the movement from consumption to creation and collaboration, there is growing demand for the “library as place” – an extension of the community that goes well beyond just a repository for books (e.g., community hubs and gathering spaces). As noted by library advocate David Lankes, “our collection is our community”, which underscores the value of public interaction.

Libraries are often referred to as community hubs and many have a long history of strong collaborations with other sectors. Recently, the Ontario government has identified community hubs as a policy priority and has appointed a Special Advisor on Community Hubs and a Community Hub Framework Advisory Group tasked with developing a framework to support the effective use of public assets and to build stronger relationships among different sectors through hubs.

Community hubs can take many different forms in order to align with the diverse needs of different population groups. They can be a school, a neighbourhood centre, or another public space (such as a library) that offers coordinated services through a variety of agencies, such as those involved in social and family services, health, employment, education, newcomer services, seniors, and more. Through the co-location of various services in the same physical space, residents can easily access related supports and forge formal and informal linkages among different service providers, minimizing time and transportation costs, while creating synergies between service providers and economies of scale through shared “back office” duties. Furthermore, by providing space for broader community social activities, hubs can enhance community engagement, strengthen social networks among community members, and build social capital within the community through shared events.<sup>4</sup>

## **Facility Design Considerations**

Public libraries throughout North America are increasingly providing new types of spaces that respond to our changing society. Examples include (but are not limited to) individual and small group study spaces, makerspaces, video conferencing, gaming centres, media centres, publishing centres, exhibition space, collaborative activities, spaces for tutoring and teaching (including distance education), workspaces for mobile workers, and more. Flexible facility designs that promote the exchange of information, innovation, and creativity are in demand.

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<sup>4</sup> CRNCC. [Backgrounder – Community Hubs: Right Care, Right Place, Right Time](http://www.crncc.ca/knowledge/factsheets/pdf/InFocus-CommunityHubs.pdf). November 2014. <http://www.crncc.ca/knowledge/factsheets/pdf/InFocus-CommunityHubs.pdf> Accessed: May 2015.

This may manifest itself in many ways, but the core principles are spaces that are flexible, spacious, accessible, and welcoming. Some examples that are being incorporated into new or redeveloped libraries include portable shelving (stacks on wheels), outdoor spaces and gardens (thinking “beyond the walls”), large lobbies where people can gather and interact, late-night access for students during exam times, ample natural light, and a wider variety of seating. As densities rise and technology has an isolating effect on some, the need for public space will become even more critical.

The need to accommodate both group (noisy) and individual (quiet) study/work space is also on the rise – this may mean that libraries need to become larger and more flexible (with improved noise attenuation) in order to accommodate a variety of “zones” or separate spaces. Barrier-free accessibility requirements are also placing pressure on many library facilities, as more space is needed to accommodate accessible washrooms, shorter stacks, wider aisles, etc.

Libraries are being thoughtfully designed with not only function but also aesthetics in mind – they are a source of civic pride. Libraries are increasingly being combined with other public uses as their value as civic anchors and cultural integrators is being recognized. Often, libraries have the indoor and outdoor spaces and supporting amenities to serve as (or to supplement) event venues that may accommodate a variety of performances, lectures, meetings, and festivals. The most recent wave of library building projects across Canada (including the new Halifax Public Library) has seen the development of new iconic facilities that respond to changing public expectations, multiple information formats, and best available technologies. Today’s libraries must accommodate the past while anticipating the future.

### **Library Space Planning Guidelines**

There are a number of factors at play when planning for the long-term growth of a library system. Specifically, there are several trends that are placing increased pressures on floor space, including the heightened role of libraries as community hubs, demand for new programs and workshops, a need for more individual study and collaborative spaces, space demands related to technology, additional space to accommodate barrier-free requirements, improved merchandizing, greater separation between quiet and noisy areas, and more.

At the same time, other trends are freeing up space within libraries, such as automation, the removal of large circulation/reference desks in favour of mobile workstations, and a general decline in the size of the physical collection (reference material is a notable example). **On balance, trends relating to the modern role and function of public libraries suggest larger (not smaller) libraries.**

The amount of space required by a public library depends on the unique needs of the individual community. The assessment of local needs may be assisted by documents such as the Ontario Public Library Guidelines (Federation of Ontario Public Libraries, 2012) and Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems (Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario – ARUPLO, 2012), which provide several measures to assist libraries in future planning in areas such as space, collection size, collection use, and hours. Where a longstanding metric of 0.6 square feet per capita was used for undertaking a high-level assessment of system-wide library space needs, this measure has been

increased to 1.0 square feet per capita in the latest ARUPLO guidelines, which are intended to apply to rural/urban and county libraries (although Halton Hills has a rural component, the majority of the Town's population would be characterized as urban). Unfortunately, neither of these benchmarks convey aspects of quality, convenience, or user satisfaction. Regular public engagement is vital to identifying local measures of success.

### **Alternative Facility Provision Models**

The consolidation of smaller libraries into fewer larger, centralized, and modern facilities that can accommodate a mixture of both quiet and noisy spaces, along with conventional and cutting-edge services, continues to be a trend throughout North America. But, public demand for convenient and locally accessible facilities remains. One option is to integrate library branches into neighbourhood destinations, such as recreation centres or town squares.

