



LAMBTON COUNTY
LIBRARY



Joint Library Facilities Review

2023 - 2031



Monteith + Brown
planning consultants



ARCHITECTURE & DESIGN



Lambton County Library

Joint Library Facilities Review

January 18, 2023

Prepared by:



Acknowledgements

We acknowledge that this land on which we are gathered today is part of the ancestral land of the Chippewa, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples, referred to collectively as the Anishinaabeg. It is through the connection of the Anishinaabeg with the spirit of the land, water and air that we recognize their unique cultures, traditions, and values. Together as treaty people, we have a shared responsibility to act with respect for the environment that sustains all life, protecting the future for those generations to come.

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Municipality of Lambton Shores

Township of St. Clair

Village of Oil Springs

Township of Warwick

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Executive Summary

Joint Library Facilities Review

“Building Innovation, Connections & Creativity in Our Communities through Effective Use of Lambton County’s Libraries.”

~ Joint Library Facilities Review Vision

Generations of Sarnia-Lambton residents have passed through the doors of Lambton County Library. In doing so, the Library has empowered and educated thousands of people living across Lambton County’s urban and rural municipalities.

Today, the Library still provides many of the same services that have been historically sought out but is moving to modernize its approach in line with progressive and efficient library systems found across Canada. The Library is striving to diversify collections, programs, services and equipment within each of its 25 libraries so that they promote early literacy, continuing education, economic development, creative and cultural capacity, technological connectivity as well as overall wellness for communities and the individuals within them. To be able to do this effectively, library buildings must have the necessary space and amenities to adapt to this evolution.

The Joint Library Facilities Review (JLFR) informs Lambton County Library and its municipal partners about *how much* library space is required to meet community needs to the year 2031. In addition, the JLFR examines the *type* of space that is required along with a review of the *shared facility model* with municipalities, and actions required for *existing libraries* that will benefit residents and the communities that they live in.



* Mallroad Library will be closing in 2024. A new library will open in the Clearwater Arena.



The JLFR aspires to strengthen Lambton County, the 11 lower-tier municipalities, and the communities within them. The JLFR advances a comprehensive facility development strategy that results in investments in new libraries, reinvestments in existing libraries, introduces “express” service points and the continuation of Lambton County Library’s progressive Mobile Library Service.

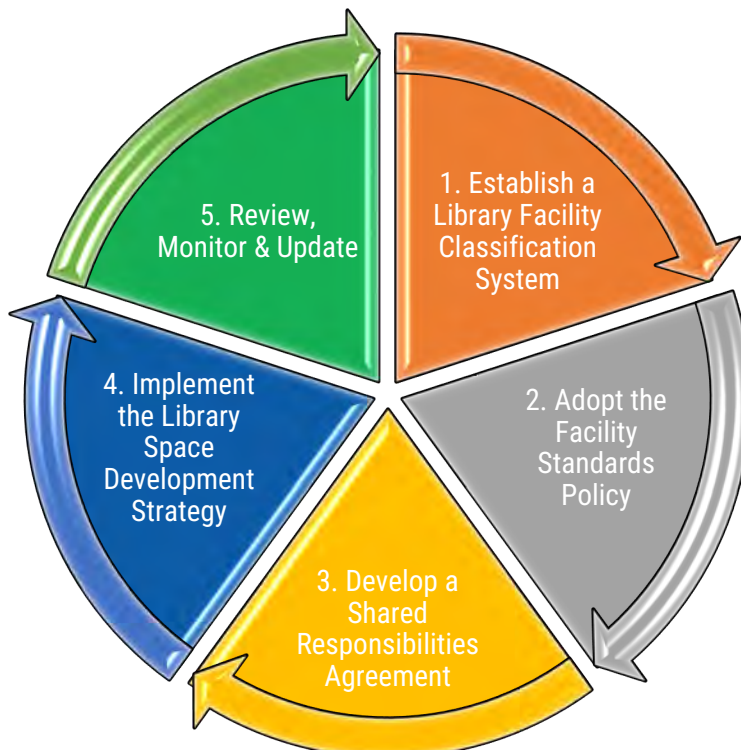
Taken together, the JLFR positions the library system to deliver comprehensive, extensive and expanded coverage to people living in many urban and rural settlements.

The JLFR contains 35 Recommendations to meet the needs of Lambton County residents whose population is projected to grow from 128,000 in 2021 to 138,500 persons by the year 2031. The JLFR’s Recommendations span the need to:

- renew the approach to facility provision with the Library’s partners with an emphasis placed on sharing responsibilities;
- adopt best practices in design to provide modern and inclusive library environments for all people;
- ensure an adequate and efficient supply of physical floor space, amounting to a total Gross Floor Area of 96,945 square feet and primarily allocating new growth-related library space to existing buildings in order to minimize costs related to land acquisition; and
- revitalize existing libraries in recognition of the important role they play in serving and connecting residents living in various settlements.

Implementation of the JLFR should generally follow the sequence of events presented below.

- Step 1** Adopt a Library Facility Classification System that aligns with the ARUPLO Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems and organizes facilities into Small, Medium, Large and Urban branch types based on catchment area and population served.
- Step 2** Adopt a Facility Standards Policy that establishes design specifications, amenities and maintenance standards for each type of library in the above noted classification system.
- Step 3** Consult with municipal and school board partners to evaluate each library building in accordance with the Facility Standards Policy and explore opportunities to meet desired design and amenity specifications, maintenance and repair standards. Prepare a new/updated agreement with Lambton Kent District School Board.
- Step 4** Implement the library space development strategy summarized in Section 9.2 of this JLFR.
- Step 5** Regularly review and monitor the JLFR along with the effectiveness of the Facility Standards Policy, undertaking updates where and when necessary.



Redefine Shared Responsibilities and the Approach to Providing Library Space

The multi-institutional approach to delivering library space between upper and lower-tier governments and the LKDSB requires that a strong governance framework is in place to ensure alignment and a clear understanding of responsibilities. It is through governance that a fiscally sustainable and community responsive approach to investing in libraries can maximize the likelihood for successful outcomes. Opportunities to deliver library services using alternative facilities should also be explored to meet desired design and amenity specifications, maintenance and repair standards, and co-locate with complementary services.

Rec. #1 Adopt a Library Facility Classification System that aligns with the ARUPLO Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems and organizes facilities into Small, Medium, Large and Urban branch types based on catchment area and population served.

Rec. #2 Prepare a Facility Standards Policy that defines minimum standards for design, amenities and upkeep of buildings occupied by Lambton County Library along with provisions to allow for regular reviews and inspections of these buildings along with timely responses to maintenance and repair concerns. The Policy should articulate shared roles and responsibilities associated with the delivery of library spaces and services with flexibility to reflect locally-specific or unique elements. The Policy should reflect modern principles and best practices regarding governance, communication, fiscal sustainability, capital and operating obligations, performance evaluation, and other elements required to deliver quality library services expected by Lambton County residents. Facility standards should align with the Library Facility Classification System stated in Rec. #1 of this Joint Library Facilities Review.

- Rec. #3** Consult with municipal and school board partners to evaluate each library building/space in accordance with the Facility Standards Policy (see JLFR Rec. #2) by exploring opportunities to meet desired design and amenity specifications along with maintenance and repair standards.
- Rec. #4** As part of the development of a Facility Standards Policy (see JLFR Rec. #2), work with municipal and school board partners to define short, medium and long-term capital needs for library buildings, while exploring opportunities to fund enhanced levels of library service at municipally-owned properties through capital grant sources pursued in collaboration with the County of Lambton.
- Rec. #5** Strive to provide libraries in buildings where complementary use or programming is possible (e.g. galleries, museums and other cultural facilities, recreation and community centres, health and social service centres, etc.).
- Rec. #6** Schedule regular walk-through inspections of each library building with Library, municipal and school board staff to discuss issues, opportunities and collective priorities to inform municipal asset management plans in adherence to the proposed Facility Standards Policy. Joint walk-throughs should be conducted annually at a minimum.
- Rec. #7** Update the letter of understanding with the Lambton Kent District School Board so that it includes libraries co-located with Grand Bend Public School in addition to Brigden Public School and any future shared school-library facilities.

Incorporate Best Practices in Library Design & Renewal

- Rec. #8** Engage area First Nations and Indigenous communities in discussions about how new and existing Lambton County Library branches can be more welcoming of Indigenous Peoples. The role of the Library in addressing applicable Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission should be examined with Indigenous communities and should include, but not be limited to, raising awareness of Indigenous history and culture through the design and programming of library space.
- Rec. #9** In line with a Facility Standards Policy (see JLFR Rec. #2, advocate the importance of implementing outstanding recommendations and correcting issues identified in municipal Accessibility Plans and Sustainability Plans to municipal partners. Where an accessibility or energy efficiency review for a Lambton County Library branch has not been completed in the past 5 years, building owners should be strongly encouraged to complete such assessments to inform future municipal asset management plans and/or capital budgets.
- Rec. #10** In addition to Rec. #8 and Rec. #9 of this Joint Library Facilities Review, engage other under-represented or otherwise marginalized populations to understand how the design of Lambton County Library branches can better meet the needs of persons experiencing homelessness or low income, the LGBTQ2S+ community, neuro-diverse individuals, and newcomers to Canada at a minimum.
- Rec. #11** Explore use of the outdoor spaces at or near libraries for services and programs delivered by Lambton County Library and its partners through reading gardens and enhanced landscaping, allotment gardens. Coordination will be required with the lower-tier municipalities with respect to building and maintaining outdoor spaces for the Library.
- Rec. #12** Install automatic people-counters at all Lambton County Library branches in order to derive meaningful visitation/usage data to inform decision-making and capital investments for a given branch. Self-service kiosks should also be installed at higher use libraries to improve user convenience and efficiencies for staff time.

Keeping Pace with County-Wide Growth

With Lambton County's population estimated to grow by more than 10,000 persons by the year 2031, it is important that Lambton County Library keep pace. There is a common misconception that modern libraries require less space due to advancements in technology when in fact the opposite is true. Libraries of today and the future require more space due to their role as community gathering points where people and businesses seek a broad range of services and programs, as well as a need for added space to be able to accommodate persons with disabilities as well as embody progressive technologies such as energy efficient components.

As such, the JLFR takes a conservative approach of maintaining existing per capita library service rates for space (i.e. no reductions or additions to these rates are proposed).

Rec. #13 Rate of Service: Maintain Lambton County Library's existing service level at 0.7 square feet of library space per capita over the JLFR planning period through a strategic combination of library space consolidation, reallocation and construction initiatives.

Rec. #14 Library System Space Requirements: Plan for the addition of approximately 9,130 square feet of new library space to meet a total supply of 96,945 square feet for Lambton County Library by the year 2031. At least half of the new space requirement should be allocated to the City of Sarnia including through the future library at Clearwater Arena and an expanded Bright's Grove Library.

Rec. #15 Future Engagement: Major capital projects undertaken by Lambton County Library - including any new builds, renovations, alterations or adjustments to the number of libraries - should be informed by consultations with elected officials, municipal decision-makers, community partners and the public where appropriate.



Rec. #16 Library Signage & Awareness: Work with all municipal partners to update exterior and interior signage – incorporating the Lambton County Library brand for consistency – in order to clearly identify Lambton County Library locations and increase awareness of their existence among the public. Coordination with municipal facility design and wayfinding strategies (e.g. use of roadside signs, façade elements such as awnings and lighting, etc.) should also be pursued to direct people to libraries. With the support of municipal partners, the name of multi-use facilities that include a library alongside another civic service would be best to be renamed so that the Library is reflected in the building name (e.g. Port Franks Community Centre & Library, Clearwater Arena & Library).

Rec. #17 Alternative Browsing & Pick-up/Drop-off Service Points: Build upon the strength of coverage associated with existing libraries by exploring alternative library service points in strategic areas. This should include, but not be limited to, installing vending machines and/or holds lockers at the Warwick Community Hall as well as locations that may be subject to consolidation of space in Dawn-Euphemia and St. Clair (e.g. Wilkesport Community Centre, Port Lambton Community Hall, etc.). Monitor the experience of other library systems that are testing or have implemented Extended Access models to determine feasibility of this approach to increase library access to Lambton County residents.

Rec. #18 Storage Space: Explore opportunities to address storage needs at all Lambton County Library locations – through shelving, cabinetry or other means - in relation to functional constraints and costs of each branch.

Library-Specific Recommendations by Municipality

Each municipality in Lambton County has unique characteristics that influence the amount and type of library space required. The pages that follow articulate how the system-wide space requirement associated with growth-related needs can be distributed across each municipality along with recommendations to improve selected libraries so that they provide a modern and inclusive experience to all library users while increasing the potential for efficiencies to residents and Lambton County Library.

Investments will allow Lambton County Library to keep pace with growth-related needs and act as a catalyst to encourage non-municipal investment in urban and rural communities. Provision of sufficient and modern library space can support community revitalization efforts through business and employee attraction, spurring development of creative industries, and empowering residents with knowledge and skills required to succeed academically and professionally.

Municipality of Brooke-Alvinston

Rec. #19 Alvinston Library: Reconfigure the customer service desk at Alvinston Library to make better use of the existing floor space while adding glazed windows at the back of the branch and optimizing the basement to allow for more functional storage for equipment, supplies and other materials needed to support library operations.

Municipality of Lambton Shores

Rec. #20 Arkona Library: Engage the Municipality of Lambton Shores to discuss the feasibility of enhancing and gaining affordable access to at least one of the meeting rooms found in the Arkona Community Centre in an effort to create space for library programs and operations. Interior reconfiguration of the library space should also be undertaken with a focus on relocating the customer service desk and updating furniture, upgrading washrooms to be barrier-free, and creating an independent library entrance at a minimum.

- Rec. #21 Port Franks Library:** Complete an interior reconfiguration plan for Port Franks Library to determine the feasibility of increasing publicly useable space and enhancing comfort. At a minimum, explore the ability to open up the separated hallway corridor at the back of the library, re-locating the customer service desk and updating flooring, furniture and shelving units. A renovation of the exterior to provide greater visibility and connection to the park should be pursued.
- Rec. #22 Forest Library:** The staff room at Forest Library should be updated along with exploring opportunities to increase storage space and formalizing a second entranceway that connects the building to the pathway and gardens in the southern portion of the site. Additional landscaping and seating elements should also be integrated into the open space found behind the library.
- Rec. #23 Thedford Library:** Reconfigure the Thedford Library interior space to make more efficient use of space while improving the library user experience through comfortable seating and formalizing areas for study/collaboration. Improved visibility into the library from the Legacy Centre's interior and exterior areas – including community centre common areas and the library's front façade - should also be pursued.

City of Sarnia

- Rec. #24 Sarnia Library:** Carry out interior redevelopment and improvement projects at Sarnia Library that include but are not limited to creating a new ground floor meeting/program room, enhancing the makerspace, improving the teen area, creating a recording studio, formalizing the rear entrance, creating an enclosed outdoor program space adjacent to the children's area, reflecting local Indigenous culture, optimizing staff areas, and exploring food and beverage (e.g. café) services. Integration of CPTED or similar safety-oriented principles is recommended for interior and exterior areas including, but not limited to, eliminating concealed building niches, improving sightlines, use of appropriate lighting and upgrading landscape elements.

Rec. #25 Bright's Grove Library: The Joint Library Facilities Review supports past planning exercises and ongoing design work to redevelop Bright's Grove Library in a manner that provides 7,000 square feet of total library space as part of a community hub in conjunction with preservation of the heritage building for use by the Gallery in the Grove.

Village of Point Edward

Rec. #26 Point Edward Library: In line with Rec. #9, explore works required to address barrier-free accessibility constraints at Point Edward Library and carry out other functional and aesthetic improvements that will encourage more use. As a more ambitious plan, engage the Village of Point Edward to discuss potential replacement of the library with a new building once costs of accessibility and functional upgrades are better understood, along with any needs of the adjoining fire hall.

Village of Oil Springs

Rec. #27 Oil Springs Library: In line with Rec. #9, explore works required to address barrier-free accessibility constraints at Oil Springs Library including addition of ramps and/or a small elevator recognizing that the library's two levels are only accessible by stairway at present time.

Town of Plympton-Wyoming

Rec. #28 Camlachie Library: Reconstruct or expand Camlachie Library to provide a minimum total Gross Floor Area of 4,250 square feet in response to population growth in Plympton-Wyoming. Enter into discussions with Town Staff to understand if future investment would be better directed to: a) expansion of the current Camlachie Library eastwards to Camlachie Road; or b) potentially co-locating the library with the Camlachie Community Centre that could generate economies of scale in construction, maintenance and community programming.

Rec. #29 Wyoming Library: Carry out façade and interior improvements to Wyoming Library that focus on modernizing the library's aesthetic appeal, increasing visibility into the library, enhancing comfort through seating and work/study areas, and improving the functionality and amenity of the library's program room.

Township of St. Clair

Rec. #30 Corunna Library: In addition to accessibility improvements and ongoing building maintenance activities (including replacement of the exterior glass and soffit restoration) for Corunna Library, engage nearby commercial landowners to determine whether a limited number of parking spaces in their lots can be reserved for library users.

Rec. #31 Mooretown & Courtright Libraries: The Mooretown and Courtright Libraries are undersized spaces that do not offer a barrier-free or modern library experience. Lambton County Library should discuss replacement of these two libraries with the Township of St. Clair by consolidating their collective Gross Floor Areas into one new library located in either Mooretown or Courtright. Consideration may also be given to combining their collective floor areas with that of the Sombra and Port Lambton Libraries (see Rec. #31) to create one large library in a centralized area in proximity to the St. Clair Parkway.

Rec. #32 Sombra & Port Lambton Libraries: The Sombra and Port Lambton Libraries are undersized spaces that do not offer a barrier-free or modern library experience. Lambton County Library should discuss replacement of these two libraries with the Township of St. Clair by consolidating their collective Gross Floor Areas into one new library located in Sombra through a redevelopment or reconstruction project on the existing Sombra Library site. Consideration may also be given to combining their collective floor areas with that of the Mooretown and Courtright Libraries (see Rec. #30) to create one large library in a centralized area in proximity to the St. Clair Parkway.

Township of Warwick

Rec. #33 **Watford Library:** Consistent with the Township of Warwick Parks, Recreation, Tourism & Culture Master Plan and Watford Library Building Condition Assessment, engage the Township in the preparation of a redevelopment plan and reinvestment strategy for the Watford Library to address capital repairs, funding and improvements that enhance use of the library. A portion of the basement should be optimized for programming and more efficient storage to support library operations.

Township of Dawn-Euphemia

Rec. #34 **School Co-location Potential / Shetland & Wilkesport Library:** Engage local school boards to discuss feasibility of integrating a Medium Branch library within a school in southern Lambton County as a means to strengthen rural communities. A co-located library should replace the Shetland and Wilkesport Libraries that no longer offer a modern experience nor meaningfully advance space-related objectives of the Joint Library Facilities Review. If implemented, an alternative library service point should be installed at the Wilkesport Community Centre (also see Rec. #17 of the Joint Library Facilities Review).

Other Libraries

Rec. #35 **Inwood, Florence, Grand Bend, Petrolia, Brigden, and Corunna Libraries:** no major capital works are recommended apart from those associated with addressing barrier-free accessibility, state of good repair, improved signage and furnishings, and other broad facility design guidance identified in the Joint Library Facilities Review.

Estimated Capital Implications of the JLFR

The JLFR capital strategy takes a fiscally responsible approach by indexing investments to the rate of population growth while retaining the existing service level for library space. The strong coverage of libraries already established throughout Lambton County results in an achievable capital plan to the year 2031. Further, the JLFR investment/reinvestment strategy sets a foundation for higher operating efficiencies that increase the potential for a higher return on investment. Potential to improve fiscal sustainability and provide better value to library users can be attained by continuing to share capital and operating resources with partners, consolidating antiquated and duplicated library services into larger and higher quality branches, and reconfiguration of existing library interiors.

JLFR Recommendations carry a preliminary capital cost estimate of \$45 million (2022 dollars exclusive of land costs and escalations) that is primarily attributed to the improvement and/or expansion of existing libraries found in Lambton County, thereby focusing JLFR outcomes on reinvestment in existing community infrastructure.





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List of Acronyms Used

AODA	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
ARUPLO	Administrators of Rural-Urban Public Libraries of Ontario
FF&E	Furnishings, Fixtures and Equipment
GFA	Gross Floor Area
JLFR	Joint Library Facilities Review
LKDSB	Lambton Kent District School Board
OPL	Ontario Public Libraries


Standard Limitations

This Joint Library Facilities Review was prepared by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. ("Monteith Brown") and MJMA Architecture & Design ("MJMA") for Lambton County Library. This report is based on information provided to Monteith Brown that has not been independently verified.

The disclosure of any information contained in this report is the sole responsibility of Lambton County Library. The material in this report and all information relating to this activity reflect Monteith Brown and MJMA's judgment in light of the information available to us at the time of preparation of this report. Any use which a third party makes of this Report, or any reliance on or decisions to be made based on it, are the responsibility of such third parties. Monteith Brown and MJMA accept no responsibility for damages, if any, suffered by a third party as a result of decisions made or actions based on this report.

Section 1.0 Introduction





Section 1.0

Introduction

Lambton County Library (“the Library”) provides services at 25 locations that serve more than 128,000 people spread across 3,000 square kilometres¹ in 11 lower-tier municipalities throughout Lambton County. Responsibilities of the Library and its municipal partners are governed by a Division of Responsibilities agreement that dates back to 1989. Lambton County Library operates as a ‘County library system’ under the provincial *Public Libraries Act*.

This Section describes the purpose of the Joint Library Facilities Review (herein referred to as the “JLFR”) along with its methodology and the planning context in which the study has been prepared.

1.1 Purpose of the Review

The JLFR provides Lambton County and its municipal partners with an understanding of *how much* library space is required to meet community needs to the year 2031. In addition to the amount of space, the JLFR examines the *type* of space that is required along with a cursory review of the *organizational model* that supports library facilities shared with the municipalities, and future directions for *existing libraries*.

The JLFR originates from Strategic Action 1.10 of the Lambton County Cultural Services Division Strategic Plan that states “Undertake a third party review of library facilities to determine their suitability for meeting current and future service demands as public libraries and community hubs, and engage local municipalities to enhance awareness of facility standards and best practices.”²

¹ Statistics Canada 2021 Census

² County of Lambton. 2022. Lambton County Cultural Services Division Strategic Plan: 2022-2026. p.12

1.2 A Vision for Libraries in Lambton County

To guide the JLFR, a vision statement has been developed to reflect values and priorities for libraries expressed through the Cultural Services Strategic Plan (see Section 2.1), feedback received through current and past community engagement efforts (see Section 4.0), as well as best practices associated with modern and responsive library systems. Designed to be easily remembered by Library staff and the public, the JLFR vision expresses the type of experiences that Lambton County Library is aspiring to provide through all of its library branches.

Building Innovation, Connections & Creativity in Our Communities through Effective Use of Lambton County's Libraries.

The JLFR vision aligns with the Cultural Services Division's overarching vision statement that emphasizes innovation and creativity while recognizing feedback that points to libraries being a place where community connections are formed. Effective use of libraries implies a pursuit of operating efficiencies while providing intentional and responsive library services that help municipalities and the County fulfil their own progressive visions.

Please note that the JLFR vision is intended to guide directions associated within this report and that it is not intended to replace the vision articulated in the Cultural Services Strategic Plan or future Strategic Plans that may be prepared specifically for the Library.

HALF of Lambton residents surveyed visited a Lambton County Library branch in 2018 & 2019!

Of these people, 42% visited Lambton County Library at least once a month.

~Probe Research Inc.

1.3 Public Libraries are Essential to Success

The public library remains fundamentally important to Canada's urban and rural communities. The modern library stays true to its roots as a place of learning, albeit in a much different form than even 20 years ago. Today, public libraries continue to empower people through knowledge while being positioned as community hubs where people come together to exchange ideas, nurture creativity and incubate innovation.

Canada's public library systems have demonstrated remarkable resiliency over time, constantly evolving and innovating in step with world-wide advances in technology. The transformative change among modern libraries is driven by broad technological and societal trends. Canada's continued shift towards knowledge-based economies, the integration of internet-based activities into daily life, and development of portable technologies such as Wi-Fi, eBooks, tablets and smart phones results in libraries helping people access and navigate technology in their personal and work lives.

Equally important are social trends emphasizing creativity, social justice, collaboration, sociability, community connection and lifelong learning. The reliance on libraries for recovery from pandemics and economic downturns – the COVID-19 pandemic is a noteworthy example – has demonstrated that the public library is an essential community service for many people. These technological and social changes are unfolding and interacting in ways that are affecting the library user experience, library collections, community relationships and, in turn, physical space.

Lambton County Library has a deep understanding of how its libraries serve vastly different needs of people living across Lambton's urban and rural communities. The Library has worked with its municipal partners to deliver services in a multitude of formats ranging from large, stand-alone branches (e.g. Sarnia Library), integrated models that are co-located with halls and community centres (e.g. Florence Library), to smaller branches oriented to rural outreach (e.g. Wilkesport Library). By working with its lower-tier municipalities, a resource-sharing approach has allowed the retention of library services notwithstanding the large geographic territory and highly dispersed population served by the Library.

1.4 Study Methodology

Lambton County Library initiated the JLFR in July 2022 with the assistance of Monteith Brown Planning Consultants Ltd. and MJMA Architecture & Design. The JLFR was developed in accordance with a Terms of Reference prepared by the County and overseen by Library staff.

The JLFR is built upon background research, a review of Lambton County Library reports and past studies, as well as consultations with municipal, school board and Indigenous representatives. Please note that consultations with the general public did not form part of the study scope, however, Lambton County Library anticipates that future feedback opportunities will be provided for the public, stakeholders, municipal administrators and elected officials as it implements the JLFR’s facility development and renewal strategies.

Space assessments have been carried out in consideration of generally accepted standards and data published by provincial library bodies such as Ontario Public Libraries Monitoring & Accreditation Council and the Administrators of Rural-Urban Public Libraries of Ontario (ARUPLO) in conjunction with Lambton County Library’s historic levels of service and past practices.

The use of several inputs in the planning process allows the JLFR to consider provincial and national trends and best practices in providing library space while reflecting the unique characteristics and priorities of people living in Lambton County. In this way the JLFR’s recommendations have considered research, current and past consultations, and assessment methodologies as an integrated set rather than exclusively relying upon any one input or tool. A high-level review of the ongoing suitability of the 1989 Division of Responsibilities agreement with the lower-tier municipalities falls within the scope of work.

The JLFR’s planning horizon spans the years 2022 to 2031.



Knitting Program at Bright’s Grove Library



Mobile Makerspace (Button Maker) at Watford Library



Video Gaming in the Library

Library Space Calculations

Floor area figures available through Lambton County articulate Net Floor Area. To allow for standardized comparisons with peer library systems, MJMA Architecture & Design calculated Gross Floor Area (GFA) for each library based on floor plans supplied by the County.³ As the buildings housing libraries span different eras of construction and are owned by 11 different municipalities and school boards, data quality differs. Therefore, GFA figures contained herein should be considered to be approximate and should be confirmed through future studies.

Lambton County Library Headquarters in Wyoming centralizes corporate administrative functions but does not provide space for public collections or programming unlike the Urban and Rural Libraries. It is also shared with other County Departments and thus for the purposes of the JLFR, administrative space at Library HQ is excluded from the system-wide GFA.

County Population Forecast

The 2021 Census records Lambton County's population at 128,154 persons exclusive of net census undercoverage. Actualized rates of population growth have far exceeded that forecasted through the County of Lambton Official Plan which identified a year 2031 population range between 111,367 and 122,162 persons. The County of Lambton's Planning & Development Services Department notes that Lambton's population is on track to rebound from past declines and that a number of municipalities are also rebounding or have been relatively stable.⁴

The JLFR recognizes that the County-approved growth forecast has deviated from when it was prepared in 2010 and that a number of lower-tier municipalities have updated their own growth forecasts in light of 2011 and 2016 Census data to reflect their actual growth trends. In order to better reflect population totals across Lambton County, growth forecasts that have been prepared by lower-tier municipalities within the past 5 years

³ Net Floor Area typically refers to the sum of all usable floor area to the inside face of exterior walls. Gross Floor Area typically refers to the sum of all building areas to the outside face of exterior walls.

⁴ County of Lambton Infrastructure & Development Services Division. Report to Chair and Committee Members. Preliminary Census Data – Population for County and Local Municipalities. April 20, 2022.

are used by the JLFR while continuing to rely on County-approved forecasts for municipalities that have not carried out their own updates.

Should the County of Lambton population growth forecast be updated within the planning period of this JLFR, **Lambton County Library is strongly encouraged to revisit recommendations contained herein** to ensure they remain relevant or whether adjustments are required.

Note about COVID-19

The JLFR was prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic when libraries were closed for extended periods of time in 2020 and 2021, and operating under significantly different conditions than in the past. JLFR assessments are based on a number of pre-pandemic variables under the assumption that historical usage and preferences will return once the pandemic is over. COVID-19 will have lasting impacts on the way in which libraries are designed, operated and used. The JLFR recognizes the impacts of the pandemic but notes ongoing monitoring of post-pandemic trends will be required as there continues to be a degree of uncertainty for the future at the time of writing this report.

Study Limitations & Exclusions

The JLFR is primarily focused upon capital-related items pertaining to the built infrastructure that supports Lambton County Library. As such, the scope of work is largely relegated to defining the amount and types of library space required along with how to provide it. Apart from a cursory review of the Division of Responsibilities agreement, the JLFR's scope does not include operational assessments such as staffing or organizational reviews, defining hours of operation, nor does it include the preparation of operating policies and practices to guide the delivery of library services.

Further, the JLFR's scope of work did not include broad public consultations or engagement, instead relying on community feedback collected by the Cultural Services Division in 2019 as part of a Community Needs Assessment Research. Implementation of JLFR recommendations after this study's completion may re-engage the general public and community stakeholders on library or topic-specific matters carried out in the future.



Section 2.0 About Lambton County Library



A large rectangular sign mounted on a brick wall. The sign is divided into two horizontal sections. The top section has a white background with a stylized sailboat logo on the left and the text "LAMBTON COUNTY LIBRARY" in bold, black, sans-serif font. Below the logo, it says "COUNTY OF LAMBTON". The bottom section has a white background with the word "Sarnia" in a large, bold, black font. Below "Sarnia", it reads "124 Christina Street South, Sarnia, ON" and "www.lclibrary.ca 519-337-3291". On the right side of the bottom section is the coat of arms of Lambton County.

LAMBTON COUNTY
LIBRARY

COUNTY OF
LAMBTON

Sarnia

124 Christina Street South, Sarnia, ON

www.lclibrary.ca 519-337-3291





Section 2.0

About Lambton County Library

This Section presents selected information about Lambton County Library including its organizational structure, the number and size of libraries it operates, library funding, and certain indicators of library use such as the number of visits, active library cardholders, circulation and borrowing,

2.1 The Library's Organization

Under the Public Libraries Act, public libraries in Ontario must be operated under the management and control of either a Public, Union or County library board. The Library operates as a County Library which is formed under Section 7 of the *Public Libraries Act* that states:

“Where resolutions of the councils of at least two-thirds of the municipalities forming part of a county for municipal purposes request that the county establish a county library, the council of the county may by by-law establish a county library for those municipalities.”

~ *Public Libraries Act, RSO 1990, c. P.44, 7(1)*

Unlike most library systems that appoint citizens and elected officials to a library board, Lambton County Library is governed by County Council. This is due to the Library's unique position of operating as an internal department of The Corporation of the County of Lambton by virtue of an exemption to the Public Libraries Act granted to Lambton County in 1994.⁵

Under its current model, in operation now for nearly 30 years, the County of Lambton has held responsibility for delivering library services on behalf of the 11 lower-tier municipalities. Library services are administered through the County of Lambton Cultural Services Division by way of the Libraries Department which is publicly branded and referred to as Lambton County Library. Lower-tier municipalities continue to own or lease the land and buildings where library services are provided, by way of the 1989 Division of Responsibilities Agreement.

⁵ Province of Ontario. Bill Pr113: An Act respecting the County of Lambton, R.S.O. 1994.

2.2 Lambton County Cultural Services Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan for the Cultural Services Division⁶ articulates the vision, mission and values guiding its actions along with a set of strategic directions that specifically articulate the actions the Division must take to the year 2026.

A Vision for Culture in Lambton

Lambton County is acknowledged as a community where creativity, innovation and culture contribute to a thriving community, and diversity and tradition are celebrated.

Cultural Services Division Mandate

To advance cultural development in the County of Lambton for economic, social, educational and community benefit.

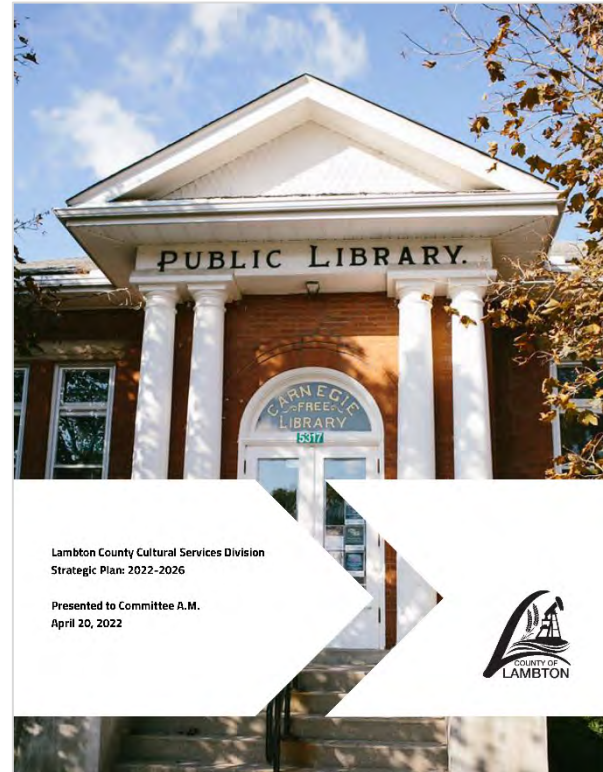
Cultural Services Division Strategic Directions

- Enhancing Access, Inclusion & Community Engagement
- Creating & Delivering Great Experiences
- Developing Partnerships that Increase Participation in Culture
- Maximizing the Value of Collections & Spaces
- Building Cultural Capacity & Raising Lambton’s Profile
- Managing Resources Efficiently & Effectively

Lambton County Library aims to support the vision, mission and values of the Cultural Services Division through its Departmental mandate. Modern libraries embody many aspects articulated in the Division’s vision as places where creativity, innovation, heritage and culture, and diversity are specifically promoted. For Lambton County Library to be able to meet its objectives, it will require buy-in from its partner municipalities and school board in order to collaboratively fund and deliver the experiences being sought within each library branch.

This JLFR has been prepared in response to Strategic Action 1.10 of the Cultural Services Strategic Plan.

⁶ County of Lambton. 2022. Lambton County Cultural Services Division Strategic Plan: 2022-2026.



“Undertake a third party review of library facilities to determine their suitability for meeting current and future service demands as public libraries and community hubs, and engage local municipalities to enhance awareness of facility standards and best practices (ARUPLO Guidelines for Rural / Urban Public Library Systems).”

**~ Strategic Action 1.10
Cultural Services Division Strategic Plan**

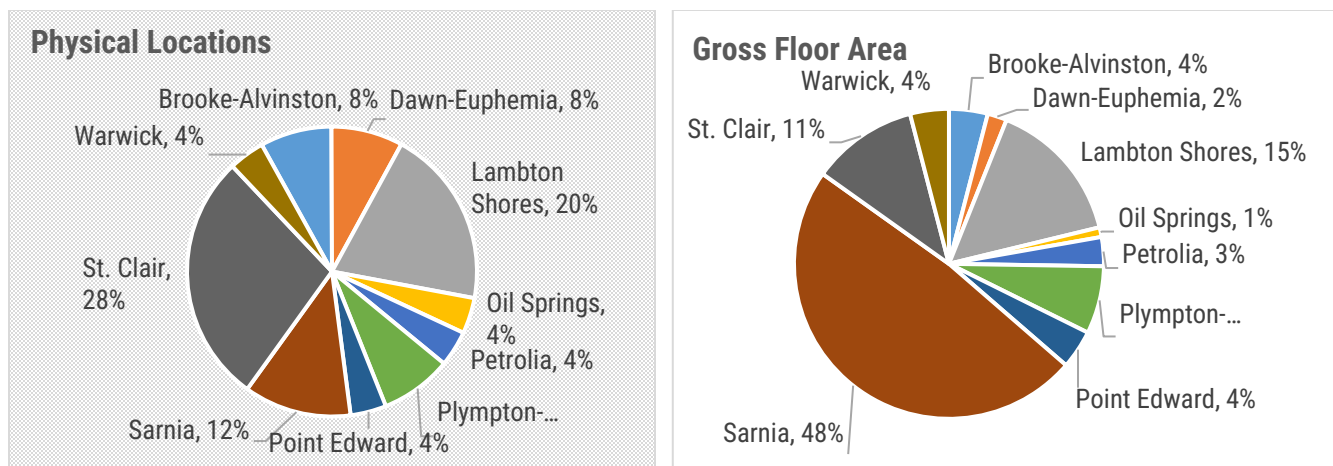
2.3 Existing Supply & Distribution of Library Space

The 25 libraries operated by Lambton County are illustrated in Map 1 while the 87,817 square feet of total library space is distributed across each municipality as shown in Table 1. Allocations by physical locations and space (Figure 1) are generally dictated by the geographic size of each municipality along with their total populations and population densities. For example, St. Clair’s seven libraries are home to 28% of all of Lambton County Library branches but contain 11% of the total library GFA; conversely, Sarnia’s three libraries equate to 12% of physical locations but account for nearly half of Lambton County Library’s total GFA.

Table 1: Library Locations & GFA by Municipality

Municipality	Population	Land Area	Libraries	Total GFA
Brooke-Alvinston	2,359	311 km ²	2	3,704 ft ²
Dawn-Euphemia	1,968	445 km ²	2	2,031 ft ²
Enniskillen	2,825	338 km ²	0	0 ft ²
Lambton Shores	11,876	330 km ²	5	13,269 ft ²
Oil Springs	647	8 km ²	1	1,015 ft ²
Petrolia	6,013	12 km ²	1	2,325 ft ²
Plympton-Wyoming	8,308	319 km ²	2	5,597 ft ²
Point Edward	1,930	3 km ²	1	3,789 ft ²
Sarnia	72,047	164 km ²	3	42,562 ft ²
St. Clair	14,659	618 km ²	7	10,071 ft ²
Warwick	3,641	290 km ²	1	3,454 ft ²
			25	87,817 ft²

Figure 1: Distribution of Physical Locations and Library Space by Municipality



Notes for Table and Figure: Population and land area derived from 2021 Census. Allocations are based on 25 branch locations providing 87,817 square feet in total

Map 1: Lambton County Library Branch Locations



Table 2: Lambton County Library Branches by Municipality & Size

Municipality	Branch Name	Address	Branch Size
Brooke-Alvinston	Alvinston Library	3251 River Street	2,508 ft ²
	Inwood Library	6504 James Street	1,196 ft ²
	Sub-Total: Brooke-Alvinston		3,704 ft²
Dawn-Euphemia	Florence Library	6213 Mill Street	1,153 ft ²
	Shetland Library	1279 Shetland Road	878 ft ²
	Sub-Total: Dawn-Euphemia		2,031 ft²
Enniskillen	Not Applicable	Sub-Total: Enniskillen	0 ft²
Lambton Shores	Arkona Library	16 Smith Street	794 ft ²
	Forest Library	61 King Street West	4,596 ft ²
	Grand Bend Library	15 Gill Road	4,058 ft ²
	Port Franks Library	9997 Port Franks Road	930 ft ²
	Theford Library	16 Allen Street	2,891 ft ²
	Sub-Total: Lambton Shores		13,269 ft²
Oil Springs	Oil Springs Library	4596 Oil Springs Line	1,015 ft ²
Sub-Total: Oil Springs		1,015 ft²	
Petrolia	Petrolia Library	4200 Petrolia Line	2,325 ft ²
Sub-Total: Petrolia		2,325 ft²	
Plympton-Wyoming	Camlachie Library	6745 Camlachie Road	2,508 ft ²
	Wyoming Library	536 Niagara Street	3,089 ft ²
	Sub-Total: Plympton-Wyoming		5,597 ft²
Point Edward	Point Edward Library	220 Michigan Avenue	3,789 ft ²
Sub-Total: Point Edward		3,789 ft²	
Sarnia	Sarnia Library	124 Christina Street South	38,324 ft ²
	Bright's Grove Library Mall Library*	2618 Hamilton Road	1,787 ft ²
		1362 Lambton Mall Road	2,451 ft ²
	Sub-Total: Sarnia		42,562 ft²
St. Clair	Brigden Library	1540 Duncan Street	2,563 ft ²
	Corunna Library	417 Lyndoch Street	2,325 ft ²
	Courtright Library	1533 Fourth Street	1,894 ft ²
	Mooretown Library	1166 Emily Street	299 ft ²
	Port Lambton Library	507 Stoddard Street	748 ft ²
	Sombra Library	3536 St. Clair Parkway	1,380 ft ²
	Wilkesport Library	1349 Wilkesport Line	862 ft ²
	Sub-Total: St. Clair		10,071 ft²
Warwick	Watford Library	5317 Nauvoo Road	3,454 ft ²
Sub-Total: Warwick		3,454 ft²	
Lambton County Library Total			87,817 ft²

* A new 4,012 square foot library at Clearwater Arena is planned to replace Mallroad Library in 2024.

Notes: Branch sizes reflect estimated GFA. Figures are approximate and should be confirmed through future studies.

2.4 Library Branch Ownership & Configuration

Lambton County Library does not own any buildings in which it operates. Library services are delivered out of buildings that are the property of lower-tier municipalities and Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) LKDSB.

Lambton County Library operates its branches using three configurations with respect to the type of space provided:

1. Stand-Alone Libraries
2. Integrated Libraries with Community Centres / Halls
3. Shared School Libraries

Stand-alone and Integrated Libraries are owned by the lower-tier municipalities who, under the 1989 Division of Responsibilities, carry out and fund all major asset management activities that ensure state of good repair along with exterior maintenance such as grass cutting and snow removal. Lambton County Library is responsible for direct operational costs associated with the delivery of library services, purchase of library materials, furniture and equipment, as well as minor repairs. Shared School Libraries operate using a similar set of responsibilities. Responsibilities of each party under the current agreements are further detailed in Section 5.2.

As a result, Lambton County Library works with 11 separate entities – 10 municipalities plus LKDSB – to coordinate asset management and other activities that support the delivery of library services. This requires considerable coordination between different local governments in terms of communication and budgeting that support the funding and maintenance of buildings that house libraries.

Having almost a dozen building owners has led to substantially different design specifications and amenities provided at each library. The most notable difference is the size of libraries which range from less than 300 square feet in the case of Mooretown Library to over 38,000 square feet at Sarnia Library. Excluding the latter that skews comparisons, the average branch size is 1,600 square feet which is a small footprint for modern libraries that deliver a mix of services through collections, technology, programming and gathering space.

Urban & Rural Libraries

Lambton County Library branches can be characterized as “Urban Libraries” and “Rural Libraries” based on the land-related characteristics of the municipalities that they serve. Urban Libraries in Sarnia and Point Edward serve large urban populations in built-up areas that are accessible by private vehicle, public transportation, and within walking or cycling distance. These libraries are predominantly located along major transportation corridors (Bright’s Grove Library is the exception) and are in proximity to residential, retail and commercial, and institutional land uses. Sarnia Library is by far the largest branch in the system at over 38,000 square feet while the three other Urban Libraries range in size from 1,787 square feet in Bright’s Grove to 3,789 square feet in Point Edward.

Libraries in the rural municipalities are service points for highly dispersed populations living across a large geographic area. Most are located in designated settlement areas of their respective municipalities though the land use characteristics of these settlements can be vastly different; for example, Corunna and Forest Libraries are situated in built-up settlements while Inwood, Shetland and Wilkesport are located in smaller residential outposts. The design characteristics of Rural Libraries are vastly different, ranging in size from less than 300 square feet in Mooretown to nearly 4,600 square feet in Forest. The Rural Libraries are co-located with recreation centres, shared with other partners such as childcare and seniors’ centres, or housed in stand-alone structures dedicated by their municipal owners for library use.

2.5 Library Funding

Lambton County Library's operating expenditures were \$7.4 million in 2021. Funding of library systems is set out under the authority of the *Public Libraries Act* that indicates an agreement between county and municipal governments will dictate the terms of building and operating libraries. As permitted by the Act, Lambton County Library generates 91% of its operating revenues through taxation, amounting to approximately \$6.7 million in 2021. The Library's remaining operating revenues are derived from printing and photocopier services, grants and donations, and selected other services. Fines and fees historically represented a nominal portion of the operating budget; the Library eliminated late fees for overdue materials effective March 2022 in line with the practice employed by progressive library systems. Provincial funding represents a small portion of revenues as the annual operating grant provided to libraries has been unchanged in decades.

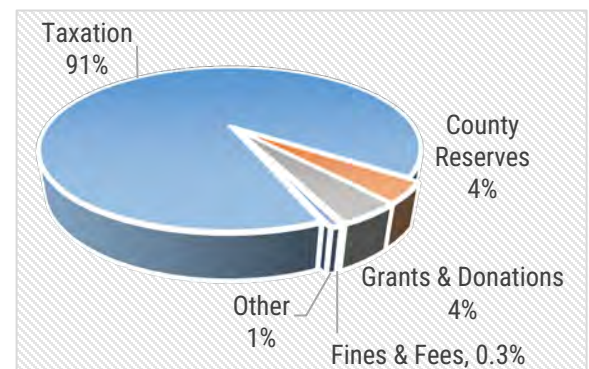
Lambton County Library's local operating funding (excluding provincial funding and other revenues) amounts to \$54.71 per person. Compared to other County library systems in Ontario, Lambton County's local operating funding is slightly above (+12%) the benchmark average of \$48.81. Wellington County Library provides the highest local operating funding at \$72.93 per person while Essex County Library is the lowest at \$32.34 per person.

In addition to the operating budget, the buildings in which branches are housed are owned by the municipalities. Capital funding is primarily derived from the building owner depending on whether it relates to asset management (e.g. lifecycle repair) or capital improvement projects. Eligible projects may be funded through municipal Development Charges where they are in effect and levied in accordance with provincial legislation.

Public Libraries Act, RSO 1990, c. P.44

- 7(4) An agreement under subsection (3) shall specify what proportion of the cost of the establishment, operation and maintenance of the county library shall be paid by the county and the single-tier municipality, respectively.
- 26(1) The amount estimated by a county library board to meet its operating costs...shall be included in the amounts to be provided by the county under clause 289 (1) (d) of the Municipal Act, 2001.
- 26(1.1) The amount mentioned in subsection (1) shall form part of the general upper-tier levy of the county, unless not all of the municipalities forming part of the county...participate in the county library, in which case the amount shall form part of a special upper-tier levy of the county that shall be levied in accordance with section 311 of the Municipal Act."

Figure 2: Lambton County Library Revenues, 2021



Source: Lambton County Library

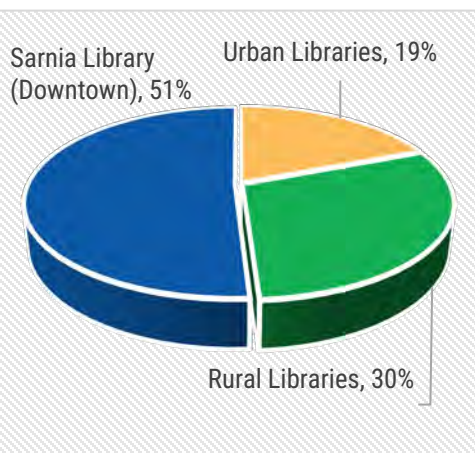
2.6 Library Use Indicators

Visits to Lambton County Branches

Lambton County Library received nearly 12,000 visits to its branches during a typical week in 2019,⁷ the last year before branches were closed for extended periods due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The five most visited branches in 2019 were:

1. Sarnia Library – 6,037 average weekly visits
2. Mallroad (Sarnia) – 1,456 average weekly visits
3. Bright’s Grove (Sarnia) – 587 average weekly visits
4. Forest (Lambton Shores) – 583 average weekly visits
5. Grand Bend (Lambton Shores) – 551 average weekly visits

Figure 3: Share of Average Weekly Visits by Type of Branch, 2019



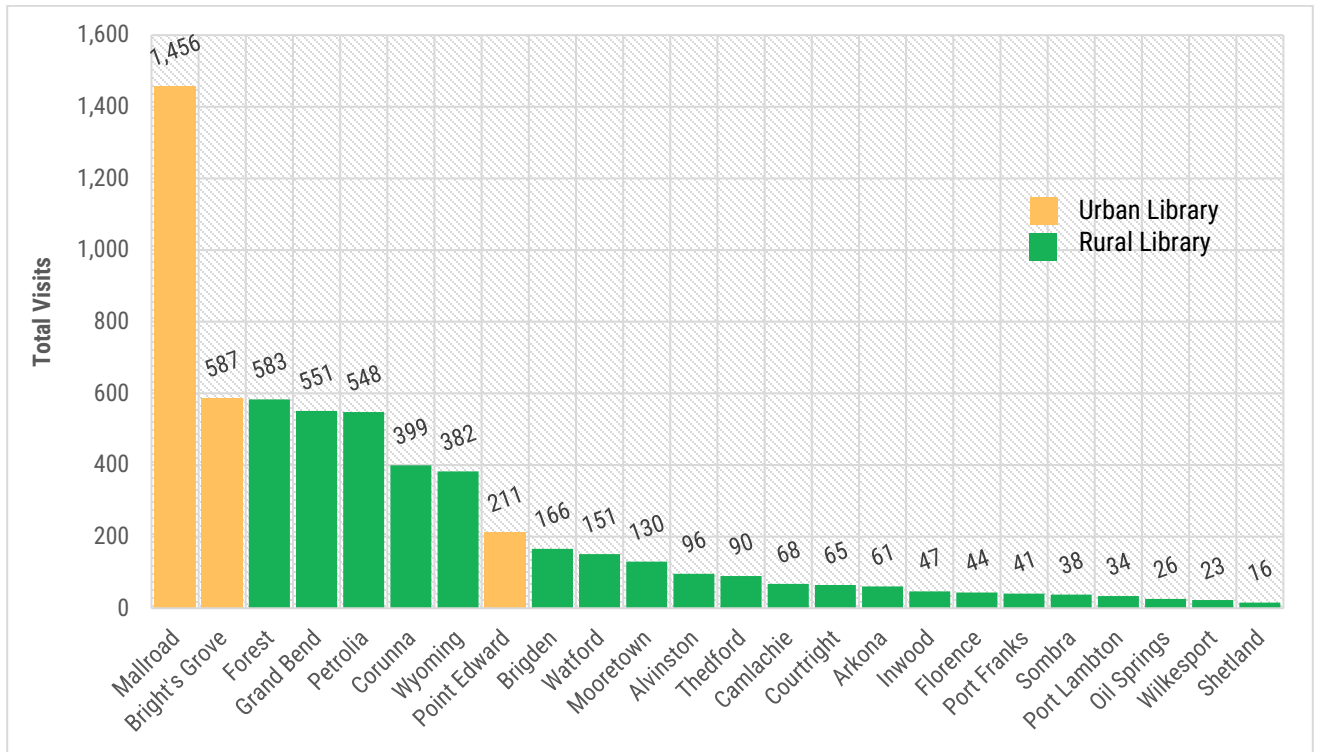
More than half of typical weekly visits across the library system were directed to Sarnia Library while the three remaining Urban Libraries (Point Edward, Mallroad and Bright’s Grove) accounted for roughly one out of every five system-wide visits. Rural Libraries generated 30% of in-person visits to Lambton County Library in a given week.

In-person visitation totals are often a function of two primary factors: a) the size of the catchment area population where highly populated areas increase the likelihood of attracting more users; and b) the size of the library space as larger libraries offer a more comfortable user experience and can provide a greater range of materials and programs. As such, measuring the number of visits per floor area provides an indication of the intensity being placed on a library branch.

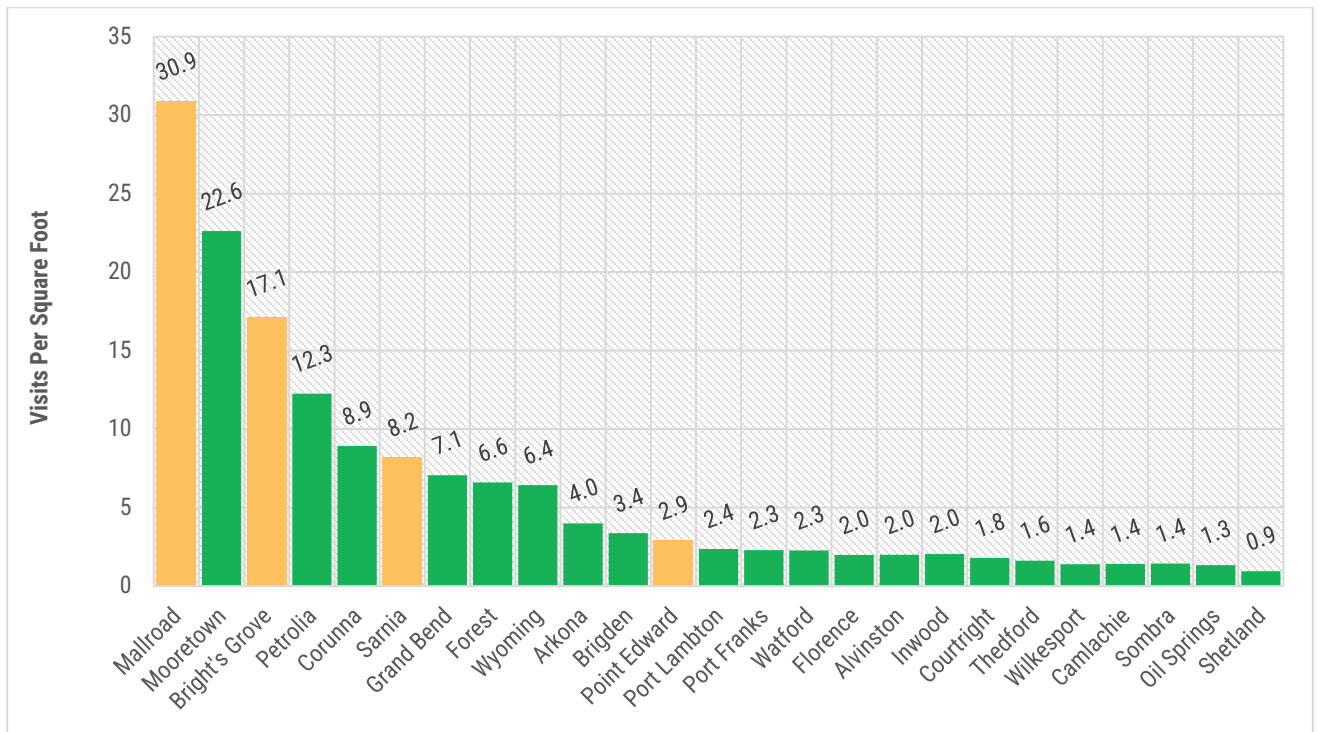
Figure 4 shows that the 31 visits per square foot at Mallroad Library and Mooretown Library are the highest rates in Lambton County; however, Mooretown is highly skewed by virtue of being the smallest library in the system at less than 300 square feet in size. Comparatively, Point Edward’s total visitation was in the top ten but its larger floor area absorbed this intensity as demonstrated by the 2.6 visits per square foot.

⁷ In-person visits are based on manual counts conducted for one week in November which Lambton County Library considers to reflect an average level of use throughout the year. Annual counts are not available as person-counters are installed only at Sarnia Library.

Figure 4: Typical Weekly In-Person Visits by Branch, 2019



Note: Sarnia Library's 6,037 weekly visits are excluded for graphing purposes



Note: as actual visitor counts are not recorded over the course of the year (except for Sarnia Library), visits per square foot are based on the manual weekly count in November and multiplied by 52 weeks of the year.

Cardholders

Lambton County Library's database recorded 16,700 active cardholders⁸ in 2021. Nearly half of active cardholders reside in Sarnia while Lambton Shores and St. Clair also have notable numbers (Figure 5).

In terms of the Library's ability to reach the population it serves, Figure 6 illustrates the number of active cardholders as a percentage of the municipalities' total population that they live in. While Sarnia has the largest number of active library cardholders, these individuals represent 11% of that city's population. By comparison, 22% of Lambton Shores' population have used their library card in the past two years and speaks to the Library's success in engaging that community to use library services. Oil Springs and Dawn-Euphemia have the lowest uptake for library services with just 4% and 6% of their respective populations being an active cardholder.

The number of active cardholders and their market penetration is a function of many factors including the number and quality of library facilities in their community, the type of collections and library services offered, hours of operation and more. Nevertheless, active cardholders can indicate where demand for certain library services is strong within the Library's territory.



Watford Library, Warwick



Camlachie Library, Plympton-Wyoming

⁸ The Library defines active cardholders in accordance with Provincial terminology and is reflective of a cardholder borrowing an item over the last 12 month period.

