



LETHBRIDGE PUBLIC LIBRARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Needs Assessment and Facilities Strategic Directions

Final Report

January 27, 2006

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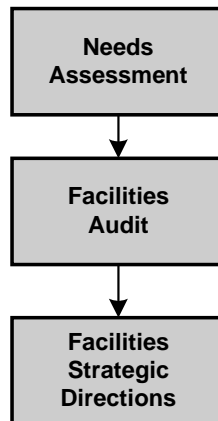
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INTRODUCTION



This document briefly summarizes the process and findings of the Needs Assessment and Facilities Strategic Directions study. The study includes 3 major sections:

- Needs Assessment, which identifies the service needs of the Library based on demographics, community opinion, comparison with peer systems, and library standards;
- Facilities Audit, which describes the Main Library site and facilities, assesses the physical condition and evaluates how well the building supports Library functions; and
- Facilities Strategic Directions, which develops a number of service delivery models, identifies general design concepts and the space requirements for each, how well the existing Main Library supports each, and provides evaluation criteria to assess each model.

The study included significant levels of community and Library staff participation, including:

- Community forum
- Interviews and interactive physical planning worksession with Library staff
- Staff questionnaire
- Library Board Stakeholder Forum
- In-House and on-line questionnaires
- Random telephone survey
- Library Board Review

In addition, a Project Planning Committee, comprising senior staff of the Library and from the City, oversaw all portions of the study.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Needs Assessment included the following conclusions:

Overall Population and Geographical Distribution

- Lethbridge Public Library's service population in 2031 will be 94,900
- In the short term, the balance of growth will be in West Lethbridge
- In the longer term, growth in West Lethbridge will moderate and reach 45,000 residents
- South Lethbridge will have substantial growth in the longer term
- North Lethbridge will have modest but continued growth over the next 25 years
- Most growth will occur at the perimeter of the City

Population Distribution

- Lethbridge will have a higher percentage of seniors in the future
- Lethbridge will continue to have a large percentage of residents in their late teens and twenties



Library Use indicators and Comparison with Peer Systems

- Most workloads that relate to LPL's facilities show falling utilization; however, LPL continues to rate highly for most workload indicators
- LPL rates highly in terms of area per capita; however, 25% of systems have planned capital expansions
- LPL's relatively high staffing levels are, in part, dictated by its facilities
- No system larger than LPL with as large a geographic area is served by a single library

Library Space Standards and Trends

- Libraries are providing more services than before, including housing increased collection formats and more computers; as well its role as a community forum is increasing: this results in increasing per capita standards
- A per capita standard of 0.9 to 1.0 square feet is appropriate for LPL, given its high level of service

By 2031, Lethbridge should be served by a library system with 85,400 to 94,900 square feet of space. Currently, it has 48,000 square feet; it will have 60,000 with the West Lethbridge community branch

What We Heard

Board and Community Forums

- The future service delivery model should serve the growing population in Lethbridge's expanded geographical area
- The Library's operational effectiveness should be sustainable
- LPL should provide service closer to home, serving seniors and others who do not drive
- A strong downtown presence is important and should be maintained
- More programs and services are required for seniors and youth

Community Questionnaires

- Respondents would use the Library more if service was closer to their home and additional parking provided
- Respondents indicated that hours of operation were a barrier to increased use of the Library; there may be a link between hours of operation and travel distance to the Library
- Except for selected geographical areas, barriers for non-users are not related to facility location and parking
- Respondents are generally happy with service and cost

Service Directions

- More focus should be placed on services and programs for children and for the provision of popular materials
- There should be a much stronger emphasis on the Library as a community commons
- Generally, respondents are satisfied with service directions

- *Seniors use the Library less than adults between 18 and 64*
- *Women use the Library more than men*
- *Use increases with education, until post graduate level, when use decreases*
- *Those with low and high incomes use the Library less*
- *Use decreases as distance from the Library increases*

A branch system would help alleviate barriers to increased patron use, including distance and parking, as well as support priority future service directions.

Future Service Roles

- Growth service areas include Pre-Schoolers/Children’s Door to Learning, Popular Materials, and Community Commons; each of these is well served by a branch system environment
- For planning purposes, the collection should be maintained at its current level of 3.4 items per capita

FACILITIES AUDIT

Library Facility Condition

In general, the conditions of LPL facilities are good to excellent, as summarized in the following table.