An emerging but still largely untested alternative is to offer self-serve options such as kiosks and library lending machines that allow libraries to more thoroughly integrate themselves in their communities, often at non-traditional sites (e.g., transit hubs, airports, retail centres, etc.). Library lending machines (similar to vending machines) are automated and allow customers to insert their library card, make a selection, and receive material (and even place holds and return materials). These machines are unstaffed and passively monitored by those in the vicinity. This technology can be costly, both in its initial purchase and ongoing operation, and is subject to service disruption due to repairs. These machines work best in high traffic areas where people are 'on the go'; high levels of usage are the best way to justify the expense. They are currently in use within Edmonton Public Library, among other library systems.

In Ontario, some libraries along the GO Transit system have had discussions exploring opportunities for locating express library kiosks within or adjacent to GO Stations (e.g., Aurora Public Library has been successful in establishing a drop-box at the local GO Station). In this vein, there are other interesting and attractive models to consider. In California, the Contra Costa County Library project ("Library-a-Go-Go") allows the local library to provide service more in line with residents' expressed needs and preferences for faster, one-stop service at locations and during hours that are most convenient to them. Located in the fastest growing region in the Bay Area, Contra Costa County Library faces the challenge of delivering service to its communities without additional funds and without reducing services to the other community libraries. A freestanding, automated book-dispensing machine (Bokomaten) allows library members to borrow and return books and media using a library card. Twice a week an outreach librarian is available on-site to sign up new members, answer questions, and assist with machine access.

Incorporating technology within current facilities also allows the library services to change and meet community demand; this allows libraries to completely rethink library services. One of the most progressive library concepts is found in Europe in Delft where the DOK Library Concept Center has introduced a team-based cross-service staffing environment in order to encourage the development of new service ideas for the library. One of the goals of the DOK Library is to digitize all collections – including unique local histories – using a modified commercial system that meets their standards.

Another unique library concept is the all-digital, paperless library, BiblioTech in San Antonio and Bexar County (Texas). BiblioTech is comprised of more than 10,000 eTitles along with eReaders available for loan; staff focus more of their time on assisting users in manipulating devices and accessing the information they need.

Alternative delivery models are numerous and most incorporate a mixture of newer concepts and older versions of strategies that have worked in the past. Over the last few decades, as libraries have built facilities throughout their communities, bookmobile service has been reduced or, in some cases, eliminated altogether. However, a number of libraries have retained bookmobile fleets including Toronto, Edmonton, Hamilton, and Ottawa, to name a few. The latter was one of the first to offer Wi-Fi and accommodate digital services.

### **Usage**

Despite rapid changes in technology and information sharing, public libraries continue to be highly valued by people of all ages. Borrowing materials, getting information, and reading/studying continue to be the main reasons for visiting libraries as was confirmed through recent research by Halton Hills Public Library. Various studies and survey data indicate that, on the whole, circulation and library usage are on the rise across Canada and that virtual services and digital information are a complement – not a threat – to traditional library services.

Part of this increase in circulation can be traced to more efficient circulation practices, a growing emphasis on popular materials, eBooks, demographic shifts, and new partnerships. People also want more hours, more content, more computers, and more books. The availability of online resources means that customers can access material at their local branch or from home, which has broadened the reach of public libraries. On the other hand, the growth of personal devices and self-service technologies has had some negative impact on the usage of traditional services such as reference and reader's advisory. Expediency and convenience are key, particularly amongst the technologically savvy younger generations that are less willing to tolerate delays when seeking information.

Younger generations remain very active users of public libraries, despite the many multi-media options accessible to them. Recent research<sup>5</sup> indicates that: "Americans under age 30 are just as likely as older adults to visit the library, and once there they borrow print books and browse the shelves at similar rates...Younger patrons are also significantly more likely than those ages 30 and older to use the library as a study or 'hang out' space." Both students and parents are very concerned about the economics of higher education and are anxious about the prospects of employment after graduation. They value places that are optimized to "get work done" and that offer personalized support.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Kathryn Zickuhr, Lee Rainie, and Kristen Purcell. Younger Americans' Library Habits and Expectations. Pew Research Center. 2013.

<sup>6</sup> OCLC, At a Tipping Point: Education, Learning and Libraries. 2014.

## **Technology & Innovation**

The public appears willing to embrace wider uses of technology at public libraries; however, the range of needs varies dramatically between the digital “natives” and “fugitives”. The digital natives – those who have grown up with technology and have a high comfort level with it – are seeking more customization and interactivity. Their expectations are considerable as they value immediacy, 24/7 access, and new experiences.

Fortunately, the “digital age divide” is becoming less distinct – access to the internet is now an expectation at all library locations (preferably through Wi-Fi) and this ideal is shared not only by younger generations but older residents as well.

The popularity of wireless devices and app-based access to library programs and content has exploded in recent years. While there was an increase in the introduction of single-use devices such as eReaders in the past few years, these are now falling out of favour with the rise of multi-functional devices such as tablets and smartphones. It should come as no surprise to expect the future of information to be internet-connected portable devices. As identified in *Confronting the Future* (Levien, 2011), “A potential library patron with a computer and an Internet connection, as well as an iPad, Kindle, or other e-reader, can already gain access to far more books, videos, and music than any public library can provide.”

