



HALTON HILLS PUBLIC LIBRARY

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT: THE ACTON BRANCH REPLACEMENT PROJECT

1. Why do we need to replace the current Acton Branch?

The most critical problem with the current facility is with accessibility. The Accessibility Audit Report commissioned by the Town of Halton Hills concluded that the Acton Branch cannot be made accessible without a significant capital investment.

In addition to the space deficiency, the replacement will address the severe shortage of space. According to Ontario Public Library guidelines, the branch should be close to 7800 square feet for the existing population, or almost twice the current size. With the anticipated population growth, we will need 9,000 square feet of library space for the Acton area by 2021. The current branch is 3700 square feet. This new space will allow us to house more material, offer a reasonable amount of quiet reading and study space, better meet the demand for Internet stations, and offer adequate space for our programs.

We know that patrons are also supportive of this expansion. In several recent surveys patrons have confirmed that they simply want more of what we are currently offering, e.g., bigger collections. At this time, we cannot add any more material; our shelves are jam-packed! We can only add to our collections if we have a larger facility.

2. Is the Halton Hills Public Library busy enough to warrant a new, larger facility?

Statistics from the last five years indicate that use at the Acton Branch has increased dramatically in all areas including borrowing, questions asked and programs attended. Since 2003, circulation is up 45%, reference service is up 15%, children's program attendance is up 23% and in-house Internet usage is up 50%.

We also know that the current Acton Branch cannot meet all of the community's needs. Not only is the space limited, users do not have enough room to work and read, and many larger programs cannot be accommodated. Experience in other

communities demonstrates that when new libraries are provided, use increases significantly. We are confident this will be the case in Acton.

3. Have planning studies been done to justify the replacement of the Acton library?

This is not a new project. In 1987 an accessibility study was prepared for the Halton Hills Public Library Board. The need for additional library space in was first identified in the early 1990s and confirmed by a planning study in 1996. In May 2009 the Library Board commissioned dmA Planning and Management Services to produce a Facility Study for the Acton Branch Library. This study confirmed the need for a single 9000 square foot branch and the adequacy of River Street location for a branch of this size.

4. Who is responsible for this project?

A Planning Committee comprised of members of the Library Board, Council, and senior Library staff are responsible for the project.

5. What features will you be looking to add/change?

The major changes include:

- creating a library that is more accessible for wheelchair users, people with mobility issues and people with strollers
- having much more space for all collections while avoiding use of very low and high shelves
- incorporating environmentally friendly technology at every opportunity
- maximizing the natural light
- offering more seating and study area choices, including conversation spaces
- making it convenient for busy people to use the library (e.g., self-checkout, self check-in,)
- providing more Internet stations
- having a floor plan/signage that makes it easy to find what you need
- properly sized and appointed programming rooms

6. What are the timelines?

The following represent the key milestones in the project:

July 2009- September 2009 Design Development Phase/Final Design Approval
October 2009-March 2011 Construction Phase
March 2011 Opening

7. What will the project cost?

The project including the LEED accreditation at the Silver level, is expected to cost \$3,500,000. This cost will be split between the Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments.

8. Where can I continue to get information on this project, and how can I submit my comments?

Information will be posted on the Library website at www.hhpl.on.ca. If you would like more information, please do not hesitate to contact me through my e-mail at: cannong@hhpl.on.ca.