System	North Wing	South Wing
<u>Architectural</u>		
<i>Exterior</i>		
Windows	Fair	Fair/Good
Wall Systems	Good	Good
Roof Systems	Poor/Fair	Good
<i>Interior</i>		
Floors	Good	Good
Walls	Good/Excellent	Good/Excellent
Ceilings	Good/Excellent	Good/Excellent
Washrooms	Good/Excellent	Good/Excellent
Millwork	Good/Excellent	Good/Excellent
Elevators	Good	Fair/Good
<i>Site</i>		
Landscape	Good	Good
Sidewalks	Poor/Fair	Poor/Fair
Parking Lot	Fair/Good	Fair/Good
<u>Structural</u>		
Foundations	Excellent	Excellent
Superstructure	Excellent	Excellent
<u>Mechanical</u>		
Ventilation	Good	Good
Heating/Cooling	Good	Good
Plumbing	Good	Good
Fire Protection	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Washrooms	Good/Excellent	Good/Excellent
<u>Electrical</u>		
Power and Systems	Good	Good
Lighting	Fair/Good	Good
Communications	Good/Excellent	Good/Excellent

Functional Evaluation

The design of the Library facilities is inherently dysfunctional, comprised of two essentially separate buildings that are meant to work as one. As a result, there are:

- multiple service points, requiring increased staffing;
- two separate public entrances necessitate two Circulation functions

- areas of severe congestion, particularly at the centre of the facilities, which should be the most open area
- three separate elevator and staircase cores

In addition, the overall usable area of the facilities is less than ideal and security is compromised.

FACILITIES STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Service Delivery Models

Six service delivery models were proposed, including:

- 1: Status Quo and Community Branch
- 2: Renovated Status Quo and Community Branch
- 3: Minimal Main Library Addition and Community Branch
- 4: Significant Main Library Addition and Three Branches
- 5: Major Main Library Renovation and Community Branch
- 6: New Main Library and Community Branch

The following table summarizes the salient factors of each model.

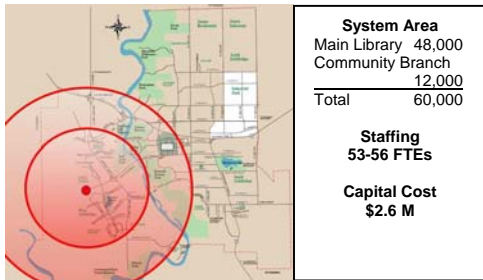
Model	Main Library			New Site	Branch Library	
	No Renovation	Existing Site Renovation	Addition		Community	Neighbourhood
Model 1	√	-	-	-	1	-
Model 2	-	√	-	-	1	-
Model 3	-	√	√	-	1	-
Model 4	-	√	√	-	1	2
Model 5	-	√	√	-	1	-
Model 6	-	-	-	√	1	-

Two types of branch libraries are included in the table above: Community and Neighbourhood Branches. The characteristics of each are listed in the table to the right.

Characteristic	Community Branch	Neighbourhood Branch
Population Served	20,000 - 30,000	15,000 - 20,000
Catchment Area	1 to 1.5 mile	.75 to 1 mile
Branch Size	12,000 gross ft ²	6,000 gross ft ²
Patron Seating	85	28
Parking	60	30
Meeting Rm. Cap.	50	25
Staffing	9 – 12 FTE	4.5 – 6 FTE

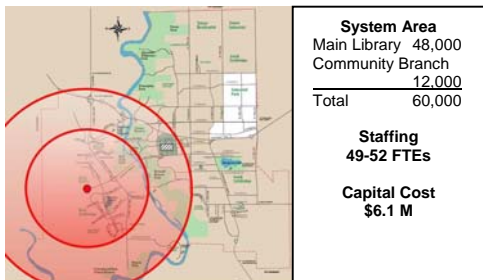
Each model is described below and relevant information about size, anticipated staffing and overall cost provided. Costs do not include the Community Branch currently planned for West Lethbridge. The Physical Plan for the Main Library section identifies the overall organization of the Main Library for each model.

It is possible to construct and evaluate alternative models, using the evaluation criteria and scoring matrix that follows. For example, a Status Quo Main Library (Model 1) with three branches (Model 4) could be considered or a New Library (Model 6) with three branches (Model 4). However, a model comprising the Main Library and two branches is not supported by the patterns of growth in the City.