In keeping with this trend, there is an increasing movement toward a BYOD (“bring your own device”) culture. Tablet sales are beginning to outpace laptop sales as 50% of Americans now have a handheld device (e.g., tablet or eReader) for reading eContent<sup>7</sup> (the Canadian Urban Libraries Council estimates that Canadian mobile device ownership is approaching 50%). Within libraries, the trend is toward fewer formal workstations in favour of spaces consisting of comfortable, casual seating in close proximity to charging stations or outlets for plugging in personal/mobile devices. Some public libraries even provide opportunities to test new electronic devices prior to purchasing (technology “petting zoos” or “sandboxes”). It is important that library offerings remain compatible with whichever devices dominate the market.

While outlets and bandwidth are in high demand, there is concern that demand for public workstations and loaned laptops will wane. Nevertheless, Internet accessible workstations, download stations, and online resources (and support for how to use them) remain very popular in many communities, particularly amongst teens, seniors, and those from lower income households. Halton Hills Public Library represents an important Wi-Fi hotspot as users are using their mobile devices to connect to digital networks more and more. This “bring your own device” trend is expected to continue.

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<sup>7</sup> Kathryn Zickuhr and Lee Rainie. [E-Reading Rises as Device Ownership Jumps](#). Pew Research Center. 2014.



Experimental space and creation/discovery zones such as gaming centres, media labs, fab labs, and other maker-type spaces that leverage new technologies (essentially places where “artists, makers and techies converge so that they can gather, create and improve”<sup>8</sup>) are in early stages of development in some library systems. Through these spaces, the community creates their own content using tools such as 3D printers, laser cutters, welding machines, etching tools, robotics tools, self-publishing machines, recording studios, and other specialized equipment. HHPL is launching a new Creativity Centre in June 2015 based on the makerspace model, with plans underway to support creative endeavours beyond what is currently offered (e.g., video/camera lending, green screen access, etc.).

Makerspaces are becoming more sophisticated and interesting models are emerging. They are often developed in partnership with others in order to leverage funds, staffing expertise, or equipment. The Edmonton Public Library has recently created a makerspace by renovating an old audio room at their downtown branch; their makerspace includes 3D printers, an Espresso Book machine, specialized high-end computers, digital conversion software, gaming area, sound recording equipment, green screen, and ceiling mounted projector and sound system. In Ontario, the Innisfil Public Library has embraced a “hacker ethic” through its strategic plan and has implemented a number of innovations, including a digital media lab, idea lab, 3D printer, and the introduction of a “resident tinkerer”. These spaces and services hold much promise in attracting younger Canadians to the library.

### **Programming**

Public libraries have a tradition of providing quality programming that enhances their collections and supports lifelong learning. Programs are essential to libraries – they animate library resources and introduce people to all that the library has to offer.

Part of the appeal of library programming is its affordability and reach to a wide range of ages and backgrounds. Care must be taken to ensure that programming retains a learning component consistent with the library’s mandate (e.g., storytime, ESL, digital literacy programs, etc.) and that there is proper coordination and communication in cases where similar municipal cultural and recreational programming may exist.

While programs that inspire customers to read must continue to be offered, they must also evolve to match the changing interests of our society. In particular, libraries are vital to young children and newcomers to Canada, both of which can be expected to be represented within Southwest Georgetown. Public libraries offer free programs, materials, and information through which people can learn new skills and languages. In addition, studies<sup>9</sup> have shown that participation in early literacy programs positively impacts children’s literacy behaviour and school readiness. Interest in informal learning opportunities is also growing, leading to increased demand for discovery centres, makerspaces, MOOCs (massively open online courses), and more. A growing focus for HHPL is “STEAM” (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) programming for children and teens, including Lego robotics. Actively

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.unlab.ca>

<sup>9</sup> Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Preschool Early Literacy Programs in Ontario Public Libraries. 2012.

involving residents in designing and delivering programs may assist in creating community-responsive opportunities that leverage local resources.

In addition, most public libraries are experiencing high demand and interest in courses and requests for assistance in the use of a wide range of electronic devices. While a wonderful opportunity for libraries, the sheer range of products and services challenge library staff and their resources. Accordingly, some libraries are creating online public resources for the use and troubleshooting of various devices, as well as offering digital “petting zoos” and a full complement of programs, which require reliable access to suitable program space.

### **Digital and Print Formats**

The onset of new technologies such as eBooks – which are quickly becoming a basic component of library service – has coincided with a period of fiscal restraint within many municipalities. This has challenged the ability of many libraries to grow their eBook collections (which cost substantially more than print books), while continuing to maintain their more traditional print and A/V collections which still hold a strong pull over the library’s traditional customer base. In most library systems, eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines, and video streaming are accounting for a greater proportion of total circulation, but still lag well behind books and printed material.