Figure 5: Number of Cardholders by Municipality, 2022

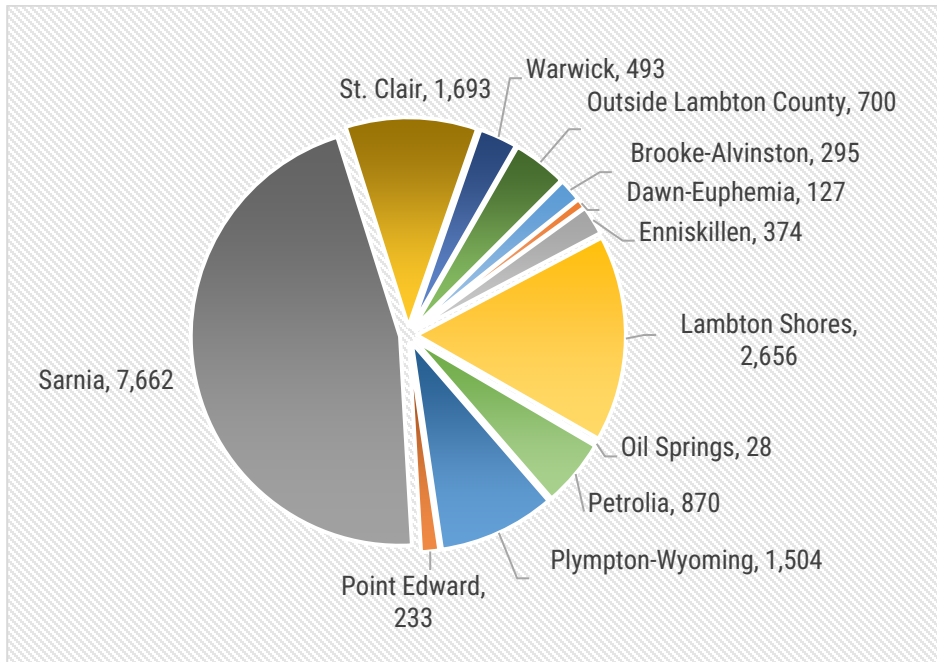
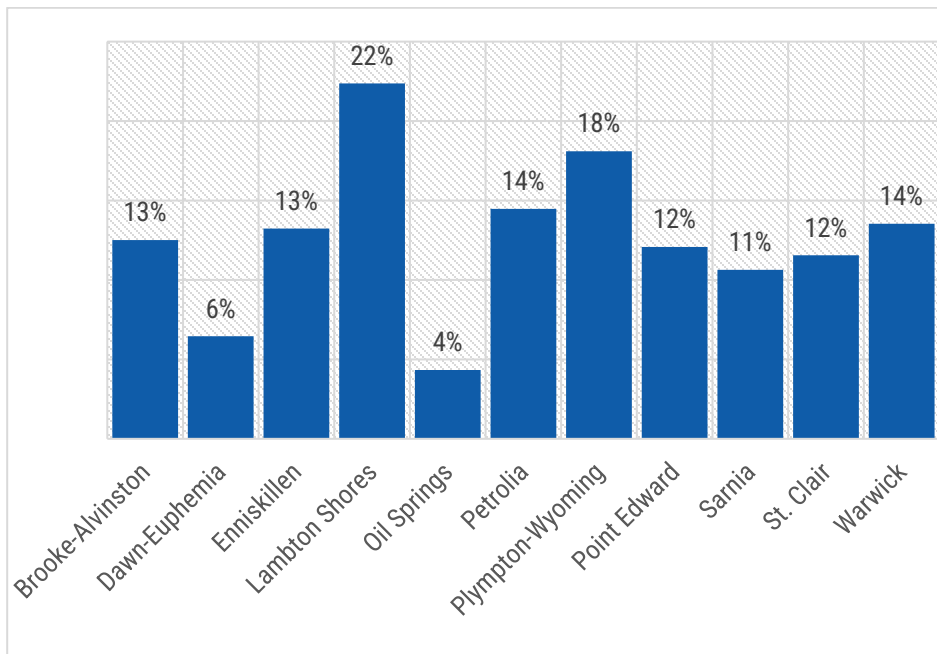


Figure 6: Active Cardholders as a Percentage of Municipal Population, 2022



Source: Lambton County Library

Circulation & Borrowing

Lambton County Library reported over 257,000 items in its collection and provides access to over 1 million items when including music and video streaming. Electronic materials continue to grow in use, particularly in response to pandemic-related factors. Library users borrowed more than 334,000 physical materials in 2021 including books, video games, movies and music; this was significantly below 2019 borrowing of 963,000 physical items as a result of COVID-19.⁹

Circulation can provide an indication of how much space is required to house library collections at the system-wide level and within a given branch; higher rates of circulation may suggest higher levels of demand for physical items. Lambton County Library's 2019 circulation was strong with physical items borrowed an average of 2.2 times each during that year (also referred to as the turnover rate).

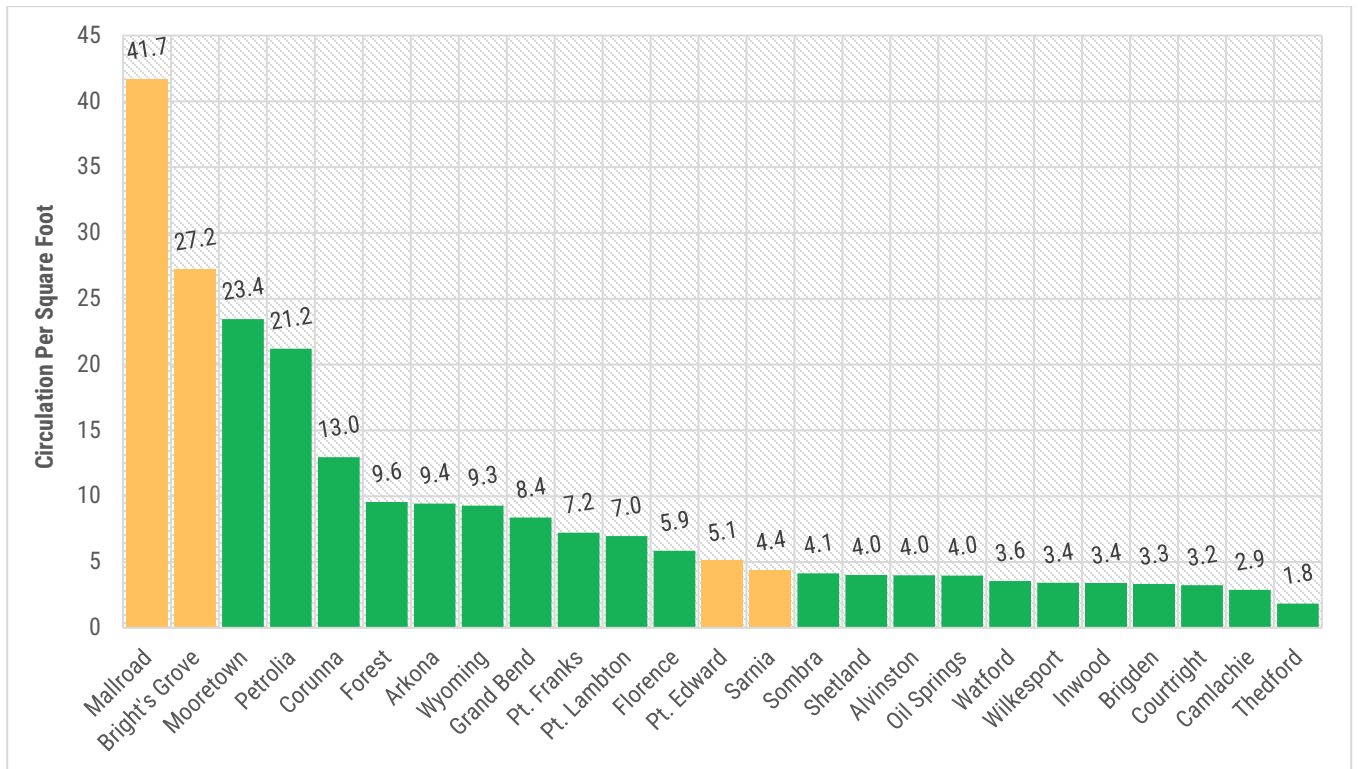
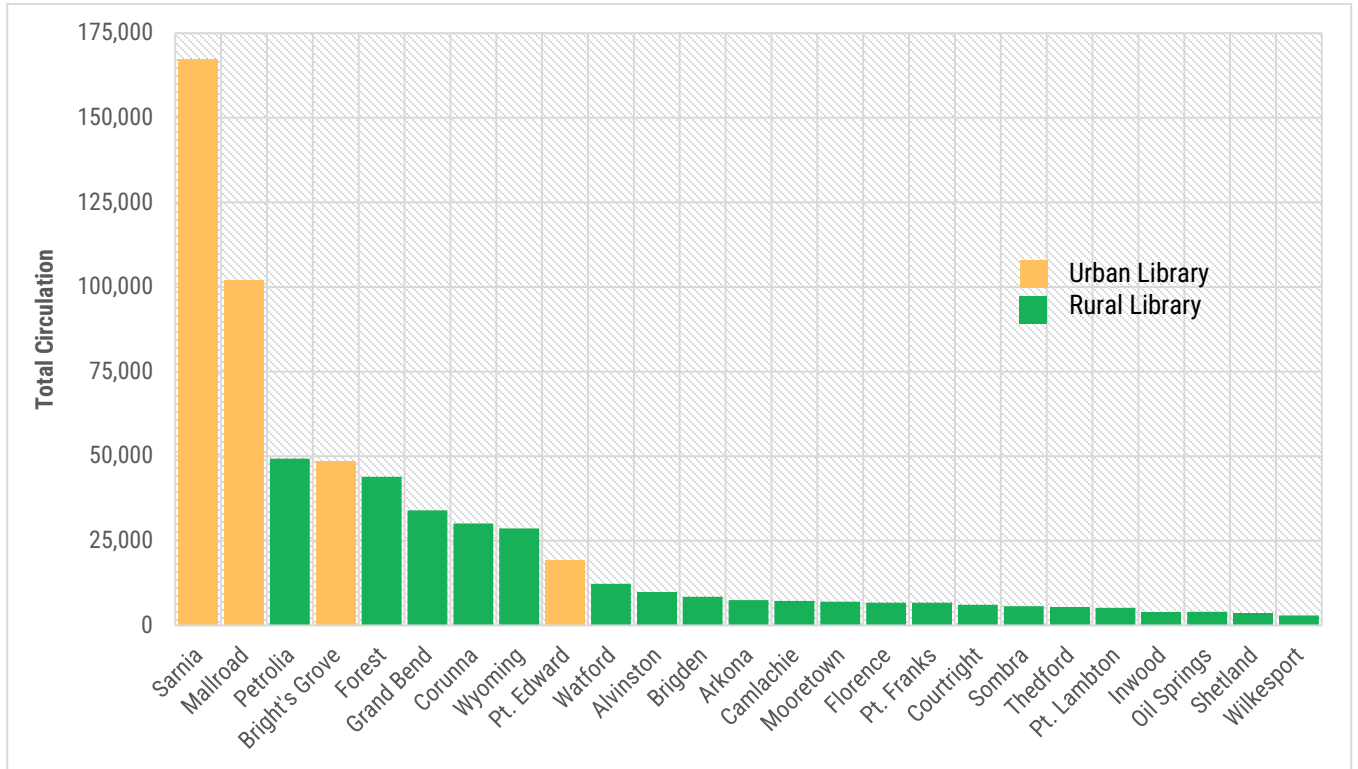
Figure 7 illustrates that branches located in the City of Sarnia had the highest pre-pandemic circulation rates, accounting for 50% of all borrowing in 2019. The top circulating branches that year were:

1. Sarnia Library – 167,500 items
2. Mallroad (Sarnia) – 102,000 items
3. Petrolia Library – 49,500 items
4. Bright's Grove (Sarnia) – 48,500 items
5. Forest (Lambton Shores) – 44,000 items

To provide a basis for comparison, the system-wide median circulation per branch was 7,245 items; use of an average circulation figure is skewed by the significant difference between libraries in Sarnia and those in rural municipalities.

⁹ Ontario Public Library Statistics, 2019-2021

Figure 7: Pre-Pandemic Circulation by Branch, 2019



Source: Lambton County Library

Borrowing can also be analyzed on a square foot basis to offer insights into the level of intensity associated with circulation but also allows comparisons between branches to be standardized. Borrowed items across the Lambton County system results in a 2019 average rate of 11.0 circulating items per square foot. Direct comparison between libraries should be interpreted cautiously due to the very wide range of library sizes in the Lambton County system. If excluding libraries whose GFA is below 1,000 square feet and would otherwise skew the average, the top five circulating branches on a square foot basis in 2019 consisted of:

1. Mallroad (Sarnia) – 41.7 items per square foot
2. Bright's Grove (Sarnia) – 27.2 items per square foot
3. Petrolia – 21.2 items per square foot
4. Corunna (St. Clair) – 13.0 items per square foot
5. Forest (Lambton Shores) – 9.6 items per square foot

Hours of Operation

In addition to catchment area populations and floor space provided, a library's hours of operation can influence the degree of use. Libraries operating with more hours open to the public creates the potential for greater usage relative to libraries that are open fewer hours.

Lambton County Library has an approved Hours of Operation Policy in place that guides how many hours its libraries are to be open to the public. The Policy seeks to follow ARUPLO Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems in consideration to the financial and staffing resources available to the Library as well as the unique needs of each community served by a library branch.¹⁰ The ARUPLO Guidelines establish targets for hours of operation for four categories of libraries based on size and catchment areas.

¹⁰ Lambton County Library Policy Manual. Branch Hours of Operation Policy. Approved by County of Lambton Council on September 5, 2020.

As shown in Table 3, ARUPLO targets for hours open are met at 11 of Lambton County Library’s branches while the remaining 14 branches - or 56% of locations - are open less than the number of hours recommended by ARUPLO. Lambton County Library assigns the highest hours of operation to branches located in Sarnia at an average of 60 open hours per week. Rural Libraries are open an average of 12 hours per week (Dawn-Euphemia and Oil Springs) to 35 hours per week (Warwick) with the exception of Petrolia that is open 65 hours per week.

Figure 8: Average Weekly Hours of Operation by Municipality

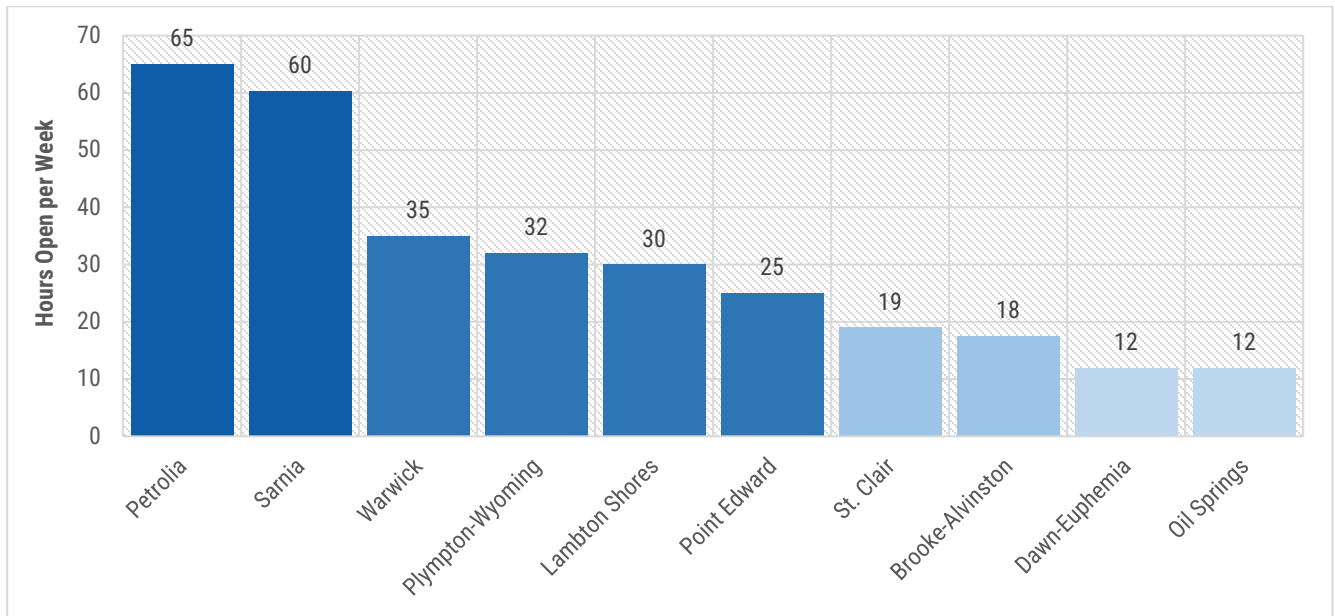


Table 3: Hours of Operation in Relation to ARUPLO Guidelines

ARUPLO Classification	Rec. Hours per Week	Lambton County Libraries that Meet or Exceed ARUPLO Standard	Lambton County Libraries that are Below ARUPLO Standard
Small Branches (2,500 to 5,000 ft ²)	20 to 25	--	Arkona, Camlachie, Courtright, Florence, Inwood, Port Franks, Mooretown, Oil Springs, Port Lambton, Shetland, Sombra, Thedford, Wilkesport
Medium Branches (5,000 to 10,000 ft ²)	25 to 45	Brigden, Corunna, Grand Bend, Point Edward, Watford, Wyoming	Alvinston
Large Branches (10,000 to 35,000 ft ²)	45 to 65	Bright’s Grove, Forest, Petrolia	--
Urban Branches (35,000+ ft ²)	65+	Sarnia Library, Mallroad	--

Note: Certain branch classifications differ from ARUPLO Guidelines based on Lambton County Library’s internal categorization practices

In terms of ARUPLO Guidelines for hours of operation in each municipality:

- **Brooke-Alvinston:** both libraries operate below the guideline.
- **Dawn-Euphemia:** both libraries operate below the guideline.
- **Lambton Shores:** two libraries operate above the guideline and three libraries operate below the guideline.
- **Oil Springs:** its library operates below the guideline.
- **Petrolia:** its library operates above the guideline.
- **Plympton-Wyoming:** one library operates above the guideline and one library operates below the guideline.
- **Point Edward:** its library operates in line with the guideline.
- **Sarnia:** all three libraries operate above the guideline.
- **St. Clair:** one library operates above the guideline, one library operates in line with the guideline, and five libraries are below the guideline.
- **Warwick:** its library operates above the guideline.

Please note that establishing the hours of operation for each branch is not included as part of the JLFR scope; therefore, the above is presented for contextual information as it relates to indicators of library use within a given municipality.

Section 3.0 Demographic Snapshot





Section 3.0

Demographic Snapshot

This Section presents selected population and socio-demographic information that is relevant to library planning. While the total number of people living in an area is an important indicator used to inform how much space is required, it is just as necessary to understand who comprises the population in terms of age, ethno-cultural background, income and other indicators that can inform the types of library services that are in need which in turn informs how library space is ultimately designed.

Statistics Canada Census data forms the basis of historical and current information, noting that 2021 Census information for immigration, education and mobility is scheduled for release in November 2022 which occurs after the majority of the JLFR's needs assessments will be completed. It also bears noting that long-range growth studies for the Lambton County and select lower-tier municipalities were prepared prior to the COVID-19 pandemic which altered traditional migration patterns and related assumptions.

As a result, Lambton County Library will need to review contents of the JLFR in relation to future Census releases and updates to lower-tier population forecasts to determine if any adjustments are required to the JLFR's analyses or recommendations.

The pages that follow present information at the County-wide level as well as for each of the 11 lower-tier municipalities that the library system serves. Growth forecasts used in this assessment are derived from reports prepared by the lower-tier municipalities, where available, and supplemented by population projections contained in the County of Lambton Official Plan (refer to cautionary note contained earlier in Section 1.4 of the JLFR).

3.1 Total Population

Lambton County grew by nearly 2,000 people between the 2011 and 2021 Census periods to reach 128,154 persons, representing an average annual growth rate of 0.15% over that 10-year period though the average growth rate has since increased to 0.2% per year over the last Census period.

Largely due to provincial policy and immigration trends, population growth in Ontario has been primarily directed to urban centres over the past 20 years. Many rural settlements have experienced stagnating to declining populations due to factors such as aging trends, migration of younger people to urban settings, employment prospects, and less availability for new housing due to provincial planning policies. Lambton County and its lower-tier municipalities have generally mirrored these provincial trends between the 2011 and 2021 Census periods with the exception of Lambton Shores, Petrolia, Plympton-Wyoming and St Clair whose populations have slightly increased.

Certain municipalities such as Sarnia and Lambton Shores also have sizeable populations of seasonal residents such as cottagers and post-secondary students that are not always captured through the Census permanent populations. Seasonal use may generate higher pressures for library services during the summer and school year.

The County of Lambton Official Plan contains growth forecasts that identify a population range between 111,367 and 122,162 persons for the year 2031.¹¹ These forecasts that have well been exceeded based on 2021 Census data.

The County-approved forecast has not been updated for over a decade and does not reflect overall population growth trends from the past three Census periods. For example, County-approved 2031 forecasts have already been exceeded for the following six lower-tier municipalities: Dawn-Euphemia, Enniskillen, Plympton-Wyoming, Lambton Shores, St. Clair and Warwick.

¹¹ County of Lambton Official Plan, in force and effect as of September 18, 2020 (October 1, 2020 Office Consolidation). p. 3-2.

For the purposes of the JLFR, assessments have considered the County-approved projections for each lower-tier municipality but also factors an 'adjusted' forecast for 2031 recognizing that Sarnia, St. Clair, Lambton Shores, Plympton-Wyoming and Warwick have each prepared updated growth forecasts through their own studies in the past five years. The Adjusted Forecast is used as the basis for the JLFR in order to more accurately project space needs at the local level. It is further assumed that the Lambton County low-range projection of 111,367 is not applicable to JLFR given the degree of actual population growth that has been realized.

Table 4: Base & Adjusted Population Forecast, 2031

Municipality	2021 Census Population	County Official Plan 2031 Projection (Base Forecast)	Municipal 2031 Projection (Adjusted Forecast)
Brooke-Alvinston	2,359	2,058 to 2,581	2,581 *
Dawn-Euphemia	1,968	1,505 to 1,963	1,963 *
Enniskillen	2,825	2,099 to 2,714	2,714 *
Lambton Shores	11,876	9,307 to 11,595	11,671
Oil Springs	647	549 to 806	808 *
Petrolia	6,013	6,410 to 7,372	7,372*
Plympton-Wyoming	8,308	6,846 to 7,830	9,269
Point Edward	1,930	1,529 to 2,058	2,058*
Sarnia	72,047	66,005 to 74,045	80,843
St. Clair	14,659	12,536 to 13,876	14,779
Warwick	3,641	2,945 to 3,579	4,435
First Nations	1,881	not applicable	not available
Lambton County Total	128,154	111,367 to 122,162	138,493

* denotes where a municipal projection is not available and where the upper range of the Lambton County Official Plan forecast is used.

Notes: Municipal projections are calculated using a straight-line growth assumption where the growth forecast does not specifically state a population figure for the year 2031. Figures exclude seasonal populations. First Nations are included by Statistics Canada in the Lambton County Census population but are governed autonomously from the County.

Sources: Statistics Canada 2021 Census; County of Lambton Official Plan, Office Consolidation 2020; Development Charge Background Studies for Lambton Shores (2017), Plympton-Wyoming (2021), St. Clair (2020) and Warwick (2020); Sarnia Comprehensive Review, Growth Management Recommendations (2020).

Figure 9: Historical & Forecasted Populations, Urban Municipalities, 2011-2031

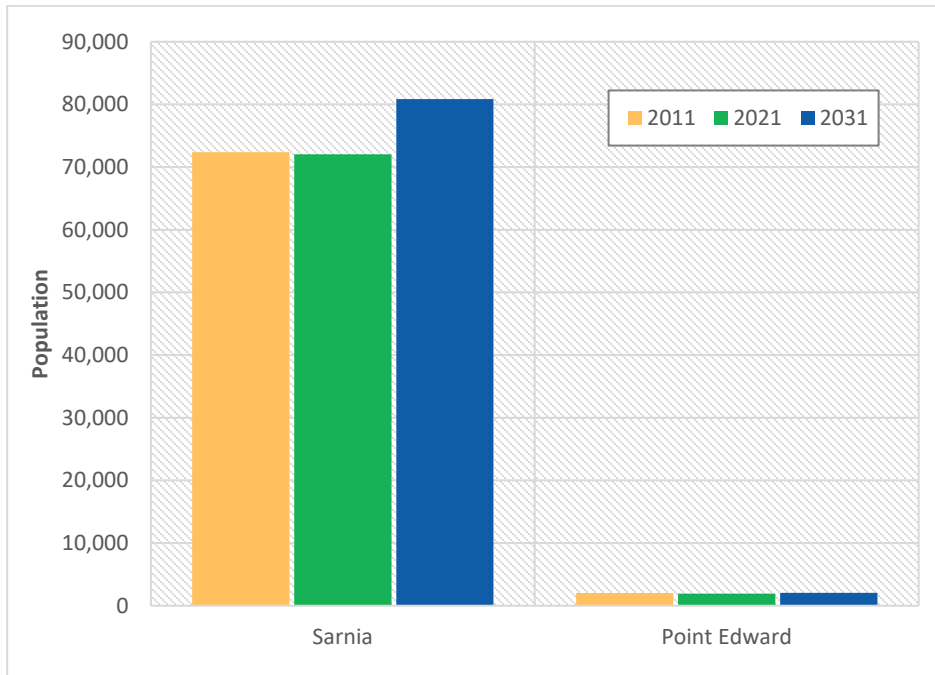
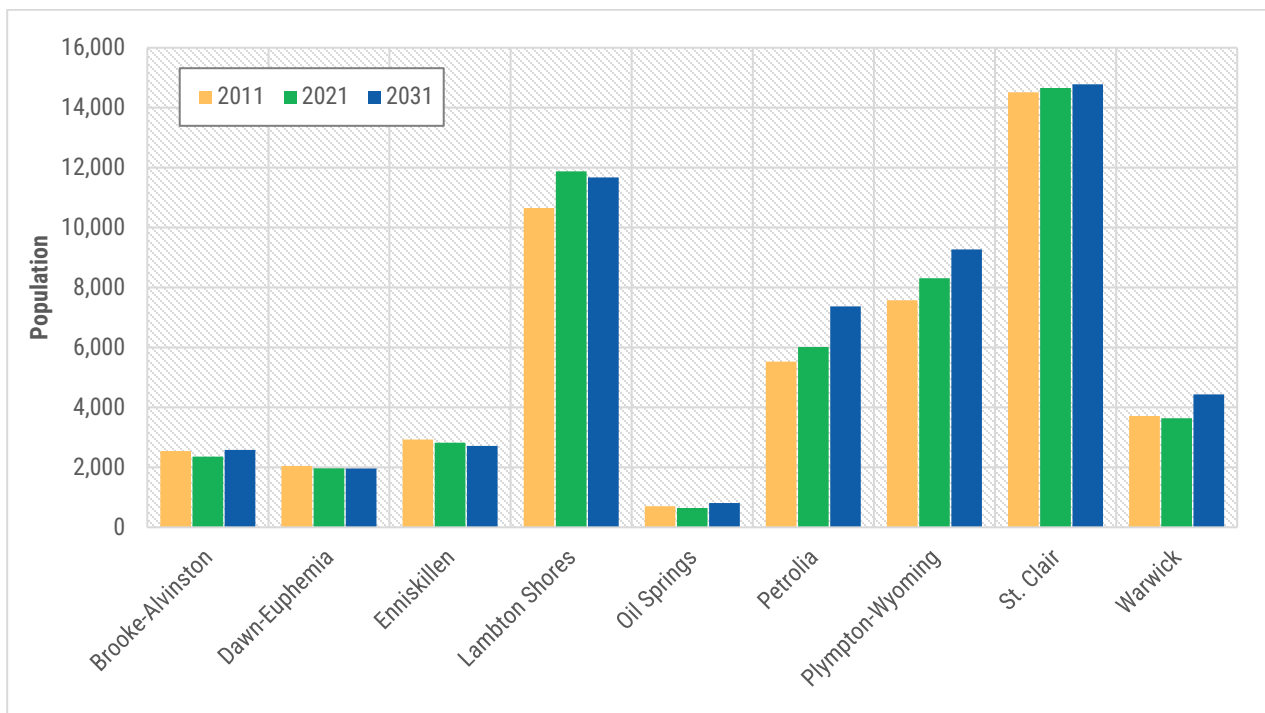


Figure 10: Historical & Forecasted Populations, Rural Municipalities, 2011-2031



Note: 2031 figures reflect an 'adjusted' scenario relative to the County Official Plan forecast by considering projections prepared by selected lower-tier municipalities.

Sources: Statistics Canada Census; County of Lambton Official Plan Office Consolidation 2020; Development Charge Background Studies for Plympton-Wyoming (2021), St. Clair (2020) and Warwick (2020).

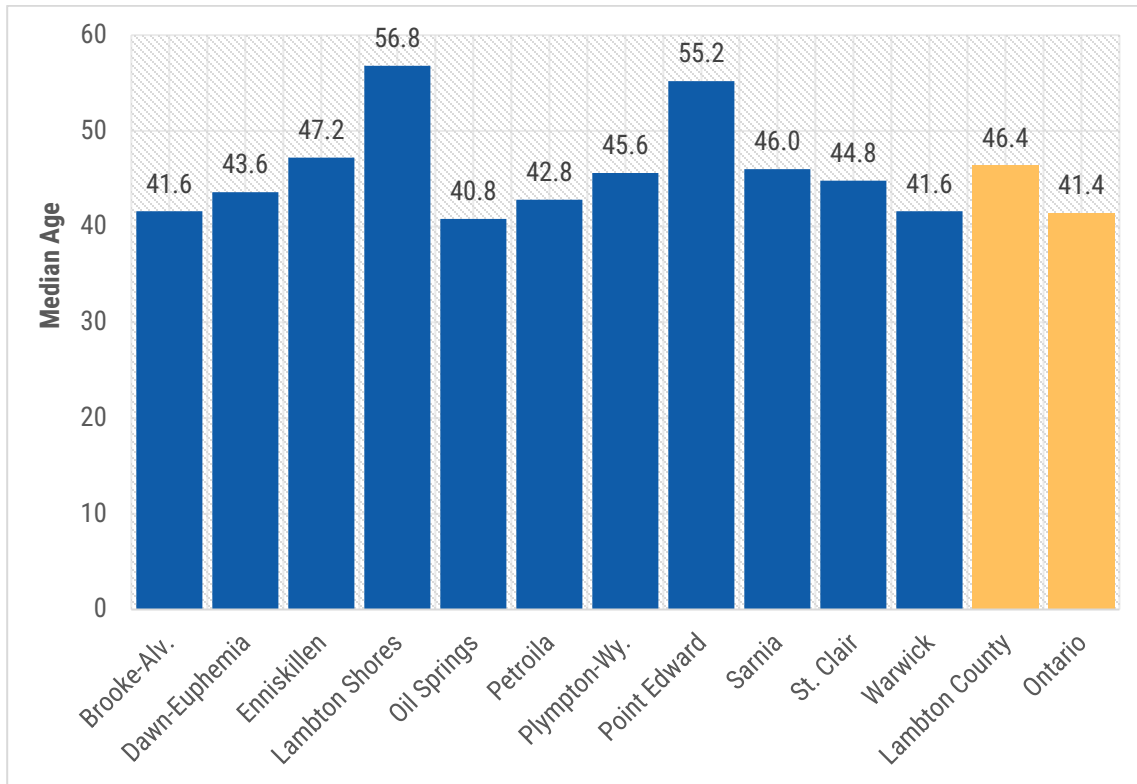
3.2 Age Structure

The age profile within Lambton County helps to inform the types of library spaces and programs that can be expected to be required. Libraries are places where people of any age, from infants to the elderly, can find something for them. All libraries should include a number of age-specific spaces such as children's and teen areas along with spaces and services for other demographics such as college/university-age residents through study space, spaces for older adults through areas devoted to collections and archives, and common areas that are devoted for use by all people such as for seating and gathering. The physical size of a library determines if it is able to offer suitable spaces for all library users, including those in different age groups.

As measured by a median age of 46.4 years, Lambton County has an older age structure compared to the provincial median of 41.6 years. Consistent with national and provincial trends, Lambton's median age has increased over the past decade (it was 44.9 years in 2011). There is significant variation in median age by municipality (Figure 11) with some interesting findings. While the provincial experience is such that urban centres tend to have lower median ages relative to rural areas, Lambton municipalities such as Brooke-Alvinston, Oil Springs, Petrolia and Warwick have similar or younger median ages than that of Ontario as a whole; conversely, Sarnia and Point Edward have higher median ages than that of the province.

Considered in tandem with the rate of growth since 2016 discussed in the previous pages, Table 5 illustrates how the number of people in different age groupings have changed since 2011. The increasing median age is largely driven by a 30% growth rate (+4,900 persons) for people 70 years of age and over, a 12% reduction (-1,800 persons) in the number of 10 to 19 year olds and a 9% decrease (-2,000 persons) among those between the ages of 35 and 54.

Figure 11: Median Age by Municipality, 2021



Source: Statistics Canada 2021 Census

Table 5: Lambton County Age Distribution, 2011 to 2021

	2011	2016	2021	5-Year Δ 2011-2016	5-Year Δ 2016-2021	10-Year Δ 2011-2021
Children (0 to 9)	12,805	13,020	12,770	2%	-2%	0%
Youth (10 to 19)	15,260	13,535	13,480	-11%	0%	-12%
Younger Adults (20 to 34)	21,230	21,530	21,530	1%	0%	1%
Mature Adults (35 to 54)	23,220	20,905	21,170	-10%	1%	-9%
Older Adults (55 to 69)	37,150	39,180	37,755	5%	-4%	2%
Seniors (70+)	16,535	18,386	21,450	11%	17%	30%

Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2011-2021

3.3 Income & Education

The 2021 Census records the City of Sarnia's median household income at \$77,500, lower than the County's median household income (\$83,000) and Ontario (\$91,000). Among the rural Municipalities, Plympton-Wyoming, Enniskillen, and St. Clair have the highest median household incomes at \$108,000, \$104,000, and \$98,000 respectively, of which all are substantially higher than the rest of Lambton County. Besides Sarina, Lambton Shores, Brooke-Alvinston and Dawn-Euphemia have the lowest median household incomes at \$80,000, \$82,000, and \$83,000, respectively.

Serving populations experiencing low income is a major priority for the JLFR as such persons may not have the same access to information and technology as people with greater financial means. In this light it is important to note that there were nearly 12,500 Lambton County residents – including over 2,500 children and teens below the age of 18 – living below Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT) in 2020; this equates to 9.9% of all residents in Lambton County. Prevalence of persons experiencing low income in 2020 as defined by the LIM-AT among the eleven municipalities is highlighted below:

- 12% of Dawn-Euphemia residents (245 persons)
- 11% of Sarnia residents (7,950 persons)
- 10% of Brooke-Alvinston residents (240 persons)
- 10% Lambton Shores residents (1,160 persons)
- 9% of Warwick residents (305 persons)

The level of education attainment can also influence the degree of library use in a community. Lambton County residents are generally well-educated with the 2021 Census reporting over half of residents (55%) as having a post-secondary education which is comparable to the provincial rate. The highest rates of post-secondary educational attainment are found in Plympton-Wyoming (60%), Petrolia (57%), St. Clair (56%) and Sarnia (55%). The lowest rates of post-secondary educational attainment are found in Dawn-Euphemia (43%) and Brooke-Alvinston (46%). The proportion of residents having a post-secondary education has increased across most of Lambton County since 2016.

Table 6: Household Income and LIM-AT, 2021

Municipality	Median Household Income	Pop. Living Below Low Income Measure After Tax
Brooke-Alvinston	\$82,000	10.1%
Dawn-Euphemia	\$83,000	12.2%
Enniskillen	\$104,000	6.8%
Lambton Shores	\$80,000	10.0%
Oil Springs	\$91,000	4.0%
Petrolia	\$86,000	7.8%
Plympton-Wyoming	\$108,000	4.6%
Point Edward	\$84,000	6.6%
Sarnia	\$77,500	11.2%
St Clair	\$98,000	6.1%
Warwick	\$86,000	8.6%
Lambton County	\$83,000	9.9%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

3.4 Immigration & Language

As an organization focused on inclusion and acceptance, Lambton County Library has made efforts to position its spaces, collections, services and staffing to be reflective of the community it serves. While there are still areas for improvement, understanding the ethno-cultural composition of Lambton County will allow the Library to keep stride with the changes in its resident base. In 2021, one out of every ten Lambton County residents (10% or 12,195 people) were born outside of Canada with the vast majority of these residents (70% or 8,570 people) living in the City of Sarnia. That said, most immigrants had been living in Canada for longer than 20 years and would not necessarily be considered as 'newcomers' to the County.

Over half of Lambton County residents have European ancestry while 17% have Asian origins predominantly of Indian or Philippino decent. English is the first language for 98% of Lambton County residents while French is the first language for 1.5%. Among non-official languages, Dutch, Italian and Spanish were the most spoken.

82% of Lambton County’s racialized populations live within the City of Sarnia. One out of twelve Sarnia residents are visible minorities comprised primarily by members of the South Asian, Black, and Latin American communities. Additionally, recently released 2021 Census data records 5% of Lambton County residents as being of Indigenous identity, the majority of whom are residents of Sarnia (that municipality borders the Aamjiwnaang First Nation).

Based on the preceding paragraph, the need for multi-lingual and multi-cultural collections and services are more likely to be in demand within City of Sarnia branches. However, immigration trends are such that greater cultural diversity can be expected in more rural settings although to a slower pace relative to urban areas.

Table 7: Immigration, 2021

Municipality	Number of Immigrants	Percentage of Immigrants
Brooke-Alvinston	110	5%
Dawn-Euphemia	130	7%
Enniskillen	170	6%
Lambton Shores	1,060	9%
Oil Springs	40	6%
Petrolia	325	6%
Plympton-Wyoming	575	7%
Point Edward	180	9%
Sarnia	8,570	12%
St Clair	740	5%
Warwick	220	6%
Lambton County	12,195	10%

Source: Statistics Canada, 2021 Census

Section 4.0 Current & Past Consultations





Section 4.0

Current & Past Consultations

Consultations carried out specifically for the JLFR have been focused on engaging staff working for the lower-tier municipalities that have direct knowledge and/or responsibility for library buildings while also reaching out to Indigenous communities in the area. No engagement of the general public was included in the JLFR scope of work as a comprehensive community consultation exercise was recently carried out in 2019 as part of a Community Needs Assessment for the Cultural Services Division, whose library-specific findings are presented in this Section.

4.1 Feedback from Municipal & Indigenous Partners

Interviews were successfully carried out with 10 lower-tier municipalities along with representatives from the Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) and the Kettle & Stony Point First Nation. Interviews were completed in July and August 2022. At time of writing, Lambton County Library has made efforts to contact the Village of Point Edward, the Aamjiwnaang First Nation and the Walpole Island First Nation but have not been successful to date.

Municipal staff that were engaged consisted of senior administration such as CAOs, Directors and Facility/Operations Managers. The LKDSB's Superintendent of Business Operations and the Kettle & Stony Point First Nation's Education Assistant/Public Library Coordinator were interviewed on behalf of their respective organizations.

Feedback from these interviews has been summarized into common and notable points below (listed in no particular order of importance or priority). Specific comments provided by these individuals have not been reproduced to respect their confidentiality but were carefully considered during the assessments completed as part of the JLFR.

- **Online Connectivity:** The importance of providing internet access to the public through libraries was discussed in nearly every interview. Lambton County libraries have been a point to access reliable and high-speed internet service which has been helpful to rural communities. Even with home internet infrastructure being extended into more rural areas, the library remains a place where people from urban and rural communities can access the internet for free, creating equity between income groups. Some municipalities indicated it would be helpful to strengthen Wi-Fi service to allow access from the outdoors as well.
- **Raising Awareness of the Library:** There is a view that many people – including municipal staff and the general public – are not aware of the many services and programs that Lambton County Library provides beyond collections. Certain municipalities indicated that they were willing to work with the Library to promote services available in their communities using municipal channels such as newsletters, attachments enclosed with property tax bills, and potentially coordinating digital resources such as use of their websites or social media platforms to spread awareness.
- **Feeling Welcome:** Municipal and First Nations representatives indicated that people want libraries to be welcoming and comfortable for all, however, this is not always the case. The design, collection, programs and operating practices of library staff can all play a role in making libraries welcoming for all people.
- **Health & Knowledge Hubs:** A number of municipal staff indicated that recent investments in meeting rooms for use by social services and other agencies was helpful, particularly in rural communities where some residents do not have the means to travel longer distances for meetings and appointments. This convenience combined with the library's welcoming atmosphere was appreciated in the context of promoting health and wellbeing. In addition, the model of co-locating libraries with schools was seen as a positive and progressive approach by teaching students how to work side-by-side with the community, maximizing use of publicly-funded facilities, and providing all students with access to trained librarians.

- **Beyond the Branch:** Municipal staff were generally supportive of the distribution of library branches but recognized there may be certain geographic gaps across Lambton County. Suggestions to increase the Library's presence/outreach capabilities included a willingness to discuss how the Library could gain better access to community centres, halls and program rooms for library programs as well as possibly install book vending machines and holds lockers in municipal facilities. Bookmobiles were also suggested in some interviews while recognizing that the Library's mobile library service to retirement homes and pilot project for mail order may be more cost-effective. These were seen as potential ways to extend library services and convenience into communities without having to build new library branches.
- **Part of the Creative Infrastructure:** A few municipalities indicated that they are placing greater focus on arts and cultural objectives and see the Library as part of a community's cultural fabric. Communities across Lambton County value their local history and the Library is seen as a place where culture and heritage can be reflected through physical space and collections. As examples, the Petrolia Library's presence in a heritage building and co-location with the adjacent outdoor farmers' market/event area is highly valued by that municipality.
- **Internal Communication:** most municipalities suggested a general comfort with the 1989 Division of Responsibilities, however, there were some that reported being unaware or unfamiliar with the terms of the agreement; all acknowledged that communication between Library and municipal staff could be improved. All municipalities were open to carrying regular walk-throughs of library branches with library staff which could help them better understand functional challenges, prioritize needs and align their capital budgets.
- **Fiscal Pressures:** many municipalities cited the reality of reduced funding and many competing priorities for capital and operating resources. These were not only relegated to infrastructure (such as roads, sewers, community centres, etc.) but also in terms of staff time to maintain a vast portfolio of municipal buildings.

4.2 Lambton County Library Staff Workshops

Lambton County Library staff were engaged through a series of workshops to obtain their insights regarding the amount, type and distribution of library space as well as their vision for the future of Lambton County libraries. To obtain perspectives from a wide range of staff, front-line staff working in each of Library Region were engaged through five workshops while one more workshop was dedicated specifically to those working in supervisory positions. Front-line workshops were held in July 2022 while the supervisory staff workshop was conducted in September 2022.

In order to allow staff to speak freely, input has been consolidated into general themes to protect confidentiality and ensure no comments can be attributed to a particular individual. These themes are summarized in the pages that follow.

- **Inclusion in the Library:** Library staff are proud that their branches are welcoming to all people, culturally responsive and age-friendly. Library staff identified that there is still opportunity for improving inclusivity within the library. In order to try to provide a fully accessible and comfortable place for all, library staff expressed the need to add sensory stations, rooms or resource kits for neuro-diverse individuals. Additional suggestions included providing more newcomer resources or programs and incorporating braille signage. Bathrooms in particular were identified as an opportunity for improvement by ensuring all have automatic doors and provide one gender neutral bathroom.
- **Comfort & Convenience:** In addition to resources, library users are looking for a comfortable space to gather and enjoy. Adding comfortable furniture or reading nooks could create a more comfortable space for users. Temperature also needs to be considered when thinking about comfort particularly when programming in basements or in shared facilities without direct access to temperature controls. To make library services more convenient, book kiosks were suggested throughout the County to provide services to underserved areas or for individuals that encounter mobility-related challenges.

- **Study & Collaborative Space:** With the emergence of online learning and working from home due to COVID-19, library staff noticed a greater demand for study space and workstations in branches. Students and professionals are interested in small private gathering spaces for small groups or an individual setting. Often these users bring their own laptops so outlets are a necessity in these spaces.
- **In-Branch Technology:** Technology has become a large component within the library system. Library staff believe that they could attract new or more frequent users by staying current with technology and equipment. It is essential that computer hardware and software stays up-to-date to allow users to open all necessary documents. It could be beneficial to incorporate screens, projectors or smart boards in each large branch for programming as well as act as a useful resource for students and professionals working in the library. To attract more teens to the library it was suggested to add gaming consoles and space for audio recording and vlog creation.
- **Hours of Operation:** For residents accessing rural branches, limited hours of operation are the primary barrier to use with some branches open just 12 hours each week. This may motivate certain residents to drive longer distances – including traveling outside of their municipality – in order to access a larger library that is open longer or at times more convenient to their schedule.
- **Library of Things:** Staff indicate that item lending (e.g. tools, cooking/baking equipment, musical instruments, sporting goods, etc.) is a trend to be cognisant of moving forward. Lambton County Library's snowshoe and Ontario Parks Pass lending has proved popular. There may be storage space-related implications in doing so depending on the size, number and type of items.
- **Promoting Library Services:** Consistent with feedback from municipal representatives, Library staff recommended raising awareness of library programs, services and events through use of social media and traditional means in order to reach all audiences.

- **Food & Food Security:** Opinion of some staff is that the library seems to be lacking food and beverage services. A simple solution could be to provide drinking water in branches while a more substantial approach could integrate cooking spaces into larger urban libraries to develop life skills and deliver culinary programming. Alternatively, the library could partner with a local restaurant or community group to incorporate a small café to provide an assortment of snacks and beverages. To provide food for all users, a food pantry or food bank could be added in selected locations where space is available or not duplicating efforts by other community groups.
- **Library Signage:** a number of libraries were identified as lacking or having inadequate physical signage to indicate their presence to the public. Signage should be highly visible, placed on library building facades and making entrances more visible, as well as being used for wayfinding (i.e. directional signage from major streets). To present a consistent image of Lambton County Library, staff indicated that all branches should have signs that reflect the County's updated branding standards.
- **Branch-Specific Thoughts:** Library staff offered feedback for each library branch as it related to their ability to meet the needs of library users, building condition, and barrier-free accessibility. These comments were considered through the assessments of library space contained later in this report.



Baby Rhyme Time at Lambton County Library

4.3 Findings from Recent Community Engagements

The County of Lambton's Cultural Services Division commissioned Probe Research Inc. in 2019 to conduct a series of research and engagement activities with County residents through telephone and online surveys, and focus groups. This input helped shape the Division's Strategic Plan and is considered recent enough to inform the JLFR.

Community Needs Assessment - Telephone Survey

Probe Research Inc. completed a statistically representative survey of 1,001 Lambton County residents in July 2019. Notable findings applicable to the Library are as follows.

- **Visits:** Approximately half of surveyed adults visited a County library in 2018 and 2019 with 42% of library users visiting a branch at least once a month. Respondents most likely to visit the library at least once a week are older residents 65+ or households with both younger and older children at home.
- **Cardholders:** Half reported having a Lambton County Library card.
- **Branches Visited:** Sarnia Library was the most popular branch visited by 66% followed by Petrolia Library at 14%. No surveyed residents reported use of the Arkona and Shetland libraries.
- **Reasons for Use:** The library is an attraction for those who like to read or as a place to bring their children or family members. Other reasons commonly cited were to study or do research.
- **Satisfaction:** High levels of satisfaction stated for customer service while hours of operation, program quality, and range of materials available being secondary drivers of satisfaction. Notable for the JLFR is that lower levels of satisfaction were attributable to the physical space offered by the libraries.
- **Willingness to Travel:** Two-thirds of the sample are not willing to travel to a nearby library branch when the one closest to them is not open. That being said, focus groups revealed that participants may be more willing to travel if they were better informed where libraries were located and how often they were open.

Community Needs Assessment - Online Survey

Probe Research Inc. offered a companion online survey for persons not contacted for the telephone survey and tabulated its 1,385 responses separately. Notable findings for the JLFR include:

- 95% of survey respondents had a library card, with two out of three indicating that they visit a branch at least once a month.
- The main reason for visiting the library is to borrow books, with about one in ten indicating they access the library to borrow movies or to use the makerspace.
- Overall satisfaction with the library is quite high, with users most likely to be satisfied with customer service and library locations and least satisfied with program quality and variety.
- Respondents were split regarding their willingness to travel to another branch with most saying they are either 'somewhat willing' or 'not very willing' to go further to visit a library. Those living in Sarnia were most willing to travel further to visit a more distant library branch (58%) compared to 29% of those living in Lambton Shores and 38% of those living in other rural areas of the County.
- Slightly more than half of respondents were interested in using the makerspace or attending programs for people to learn how to use technology. Approximately four out of ten respondents were interested in using meeting spaces at library branches.
- 27% of respondents indicated they have only accessed library services online.
- Main reasons for visiting the library were to borrow books (56%), borrow movies/DVD's (11%) and to use computers/makerspace (9%).

Sarnia Space and Service Needs Study

The Sarnia Space and Service Needs Study employed a survey along with a number of focus groups with the community, library partners and library staff that were conducted in 2017. Broad themes identified included:

- There was a significant demand for additional programming for all age groups. Ideas ranged from traditional programming such as book clubs and readings to more social and interactive programs like hobbies, cooking, town events, and technology tutorials.
- Teens felt disconnected from the library and noted travelling to libraries as a barrier. Teens were thus more likely to use a school library than visit a Lambton County Library branch.
- Adult programming requests were more focused on learning over entertainment with strong support for both in class and self-directed learning platforms.
- Outreach in the community and marketing of available programs could be improved to help awareness.
- There was a focus on protecting current libraries. The Sarnia Library faces issues with parking limitations and a lack of interior appeal, with a more flexible space for programming being suggested.
- A desire for more afternoon programs among all age groups.
- There is a lack of programmable space making it difficult to build successful and reputable programs.
- Technology provided at libraries was believed to be inadequate and not always conducive for technology-based programs.
- Partners were open to bigger and more formal relationships with the Library. Greater coordination is needed to support the cultural and entertainment life of Sarnia.

4.4 Key Insights for the JLFR

Through past and current research and consultations carried out for the Lambton County Joint Library Facilities Review, Sarnia Space and Service Needs Study (2017) and the Community Needs Assessment (2019), the following insights can be gleaned for consideration through the needs assessments presented in this report:

- **Importance:** Libraries are important to many Lambton County residents and provide strong value to people with a wide range of ages and interests.
- **Community:** Libraries are seen as a way to build communities and connect residents with one another.
- **Limitations:** Lack of space and lower levels of satisfaction with the design of physical space were reported as diminishing the library experience, which in turn could be reducing use and effectiveness of the library.
- **Online Connectivity:** Lambton County libraries have been a point to access reliable and high-speed internet service which has been helpful to rural communities and creates equity between income groups. This service is highly valued and needs to continually be a focus.
- **Co-Location with Schools:** The model of co-locating libraries with schools is seen as a positive and progressive approach by teaching students how to work side-by-side with the community, maximizing use of publicly-funded facilities, and providing all students with access to trained librarians.
- **Communication:** Communication is imperative for libraries to operate efficiently and provide quality experiences to users. The library needs outreach to the community to inform users of upcoming events and programs available while communication with municipal staff will help better understand functional challenges, prioritize needs and align capital budgets.



Section 5.0 Library Organizational Model





Section 5.0

Library Organizational Model

5.1 Organizational Structure

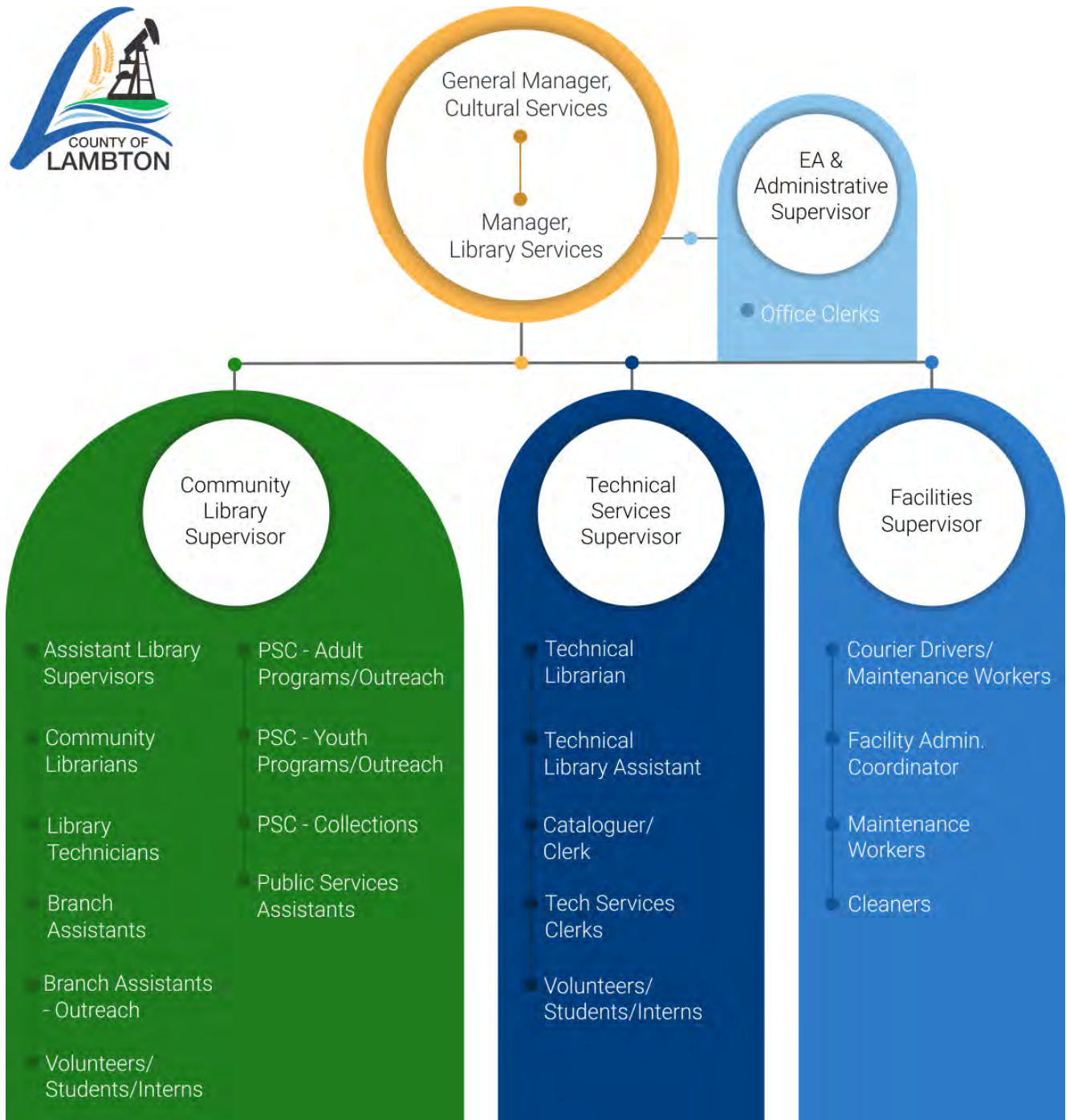
Lambton County Library is a Department of the County of Lambton's Cultural Services Division. In addition to operating the 25 libraries, the Division is tasked with the operation of the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery (located in Sarnia), Lambton Heritage Museum (Lambton Shores), Oil Museum of Canada (Oil Springs) and Lambton County Archives (Plympton-Wyoming); these facilities are operated separately from the Library.

The Library operates using a centralized organizational structure (Figure 12) whereby the Manager of Library Services oversees a team of Supervisors and reports to the General Manager of Cultural Services. Consistent with many library systems, Lambton County Library organizes responsibilities into functional groupings based on work specialization, namely branch services, public services, technical services, administrative services and facilities. Library management, supervisory and public service coordinator staff are non-unionized positions while librarians, technicians and assistants are unionized. At present time, approximately 85 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) staff positions are involved with the direct operation of the Library.

The JLFR's scope does not include staffing or organizational reviews; however, cursory examinations suggest that the organizational structure is appropriate for the facility provision model presently in place. Library staff are able to function on programmatic, technical and logistical elements of service delivery while leveraging staff resources in other Departments of the County (e.g. IT and communications support) along with the lower-tier municipalities for maintenance and repairs.

The pages that follow identify that an updated policy framework be created to modernize the shared responsibilities between the Library and its facility partners. Changes to responsibilities and/or building ownership models may have staffing implications that will need to be considered while any new library construction or major renovation will also require an analysis of staffing capacity at that time.

Figure 12: Lambton County Library Organizational Structure, 2022



5.2 Responsibilities of the Library & Partners

Agreement with Municipalities

Lambton County Library and the lower-tier municipalities are guided by an agreement that dates back to 1989. Known as the Division of Responsibilities,¹² it is a policy that assigns responsibilities to the municipalities and County as follows.

Municipal Responsibilities

- Provision of building or facility for the branch
- Any capital improvements to the building
- Exterior maintenance (landscaping, grass cutting, snow removal, etc.)
- Insurance and security for the building
- Utilities such as heat, water, electricity
- Plumbing/electrical work, and furnace and air conditioner repairs
- Renovations such as re-flooring and repainting
- Payment of the annual library levy as approved by County Council
- City of Sarnia is responsible for elevators in the Sarnia Library

Lambton County Responsibilities

- Staff wages, benefits, travel expenses and training
- Library materials such as books and materials, and organizing materials so that they are accessible and rotated between branches
- Library furniture and equipment and their associated maintenance
- Telephones, office supplies, postage, fire extinguishers, signage
- Van delivery service to and from branches
- Janitorial work in the branches
- Operations and maintenance of library headquarters
- Library programs
- Insurance on all contents and exhibits in the libraries
- Local history collection for the County
- Minor repairs such as changing light bulbs, fixing door locks, etc.
- Security system, vehicle and printing press maintenance, and public liability insurance for the Sarnia Library

¹² Division of Responsibilities between Municipalities and Lambton County Library. Approved September 14, 1989.

Agreement with Lambton Kent District School Board

A letter of understanding¹³ exists between the Library and Lambton Kent District School Board (LKDSB) for the provision of a library at Brigden Public School. Currently, the LKDSB maintains a partial FTE to act as a School Librarian at Brigden Library when the branch is not open to the public during the school day. Notable elements include (but are not limited to):

- Circulation of non-book materials belonging to each party shall be at the discretion of that party.
- Opportunity for a Brigden Library Advisory Committee to make recommendations to the LKDSB, Township, or County Library (note: the Advisory Committee has not been active in recent years).
- Both parties are responsible for leaving the library tidy.
- An exterior entrance and washroom will be available for public use.
- Replacement costs for furniture, equipment and shelving will be negotiated between the LKDSB and the Library.
- The Library provides technical support for computers and software.
- LKDSB supplies custodial services except during custodial vacation periods at which time library staff will assume these duties.
- The Library provides cataloguing services for the school three times per year. School staff will provide library services with titles that have been weeded from the school's collection.
- The County provides liability insurance.
- Prior to the beginning of the school year, the school and Library will meet to determine hours of operation for the branch.

No such agreement is known to formally exist for Grand Bend Library and Grand Bend Public School. Grand Bend Library operates similarly to that in Brigden, however, LKDSB does not allocate any FTEs to the library and as such, the County's Library Staff fulfill the role of School Librarian; further, Grand Bend Library has more hours of operation than in Brigden.

¹³ Letter of Understanding Between Lambton Kent District School Board and County of Lambton regarding the use of the Library at Brigden Public School. Dated April/May 2005

5.3 Approaches in Other Library Systems

There are a range of facility provision models employed by other library systems in Ontario. For municipal library systems, the most common approach is to provide library branches in municipal buildings such as stand-alone libraries, branches integrated with community halls or community centres, or combined with other civic infrastructure such as administration buildings/town halls or with emergency services. Municipalities are responsible for building, maintaining and operating their library assets through Library Board governance and Council-directed financial supports.