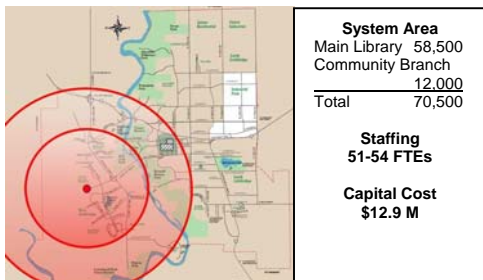
Model 1: Status Quo and Community Branch

This model retains the existing Main Library as is, with no shifts to internal programming, no renovation and no additions. It assumes the development of a Community Branch in West Lethbridge.



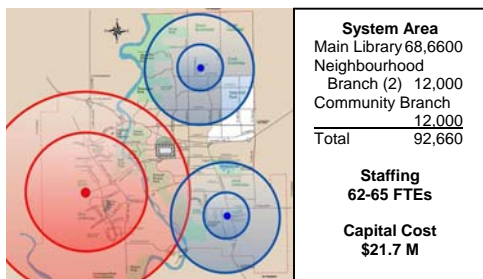
Model 2: Renovated Status Quo and Community Branch

This model is based on the continued use of the existing Main Library, with significant shifts to internal programming. As in other models, it assumes the development of a Community Branch in West Lethbridge.



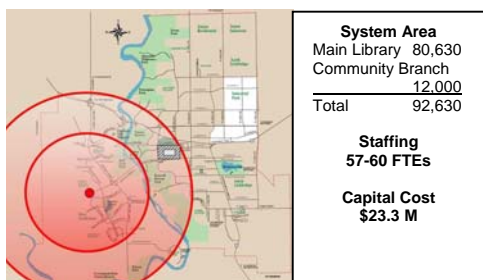
Model 3: Minimal Main Library Addition and Community Branch

This model is based on the continued use of the existing Main Library, with the construction of a modest addition, which is required to remedy current operational shortcomings. It assumes the major reorganization of functions within the Main Library, but not significant growth, except as required to relieve current congestion. It assumes the development of a Community Branch in West Lethbridge.



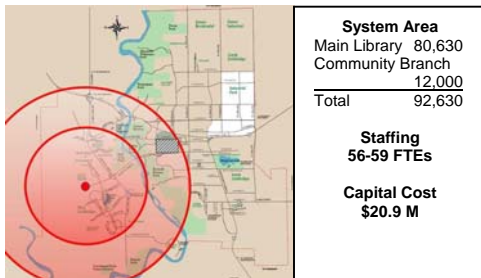
Model 4: Significant Main Library Addition and Three Branches

This model is based on a significant addition to the Main Library as well as significant reorganization of functions. It assumes the development of two Neighbourhood Branches in North and South Lethbridge, and a Community Branch in West Lethbridge. The extension of library service to the three library branches will be conducted through phased development over a period of years.



Model 5: Major Main Library Renovation and Community Branch

This model is based on a major renovation of the Main Library and reorganization of services within the facility. As in other models, it assumes the development of a Community Branch in West Lethbridge.



Model 6: New Library Building with Community Branch

This model is based on the development of a new Main Library on a downtown site to accommodate an expansion of the library to meet library standards. It also assumes the development of a Community Branch in West Lethbridge.

Program Brief

The Program Brief identifies eight functional components for the Main Library and two functional components for Branch Libraries. A functional component can be defined as a grouping of activities and assigned spaces that are physically related by their common mission to satisfy a specific group of functions or operations. A functional component may or may not be synonymous with a department since the term “department” usually refers to an organization’s administrative organization and not its physical or functional organization.

Space Requirements

The following table indicates the component area targets for physical planning by model. Models 1 and 2 are based on existing areas; Model 3 is based on the existing area, plus 20%. Models 4 through 6 are based on discussions with staff and the overall space requirements identified in the Needs Assessment section.