The demographic most likely to read eBooks include those with higher degrees of educational attainment, those who live in higher earning households, and those who are between the ages of 30 and 49. A recent American study found that the percentage of adults who read an eBook in the 2013 was 28%, up from 23% at the end of 2012. At the same time, about 70% reported reading a book in print, which represented a 4% increase over 2012. The study also found that most people who read eBooks also read print books, and just 4% of readers are “eBook only.”<sup>10</sup> Other research in Canada indicates that the borrowing rate for eBooks is slowing, suggesting that they are stabilizing as another format for library lending. On this topic, the following print and digital borrowing trends were noted by the Canadian Urban Libraries Council in a recent report<sup>11</sup>:

- In 2013, urban libraries reported eBook circulation was up to 10% of total circulation. By comparison, eBook circulation was 5% of total circulation at HHPL in 2014.
- Borrowing of downloadable eBooks increased exponentially between 2010 and 2013, and began to stabilize in early 2014. This trend also held true at HHPL, where eBook borrowing increased by 133% between 2011 and 2012, 64% between 2012 and 2013, and only 20% between 2013 and 2014.
- Spending on print as a percentage of total spending in the last ten years has declined to accommodate the introduction of increasing audio-visual and digital formats. This too has been the experience at HHPL, as the Library has increased its DVD budgets and shifted some of the reference and circulating print budgets to eContent.

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<sup>10</sup> Kathryn Zickuhr and Lee Rainie. [E-Reading Rises as Device Ownership Jumps](#). Pew Research Center. 2014.

<sup>11</sup> CULC. [eBooks in 2014: Access and Licensing at Canadian Public Libraries](#). April 2014.

- Print books accounted for 72% of materials expenditures in 2000-2001. This declined to 51% in 2012. HHPL had a similar experience, with print material expenditures declining from 72% in 2001 to 60% in 2012 (as a proportion of the overall materials budget).
- Overall spending on eBooks increased by 250% between 2010 and 2012. During the same period, spending on eBooks increased by 107% at HHPL.
- Both the consumer and library markets for children’s eBooks have been growing much more slowly than the adult market.

Despite growing interest in digital access, demand for print material also remains strong and research suggests that not only do people prefer different formats for different circumstances, but younger generations continue to have a strong bond to the printed word. Continuing to offer a robust (but possibly smaller) print collection – while adjusting to new and changing formats – is likely to remain a high priority for public libraries for many years to come. The true impact of eBooks will take some time to fully evaluate and libraries must be willing to assume this risk in order to be innovative, relevant, and responsive to customer needs.

For the general public, most eBooks are priced similarly to paperbacks (but currently cost libraries more), meaning that they hold little advantage in terms of price to the public, particularly when one considers the cost of purchasing (and eventually upgrading) a digital device. Printed books also provide the ability to flip back and forth (for endnotes, table of contents, etc.) and mark-up (for books in personal collections), while not requiring a charged battery to read. The physicality of printed books is a subtle reminder that they are there to be read – many library customers visit libraries largely for the joy of browsing.

Unfortunately, Canadian public libraries are currently facing challenges both in terms of being able to purchase content from publishers, as well as making that content readily discoverable through their websites. Access to eBooks is gradually improving as all of the large multinational publishers now sell eBooks to Canadian public libraries; however, concerns remain over the cost of licensing and access to smaller publishers (including those that promote Canadian content).

## **6. Library Space Needs & Potential Co-location Options**

This section includes an evaluation of the need, general sizing, and locational criteria for a new library branch in Southwest Georgetown. Key inputs include anticipated population growth, evolving trends in library service, and potential co-location options. This analysis has also considered library space provision models being applied or considered in other library systems, including those with traditional and non-traditional partners, along with preferred site characteristics for a new branch library within Southwest Georgetown.

## **Facility Model**

As identified through prior HHPL studies, library facility models define the roles, relationships, and sizes of the different library facilities and describe the key service characteristics for each type of facility. Facility models are specific to a municipality's geography, population distribution, and socio-demographic characteristics, among other factors. HHPL's current facility model includes a larger resource library in Georgetown and a community branch library in Acton.

The 2009 study completed for the Acton Branch did not contemplate a third physical library location in Halton Hills during the study's planning horizon, which extended to 2021. Nevertheless, we believe that HHPL's facility model is flexible in its ability to accommodate a third library branch, insofar as the third branch would be a satellite to the existing Georgetown Branch that serves as the Library's administrative hub and central location for Town-wide (or community-wide) events and services. The questions of particular interest must be focused on need, location, and timing.

## **Space Planning Target**

The current gross floor area of Halton Hills Public Library space is 43,400 square feet between its two branches. Based on a current population estimate of nearly 65,000, this translates into a Town-wide average of 0.67 square feet per capita. This ratio represents a snapshot in time and will change with changes to the population and facility provision.

In terms of system-wide needs, the approach of using per capita standards continues to be a reasonable methodology for studies of this nature. HHPL's past studies have promoted a guideline of 0.6 gross square feet per capita as a means for identifying future library space needs. This minimum guideline has been in regular use within the library sector for decades, although increasing pressures on floor space (due largely to the heightened role of libraries as gathering spaces/hubs, increased space demands related to technology, additional space to accommodate barrier-free requirements, etc.) have caused many library systems to re-examine this space target. For example, the Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries – an organization that advocates for libraries largely within county structures – now suggest a guideline of 1.0 square feet per capita.