In some instances, municipally-operated library branches are leased by the municipality from private property owners such as in retail or storefront settings, or provided in partnership with other institutions such as schools or an upper-tier municipality (e.g. County/Regional governments).

Union library systems function in a similar fashion since these types of library systems were formed by an amalgamation of multiple municipal libraries that previously owned their assets or worked with others. County library systems also operate using municipal assets though there are often different responsibilities (funding and operational) as well as different approaches that will be discussed in the pages that follow.

For the JLFR it is most appropriate to look to other County library systems to provide a basis of comparison to the approach presently employed by Lambton County through its current Division of Responsibilities agreement with the municipalities and the letter of understanding with LKDSB. In particular, southern Ontario case studies are presented for Chatham-Kent Public Library, Huron County Library, Middlesex County Library and Wellington County Library.

Chatham-Kent Public Library – A Traditional Municipal Model

Chatham-Kent is a single-tier municipality spanning a large geographic area to the south of Lambton County. Chatham-Kent Public Library (CKPL) is an operating Department of the municipality who is governed by a library board and funded by Municipality of Chatham-Kent Council. CKPL operates 11 libraries that serve the 104,000 residents living in a number of settlement areas spread across its 2,400 square kilometres.

As part of the municipality, the CKPL is part of regular senior-level corporate discussions which allows it to advance needs in tandem with those expressed by other Departments. As a municipal department, CKPL operates in accordance with its annual and long-range budgets that form part of the Municipality's broader fiscal planning. Governance of CKPL is provided by its Library Board while funding is administered through Council, consistent with most municipal library systems. CKPL maintains autonomy over its marketing and communications as the Municipality's corporate communications division has limited resources.

Most of the libraries were 'Centennial builds' and thus have been operating for decades though CKPL has been able to renovate a few branches over the past decade. Asset management such as building maintenance and repair is coordinated with the Municipality's Facilities Division who are tasked with maintaining all municipal buildings in addition to the libraries. Although there are competing pressures and priorities for asset management, the libraries are kept in good condition and a number of them have been improved to strengthen health and safety of library staff as well as barrier-free accessibility for the public. In addition to aforementioned accessibility and health and safety, CKPL has installed under-carpet electrical cabling through some renovations recognizing the demand for power among library users bringing laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc. into the branch.

CKPL regularly explores opportunities to optimize existing library space by curating in-branch items to reflect unique demands of a given community. It seeks greater flexibility in its libraries using moveable furniture that allows library staff to create areas for collaboration (e.g. easily moving tables together) or opening up floor space for programs as most branches do not have dedicated meeting space (they are also exploring noise-cancelling pods quiet study and group collaboration). CKPL is installing RFID technology at all locations and exploring security gates at selected libraries.

As a Department of its Municipality, CKPL operates in municipally-owned buildings and coordinates asset management with other Divisions.

Library Organizational Model

Like Lambton County, Chatham-Kent has grappled with public requests for additional hours of operation at certain branches but does not have the staffing resources to be able to extend access given current funding. Exploration of closing underutilized branches and re-allocating staff hours to nearby libraries has not been supported at the political level and by some in the community. A number of CKPL libraries are undersized to deliver the types of services being sought by residents but are doing their best to enable flexibility and inclusivity within libraries given that funding constraints are such that they have not been able to expand floor area.

That being said, CKPL is exploring the feasibility of relocating its Chatham branch as part of a mall redevelopment in the downtown that is envisioned as a potential community hub containing other creative and cultural infrastructure. Discussions are underway between the Municipality and the private landowner, including the possibility of rebuilding the library with a larger branch. In support of the community hub potential, CKPL has indicated that it would be desirable for a future Chatham branch to contain a makerspace (which they don't have at any locations), teen area, seating areas, etc. in addition to collections.

In a fiscally conservative area of Ontario with a small and highly dispersed population, CKPL uses its communications platform and position in the municipal corporation to raise awareness to the social, economic and other values that the library brings to residents. Messaging is constant to ensure the library's needs are understood in relation to other competing priorities for hard infrastructure and soft services delivered by the Municipality.



Photo Credit: Blackburn News

Huron County Library – A Collaborative Approach

Situated to the north of Lambton, Huron County consists of nine lower-tier municipalities and operates 12 branches through the county-library system across a large geographic territory. All County libraries are operated out of buildings owned or leased by the lower-tier municipalities which, in turn, are made available to Huron County Library under a formal agreement. All but one municipality has a County-operated library branch.

This agreement guides the provision of library facilities and services between Huron County and each lower-tier municipality. The agreement has been governing roles and responsibilities since 1998 through which:

- Municipalities are responsible for maintaining the facility interior and exterior including garbage and snow removal, heating, building insurance as well as repairs, renovations and improvements; and
- The Library is responsible for staffing, operating and furnishing each branch, equipment and materials, and periodic inspections.

The agreement specifies that the County Library will establish an annual grant to be paid to each municipality – as articulated in a separate Service Delivery Model Policy – and that this grant will be reviewed each year. It further specifies that any new facilities or major renovations and improvements to existing buildings shall be jointly planned between the municipality and the Library. Either party is able to terminate the agreement upon 90 days written notice.

Huron County Library leases its buildings from its municipalities in accordance with a rental agreement and a Service Delivery Model Policy that establishes design and operating parameters for each party.



Photo Credit: Huron County Library

The Service Delivery Model Policy categorizes three types of physical libraries according to factors such as their location, size and hours of operation. A fourth tier pertains to services provided outside of a physical branch setting. Huron County Library tiers consist of:

- **Comprehensive Libraries** that maximize access and convenience, are a minimum of 5,000 square feet or offer 1 square foot per capita in its catchment area and are open a minimum of 36 hours per week. These libraries offer a wide range of collections and services, work spaces for study and collaboration, and curated programs.
- **Neighbourhood-Enhanced Libraries** that are a minimum of 2,500 square feet or 1 square foot per capita in its catchment area, are open at least 24 hours per week, and meet all guidelines set out under ARUPLO definitions for small branches.
- **Neighbourhood Libraries** that are a minimum of 2,500 square feet or 1 square foot per capita in its catchment area, are open at least 15 hours per week, but do not necessarily meet all guidelines set out under ARUPLO definitions for small branches.
- **Virtual Branch** includes the online catalogue providing access 24 hours a day throughout the week.

Huron County Library staff indicate that the approach has historically worked well and that the tiered-model continues to be envisioned moving forward. However, certain logistical elements are out of date and thus there is a need to revisit and update the framework. Like Lambton County Library, the agreement in Huron County has now been in place for over 20 years and expectations from the public and municipal partners have evolved over this time. Fiscal realities are such that certain municipalities are facing challenges in funding maintenance and state of good repair activities; similarly, annual maintenance grant payments are being questioned by some municipalities as to whether they are sufficient to offset their costs. As the County Library revisits roles, responsibilities and funding obligations, it notes that adjustments could have an impact on the County tax levy, particularly with respect to the annual grant since the library system is not permitted to recover many of its costs consistent with provincial legislation.

Middlesex County Library – Tiered Lease Rates

Situated to the east of Lambton County, Middlesex County operates 15 libraries that serve residents living in its lower-tier municipalities by leasing space in municipal buildings. The leased approach is a key difference from the Lambton County's 1989 Division of Responsibilities that specified the municipalities are to provide the physical space with no reference to a rental payment or physical space standards.

With changing library user needs and resident expectations, Middlesex County wished to encourage expansion of such "comprehensive" services in certain locations. As the County evolved to deliver different types of space and services provided at certain branches, it recognized library buildings fell into three broad categories providing Basic, Enhanced and Comprehensive service levels.

County libraries meeting the minimum standards articulated in the Facilities Standards Policy are classified as a "Basic" library building. "Enhanced" library buildings meet these same standards but also provide spaces conducive to library programs and staff administrative duties. "Comprehensive" library buildings meet the Enhanced service level plus provides space for the provision of Government Information Services, offices for itinerant service providers such as social services, and designated programming space for employment and library-related programs.

In 2012, County Council and the Library Board approved a Three-Tier Lease Rate for County Library Facilities Policy where the fundamental premise is that a variable lease structure for library facilities accounts for the fact that there is a higher capital and maintenance cost associated with larger full-service branches. Lease rates for Enhanced library buildings are higher than the Basic buildings and are increased further for Comprehensive buildings. This provides municipalities with revenue certainty through an assurance that investments in a given branch will be repaid and reduce their capital payback. Indexing lease rates to building quality allows municipalities to determine whether their investments in a building will generate a positive return on investment in terms of fiscal performance but also the value to their residents to offer what some view as a county service.¹⁴

¹⁴ County of Middlesex. Staff Reports entitled Library Facility Study (January 24, 2012) and Three-Tier Lease Rate for County Library Facilities (November 27, 2012).

Middlesex County Library rents its buildings, with payments indexed to the quality of the space provided.

Library Organizational Model



Photo Credit: County of Middlesex

Municipalities wishing to participate in the variable lease register their interest with the Middlesex County Library Board, the latter of whom determine whether doing so is in the best interests of the County. A Rental Agreement is then formed with the municipality for a building or buildings that specifies standard terms such as the lease rate, lease term, and spaces that the library is entitled to use (e.g. program rooms, office space, etc.).

The agreement also articulates obligations for maintenance and repair, liability and insurance, furnishings, utilities, signage and other items specific to the site/building as agreed to between the parties. The Three-Tier Lease Rate For County Library Services is included as an attachment to the rental agreement so that definitions of Basic, Enhanced and Comprehensive library facilities are entrenched in the agreement and support the rental rates being paid.

Feedback from Middlesex County Library staff indicates that the variable lease model demonstrably resulted in new and renovated libraries that meet its Comprehensive service level. The policy identified required improvements and made the fiscal discussions more palatable for decision makers, particularly since they supported the tiered lease model. There have been some challenges namely that the Library is sometimes viewed as strictly a 'tenant' that is being subsidized below market rates but the Library is offering a service on behalf of the municipality where a number of its costs cannot be recovered through fees under the *Public Libraries Act*.

Challenges anticipated by library staff in the near future will be to revisit the current rental rates in consideration of impacts from recent inflationary pressures and municipal desires for cost recovery. Renewal of branch-specific rental agreements will also need to take place. Furthermore, certain municipalities are seeking upgrades to Enhanced branches before the County has verified whether Enhanced services are required in a given community and the Library's fiscal ability to operate them.

Wellington County – A County-Owned Approach

Wellington County Library operates 14 branches across seven lower-tier municipalities. It is fortunate to have five Carnegie buildings that have been renovated to meet accessible design standards while maintaining heritage features consistent with the County's strong value placed on culture. Under the current facility ownership model:

- 10 libraries are stand-alone buildings owned by the County.
- 1 library is co-located with a municipal community centre and public works garage where the County owns the library portion of the building and the municipality owns the rest.
- 1 library is co-located with a seniors' centre in a municipally-owned building. However, the senior centre will be relocated in the next few years and the County is presently exploring purchase of the building from the municipality of which an option may involve a lease-to-own agreement.
- 2 libraries are co-located with secondary schools whose buildings are owned by the school board. The Library's long-term lease at one school is set to expire and the Library has plans to relocate this branch to a County-owned building in the near future.

Wellington County Library has a goal of owning all of its library buildings and is moving closer to that vision with the planned purchase as noted in aforementioned bulleted list. The Library sees strong benefit in owning their buildings primarily because asset management activities are controlled by the County. Their experience in sharing buildings with municipalities has had its challenges related to alignment of priorities, though do acknowledge there are sometimes benefits associated with being part of a multi-service destination. By owning their buildings, the County has been able to negotiate rental agreements with health care and other providers to operate out of library buildings which provides a degree of convenience to residents while also contributing revenues to offset a portion of library-related costs.

Wellington County Library has a goal of owning all buildings that provide library services.

Library Organizational Model

Library staff indicate that Wellington County Council has been highly supportive of funding the acquisition of their branches over time and recognize the value provided by libraries. By controlling investment, Wellington County Library has been able to provide high quality facilities that have strong levels of satisfaction from the public, even if there may be an incorrect impression among some residents that their municipalities are responsible for funding the libraries.

As noted earlier, Wellington County and one of its lower-tier municipalities are exploring a lease-to-own agreement so that the building ownership is ultimately transferred to the Library. The lease-to-own option, which is still being worked out, provides the Library with an ability to distribute the cost of acquisition over a period of time. The municipality is building a new community centre which will contain a seniors' centre that replaces the one presently shared with the Library. This provides Wellington County Library with the ability to assume the vacated seniors' portion of the building to use as the Library deems fit though it is a unique circumstance driven by that municipality's decision to build a new community centre elsewhere.



Photo Credit: County of Wellington

5.4 Benefits & Challenges of the Current Approach

The 1989 Division of Responsibilities set a framework to ensure municipal assets can be cost-effectively utilized by Lambton County Library for library services. Noted benefits are a spirit of collaboration with municipalities, albeit to different degrees, along with a sharing of resources between different levels of government that ultimately provides fiscal value and enhanced service coverage potential for residents living across Lambton County. For municipalities that co-locate libraries within multi-use community centres and halls (as is the case in Thedford and Mooretown as examples), the intent is to provide residents with convenience while municipalities and the Library benefit from the foot traffic that each other generates in the multi-use facility.

Feedback received from Library and municipal staff through JLFR consultations reinforce intended benefits of collaboratively providing library services. Municipalities in Lambton County – with the possible exception of the City of Sarnia – have smaller staff complements and mandates focused on physical infrastructure/facility management more so than direct delivery of community services and programming. It would be difficult for Lambton County's lower-tier municipalities to directly govern, administer and operate their own municipal library system without adding to their own organizational infrastructure.

By contrast, the County of Lambton provides strong value by generating economies of scale through its organizational infrastructure that ensures qualified staffing is in place (including staff coverage between libraries located in different municipalities), provision of information technology and communications services, alignment with County cultural services and community development/outreach initiatives, and more. The result is an efficient approach to delivering library services to a highly dispersed population across Lambton County's large geographic territory.

The primary challenges with the existing Division of Responsibilities are a function of its age. When first crafted 30 years ago, libraries could be described as small 'single-purpose' facilities that enabled borrowing through their collections whereas today's libraries are larger and able to respond to greater demands that address a dynamic range of multi-service needs of residents. This translates into libraries that are used for many types of programs beyond what is offered through traditional collections. For example, modern libraries function as de facto community centres that enable community gathering, arts and culture, recreation, social and health services, food security and more; such services can have sizeable space implications and delivery is not possible at many Lambton County Library locations due to historically undersized floor plans.

Furthermore, municipal buildings have aged significantly over the past 30 years and no longer impart a modern look and feel; in fact, many libraries are well advanced into their lifecycles where certain building and mechanical systems require replacement. In addition to outdated aesthetics and antiquated conditions, the era of construction for a number of buildings housing the libraries do not meet barrier-free or universally accessible design specifications as do modern libraries built to conform to AODA standards. With AODA compliance for built infrastructure falling under the municipal responsibility under the Division of Responsibilities agreement, unfortunately barriers for persons living with disabilities in Lambton County continue to persist in a number of library parking lots, exterior entranceways and interior circulation areas although certain municipalities have identified and/or taken action required to address some of these constraints.

Collectively the lifecycle, accessibility and aesthetic upgrades required for older library buildings carry a multi-million dollar capital cost to improve functional aspects in a modern and inclusive manner for all Lambton residents. With municipalities trying to address other infrastructure deficits such as roads and sewers, making the case to reinvest in libraries has proved difficult at times. Combine this with the fact that Lambton County Library must align, coordinate and work with 10 separate municipalities and LKDSB to fulfill its facility strategy. Each partner has other funding priorities and differing abilities to pay for library improvements, and thus funding asset management and improvement of libraries is challenging.

Lambton County has worked with some of its municipalities to improve library buildings, with the Library even funding enhancements such as painting and flooring that technically reside with the municipality under the Division of Responsibilities. Lambton County is open to exploring how it could fund leasehold improvements, however, it must consider whether doing so is fiscally appropriate given that the existing Division of Responsibilities does not specify a length of term for a library to remain in a municipal building (i.e. the Library would want to remain in a building for a certain amount of time depending on its level of contribution to a municipally-owned asset).

The Division of Responsibilities articulates the general roles and obligations of a municipality and the County in using municipal buildings for library services. In terms of ongoing maintenance and repairs, however, Library and municipal staff both indicate that the Division of Responsibilities has been interpreted in different ways as staff persons from both parties have changed over the years. Library staff report having to carry out duties at some branches such as snow clearing and gardening, and are reliant on municipal facility management staff to address needed repairs in a timely manner. Some municipalities indicate that their facility maintenance staff are spread thin and unable to immediately remedy issues when identified by Library staff. Unless Library staff have the expertise or permission under County and municipal collective bargaining agreements to undertake work themselves, the quality of the library experience is impacted when building maintenance concerns are not addressed in a timely manner.

As it pertains to the Letter of Understanding with the LKDSB, the existing agreement for the public library at Brigden Public School is working well based on discussions with LKDSB's Superintendent of Business Operations and the Library. Both parties support the provisions contained in the agreement and note that challenges are largely related to communication and logistical implementation, particularly as it relates to the interpretation of agreements by school Principals and their discretion to manage student safety. As noted earlier in this Section, no formal understanding or agreement is in place for Grand Bend Public School and Lambton County Library and is thus considered to be a policy gap.

Libraries are prominent community focal points, and thus library buildings are a reflection of the municipalities and the County regardless of who owns and maintains them.

5.5 Opportunities to Explore Moving Forward

While the scope of the JLFR does not include formally amending the existing Division of Responsibilities or drafting a new agreement(s) altogether, it is apparent that there is a need to update the agreement to reflect the current needs and expectations of all parties involved. This is not necessarily to say that the existing Division of Responsibilities is entirely out of date as there are some prevailing philosophies and principles that offer much to build on such as a collaborative commitment to deliver library services that benefit Lambton County's communities.

Libraries are situated in prominent locations within their respective municipalities and the buildings are a reflection of the municipalities and the County. As such, all parties play an important role in meeting needs for library services. The following set of considerations is intended to provide a point of departure for Lambton County Library to explore as it updates its approach to delivering library space in concert with its partners.

Employing ARUPLO Typologies for Library Classification

Libraries across Lambton County have different design and operating characteristics that are primarily attributed to pre-amalgamation of municipalities and the library system. The origins of the library system are important because many of the pre-amalgamated buildings in which Lambton County Library is housed remain in operation to this day.

Lambton County Library buildings are vastly different in terms of their era of construction, design and size specification, amenity value and state of repair. This is a function of having 11 different property owners (10 municipalities and 1 school board), resulting in an inconsistent library user experience across the county-wide library system.

Certain library systems classify their libraries by geographic catchments (e.g. urban and rural, city-wide and neighbourhood, etc.), this system of typology alone would be inadequate for the needs of Lambton County Library. While geography is useful, Lambton County library buildings reflect diverse designs and states of repair combined with very little difference in the average size of Urban versus Rural Libraries (2,000 square feet excluding Sarnia Library). The approach in neighbouring library systems in Middlesex County and Huron County of categorizing libraries by design and amenity criteria is worth formalizing in the Lambton County context.

Categorizing Lambton County Library branches by their design specification and potentially level of maintenance/upkeep is a way to standardize some of the differences associated with having nearly a dozen individual property owners. It further reflects that Lambton County Library alone is not able to direct capital investment to provide a consistent library experience across all of its branches and that its institutional partners have finite capital resources as well. A classification system based on library quality can help the Library and its partners to prioritize investments to library locations where such investment generates the greatest return on investment and fulfills objectives of what a given library is intended to be in terms of its service potential.

The ARUPLO Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems provide a system for classifying libraries to aid library systems determine appropriate design standards and service levels. The ARUPLO Guidelines consider trends in both urban and rural areas of Ontario, and place an emphasis on how library systems can advance principles of rural sustainability. The Guidelines identify four types of libraries consisting of Small Branches, Medium Branches, Large Branches, and Urban Branches whose attributes can be determined a multitude of parameters including the size of the population served, local economic activity and seasonal demand. ARUPLO recognizes that each library system in Ontario is unique and that classification systems will vary. Lambton County Library has employed the ARUPLO definitions in consideration of a number of market, facility design, and service delivery factors.

For the purposes of the JLFR, the four types of libraries continued to be used for consistency in planning and decision-making. However, this report focuses largely upon space related factors namely the size of a library branch (adjusted from the Guidelines to reflect Lambton County Library characteristics), the catchment area that is services, along with a number of design amenities that are optimally contained within them. These are explained below through Table 8 and Table 9.

All libraries irrespective of classification should be designed in accordance with facility accessible standards for persons with disabilities as recommended earlier in this report while considering other design best practices advanced in Section 6.0 of the JLFR.

Table 8: Proposed Library Classification System

Library Type	Gross Floor Area	Catchment	Example Amenities
Urban Branch	Above 35,000 square feet	Municipal or County-Wide	Large Branch Amenities plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Seating and gathering lounge – Dedicated Program Areas and Meeting Rooms – Computer lab, Makerspace and Teen Area – Quiet Study and Group Collaboration areas – Historical items and/or archives – Food and beverage concession / café – Teaching / community kitchen
Large Branch	4,000 to 6,000 square feet	Community / Large Settlement Area	Medium Branch Amenities plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Library Program Area (dedicated or shared with other branch functions) – Storage for equipment and supplies – Study pods / kiosks – Staff Workroom
Medium Branch	2,000 to 3,999 square feet	Neighbourhood / Small Settlement Area	Small Branch Amenities plus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Dedicated areas and furniture for user seating – Children’s Area
Small Branch	Less than 2,000 square feet	Neighbourhood / Small Settlement Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Library Collections – 2 Computer workstations and printer – Customer service desk

Note: amenities listed are intended to be a general guide; other amenities may be rationalized pending design, community needs and intended library functions. GFA presented differ from ARUPLO Guidelines to better reflect characteristics of the Lambton County Library supply.

Table 9: Proposed Library Tiers, Expanded Definitions

Urban Branch – this classification applies to libraries that deliver the broadest range of services geared to education, economic development and employment, technology, arts and cultural services and others as appropriate. These libraries occupy a large floor area (over 35,000 square feet) in order to deliver the multi-faceted services and experiences afforded through a modern library.

Lambton County Library Locations (1): Sarnia

Large Branch – applicable to libraries that provide a high quality level of amenity and programming to Lambton County’s more populous settlements through appropriately sized floor areas ranging generally between 4,000 and 6,000 square feet.

Lambton County Library Locations (3): Forest, Grand Bend, Petrolia

Medium Branch - category applies to libraries that are able to deliver a slightly broader level of service and amenity value compared to a Basic Library such as small-scale seating areas, scoped library programs and sufficient space for staff duties. These libraries are generally between 2,000 and 3,999 square feet in size.

Lambton County Library Locations (9): Alvinston, Brigden, Camlachie, Clearwater, Corunna, Point Edward, Thedford, Watford, Wyoming

Small Branch - this category reflects a library that is considered undersized by ARUPLO standards and best practices in the library sector, generally below 2,000 square feet. A Basic Library is primarily focused on housing limited library collections and providing basic services such as (but not limited to) printing.

Lambton County Library Locations (12): Arkona, Bright’s Grove, Courtright, Florence, Inwood, Mooretown, Oil Springs, Port Franks, Port Lambton, Shetland, Sombra, Wilkesport

Notes: The Petrolia Library provides a level of amenity that is reflective of a Large Branch despite not meeting the GFA requirement for this tier. Mallroad Library is not reflected above as it will be permanently closed in the near-term and replaced with a library at Clearwater Arena.

Updating the Governance & Policy Basis for Facility Provision

Through documents such as this JLFR, the Cultural Services Strategic Plan and other library-specific analyses, County Council and Administration will implement their vision for library services in Lambton County. Based on past and present consultations, it is clear there is a growing expectation for Lambton County Library to deliver a greater range of services beyond its historical norms. To deliver on the vision and address needs of residents through physical space, two separate but inter-related policies are recommended.

The first is an update to the existing Division of Responsibilities that would ideally be reframed as “Shared Responsibilities” Policy or Agreement recognizing feedback from library and municipal stakeholders that desire a greater degree of flexibility and a “common sense” approach in addition to clearly delineating obligations of each party. So long as library buildings remain under the ownership of others, it remains reasonable that the building owners be primarily responsible for funding construction, major alterations and repairs (also see pages that follow) but that the Library may also contribute capital in exchange for security on its investment through building occupancy terms or other defined benefits.

The second policy would be a new document governing minimum facility standards that could potentially be appended to the proposed Shared Responsibilities Policy or stand on its own entirely. Referred to as a Facility Standards Policy (borrowed from Middlesex County Library terminology), this document would help ensure that library buildings are designed and maintained in a manner agreed upon by Lambton County Library, the lower-tier municipalities and LKDSB.

Strengthening Relationships & Communication

Lambton County Library strives to maintain positive relationships with all of the lower-tier municipalities and LKDSB. Conversations with all parties through the JLFR emphasized that everyone is aligned regarding the importance of communication with each other and that there is always room for improvement. Communication and relationship building can be challenged as staff come and go but there is recognition that policy development and operating practice should embed systematic opportunities for continued dialogue.

From a policy perspective related to the Shared Responsibilities Agreement and Facility Standards Policy noted earlier, communication can be engrained in principle as well as implementing formal and informal mechanisms. A couple of straightforward elements would be to specify periodic reviews of the above noted policies between the parties to discuss successes, challenges and lessons learned to apply to future policy updates. Another easy but effective tool would be to include a requirement for regular walk-throughs of each library branch attended by Library and municipal staff (and school board staff for shared libraries). Recommended at least once a year, walk-throughs would allow staff to review asset management needs at each branch and collectively discuss priorities to coordinate capital budgeting between the Library and its partners.

Securing a Sustainable Fiscal Approach

Implementation of the proposed Shared Responsibilities and Facility Standards Policies will have financial implications for new capital investment, asset management and operation of the libraries. The financial obligations of each party should be updated to deliver on the needs and expectations for library services of the public while recognizing that there is a role to play for the Library, the municipalities and LKDSB.

As discussed throughout Section 6.0 and 8.0 of the JLFR, there are a number of design trends guiding the library sector in terms of alignment with provincial legislation and generally accepted guidelines, as well as noted deficiencies of certain existing branches. The financial resources of the County Library and the lower-tier municipalities are finite and spread across a vast infrastructure portfolio that also faces a funding deficit.



Shetland Library, Dawn-Euphemia



Port Lambton Library, St. Clair

Creativity will be required to continually coordinate budgets of eleven different municipalities with that of the Library. As noted in earlier paragraphs, there may be an opportunity for the County to contribute to leasehold improvements despite this historically being borne entirely by the municipalities. The County has already funded some interior improvements such as painting and flooring to alleviate some pressures on municipalities while enhancing the in-library experiences of residents. The biggest risk that the County faces with respect to such investment is that it does not own its library buildings and decisions regarding occupancy and length of term are beyond the Library's control. This could be mitigated by developing agreements that specify a length of term and other rights of the Library if it were to contribute funding for leasehold improvements and other non-obligatory capital improvements.

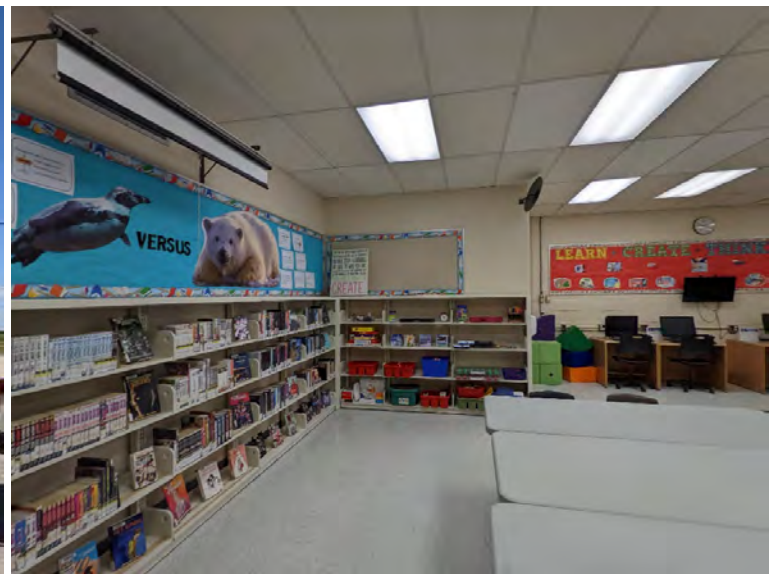
Updating the LKDSB Agreement

Like the historical agreement with the municipalities, Lambton County Library's approach with LKDSB provides a strong basis upon which to build. Since the current letter of understanding was crafted specifically for Brigden Library, it would be worthwhile to craft a new standardized agreement that applies to both Brigden and Grand Bend Libraries and their respective elementary schools. Any unique or specific elements pertaining to each location could be appended to the standardized agreement.

In addition to revisiting and reconfirming existing principles, roles and responsibilities found in the current letter of understanding, the updated agreement should reflect the following at a minimum:

- Formalize public access policies to libraries during school hours of operation – in consideration of Safe Schools legislation – in order to establish understanding of public use and school safety among Lambton County Library, LKDSB administration, and Principals for all schools that the policy/agreement applies.
- Embed regular walk-throughs between the Library and the LKDSB's Safe Schools Coordinator and Facility Management staff, preferably carried out annual at a minimum.

- Embed expectations and responsibilities of each party regarding Teacher-Librarians, including who provides them and/or funding allocation to these positions.
- Create policies and invest in self-serve and inventory control technology to mitigate unauthorized checkouts and untracked borrowing.
- Enhancing ways for shared libraries to operate for the benefit of students and the public without being unduly impacted by school closures and construction projects as well as maintaining their autonomy through provision of separate library entrances, ability to control temperature, and make minor modifications through fixtures and furnishings.



Brigden Library, St. Clair

5.6 Recommendations

- Rec. #1.** Adopt a Library Facility Classification System that aligns with the ARUPLO Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems and organizes facilities into Small, Medium, Large and Urban branch types based on catchment area and population served.
- Rec. #2.** Prepare a Facility Standards Policy that defines minimum standards for design, amenities and upkeep of buildings occupied by Lambton County Library along with provisions to allow for regular reviews and inspections of these buildings along with timely responses to maintenance and repair concerns. The Policy should articulate shared roles and responsibilities associated with the delivery of library spaces and services with flexibility to reflect locally-specific or unique elements. The Policy should reflect modern principles and best practices regarding governance, communication, fiscal sustainability, capital and operating obligations, performance evaluation, and other elements required to deliver quality library services expected by Lambton County residents. Facility standards should align with the Library Facility Classification System stated in Rec. #1 of this Joint Library Facilities Review.
- Rec. #3.** Consult with municipal and school board partners to evaluate each library building/space in accordance with the Facility Standards Policy (see JLFR Rec. #2) by exploring opportunities to meet desired design and amenity specifications along with maintenance and repair standards.
- Rec. #4.** As part of the development of a Facility Standards Policy (see JLFR Rec. #2), work with municipal and school board partners to define short, medium and long-term capital needs for library buildings, while exploring opportunities to fund enhanced levels of library service at municipally-owned properties through capital grant sources pursued in collaboration with the County of Lambton.

- Rec. #5.** Strive to provide libraries in buildings where complementary use or programming is possible (e.g. galleries, museums and other cultural facilities, recreation and community centres, health and social service centres, etc.).
- Rec. #6.** Schedule regular walk-through inspections of each library building with Library, municipal and school board staff to discuss issues, opportunities and collective priorities to inform municipal asset management plans in adherence to the proposed Facility Standards Policy. Joint walk-throughs should be conducted annually at a minimum.
- Rec. #7.** Update the letter of understanding with the Lambton Kent District School Board so that it includes libraries co-located with Grand Bend Public School in addition to Brigden Public School and any future shared school-library facilities.



Library
Entrance
← Off Higgins Street

PAT DAVIDSON
LIBRARY
WYOMING BRANCH
LIBRARY
OPEN
FOR
BROWSING

Section 6.0 Facility Design Guidance





Section 6.0

Facility Design Guidance

For Lambton County Library branches to attract greater usage and enable the range of programs and service being sought by residents, design-related considerations of space are of paramount importance. This Section describes how the form and function of the modern library translates into welcoming, inclusive and functional space that brings people together and delivers the types of services that allow communities to thrive.

6.1 The Library as a Place for All

Modern libraries offer engaging and innovative environments to attract a diverse range of patrons. Successful spaces offer intimacy, warmth, and comfort on a public scale. Libraries must accommodate an unprecedented diversity of clientele as demographics continue to evolve. Collections, service points, and lounge spaces must consider a range of physical, mental, and developmental disabilities, a broad age range, and diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Past and current consultations reinforce that Lambton County Library is a place for all people. Its doors are open to anybody that wishes to enter and people are welcomed without judgement. Lambton County Library employs a progressive operating philosophy and a commitment to inclusion in both its urban and rural settings.

Indigenous Perspectives in the Library

Events of the past few years have highlighted the critical importance that public education plays in reconciling the difficult history of Canada's past with new actions that begin to bring hope for a unified future. Lambton County shares borders with three First Nations (Kettle & Stony Point, Aamjiwnaang and Walpole Island) and was home to approximately 6,000 persons with Indigenous identity living off-reserve in 2021.

Conversations with Kettle & Stony Point First Nation were held as part of the JLFR. The First Nation operates a modest, single room library dedicated to the Indigenous collection while providing some workspace and access to the internet. These conversations emphasized that Indigenous Peoples wish to know that they are welcome in libraries outside of their territories and see themselves reflected in library collections, programs and services. For Kettle & Stony Point, poverty and transportation-related barriers were identified as barriers to knowledge and employment. An ability for Lambton County Library to supplement what is available through the First Nations library would help the community as well as potentially having access to makerspace equipment such as audio-visual technology for Elders to record and pass on Oral traditions before those stories are lost.

As learning and gathering places, settler libraries can foster exploration of Canada's pre-colonial past and enrich our outlook with the deep knowledge that comes from seeking diverse views and alternative understandings. The development or renovation of any library is an opportunity to move to a deeply embedded commitment to working with Indigenous communities. The facility planning and design process should seek ways to learn from Indigenous ways of seeing while collectively exploring how a library might better integrate its past and present with its future plans, enrich how a library transforms from space to place, and shape the way people inhabit and use it.



Saskatoon Central Library (Concept)
Photo Credit: Formline Architecture



Lambton County Library Ancestral
Lands Acknowledgement

To promote awareness and understanding of Indigenous culture, the physical space can be designed to reflect design elements found in Indigenous communities. Considering built libraries “as part of the land” on which they are situated is a design principle long embodied by Indigenous communities but is also congruent with current principles of environmental sustainability. Toronto Public Library’s design for Dawes Road Library celebrates Indigenous values of living on the land, sharing gifts of knowledge and supporting creativity. It reflects traditions such as the star blanket, roundhouse and is targeting zero-carbon emissions. The new Saskatoon Central Library is also taking design cues inspired by Indigenous and Métis culture, including a mass timber structure to express the importance of wood, rooted in the log poles of the tipi and the log cabin; Dawes Road Library and Saskatoon Public Library are currently in the conceptual phases, have retained Indigenous architects and are consulting with Indigenous communities.

Within the built space, libraries are a place to showcase Indigenous art and integrate Indigenous materials into the collection in recognition of the role that these peoples have played in the development of the country as well as to promote principles of Truth and Reconciliation. Common areas, program rooms, makerspaces and other areas are places where collaborative program delivery for Indigenous and Non-Indigenous library users can occur (e.g., to share knowledge, teach language, use makerspaces to create video or audio recordings of oral traditions, etc.). Similarly, the library’s outdoor space can be designed to reflect the connection to the land from native species plantings to built elements such as sacred fires and space conducive to sharing circles. The JLFR recommends engaging Indigenous communities to inform designs for new or substantially renovated Lambton County Library branches, along with other consultations aimed at improving inclusivity in existing spaces.

Libraries Serve Multiple Ages & Generations

Libraries are multi-generational settings that attract new parents and toddlers, school-age and post-secondary students, young professionals and seniors. Libraries have adapted their collections and programming to respond to the needs of diverse age groups, carefully remaining apprised of trends and interests pertaining to each. Examples of age-specific design elements include dedicated Children's and Teen Areas, comfortable lounges that are attractive to older adults looking to spend time in a branch, stroller parking areas, and more.

Section 3.2 of the JLFR speaks to the evolving age structure across Lambton County; consideration of changes in different age groups should inform space and service delivery in libraries but always ensuring sufficient flexibility to recognize the inherent multi-generational usage that takes place in all library branches.

Libraries are an Access Point for Vulnerable Populations

Public libraries are one of the few free spaces available to marginalized populations. The *Public Libraries Act* supports provision of equal and universal access to information and ensures free and equitable access to public libraries for all members of the community. Among other items, the *Act* specifies that there are to be no charges for admissions to library, in-library use of materials, borrowing / reserving materials, nor for information services. There are a number lower income households in Lambton County that benefit greatly from affordable and accessible public library services, including the 12,500 residents (10% of Lambton's total population) living below Statistics Canada's Low-Income Measure After Tax.

Lambton County has made substantial and targeted efforts to better service vulnerable populations, most recently exemplified through removal of late fees, Wi-Fi and computer upgrades to bridge the digital divide, and providing mobile book delivery services to retirement residences and long-term care homes. In 2021, the Library worked with the County's Social Services Division to position libraries in Alvinston, Corunna, Forest, Thedford and Wyoming as outreach points for rural Ontario Works clients by investing in meeting rooms that alleviate transportation-related challenges; the new meeting spaces are also used for general community use and library programs.

The Library as an Advocate for Social Justice

There has been a resurgence in recent years of attention placed upon social justice issues. Prominent areas of focus have included the LGBTQ2S, Indigenous and racialized communities. Libraries have raised awareness of social issues, educated the broader public, and supported historically marginalized populations. Efforts have largely centred upon supplementing collections with authors representing marginalized backgrounds and topics speaking to these communities, showcasing such collections at certain times of the year (e.g. Black History Month, Pride, etc.), delivering intentional programming (e.g. London Public Library offers a Drag Queen Storytime), and providing resources to these communities.

Libraries as Destinations for Newcomers and Diverse Cultures

Libraries have long been some of the first community destinations sought out by newcomers to Canada. Libraries are a place for recent immigrants to hone language and literary skills through access to collections and programs such as ESL, while providing a safe space to meet other people in their community. Lambton County Library is an invaluable access and referral point for newcomer services offered by all levels of government and agencies operating locally. Its libraries can be places that showcase the cultural backgrounds found within the communities they serve, while providing a welcoming and comfortable environment through the design of space, collections, and staffing. More than 12,000 Lambton County residents (10%) were born outside of Canada, the majority of whom reside in Sarnia.

Barrier-Free Accessibility in Libraries

The provincial *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) aims to make public spaces in Ontario accessible for persons with disabilities by the year 2025. Accessibility standards have been created as part of the AODA for businesses and organizations to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities have more opportunities to participate in everyday life. In addition to persons with disabilities, implementation of AODA and related standards will improve the experience for the growing population of seniors of whom some will have age-related health concerns that affect their mobility, sight, hearing, etc.

The Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11) made under the AODA requires that public libraries provide access to or arrange for the provision of access to accessible materials where they exist. Some library boards will have extensive collections of accessible materials, while other library systems may have smaller collections. When procuring new library materials, libraries are required to consider the accessibility needs of their users so that collections are accessible to the widest range of people. Part 4.1 of Integrated Accessibility Standards provides specific guidance pertaining to the design of public spaces and the built environment within which public libraries are a part.

Lambton County Library's capital projects have regard for the AODA, the County's Accessibility Plan along with multi-year accessibility plans where these have been prepared by lower-tier municipalities. Under the 1989 Division of Responsibilities, accessibility projects pertaining to the physical structure of a library branch are typically funded by the municipality while operational and service enhancements (such as provision of accessible furniture and collections) would be the responsibility of the County.

The most comprehensive accessibility enhancements in recent years have been carried out at the Sarnia Library which has made significant improvements to its entranceway, selected washrooms and elevator access. Selected improvements have also been made to improve accessibility at other branches but accessibility can always be improved so that branches are inclusive.

However, the majority of Lambton County Library buildings do not fully reflect barrier-free accessibility standards. In the absence of undertaking major capital projects such as renovations, there is no requirement under AODA legislation to upgrade building accessibility which continues to result in certain barriers being in place; for example, a person using a wheelchair would not be able to access the upper-level teen collections or historical room at Point Edward Library. To create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all library users, creating barrier-free buildings is a requirement.

Some considerations for Lambton County Library are to shorten bookshelves to suit individuals with low reach abilities, widening circulation paths for larger mobility devices and strollers, providing gender-neutral and universal washrooms with change tables, and improving service counter configurations to suit different needs of staff and patrons. Necessary barrier-free improvements can only be made if there is sufficient physical space to accommodate the changes.

Further, providing accommodation for those who have hearing and vocal challenges such as hard-of-hearing technology or assistive speaking devices in meeting rooms and at service counters would go a great distance with ensuring comfort for all. Lower lighting, sound attenuation and comfortable colour schemes can also aid those with sensory needs. Such actions could be carried out in tandem with interior furniture and shelving reconfigurations or minor renovations at a given Lambton County Library branch. In addition to facility design, accessible libraries also provide customer service and programs to engage persons with disabilities; as an example, London Public Library offers Sensory Storytimes for children on the autism spectrum while also providing Sensory Support Kits for in-branch use by neuro-diverse individuals.

In addition to such general considerations, Accessibility Plans prepared by selected municipalities identify the following library-specific points.

- **Sarnia's** Accessibility Plan, 2021-2026, notes that accessibility reviews have been completed for Sarnia Library and Bright's Grove Library, and that recommendations listed in these reviews are considered to be a priority. At time of writing the JLFR, such projects were not included in long-range capital plans.
- **Dawn-Euphemia's** Accessibility Plan, 2017-2022, identifies barriers to the Shetland Library entrance and washroom for persons using wheelchairs. The Shetland Library has added an exterior ramp, however, a small curb remains at the threshold of the door. The constraints of Shetland Library's physical size prevents any meaningful ability to correct the size of the washroom and ensure accessibility throughout the branch.

- **Lambton Shores’** Accessibility Plan, 2020-2022, indicates that the Municipality has installed automatic door openers at all libraries and will continue to renovate washrooms to be accessible.
- **Plympton-Wyoming’s** Accessibility Plan, 2019-2024, identifies accessibility improvements were carried out at Camlachie Library and Wyoming Library though some issues remain outstanding. Eight recommendations are made for Camlachie Library (the most significant ones have been recently addressed through parking lot improvements) while another three recommendations are made for Wyoming Library to address challenges posed by high bookshelves, a need for accessible parking spaces, and minor improvements to the entrance and washroom.
- **Warwick’s** Accessibility Plan, 2019-2024, identifies high bookshelves and lack of accessible parking spaces as issues along with the entrance to the Watford Library. While there is an accessible washroom and a lift added in recent years, the latter requires staff assistance to operate it. 21 recommendations are specifically made to improve accessibility in the branch.

Current Accessibility Plans for Brooke-Alvinston, Point Edward and Petrolia did not specifically mention their libraries. Accessibility Plans or related reviews were not found for Oil Springs and St. Clair.



Tall shelves / narrow aisles in Arkona Inaccessible steps at library entrances in Shetland and Sombra

6.2 The Library as a Beacon of Resiliency

“Hard times bring libraries’ value into sharper focus.”

~ American Library Association
The State of America’s Libraries

After the 2008 financial crisis, the American Library Association (ALA) found that the recession drove more Americans to libraries in search of employment resources. The ALA report stated that public libraries were a critical part of helping unemployed workers navigate the online job market, learn new skills (including resume building), deliver continuing education programs, and access government services.¹⁵ In a more recent report, the ALA President stated that despite the challenges brought on by COVID-19, 2021 “also proved to be a year of opportunity, as libraries kept Americans connected in ways that brought our communities closer. Buildings may not have been open, but libraries were never closed.”¹⁶

The ALA’s findings are applicable to libraries in Canada. With certain parallels between the 2008 economic downturn and the COVID-19 pandemic, it is reasonable to expect that Canada’s public library systems will once again be relied upon as a pillar of resiliency. However, the 2008 ALA report found that funding lagged following the recession as state and city budgets were cut, resulting in reduced library budgets and hindering their ability to operate at full capacity in the months that followed. In Canada, it remains to be seen if pandemic-related stimulus from senior levels of government will be sufficient to allow libraries to maintain their current funding allocations, and how funding will compare to the level of need being placed on the public library system as a result of any economic downturn.

To be successful, Lambton County Library must continue looking to research and lessons from across the world and invest time and resources in new technologies and approaches that assist in realizing the many benefits associated with access to library services. With rural school consolidation periodically being reviewed, the Library must remain prepared that any closure of schools may drive students to a library branch to use computer and internet services, particularly for people that do not have the means to access the technology at home.

¹⁵ American Library Association. 2010. The State of America’s Libraries. p.i

¹⁶ American Library Association. State of America’s Libraries Special Report: COVID-19. *Libraries Serve as First Restorers*. p.4

6.3 Partnerships & Community Hubs

Public libraries are increasingly being recognized as a community destination and an attractive public space with an enjoyable atmosphere. Many libraries embrace their role as a community hub and are focusing efforts on becoming civic integrators, particularly through partnerships and a focus on directly providing information or acting as a referral point for other civic services. The evolution of libraries as gateways and hubs of civic activity has resulted in non-traditional library spaces for creation, collaboration, socialization, and programming.

Lambton County Library incorporates some of these elements, to varying degrees across each branch. The Library has formed relationships with community partners and agencies whose mandates and services are complementary to its mission statement, invested in makerspaces and program rooms to increase programming outreach, and has partnered with municipalities and other County departments to build and deliver services out of libraries.

Although not the primary intent of the Library's service model, the use of the term "community hub" has gained much traction in recent years. With 12,000 in-person visits to Lambton County Library branches every week in 2019 (over 600,000 visits annually), there is no denying the Library's role as a civic integrator and community hub simply based on the number of people walking through its doors. As a place, a community hub is a central access point for a range of needed health and social services, along with cultural, recreational, and green spaces to nourish community life.

A community hub can be a library, recreation centre, school, early learning centre, older adult centre, community health centre, place of worship, or another public space. This concept offers many social benefits, strengthens community cohesion, and fosters enhanced quality of life by providing a central location to deliver a range of services in consultation with the residents who will use them. In 2015, the Province of Ontario published "Community Hubs in Ontario: A Strategic Framework and Action Plan" to assist in the planning and delivery of integrated hub projects and has offered partial funding for a number of initiatives. Implementation of community hub projects are beginning to be implemented across the Province, with some good examples emerging.

6.4 The Role of Technology in Libraries

Libraries are operating in a period of rapid technology innovation, enabling them to meet the needs of their customers in new and exciting ways such as through use of wireless devices that have made Wi-Fi and independent work/study stations more vital. “Digital inclusion” is a term that refers to ensuring all individuals and communities, including the most disadvantaged, are able to access and use digital technologies in today’s information-based society. Lambton County Library is a primary resource to advance digital inclusion and digital literacy through the technological infrastructure provided in its branches while also building technological capacity and incubating innovation within communities.

While computer commons are still at the heart of most libraries, Wi-Fi technology and people bringing their own mobile technology - such as laptops, tablets, e-books and smartphones - is resulting in all areas of a library branch being used for digital purposes. This is creating needs for strong Wi-Fi signals in all corners of a library and electrical outlets for charging among other requests. Some libraries have customized laptop lounges, seating bars, and cafés that provide unique amenities that complement other ‘traditional’ uses in the branch such as reading, socializing and studying.



Self-Service Checkout Kiosks
at Sarnia Library

As Lambton County Library embraces larger electronic collections and the “internet of things”, its library branches will need to explore upgrades to their electrical infrastructure as well as consider new spatial configurations and types of furniture to suit the expectations that library users have about access to technology. For example, under-carpet cabling systems that allow for power and data connection flexibility could open up potential for adapting former bookshelf spaces to work, or lounging spaces. Smaller details may include providing seating with a surface for laptop use while lounging and lighting that does not create a glare on monitors.

Broader considerations such as designing flexible spaces that extend beyond books and paper to enable content creation, virtual collaboration and equipment collections will challenge standards of what must be considered when planning for the new. The Library has also begun to explore ways to improve convenience to users by installing self-service checkout kiosks at the Sarnia Library which also alleviates pressures on staff working at the customer service desk.

Digital Literacy & Bridging the Digital Divide

Digital literacy is quickly expanding and libraries play a key role in the education process. New technologies are leading to the emergence of new public experiences, allowing libraries to reinforce their value to their community, including to younger generations. Through the provision of computer commons, makerspaces, program rooms and other areas, the public library has become a place for residents of all ages and backgrounds to learn about the types of technology prevalent in the global arena along with how to use technology for the betterment of their daily lives.

Libraries are also witnessing challenges relating to what is known as the “digital divide” where there are segments of the population that cannot afford and/or have the ability to navigate technology. Lambton County Library is a critical community resource that bridges the digital divide by enabling free access to the internet (nearly 70,000 internet uses in 2019), provision of computers and laptops for library cardholders to use, delivering programs and technical assistance to help residents navigate technology, and providing affordable printing, scanning and access to makerspace equipment.

Lambton County Library provides 106 computer workstations with internet access, the second most of any county library system behind only Middlesex County. This translates into 8.2 computers per 10,000 residents which is slightly below the county system average of 8.5 per 10,000 residents. Some library systems, particularly those facing in-branch space constraints, are revisiting the idea of dedicating space to computer workstations in favour of lending laptops, netbooks and tablets whose portable nature does not require dedicated desk space. This allows for library space to be reclaimed for other in-demand uses such as program and seating areas.

Presently, Lambton County Library does not lend portable devices (except for e-readers) for in-branch use but it bears noting that this is not necessarily uncommon in other library systems either. As Lambton County Library upgrades RFID and other security systems in its branches, a shift to lending portable devices is an opportunity to cost-effectively reclaim useable space for the public and could be especially helpful at small libraries such as Oil Springs and Port Franks but in mid-size libraries as well.



Sarnia Library Makerspace

Makerspaces & Digital Innovation Hubs

A makerspace is an important and frequently requested program element found in any new library. The Makerspace at Sarnia Library is a good example of Lambton County Library's efforts to advance technological creativity and productivity. It contains equipment such as 3D printers, laser cutters, button makers, VHS to DVD digitizing tools, sewing machines and more. The Library and its community partners offer programs within the makerspace along with workshops and training sessions. A mobile makerspace service is also provided that rotates selected equipment across branches system-wide.

Some library systems are positioning makerspaces as 'Digital Innovation Hubs' that advance the fundamental premise by working with other agencies and delivering a broader range of programming. As an example, Brampton Library's MakerSpace Brampton initiative is a joint venture with the City's Economic Development Office and Sheridan College's Faculty of Applied Science and Technology with interactive equipment and program offerings for all ages. While Sarnia Library's Makerspace is a good start, it was not designed or set up to create a sense of enclosure, nor is it currently furnished as a 'true' lab or collaborative space.

Digital Programming

Lambton County Library's focus on digital content and programming has proven popular and even invaluable during the COVID-19 pandemic. The act of borrowing printed books is still by far the most popular activity at libraries, however, the desire for variety and different library formats has increased considerably in recent years. A 2015 Market Probe Survey commissioned by the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries revealed that 66% of library cardholders mostly read in hard copy while 17% mostly read in electronic format and 18% read both. Although there may be a growing tendency away from physical collections and toward digital access, broad trends indicate that many people, including children and youth, still prefer books and other physical items.

As a result, physical collections will continue to coexist with emerging digital formats for the foreseeable future and illustrates the necessity of maintaining a diverse collection to meet the needs of the entire community. Therefore, the impact of technology has not significantly lessened the demand for traditional materials but in fact has led to greater space needs, particularly for study/learning spaces and creative spaces. Self-serve technologies are now ubiquitous and have “unchained” library staff from their desks thereby allowing them to be flexibly deployed wherever and however necessary within the branch or community.

In addition to spaces that enable physical access to technology and equipment, technology procurement, renewal, systems data analysis, and related programming have become a key focus for Public Libraries in recent years. Not only can technology introduce the community and staff to new possibilities, it can also streamline and improve existing processes.

6.5 Food Security & Food Literacy

Modern libraries systems are taking an active role in food, food nutrition, food security and food justice. In doing so, libraries not only educate their public but can also advance the fun aspects of food by promoting “farm to table” concepts and bringing communities together through “a common language of food” using a combination of space, programs and initiatives. Lambton County’s agricultural heritage lends itself well to localized food literacy initiatives through the Library including education and stewardship of some Canada’s most fertile farming lands along with potential to contributing towards rural economic development.

Food security means that all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their food preferences and dietary needs for an active and healthy life.¹⁷ Food justice is a similar principal to food security, however, it is a social movement oriented to provide access to healthy, nutritious and affordable food particularly where there may be “food deserts.” Progressive library systems across North America are promoting food justice primarily through: distribution of food through branches; food literacy and food education/nutrition programs; culinary instruction; and supporting

¹⁷ Report of the World Food Summit, 1996.

community-based organizations with a mandate towards food justice through promotion and/or partnerships.

Lambton County Library's Seed Library is a progressive initiative consistent with other leading library systems that form part of food security and food literacy programs. With the support of One Seed Lambton, the Seed Library is a free, community-driven seed borrowing system that provides an opportunity for people to grow their own healthy food. Library card holders borrow vegetable and herb seeds that they plant, grow, and harvest while letting a few plants mature and return to seed. Borrowers then return the new seeds to the Library to help sustain the collection. Seed libraries can support the local food system and urban agriculture, foster seed saving literacy, and promote locally adapted plant genetics including non-GMO food sources. Seed libraries are often supported by programs such as how to grow a garden, author talks and discussion clubs.

Some library systems directly deliver or partner with local food-oriented organizations to deliver outdoor programs. Kingston Frontenac Public Library (KFPL) has developed a community garden at one of its libraries in partnership with a local agency with produce grown being shared among volunteers and donated to the community. KFPL also has plans to host a weekly Community Harvest Market at that same branch during the growing season to provide the community with access to affordable produce.

A newer trend is the integration of teaching kitchens into the library setting in order to support programming delivered by a library; these can be larger facilities inspired by the "commercial/industrial" kitchen concept that provides quality finishes, ventilation systems and appliances to smaller warming kitchens akin to what might be found at home. Mississauga Library is including a large teaching kitchen as part of the reconstruction of its Central Library. "The Kitchen" at Edmonton Public Library's Stanley A. Milner branch is an open concept 2,100 square foot space promoting food literacy, health and nutrition, experimentation and other culinary opportunities while responding to interests of local "foodies."

The Kitchen also supports Edmonton's growing ethno-cultural populations looking for community space, particularly those where food and cooking are a major part of their culture. EPL programs The Kitchen with live and virtual classes along with cooking demonstrations led by instructors, local

chefs and restaurateurs; much like a makerspace is optimally staffed by a person experienced in creative industries, EPL employs a 'Kitchen Coordinator' with a background in restaurants and catering.



The Kitchen at Edmonton Public Library. Photo Credit: Edmonton Public Library

The availability of food and beverage retail services (e.g., cafes and other forms of concessions) is now an established trend building on the coffee shop experience that has been combined with bookstores for many years. Food services is not necessarily viewed as a revenue generator – although it can provide a non-traditional revenue stream – as much as it is intended to be a comfort-oriented service that encourages more frequent visits and longer stays in the library. Cafés and staffed food services tend to be best suited in larger, higher-order branches where foot traffic supports the business viability; however, rural or neighbourhood-level branches can support consumption of food through vending machines and operating practices that allow library users to bring food and drink into appropriate areas of the library.

Whether providing cafes or kitchens, availability of space is crucial in terms of providing the necessary infrastructure and equipment, as well as the ability to program the space and allow for consumption. For example, electrical and plumbing servicing may be needed along with fire suppression and exhaust systems for kitchens. The small size of a number of Lambton County Library branches is also such that partnerships with the lower-tier municipalities and/or community partners (e.g. faith-based organizations, cultural clubs, service clubs, etc.) would be required, potentially in conjunction with the recreation departments that are responsible for the buildings shared with libraries.

6.6 Bringing the Library Outside



Rotary Reading Garden, London ON
Photo Credit: Canadian Society of
Landscape Architects



Audley Library Reading Garden &
Patio, Ajax ON



HollisWealth Story Pod,
Newmarket ON
Photo Credit: Town of Newmarket

The public library is gaining an outdoor presence in response to growing public demand trends. Requests for outdoor reading areas through patios and gardens are growing as people seek a connection to nature or simply get fresh air. Libraries are also delivering programming and events in their outdoor spaces for the benefit of their users as well as to support cultural creatives, economic development and place-making objectives of others. The Central Library in downtown London, Ontario is one example where weekly concerts featuring local musicians have been introduced over the office lunch hour in its 16,000 square foot Rotary Reading Garden while also tying in similar library programs within that garden to support community events held along London’s pedestrian-oriented “Flex Street.”

COVID-19 highlighted that people are looking for library services outside of the branch interior. Library systems showed how the pandemic exposed the “digital divide” whereby users reliant on public Wi-Fi were left vulnerable when libraries were closed. The Somerville Library in Massachusetts, like many systems in North America, observed people sitting in library parking lots trying to obtain a Wi-Fi signal; Somerville Library transformed an empty courtyard at its Central Branch into a public workspace using basic wood pallets, chairs, tables, umbrellas, and a heater (for the winter) with access to power outlets and use of Wi-Fi extenders. This form of ‘tactical urbanism’ yielded immediate benefits and was a low-cost endeavour compared to a traditional design build process.¹⁸

Building on the Little Free Library concept where community members lend their own materials, some library systems are advancing their own outdoor enclosures. The HollisWealth Story Pod in Newmarket is a community-supported lending library located in the historic downtown area. The Story Pod is an abstract, black box that is open during the day – like the covers of a book – where visitors can take or leave something to read, or lounge on the built-in seating for reading or story times. At night, the doors are locked and use solar powered lighting to create a lantern like effect to provide ambience for night markets or community events.¹⁹

¹⁸ Project for Public Spaces. How a Library is Reimagining Public Wi-Fi during COVID-19. Greiner, A. (2021, Feb. 7). Accessed from <https://www.pps.org>

¹⁹ Arch Daily. Story Pod / Atelier Kastelic Buffey. Accessed from <https://www.archdaily.com>

The Sarnia Library offers a robust landscaping array with historical pieces and a concrete pad at the rear that could be used for seating. Outdoor elements are more limited at other branches though the Port Franks Library has the benefit of being co-located with a major park which can be used by library users while the Corunna Library has a hardscaped street frontage.

Lambton County Library has been creatively exploring use of the outdoors in other ways as well. It has installed Story Walks outside of certain libraries such as Port Franks and Mooretown that display pages from books along a trail. Well-designed Story Walks combine literacy with physical activity and public art, with Lambton County adopting a promising practice in line with other progressive library systems.