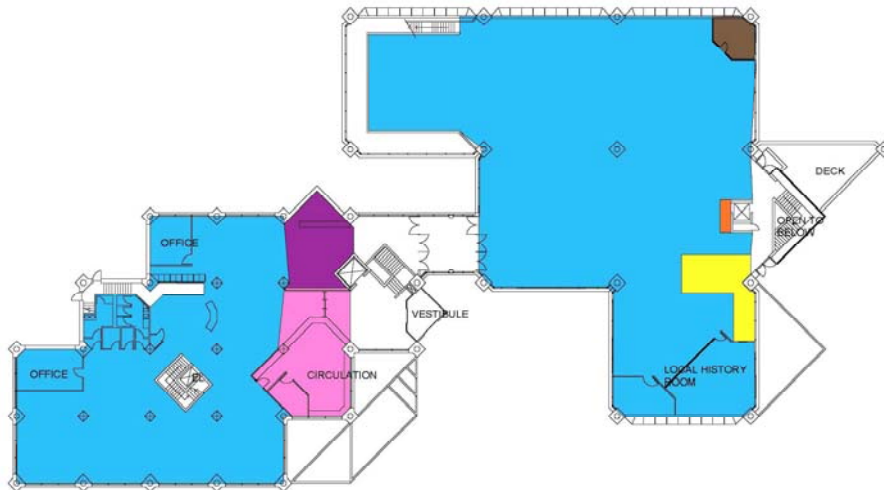
Components	Models 1 & 2 Component Area	Model 3 Component Area	Model 4 Component Area	Models 5 & 6 Component Area
A.1 Community Forum and Meeting Rooms	4,700	5,580	6,695	8,890
A.2 Entrance and Membership Services	1,200	1,440	2,770	2,940
A.3 Children’s Library	5,900	7,370	10,970	13,295
A.4 Young Adults	400	485	1,290	1,755
A.5 Information Services	23,500	26,980	28,125	32,775
A.6 Literacy Services	990	1,170	1,340	1,535
B.1 Administration	3,090	3,540	3,860	3,710
B.2 Back-of-the-House, Maintenance and Facility Services	1,800	2,165	3,750	4,080
Main Library Total	41,580	48,730	58,800	68,980
Main Library Gross Area	48,000	58,500	68,660	80,630
Branch Libraries				
C.1 Community Branch	NA	NA	NA	NA
C.2 Neighbourhood Branch	-	-	NA	
Branch Library Gross Area	12,000	12,000	24,000	12,000
TOTAL BUILDING GROSS AREA	60,000	70,500	92,660	92,630

Physical Plan for Main Library

A physical planning worksession was conducted with Library staff to identify, for each model, the best organization of functional components. Model 1, which is the existing functional layout of the Library, and Model 6, which assumes the development of a new library, were not considered in this worksession. However, plans of Model 1 are included, along with its relative advantages and disadvantages. For Model 6, only the advantages and disadvantages are included.

Model 1: Status Quo

Upper Level



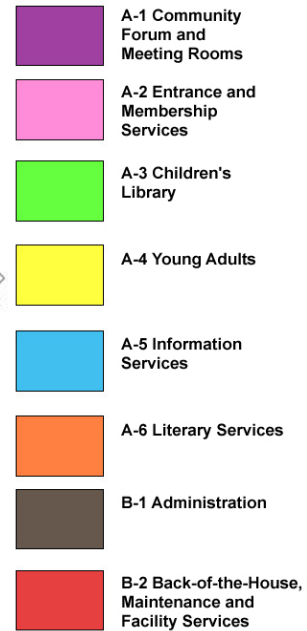
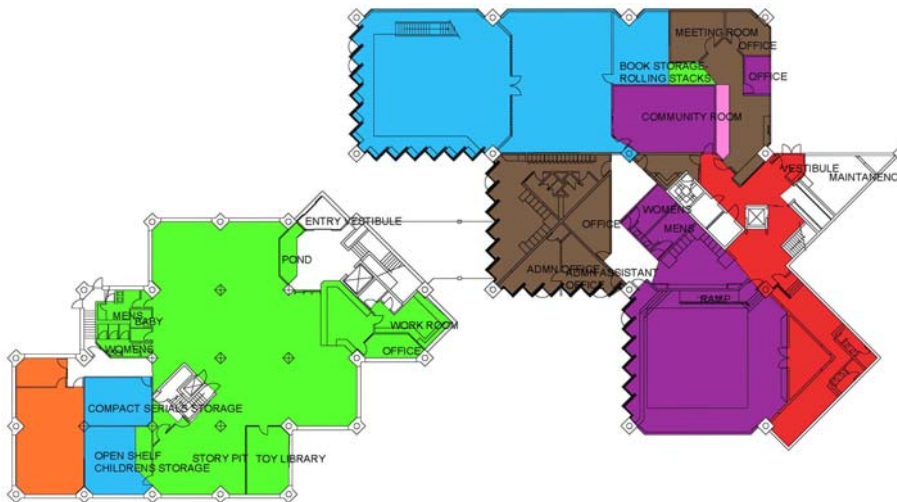
Advantages