To provide additional guidance, a benchmarking analysis has been undertaken to examine space provision levels in comparator library systems. The following table identifies seven multi-branch library systems (including HHPL) located within the Greater Golden Horseshoe, representing municipalities with populations that are generally similar to Halton Hills.

On a per capita basis, HHPL currently ranks third out of the seven library systems in the amount of library space. The average ratio within the comparator group is 0.58 square feet per capita, with a high of 0.80 square feet per capita in Niagara Falls and a low of 0.42 square feet per capita in Milton. However, it should be noted that some of the systems identified in this table are currently expanding (e.g., Clarington) or planning for the expansion (e.g., Milton) of their library facilities.

### Benchmarking: Library Space Provision

| Library System      | 2013 Reported Population | Number of Locations | Library Space (sf) | Library Space per Capita (sf) |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Welland             | 50,631                   | 2                   | 35,350             | 0.70                          |
| Caledon             | 67,054                   | 7                   | 42,750             | 0.64                          |
| Niagara Falls       | 82,997                   | 4                   | 66,700             | 0.80                          |
| Clarington*         | 89,184                   | 4                   | 42,700             | 0.48                          |
| Pickering           | 94,883                   | 4                   | 52,750             | 0.56                          |
| Milton              | 98,000                   | 2                   | 41,300             | 0.42                          |
| <b>Average</b>      | <b>80,458</b>            | <b>3.8</b>          | <b>46,925</b>      | <b>0.58</b>                   |
| Halton Hills (2015) | 65,000                   | 2                   | 43,400             | 0.67                          |

\* Clarington PL is currently expanding a branch that will result in an additional 6,000 square feet  
 Sources: Population – Ontario Public Libraries Statistics (2013); Library Space -- MBPC

For further comparison, a review of selected library master plans across the Greater Toronto Area suggests that many library systems continue to target a level of service around 0.6 square feet per capita.

### Benchmarking: Library Space Provision Guidelines

| Public Library System | Space Provision Target |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Mississauga           | 0.46 sf/capita         |
| Ajax                  | 0.55 sf/capita         |
| Milton                | 0.55 sf/capita         |
| Oakville              | 0.58 sf/capita         |
| Brampton              | 0.60 sf/capita         |
| Markham               | 0.60 sf/capita         |
| Richmond Hill         | 0.60 sf/capita         |
| Vaughan               | 0.61 sf/capita         |
| Aurora                | 0.70 sf/capita         |
| East Gwillimbury      | 0.70 sf/capita         |
| Innisfil              | 0.70 sf/capita         |
| King                  | 0.95 sf/capita         |

Source: Monteith Brown Planning Consultants, 2015

Based on the aforementioned trends, guidelines, and other pressures being placed on Halton Hills Public Library, it is evident that additional space will be required to serve new residents and to ensure a proper spatial distribution. **Although trends suggest a decline in the size of the physical collection size over time, the demands for flexible and community space are on the rise. With the vision for the modern**

library suggesting that more space will be needed, it is recommended that Halton Hills Public Library continue to pursue a minimum space provision target of 0.6 square feet per capita.

### Library Space Needs

The following table provides the space requirements for library provision based on the population projections and the 0.6 square foot per capita standard being employed by this Study. Based on a target of 0.6 sf/capita, the current HHPL system would appear to be built for a population of approximately 72,000 residents, which the Town is forecasted to achieve around the year 2024.

#### **Projection of Library Space Needs based on Recommended Provision Target**

| Year | Population Forecast | Existing Library Space (sf) | 0.6 sf per capita |                   |
|------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|      |                     |                             | Needs (sf)        | Surplus (Deficit) |
| 2016 | 65,100              | 43,400                      | 39,060            | 4,340             |
| 2021 | 66,900              |                             | 40,140            | 3,260             |
| 2026 | 80,000              |                             | 48,000            | (4,600)           |
| 2031 | 94,000              |                             | 56,400            | (13,000)          |

Population data source: Halton Hills Development Charges Background Study, 2012 (adjusted to include Census undercount)

With a current provision level of 0.67 sf/capita and a target of 0.60 sf/capita, the Library is currently in a surplus position of approximately 4,340 square feet. **Based on a projected population of 94,000 residents in 2031, HHPL will require a total of 56,400 square feet of library space, which is 13,000 square feet more than what is currently provided.**

Facility provision is the responsibility of the Town – with direction provided by the Library Board – and will be dependent on financial resources and partnership opportunities. If growth-related, as is expected to be the case in Halton Hills, new facilities would be eligible for up to 90% funding through Development Charges.

### Concept for a Southwest Georgetown Branch

Public libraries are inclusive institutions that are created equally for everyone in the community. They are not intended just to serve specific neighbourhoods, rather they are distributed equitably to improve access to all residents in the most cost effective manner possible. Duplication of service is not cost effective and HHPL tries to avoid this through long-term planning that emphasizes fair and equitable distribution. In the end, tough choices need to be made about how best to offer services, which requires a balance between meeting resident expectations and financial sustainability.

There are indications that the community in general has a low tolerance for extended travel, particularly with increasing growth-related traffic volumes. These expectations would suggest a desire for an additional library location within Southwest Georgetown as the current branch is located approximately 5 kilometres away from the centre-point of this new community. Master planning for area library

branches typically involves the application of a 2.5 kilometre service radius, suggesting that the majority of Southwest Georgetown – in addition to much of South Georgetown – would be without adequate coverage if a library branch was not developed in the area.