Lambton County Library also promotes 'physical literacy' and enables connections to the outside of the library setting through strategic initiatives with lower-tier municipalities, Lambton Public Health, Ontario Parks and other agencies. With its partners, the Library has created an 'active lifestyle collection' that comprises adult and children's snowshoes that are available for a week-long loan, pedometers that can be lent to individuals or groups, and GPS units for geocaching. Lambton County Library lends out the Ontario Parks Pass that provides borrowers with entry and a day-use coupon for any Provincial Park. The Library received the passes from Ontario Parks as a part of its library day-use vehicle lending program that encourages Ontario residents to spend time outdoors and take advantage of the benefits being outdoors provides to mental and physical health.



Corunna Library, St. Clair



Sarnia Library



Storywalk at Port Franks Library, Lambton Shores

6.7 Environmentally Resilient Designs

Addressing climate change is becoming a priority of many communities in order to lead the development of resilient and low-carbon communities. Lambton County Library branches are in various stages of service life and as the state of good repair program advances, upgrades to more energy efficient types of electrical and mechanical equipment, air sealing of building envelopes and improvements in the insulation levels of building glazing, walls and roofs will help minimize energy consumption.

The design and construction of new public facilities brings further opportunity to lead and make significant impacts with climate change action. There is a national Green Building Standard for New Construction, using industry standards such as the Canada Green Building Council Zero Carbon Design guide to ensure that a building's carbon footprint is considered at every stage of its life, starting at the conception stage, to construction, operation and eventual end of use.

Low embodied carbon for designing facilities must include considerations of prioritizing user comfort over air temperatures, sourcing local and sustainable materials and integrating passive design strategies, such as:

- Orienting the building to take advantage of solar and wind exposures, including natural light and ventilation;
- Designing elegant structures that minimize material use; and
- Detailing buildings to ensure long operational life and lower maintenance costs.

Meeting these standards for all future library work will upgrade existing libraries to the 21st century. It will require cooperation with municipal partners and the LKDSB as the building owners primarily responsible for building and mechanical system upgrades. Adoption of environmentally progressive building can position Lambton County Library and its partners to be at the forefront of the industry while generating local benefits through environmental and financial means. The Library has integrated environmental stewardship and education into its service delivery such as lending 'Kill-A-Watt™' meters (supplied by Bluewater Power) to help calculate the cost of running household appliances.

6.8 Emerging Library Spaces & Service Formats

Borrowing books and materials remains one of the most popular reasons for visiting libraries. However, lending services are evolving (e.g., a physical collection that is more focused on popular materials and growing digital resources) and being supplemented by an increasing focus on creation and collaboration in library spaces. This is leading to a reduced collections footprint that allows room for more seating, meeting and study.

However, this is not to say that libraries require less space; in fact, the opposite is true as greater demands are being placed on floor area for the library of “things”, barrier-free accessible features, and program space. Pre-pandemic borrowing rates were substantial and increasing, however, borrowing is but one measure of a library’s use. Past and ongoing consultations showed that library users also rely on Lambton County Library to study, use technology and access programs; both urban and rural branches are used for social connection and, in some cases, are the only public facility available nearby.

The public library is taking new forms in relation to its evolution towards serving a broader range of community needs but also in response to increasing access to the number of service points, the digital age that libraries are operating in today, as well as capital and operational funding challenges. The challenge of having enough space to provide knowledge is embedded in the concept of a library.

From Bookmobiles to Mobile Library Outreach Service

Bookmobiles embody a fundamental premise of the public library and evolved from the aim to make knowledge free and accessible to all. As public libraries were being established throughout cities during the 19th Century, rural populations remained isolated from library service. Putting curated collections on wheels so that librarians could bring the service to the people was an inventive and practical solution to the challenge of serving remote communities.



Lambton County's first bookmobile dates back to the early 1930s in the form of a trailer. The Library's bookmobile was recently retired after 20 years of service and the model has evolved to a 'Mobile Library Service' using a van that delivers library materials and programs to 15 retirement and long-term care homes throughout Lambton County in an effort to better serve library patrons that may have difficulty accessing transportation or have mobility challenges.



The Mobile Library Service operates from Sarnia Library, with library staff selecting and delivering materials and programs. The van is also taken to special events where Library staff provide programs on the go. Cities such as Toronto, Guelph and Ottawa along with smaller systems such as Wasaga Beach have also committed investments in new vehicles proving that - despite the proliferation of all things digital - providing library services to those who might be challenged by distance, time or mobility remains a contemporary and relevant issue.



Mobile library services give libraries flexibility to respond to changing needs. As COVID-19 demonstrated, bookmobiles which can provide services outside, were able to remain operational with ease. Enabling civic engagement and social interaction in a time when people faced isolation highlighted the intangible value that a library service brings to a community. As Lambton County Library recognized, however, bookmobiles also had their challenges such as higher travel-related costs for fuel and maintenance – exacerbated by the large geographic territory served – as well as staff time and incompatibility with certain County and municipal environmental objectives (e.g. a move to net zero emissions).



Lambton County Library Bookmobiles and Mobile Library Service, circa 1935, 1949, 2011 & 2022

Photo Credits: Lambton County Museums, Lambton County Library

In the case of Lambton County, having 25 libraries means library service is provided in or near every major settlement. Lambton County Library is also separately piloting a delivery-by-mail program for persons with demonstrable mobility challenges and thus there is a robust coverage in place to overcome some traditional barriers faced by people with reduced mobility. The evolution of Lambton County Library's mobile service model is such that reintroduction of a traditional bookmobile is not recommended (pending outcomes of the Mobile Library Service and mail delivery initiatives).

Modular Libraries

Building facilities to meet the needs of growing communities are often subject to limitations of space, time and money. Large capital investments into branches that deliver quickly enough to respond to growth and adequately address community needs are major challenges. Some library systems are looking to prefabricated buildings in response, offering simple structures that can be built within a factory so that disruption with construction is minimized.

Oakville Public Library's Sixteen Mile Branch is a 5,000 square foot prefabricated structure that recently opened as a pop-up location in order to maintain library services during the construction of a new permanent building (being built on the site of the original demolished library). The pop-up is made up of seven, 60 foot long modular units that were built at a factory, transported to Oakville and then connected onsite. The facility is fully demountable and will be deployed elsewhere once the new branch is built.



Sixteen Mile Branch, Oakville ON

Photo Credit: Town of Oakville

Prefabricated buildings have come a long way from the vinyl clad, windowless boxes of the past. Depending on the degree of mobility required, these buildings can be fully customized to be much more welcoming with large glazed areas and tactile claddings and to project a recognizable public facility. The American Green Building Council built an education centre in Baltimore, MD, to LEED standards. The movable, 14 foot by 43 foot, prefabricated building includes flexible education space for workshops, training programs and community activities.



US Green Building Council, Green Education Centre, Baltimore MD

Photo Credit: Modular Genius

Although construction costs are not necessarily less, modular libraries do provide an option for longer term as well as interim solutions which could be deployed to multiple locations within its service life and may be worth considering as part of a larger plan to expand library services. While this form of library has not been specifically recommended in the JLFR, consideration may be appropriate depending on future outlook for library space in Lambton County.

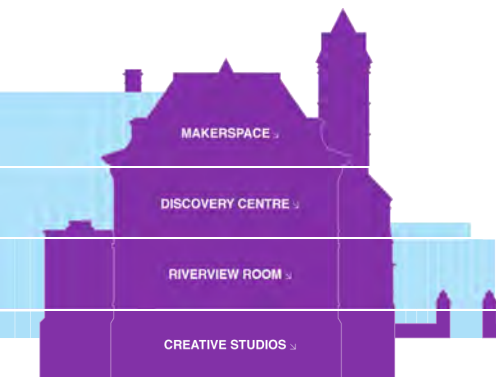
Bookless Libraries

Among challenges brought on by COVID-19, the acceleration of digital media literacy and an exposure to accomplishing tasks online can be perceived as a positive outcome of the pandemic. This does not imply that technology has become accessible to all but it further emphasizes the critical need to ensure that access to technology is available to all.

A transition to technological services gained momentum with the advent of personal computers. The extreme manifestations of this are libraries that have computer labs in place of physical book collections. Bexar County's BiblioTech System in San Antonio, Texas, focuses completely on providing access to technology and spaces for collaboration and creative production. All three branch locations are located in at-risk neighbourhoods where many families do not have the means to own their own computer equipment. This system operates in cooperation with the city's traditional library system.

Bookless libraries also focus on programming and community social spaces in place of book collections. The City of Cambridge with Cambridge Library opened Canada's first bookless library. The award-winning project is a partnership between the City and its Idea Exchange Division (the Public Library) who focus on delivering programs that supports lifelong learning and creativity. The City needed to find a way to restore a national, heritage post office building into a vital part of its public urban infrastructure and the Idea Exchange needed spaces for their programs. The Old Post Office, which is an integration of new spaces within the restored building, houses a black box theatre, film and audio recording suites, maker spaces, wood and metal workshop tools, a roof top terrace and a community lounge area.

While Lambton County Library does not operate bookless libraries, some of its rural branches have limited collections. This is partly in response to the size of the branch but also to recognize that in some areas the library serves more of a social function as one of the few (or only) public gathering places in the vicinity. Such branches are thus important for holds pick-ups, access to internet or technology, and/or the ability to participate in library programs.



Cambridge Idea Exchange,
Old Post Office
Photo Credit: Cambridge Public
Library

'Express' and 'Extended Access' Libraries

Vaughan Public Library and Oakville Public Library have taken a new approach to increasing the number of service points to supplement their branch model. A traditional branch is being built in the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre alongside a 400 square foot storefront library space known as the VMC Express; these are being built as part of a mixed-use project involving multiple partners including the land development community.

OPL Express locations are specifically targeted with convenience in mind for time-pressed residents by providing service points in high-traffic community centres; OPL Express locations enable pick-ups through holds lockers, returns via drop-off bins, as well as browse and borrow through self-serve kiosks/book vending machines. Middlesex County Library and Kingston Frontenac Public Library (KFPL) both provide a "Novel Branch" (kiosk); Middlesex County Library's kiosk is placed at the Adelaide Metcalfe Municipal Office while KFPL's is located at a community centre and has plans to install another at a new secondary school. Library users scan their library card and enter a PIN to open the kiosk, and then browse and borrow materials; the kiosk tracks and records what is removed using RFID.

Express Libraries are a convenient and cost-effective way for libraries to align with urban objectives to create walkable and transit-supportive communities. However, Express Libraries are not necessarily relegated to high density locations. Like Lambton County Library, Hamilton Public Library (HPL) serves a large geographic region including rural areas with highly dispersed populations. Historically its Freulton Branch was only open for 17 hours per week due to its more remote location but since 2017 has been operating using a 'model through which a library card is used to gain access to the branch during the hours that staff are not present under HPL's "Rural Extended Access Service." All books and technology are available during extended hours and there is a direct line to the central library for support. Three rural branches now offer the Extended Access service.



NovelBranch Kiosk, Adelaide-Metcalfe
Photo Credit: Middlesex County Library



VMC Library & VMC Express
Photo Credit: Vaughan Public Libraries



Photo Credit: Hamilton Public Library

In 2021, Essex County Library piloted an Extended Community Access Services program to extend branch hours in rural communities, starting with its McGregor Branch that increased hours of operation from just 17 hours to 49 hours per week. Using the Bibliotheca Open Plus self-service technology purchased through funding from the Municipal Modernization Program, no jobs or other hours were cut. Over the next year, Kingston Frontenac Public Library (KFPL) will be testing out a similar 'Extended Hours' program at its Pittsburgh Branch that would result in an additional 22 hours per week of unstaffed public access over and above the existing staffed hours currently provided (meaning no job losses are planned as a result). KFPL patrons will use their library card and a PIN to gain access using a door keypad, and are able to connect with library staff in other branches when assistance is needed.

For extended community access models to be successful, improvements to physical space are required. For example, modifications to doorways, locking mechanisms, video surveillance and other infrastructure will be needed to secure a library's assets and ensure public safety.

Hours of operation and staffing are beyond the scope of the JLFR; however, the extended access programs being explored across Ontario add an alternative to increase hours of operation at one library without having to reallocate existing library staff complements from another branch where hours would otherwise be reduced. Installation of holds lockers are another option though are largely relegated to pickup service when a physical branch is closed, provided the locker can still be accessed (technology and build quality is improving which can allow for exterior holds lockers as well).

Library users generally place strong value in having library staff being available, however, province-wide consultations also prioritize longer hours of operation and increased access to library services such as holds lockers. Pragmatically, a balance will need to be struck between hours of operation in relation to staffing costs which could present a challenge if current funding allocations are not to be increased in line with services. Future operational assessments carried out by Lambton County Library would need to investigate this further.

The Library of Things

As alluded through library staff consultations and best practices presented in certain part of this Section, library collections in Lambton County and progressive systems have expanded beyond books and reference materials to include non-traditional items such as sporting goods, tools, musical instruments, plant seeds, and other items useful to households and individuals.

The ‘Library of Things’ is a term that can pertain to initiatives of public library systems but also can refer to municipal and community-based lending that is organized by residents or businesses, sometimes for a monthly or annual membership fee. A Library of Things generally pertains to any collection of objects, equipment or items that is loaned to others that centre on Do-It-Yourself culture and the sharing economy. As examples, St. Catharines Public Library’s Library of Things includes nature explorer and fishing kits for children and youth, life vests (to support fishing kits), board games, sporting equipment, memory care kits, tool sets, as well as tablets and Nintendo Switch consoles. Other library systems embracing the Library of Things include Peterborough Public Library, Brampton Library, Caledon Public Library, Vaughan Public Library and more.

To be able to provide a Library of Things, appropriate physical infrastructure and organizational supports are required. At a minimum, storage space is needed to house objects but space requirements are defined by the type of objects and how many there are; as an example the Municipality of South Dundas’ Sports Lending Library (operating separately from its SDG Library) allows residents to borrow stand-up paddleboards, canoes and kayaks but the space requirements are such that it stores this equipment at a local arena. Smaller items may require less storage or display space but many libraries operated by Lambton County Library are already faced with space-related pressures. As such, new library buildings and renovation/expansion of existing libraries should factor in spaces to support a Library of Things in addition to being able to house traditional supplies and equipment for programming and administrative functions.

6.9 Recommendations

- Rec. #8.** Engage area First Nations and Indigenous communities in discussions about how new and existing Lambton County Library branches can be more welcoming of Indigenous Peoples. The role of the Library in addressing applicable Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission should be examined with Indigenous communities and should include, but not be limited to, raising awareness of Indigenous history and culture through the design and programming of library space.
- Rec. #9.** In line with a Facility Standards Policy (see JLFR Rec. #2), advocate the importance of implementing outstanding recommendations and correcting issues identified in municipal Accessibility Plans and Sustainability Plans to municipal partners. Where an accessibility or energy efficiency review for a Lambton County Library branch has not been completed in the past 5 years, building owners should be strongly encouraged to complete such assessments to inform future municipal asset management plans and/or capital budgets.
- Rec. #10.** In addition to Rec. #8 and Rec. #9 of this Joint Library Facilities Review, engage other under-represented or otherwise marginalized populations to understand how the design of Lambton County Library branches can better meet the needs of persons experiencing homelessness or low income, the LGBTQ2S+ community, neuro-diverse individuals, and newcomers to Canada at a minimum.
- Rec. #11.** Explore use of the outdoor spaces at or near libraries for services and programs delivered by Lambton County Library and its partners through reading gardens and enhanced landscaping, allotment gardens. Coordination will be required with the lower-tier municipalities with respect to building and maintaining outdoor spaces for the Library.
- Rec. #12.** Install automatic people-counters at all Lambton County Library branches in order to derive meaningful visitation/usage data to inform decision-making and capital investments for a given branch. Self-service kiosks should also be installed at higher use libraries to improve user convenience and efficiencies for staff time.

Section 7.0 County-Wide Space Analysis





Section 7.0

County-Wide Space Analysis

This Section assesses the need for library space across Lambton County by establishing a planning framework through branch typologies, use of per capita standards and a geospatial analysis. Analysis specific to each municipality is contained in Section 8.0 and builds on county-wide assessments.



7.1 Per Capita Space Analysis

Use of per capita standards remains as a reasonable methodology for most urban and rural library systems to project high-level needs. Despite the recent evolution of library holdings and roles, library usage levels remain strong and a standards-based approach endures. 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 (Ontario Public Library Guidelines Monitoring and Accreditation Council, 7th edition 2017) and Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems (Administrators of Rural-Urban Public Libraries of Ontario – ARUPLO, 3rd edition 2017), which provide several measures to assist libraries in future planning in areas such as staffing, space, collection size, collection use and hours.



A metric of 0.6 square feet per capita was traditionally advanced by provincial library bodies for system-wide space assessments. In more recent years, a higher measure of 1.0 square feet per capita has been promoted within the sector though the ability of a library system to attain any guideline is largely a function of: a) the size of their population; b) the amount of library space historically provided; and c) funding allocated by municipalities to their library system. It bears noting that these traditional guidelines do not convey quality, convenience, or user satisfaction. Therefore, regular public engagement is vital to identifying local measures of success.

Space Provision Rates Across Lambton County

Lambton County Library's system-wide supply of 87,817 square feet translates into 0.7 square feet of library space per capita. Segmenting service levels by library types in relation to the populations that they serve results in the following:

- **Urban Branches – 0.63 square feet per capita** based on Sarnia and Point Edward's collective population of 73,977; and
- **Rural Branches – 0.79 square feet per capita** based on a population of 52,296 across the nine rural municipalities.

Space provision rates vary dramatically across Lambton County from just 0.4 square feet per capita in Petrolia to 2.0 square feet per capita in Point Edward (Figure 13). Sarnia is home to 56% of Lambton County's population and 48% of the total library space but the City's service level of 0.6 square feet per capita is slightly below the system-wide average. That said, service levels are strong in most lower-tier municipalities with the exception of Enniskillen (where no libraries exist) and Petrolia, the latter of which has an above-average library design and aesthetic quality that results in a strong user experience. Rural Libraries presently service their municipalities at a collective rate of 0.79 square feet per capita which is 25% higher than the rate for Urban Libraries; a higher level of service is common in rural areas as more physical library locations tend to be required in order to serve larger territories with dispersed populations.

Per Capita Space in other County Library Systems

A benchmarking exercise was undertaken among county library systems in Ontario. The average per capita library space provision was 0.7 square feet per capita with Lambton County Library operating the most service points and providing the second highest total GFA behind only Wellington County Library.²⁰

²⁰ Ontario Public Library Statistics, 2021.

Lambton County Library's system-wide supply of 87,817 square feet translates into 0.7 square feet of library space per capita which is in line with other county library systems.

It is recommended that Lambton County Library maintain its existing service level of 0.7 square feet per capita.

7.2 Lambton County Space Analysis

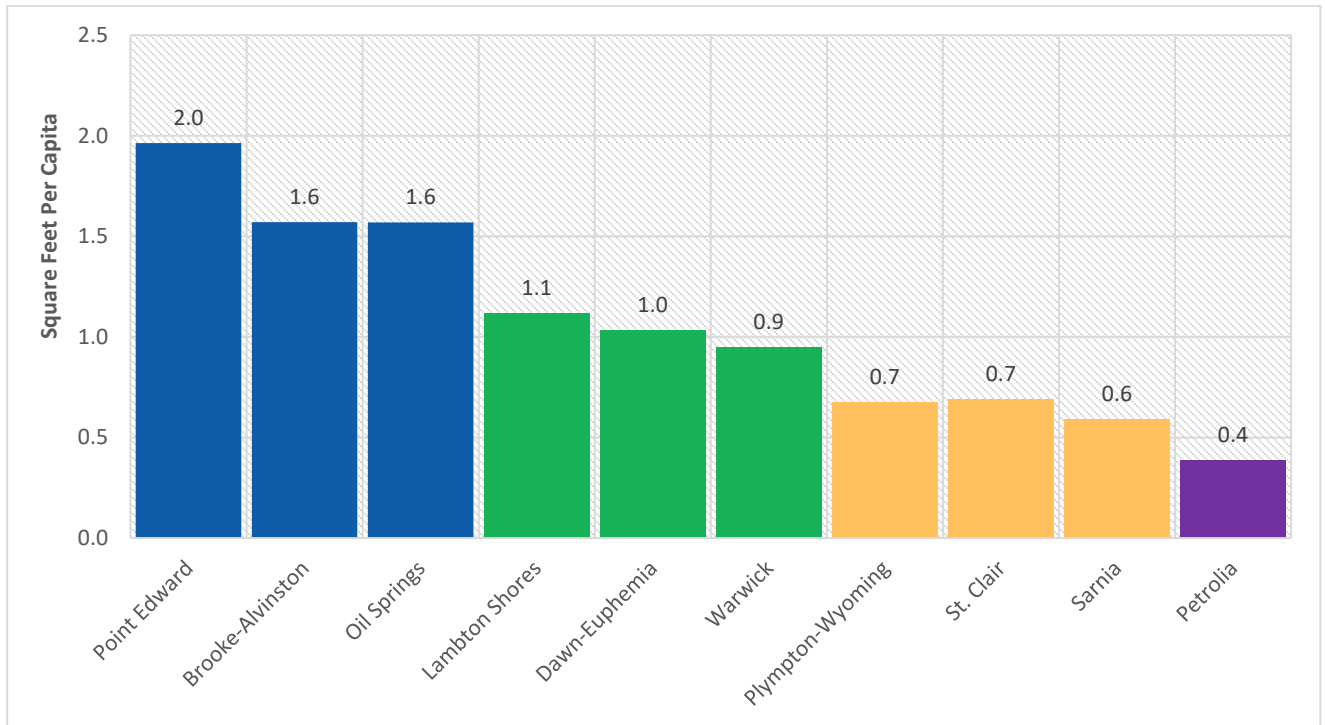
Lambton County Library's provision level of 0.7 square feet per capita is a reasonable rate when measured with ARUPLO Guidelines and progressive library systems across Ontario. As shown through the spatial analysis, the 25 library service points offer strong coverage in relation to areas where Lambton's residential populations are concentrated.

Trends in the library sector, derived from community engagement and literature, demonstrate a need for more library space as opposed to less. For example, ARUPLO Guidelines referenced earlier in this Section have moved to a higher rate of library space per capita in recent years due to the added space required to make libraries compliant with AODA legislation (e.g. lower but more shelving, wider aisle widths, and accessible washrooms to accommodate persons with disabilities), sufficient areas devoted to collections, computer workstations and user seating, as well as other public service and staff areas.

It is recommended that the existing service level of 0.7 square feet per capita be maintained to ensure that Lambton County Library:

- falls within the range supported by provincial library bodies and sector leaders such as ARUPLO that have rationalized service level standards using evidence-based approaches;
- is able to maintain its service levels in line with program and service needs expressed by its public;
- aligns with rates of service being targeted by a number of peer library systems;
- provides capacity to address peak-season demands generated by seasonal residents and postsecondary student populations for a portion of the year;
- keeps pace with needs arising from population growth; and
- promotes fiscal responsibility and sustainability by maintaining historic levels of service that are used to determine growth-related funding for eligible capital projects through Development Charges.

Figure 13: Rate of Space Provision by Municipality, 2022



Municipality	Total GFA	Sq. Ft. Per Capita
Brooke-Alvinston	3,704 ft ²	1.57
Dawn-Euphemia	2,031 ft ²	1.03
Enniskillen	0 ft ²	0.00
Lambton Shores	13,269 ft ²	1.12
Oil Springs	1,015 ft ²	1.57
Petrolia	2,325 ft ²	0.39
Plympton-Wyoming	5,597 ft ²	0.67
Point Edward	3,789 ft ²	1.96
Sarnia	42,562 ft ²	0.61
St. Clair	10,071 ft ²	0.69
Warwick	3,454 ft ²	0.95
Total GFA	87,817 ft²	0.71

Note: seasonal and temporary student populations are excluded from the calculation and thus the rate of service among certain libraries would be lower than shown for a portion of the year.

Population projections based on County and lower-tier forecasts presented in Section 3.1 of the JLFR suggest that the number of people living in Lambton County will range between 122,162 and 138,493 in the year 2031. In the event that Lambton’s population declines to 122,000 persons from the 128,000 residents living in the County at present, no net new library space will be needed based solely on application of the per capita standard.

If growth rates continue and Lambton County’s population reaches the 138,500 persons estimated through the JLFR’s adjusted forecast, a total library supply of 96,945 square feet would be needed (Table 10). This amounts to a need to create 9,128 square feet of net new library space for the Lambton County Library supply. With Mallroad Library in Sarnia being closed in favour of renovating the second floor of Clearwater Arena as a library (thereby adding 1,560 square feet of net new space in Sarnia), an area equivalent to 17% of the year 2031 gross floor space requirement is already being addressed.

Just as there is a possibility that population levels could decline, there is also a chance that population growth could exceed the adjusted forecast used herein. As such, **it would be prudent for the Library to revisit library space needs once the year 2031 forecast is further refined by the County.**

Table 10: System-Wide Projection of Library Space Needs, 2021-2031

Year	County Population	Library Space Provided*	Library Space Needs @ 0.7 ft ² per capita	Deviation from Existing Supply
2022	128,154	87,817 ft ²	89,708 ft ²	- 1,891 ft ²
2031	138,493	89,378 ft ²	96,945 ft ²	- 7,567 ft ²

Note: 2031 library space reflects net addition of 1,561 square feet through the replacement of Mallroad Library with a new library at Clearwater Arena

Population Sources: Statistics Canada 2021 Census (assumed to reflect 2022 population); Adjusted Population Forecast referenced in Section 3.1 of this JLFR.

The County-wide additional space requirement of 7,567 square feet - after the addition of the library at Clearwater Arena - is further explored across each of the lower-tier municipalities. Table 11 illustrates that some municipalities have sufficient amount of library space per capita while others would fall below this mark. This is not to say all municipalities will or should meet the 0.7 square feet per capita since Lambton's large geographic area and the nature of its county-wide library system is such that some inter-municipal mobility is expected.

What can be seen is that library space needs are sufficiently met in seven of the eleven lower-tier municipalities. Of the four municipalities who would fall below the 0.7 square feet per capita level of provision in 2031:

- **Enniskillen's** deficit is a result of not having any library locations as its population has historically been able to rely on nearby libraries in adjacent municipalities.
- **Plympton-Wyoming** would have a modest deficit of less than 900 square feet
- **St. Clair** has a nominal deficit of less than 250 square feet meaning that it is essentially providing the targeted level of service;
- **Petrolia** would have a deficit in the range of 2,800 square feet; and
- **Sarnia** would have the largest deficit at 12,500 square feet after addition of the library at Clearwater Arena but space-related pressures are somewhat mitigated by the ability of Point Edward's projected surplus of 2,350 square feet to address the needs of residents in Sarnia's northwest.

Section 8.0 of the JLFR explores municipally-specific needs for library space in greater detail.

Table 11: Library Space Projection by Municipality, 2031

Municipality	Total GFA*	2031 Service Level (ft ² per capita)	2031 Space Requirement (ft ²)	Deviation from Current GFA (ft ²)
Brooke-Alvinston (2031 pop. = 2,581)	3,704	1.44	1,807	+ 1,897
Dawn-Euphemia (2031 pop. = 1,963)	2,031	1.03	1,374	+ 657
Enniskillen (2031 pop. = 2,714)	0	0.00	1,900	- 1,900
Lambton Shores (2031 pop. = 11,671)	13,269	1.14	8,170	+ 5,099
Oil Springs (2031 pop. = 808)	1,015	1.26	566	+ 449
Petrolia (2031 pop. = 7,372)	2,325	0.32	5,160	- 2,835
Plympton-Wyoming (2031 pop. = 9,269)	5,597	0.60	6,488	- 891
Point Edward (2031 pop. = 2,058)	3,789	1.84	1,441	+ 2,348
Sarnia (2031 pop. = 80,843)	44,123	0.61	56,590	- 12,467
St. Clair (2031 pop. = 14,779)	10,071	0.68	10,345	- 274
Warwick (2031 pop. = 4,435)	3,454	0.78	3,105	+ 350
Total GFA	89,378	0.65	96,945	- 7,567

* 2031 GFA assumes a net addition of 1,561 square feet to the existing supply of 87,817 square feet through replacement of Mallroad Library with the new Clearwater Library.

Notes: Adjusted Population Forecast referenced in Section 3.1 of this JLFR. Space requirement is based on targeted 0.7 square feet per capita.

7.3 Spatial Analysis

Lambton County Library branches service localized catchment areas but depending upon the design and services offered at a given branch, the reach of a given library may extend to a more regional catchment where people are willing and/or able to travel longer periods to reach it. The size of a library's geographic catchment is dictated by whether it is an urban or rural branch; Urban Libraries in Sarnia and Point Edward have a smaller catchment size but serve more people within it than would a rural branch; conversely, rural branches have a larger catchment size due to the dispersed nature of their populations but potentially shorter travel times by car due to less traffic congestion and higher posted speed limits.

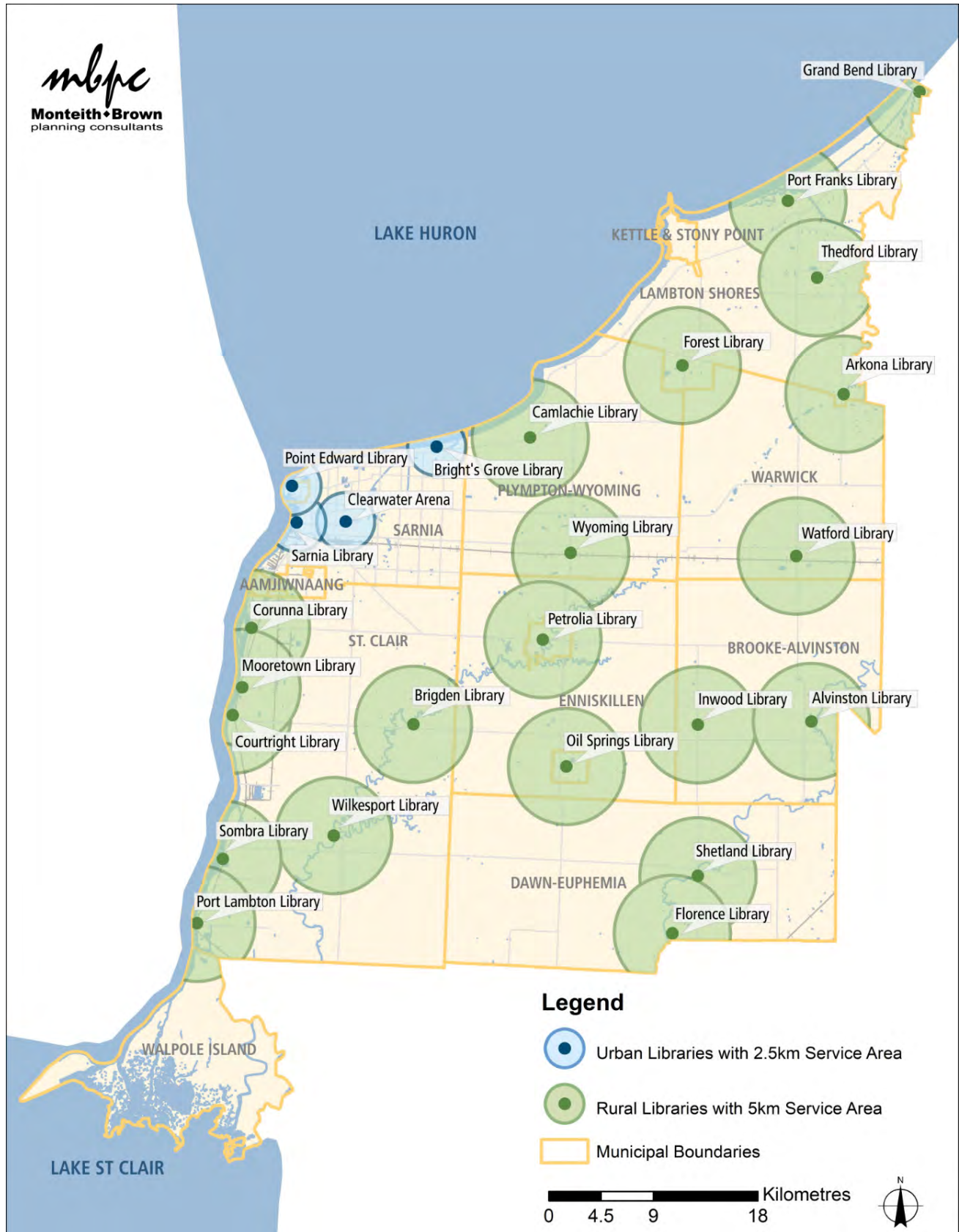
With library systems operating under a premise to serve as many people as possible and be a place for all, the ability to reach a library is an important consideration. Equity for urban and rural residents that may not have regular access to a motorized vehicle must be taken into account, particularly where public transit or active transportation infrastructure (bike lanes, trails, sidewalks, etc.) is deficient or not available. On this basis, the JLFR analyzes library service catchments using a radius of:

- **2.5 kilometres for urban branches**, generally equating to a 7 to 10 minute drive, 20 minute bicycle trip and 30 minute walk; and
- **5.0 kilometres for rural branches**, equating to a 10 to 12 minute drive and a 20 to 30 minute bicycle trip (note: most pedestrians are unlikely to walk between settlement areas).

Map 2 shows that Lambton County Library's 25 branches provide strong distribution across its service area, especially in relation to settlement areas where populations are concentrated. For the majority of the population that has greater means to travel, the coverage is generally satisfactory despite some agricultural areas not being covered by the service radii established above. This is reinforced by past survey work that found 83% of residents report that the location of libraries is NOT a barrier to use.²¹ That said, it is recognized that certain populations in Lambton County face barriers to travel to a library due to age, income, distance or other reasons.

²¹ Probe Research Inc. 2019.

Map 2: Geographic Coverage of Libraries



While coverage in each municipality is discussed in greater detail in Section 8.0, at a high level Map 2 illustrates the following:

- **Sarnia & Point Edward** – strong coverage with a small gap identified in the vicinity of Murphy Road and Michigan Avenue (noting the future library at Clearwater Arena and Bright’s Grove Library are located within a 10-minute drive of this intersection). A gap in the south-east is attributable to the agricultural character that exists.
- **Brooke-Alvinston** – satisfactory coverage in the southern part of the Township with a gap to the north (largely agricultural lands) partially serviced by the Watford Library.
- **Dawn-Euphemia** – overlapping coverage between Shetland and Florence in the central portion of the Township with the low-density agricultural areas to the west showing as a gap.
- **Enniskillen** – well covered by the Petrolia, Oil Springs and Inwood Libraries despite having no physical libraries in the municipality.
- **Lambton Shores** – good coverage to the east and west, with a service overlap between the Port Franks and Thedford Libraries.
- **Oil Springs** – the entire municipality is covered by its library.
- **Petrolia** – the entire municipality is covered by its library.
- **Plympton-Wyoming** – good coverage with a gap to the east and west of the Highway 21 (shared with Warwick) but noting there are not any major urban settlements in this portion of the corridor.
- **Point Edward** – the entire Village is covered by its library’s catchment area along with a portion of northwest Sarnia.
- **St. Clair** – strong coverage including a sizeable service overlap between 5 libraries located along the St. Clair Parkway.
- **Warwick** – a gap exists around the Warwick settlement though it is a 10 to 15 minute drive to Watford, Arkona and Wyoming.

7.4 Recommendations

- Rec. #13.** Maintain Lambton County Library's existing service level at 0.7 square feet of library space per capita over the JLFR planning period through a strategic combination of library space consolidation, reallocation and construction initiatives.
- Rec. #14.** Plan for the addition of approximately 9,130 square feet of new library space to meet a total supply of 96,945 square feet for Lambton County Library by the year 2031. At least half of the new space requirement should be allocated to the City of Sarnia including through the future library at Clearwater Arena and an expanded Bright's Grove Library.



Section 8.0

Library Space Needs by Municipality





Section 8.0

Library Space Needs by Municipality

This Section builds on county-wide assessments and facility design guidance presented in the JLFR to provide an evaluation of needs for library space within each of the lower-tier municipalities in Lambton County.

8.1 Brooke-Alvinston

2021 Census Population: 2,359

2031 Population Forecast: 2,581

Existing Library GFA: 3,704 square feet (1.6 square feet per capita)

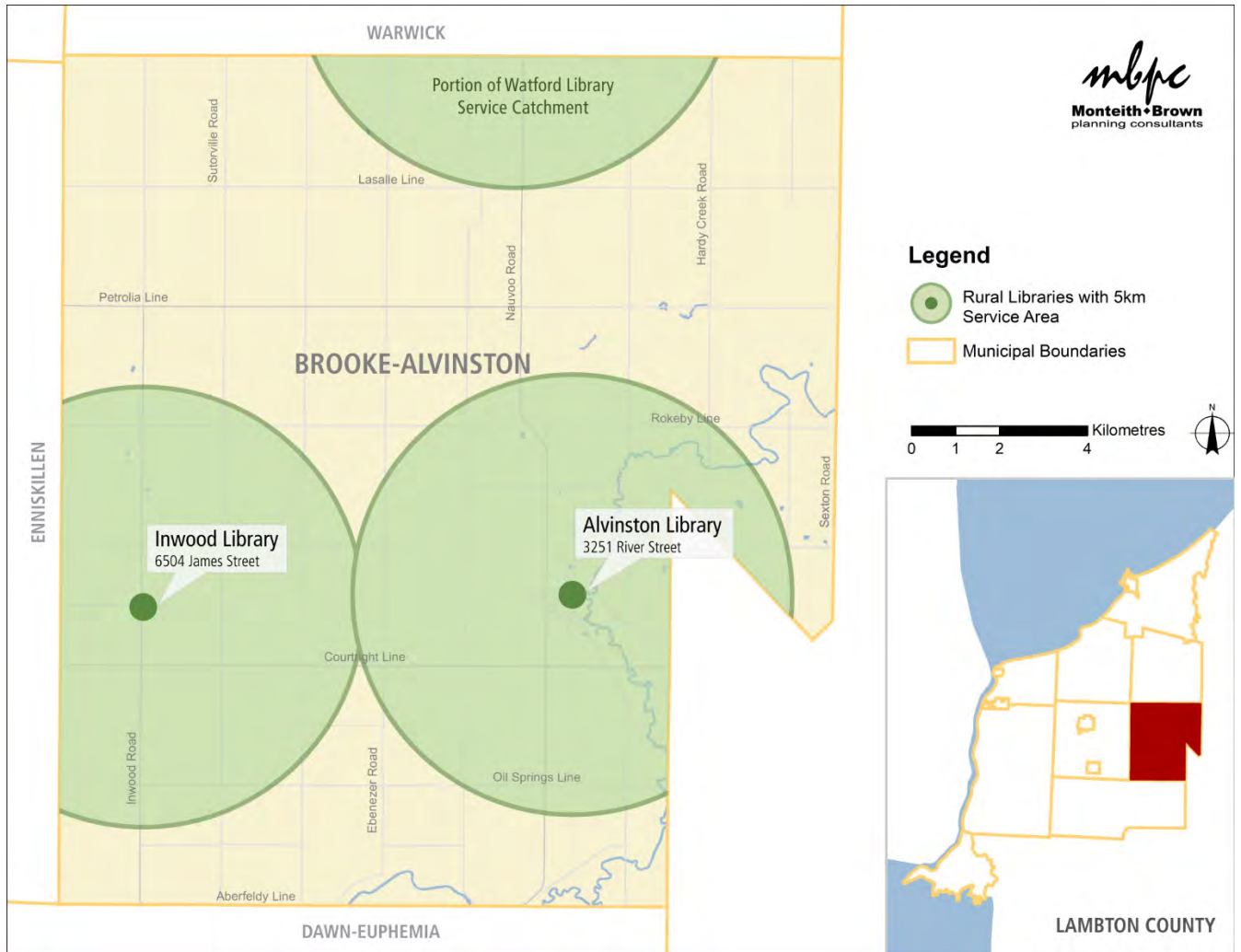
2031 Supply Required @ 0.7 sq. ft. per capita: 1,807 square feet

Brooke-Alvinston is predominantly rural in nature with its urban settlement areas consisting of Alvinston and Inwood where the two libraries situated in the Township are located. Brooke-Alvinston's 2021 Census population of 2,359 persons represents a decrease of 189 persons over the past 10 years and amounts to an average decline of 0.7% per year (although the rate of decline has decreased during the past five years, averaging 0.4% annually since 2016).

The Alvinston and Inwood Libraries collectively offer a strong rate of space provision per capita at more than double the County-wide average. The amount of floor area is such that GFA requirements will remain sufficient to address the modest growth projected in the Township over the next 10 years. In fact the Alvinston Library alone - the largest of the two libraries in the Township - has enough square footage to offer a 1.0 square foot per capita service level to Brooke-Alvinston residents over the next 10 years (40% above the county-wide rate). Spatial coverage is relatively strong within and around the Inwood and Alvinston settlements with residents living in the Township's north falling within the Watford Library catchment.

The pages that follow articulate that the primary strategies arising from the JLFR specific to Brooke-Alvinston are to optimize storage potential at the Alvinston Library and consider an alternative service delivery model in Inwood through a holds locker and/or book vending machine, the latter subject to a service delivery/staffing review with the potential of re-allocating staffed hours of operation from Inwood to Alvinston.

Map 3: Distribution of Libraries, Brooke-Alvinston



Alvinston Library

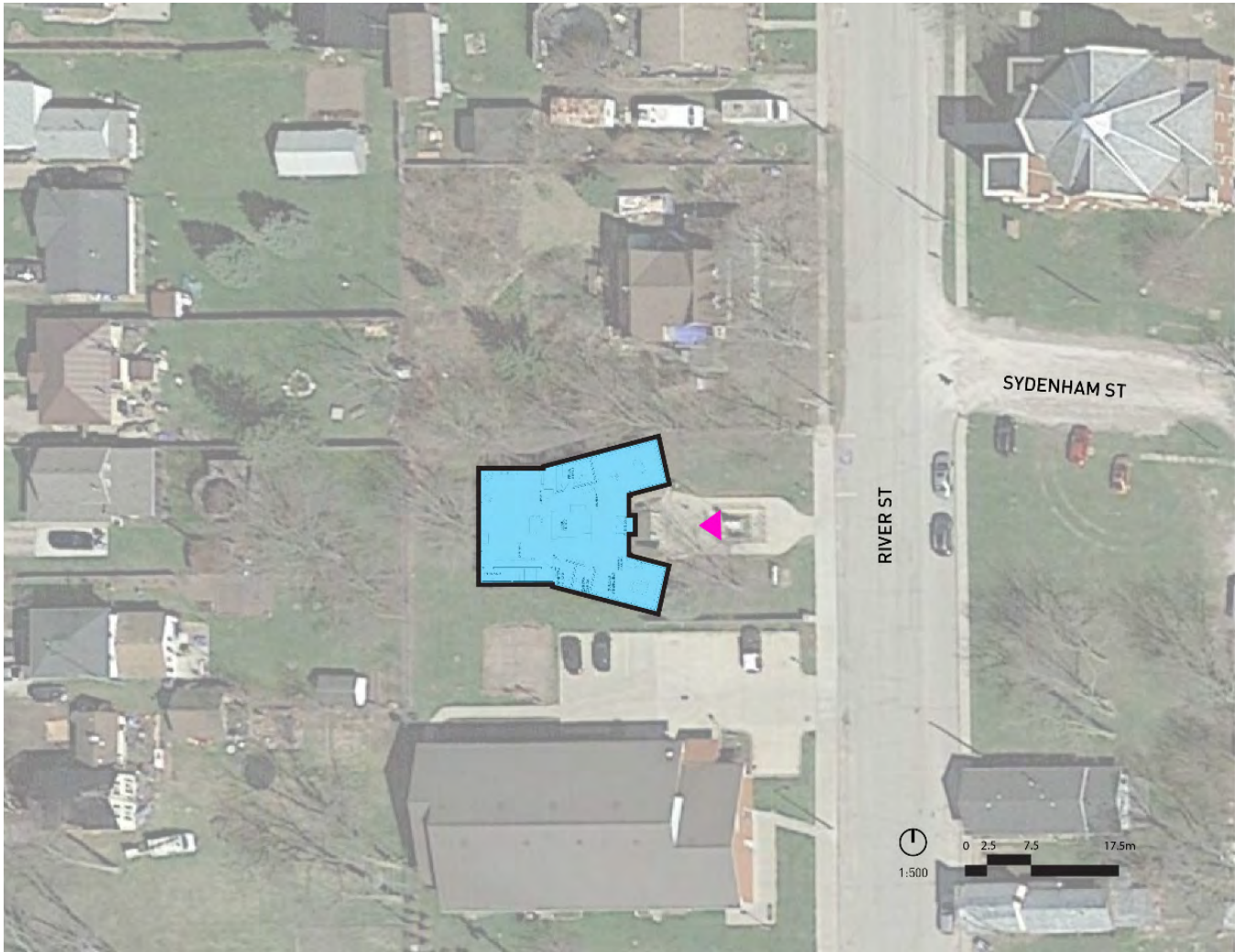
Address:	3251 River Street
Classification:	Medium Branch
Library Type:	Stand-Alone
Gross Floor Area:	2,508 ft²
Weekly Visits:	96
Hours Open:	23 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	10,011 items / 4.0 per ft²

Alvinston Library services Brooke-Alvinston and the northeast portion of Dawn-Euphemia. The library has been at the current River Street building in 1984 where it features a war memorial and garden at its entrance. Lambton County Library recently carried out minor renovations to the branch to create a private meeting room along with new shelving and painting. A physical addition to the building dates back approximately 20 years and site configuration is such that further expansion is unlikely. Vehicular parking is directed to the street.

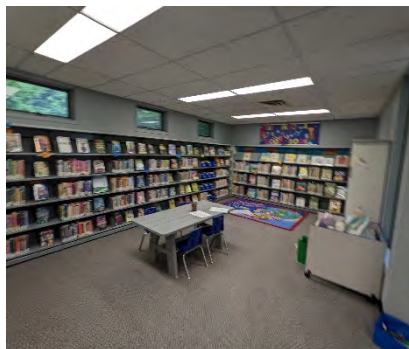
There are nearly 200 library users that use Alvinston Library as their home branch. Of these users, 70% live within the five-kilometre service area of the library and 82% are residents of Brooke-Alvinston. Based on a typical week, Alvinston Library receives 96 in-person visits. The library experienced an increase in material circulation from 2018 to 2019, although has seen a significant decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic as with all libraries.

Alvinston Library is well positioned to meet its function as a Medium Branch and will remain an important destination within the Township and adjacent municipalities. In addition to addressing barrier-free accessibility and maintaining state of good repair, the JLFR recommends that Lambton County Library reconfigure the customer service desk and selected rooms to make better use of the existing floor space while optimizing the basement to allow more efficient and functional storage through use of cabinetry, shelving and other organizational elements. Adding glazed windows at the rear of the branch will improve visual connections to the greenspace for the enjoyment of library users.

Figure 14: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Alvinston Library



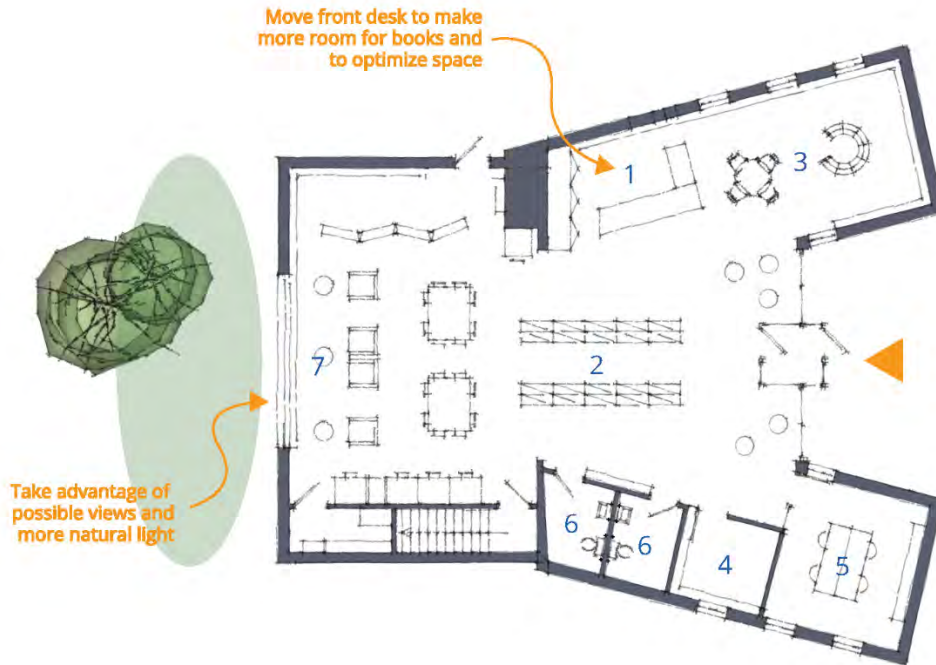
Library Exterior



Children's Area



Collections and Work Area



Take advantage of possible views and more natural light

Move front desk to make more room for books and to optimize space

- 1 SERVICE DESK
- 2 MAIN COLLECTIONS
- 3 CHILDREN'S AREA
- 4 STAFF ROOM
- 5 MEETING ROOM
- 6 EXISTING BARRIER FREE WASHROOM
- 7 NEW WINDOW OPENING



Alvinston Library



Inwood Library

Address:	6504 James Street
Classification:	Small Branch
Building Type:	Stand-Alone
Gross Floor Area:	1,196 ft²
Weekly Visits:	47
Hours Open:	12 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	4,043 / 3.4 items per ft²

Inwood Library is a small library despite an expansion to the back of the building in 2013. Just 50 library users identify it as their home branch which along with modest circulation visitation rates that result in its 12 hours of operation per week. Inwood had the fourth lowest pre-pandemic circulation per square foot numbers of all Lambton County Library branches and the number of weekly in-person visits is less than a third of the Rural Library average.

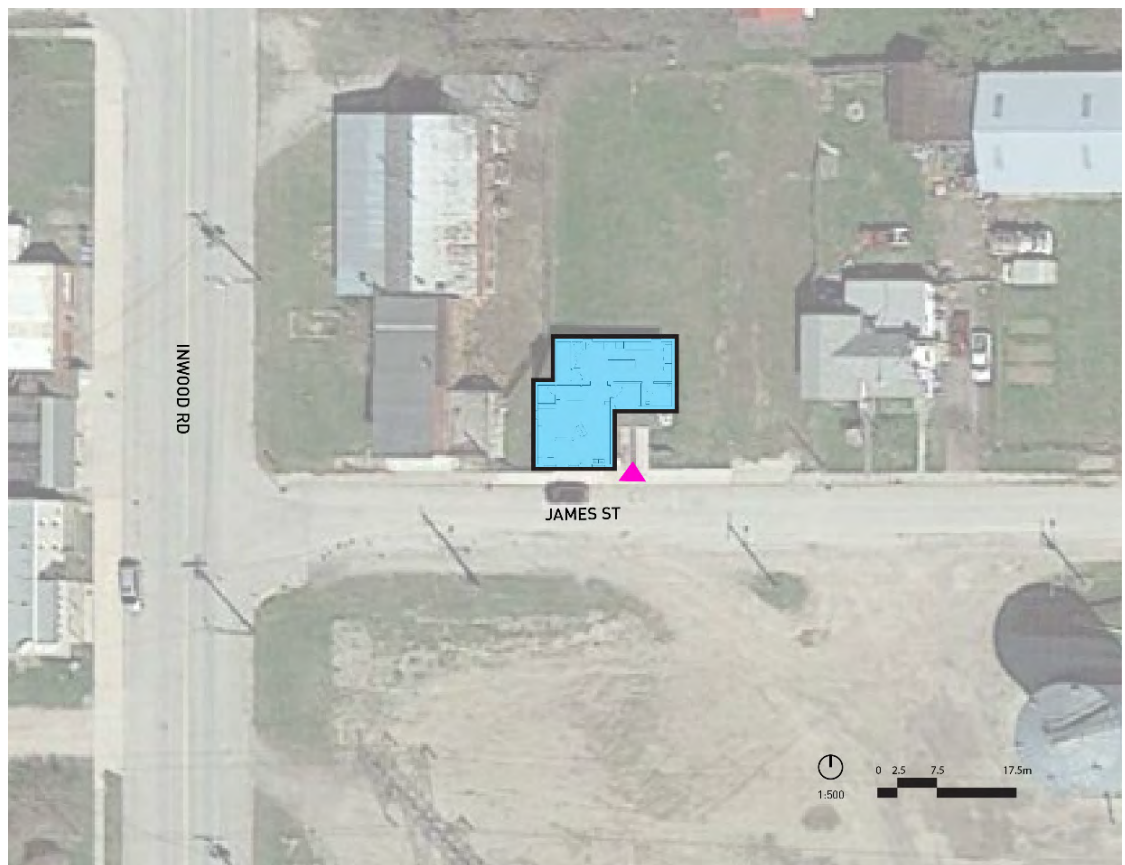
The configuration and layout of the library does not allow it to host private meetings while space is limited for customer service, staff functions, and storage. Pre-pandemic library programs offered here were half of the Rural Library average and ranked in the bottom five locations for program attendance. Its wood-cladded interior is warm though offers little ability to add more shelving to expand collections. As a low use library serving a very small catchment area population (approximately 1,000 people), the business case is difficult to support capital investment beyond AODA and standard asset management practices.

With the Alvinston Library located a 10-minute drive of Inwood Library, there is also a question about whether future capital and operating resources required for Inwood Library would be better redirected to the Alvinston Library. Residents of Brooke-Alvinston have access to a space per capita level of service that is more than double the rate of the Lambton County average and the little population growth that is forecasted means that Alvinston Library could adequately service the municipality's population on its own.

Library Space Needs by Municipality

If Inwood Library were closed, however, there would be a geographic gap created for people without access to a vehicle that live on the west side of Brooke-Alvinston and portions of Enniskillen; any removal of the library could potentially exacerbate rural-specific challenges such as connecting these communities through public space and social isolation, particularly since there are little to no municipal facilities in this area of the County. As such, there continues to be merit in operating the Inwood Library within the JLFR's planning period from a geographic accessibility perspective provided that maintenance and repair obligations can be addressed.

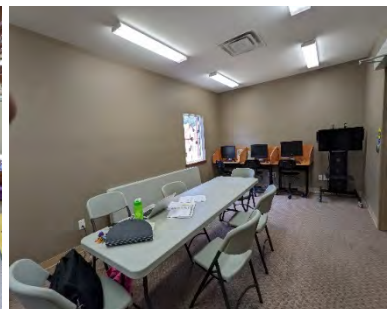
Figure 15: Site Plan, Inwood Library



Library Exterior



Collections Area



Seating / Meeting Area

8.2 Dawn-Euphemia

2021 Census Population: 1,968

2031 Population Forecast: 1,963

Library Space Provided: 2,031 square feet (1.0 square feet per capita)

2031 Supply Required @ 0.7 sq. ft. per capita: 1,374 square feet

Dawn-Euphemia's 2021 population of 1,968 represents a modest decline (81 fewer people) than in 2011. However, this decline is entirely attributable to the 2011-2016 period after which population levels stabilized and is a trend that is expected to persist with the Township's 2031 population forecasted to remain at a similar level as today.

Both libraries in Dawn-Euphemia are classified as Small Branches though there is a significant difference in the quality between the two facilities, with the Florence Library imparting a significantly more modern level of aesthetic and functionality. Based on little change in its population and a space per capita rate that exceeds that recommended in the JLFR, the amount of library space in Dawn-Euphemia is considered to be satisfactory for the planning period. That being said, there is a sizeable overlap of territories served by its two libraries (Map 4) that creates a redundancy in service particularly since they are within driving and cycling distance of each other.

No new redevelopment projects are recommended in Florence which is one of the newer libraries in the County having been opened in 2010.

The site and building constraints of the Shetland Library are unlikely to generate a cost-effective return on investment, particularly in relation to its low level of use as measured by visits, circulation and inability to deliver meaningful library programs in its current configuration. To improve operating efficiencies and fiscal sustainability of the library system, the JLFR directs Lambton County Library to:

- a) Engage local school boards to discuss the potential to integrate a public library branch at a rural school where enrolment rates are low, thereby creating an opportunity to make use of potentially underused space in a school building and increasing efficiency of geographic accessibility to rural populations by reducing the current service duplication;

- b) if discussions with a local school board reveal an interest and confirm feasibility of integrating a public library at a rural school (or another suitable location), construct a Medium Branch library with a minimum GFA of 2,000 square feet that consolidates the existing Shetland Library and Wilkesport Library (also discussed in Section 8.9); and
- c) upon opening of a new Medium Branch library, the Shetland and Wilkesport Libraries should be closed with consideration given to replacing them with express library service points such as holds lockers and/or vending machines.

Relocation of the Shetland and Wilkesport Libraries to a rural school makes strong sense as it would reconcile inefficiencies associated with duplicated geographic service, limited hours of operation, and grossly inadequate/inaccessible floor space provided in the existing buildings. A library co-located with a school would result in a greater number of rural areas having access to library services while strengthening the case to retain a rural school. Pupil Accommodation Reports and/or other capacity-related reports can be referenced to identify candidate locations and inform how Lambton County Library may be able to assist school boards in making use of underused space in a school building.