- Patrons are familiar with layout
- Least expensive

Disadvantages

- Maintains current congestion
- High staffing requirements
- Disorganized
- Security concerns
- Does not meet area standards

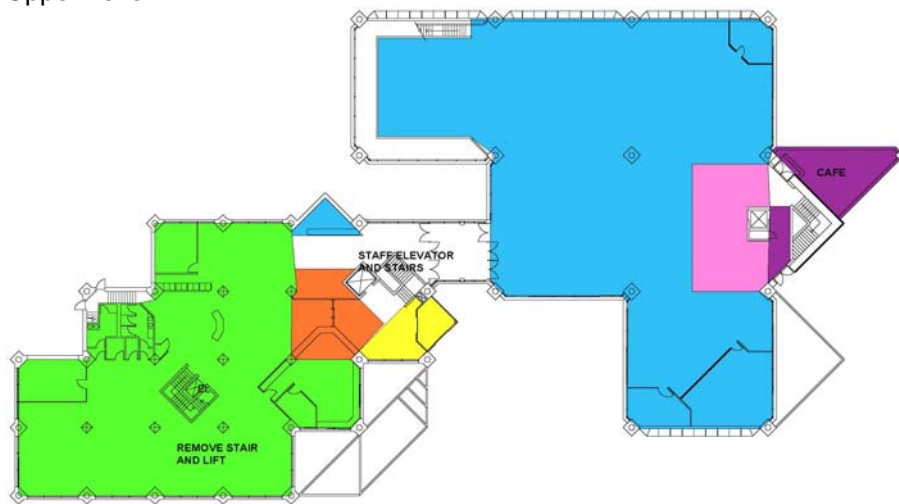
Lower Level



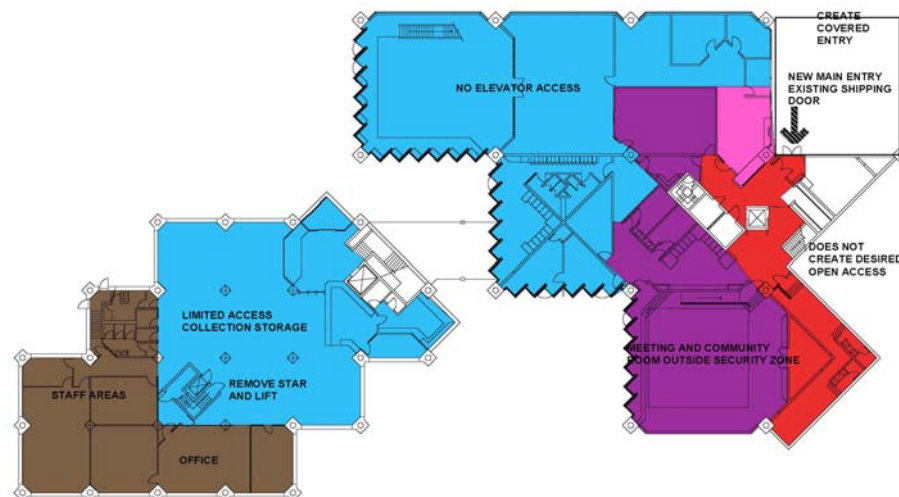
Model 2: Renovated Status Quo

Model 2 re-establishes the entrance off Stafford Drive on the Upper Level and links it to the service entrance which now is enhanced to provide patron access from the parking on the Lower Level. This serves to create a connected access zone outside of the Library's security zone and allows the creation of a single circulation desk. The smaller elevator and stair core is removed to clear the floorplate.

Upper Level



Lower Level



Advantages

- Single circulation desk
- Improved net to gross ratio
- Security of entrance and meeting rooms is achieved
- 2nd least expensive