The Southwest Georgetown area is a localized development within an established settlement area. Any prospective library facility within Southwest Georgetown would be accessible to future residents as well as those living in vicinity, including those in the established subdivision to the east. The 2011 Census reported a total of approximately 14,000 residents (adjusted for Census undercoverage) living in the urban portion of Georgetown south of Hungry Hollow/Silver Creek. A smaller number of residents living in the rural areas further to south would also likely be served by a branch in Southwest Georgetown. Including the existing population and the estimated 19,000 residents projected for Southwest Georgetown, **a branch in this area could theoretically be asked to serve a population of 33,000 or more once the area is fully built-out.**

Given that the existing Georgetown Branch serves as a central/resource library for the Town, one cannot simply apply the recommended target of 0.6 square feet per capita to the population estimate for South/Southwest Georgetown as this would result in a larger library than is necessary as there will still be an element of the population that will prefer using the existing branch. In determining the preferred size for the Southwest Georgetown Branch, it is best to defer to the Town-wide library space deficit identified in the previous section – that being 14,000 square feet. This figure represents a metric of approximately 0.4 square feet per capita for the future population of South/Southwest Georgetown, which is a reasonable benchmark for an area branch. **This methodology confirms that a library of approximately 14,000 square feet would be suitable to serve Southwest Georgetown (and vicinity) at full build-out.**

It is recognized that funding and/or land availability may be constraints for any future library in Southwest Georgetown. While 14,000 square feet has been identified as a preferred size based on local and Town-wide population figures, facility sizing could be impacted by the location, design, and partners involved in the branch. For example, a library facility that has access to entrances, washrooms, program areas, storage, etc. that are shared with other partners/uses could be as much as 20% smaller depending on the amenities and level of access. **As a result, co-location within a shared facility could reduce the requirement to as little as 11,200 square feet.**

As a point of comparison, some examples of recently constructed libraries in the range of 8,000 to 17,000 square feet include:

- Essex Public Library, Lakeshore Branch (2014, 8,000sf, combined with community centre)
- London Public Library, Stoney Creek Branch (2011, 8,000sf, combined with community centre)
- Brampton Public Libraries, Mount Pleasant Branch (2011, 8,000sf with potential second phase to bring branch to 19,000sf, combined with school and community space)
- Vaughan Public Libraries, Mount Pleasant Branch (2014, 8,500sf, combined with community centre)

- Clarington Public Library, Newcastle Branch (2009, 9,100sf, stand alone)
- Whitby Public Library, Brooklin Branch (2010, 11,000sf, combined with community centre)
- Milton Public Library, Beaty Branch (2009, 11,300sf, stand-alone)
- Burlington Public Library, Alton Branch (2013, 11,800sf, combined with school library and community centre)
- London Public Library, Southwest/Westmount Branch (in design, 14,000sf estimated, combined with community centre)
- Toronto Public Library, Scarborough Civic Centre Branch (2014, 14,500sf, combined with Civic Centre)
- Toronto Public Library, Fort York Branch (2014, 16,000sf, stand alone)
- Richmond Hill Public Library, Oak Ridges Branch (in design, 16,000sf estimated, stand-alone)
- Mississauga Public Library, new Meadowvale Branch (under construction, 16,300sf, combined with community centre)
- Waterloo Public Library, John M. Harper Branch (2011, 17,000sf, combined with community centre)

In terms of timing, it is anticipated that the development of Southwest Georgetown will occur at a rather steady pace between 2021 and 2031. In order to balance demands from a growing population with available funding, it is often best to align facility opening with the mid-point of a construction period. That being said, it is recognized that there are over 14,000 residents within South Georgetown at this present time (many of which would make use of a branch in this area) and that the current library system is planned for a population of 72,000, which the Town is forecasted to reach around 2024. **Based on current information, development of the Southwest Georgetown Branch may be considered within an early term phase of community construction, with a target in or around the year 2024.** As time passes, this target should be revisited as it will ultimately be impacted by several factors that are currently unknown, such as the approved vision for Southwest Georgetown, population growth, the availability of the selected site, construction activity and phasing in the area, site servicing and related infrastructure, potential partnership alignment, and funding (keeping in mind that development charge funding is not likely to be available prior to 2021).

Please note that these figures are based on our preliminary analysis with many unknown factors, including the site. HHPL should seek to further refine this target through more detailed analysis at the appropriate point in time, following approval of the Secondary Plan. It is possible that the proposed library branch could function and look different from a more conventional branch and there remains a need to develop a functional space and operations plan for the facility, to be informed by a public consultation program. For example, trends would indicate that the facility should have a flexible floor plan to accommodate a variety of technologies and interactive experiences (along with a dedicated program room), individual and group study spaces, and a collection that is right-sized for the community, in addition to a wide range of traditional and partnered services.



## **Joint Facility & Partnership Considerations**

Partnership building and outreach is as important as ever for public libraries as mounting fiscal pressures and the evolution of library services are requiring libraries to place more emphasis on new collaborations. Some partnerships may be related to outreach, creative spaces, and programming, while others involve co-location.