Map 4: Distribution of Libraries, Dawn-Euphemia



Florence Library

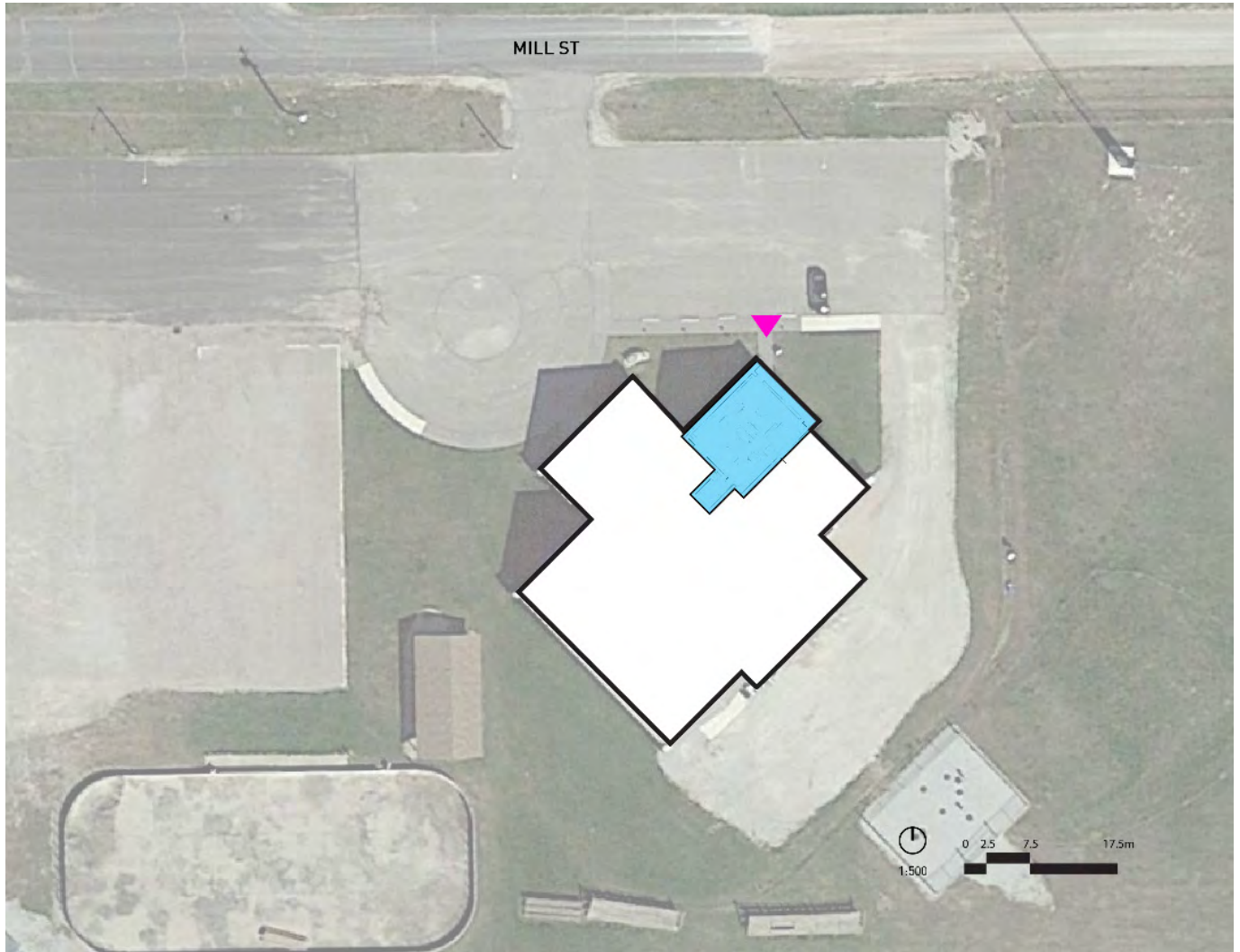
Address:	6213 Mill Street
Classification:	Small Branch
Building Type:	Integrated with Community Centre
Gross Floor Area:	1,153 ft²
Weekly Visits:	44
Hours Open:	12 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	6,750 / 5.9 items per ft²

Florence Library is classified as a Basic branch due to a small floor space but is of high aesthetic quality by virtue of its integration within a community centre built by the Township of Dawn-Euphemia (which includes a hall, commercial kitchen, meeting room, ball diamond, outdoor skating rink and parking lot). Florence Library primarily services small urban and rural settlements located in the southern part of the Township, with approximately 60 library cardholders identifying it as their home branch. Due to its proximity to the border of Lambton County and Chatham-Kent, nearly 40% of its home library cardholders are non-residents.

The Florence Library's 44 weekly visits are just one-quarter of the Rural Library average and circulation figures are also below-average. This may be a function of having just 12 hours per week open to the public and it bears noting that circulation figures were in a declining trend even before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Opened in 2010, Florence Library was designed in consideration of relatively modern barrier-free accessibility standards and is early in its lifecycle. Therefore, no major capital expansions or renovations are proposed for Florence Library over the course of the JLFR's 10-year planning period. As discussed in the pages that follow, there may be opportunity to deliver an expanded range of service and programming within the library and adjoining community centre (e.g. expanded older adult programs in the hall or meeting room, food literacy programs in the kitchen, etc.) in the event that an hours of operation and/or programming analysis support this.

Figure 16: Site Plan, Florence Library



Library Exterior



Collections Area (views from front and rear)

Shetland Library

Address:	1279 Shetland Road
Classification:	Small Branch
Building Type:	Stand-Alone
Gross Floor Area:	878 ft²
Weekly Visits:	16
Hours Open:	12 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	340 / 0.5 items per ft²

Shetland Library is one of the smallest and more geographically isolated facilities operated by Lambton County Library, sharing part of its southern catchment area with the Florence Library which is located a 10-minute drive and 20-minute bicycle ride from each other. Shetland Library has less than 60 library cardholders that use it as their home branch which is similar to Florence Library; however, the Shetland Library attracted the lowest number of pre-pandemic weekly visits in the county library system while only Wilkesport Library reported a lower pre-pandemic circulation.

Shetland Library is housed in an aging stand-alone red-brick structure with barrier-free accessibility constraints at its entranceway, washroom and shelving. The library provides no formalized parking areas while offering a low amenity and aesthetic value resulting in an outdated interior finish. There is little ability to readily carry out a meaningful expansion or redevelopment project within the confines of its existing property boundaries.

Apart from its nominal contribution to Lambton County Library's system-wide supply of space, there is little to rationalize continued operation of the Shetland Library moving forward. Accessibility improvements alone could span tens of thousands of dollars (if not more) not to mention the aging state of the building will require increasing levels of maintenance and repair as time goes on.

Lambton County Library would be better to redeploy resources assigned to Shetland Library elsewhere in the library system on the basis of its low catchment area population, duplication in service catchment, and costs required to bring it to a modern and accessible level. The 12 hours of staffed operation each week would be better re-allocated to the Florence Library (subject to an hours of operation review) particularly if Lambton County Library can secure additional times in the Dawn-Euphemia

Community Centre’s modern and accessible hall and meeting room for library programs. As discussed earlier in this Section as well as in Section 8.9, consolidation of Shetland Library’s GFA with that of Wilkesport Library into a new Medium Branch integrated within a rural school – subject to discussions with local school boards – would improve operating efficiencies, strengthen the case for longevity of rural schools, and service more rural households in southern Lambton County.

Figure 17: Site Plan, Shetland Library



Library Exterior



Collections Area (views from front and rear)



8.3 Enniskillen

2021 Census Population: 2,825

2031 Population Forecast: 2,714

2021 Library Space Provided: 0 square feet (0 square feet per capita)

2031 Supply Required @ 0.7 sq. ft. per capita: 1,900 square feet

Enniskillen's 2021 Census population of 2,825 is a decrease of 105 persons compared to 2011 and represents an average decline of 0.3% annually over that period. However, the Township's population has modestly rebounded since 2016, averaging a 0.2% annual growth rate over the last five years. The County of Lambton forecasts, however, suggest fewer people living in the community in 2031 compared to today.

Enniskillen does not have a physical library within its municipal boundaries and thus its residents travel to adjacent or nearby municipalities to access library services. On its own, Enniskillen's population could warrant a 1,900 square foot library based on the system-wide per capita standard but there is some capacity among its neighbours that reduce pressure on Lambton County Library to provide a branch specifically in this municipality.

The fact that this Township has a limited population base that is not experiencing growth-related pressures and does not operate any community centres or halls of its own also reduces the business case of directing new capital investment to Enniskillen. Conversations with Township Staff indicate that provision of library services has not been something that their Council or administration have ever provided or meaningfully contemplated.

As such, the JLFR does not find justification for new library construction in the Township of Enniskillen.

8.4 Lambton Shores

2021 Census Population: 11,876

2031 Population Forecast: 11,671

Library Space Provided: 13,269 square feet (1.1 square feet per capita)

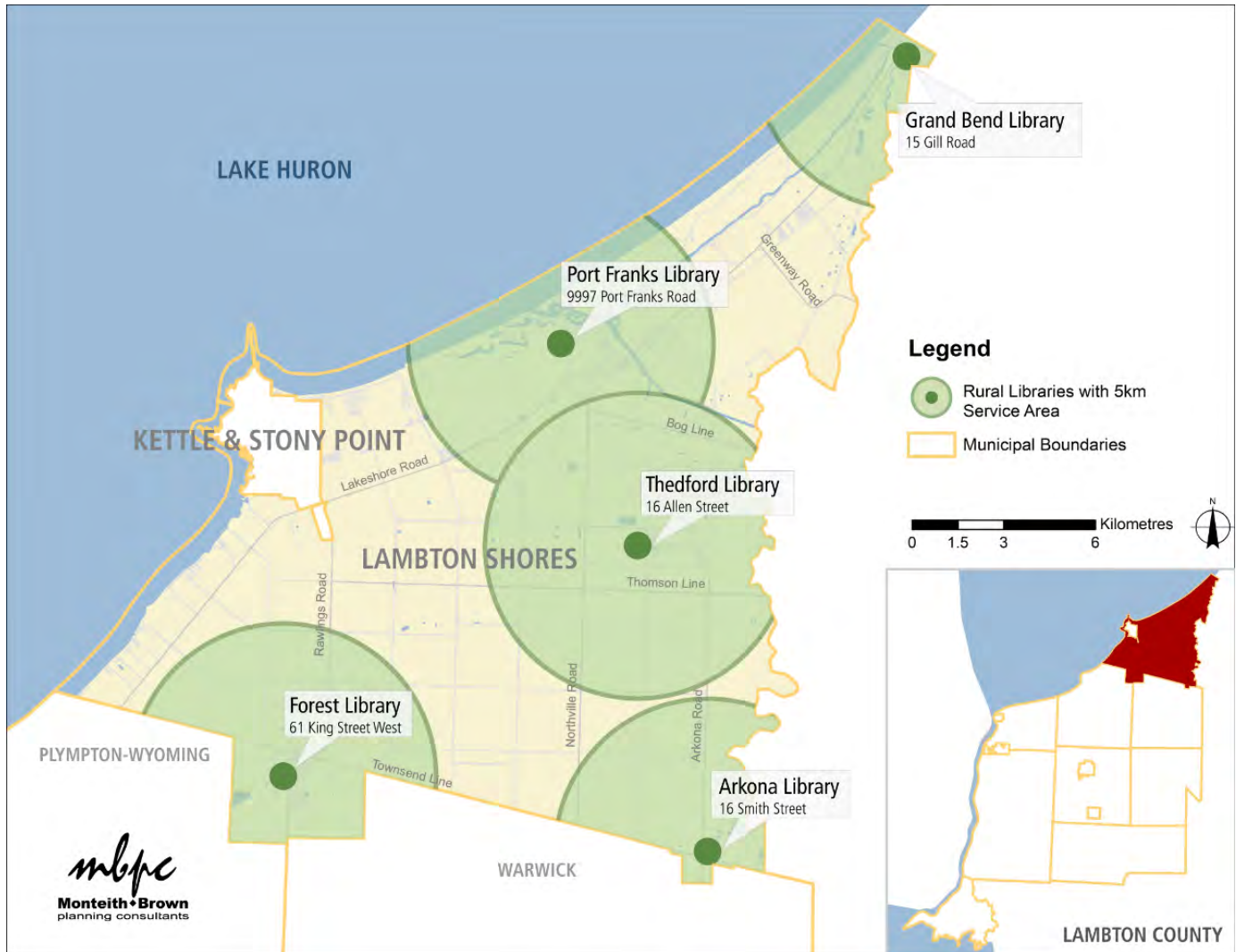
2031 Supply Required @ 0.7 sq. ft. per capita: 8,170 square feet

Lambton Shore's population has been experiencing growth over the past five years, averaging 2.3% annually between the 2016 and 2021 Census periods; this represents a reversal from a declining population between 2011 and 2016. The Municipality's growth forecast was prepared without the benefit of 2016 Census data and thus would not have accounted for the rebounding population which is likely a reason its 2031 population forecast is lower than the 2021 Census figure. That same forecast also identifies that the Municipality's population increases by upwards of 70% when factoring in the sizeable base of seasonal residents (e.g. cottagers) that live in Lambton Shores.

Based on population forecasts that are available to inform the JLFR, the amount of library space per capita in Lambton Shores will be sufficient to service the needs of its permanent population; there will undoubtedly be pressures placed on libraries such as Grand Bend and Port Franks during the summer months but seasonal residents may also be looking for more outdoor forms of activity by virtue of the natural aesthetic that draws them to the Municipality and thus may not place the same pressure on a library that permanent residents might.

The JLFR recommends efforts that support raising awareness of libraries in Lambton Shores by increasing their visibility, ability to deliver library programs and making more efficient use of available space within selected library buildings.

Map 5: Distribution of Libraries, Lambton Shores



Arkona Library

Address:	16 Smith Street
Classification	Small Branch
Building Type:	Integrated with Community Centre
Gross Floor Area:	794 ft²
Weekly Visits:	61
Hours Open:	12 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	7,498 / 9.3 items per ft²

Arkona Library occupies a single room within the Arkona Community Centre, a former school originally built in 1962 that was purchased a number of years ago by the Municipality of Lambton Shores and has been made available for community use. In addition to the library, there are two former classrooms in the community centre that are managed by the Municipality. The community centre and library are embedded within a neighbourhood with outdoor amenities including a playground and splash pad, and an onsite parking lot.

At just under 800 square feet (excluding the shared washrooms), Arkona Library is one of the smallest in Lambton County with only the libraries in Port Lambton and Mooretown providing less floor space. Library staff indicate that the clientele primarily consists of seniors and caregivers with children, the latter of whom often are also visiting the adjacent park. Serving the southeastern portion of Lambton Shores and extending into Warwick, Arkona Library has just over 100 library cardholders that identify it as their home branch and of whom 75% live within the 5-kilometre service area of the library.

Being open just 12 hours a week contributes to the library's below-average visitation and circulation. Its small GFA and absence of a program room limit the Library's ability to deliver programs at this location but could be a prospective area to focus on should affordable access to one of the community centre's meeting rooms be secured. That said, one meeting room is largely dedicated to a local service club and the other offers an outdated level of amenity that may not appeal to library program participants or allow meaningful library programs to be delivered.

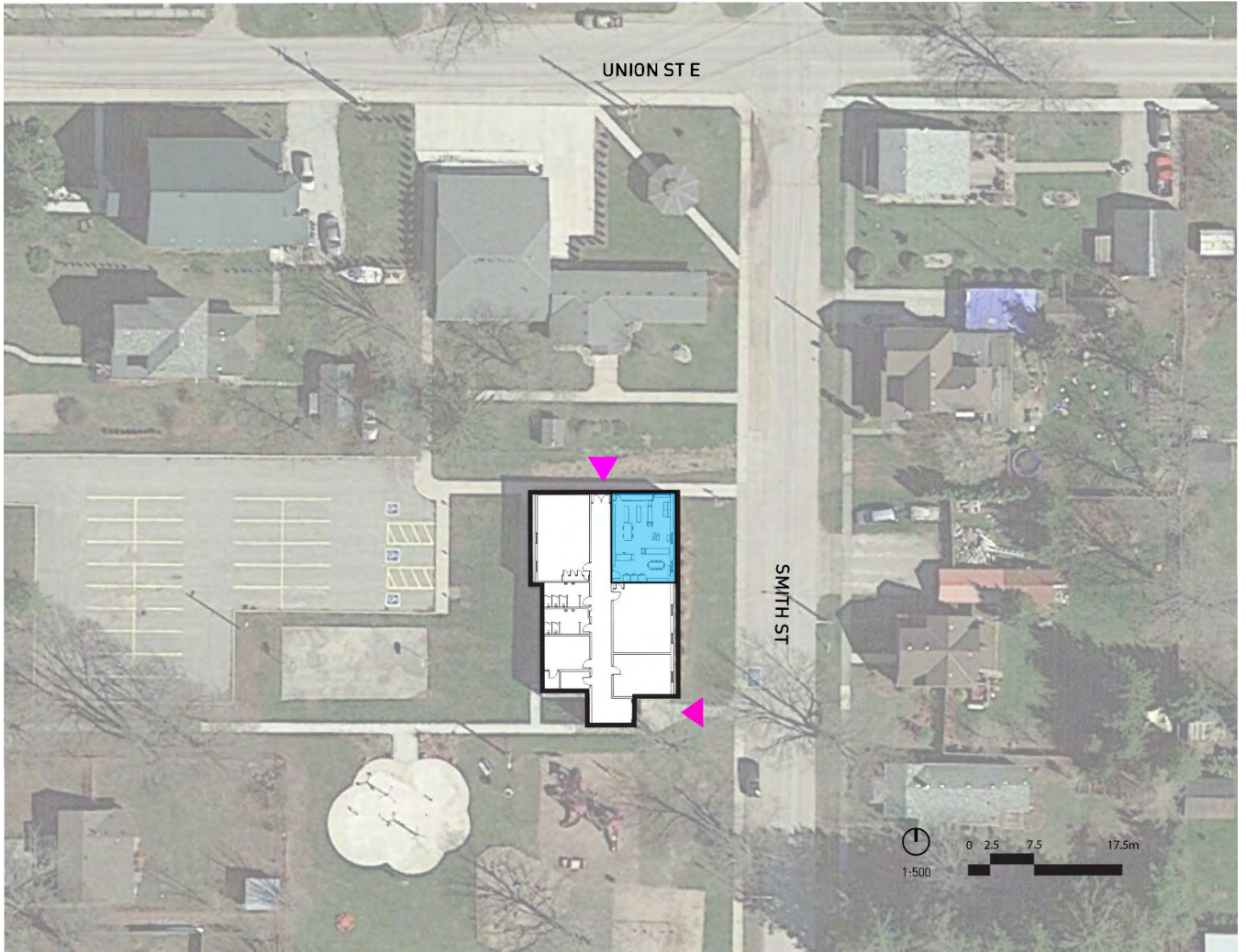
While there are limited opportunities to significantly improve the Arkona Library due to the small GFA and an already strong per capita rate of library space in Lambton Shores, there are a few things that should be considered. As with all libraries, addressing barrier-free accessibility and ensuring state of good repair will be required but as part of the latter, the library would benefit from an enhanced air handling and ventilation system.

As alluded to earlier, Arkona Library would be a good candidate for additional library programming since there is interest among area seniors as well as an ability to potentially cross-program children's activities with the onsite playground and splash pad. The Municipality's Leisure Services Master Plan directs the Community Services Department to be a "facilitator" of recreation and cultural programming by providing space for its community partners to deliver their services.²² Lambton County Library is one such partner and if able to work with the Municipality to modernize at least one of the meeting rooms to enable more program delivery by the Library, this would benefit residents living in and around Arkona. The sketch prepared for this JLFR (Figure 18) can be used as a guide illustrating how the program room across the hall from the library could be adapted into library space and would allow for a dedicated entrance to be provided to the library; the program room could still be rented or programmed by the Municipality should it find a need to do so. Discussions with Municipal staff indicate that Arkona Community Centre is underutilized and thus there may be a rationale to draw more use into the building by enabling library and other community programming to take place.

Should the Municipality and Lambton County Library be able to come to an agreement to address the above and increase Arkona Library's usage potential, the Library could rationalize its own investment in other aesthetic improvements such as painting, furniture, and/or others. Interior reconfiguration could also be considered within the library particularly as it relates to the location of the customer service desk which can create a bottleneck due to being adjacent to the narrow interior entrance door.

²² Municipality of Lambton Shores. 2018. Leisure Services Master Plan Update. p.39

Figure 18: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Arkona Library



Library Exterior

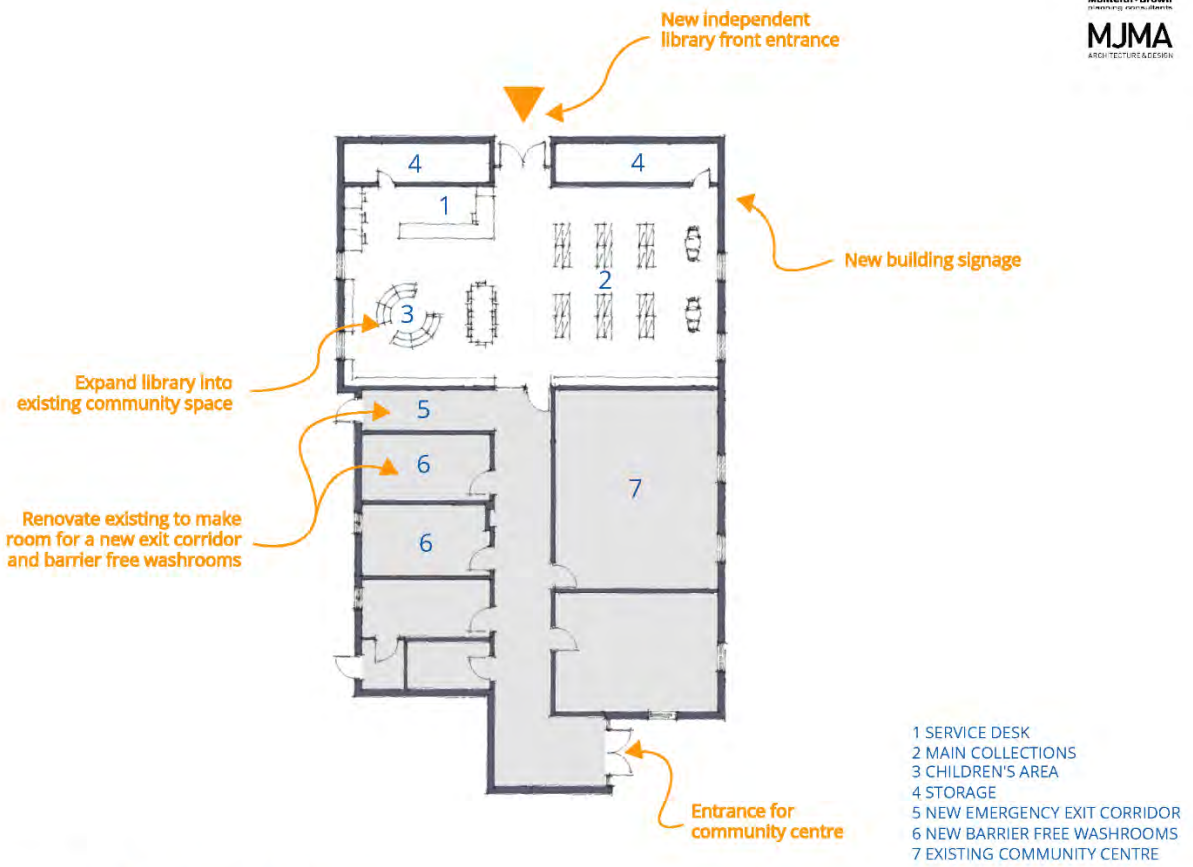


Children's Area



Work/Study Area

Library Space Needs by Municipality



Arkona Library



Forest Library

Address:	61 King Street
Classification:	Large Branch
Building Type:	Stand-Alone
Gross Floor Area:	4,596 ft²
Weekly Visits:	583
Hours Open:	65 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	43,947 / 9.6 items per ft²

Forest Library is strong example of what Rural Libraries and Standard Libraries should be aspiring towards. It provides an appropriate floor area in an open concept format that manages to distinguish specific areas by age group, collections and technology, and customer service. It imparts a strong historical and architectural character sitting on the site of Forest's former Grand Truck Railway Station and designed in 1985 based on a modified replica of an earlier train station that served the town. Combined with a \$100,000 refresh of the interior in 2022 (painting, flooring, shelving and furniture) and an attractively landscaped outdoor plaza along King Street, a high quality library experience is provided to library users.

Forest Library has 1,150 active users identifying it as their home branch which trails only Petrolia among Rural Libraries. Of these cardholders, 45% live within five kilometres of the library demonstrating its appeal across a larger geographic area; its catchment extends into Warwick and Plympton-Wyoming but library use may also be bolstered by those from other parts of Lambton County that use Forest as a regional destination for other goods and services.

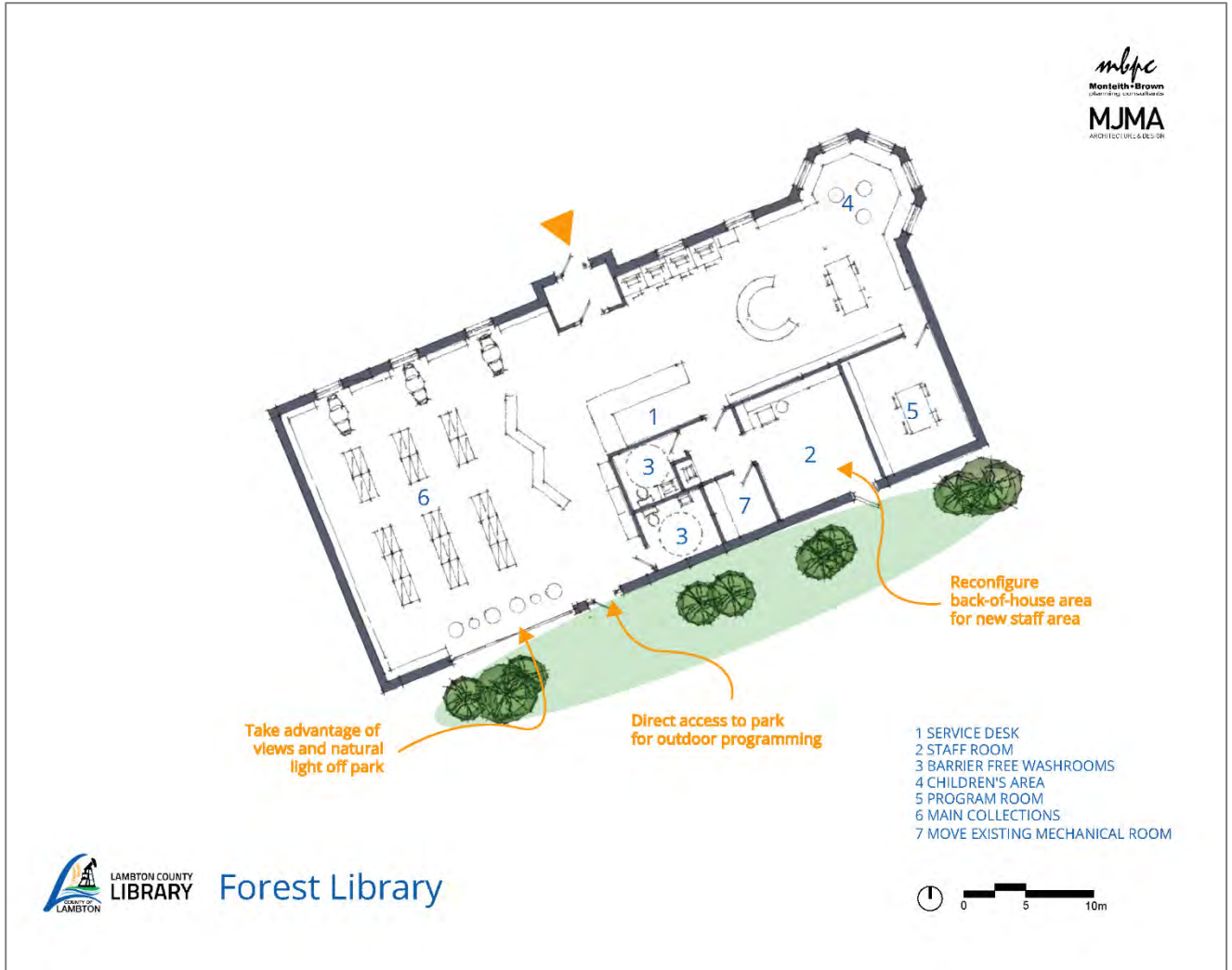
Total pre-pandemic circulation was the second highest among Rural Libraries (again behind Petrolia) and intensity placed on library space is illustrated by having the third-highest circulation and visitation rates per square foot for Lambton County Library's rural branches (excluding Mooretown Library which skews averages). Forest Library offers more than double the number of library programs than the rural branch average with the 9,800 participants engaged in 2019 being the highest of any library in the Lambton County Library system (including urban branches).

Forest Library benefits from being open 65 hours per week which in turn has contributed to strong in-branch utilization indicators. The recent renovations and creation of the private meeting room should further reinforce the appeal and usage potential of Forest Library coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Actions to consider over the next 10 years include updating the staff room (which was not modified during the last renovation) to improve its functionality, exploring options to increase the amount of storage space in support of the heavy programming (and other) demands placed on the library. Consistent with Rec. #11 of the JLFR, Lambton County and the Municipality should explore additional landscaping and seating elements at the rear of the library to tie into the aesthetic beauty of Rotary Civic Square that abuts the property to the east. As part of that exterior work, a more visible entrance/exit should be formalized where the emergency door is located, thereby creating a direct connection for people to access the library from the pathway at the rear.

Figure 19: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Forest Library





Library Exterior



Collections & Seating Area



Customer Service Desk & Computers

Grand Bend Library

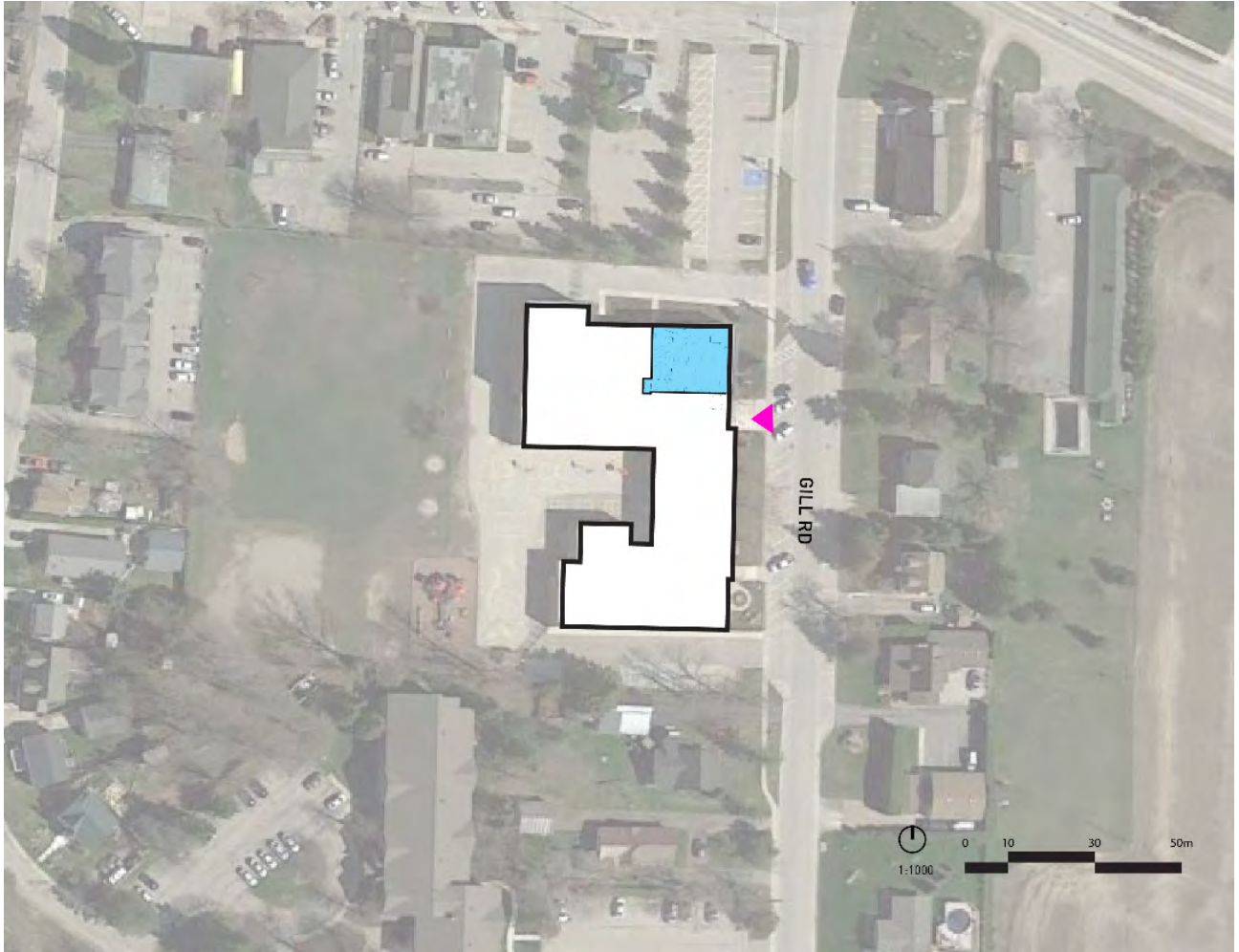
Address: 15 Gill Road
Classification: Large Branch
Building Type: Shared with Elementary School
Gross Floor Area: 4,058 ft²
Weekly Visits: 551
Hours Open: 49 hours per week
2019 Circulation: 33,997 / 5.3 items per ft²

Grand Bend Library occupies the north-east corner of the Grand Bend Public School, serving as both a community library and the school library. There is a shared entrance vestibule that can separate access between the library and school portion. The library space in particular has high ceilings providing a bright and relatively modern space for users, and contains its own washroom. A large multi-purpose room formerly dedicated to the library (and reflected in the above noted GFA) has been taken back by the school for its own uses based on its internal space limitations.

Grand Bend Library is a well-used library with the second highest number of weekly in-person visits (only behind Forest Library) and third highest total circulation among Rural Libraries. The number of pre-pandemic programs offered are similar to the rural branch average but program attendance is about 20% below average. More than 60% of the 1,150 library cardholders identifying it as their home branch live within five kilometres but Grand Bend's location near the northern border of Lambton County means that this library also receives a sizeable number of visitors from Middlesex and Huron Counties (as well as other parts of Lambton).

As one of the higher quality libraries in Lambton County, no major capital recommendations have been advanced for Grand Bend Library over the next 10 years beyond typical asset management activities. Updated furniture and new shelving is necessary while more prominent exterior signage would be helpful.

Figure 20: Site Plan, Grand Bend Library



Library Exterior



Collections Area



Children's Area

Port Franks Library

Address:	9997 Port Franks Road
Classification:	Small Branch
Building Type:	Integrated with Community Centre
Gross Floor Area:	930 ft²
Weekly Visits:	41
Hours Open:	12 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	6,721 / 7.2 items per ft²

Port Franks Library forms part of a quaint community-oriented complex. The library is housed in the east wing of the Port Franks Community Centre, providing a small collections area in one of Lambton County Library's smallest branches. The library has access to its own set of washrooms. The rest of the community centre consists of a large hall that is divisible, each side with their own kitchen facilities. The Storywalk installed in the open space to the east is an excellent complement to the multi-generational nature of the surrounding park which contains sports fields, tennis and pickleball courts, playground and seating areas.

Port Franks Library has over 160 library cardholders that rely on it as their home branch, over 70% of whom live within five kilometres. The small floor area constrains the library's ability to provide a quality experience to its users despite the efforts of the Municipality and Lambton County Library to make the best of interior and exterior environments. There is little space for maneuverability, seating, study or group collaboration which – along with being open 12 hours in a week - may be a factor contributing to a pre-pandemic in-person visitation rate that is less than a quarter of the Rural Library average. Total borrowing was about half of that at other Rural Libraries while Port Franks offered the fewest number of programs in the Lambton County Library system in 2019 and only libraries in Inwood, Wilkesport and Sombra attracting fewer library program participants.

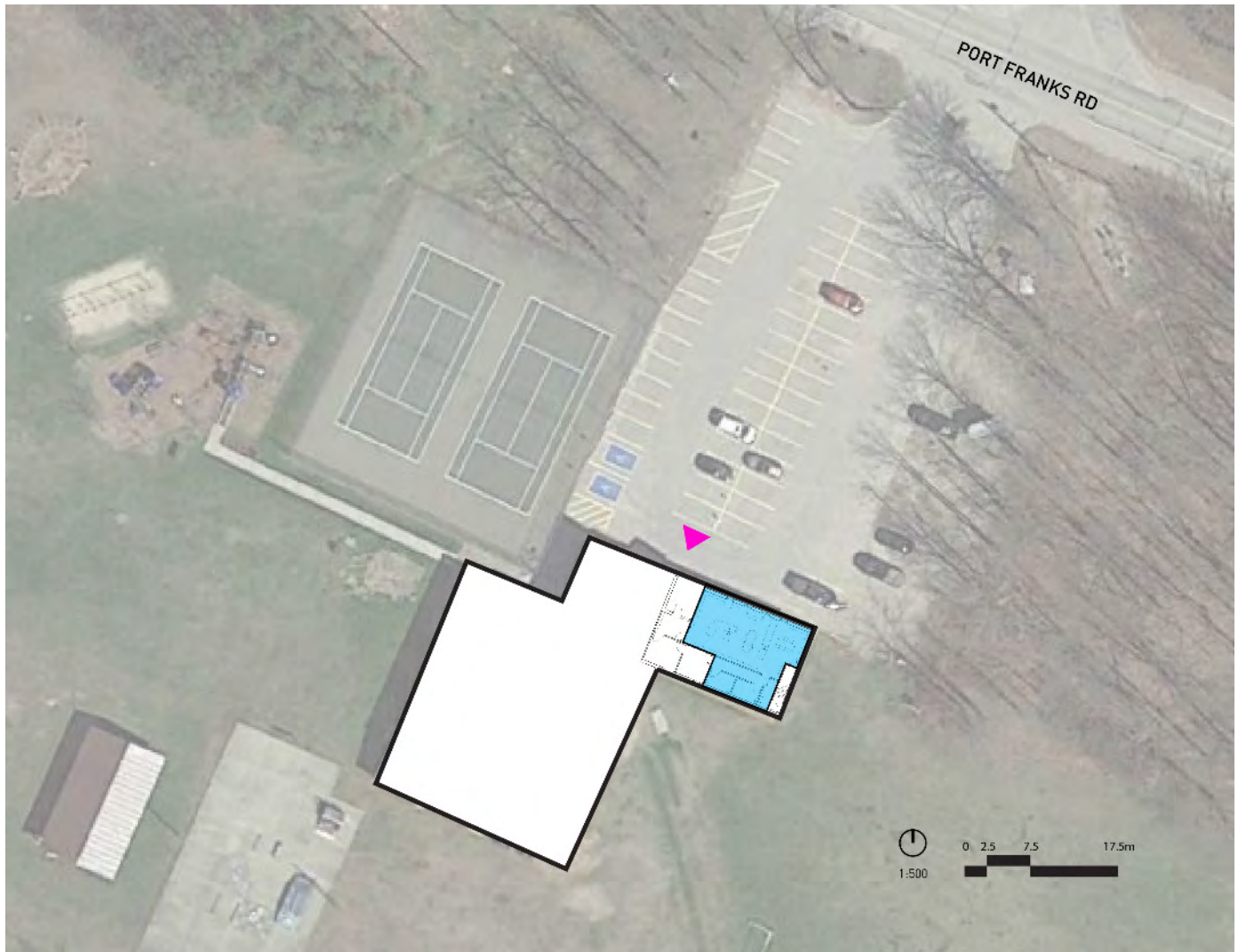
Although the Port Franks Library catchment overlaps with a portion of Thedford's, the former reaches a number of lakefront settlements that would otherwise be subject to a geographic gap in the absence of this library. While there may be a case to be made that staff library operations could be re-allocated to higher traffic locations if replaced with a holds locker or book vending machine, Port Franks is a fairly self-enclosed community and having a library form part of the community centre and park complex makes logical sense. It is understood that a number of seasonal residents, campers and day-trip tourists will visit the library in the warmer months and therefore the library serves as an access point that also supports economic development objectives of the Municipality and County as a whole.

As such, the Port Franks Library should continue to deliver library services moving forward but in a manner that recognizes its constraints and seeks to improve efficiency of the space. The primary focus beyond barrier-free accessibility and state of good repair over the next 10 years is for an interior configuration of the Port Franks Library that may potentially involve reduction of collection space in favour of areas for seating and gathering, as well as reclaiming the corridor leading to the washrooms, staff office and rear emergency exit as more useable library space. Opportunities to replace the structural wall to the east and/or south, overlooking the open space and Storywalk, should be considered to improve visibility into the library and allow users to benefit from the beauty of the site while in the library.

While not a formal recommendation of the JLFR, it bears noting that large garbage and recycling bins were being stored in the library's entrance area at the time of site tours; it is not known if this is common practice but should be raised with Municipal staff as it presents an unsightly appearance and odour for people coming into the library.

Library Space Needs by Municipality

Figure 21: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Port Franks Library



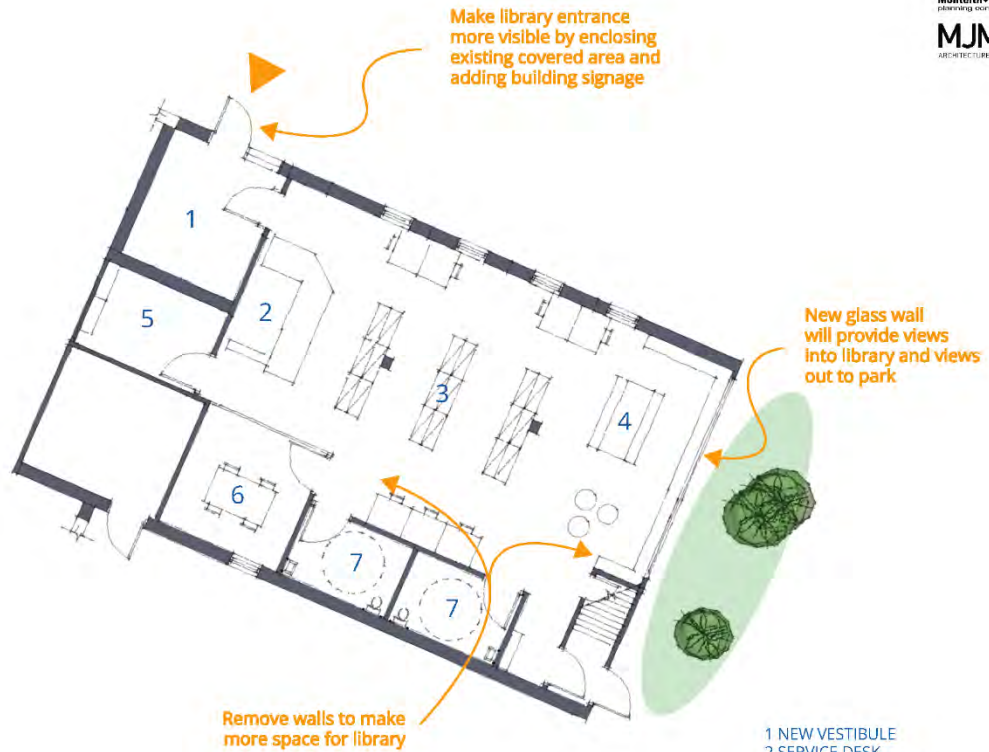
Library Exterior



Collections Area



Teen Area



Port Franks Library



Thexford Library

Address:	16 Allen Street
Classification:	Medium Branch
Building Type:	Integrated with Community Centre
Gross Floor Area:	2,891 ft²
Weekly Visits:	90
Hours Open:	12 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	5,332 / 1.8 items per ft²

Thexford Library was opened in 2011 after a rebuild of the Legacy Centre, providing a spacious and open concept floor area. The entire facility was the first LEED-certified building in Lambton Shores and it continues to provide a relatively modern library space for its users. In addition to the library, the Legacy Centre contains an arena, large community hall and childcare centre with washrooms shared between the library and other facility users. Thexford Library is thus part of an important multi-use community hub serving residents living in and beyond the Thexford settlement.

Unfortunately, however, the library's usage indicators are lower than would be expected compared to other libraries in the province that have been integrated within modern multi-use community centre builds; those libraries are often able to benefit from foot traffic generated by the facility's recreational users and spectators. Pre-pandemic visitation was slightly less than half than Lambton County Library's rural branch average and total circulation was about a third of the rural branch average. While the number of library programs offered was in line with the rural average, program attendance was slightly below.

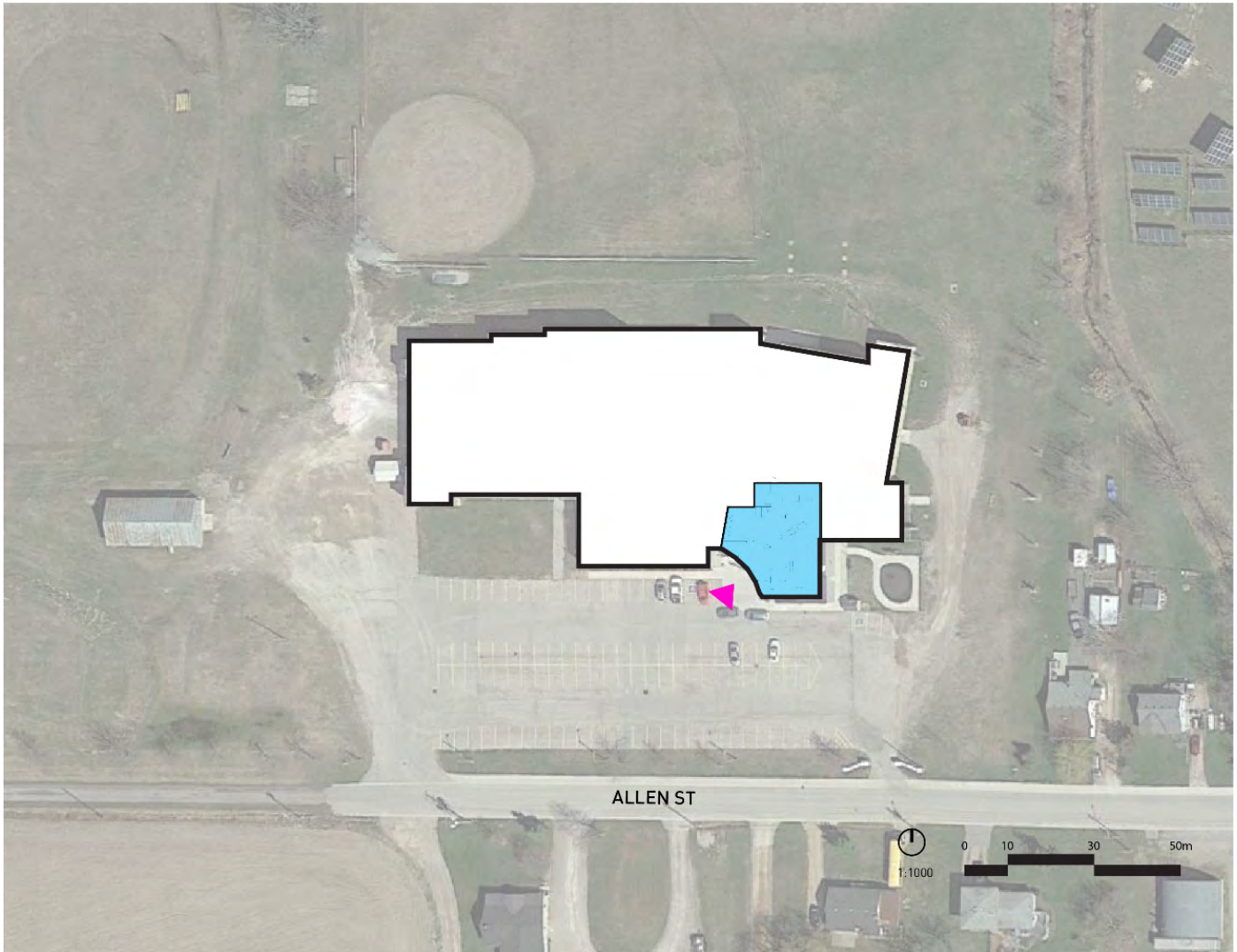
Hours of operation are likely a limiting factor at just 12 hours open per week. Site tours also revealed that a lack of visibility may not be raising sufficient awareness of the existence of Thexford Library; the dark exterior glazing obscures the library's separate entrance and ability to see inside from the parking lot while its interior entrance is located around a corner from the community centre's main internal corridor.

While spacious, Thedford Library's interior could be reconfigured in a manner to provide more comfortable seating while the addition of more tables and chairs could encourage use for collaborative or individual work/study activities. To raise awareness of the library and improve visibility into it, the following actions are recommended within the next 10 years through a collaborative approach with Municipal staff:

- Add a larger and more prominent sign to the Legacy Centre façade specifically identifying the presence of the library;
- Replacing the interior cinder-block wall with permeable wall such as glass and/or a potentially larger interior entranceway which will allow a view into the library from the corridor; and
- Adding reference to the library on the Legacy Centre's existing wayfinding sign that is found at the intersection of County Road 79 and Allen Street.

By updating exterior and interior signage, it is hoped that Lambton County Library can expand Thedford Library's reach from a localized catchment – it has less than 100 library cardholders that use it as their home branch – to one that is more regional in nature to mirror the catchment of the Legacy Centre's recreational components. To this end, hours of operation would need to be expanded and a greater focus would be required on library programming (both requiring separate reviews of operational implications). In terms of hours of operation, one area that could be explored would be to provide expanded seasonal hours in the evening during the ice sport season which drives much of the Legacy Centre's use.

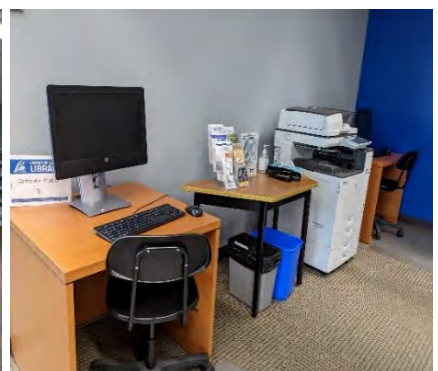
Figure 22: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Thedford Library



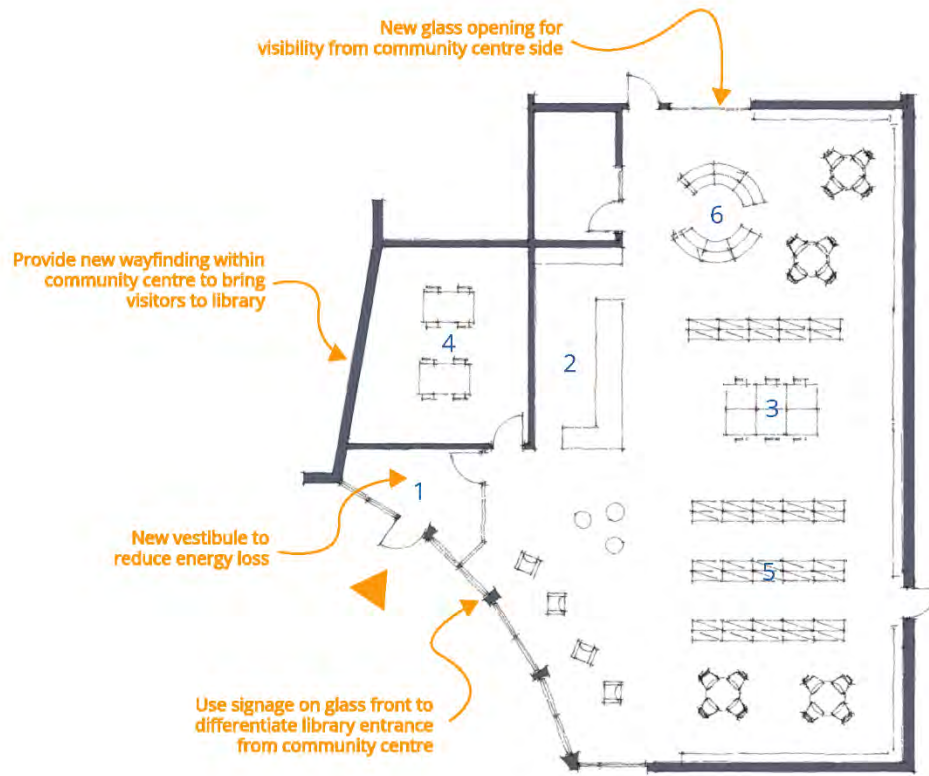
Library Exterior



Customer Service Desk



Computers



- 1 NEW VESTIBULE
- 2 SERVICE DESK
- 3 COMPUTERS
- 4 PROGRAM ROOM
- 5 MAIN COLLECTIONS
- 6 CHILDREN'S AREA



8.5 Oil Springs

2021 Census Population: 647

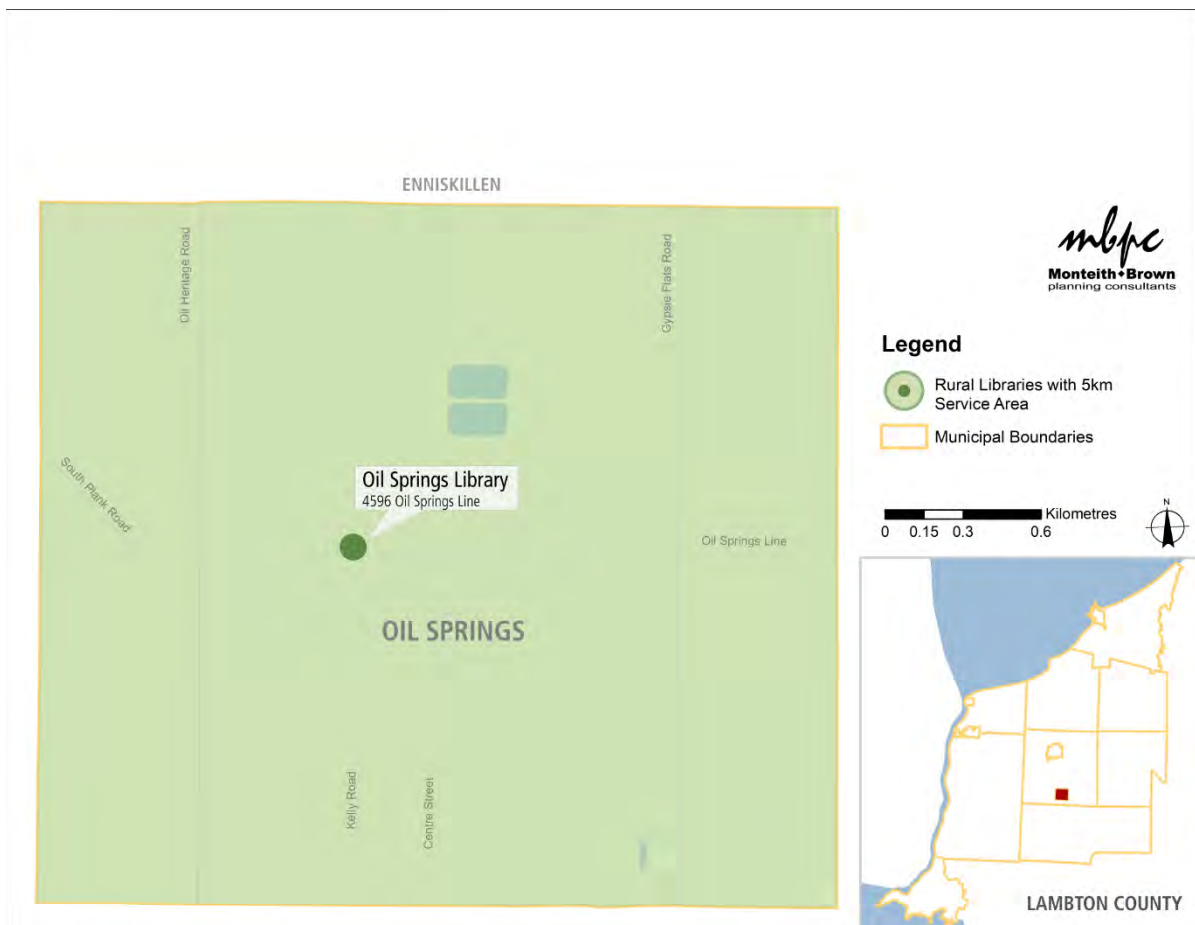
2031 Population Forecast: 808

Library Space Provided: 1,015 square feet (1.6 square feet per capita)

2031 Supply Required @ 0.7 sq. ft. per capita: 566 square feet

The Village of Oil Springs is a small municipality whose population has been recorded at less than 650 persons in both the 2016 and 2021 Census periods. Lambton County's approved lower-tier forecast estimates approximately 800 people will be residing in the Village by the year 2031. The Village has access to a robust library provision level of 1.6 square feet per capita with the Oil Springs Library. The amount of library space, as measured by GFA, will be sufficient to meet the planning horizon to the year 2031 and thus no new additions to the space supply are proposed in this JLFR. However, there is opportunity to modernize this library as will be discussed in the pages that follow.

Map 6: Distribution of Libraries, Oil Springs



Oil Springs Library

Address:	4596 Oil Springs Line
Classification:	Small Branch
Building Type:	Integrated with Post Office & Public Works
Net Floor Area:	1,015 ft²
Weekly Visits:	26
Hours Open:	12 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	4,023 / 4.0 items per ft²

Oil Springs Library is a small branch within a designated heritage building originally built in 1932 with the library moving into the space in 2001. The building also contains a Post Office, a community hall, and the library's basement is used by the Village's Public Works staff that operate out of a detached garage situated at the rear of the property. Oil Springs Library has frontage and strong visibility along the Village's main street, sits next door to a Royal Canadian Legion and is located across the street from the Municipal Offices.

The library's interior configuration is somewhat awkward with a split-level, linear shape across two floors; there is little ability for a single staff person to supervise both floors concurrently. A minor refresh to the interior was completed in 2017 through painting and some new furniture, however, the library is not generally considered to be accessible for persons with disabilities.