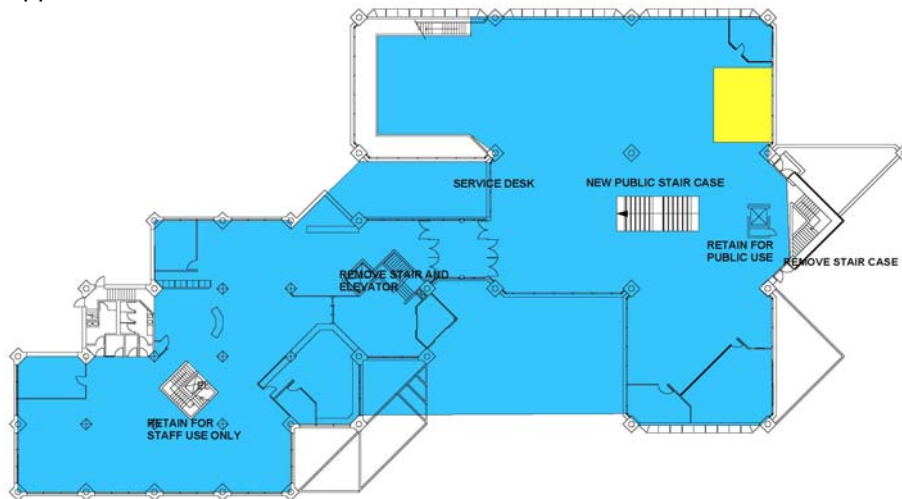
Disadvantages

- High staffing requirements for retrieval
- Parts of collection are closed to patrons
- There is no elevator access to the Information Services collections on the Lower Level
- Central congestion is still a concern
- Children's Library is far from entrance
- Conflict between service and public at entrance
- Does not meet area standards
- Significant costs with no area gain

Model 3: Minimal Main Library Addition

Model 3 includes a modestly sized infill addition to better link the two Library wings. It develops a new public entrance adjacent to the existing service entry to collect patron traffic from both the parking lot and 5th Avenue South. A major staircase is added to move patrons through the building, with a single circulation desk provided on the Lower Level. A new service entrance is developed in the South Wing. The South Wing's main elevator/staircase core is removed to clear the floorplate.

Upper Level



Advantages

- Good access from both the street and parking
- The Children's Library is readily accessible
- Information Services is on a single level
- Improved net to gross ratio
- Security of entrance and meeting rooms is achieved
- Minimizes staffing requirements

Disadvantages

- Additional parking is required
- Sorting and circulation services is removed from the service entrance
- Does not meet area standards
- High cost for area gain

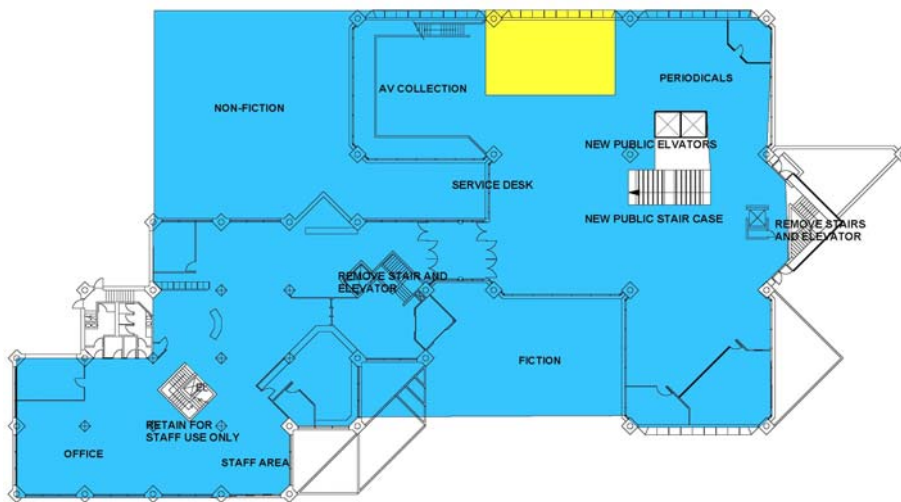
Lower Level



Model 4: Significant Main Library Addition (and Three Branches)

Model 4 includes a modestly sized infill addition to better link the two Library wings with an expansion to the South. As in Model 3, it develops a new public entrance adjacent to the existing service entry to collect patron traffic from both the parking lot and 5th Avenue South. A major staircase is added to move patrons through the building, with a single circulation desk provided on the Lower Level. A new service entrance is developed in the South Wing. The South Wing's main elevator/staircase core is removed to clear the floorplate.