In contemplating another library branch, an approach that is supported by research and the experiences in other communities is the desire for the library to be part of a joint facility with other community uses, such as a recreation and arts centres, municipal offices, schools, etc. Multi-use buildings that combine libraries and other civic uses have been popular templates for years as they offer a “one stop shopping” convenience, economies of scale, and opportunities to collaborate on service delivery. For example, the library / recreation centre model is a widely successful one that many communities have deployed in order to drive usage for all parties and benefit from various economies of scale in construction and shared service delivery. Successful partnerships help to share risks and benefits, allowing the library to achieve strategic priorities in a more effective or efficient manner.

On occasion, school boards and public libraries have also partnered to contribute financial and human resources to the sharing of library facilities under the same roof. These sharing arrangements can involve both elementary and secondary schools and, from our experience, such partnerships require considerable effort to ensure that all parties contribute their fair share (including financial and human resources) and that access by both the public and students is not unduly restricted

Other co-location options might include day care providers (e.g., St. James Town Library in Toronto), residential providers (seniors/affordable housing, e.g., Aldershot Branch in Burlington; low income housing for single mothers, e.g., Vancouver Library / YMCA), private sector (restaurants, fitness), health care, Service Ontario, and more. As the planning for Southwest Georgetown is still in its early stages, it is not presently known if any of these examples are viable options for Halton Hills Public Library.

In areas of fast growth where the municipality either does not have adequate funding in place or a permanent site secured (e.g., Brampton, Edmonton, etc.), some libraries have established temporary branches or kiosks as interim measures to satisfy immediate demands. Given expressed demand for library service in developed portions of south Georgetown, a temporary location would not likely be viewed as a worthwhile option.

## Site Principles & Criteria

While the purpose of this report is not to design the next Halton Hills Public Library facility, there are some key characteristics and principles that are commonly found in high performing library systems that are relevant to the siting and sizing of a library facility in Southwest Georgetown. For example, wherever possible, the proposed library facility should:

- be in a visible and prominent location (e.g., key placemaking principles), with appropriate curb appeal that highlights the library’s civic presence and focal point potential
- be located within an urban area, ideally in close proximity to one or more schools
- be combined with other service providers and outdoor spaces
- be accessible by both pedestrians and vehicles (with sufficient parking)
- have main level access, with primary public areas being located on one level
- have flexible spaces that can be used for multiple activities and by multiple users
- allow for use by residents of all ages, included an anticipated influx of young families
- offer opportunity for future expansion
- offer options for environmentally sustainable features

The site evaluation criteria contained in the 2009 Acton Library Facility Study should also be considered when considering potential locations and selecting a preferred site for the Southwest Georgetown Library. These include the following, with modest adjustments made through this report:

1. **Size and Configuration**

(Required) Developable area must be free of existing buildings or site constraints and large enough to incorporate the proposed library, parking, and a minimum buffer area. Developable area is large enough to support a future expansion (if necessary), a major partnership, expanded parking or buffer areas, etc.

2. **Municipal Servicing**

(Required) Full services must be available to the boundary of the site or reasonably accessible to avoid extraordinary costs associated with servicing the site.

3. **Zoning / Permissible Uses**

(Required) Site will be removed from consideration if the existing zoning does not allow the proposed use and a revised designation would not be supported by planning staff.

4. **Access – Vehicle**

Borders an arterial road (ideal) or a collector road near an arterial road (adequate).

5. **Access – Pedestrian**

On a trail or pedestrian/bicycle pathway or link.

6. **Visibility**

Street frontage on an arterial road (ideal) or a collector road near an arterial road (adequate); may also consider other site-specific considerations enhancing visibility.

7. **Compatible Use**  
Compatibility with surrounding land uses and urban form and absence of potential adverse effects on adjacent uses.
8. **Major Partnership Potential**  
Educational, recreational, or community service providers (including non-traditional partners) that could co-locate with the library in a mutually beneficial manner.
9. **Site Acquisition Costs**  
If applicable and assuming information is available, the relative cost of the site.
10. **Site Development Costs**  
Any attribute of the site that would result in higher than normal development costs.
11. **Centrality to the Service Area**  
Location relative to the population served.
12. **Complementary Use**  
Retail or other uses in the immediate vicinity that might be combined with a trip to the library or might benefit from a location in proximity to the library.
13. **Contribution to Corporate or Library Objectives**  
Contribution to other municipal or library objectives, such as acting as a catalyst for business development or creating a community focal point.

### **Southwest Georgetown Library Branch Development Options**

Based on the preceding analysis and discussions with Town/Library staff, the following options may be considered for library facility provision in Southwest Georgetown:

1) **Town Square/Main Street location within Southwest Georgetown (“Community Hub”)**

Libraries are civic anchors that can serve as a catalyst for economic activity and are commonly located along main streets in communities throughout Ontario and beyond. The land use concepts currently being evaluated for Southwest Georgetown each include a community use node that could involve a library or other municipal building. For two of the three land use concepts, this node is situated centrally within the Southwest Georgetown area, as part of a Town Square or Main Street Area. It has not yet been determined if there will be any municipal community centres or other notable civic buildings within this area that would allow for joint development/co-location opportunities.