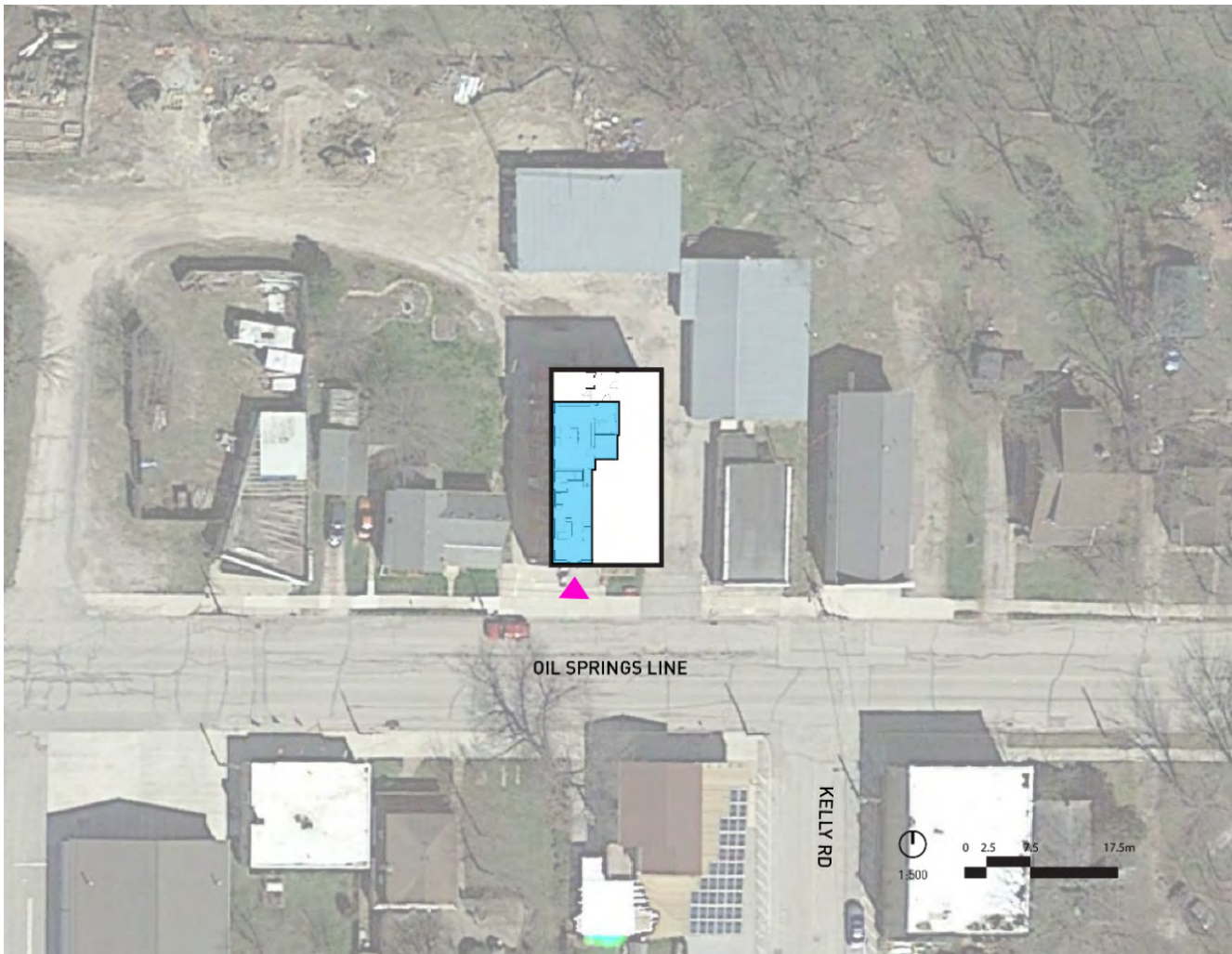
Oil Springs Library is approximately half of the average size of a Rural Library in Lambton County but its GFA provides the Village and nearby rural areas with a robust level of space per capita that is double the county-wide average. Its average weekly visitation rate amounts to just 15% of the Rural Library average and its circulation is below average as well. Limited programming takes place at this library although Lambton County Library's use of the Oil Springs Youth Centre on Victoria Street for program delivery would be welcomed by the Village.

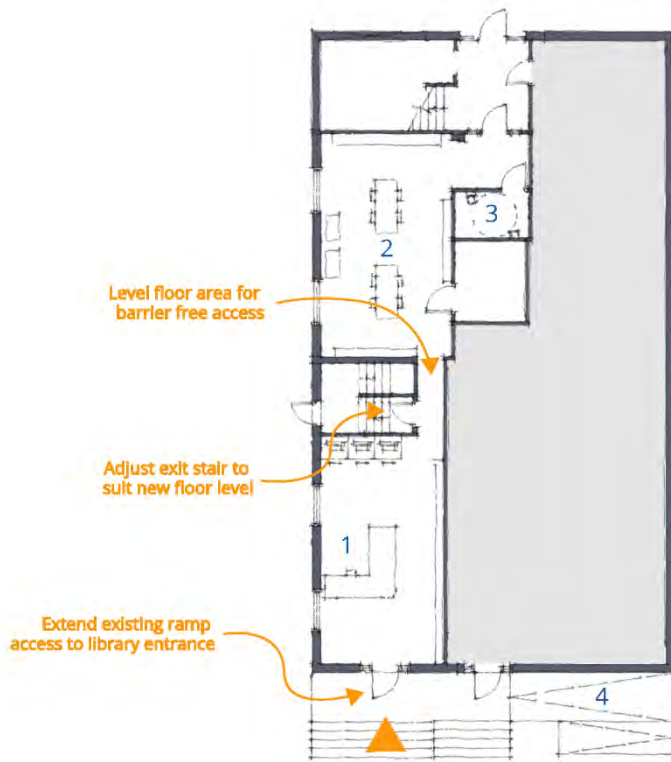
Undoubtedly hours of operation play a factor in the usage factor as does the limited catchment area population. The Village has chosen not to carry out renovations to the building due to its capital cost – an external funding grant to improve the community hall and HVAC systems was recently turned down as the overall project cost was deemed too high – which does

not necessarily bode well in terms of potential investment in the library-portion without fiscal support from Lambton County.

As a result, no space additions are required for Oil Springs Library. Instead the Village should be engaged to address ongoing maintenance and barrier-free accessibility-related improvements advanced through JLFR Rec. #6 and Rec. #9.

Figure 23: Site Plan, Oil Springs Library





Oil Springs Library



Library Exterior



Ground Floor



Second Floor Collections Area

8.6 Petrolia

2021 Census Population: 6,013

2031 Population Forecast: 7,372

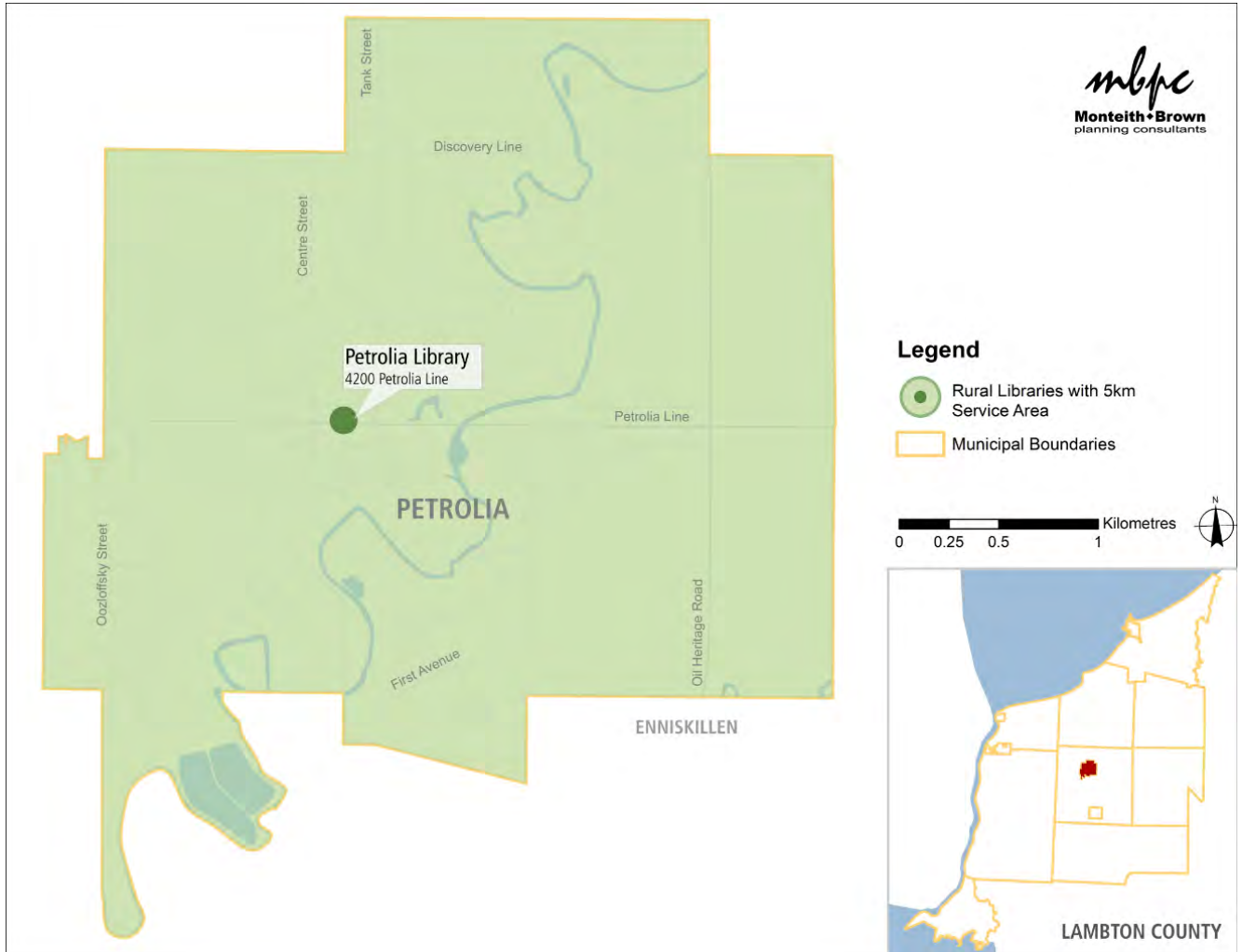
Library Space Provided: 2,325 square feet (0.4 square feet per capita)

2031 Supply Required @ 0.7 sq. ft. per capita: 5,160 square feet

Petrolia's population grew by nearly 500 persons since 2011 to reach a 2021 Census population of 6,013. Continued growth is forecasted whereby the Town is projected to have nearly 7,400 residents by the year 2031 which will compound per capita space pressures in Petrolia. The Town's library space provision rate of 0.4 square feet per capita is the lowest in Lambton County (except Enniskillen which does not have any library space) and an added 1,300 persons would mean that an additional 2,835 square feet of library space would be needed to attain 0.7 square feet per capita.

Despite a need for additional library space in Petrolia to meet the system-wide per capita target and alleviate pressures placed on its library's floor space, it will be difficult to reconcile on the existing site. Major expansion or alteration to Petrolia Library is likely too complex given the built-out nature of the site and its designation under the Ontario Heritage Act. There does not appear to be strong case to construct and operate a second branch in the Town of Petrolia given the municipality's small territory and thus it is most plausible that space deficiencies associated with Petrolia's population be addressed elsewhere in the County library system.

Map 7: Distribution of Libraries, Petrolia



Petrolia Library

Address:	4200 Petrolia Line
Classification:	Large Branch
Building Type:	Stand-Alone
Gross Floor Area:	2,325 ft²
Weekly Visits:	548
Hours Open:	65 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	49,289 / 21.2 items per ft²

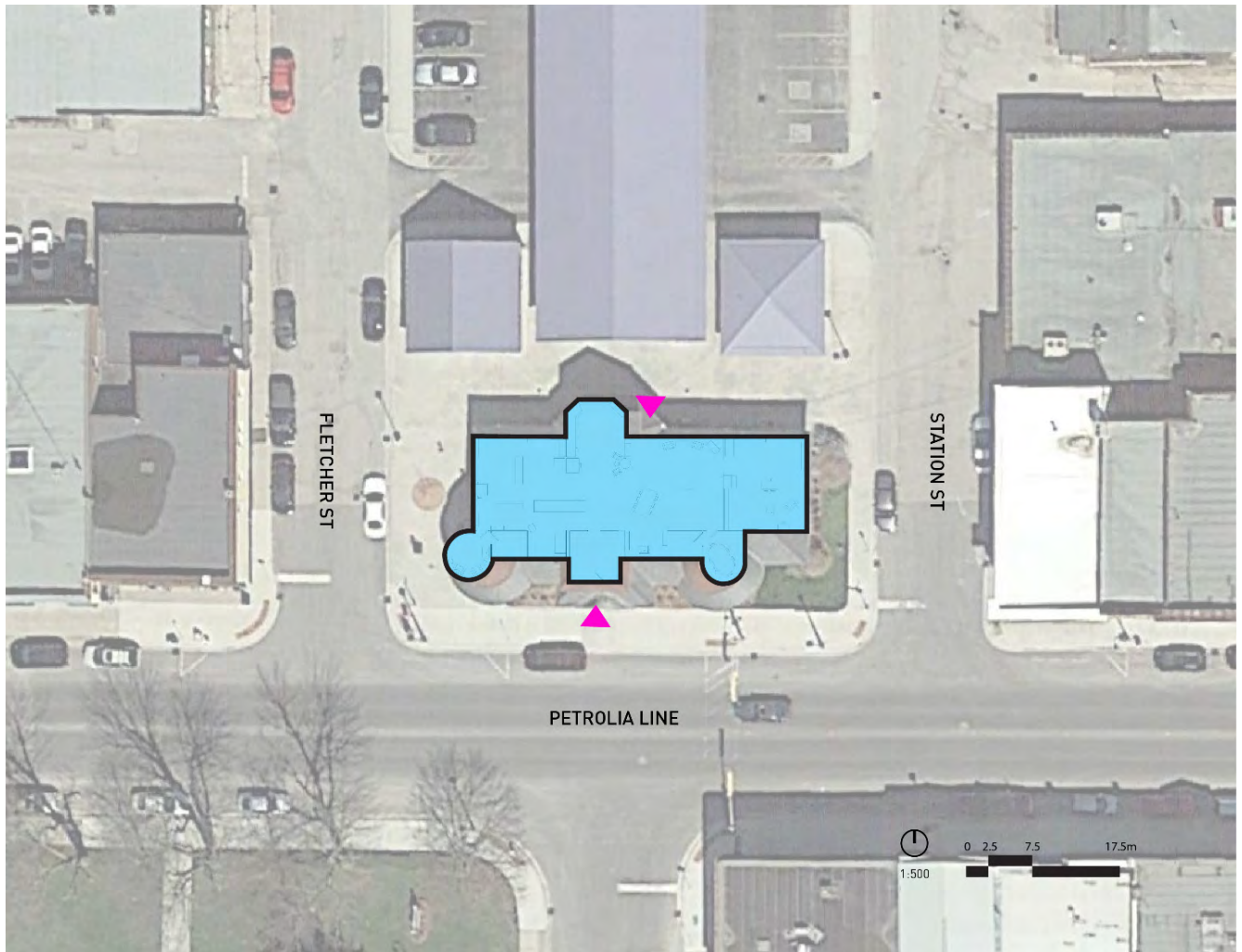
Petrolia Library is located in a designated heritage building that respects the strong architectural character of its original train station dating back to 1903. The library is a recognized and valued part of the Town's creative infrastructure as demonstrated through municipal investment in the building, its co-location and joint programming with its central farmers' market venue, as well as its siting along Petrolia's main street and across from the Victoria Playhouse.

The train station's transformation into a library is thought to be one of the first Canadian examples of an unused railway station being preserved by a municipality through adaptive reuse. Renovations to the interior of the building were most recently completed in early 2022 through new shelving, flooring, paint and upgraded access to technology including the installation of an early literacy station computer in the children's area. Renovations also included a new accessible service desk and changes to the interior configuration.

Approximately 1,350 people identify Petrolia Library as their home branch and 28% of its primary user base comes from Enniskillen. This library received the sixth-highest number of average weekly visits out of all Lambton County Library branches while its pre-pandemic circulation was highest of any Rural Library. The level of use compounds space-related pressures with 12.3 visits and 21.2 circulated items per square foot both ranking fourth in the library system and double the Lambton County Library average.

As a designated heritage structure that was purpose built for a different use, any alteration in the form of an expansion or redevelopment would be difficult and architecturally complex which is compounded given the built-out nature of the site. The fact that Lambton County Library and the Town of Petrolia have committed a sizeable reinvestment in recent years positions the library to function optimally for the foreseeable future.

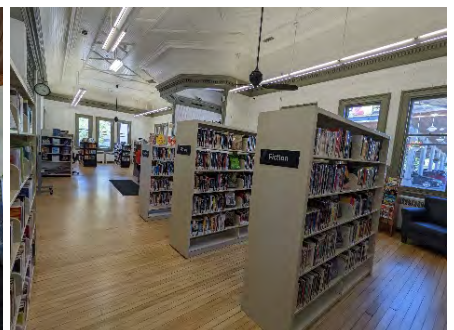
Figure 24: Site Plan, Petrolia Library



Library Exterior



Children's Area



Collections Area

8.7 Plympton-Wyoming

2021 Census Population: 8,308

2031 Population Forecast: 9,269

Library Space Provided: 5,597 square feet (0.67 square feet per capita)

2031 Supply Required @ 0.7 sq. ft. per capita: 6,488 square feet

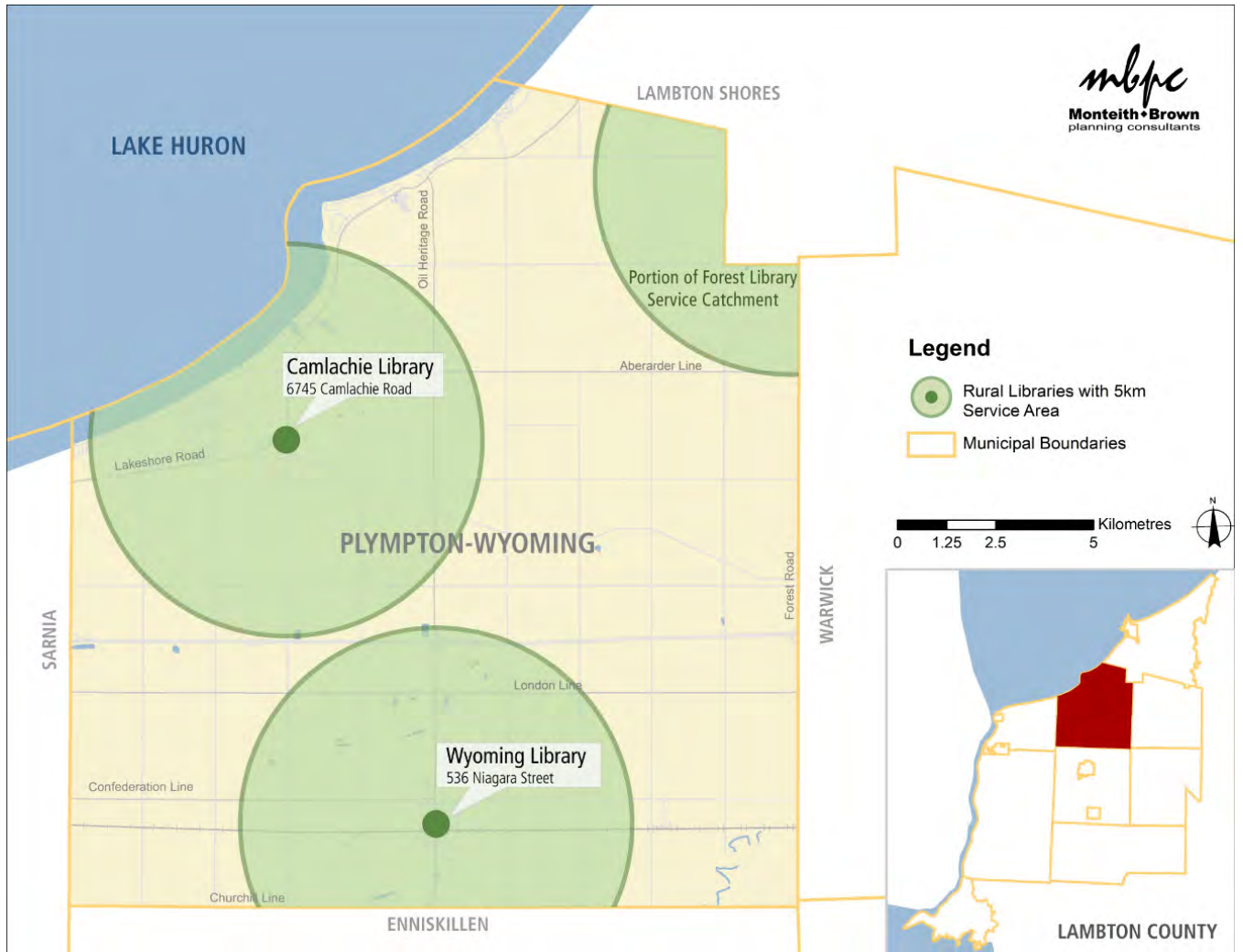
Plympton-Wyoming's 2021 Census population of 8,308 persons is an increase of over 700 persons since 2011 and amounts to an average growth rate of 1.0% per year. The rate of growth has significantly accelerated during the past five years, averaging 1.3% annually since 2016 compared to 0.6% from 2011 to 2016. Continued population growth is forecasted to the year 2031 when the Town is expected to reach nearly 9,300 persons based on planning assumptions that the majority of future development will occur north of Lakeshore Road.²³

Plympton-Wyoming is home to two Standard Libraries (Class C) whose collective GFA provides 0.67 square feet per capita to its residents, close to the targeted rate across the Lambton County Library system. If left unchanged, the service level would decrease to 0.6 square feet per capita with the forecasted addition of approximately 900 new residents over the JLFR planning period. Geographic distribution of the two libraries results in strong coverage around the Camlachie and Wyoming designated settlement areas while a portion of the Town's northeast is encompassed by the Forest Library.

The JLFR proposes substantial reinvestment for Plympton-Wyoming's two libraries but there is a hope that at least some of the capital can be funded through eligible growth-related levies and assessment growth as the Town's residential areas develop over the next 10 years. As will be discussed in the pages that follow, a more intensive capital expansion or redevelopment project is proposed for the Camlachie Library while a focus on interior renovations – building on recent work by Lambton County Library – and façade improvements are proposed for Wyoming Library.

²³ Town of Plympton-Wyoming. 2021 Development Charges Background Study. p.8

Map 8: Distribution of Libraries, Plympton-Wyoming



Camlachie Library

Address:	6745 Camlachie Rd.
Classification:	Medium Branch
Building Type:	Stand-Alone Shared with Museum
Net Floor Area:	2,508 ft²
Weekly Visits:	68
Hours Open:	16 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	7,245 / 2.9 items per ft²

Camlachie Library is housed in a former United Church built in the 1950s, occupying the upper level while the Plympton-Wyoming Museum is housed in the basement. The library has been operating in this location since 2013 with recent investments made by the Town to pave the parking lot and improve barrier-free accessibility to the entrance.

More than 160 library cardholders identify Camlachie Library as their home branch. Serving a localized population, Camlachie Library's weekly visits and circulation are below the Rural Library average though the limited hours of operation are likely a contributing factor.

Camlachie Library will be relied upon to serve needs of newly developing residential areas north of Lakeshore Road. As reinforced through discussions with Lambton County's municipal partners, new residents – as well as established residents – often bring expectations for modern library services and experiences. Improving the functional and aesthetic appeal of library services in Camlachie will allow the Library and Town to:

- address future space needs in Plympton-Wyoming;
- use the library as a place for established and new residents to connect with each other;
- deliver meaningful and impactful programs for Camlachie residents and those living in surrounding rural areas; and
- support economic development and creative potential for Plympton-Wyoming and area municipalities as a whole.

As noted in preceding pages, Plympton-Wyoming currently provides a sufficient amount of space per capita but its population growth will increase pressures on the Town and Lambton County Library to keep pace. Plympton-Wyoming would require an additional 900 square feet of library

space to provide 0.7 square feet per capita based on its 2031 population estimate. There is strong merit in allocating this space to the Camlachie settlement through either:

- a redevelopment or expansion of the existing library with availability of undeveloped open space on its site (potentially eastwards towards Camlachie Road); or
- construction of a new purpose-built library, potentially through a joint project that renews, rebuilds or expands the nearby Camlachie Community Centre.

To be fiscally prudent and proactively plan for growth, it would be more economical to carry out one construction project as opposed to incrementally expanding in phases. Therefore, it is appropriate to look beyond the JLFR's planning horizon and be cognisant that the Town is planning for a longer-range population of approximately 10,500 persons.²⁴ Based on the longer-range forecast, approximately 7,350 square feet in total would be needed in Plympton-Wyoming and thus it would be preferable to ensure an expanded or reconstructed library in Camlachie be sized at a minimum of 4,250 square feet (i.e. adding at least 1,750 square feet above the current GFA).

Given the proximity of the library and community centre to the Town's designated future residential growth areas, a new facility may be eligible for growth-related funding which adds support to the business case; however, funding sources would need to be confirmed with the Town. Any facility expansions, improvements and added programming in Camlachie may have operating implications such as a need for expanded hours of operation and associated staffing.

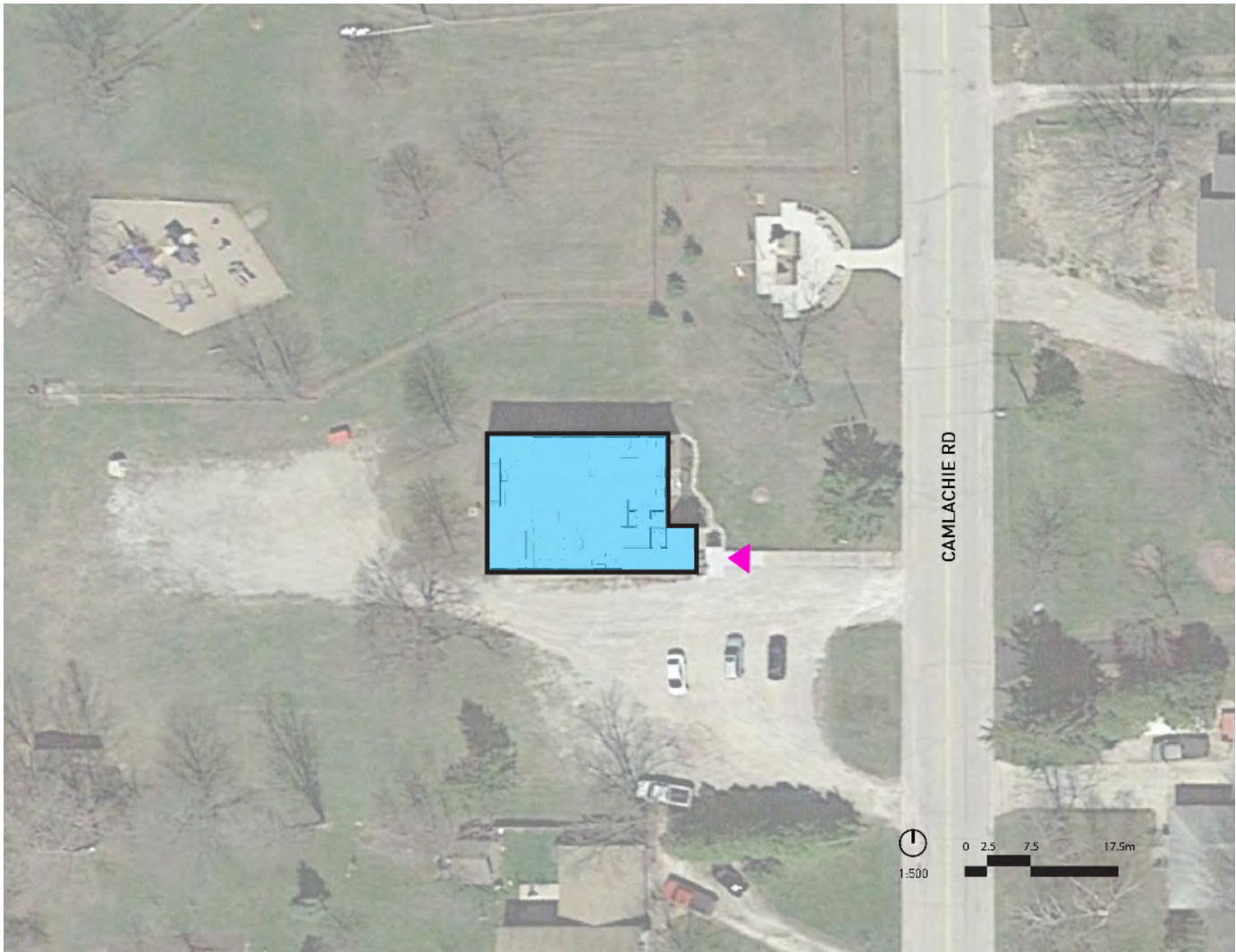
Camlachie Library has been operating in its current location for 10 years and there may be concerns about directing additional capital to it once again. Notwithstanding the operating and service efficiencies that would be gained by expansion or redevelopment, there are temporary measures that could be employed until population and funding ability reach an acceptable threshold for the Town. Some interior reconfiguration and upgraded furniture could be carried out in the short-term to slightly

²⁴ Ibid. Town of Plympton-Wyoming 2021 Development Charges Background Study.

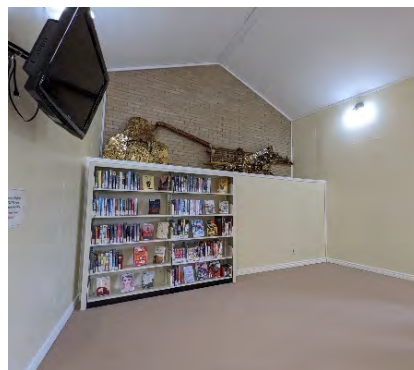
Library Space Needs by Municipality

improve functionality and comfort. However, the Town and Library would have to weigh the costs of temporary improvement measures against the costs of any renovation, expansion or redevelopment ultimately required.

Figure 25: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Camlachie Library



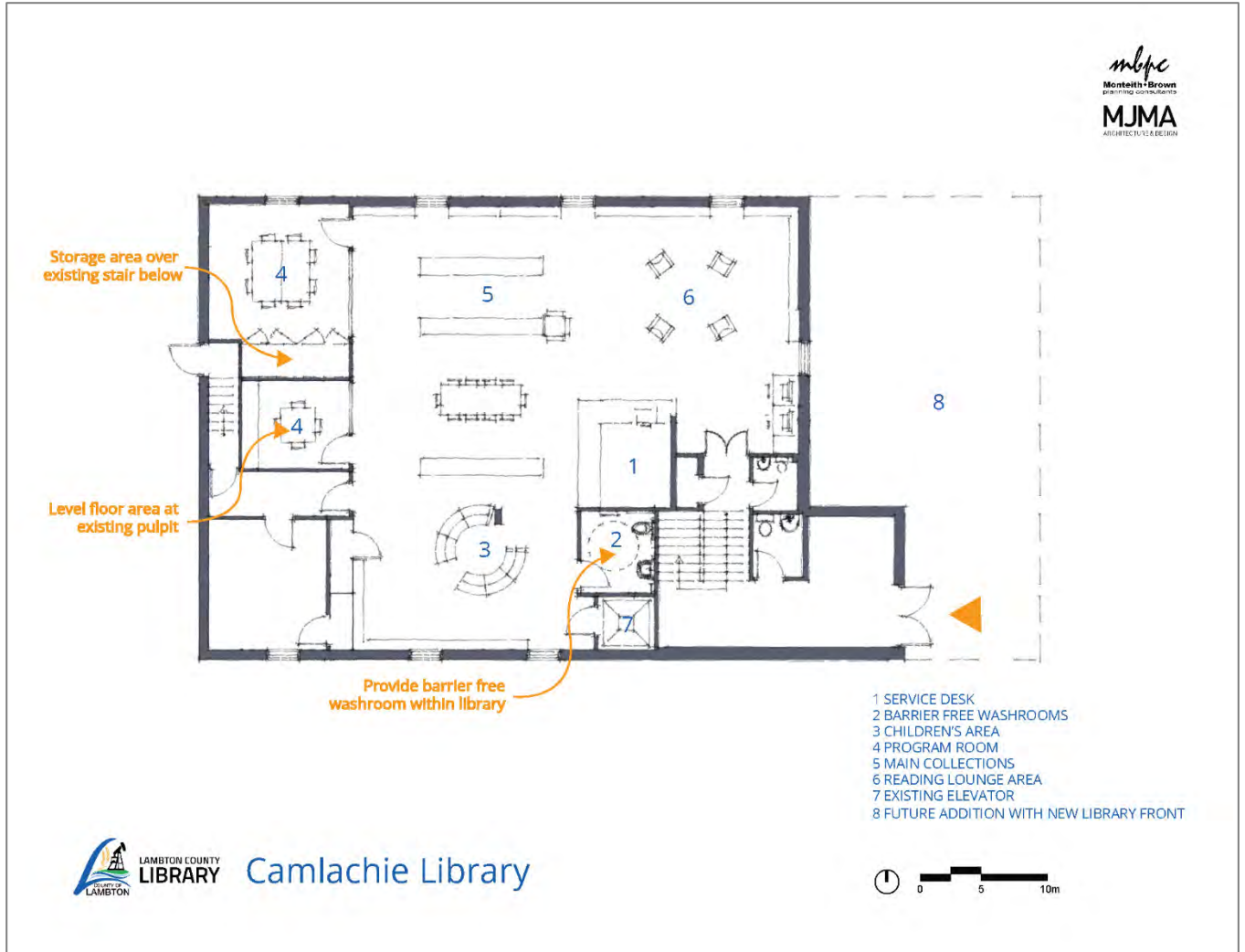
Main Entrance



Elevated Collections Area



Collections Area



Note: Initial concept reflects a short-term interior enhancement plan that can be implemented prior to a library expansion or redevelopment project that would be defined through subsequent architectural investigations.

Wyoming Library

Address:	536 Niagara Street
Classification:	Medium Branch
Building Type:	Stand-Alone
Gross Floor Area:	3,089 ft²
Weekly Visits:	382
Hours Open:	48 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	28,671 / 9.3 items per ft²

Wyoming Library provides a spacious floor area that houses its collection, meeting room, an accessible washroom, and a large activity room that contains kitchen equipment and has its own exterior entrance. Onsite parking is found at the rear of the building but provides a limited number of spaces thus most parking is directed to the street. The library's frontage along Niagara Street is landscaped.

It offers the third largest GFA among Rural Libraries that is approximately 33% larger than the average. Over 550 active library cardholders use the Wyoming library as their home branch of whom 65% live within five kilometres of the library. Its 2019 circulation ranked in the top five Rural Libraries and weekly in-person visitation was more than double the average. The number of pre-pandemic library programs and program attendance was double the Rural Library average. These are all positive indicators of library usage and value provided to its resident base.

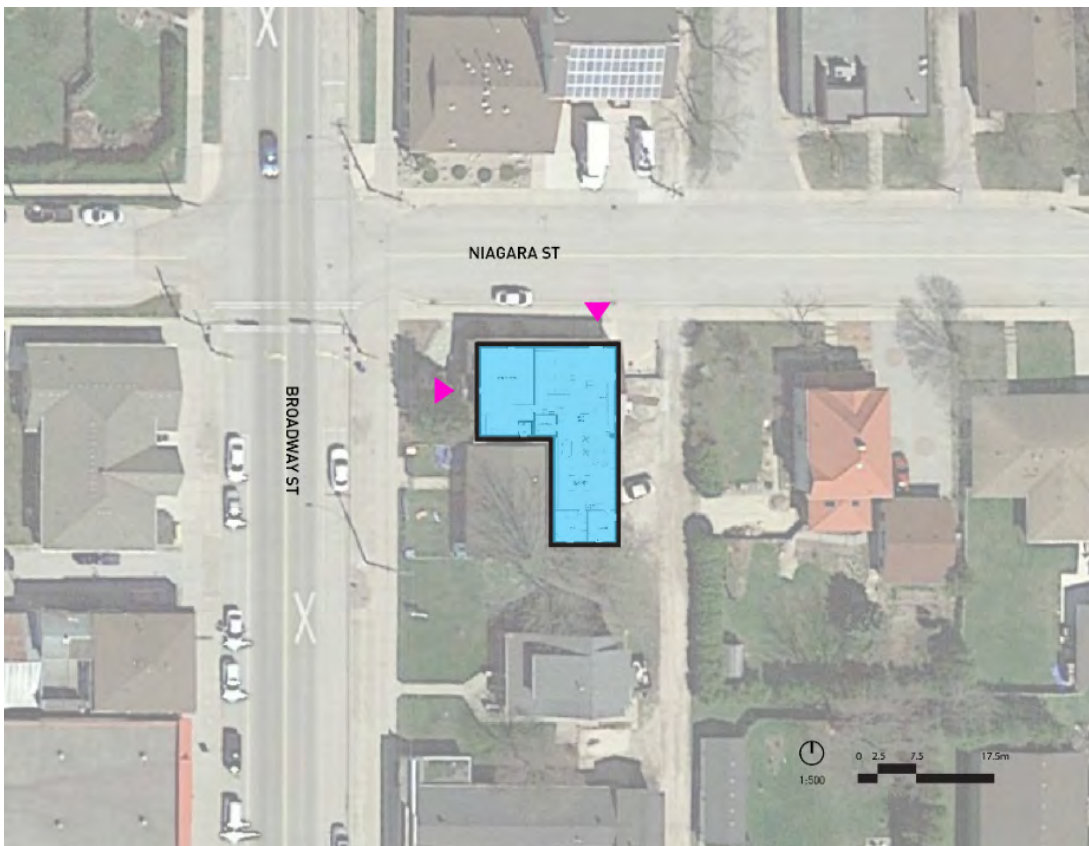
Building on Lambton County Library's recent investments in flooring and the meeting room, Wyoming Library has the potential to significantly enhance the library user experience with some cost-effective interior renewals. At a minimum, carrying out wall painting using the County's new branding colour scheme, updating some of the shelving (including lower accessible stacks), and purchasing modern furniture throughout the library would go a long way in creating a comfortable and appealing environment.

Of particular focus would be a modest redesign and reconfiguration of the activity room. Given that Wyoming Library is an important access point for library programming, it is recommended that the activity room be revitalized in a manner that upgrades components such as the kitchen for food literacy and community cooking programs as well as potentially creating a flexible space that could serve as a seating lounge when not in use for library programs.

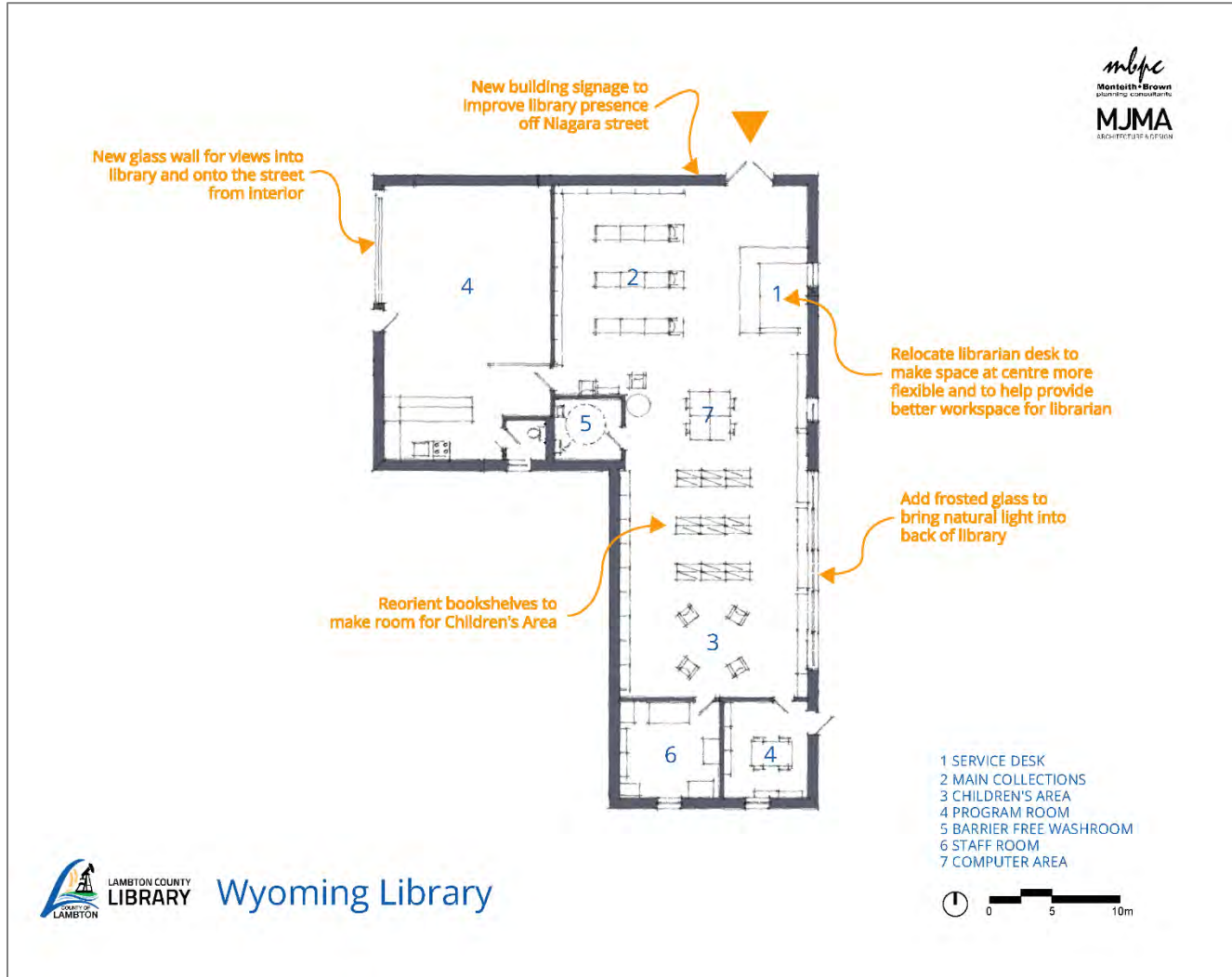
The physical separation between the collections area and the activity room is optimal since noisier activities can be separated from quieter zones. There is also revenue generation potential given a revitalized activity room could be rented for after-hours community use with its separate entrance and ability to lock the collections area, supporting the business case for reinvestment.

In terms of its exterior, the library's frontage along Niagara Street presents an excellent opportunity to transform the unwelcoming steel-cladding into a more visually appealing facade. For example, the addition of windows or glazed elements that allow visibility into the library from the street will reinforce it as a civic destination, hopefully encourage more walk-in traffic, and provide an added benefit of introducing additional natural light into the library's interior. Increased visibility along its frontage on Oil Heritage Road will have a similar effect but also complement the proposed revitalization for the activity room to enable views into the library's landscaped exterior. With respect to parking, site limitations are unfortunately such that the parking lot is unlikely to be expanded.

Figure 26: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Wyoming Library



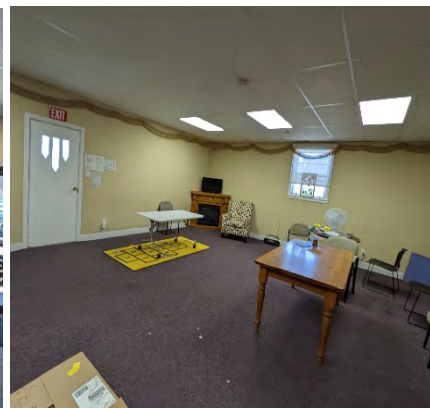
Library Space Needs by Municipality



Library Exterior



Collections Area



Program Room

8.8 Sarnia & Point Edward

2021 Census Population: 73,977 (72,047 in Sarnia, 1,930 in Point Edward)

2031 Population Forecast: 82,901 (80,843 in Sarnia, 2,058 in Point Edward)

Library Space Provided: 46,351 square feet (0.6 square feet per capita)

2031 Supply Required @ 0.7 sq. ft. per capita: 58,030 square feet

Library needs in Sarnia and Point Edward are assessed together given the integrated nature of how each of their respective residents utilize community services. That said, the distinct and autonomous operational and funding practices of each municipality are recognized in the context of the JLFR. Lambton County Library operates three libraries in Sarnia and one library in Point Edward that provide space slightly below the per capita rate recommended at the system-wide level.

That being said, the Sarnia Library is the largest branch and the City has committed to renovating the hall at Clearwater Arena to provide a larger and higher quality library space compared to the Mallroad Library it will replace. Further, the City has committed to exploring opportunities to redevelop the Bright's Grove Library and thus its approach to improving library services is commendable.

More than half (57%) of Lambton County's population base is concentrated in Sarnia and Point Edward and more than half (52%) of the Library's total GFA is housed in these two municipalities. Much of Lambton's population growth over the next 10 years will be accommodated in the City of Sarnia which will further exacerbate per capita space-related pressures; even after adding an additional 1,560 square feet of GFA associated with the Clearwater Library to the city-wide supply, Sarnia's library provision rate would fall to 0.55 square feet per capita. Little forecasted population growth in Point Edward would not contribute to additional pressures for library space in the two urban areas.

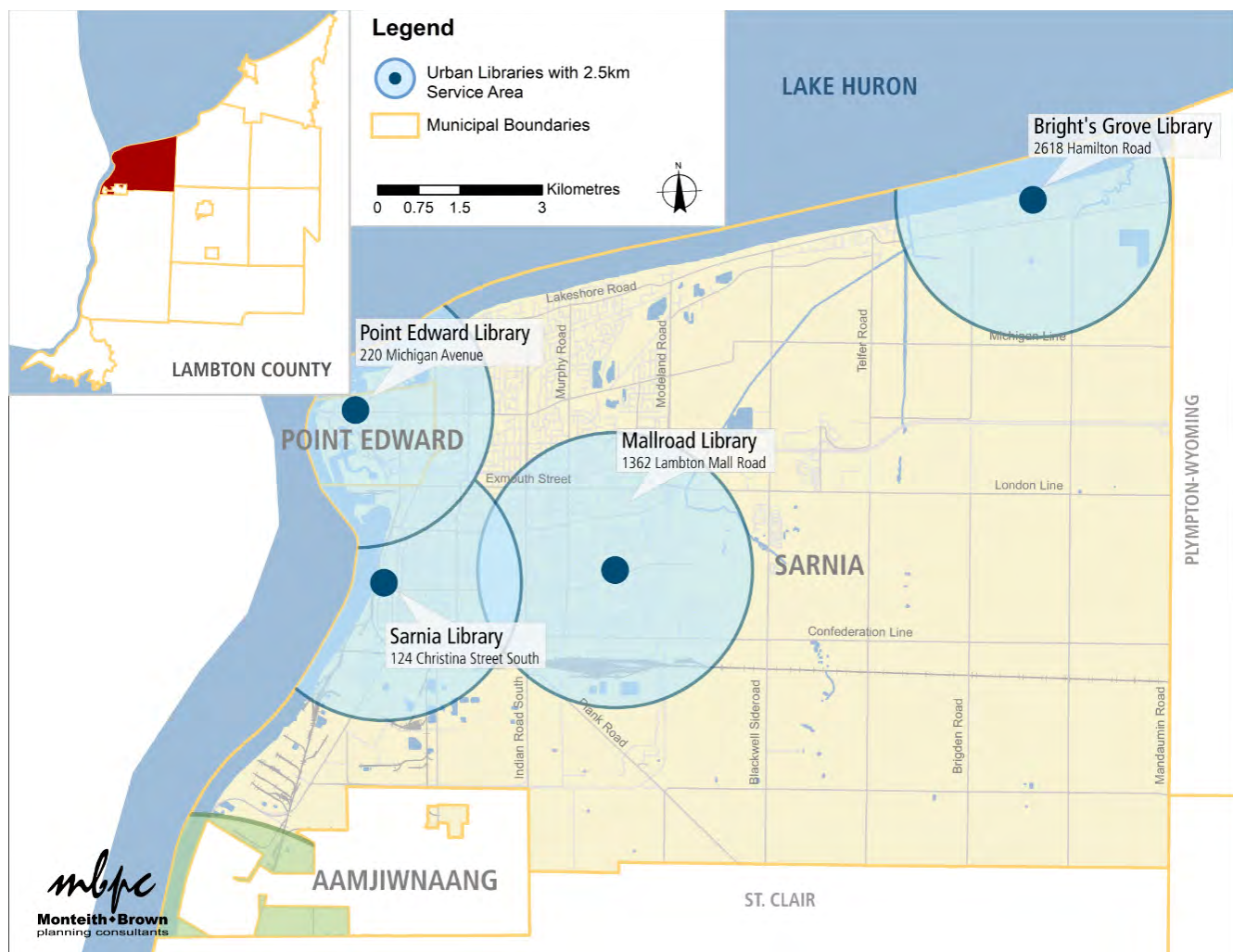
If targeting 0.7 square feet per capita, an additional 11,679 square feet of space would be required to keep pace with population growth in the two urban areas. However, this full quantum of space exceeds that required across the entire library system meaning that Lambton County Library could reduce the amount of new space required within Sarnia.

Library Space Needs by Municipality

As identified in Rec. #13 of the JLFR, a need for approximately 7,600 square feet of new library space is being targeted with half of that quantum – amounting to 3,800 square feet – being allocated to Sarnia. Residents living in Sarnia and Point Edward would still be serviced at a similar level as today (0.6 square feet per capita based on adding 3,800 square feet by 2031) which is still an acceptable metric factoring higher population densities and greater transportation mobility (e.g. transit and sidewalk/trail networks) that reduce the number of physical locations compared to rural areas.

The JLFR supports past planning that has advanced expansion of Bright's Grove Library. Interior works that improve the functionality, safety and service potential of Sarnia Library have also been articulated within the JLFR's timeframe.

Map 9: Distribution of Libraries, Sarnia & Point Edward



Sarnia Library

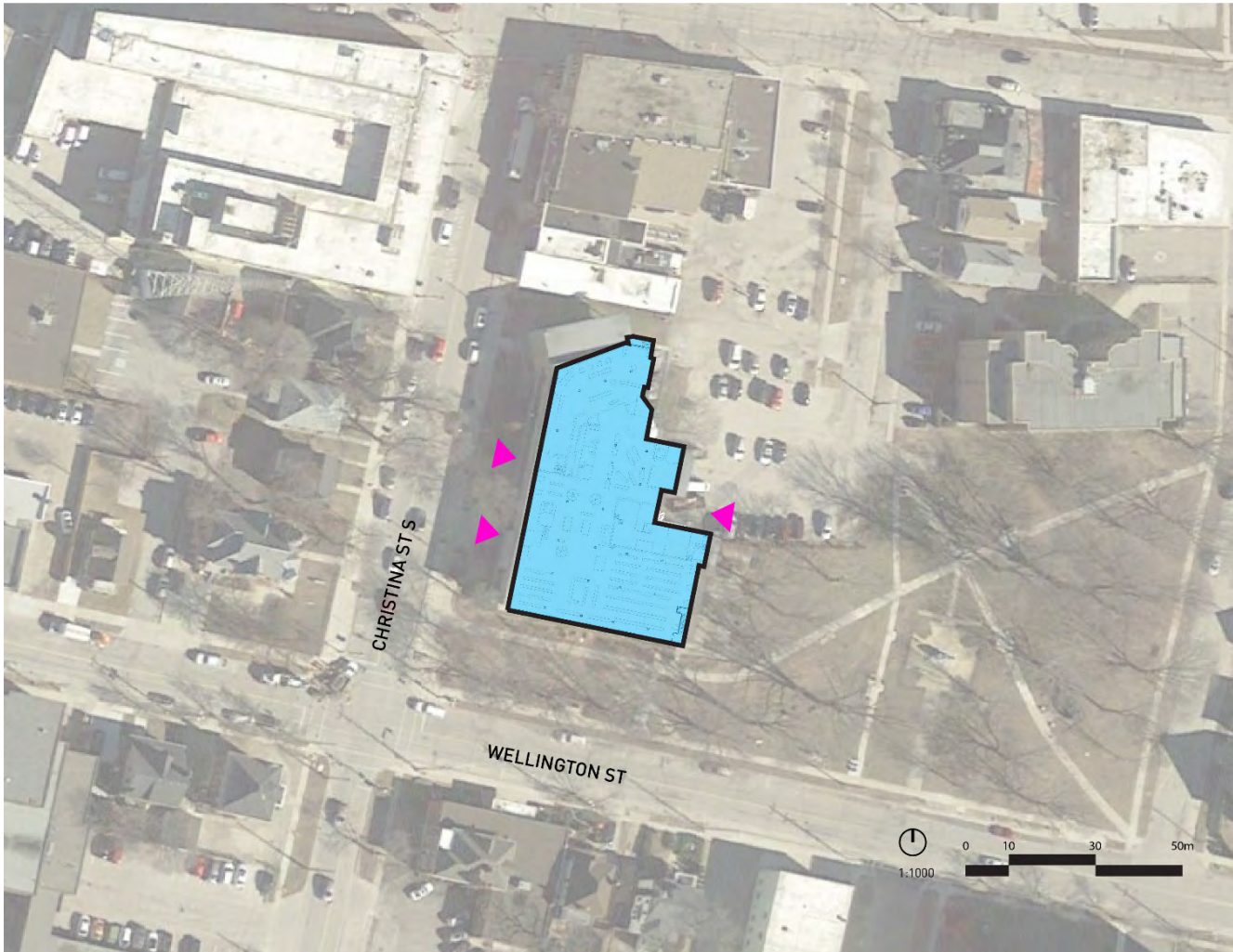
Address:	124 Christina Street
Classification:	Urban Branch
Building Type:	Stand-Alone
Gross Floor Area:	38,324 ft²
Weekly Visits:	6,037
Hours Open:	66 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	167,488 / 4.4 items per ft²

Sarnia Library is the only Urban Branch classified under the JLFR's tiered hierarchy of facilities due to the clear differentiation of this library in terms of its size, level of amenity, and the scale of collections and library programs offered. The library was originally constructed in 1960 and its theatre subsequently added in 1975; investments have been made over the years to maintain the building, improve barrier-free accessibility and incorporate services such as the makerspace.

A building condition report was last completed for the Sarnia Library in 2014 that stated the overall condition of the library is good considering its age, but at that time many of the systems had reached their service life and were due for replacement. The City of Sarnia has started to address some of these asset management needs while carrying out selected barrier-free accessibility upgrades largely centred around the entrance area and washrooms. The County of Lambton has made substantial investments in the theatre including new seating in 2019.

Being centrally located in the County's largest urban area and providing ample floor area for multiple library services resulted in Sarnia Library generating the highest levels of in-person visitation, circulation, internet uses and number of library programs offered in 2019. More than 5,100 library cardholders use Sarnia Library as their home branch while the library handles over 50% of the typical weekly visitors to the Lambton County library system. Lambton County Library's mobile library service is based in this location where deliveries to long-term care homes and retirement complexes are coordinated.

Figure 27: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Sarnia Library



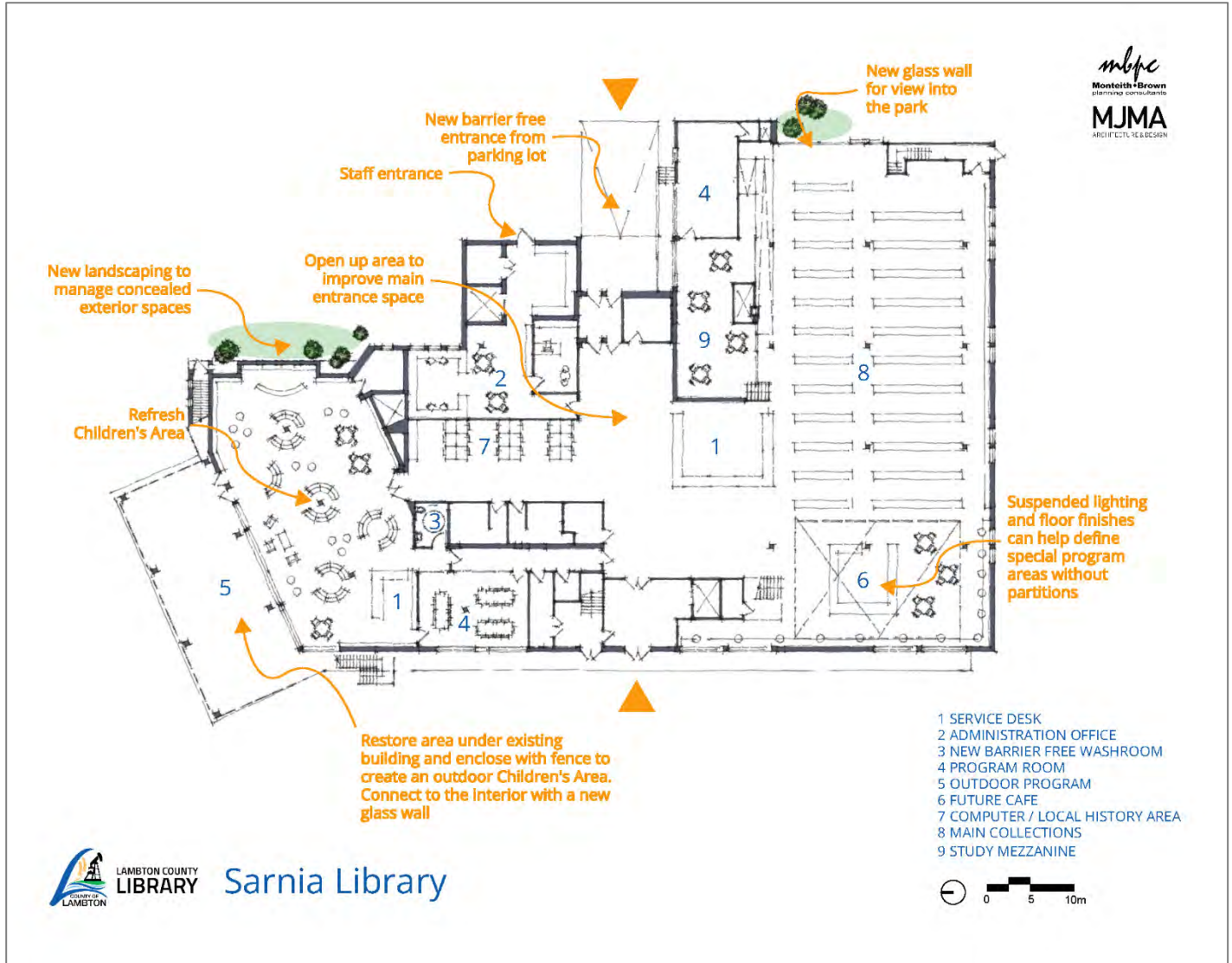
Library Exterior



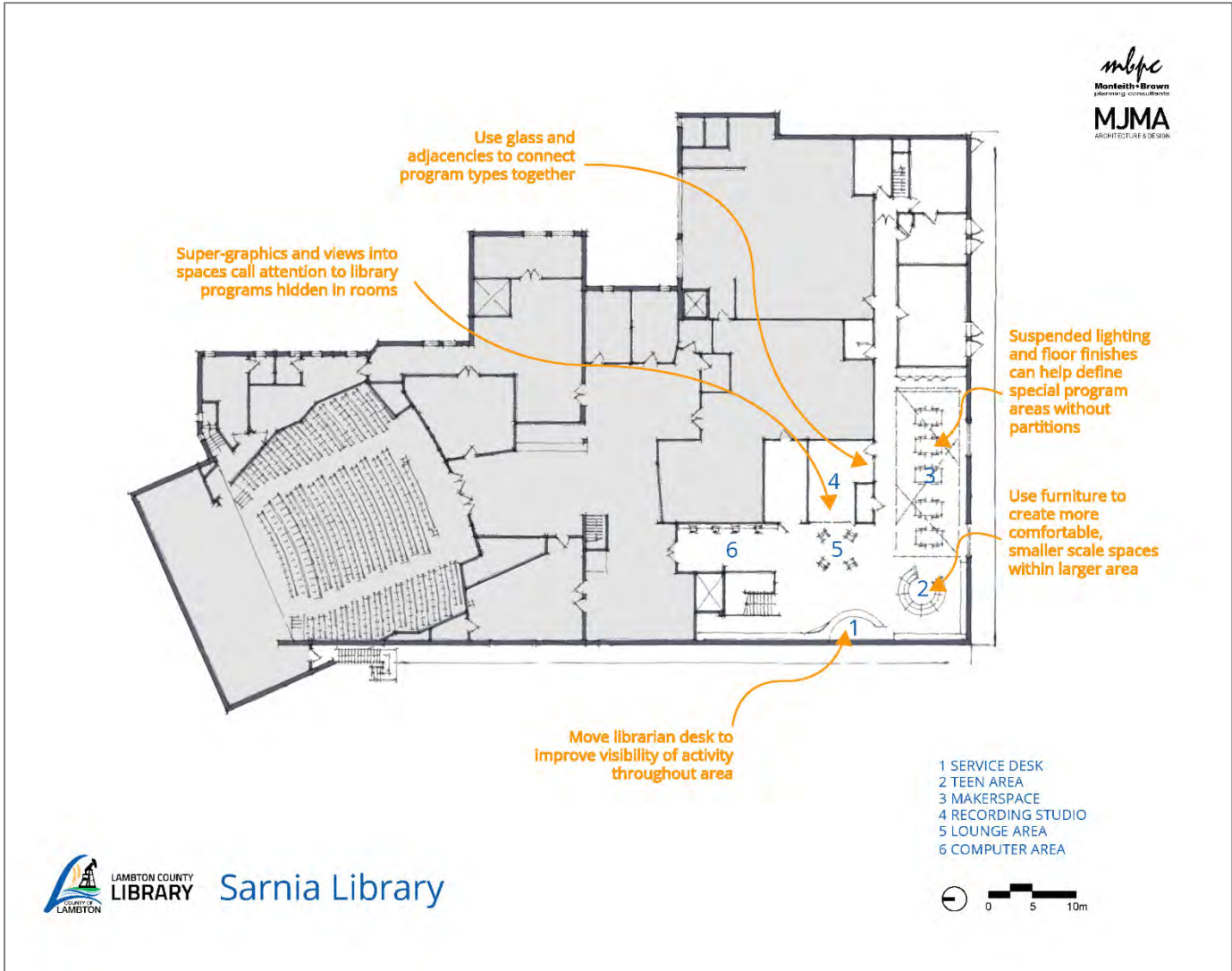
Ground floor collections / seating



Upper level makerspace / seating



Sarnia Library, Ground Level Concept



Sarnia Library, Upper Level Concept

Library space is distributed across two floors. The ground floor contains the customer service desk and self-service checkout kiosks, collections and local history area, computer area, and a split-level area assigned for staff administration (accessed by a stairway and thus not accessible as the service elevator has been out of service for decades). A large children's area is housed in the northern part of the building and has physical separation with the adjacent computer lab which helps to mitigate noise travel. In addition to one accessible washroom, washrooms in their original condition are found across three areas on the ground floor.