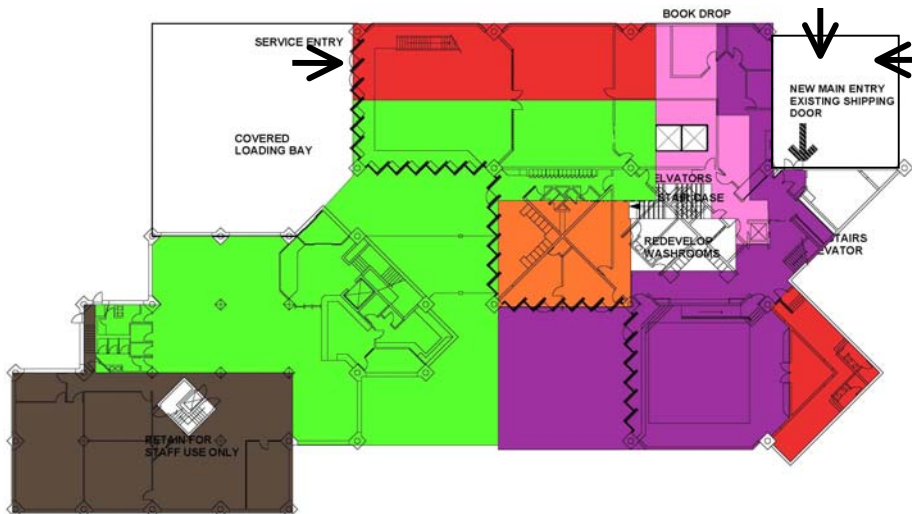
Upper Level



Advantages

- Good access from both the street and parking
- The Children's Library is readily accessible
- Information Services is on a single level
- Public / non-public zoning is achieved
- Security of entrance and meeting rooms is achieved
- Sorting is adjacent to shipping and receiving
- Shipping and receiving is covered
- Good net to gross ratio
- Meets area standard requirements with 3 branches
- Minimizes staffing requirements

Lower Level



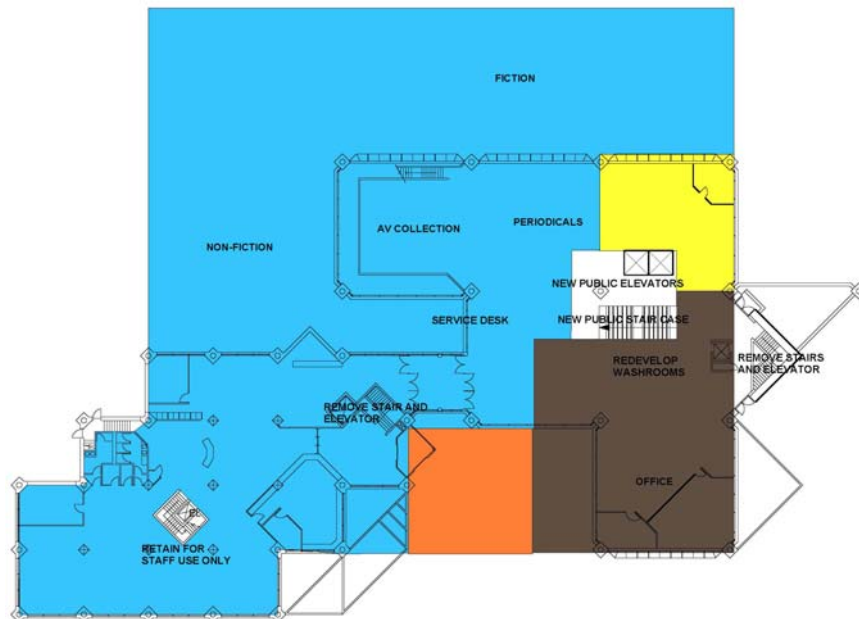
Disadvantages

- Functions on Lower Level have small area shortfall
- Literacy could be better located with Information Services
- Additional 76 parking stalls required
- Relatively costly

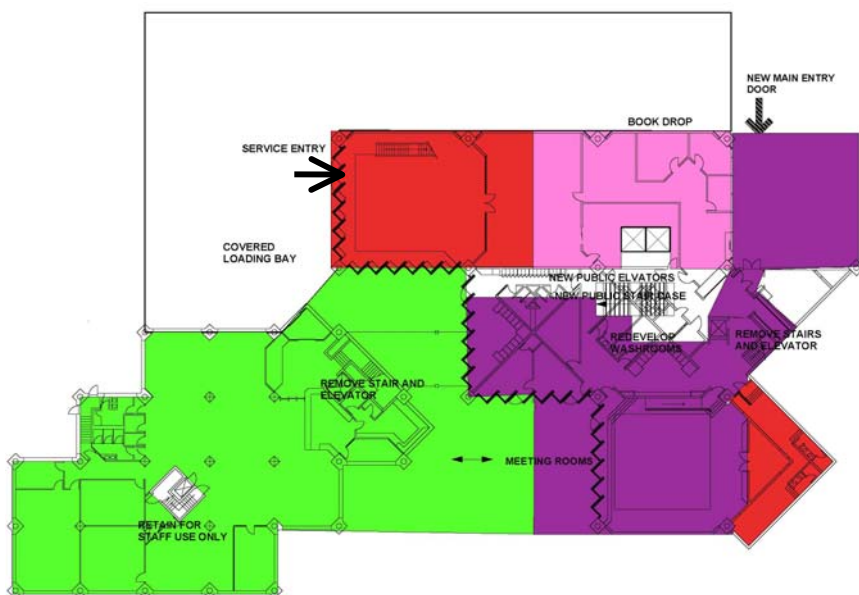
Model 5: Major Main Library Addition (and Community Branch)