2) **Co-location with school and/or social service partners within Southwest Georgetown**

The preliminary concept plans for Southwest Georgetown identify a total of six elementary schools and one secondary school. Beyond schools, it is not currently known what community or social service agencies will be looking to locate within Southwest Georgetown. Should HHPL wish to pursue this option, it would be prudent to solicit interest from other service providers for creating a true community hub for the area. Unfortunately, the interest of potential partners

aside from schools may not materialize for several years, possibly until Southwest Georgetown is largely built-out, which may create uncertainty and delay if this option is selected.

There have been several joint public library / school developments completed in recent years within Ontario as both parties seek cost efficiencies in both construction and service delivery. Under this option, it may be possible for the Library to consider a reduction in library space (up to 20%) should adequate access be provided to common elements such as entrances, washrooms, programs rooms, storage, etc.

### 3) **Main floor of a multi-level residential complex within Southwest Georgetown**

As identified in the previous scenario, it is too early in the Southwest Georgetown planning process to confirm whether or not this is a viable option. If HHPL were to seek main floor space in a multi-level residential complex, it would likely do so under a lease arrangement. Key concerns would be the visibility of the site, availability of sufficient space, the duration of the arrangement, public access to the space (or perceptions thereof), and other common tenant/landlord matters.

### 4) **Gellert Community Centre Expansion**

The Gellert Community Centre is located immediately adjacent to the Southwest Georgetown boundary. The potential of locating the new Georgetown Branch at this site was previously explored in 2005, but was rejected due to the Town's future plans for expanded recreation services on this site and the subsequent lack of space to accommodate the required library building footprint. **Recent discussions with the Town suggest that there would not be sufficient land at this location to accommodate a library branch and, thus, this option is not being pursued at this time.**

Nevertheless, it bears noting that joint library/ recreation centres are a successful model in many municipalities. Libraries and indoor swimming pools are a particularly good fit as both receive moderate to heavy use throughout the day. The Town is currently contemplating an expansion to the Gellert Community Centre, which may include a gymnasium, youth and seniors space, and an enlarged fitness centre. If this site were to be revisited as an option for the Library, it would have the benefit of building off an existing community destination (with shared spaces and support amenities) on a site that is generally "development-ready".

If a library were to be considered for this site, it would ideally be realized through an expansion to the existing building rather than a stand-alone structure in order to improve convenience and leverage opportunities for shared space and service. Under this option, it may be possible for the Library to consider a reduction in library space (up to 20%) should adequate access be provided to common elements such as entrances, washrooms, programs rooms, storage, etc.

Additional discussions with the Town and community as part of the Vision Georgetown and subsequent processes are recommended in order to confirm the viability of the proposed concepts. A site evaluation process should be undertaken at the appropriate time, as well as discussions with potential partners should this be part of the recommended option.

## 7. Summary of Findings

The following represent the key findings of this Library Facility Needs Assessment:

1. A population of approximately 19,000 is currently being forecasted for Southwest Georgetown. The Town anticipates development in Southwest Georgetown to begin in 2021 with build-out by 2031. The area is likely to attract young families, including newcomers to Canada. A library branch in Southwest Georgetown would also attract users from established neighbourhoods in South Georgetown (it is estimated that an additional 14,000 people reside in the area immediately south of Hungry Hollow/Silver Creek).
2. Vision Georgetown presents an opportunity to embed HHPL as a community focal point, gathering place, and educational and cultural anchor within Southwest and South Georgetown. Public libraries are essential components of complete communities, and Southwest and South Georgetown will have the critical mass necessary for this important piece of infrastructure.
3. On balance, trends relating to the modern role and function of public libraries suggest larger (not smaller) libraries. With the vision for the modern library suggesting that more space will be needed, it is recommended that Halton Hills Public Library continue to pursue a minimum space provision target of 0.6 square feet per capita for projecting Town-wide needs. Based on a projected population of 94,000 residents in 2031, HHPL will require a total of 56,400 square feet of library space, which is 13,000 square feet more than what is currently provided.
4. A library of approximately 13,000 square feet would be suitable to serve Southwest Georgetown (and vicinity) at full build-out. Co-location within a shared facility could reduce the requirement to as little as 10,500 square feet (as much as 20% less space, assuming adequate access to common elements such as entrances, washrooms, programs rooms, storage, etc.). The branch would serve as a satellite to the existing Georgetown Branch, which will continue to house the Library administration, specialized services, and major events.
5. Based on available information, development of the Southwest Georgetown Branch may be considered within an early term phase of community construction, with a current target in or around the year 2024. As there are currently several unknown factors that may affect facility timing and sizing, HHPL should seek to further refine these targets through more detailed analysis (e.g., functional space and operations plan) closer to the time of implementation.
6. There are a number of potential models and locations that may be considered for the Southwest Georgetown Branch, recognizing that a shared service model is a substantial benefit for today's modern libraries. Additional discussions with the Town and community as part of the Vision Georgetown and subsequent processes are recommended in order to confirm the viability of the proposed concepts. A site evaluation process should be undertaken at the appropriate time, as well as discussions with potential partners should this be part of the recommended option.