The upper level is home to the makerspace, a secondary customer service desk, multipurpose meeting rooms and additional work areas for library staff. The Sarnia Library Theatre occupies the southern portion of the second floor, offering its own set of washrooms – that service the library's entire upper level - and a storage room; a dedicated entrance vestibule on the ground floor provides access to the theatre via a stairwell and elevator. There are two accessible washrooms in the theatre lobby in addition to washrooms in their original condition, one small public washroom in its original condition on the second floor near the Makerspace, along with original staff washrooms at the rear of the building. Sarnia Library's exterior amenities include a landscaped park setting, an onsite parking lot and a concrete patio at the rear.

Library staff anecdotally indicate that seniors make up the largest part of the user base with many regular patrons accessing large print and audio-book resources. In addition to serving core library users, being located in the downtown some of the library's clientele use the library to take shelter from the environment (i.e. as a place to stay warm or cool), use the washrooms and access Wi-Fi.

While no physical expansions to the building footprint are contemplated in the JLFR planning period, a number of improvements should be considered to improve upon barrier-free accessibility, functionality and the service mix delivered through Sarnia Library:

- Carry out a coordinated shelving and flooring replacement throughout the branch. Shelving should be lowered and spaced to enhance barrier-free accessibility while flooring should generally be consistent across the library.

- Improve the entranceway to the rear parking lot so that it meets barrier-free accessibility standards.
- Create a meeting/program room by enclosing the space between the Christina Street entrance vestibule and existing children's area, preferably in a manner that allows dedicated access to the room for rentals when the library is closed.
- Create an outdoor program and/or seating area adjacent to the existing children's area (below the structural canopy connecting Christina Street to the rear parking lot). A new doorway would be required and enclosure of the area would help with building control and security.
- Furnishing the concrete patio at the rear of the library without necessarily duplicating the function of the above noted proposal to formalize an outdoor program area.
- Improve lighting throughout the library, preferably with energy-efficient standards and strategic use of natural light; the latter could be attained by re-orienting certain shelves and/or adding additional windows.
- Expand upon the existing makerspace to more clearly delineate the space while updating furnishings and makerspace equipment. Inclusion of greater video and audio production capabilities (e.g. soundproof room) would be desirable from the perspective of promoting digital literacy, creative industries, and cultural expression.
- The collections space immediately adjacent to the makerspace could be formalized as a teen area given noise separation enabled between the ground and second floor, good line of sight from the upper floor customer service desk, and adjacency to the makerspace.
- Integration of interior and/or exterior elements reflective of local Indigenous Peoples, including potentially devoting a portion of space within the library to Indigenous history and culture (also see JLFR Rec. #8).

- Consider a food and/or beverage concession such as a café, potentially contracted to a local business, which would improve the level of amenity and encourage longer stays as well as creating a new revenue stream to offset subsidized service costs. A balance would need to be struck to avoid undue competition with nearby businesses.
- Optimizing staff work areas and administrative areas located on the ground and second floors. Repairing the service elevator connecting the two levels would improve workflow for library staff but would not meet AODA standards in its current configuration.
- Integrating safety design principles such as CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design) with input from health and social service providers, law enforcement, and other subject matter experts.

The above noted works are generally consistent with past direction from the Sarnia Space and Service Needs Study that recommended “a large interior renovation and upgrade HVAC and FF&E...add program space and provide expanded digital services.”²⁵

The Sarnia Library Theatre is a unique service managed by Lambton County Library on behalf of the City. While certain improvements have been carried out, certain logistical deficiencies and limitations were observed during tours. These included limited back of house space for performers’ changerooms and green room as well as set design/fabrication space, a need for more storage and potentially a separate entrance to the theatre from the back of house for performers. Public washrooms are considered to be outdated in relation to other performance venues, despite the recent addition of two accessible single-use washrooms.

Please note that with the JLFR’s scope relegated to library space, any suggestions for the theatre noted herein should not be treated as recommendations but rather provide a point of departure for a theatre-specific analysis and/or business plan.

²⁵ Lambton County Library. 2017. Sarnia Space and Service Needs Study. p.11

Bright's Grove Library

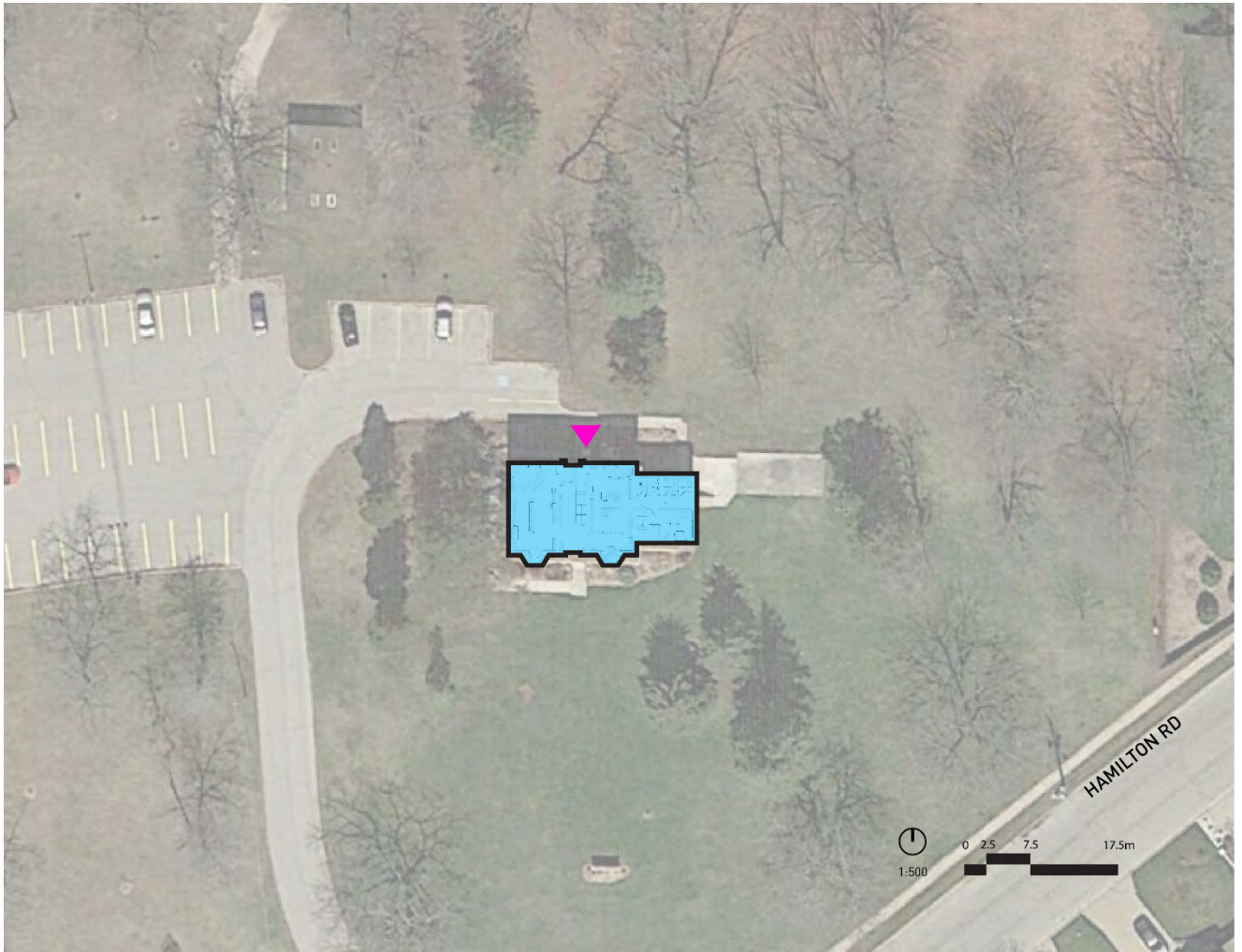
Address:	2618 Hamilton Road
Classification:	Small Branch
Building Type:	Integrated with Art Gallery
Gross Floor Area:	1,787 ft²
Weekly Visits:	587
Hours Open:	50 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	48,617 / 27.2 items per ft²

Bright's Grove Library serves residential areas along Lake Huron's northern shoreline in Sarnia. The yellow brick house that the library is located in was originally built in 1875 before being acquired by the City of Sarnia in 1978 and subsequently restored. The library operates on the main floor while the Gallery in the Grove occupies the second floor.

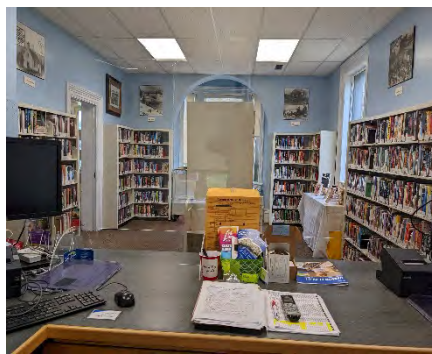
While it is understood that some residents of Plympton-Wyoming use Bright's Grove Library, it bears noting that 80% of the 1,050 library cardholders using it as their home branch are Sarnia residents. A typical pre-pandemic week generated 25% more in-person visitation than the Lambton County Library average while Bright's Grove Library's 2019 circulation metrics are surprising strong given its floor size, ranking fourth among County libraries in terms of total circulation and trailing only Mallroad Library in terms of circulation per square foot. The 555 library programs offered there in 2019 was almost triple the County average and attracted more program participants than any library apart from Forest Library.

As such, Bright's Grove Library's operating characteristics are more reflective of a Large or Medium Branch but its layout and limited floor area offer an outdated library experience. This finding should not be entirely surprising as the City of Sarnia and Lambton County Library have completed previous library studies within the past five years that have reinforced the importance of Bright's Grove Library and a desire to improve it.

Figure 28: Site Plan, Bright's Grove Library



Library Exterior



West Room



East Room

In early 2022, Sarnia City Council passed a motion to initiate detailed design work for an expansion to Bright's Grove Library and prioritized the project in the City's 10-year capital plan, building on a recommendation by the Sarnia Space and Service Needs Study. That report stated that "Bright's Grove Branch must be expanded to accommodate use as well as link the Gallery in the Grove to Library programming in partnership. An elevator is needed for AODA compliance."²⁶ In July 2022, Council approved a terms of reference for a committee to oversee what is being branded as a 'library, gallery and community hub'.

An initial design proposes a 7,000 square foot expansion and identifies a construction cost between \$5 million and \$8 million with a community group indicating that they would hope to contribute \$1 million towards the project. The expansion would house the library with the existing structure being assigned to the Gallery for exhibition space and program/event space.²⁷ Given the global cost environment at time of writing, the previous capital cost estimate would be considered to be conservative and would need to be reconfirmed.

Assuming that the City implements this initial design vision, a 7,000 square foot library would add approximately 3,200 square feet of new library space to the Lambton County Library's total GFA. This aligns nicely with Rec. #14 of this JLFR that recommends 7,600 square feet be added to the Lambton County Library supply of which half (3,800 square feet) would be allocated to the City of Sarnia to address its growth-related needs.

While an additional 3,200 square feet in Bright's Grove combined with the GFA being added at Clearwater Library will result in approximately 900 square feet more in Sarnia than recommended by 2031, it will create highly functional library space in the City that provides long-range flexibility to respond to ongoing population growth and achieve economies of scale in construction compared to adding that GFA at a later time.

As such, the JLFR supports the ongoing work to expand the Bright's Grove Library in conjunction with the Gallery in the Grove.

²⁶ Ibid. Sarnia Space and Service Needs Study, 2017

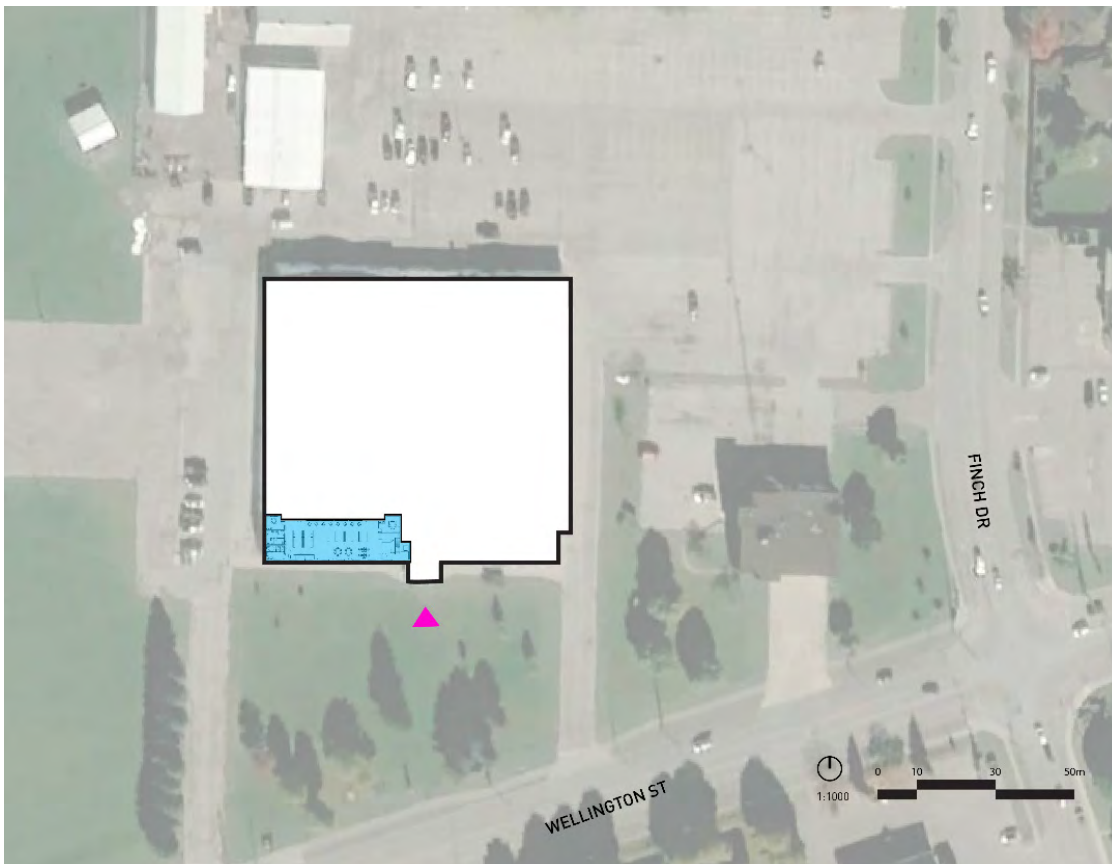
²⁷ Passa Associates Inc., Proposed Floor Plan/Site Plan. December 20, 2020.

Clearwater Arena Library

Address: 1400 Wellington Street
Classification: Large Branch
Building Type: Integrated with Arena
Gross Floor Area: 4,012 ft² (estimate)
Weekly Visits: Not Applicable
Hours Open: Not Applicable
2019 Circulation: Not Applicable

A new library at Clearwater Arena is under construction at time of writing this JLFR as a replacement to Mallroad Library (which will be permanently closed). Based on construction drawings supplied, the new library at Clearwater Arena will be 4,012 square feet in size which will add 1,560 square feet to Lambton County Library’s system-wide supply. The new library completely redevelops and repurposes the community hall located on the second floor of the arena through which space is being added for library collections, a program room, seating and workstations, a staff room, and washrooms. A separate entrance will be dedicated to the library.

Figure 29: Site Plan, Clearwater Library



Point Edward Library

Address:	220 Michigan Avenue
Classification:	Medium Branch
Building Type:	Integrated with Fire Hall
Gross Floor Area:	3,789 ft²
Weekly Visits:	211
Hours Open:	25 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	19,301 / 5.1 items per ft²

The site that Point Edward Library occupies dates back to 1888 but the library was developed in 1967 as a Centennial project. The library offers a warm atmosphere in each of its three floors with: a children's area, storage room and computers housed on the lower level; collections and customer service desk on the main level; and additional collections, a teen area and tables and seating on the upper level. A room dedicated to showcasing historical items specific to Point Edward is also housed on the upper level. No vehicular parking is provided onsite and thus directed to the street, although library staff indicate that many of users walk or cycle to the library.

Point Edward Library has over 360 library cardholders that use the library as their home branch. Of these users, 35% are residents of Point Edward and 60% are residents of Sarnia as the library's catchment extends into the city. Library staff indicate that most of its clientele consists of seniors but there is a pre-school located nearby that is a frequent visitor. Typical in-person visitation rates and circulation are well below the other Urban Libraries but Point Edward Library offers about half of the number of open hours in a week as do its urban library counterparts. The 250 pre-pandemic library programs delivered at the library was 25% above the county-wide average and as a result attracted an above-average number of program participants.

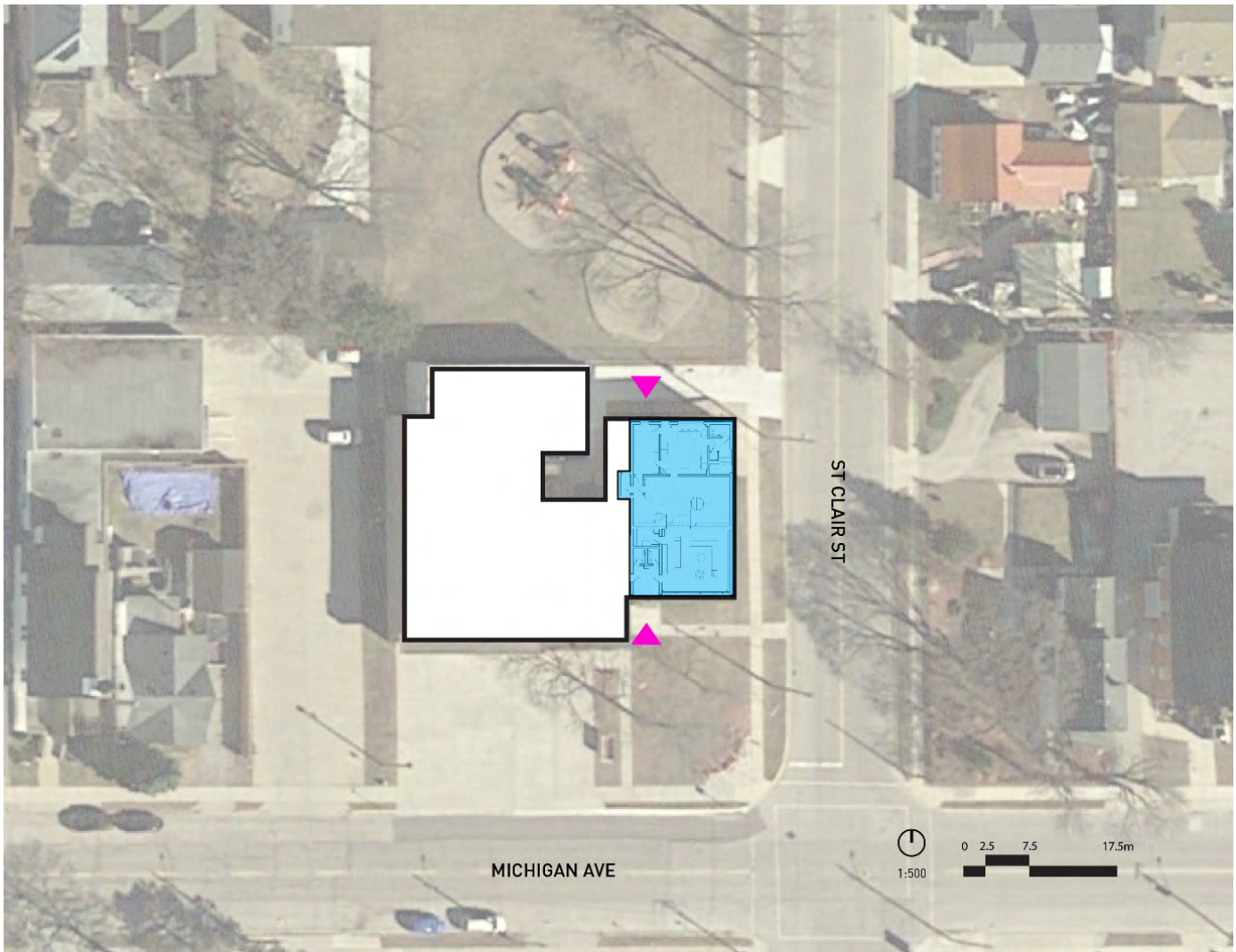
A number of barrier-free accessibility challenges were observed that must be addressed to provide an inclusive environment. The exterior entrance to the main floor is only accessible by a stairway which results in the lower level entrance being the only point of access/egress to the library. Once inside, the three floors are connected only by interior stairwells. Washrooms are located on the upper level and are not accessible as well.

While the library's interior generally shows well, particularly with recent wall painting that would complement the new flooring that has been installed on the upper and lower levels; updating the flooring on the main level as well would impart a level of visual consistency and concurrently provide an opportunity to update bookstacks in conjunction with other accessibility upgrades.

A more ambitious plan would be to redevelop Point Edward Library in its entirety, possibly with the fire hall. The library's location on Michigan Avenue provides an opportunity to reinforce the site as a civic destination for people travelling to the waterfront and those visiting business along this major thoroughfare. Given that the building offers services on multiple levels that must all be made accessible to meet AODA standards, it is worth evaluating the capital cost of completing accessibility and other functional upgrades (e.g. better program delivery potential) with the cost associated with a rebuild. It is acknowledged that this could be fiscally challenging given the small population base of the Village but there is also a potential economic development and tourism benefit if capturing a portion of visitors travelling to the Waterfront Park, casino, yacht club and other local points of interest.

Library Space Needs by Municipality

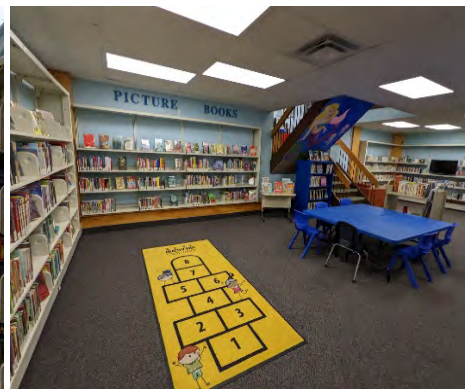
Figure 30: Site Plan, Point Edward Library



Library Exterior



Main Floor Collections



Lower Level Children's Area

8.9 St. Clair

2021 Census Population: 14,659

2031 Population Forecast: 14,779

Library Space Provided: 10,071 square feet (0.69 square feet per capita)

2031 Supply Required @ 0.7 sq. ft. per capita: 10,345 square feet

St. Clair's 2021 Census population of 14,659 persons is approximately 150 persons more than recorded in 2011, translating into an average growth of 0.09%. All of this growth occurred in the past five years as the population decreased to 14,086 in 2016. This results in an average annual growth rate of 0.8% over the last five years. The Township is projecting its population to modestly increase by 100 persons over the next 10 years to reach 14,779 in the year 2031. Most of the forecasted residential development is expected to be directed to Corunna.²⁸

Despite having seven libraries, the most of any municipality in Lambton, the average rate of space provision is essentially in line with the Lambton County Average at 0.69 square feet per capita. However, four of the libraries in St. Clair are smaller than 1,400 square feet (three of which are below 900 square feet) meaning that their ability to deliver modern library services is not possible. A modest increase in total GFA for St. Clair would be required to keep pace with growth which could potentially come through larger floor plans tied into a future library capital project(s).

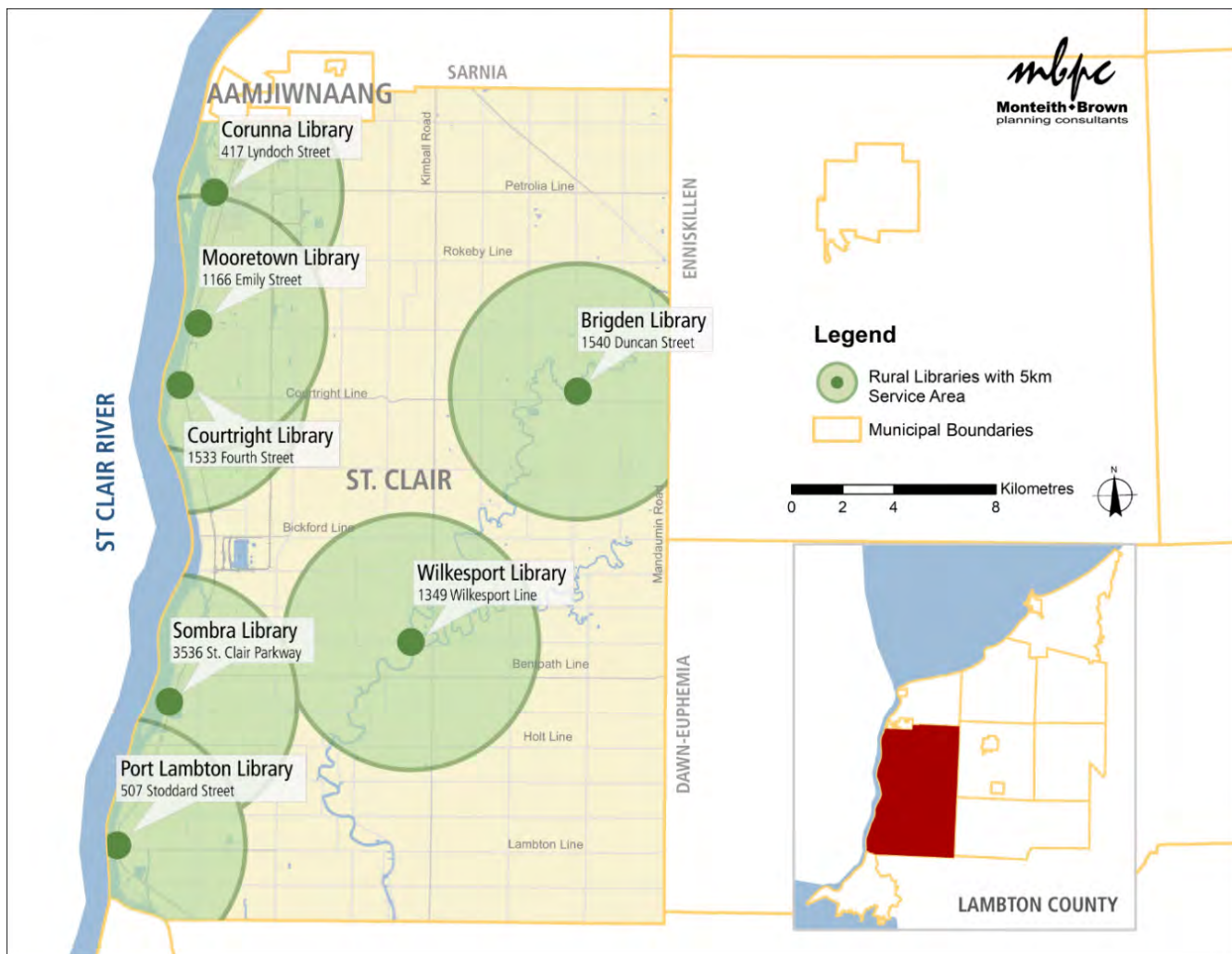
The number of libraries concentrated along the riverfront (Map 10) results in duplicated service catchments between Corunna and Courtright as well as between Sombra and Port Lambton. Compounding operational inefficiencies is the fact that Lambton County Library can only justify being open 12 hours per week at five of the seven libraries in St. Clair due to their size limitations and the below average circulation and programming rates that ensue as a result.

²⁸ Township of St. Clair. 202. Development Charges Background Study. pp.43, 54

Library Space Needs by Municipality

The JLFR rationalizes continued operation of the Corunna and Brigden Libraries over the next 10 years based on their usage profile, recent investment history and catchment areas being served. New library space will be required in St. Clair both to retain existing per capita service rates in line with modest population growth but also to provide refreshed library facilities in light of the fact that a number of libraries in the Township are in an antiquated state, too small to offer meaningful library services, and/or duplicate each other's service catchments.

Map 10: Distribution of Libraries, St. Clair



The recommended library facility development strategy involves two options for Lambton County Library to further explore with its municipal partners in St. Clair as follows.

Option 1: Two Mid-Size Libraries - Build one new Medium Branch library that consolidates the GFA of the existing Mooretown and Courtright Libraries. In addition, a second new Medium Branch library would consolidate the GFA of the existing Sombra and Port Lambton Libraries. The location of one of these new libraries should either be at the Mooretown Sports Complex through a ground floor expansion or a location to be determined in Courtright. The location of the second new library should be in Sombra, potentially at the current site. Both new libraries should provide a minimum GFA of 2,500 square feet.

Option 2: One Large Library - Build one new Large Branch library with a minimum GFA of 5,000 square feet in either Sombra or Courtright to replace the existing libraries found in Port Lambton, Mooretown, Courtright and Sombra.

For communities where library space is re-allocated to a larger library in a different settlement, Lambton County Library should implement an 'express' or 'outreach' library service model to retain the ability of residents to pick-up, drop-off and potentially browse using vending technology. Some library programming could be retained in these communities provided affordable access can be secured to meeting rooms, halls, and/or kitchens located in settlements being serviced under the outreach approach.

Option 1 is the preferred approach of the JLFR, solely from the perspective of retaining some of the historical geographic distribution that St. Clair residents are accustomed to. That said, Option 2 also has merits as it would be more operationally efficient for Lambton County Library and allow it to potentially provide a more responsive level of service and programming that are supported by greater hours of operation.

However, Option 2 would increase the travelling distance for some residents to access a library though it is noted that drive time between Mooretown and Corunna is 20 minutes meaning a more centralized location (e.g. Courtright or Sombra) would still be considered reasonable,

particularly if Lambton County Library were to still offer non-staffed services such as holds lockers, book drop bins and/or book vending machine technology. Outreach library programs could also be retained to a degree if access can be facilitated to the community halls and program rooms in communities where a library is replaced.

There is also a case to be made to consolidate the GFA of Wilkesport Library with that of Shetland Library as previously discussed in Section 8.2 of the JLFR, relocating these two libraries to a school in southern Lambton County (preferably St. Clair or Dawn-Euphemia) where a higher quality Standard Library (Class C) would be provided. Wilkesport Library has functional challenges associated with its small size, inaccessibility to persons with disabilities and limited ability to deliver library programs and house an adequate library collection. This would require agreement from a local school board and potentially replace staffed libraries in Wilkesport and Shetland with express library service points such as holds lockers and/or book vending machines. It is recognized that this could remove a staffed library from St. Clair (depending on the location of the co-located school library), however, geographic distribution, hours of operation and access to library services would be significantly improved for residents living across southern Lambton County.

The Township does not levy a development charge for library service as it has previously assumed its library infrastructure would be able to support growth in the Township to 2031.²⁹ As will be discussed in the pages that follow, the JLFR's library facility development strategy identified for St. Clair will have capital implications but as specified in the Development Charges Background Study, library needs will be re-examined in the next development charges update (estimated for 2025); that process will determine the extent of capital funding that can be directed through eligible growth-related projects.

²⁹ Ibid. St. Clair Development Charges Background Study. p.66

Brigden Library

Address:	1540 Duncan Street
Classification:	Medium Branch
Building Type:	Shared with Elementary School
Gross Floor Area:	2,563 ft²
Weekly Visits:	166
Hours Open:	25 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	8,474 / 3.3 items per ft²

Brigden Library is co-located with Brigden Public School with a dedicated exterior public entrance and an interior door that connects it to the rest of the school. The library's layout offers a spacious feel with some lower shelving and wide aisle widths, along with areas for children's programs, collections, and computers. A washroom and a space for the teacher-librarian are also contained in the library. Onsite parking is shared with the school and the lot can become congested when library hours coincide with school drop-off and pick-up periods.

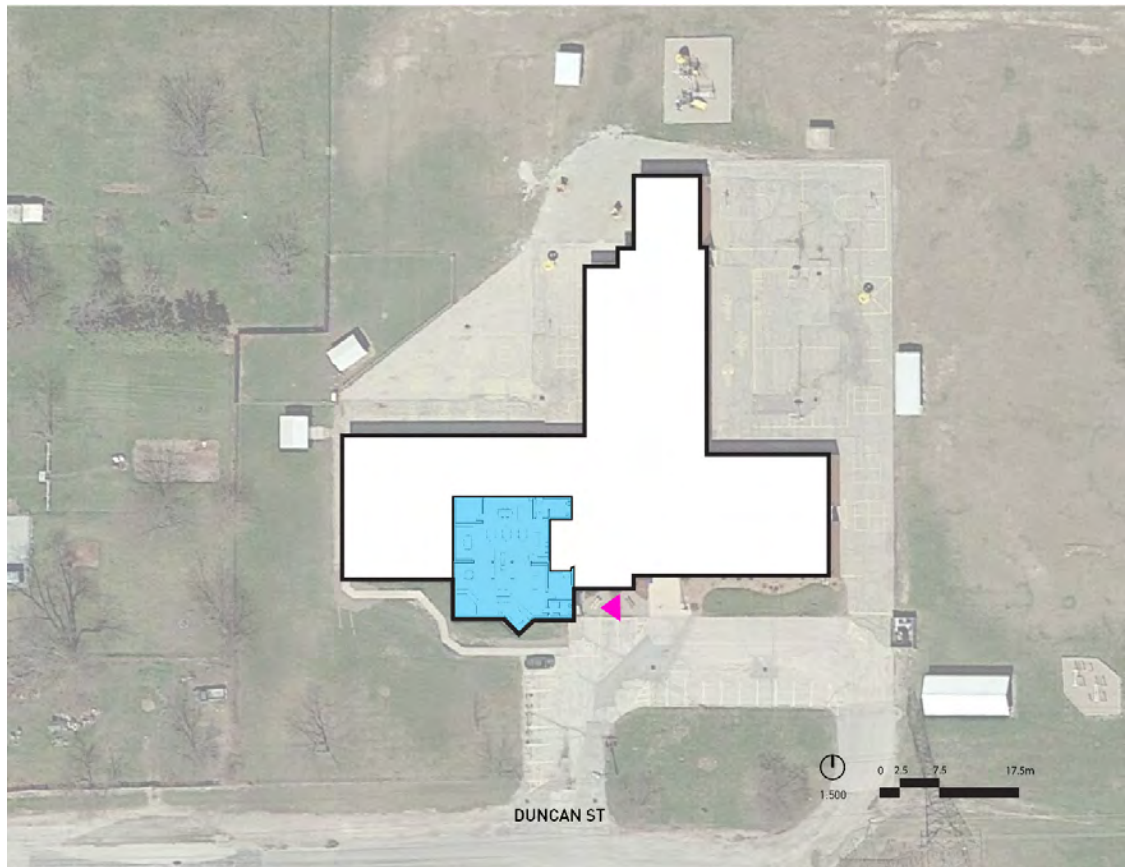
In addition to use by students during the day, library staff indicate that school families also make use after school or during the evenings. Seniors form another substantial component of the library's clientele. In total, 270 library cardholders are recorded as using Brigden Library as their home location with 60% of these living within five kilometres of the library while drawing from elsewhere in St. Clair and Enniskillen. Its typical pre-pandemic visitation over the course of a week is in line with Lambton County Library's rural branch average but circulation is well below average following a 28% decline in borrowing after 2018. Brigden Library is also below-average when it comes to library programs offered and attendance. The number of hours open to the public in a week is in line with the rural library average.

Apart from improving barrier-free accessibility to the interior washroom and any other upgrades identified through accessibility audits per Rec. #9 of the JLFR, no major capital projects are recommended for this library over the next 10 years. Accordingly, no recommendations specific to Brigden Library have been proposed apart from those tying into system-wide recommendations that are applicable to all Lambton County Library locations. Potential service enhancements are more of a priority and subject to an operational review and discussions with the Lambton Kent District School Board.

Library Space Needs by Municipality

For example, the teacher-librarian office occupies an ample floor area and may be better repurposed – in whole or in part – for more public-serving needs such as technology and/or programming. Further, interior access should be explored as currently the school has access to the library beyond its hours of operation which has resulted in some books being borrowed by teachers and students without being registered in the library system. Implementation of RFID and self-service checkouts may alleviate such logistical challenges at Brigden Library.

Figure 31: Site Plan, Brigden Library



Library Exterior



Large Print Collection



Storytime Area

Corunna Library

Address:	417 Lyndoch Street
Classification:	Medium Branch
Building Type:	Stand-Alone
Gross Floor Area:	2,325 ft²
Weekly Visits:	399
Hours Open:	48 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	30,138 / 13.0 items per ft²

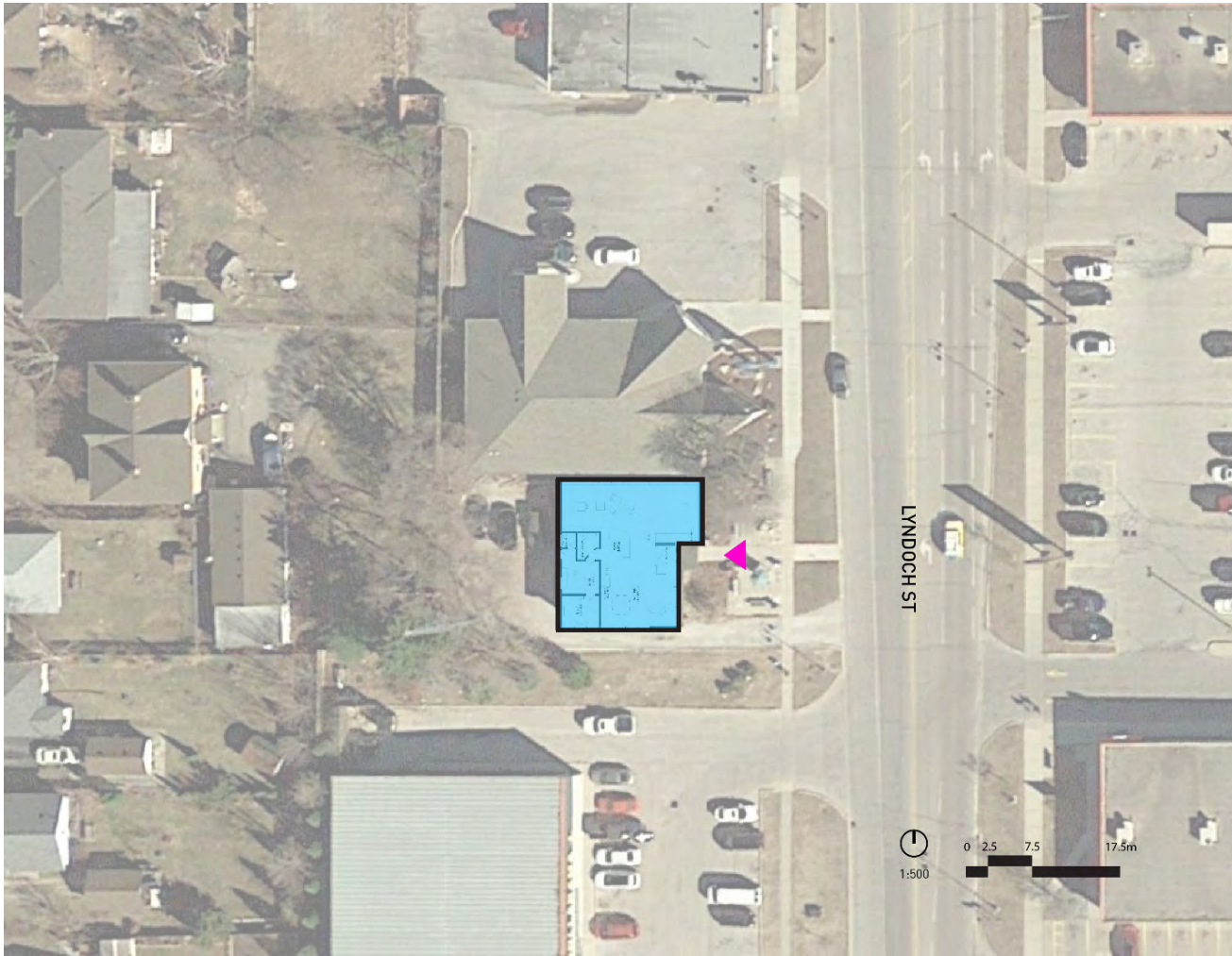
Corunna Library is centrally located in the settlement, conveniently providing direct access from the Lyndoch Street commercial corridor as well as the rest of the St. Clair Parkway and Petrolia Line. The library's public-facing interior areas were renovated in 2021 to replace flooring, shelving, and furniture while also painting and designating a private meeting room; these works have significantly enhanced the comfort and appeal of the library. There are designated areas that separate the children's collection from the broader collection, seating, and technology. The library provides a single washroom (not barrier-free) and a small staff room as well. Exterior amenities include a hardscaped front yard and a small parking lot at the rear of the building.

Among Lambton County library holders, 850 use Corunna Library as their home branch of whom 70% live within five kilometres. Anecdotal observations of staff suggest Corunna Library users are typically representative of seniors' aged residents though younger families are using in-library programs and services as well. Physical circulation is more than double the Rural Library average and ranks in the top five of all Lambton County Library locations on a square foot basis.

The recent renovations place Corunna Library in a strong position to respond to needs over the next ten years. Emphasis is placed on washroom accessibility (per JLFR Rec. #9) and building maintenance; for the latter, the windows along the front exterior should be replaced in tandem with restoration of soffits to enhance the library's connection to the public realm along Lyndoch Street. With little opportunity to add vehicular parking onsite, Lambton County Library should engage neighbouring commercial landowners to discuss whether a limited number of their parking stalls could be designated for library users.

Library Space Needs by Municipality

Figure 32: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Corunna Library



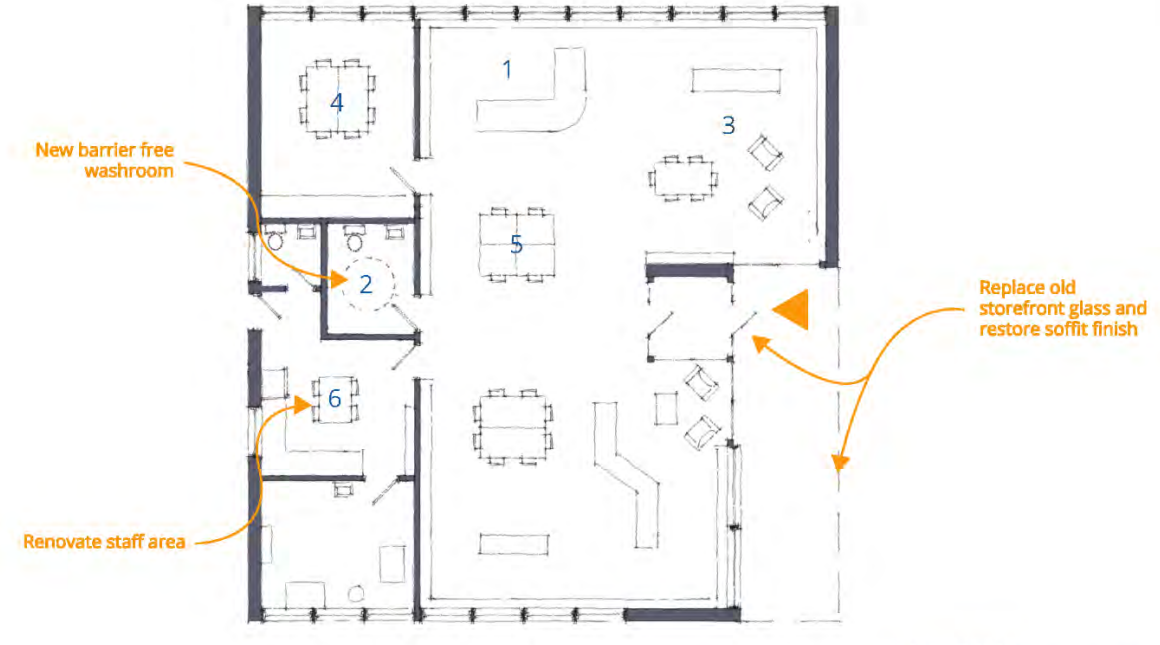
Library Exterior



Children's Area



Seating Nook



- 1 SERVICE DESK
- 2 NEW BARRIER FREE WASHROOMS
- 3 CHILDREN'S AREA
- 4 PROGRAM ROOM
- 5 COMPUTER AREA
- 6 STAFF ROOM



Courtright Library

Address:	1533 Fourth Street
Classification:	Small Branch
Library Type:	Integrated with Seniors' Centre
Gross Floor Area:	1,894 ft²
Weekly Visits:	65
Hours Open:	12 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	1,320 / 4.0 items per ft²

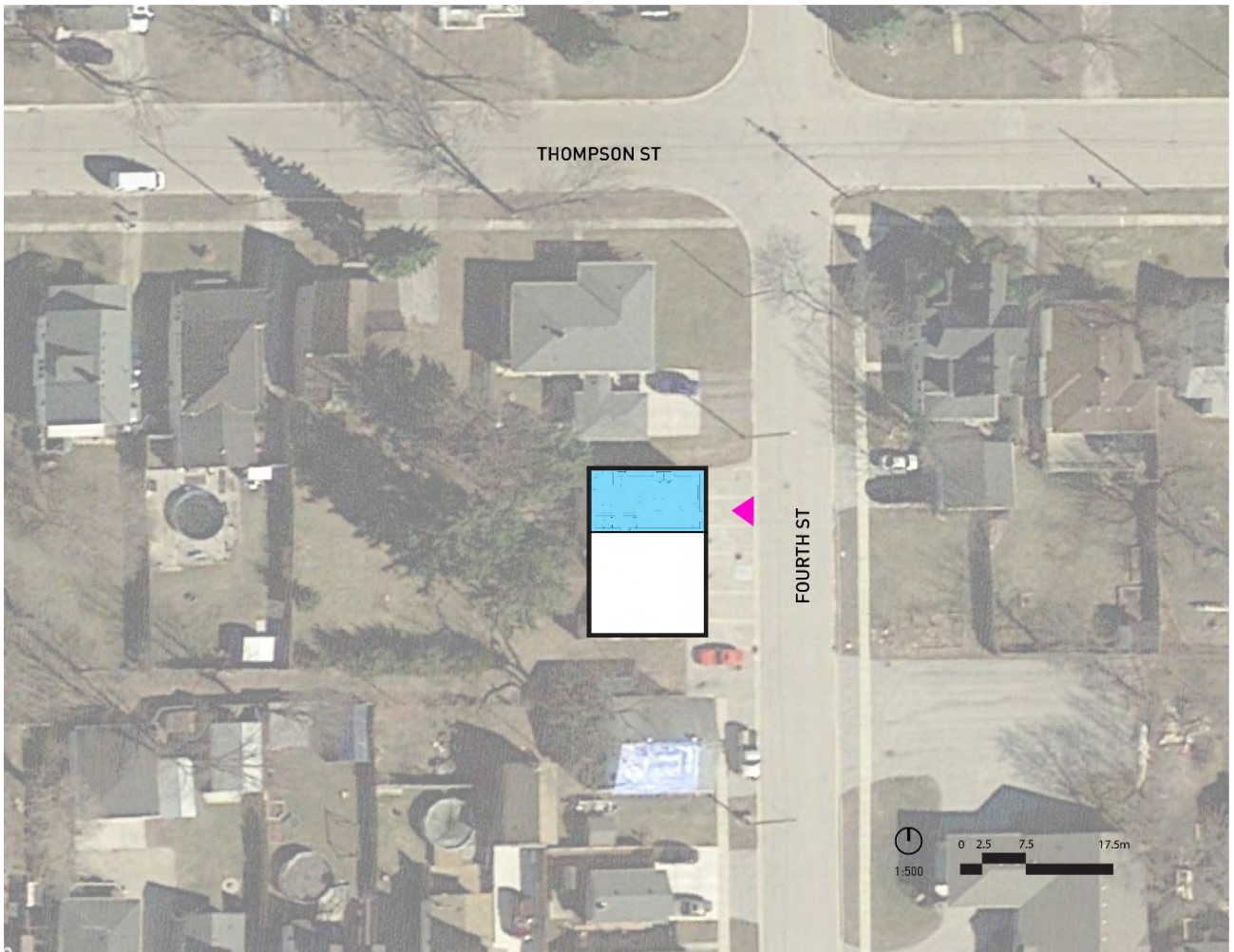
Courtright Library is housed in an aging former volunteer fire station that is now shared with a seniors centre. The library is sited within a residential neighbourhood one block from the St. Clair Parkway corridor, providing a relatively small floor space that is reflective of a past era of library services. Courtright Library provides all of its services in a single room with a small storage room.

There are fewer than 75 library card holders that identify Courtright Library as their home branch. In-person visitation rates, circulation and library programming are well below the respective Rural Library averages. While the 12 hours each week that the library is open is limited, below-average usage is also likely attributable to the antiquated aesthetic and functional experience provided to library users as well as overlapping service catchments with libraries located in Mooretown, Corunna and even Sombra.

Township staff have indicated that there have been some preliminary discussions about potentially replacing the Courtright Library. While no definitive plans have been advanced, the Township is cognisant of the antiquated building conditions and is contemplating the costs of remediation versus replacement.

The business case to reinvest in the existing building lacks strong rationale given its age-related constraints, lack of barrier-free accessibility and inability to function as a modern library. The JLFR supports replacement of Courtright Library with a new facility. As discussed in the pages that follow, a larger library that consolidates existing GFAs in Courtright and Mooretown is recommended at a minimum (as GFAs from the Port Lambton and Sombra Libraries may be considered).

Figure 33: Site Plan, Courtright Library



Library Exterior



Collections Area



Computers

Mooretown Library

Address:	1166 Emily Street
Classification:	Small Branch
Library Type:	Integrated with Community Centre
Gross Floor Area:	299 ft ²
Weekly Visits:	130
Hours Open:	12 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	7,011 / 23.4 items per ft ²

Mooretown Library is located on the upper level of the Mooretown Sports Complex. It is the smallest public library in Lambton County and is housed in a separated room enclosed within the community centre's hall. The limited floor space is nearly entirely occupied by collections, a photocopier and a small customer service desk; washrooms and parking are shared with the rest of the complex. The library is located across the street from the Township's municipal offices and is thus considered to be part of a broader civic campus.

Incorporation of libraries within broader multi-use community centers is considered good practice due to the ability to create multi-service civic destinations and provide centralized convenience to users. In these models, libraries are able to benefit from foot traffic generated by recreational components such as an arena, pools and gymnasiums. In the case of Mooretown Library, it does provide a level of convenience but does not offer a GFA or level of amenity that is being sought by the modern library user. Further limiting its potential is the fact that it is somewhat difficult to find within the community centre with prospective users having to navigate to the second floor, entering first into the community hall before entering another door to the library; there is often confusion when the community hall is being used for an event or other function as it would give the impression to some that entry is not permitted even if the library is open.

These challenges are further exemplified by Mooretown Library having less than 55 library cardholders using it as their home branch. While typical week visitation rates and circulation are below average, they are stronger than some other Rural Libraries which may speak to the fact that the library benefits from those using another part of the Mooretown Sports Complex. There is little to suggest people would otherwise be drawn to the library given its low design quality and overlapping service catchment with

libraries in Corunna and Courtright; these nearby libraries are located within a 5-minute drive and 10 to 20 minute bicycle trip to Mooretown.

There is an inefficiency in terms of the geographic overlap as well as Lambton County Library operating two of these three small libraries branches (Courtright and Mooretown) for just 12 hours a week. The type of space currently provided in Courtright and Mooretown begs the question about whether capital and operating resources would be better directed to a higher quality library or re-allocated to another library.

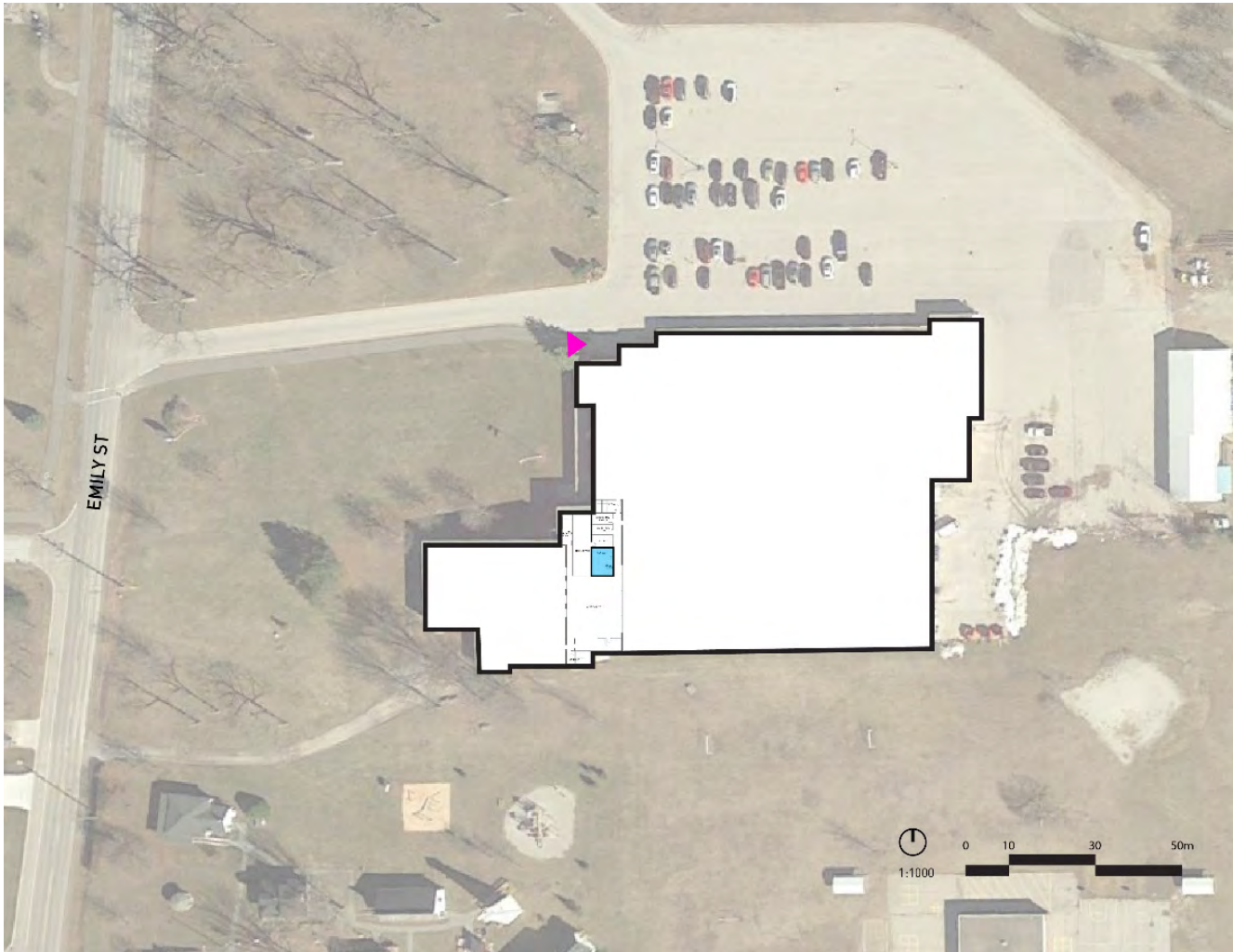
If Lambton County Library were to combine the collective GFAs of the Mooretown and Courtright Libraries to build a new library, this would offer approximately 2,200 square feet of library space. Combined with a quality design specification, this could take two Small Branch libraries and create one larger Medium Branch library. Not only would this provide a better library service to St. Clair residents but it would allow Lambton County to operate more efficiently from a fiscal and service/program delivery perspective.

In terms of prospective location for a new library, choices would be most appropriate to rebuild the library in either Mooretown or Courtright. Mooretown Library is closer to a quality library in Corunna but is part of that aforementioned civic campus and its integrated nature is such that if properly redeveloped – with sufficient GFA and ground floor access – its usage potential would surpass that of a stand-alone branch. On the other hand, Courtright would offer better geographic separation (i.e. less catchment area duplication) relative to the Corunna Library.

Ultimately further conversations would be required with the Township of St. Clair to understand what they would view as benefits and challenges of providing an expanded library on the ground floor of the Mooretown Sports Complex compared to a new and potentially stand-alone library in Courtright. For whichever settlement that the library is not located, an 'express' service point (e.g. holds, drop bins, vending technology, outreach programming, etc.) should be explored.