Model 5 includes a modestly sized infill addition to better link the two Library wings with a major expansion to the South. As in Models 3 and 4, a new public entrance is developed adjacent to the existing service entry to collect patron traffic from both the parking lot and 5th Avenue South. A major staircase and elevator core is added to move patrons through the building, with a single circulation desk provided on the Lower Level. A new service entrance is developed in the South Wing. The South Wing's main elevator/staircase core is removed to clear the floorplate.

Upper Level



Lower Level



Advantages

- Good access from both the street and parking
- The Children's Library is readily accessible
- Information Services is on a single level
- Public / non-public zoning is achieved
- Security of entrance and meeting rooms is achieved
- Sorting is adjacent to shipping and receiving
- Shipping and receiving is covered
- Provides high profile for Library administration
- Locates Literacy in proximity to Information Services
- Good net to gross ratio
- Minimizes staffing requirements

Disadvantages

- Functions on Lower Level have small area shortfall
- 2% area overage
- Additional 101 parking stalls required
- Most costly model

Model 6: New Main Library Building (and Community Branch)

Model 6 is based on the development of a new Main Library on a nearby site in downtown Lethbridge. The list of possible advantages and disadvantages include

Advantages

- Exciting new facility built to maximize efficiency of building and staffing, creating a major civic space and renewing interest in the library
- May be located on site with better public transit access and parking access
- Achieves area standards
- Provides opportunities for partnering to create a cultural precinct
- Minimizes disruption of library services
- Lowest unit rate for new construction

Disadvantages

- Must find buyer or tenant for existing site
- Must find suitable site
- When site costs are added, may be most expensive model

Model Evaluation

Evaluation criteria developed to assess models include:

1. Strategic Alignment - Among the relevant goals are a number from the Library's *Plan of Service 2001 – 2007*, including developing other fixed service points, expanding the Library, and encouraging cultural and business partnerships.
2. Lethbridge Municipal Development Plan – Among the relevant goals are keeping jobs and services close to residential areas, retaining a distinct local flavour and sense of place, developing the downtown as a strong centre, and connectivity to transportation networks.
3. Space Standards – The Needs Assessment identified the need for between 85,400 and 94,900 square feet of space by 2031.
4. Collection Target – The Needs Assessment identified the need to develop a collection that provided 3.4 items per capita
5. Proximity to Patrons – The Library should provide fixed service points closer to patrons, as this was a factor that limited use of the Library.
6. Parking – The Library should provide additional parking to support the majority of patrons who access the facility by car.
7. Effective Staffing – The physical layout should allow the Library to reduce staffing points, streamline materials flows, and allow for easy monitoring of public areas.
8. High Level of Service – The model should maintain the high level of service, through focused staff attention, hours of operation, proximity of service, and ease of access.

9. Children's Services – The Library should increase the level of service to pre-schoolers and children.
10. Popular Materials – The Library should increase access to popular material collections.
11. Community Commons – The Library should provide additional formal and informal meeting spaces.
12. Operational Costs – The Library is more sustainable if operating costs can be kept low.
13. Capital Costs – If service delivery outcomes are the same for any two models, the less expensive model is preferred.
14. Phased Implementation – Phased growth that allows the Library to maintain a level of service that tracks population growth is preferable to large initiatives that are either overbuilt or in which the population is underserved before construction takes place.
15. Service Continuity – The model should minimize disruption to the operations of the Library system as development occurs.

The study includes a discussion of how each model addresses each of the criteria listed above and concludes with a Decision Matrix that provides a framework for assessing the options.