Library Space Needs by Municipality

Figure 34: Site Plan, Mooretown Library



Signed Secondary Entrance



Collections & Customer Service Area

Port Lambton Library

Address: 507 Stoddard Street
Classification: Small Branch
Building Type: Integrated with Community Hall
Gross Floor Area: 748 ft²
Weekly Visits: 34
Hours Open: 12 hours per week
2019 Circulation: 5,213 / 7.0 items per ft²

Port Lambton Library is another small library branch in St. Clair, co-located with the Port Lambton Community Memorial Hall. Its small GFA along with limited functional and aesthetic appeal is devoted to housing a small collections area, a couple of computers, and the customer service desk. Washrooms are located in the corridor leading from the library's dedicated access off the parking lot but are shared with the rest of the community hall. The Township has invested in making its hall more attractive for rentals and community programs, particularly with an improved kitchen that could be used to support catering and other event functions.

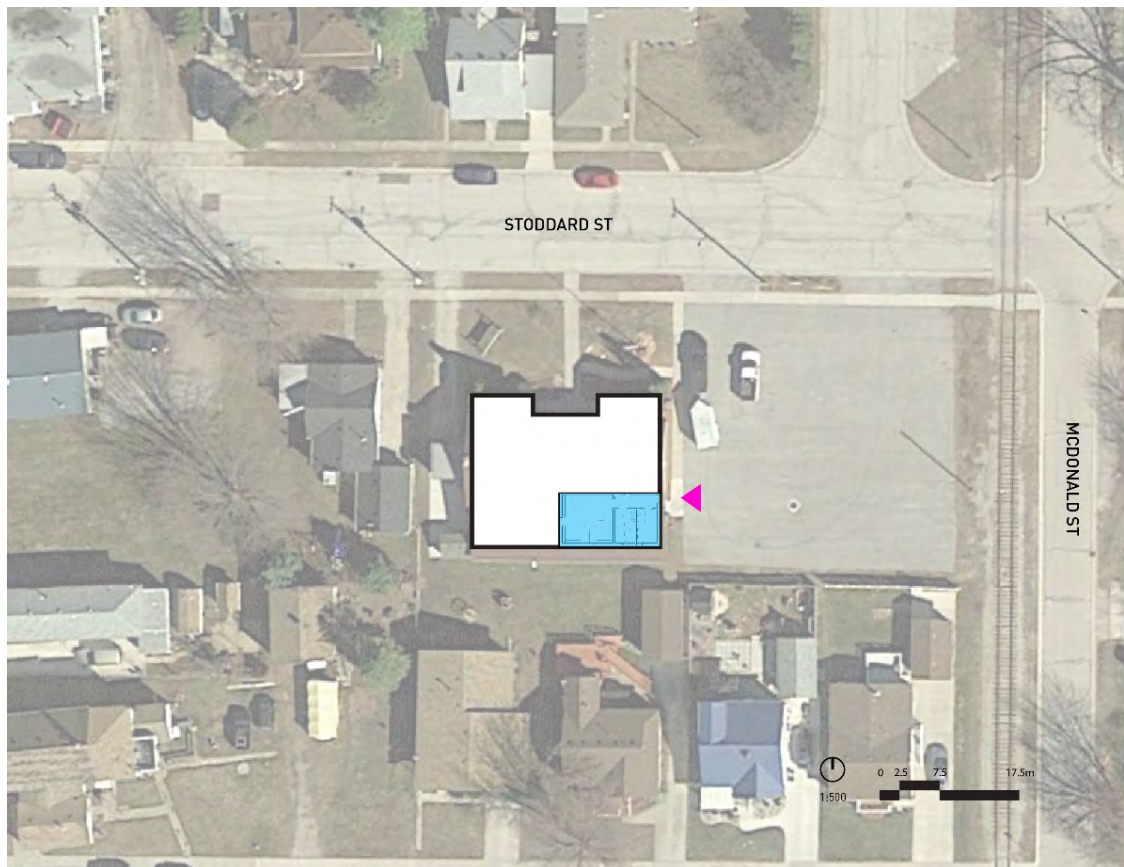
Just over 120 library cardholders identify Port Lambton Library as their home branch. A typical week generates just 34 visits in the 12 hours that the library is open, ranking in the bottom five libraries visited. Pre-pandemic circulation is approximately two and a half times below the Rural Library average although library programming and attendance are closer to – but still below – the rural average. It is understood that some St. Clair residents living in its south may be travelling to Chatham-Kent libraries (e.g. Wallaceburg which is a 15-minute drive from Port Lambton) where a reciprocal borrowing agreement between Lambton County Library and Chatham-Kent Public Library reduces some service pressures in the rural settlements between them.

There is limited expansion potential onsite at Port Lambton Library without either reducing available parking or having to purchase abutting properties. As noted in preceding pages for Mooretown Library which also provides a very small floor area, there is merit in considering consolidating GFA for Port Lambton and Sombra Libraries whereby the new library is built in Sombra (through internal expansion or reconstruction of the existing library there) and modifying the service approach in Port Lambton.

Library Space Needs by Municipality

To enable more efficient staffing under the assumption that the existing staff complement would be maintained, a holds locker and/or book vending machine technology would still allow for pick-up, drop-off and limited browsing. The Library could still deliver programs in the community hall and kitchen meaning that some staff time would be retained but allow the remainder to be re-allocated to a library that has higher in-person visitation, circulation and program attendance rates.

Figure 35: Site Plan, Port Lambton Library



Library Exterior



Collections & Customer Service Area

Sombra Library

Address:	3536 St Clair Pkwy
Classification:	Small Branch
Building Type:	Integrated with Childcare Centre
Gross Floor Area:	1,380 ft²
Weekly Visits:	38
Hours Open:	12 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	5,710 / 4.1 items per ft²

Sombra Library is located in a former Municipal Office that was constructed in 1966. The library occupies the western portion of the building with the remainder leased by the Township to a childcare provider. The library has an open floor plan whose limited GFA is devoted to collections, a small children's area and the customer service desk while an elevated area – accessible only by stairs – is intended as workspace with a table and a couple of workstations. Library staff share their breakroom with childcare staff.

Approximately 110 Lambton County Library cardholders use Sombra Library as their home branch. Of these users, nearly 70% live within the five-kilometre service area of the library. Typically receiving only 38 visitors in a week, this library ranks in the bottom five among all Lambton County Library locations. Pre-pandemic circulation is less than half of the Rural Library average while only Port Franks Library hosted fewer library programs.

As discussed throughout the library assessments for St. Clair, there is strong rationale to consolidate the number of service points due to inadequate building sizing and design specifications, as well as financial inefficiencies associated with having four libraries located in a linear stretch along the St. Clair Parkway within 20 minutes of each other. With little expansion possibility at the existing library sites in Courtright and Port Lambton, Sombra is an ideal candidate for an expanded library given the space that exists onsite.

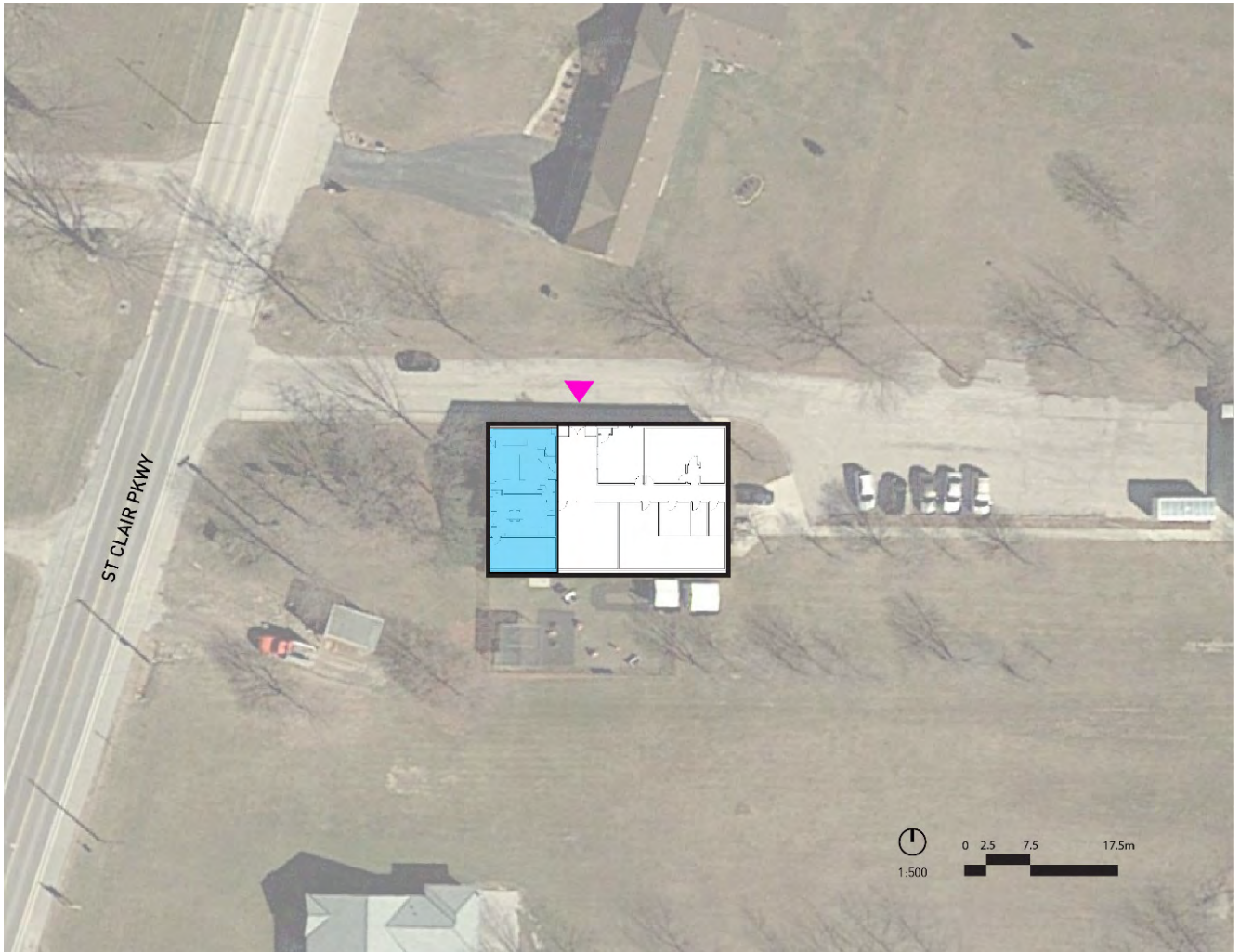
The JLFR recommends that at a minimum, the existing GFA of Sombra Library and Port Lambton Library be consolidated into a larger library. Under the assumption that this space will be directed to the existing library property in Sombra, one of two following options should be pursued in consultation with the Township of St. Clair:

1. Expand the Sombra Library into other parts of the former municipal office, potentially assuming adjacent rooms that are currently being leased out to another party. This would require major interior alterations and renovations.
2. Demolish the former municipal office in favour of creating a new library building that is purpose-built for library-specific services.

The new/redeveloped Sombra Library should be designed to function as a Medium Branch per Section 5.5 of the JLFR and should be a minimum of 2,500 square feet. Upon opening of the new library, Port Lambton Library should be changed from a staffed library to function as an 'express' library service point through use of a holds locker, book drop bin and/or book-vending technology to allow for pick-ups and drop-offs to remain in Port Lambton along with potentially selected library outreach programming.

With the JLFR recommending a similar consolidation of space for the Mooretown and Courtright Libraries, there is also the potential of combining the GFA of these two libraries with that of Sombra and Port Lambton Library. This would result in a Large Branch library closer to 5,000 square feet in size and could optimally be located in either Sombra, Courtright or Mooretown.

Figure 36: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Sombra Library



Library Exterior

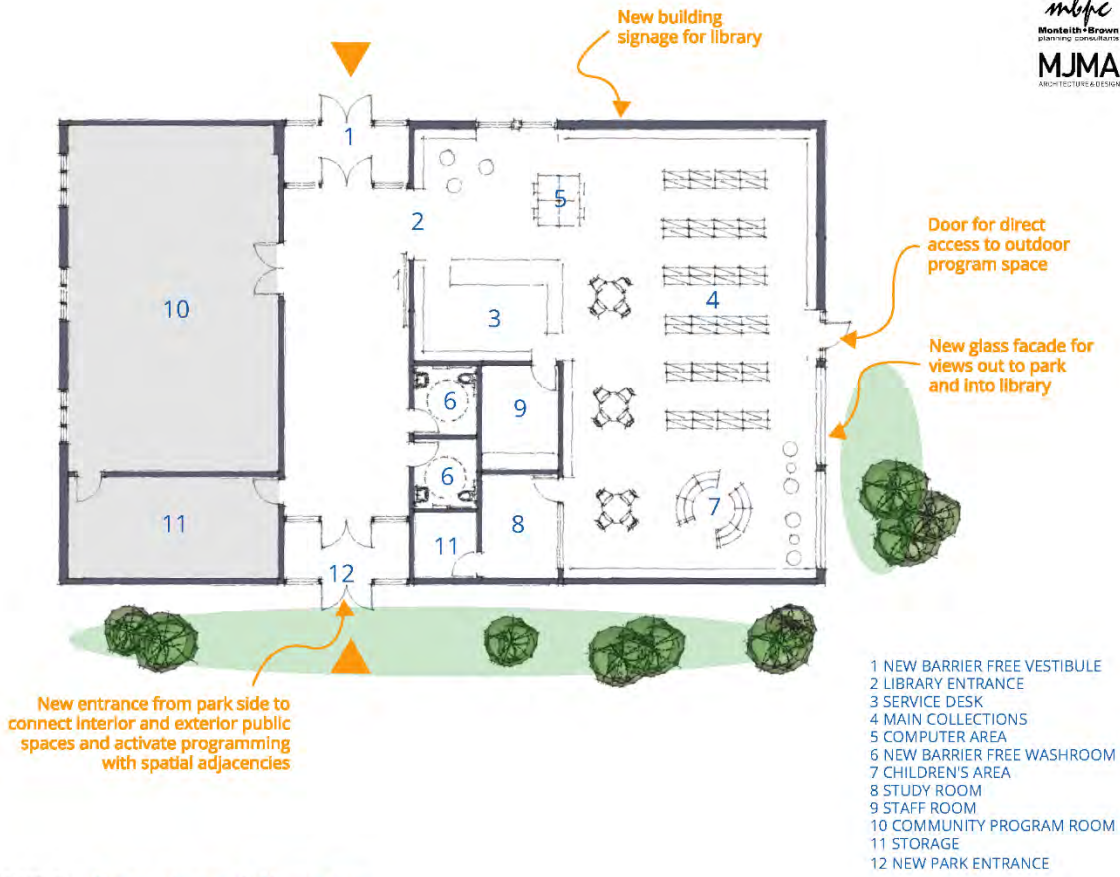


Work/Study Area



Collections

Library Space Needs by Municipality



LAMBTON COUNTY LIBRARY

Sombra Library



Wilkesport Library

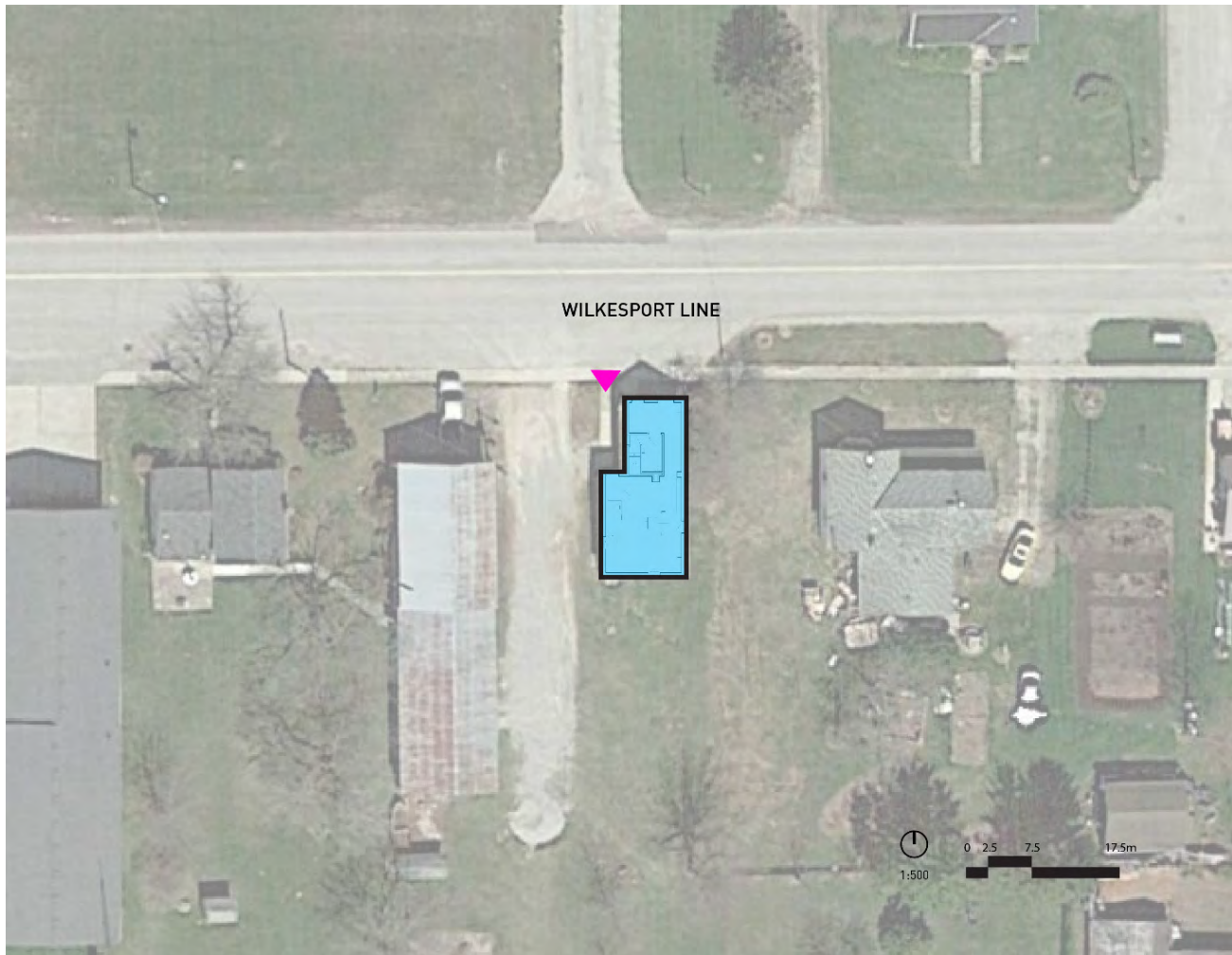
Address:	1349 Wilkesport Line
Classification:	Small Branch
Building Type:	Stand-Alone
Gross Floor Area:	862 ft²
Weekly Visits:	23
Hours Open:	12 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	2,946 / 3.4 items per ft²

Wilkesport Library offers a basic level of service in a small floor area that is segmented into space for general collections and two computers at the rear of the library plus a small children's area at the front; a washroom and storage space bisects these two rooms while an upper level is not available for public use. The building has the appearance of a residential structure with a large rear yard and parking directed to the street. Largely serving agricultural settlements that are centrally situated in St. Clair, Wilkesport Library is a fairly isolated but acts as a service point for people living within and around its catchment. While it is a stand-alone structure, it is located nearby to a fire hall and is across the street from the Wilkesport Community Centre.

Just 45 Lambton County Library cardholders associate Wilkesport as their home branch. Only Shetland Library attracts fewer visits in a typical week and with less than 3,000 items borrowed in 2019, Wilkesport Library is the lowest circulating branch in all of Lambton County. It is not a high programming location.

As discussed earlier in this Section as well as in Section 8.2, consolidation of Wilkesport Library's GFA with that of Shetland Library into a new Medium Branch library integrated within a rural school – subject to discussions with LKDSB – would improve operating efficiencies, strengthen the case for longevity of that rural school, and service more rural households in southern Lambton County.

Figure 37: Site Plan, Wilkesport Library



Library Exterior



Collections Area



Children's Nook

8.10 Warwick

2021 Census Population: 3,641

2031 Population Forecast: 4,435

Library Space Provided: 3,454 square feet (1.0 square feet per capita)

2031 Supply Required @ 0.7 sq. ft. per capita: 3,105 square feet

The Township of Warwick is a rural municipality with two primary urban areas consisting of the Warwick settlement and Watford, the latter of which is home to the sole library in the Township. Warwick's 2021 Census population was recorded at 3,641 which represents approximately 75 fewer persons compared to 10 years prior that amounts to an average annual decline of 0.2%. The Township forecasts that its population will revert to a growth scenario and add nearly 800 new residents by the year 2031.

The Watford Library catchment provides generally good coverage south of Egremont Road (extending into Brooke-Alvinston) while areas north of the highway are partially served by the Forest and Arkona Libraries. The Watford Library's GFA will keep the per capita rate of space provision above Lambton County Library's system-wide target meaning that no additional library space is required in Warwick over the next 10 years.

That said, the pages that follow identify a need to revitalize the Watford Library. The Township has demonstrated an intent to advancing its arts and cultural system, and recognizes the value of having a Carnegie Library as part of its creative infrastructure. The Township's recently completed Parks, Recreation, Tourism & Culture Master Plan recommends that the Township prepare a redevelopment plan to establish a reinvestment strategy for the Watford Library to address capital repairs, funding and improvements. The Master Plan states that:

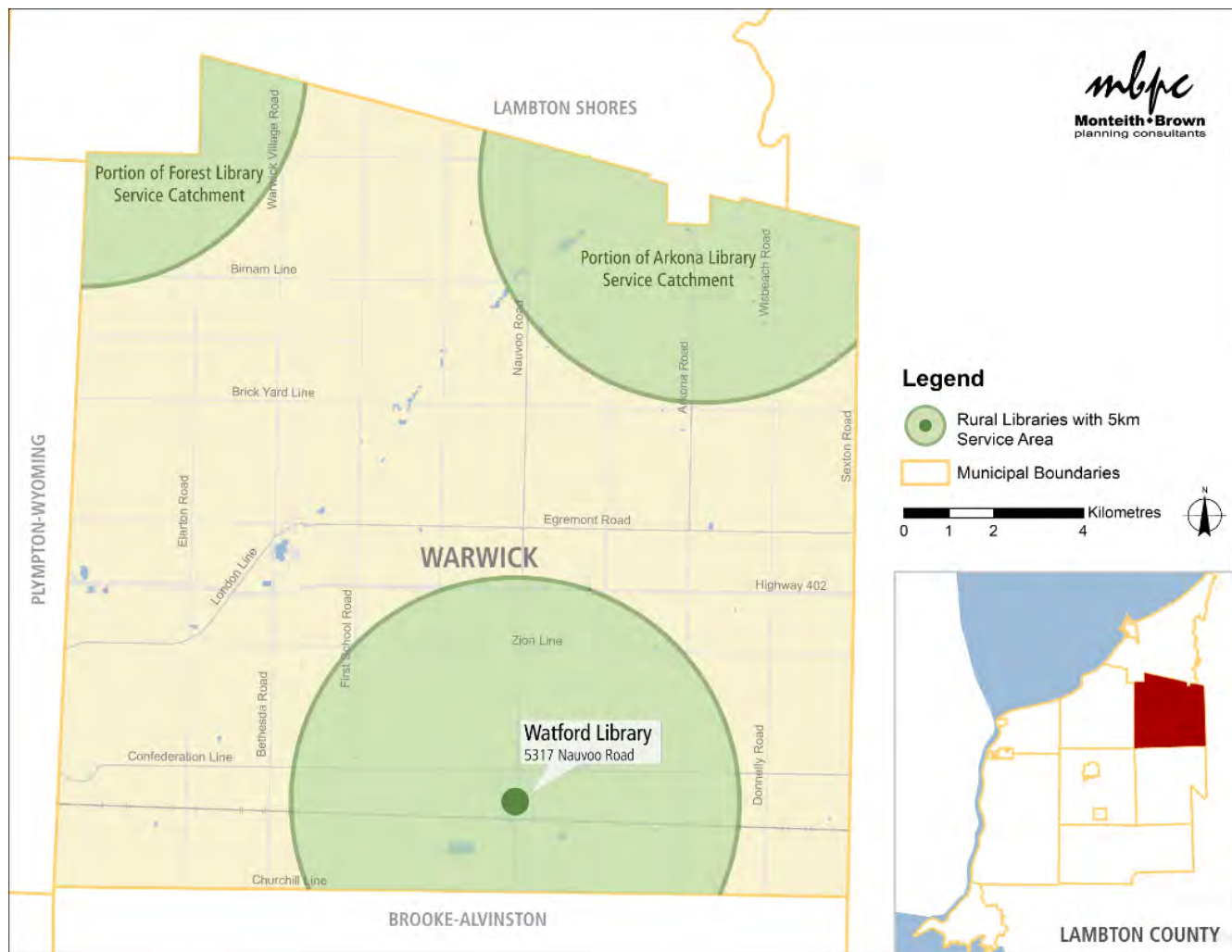
"The historical significance of the Watford Carnegie Library cannot be understated. As one of the 125 Carnegie libraries that are still in operation across Canada, continued reinvestment in the current location is recommended to ensure that residents continue to have access to library resources and to maintain the Township's connection with the past."³⁰

³⁰ Township of Warwick. 2021. Parks, Recreation, Tourism & Culture Master Plan. p.54

Library Space Needs by Municipality

In addition, the Warwick settlement area is an identifiable geographic gap for residents with limited transportation mobility. A cost-effective opportunity for Lambton County Library to expand its customer reach would be place a holds locker or book vending machine at the Warwick Community Hall. Opportunities for library outreach programs could also be considered at that Hall which is conveniently located directly on Egremont Road. Engaging Township officials will be required to confirm interest and suitability of doing so.

Map 11: Distribution of Libraries, Warwick



Watford Library

Address:	5317 Nauvoo Road
Classification:	Medium Branch
Building Type:	Stand-Alone
Gross Floor Area:	3,454 ft²
Weekly Visits:	151
Hours Open:	35 hours per week
2019 Circulation:	12,284 / 3.6 items per ft²

Watford Library is a Carnegie Library that dates back to 1885 as a business before the Township purchased the building in 1913 and subsequently opened the library. An addition to the rear was completed in 2006 to add a lift and stairway. The Watford Library has a main floor that houses the collection, customer service desk, computer workstations, and an accessible washroom. The basement level also provides usable space through which the library delivers some programs while there is a separated meeting room along with a small storage area. A small onsite parking lot is provided with overflow directed to the street.

A Building Condition Assessment was completed for Watford Library in 2018 found the library to be in fair condition but exhibiting signs of minor to moderate deterioration as well as several building systems now beyond their expected lifecycles. The Building Condition Assessment prioritized over \$381,000 in capital works to the year 2029 noting that this figure will be higher given global inflationary pressures that have escalated costs in the time since the condition assessment was prepared.

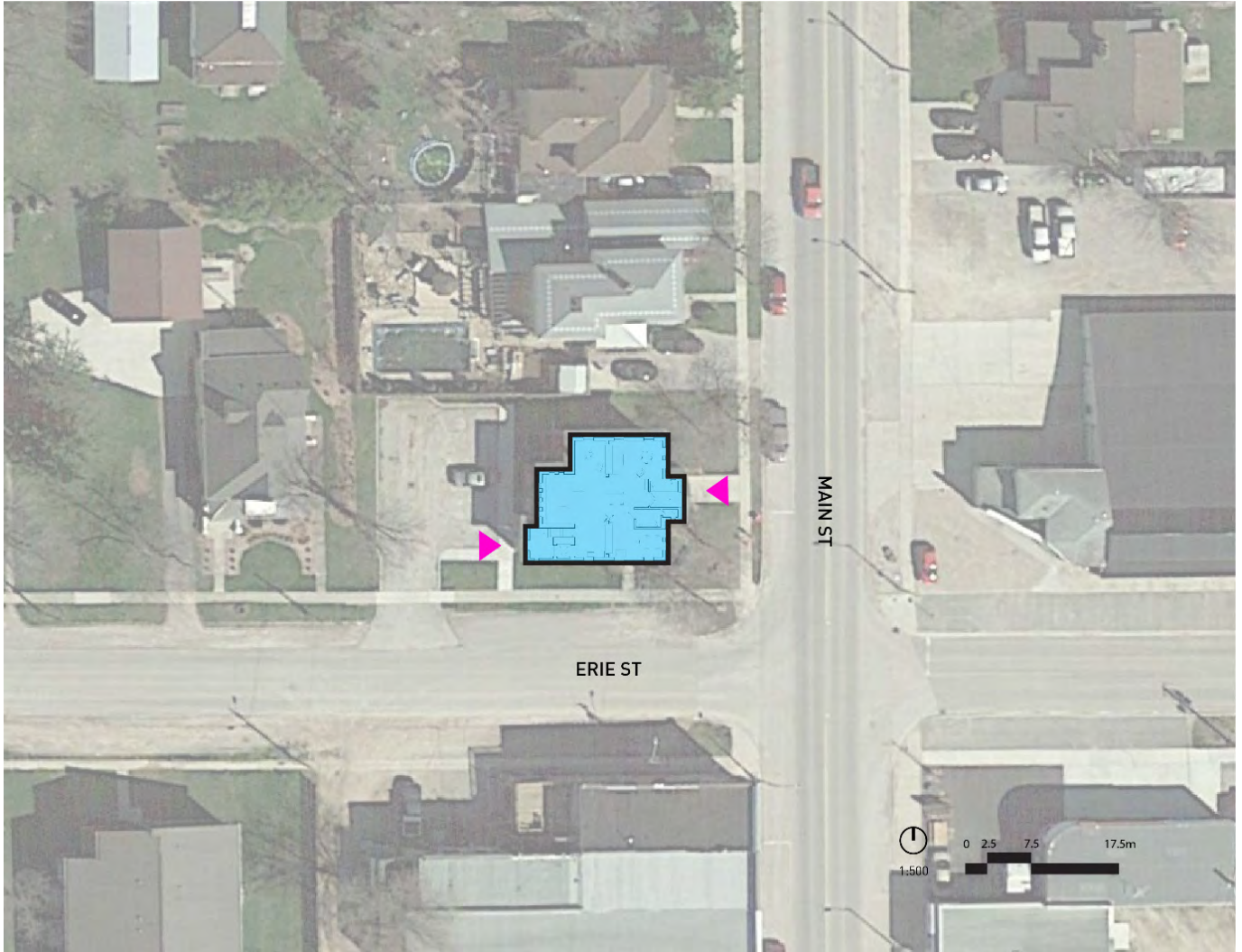
Watford Library has approximately 350 persons that identify it as their home branch. Watford received on average 151 visitors per week in 2019 which is slightly below the Rural Library average of 169 weekly visitors. Circulation is also slightly below the Rural Library average though Watford Library delivers an above-average number of library programs and attracted nearly 25% more program participants than other Rural Libraries.

Consistent with the Township of Warwick Parks, Recreation, Tourism & Culture Master Plan and Watford Library Building Condition Assessment, Lambton County Library should engage the Township in the preparation of a redevelopment plan and reinvestment strategy for the Watford Library. These plans should identify capital repairs, funding and improvements that will enhance the usage potential of the library with consideration also given to operating implications such as extended hours of operation and programming that arise from physical improvements.

Specifically from the perspective of improving the functionality of the space, the renewal plan for Watford Library should investigate the ability to deliver a greater range of library programming in the basement level as well as create more organized storage. In addition to addressing deteriorating structural elements such as parts of the foundation, improving public use potential of the basement will need to explore climate control and air exchange improvements (including enclosing the furnace area), possibly making the existing exterior entrance to the basement more accessible (i.e. so program participants do not have to rely solely on the lift), and new flooring.

The main level would also benefit from a renewal that respects the original architectural character and improves functionality of the space. In addition to any structural and mechanical renewals identified in the Building Condition Assessment, there may be an opportunity to re-orient the service desk to increase the amount usable space as well as aesthetic improvements such as painting and refinishing works, and updating in-branch furniture. Given site constraints, it is unlikely that additional onsite parking can be created.

Figure 38: Site Plan & Initial Concept, Watford Library



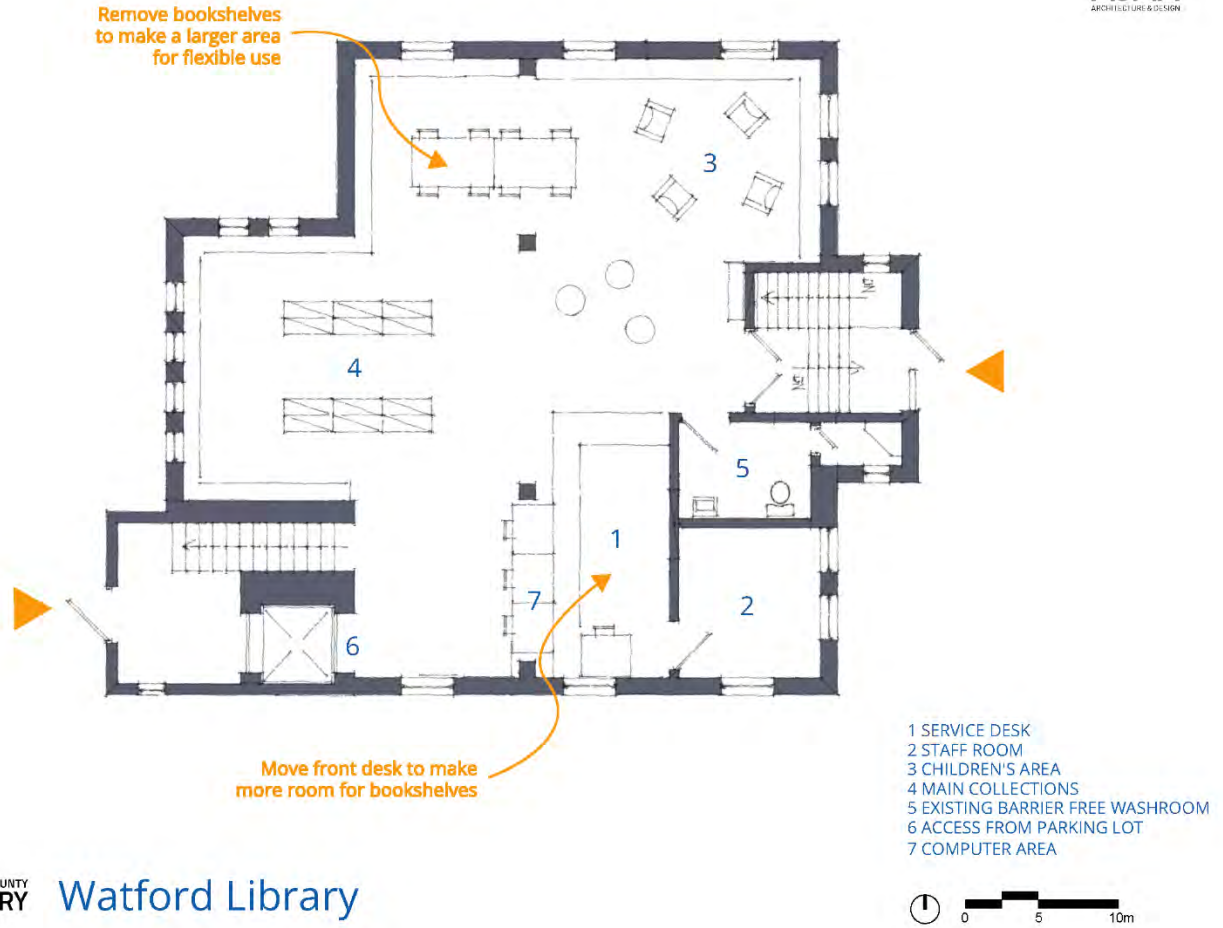
Library Exterior



Main Floor



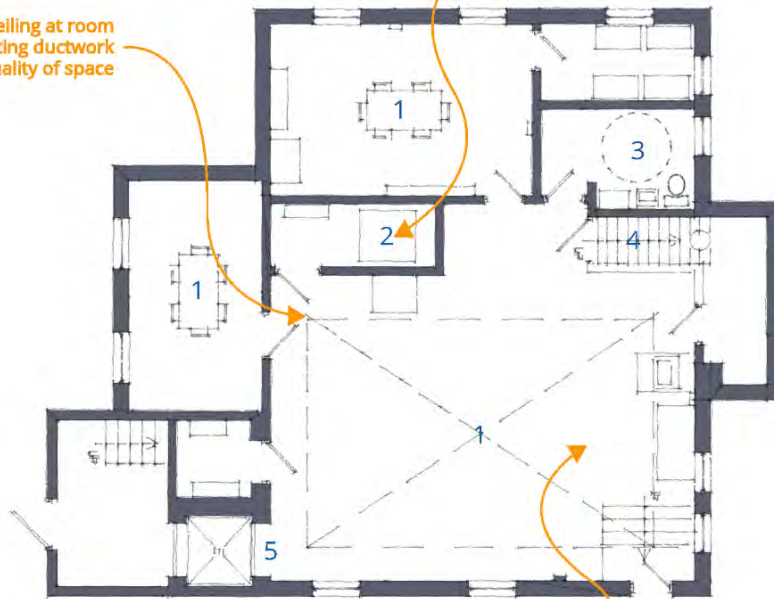
Basement Program Area



Watford Library, Main Level Concept

Lower finished ceiling at room perimeter to conceal existing ductwork and to improve quality of space

Conceal existing mechanical equipment



Leave finished ceiling high at centre of the space to help define program area

- 1 PROGRAM ROOM
- 2 MECHANICAL EQUIPMENT ROOM
- 3 NEW BARRIER FREE WASHROOM
- 4 STAIRS TO THE UPPER LIBRARY
- 5 ENTRANCE FROM THE PARKING LOT

Watford Library, Basement Level Concept

8.11 Recommendations

Rec. #15. Future Engagement: Major capital projects undertaken by Lambton County Library - including any new builds, renovations, alterations or adjustments to the number of libraries - should be informed by consultations with elected officials, municipal decision-makers, community partners and the public where appropriate.

Rec. #16. Library Signage & Awareness: Work with all municipal partners to update exterior and interior signage – incorporating the Lambton County Library brand for consistency – in order to clearly identify Lambton County Library locations and increase awareness of their existence among the public. Coordination with municipal facility design and wayfinding strategies (e.g. use of roadside signs, façade elements such as awnings and lighting, etc.) should also be pursued to direct people to libraries. With the support of municipal partners, the name of multi-use facilities that include a library alongside another civic service would be best to be renamed so that the Library is reflected in the building name (e.g. Port Franks Community Centre & Library, Clearwater Arena & Library).

Rec. #17. Alternative Browsing & Pick-up/Drop-off Service Points: Build upon the strength of coverage associated with existing libraries by exploring alternative library service points in strategic areas. This should include, but not be limited to, installing vending machines and/or holds lockers at the Warwick Community Hall as well as locations that may be subject to consolidation of space in Dawn-Euphemia and St. Clair (e.g. Wilkesport Community Centre, Port Lambton Community Hall, etc.). Monitor the experience of other library systems that are testing or have implemented Extended Access models to determine feasibility of this approach to increase library access to Lambton County residents.

- Rec. #18. Storage Space:** Explore opportunities to address storage needs at all Lambton County Library locations – through shelving, cabinetry or other means - in relation to functional constraints and costs of each branch.
- Rec. #19. Alvinston Library:** Reconfigure the customer service desk at Alvinston Library to make better use of the existing floor space while adding glazed windows at the back of the branch and optimizing the basement to allow for more functional storage for equipment, supplies and other materials needed to support library operations.
- Rec. #20. Arkona Library:** Engage the Municipality of Lambton Shores to discuss the feasibility of enhancing and gaining affordable access to at least one of the meeting rooms found in the Arkona Community Centre in an effort to create space for library programs and operations. Interior reconfiguration of the library space should also be undertaken with a focus on relocating the customer service desk and updating furniture, upgrading washrooms to be barrier-free, and creating an independent library entrance at a minimum.
- Rec. #21. Port Franks Library:** Complete an interior reconfiguration plan for Port Franks Library to determine the feasibility of increasing publicly useable space and enhancing comfort. At a minimum, explore the ability to open up the separated hallway corridor at the back of the library, re-locating the customer service desk and updating flooring, furniture and shelving units. A renovation of the exterior to provide greater visibility and connection to the park should be pursued.
- Rec. #22. Forest Library:** The staff room at Forest Library should be updated along with exploring opportunities to increase storage space and formalizing a second entranceway that connects the building to the pathway and gardens in the southern portion of the site. Additional landscaping and seating elements should also be integrated into the open space found behind the library.

- Rec. #23. Thedford Library:** Reconfigure the Thedford Library interior space to make more efficient use of space while improving the library user experience through comfortable seating and formalizing areas for study/collaboration. Improved visibility into the library from the Legacy Centre's interior and exterior areas – including community centre common areas and the library's front façade - should also be pursued.
- Rec. #24. Sarnia Library:** Carry out interior redevelopment and improvement projects at Sarnia Library that include but are not limited to creating a new ground floor meeting/program room, enhancing the makerspace, improving the teen area, creating a recording studio, formalizing the rear entrance, creating an enclosed outdoor program space adjacent to the children's area, reflecting local Indigenous culture, optimizing staff areas, and exploring food and beverage (e.g. café) services. Integration of CPTED or similar safety-oriented principles is recommended for interior and exterior areas including, but not limited to, eliminating concealed building niches, improving sightlines, use of appropriate lighting and upgrading landscape elements.
- Rec. #25. Bright's Grove Library:** The Joint Library Facilities Review supports past planning exercises and ongoing design work to redevelop Bright's Grove Library in a manner that provides 7,000 square feet of total library space as part of a community hub in conjunction with preservation of the heritage building for use by the Gallery in the Grove.
- Rec. #26. Point Edward Library:** In line with Rec. #9, explore works required to address barrier-free accessibility constraints at Point Edward Library and carry out other functional and aesthetic improvements that will encourage more use. As a more ambitious plan, engage the Village of Point Edward to discuss potential replacement of the library with a new building once costs of accessibility and functional upgrades are better understood, along with any needs of the adjoining fire hall.

- Rec. #27. Oil Springs Library:** In line with Rec. #9, explore works required to address barrier-free accessibility constraints at Oil Springs Library including addition of ramps and/or a small elevator recognizing that the library's two levels are only accessible by stairway at present time.
- Rec. #28. Camlachie Library:** Reconstruct or expand Camlachie Library to provide a minimum total Gross Floor Area of 4,250 square feet in response to population growth in Plympton-Wyoming. Enter into discussions with Town Staff to understand if future investment would be better directed to: a) expansion of the current Camlachie Library eastwards to Camlachie Road; or b) potentially co-locating the library with the Camlachie Community Centre that could generate economies of scale in construction, maintenance and community programming.
- Rec. #29. Wyoming Library:** Carry out façade and interior improvements to Wyoming Library that focus on modernizing the library's aesthetic appeal, increasing visibility into the library, enhancing comfort through seating and work/study areas, and improving the functionality and amenity of the library's program room.
- Rec. #30. Corunna Library:** In addition to accessibility improvements and ongoing building maintenance activities (including replacement of the exterior glass and soffit restoration) for Corunna Library, engage nearby commercial landowners to determine whether a limited number of parking spaces in their lots can be reserved for library users.
- Rec. #31. Mooretown & Courtright Libraries:** The Mooretown and Courtright Libraries are undersized spaces that do not offer a barrier-free or modern library experience. Lambton County Library should discuss replacement of these two libraries with the Township of St. Clair by consolidating their collective Gross Floor Areas into one new library located in either Mooretown or Courtright. Consideration may also be given to combining their collective floor areas with that of the Sombra and Port Lambton Libraries (see Rec. #31) to create one large library in a centralized area in proximity to the St. Clair Parkway.

- Rec. #32. Sombra & Port Lambton Libraries:** The Sombra and Port Lambton Libraries are undersized spaces that do not offer a barrier-free or modern library experience. Lambton County Library should discuss replacement of these two libraries with the Township of St. Clair by consolidating their collective Gross Floor Areas into one new library located in Sombra through a redevelopment or reconstruction project on the existing Sombra Library site. Consideration may also be given to combining their collective floor areas with that of the Mooretown and Courtright Libraries (see Rec. #30) to create one large library in a centralized area in proximity to the St. Clair Parkway.
- Rec. #33. Watford Library:** Consistent with the Township of Warwick Parks, Recreation, Tourism & Culture Master Plan and Watford Library Building Condition Assessment, engage the Township in the preparation of a redevelopment plan and reinvestment strategy for the Watford Library to address capital repairs, funding and improvements that enhance use of the library. A portion of the basement should be optimized for programming and more efficient storage to support library operations.
- Rec. #34. School Co-location Potential / Shetland & Wilkesport Library:** Engage local school boards to discuss feasibility of integrating a Medium Branch library within a school in southern Lambton County as a means to strengthen rural communities. A co-located library should replace the Shetland and Wilkesport Libraries that no longer offer a modern experience nor meaningfully advance space-related objectives of the Joint Library Facilities Review. If implemented, an alternative library service point should be installed at the Wilkesport Community Centre (also see Rec. #17 of the Joint Library Facilities Review).
- Rec. #35. Inwood, Florence, Grand Bend, Petrolia, Brigden, and Corunna Libraries:** no major capital works are recommended apart from those associated with addressing barrier-free accessibility, state of good repair, improved signage and furnishings, and other broad facility design guidance identified in the Joint Library Facilities Review.

Section 9.0 Implementation Plan





Section 9.0

Implementation Plan

This Section summarizes the Recommendations arising out of the JLFR and assigns timing and capital cost implications to them. A process for monitoring and reviewing the JLFR is also provided.

Implementation of the JLFR's recommendations can be sequenced through the following broad categories:

1. Renewing the Framework for Shared Responsibilities
2. Confirming the Space Development Strategy
3. Establishing Capital Budgets & Timelines
4. Monitoring & Reviewing the JLFR

9.1 Renewing the Framework for Shared Responsibilities

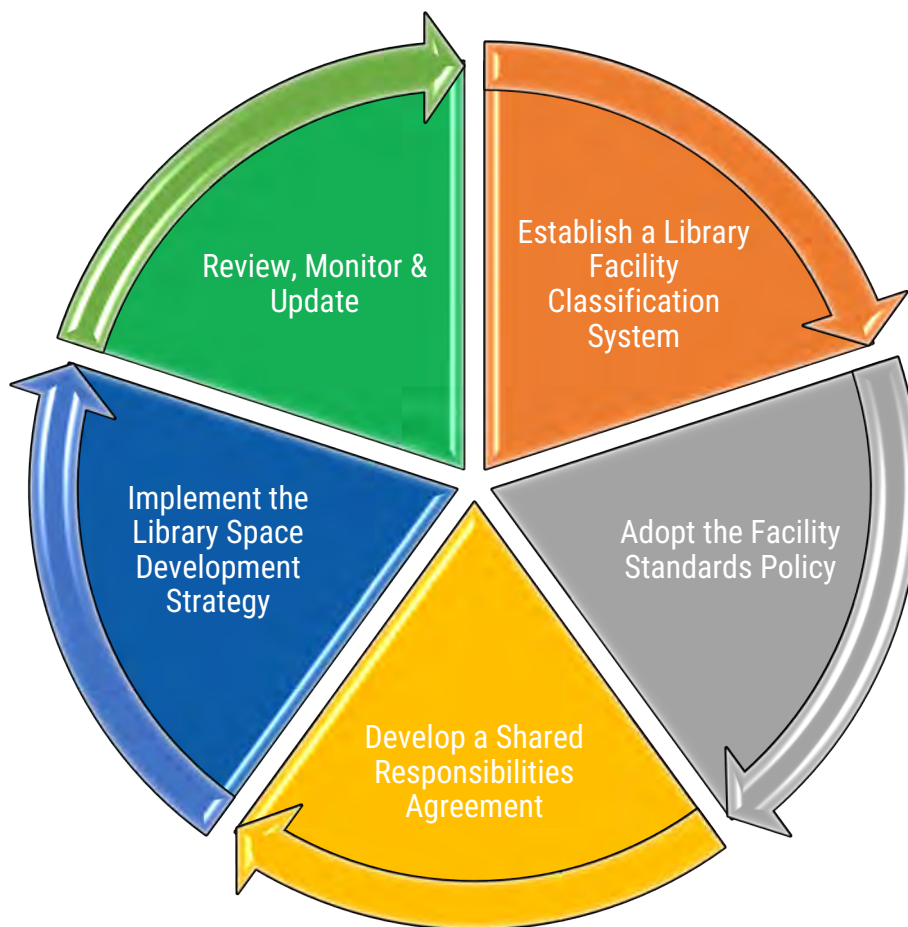
The multi-institutional approach to delivering library space between upper and lower-tier governments and the LKDSB requires that a strong governance framework is in place to ensure alignment and a clear understanding of responsibilities. It is through governance that a fiscally sustainable and community responsive approach to investing in libraries can maximize the likelihood for successful outcomes.

Step 1 The first step in renewing the framework of the library facility model is for Lambton County Council to adopt a Library Facility Classification System that aligns with the ARUPLO Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems and organizes facilities into Small, Medium, Large and Urban branch types based on catchment area and population served (JLFR Rec. #1).

Step 2 Upon adoption of the Library Facility Classification System, the next step is to establish a Facility Standards Policy that assigns design specifications, amenities included and maintenance standards to each of the four library types. This Facility Standards Policy should be developed in consultation with the lower-tier municipalities and LKDSB, and subsequently should be adopted by Lambton County Council (JLFR Rec. #2).

- Step 3** Each library building should then be evaluated with municipal and school board partners in accordance with the Facility Standards Policy, exploring opportunities to meet adopted design and amenity specifications, maintenance and repair standards. The agreement with Lambton Kent District School Board should be renewed/updated (JLFR Rec. #3 and Rec. #7).
- Step 4** Proceed to implementation of the library space development strategy (see JLFR Section 9.2 that follows).
- Step 5** Regularly review and monitor the JLFR along with the effectiveness of the Facility Standards Policy, undertaking updates where and when necessary.

Figure 39: JLFR Implementation & Sequencing



9.2 Summary of the Space Development Strategy

The JLFR recommends that for Lambton County Library to keep pace with population growth at its historical rate of 0.7 square feet per capita, a total of 7,600 square feet of new library space would be required by the year 2031. The allocation of new GFA is distributed between the City of Sarnia, which accounts for the majority of Lambton's population growth forecast to 2031, and selected rural libraries where residential growth is planned (e.g. north Lambton).

Addition of New Gross Floor Area

The JLFR proposes the addition of 7,450 square feet to Lambton County Library's total system-wide GFA through the following capital projects.

- Addition of 3,200 square feet of net new space through an expansion of Bright's Grove Library that results in a total GFA of 7,000 square feet being provided for library services.
- Addition of 1,560 square feet of net new library space through the replacement of Mallroad Library with a new 4,000 square foot library at Clearwater Arena (approved project currently under construction).
- Addition of 1,750 square feet of net new space through an expansion of Camlachie Library that results in a total GFA of 4,250 square feet.
- Addition of 260 square feet of net new space if integrating a 2,000 square foot library at a local school in southern Lambton County to replace the Wilkesport and Shetland Libraries (subject to discussion with LKDSB).
- Addition of 680 square feet of net new library space in the Township of St. Clair as a result of consolidating four existing libraries in to two new libraries at 2,500 square feet each.

These noted actions would result in a system-wide GFA of 96,828 square feet, translating into 0.7 square feet per capita by the year 2031 and fulfilling virtually all space requirements associated with the per capita target. In addition to these projects, the JLFR encourages engagement of the Village of Point Edward to discuss potential to rebuild the Point Edward Library to provide the same GFA but in a manner that is more accessible and functional for library users.

Improvements to Existing Libraries

The JLFR has looked at each Lambton County Library branch and identifies improvements that are generally focused on the existing building envelope and interior areas. The following activities should be pursued at a minimum.

- Interior redevelopment and improvement projects at Sarnia Library that include creating a new meeting/program room, enhancing the makerspace including integration of a sound and/or video recording studio, establishing a teen area, formalizing the rear entranceway, creating an enclosed outdoor program space adjacent to the children's area, optimizing staff areas, and exploring food and beverage (e.g. café) services. Upgraded landscaping should also be undertaken to make the space feel more comfortable and safe for library users.
- Interior reconfiguration, improvements and upgraded Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E) at Port Franks Library, Arkona Library, Thedford and Wyoming Library. Each of these locations would also benefit from providing a better visual connection to their respective outdoor surroundings.
- Restoration, interior reconfiguration, upgraded FF&E and more functional storage at Watford Library.

The JLFR also provides system-wide design guidance applicable to all libraries that ensure highly visible and consistently branded signage, AODA upgrades and other actions required to promote inclusion among all facets of the population, improving in-library technologies and use of the outdoor areas to support library services.

Additional Library Service Points

Lambton County Library presently provides 25 'bricks and mortar' service points that are staffed and open to the public. Although consolidation of certain undersized libraries in St. Clair and Dawn-Euphemia have been advanced in favour of larger and more functional library spaces, the number of library service points would in fact be increased; the JLFR recommends the installation of library vending machines, holds lockers and/or book return options to increase convenience and coverage provided to Lambton County residents. Installation of such 'express' service points is advanced for the Warwick Community Hall as well as in communities such as Wilkesport, Port Lambton, and others where physical branches are recommended for consolidation.

Investments in new physical libraries, reinvestments in existing libraries, introduction of express service points and continuation of the Library's progressive Mobile Library Service will position the library system to deliver comprehensive, extensive and expanded coverage to people living in many urban and rural settlements.

9.3 Establishing Capital Budgets & Timelines

Strong coverage from libraries already established throughout Lambton County results in an achievable capital plan for the Library to the year 2031. The JLFR's Recommendations carry a preliminary capital estimate of \$45 million (2022 dollars excluding escalations), the majority of which is attributed to improvement and/or expansion of libraries already found in Lambton County, thereby focusing JLFR outcomes on reinvestment in existing community infrastructure.

The Library will need to work with its municipal and school partners to confirm capital cost estimates in accordance with evaluations carried out under the new Facility Standards Policy (see JLFR Rec. #2 and Rec. #3) and detailed design work. Timing of major capital projects summarized in Table 12 will also need to be confirmed and coordinated with partners so that municipal, school and County budgets are aligned.

Table 12: Summary of Major JLFR Capital Items

Recommendation	Suggested Timing
<p><u>City of Sarnia</u> Bright’s Grove Library Redevelopment Sarnia Library Interior & Exterior Works</p>	<p>2026-2028 2029-2031</p>
<p><u>Municipality of Brooke-Alvinston</u> Alvinston Library Interior Reconfiguration & Enhancements</p>	<p>2023-2025</p>
<p><u>Township of Dawn-Euphemia</u> Construction of New Library at Dawn-Euphemia Public School (@2,000 ft²P subject to discussions with LKDSB)</p>	<p>2029-2031</p>
<p><u>Municipality of Lambton Shores</u> Arkona Library Interior Enhancements Thedford Library Interior Enhancements Port Franks Library Interior Reconfiguration & Enhancements Forest Staff Room Enhancement & Exterior Landscaping</p>	<p>2023-2025 2026-2028 2029-2031 2029-2031</p>
<p><u>Town of Plympton-Wyoming</u> Wyoming Library Interior & Exterior Enhancements Camlachie Library Interior Accessibility Enhancements Camlachie Library Expansion (@ 1,750 ft²)</p>	<p>2023-2025 2023-2025 2029-2031</p>
<p><u>Township of St. Clair</u> Sombra Library Interior Expansion & Renovation (@ 2,500 ft²) Standard Library Construction, Location TBD (@ 2,500 ft²) Corunna Library Interior & Exterior Improvements</p>	<p>2023-2025 2026-2028 2029-2031</p>
<p><u>Township of Warwick</u> Watford Library Restoration & Enhancements</p>	<p>2023-2025</p>
<p><u>Other Projects</u> Branch Accessibility & Energy Audits JLFR Update Express Service Points / Holds Lockers / Vending Options</p>	<p>2023-2025 2026-2028 To Be Determined</p>

Note: Suggested Timing is subject to revision depending upon factors such as (but are not limited to) rate of population growth relative to forecasts used to underpin JLFR assessments, input from future public and stakeholder consultations, grant and external funding opportunities, lifecycle conditions and asset management planning for existing branches, and financial contributions provided by Lambton County Library’s partner municipalities.

The JLFR capital strategy takes a fiscally responsible approach by indexing investments to the rate of population growth while retaining the existing service level for library space so that Lambton County keeps pace. Not only will these investments allow Lambton County Library to keep pace with growth-related needs but also act as a catalyst to encourage non-municipal investment in urban and rural communities. Provision of sufficient and modern library space can support community revitalization efforts through business and employee attraction, spurring development of creative industries, and empowering residents with knowledge and skills required to succeed academically and professionally.

Further, the JLFR investment/reinvestment strategy sets a foundation for higher operating efficiencies that increase the potential for a higher return on investment. Potential to share capital and operating resources with LKDSB, consolidation of antiqued and duplicated library services into larger and higher quality locations, and reconfiguration of existing library interiors can help attain cost savings while providing better value of library users.

9.4 Monitoring & Reviewing the JLFR

The JLFR is built upon a number of foundational inputs of which some have the potential to change over the planning period. For example, County-wide and certain lower-tier municipal population forecasts are considered to be dated based on their deviations from past Census and building permit data. GFA calculations may also change as Lambton County Library and its municipal partners undertake comprehensive asset management plans for certain library buildings.

As a result to any changes to such inputs, the Library should regularly review, assess, and periodically revise the JLFR's Recommendations in order to ensure that they remain reflective of needs in urban and rural areas. This may require monitoring library utilization, demographics, and continuing dialogue with partners and community organizations. Development of annual work plans and year-end reports should track achievements and lessons learned in order to determine the success of the JLFR.

Through these mechanisms – or as a result of internal or external factors – adjustment in resource allocations and priorities may be required. The steps below should be considered to conduct annual reviews of the JLFR.

- Review of the past year (recommendations implemented, capital projects undertaken, success of new and existing initiatives, changes in usage levels, areas for improvement or adjustment, etc.).
- Review the JLFR to identify and/or confirm short-term initiatives based on staff reviews and consideration (e.g., trends, consultation, usage data, funding, partnerships, etc.).
- Identify potential challenges for the upcoming year, including through information discussed during recommended annual walk-throughs of library buildings with municipal partners.
- Communicate the status of ongoing and future projects with Lambton County Library staff, municipal Councils, and the public.
- Revise the capital budget and propose external funding opportunities, as necessary.
- Update the JLFR in five years.



LAMBTON COUNTY
LIBRARY



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