



Richmond Hill Public Libraries **Facilities Master Plan**

February 2024

Richmond Hill Public Libraries Facilities Master Plan

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Prepared for:

Richmond Hill Public Libraries

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Land Acknowledgment

With great respect, we acknowledge that Richmond Hill Public Libraries are situated on the traditional territories of the Mississaugas of the Credit and the Chippewa peoples. The land we now call Richmond Hill has been inhabited by many First Nations for centuries; today, this place is home to Indigenous Peoples from all across Turtle Island. We are grateful to the First Peoples for the care for, and teachings about, our earth and our relations to the land, water, and places we call home. We hope that we all can honour those teachings in our ongoing culture of learning and sharing at the library.

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1.0 Executive Summary

Brook McIlroy Inc. has been retained by Richmond Hill Public Libraries (RHPL) to complete an update to the 2013 Facilities Master Plan. This update to the Richmond Hill Public Libraries Facilities Master Plan, along with the Richmond Hill Public Library Strategic Plan 2021-2025, provides direction for the growth and revitalization of the library network's facilities over the next 10 years, 20 years, and beyond. This report compiles findings from engagement activities, building and facility analysis, policy review, and study of library best practices that inform recommendations for how RHPL can sustainably grow alongside the City's ambitious plans for urban intensification outlined in the Official Plan.

Library Service Model

This Plan reaffirms RHPL's tiered Library Service Model, in which a Central Branch supports a network of smaller branches – Community and Neighbourhood Branches -- that provide greater coverage and may offer specialized collections and services based on the needs of the local population. Today, the coverage of RHPL's existing branches leave large geographic gaps without sufficient library access, including areas where the Official Plan directs future growth in north and east Richmond Hill. This Facilities Master Plan recommends the addition of an "Express Branch" tier to the Library Service Model, which can be deployed quickly and inexpensively to fill these service gaps. Express Branches can include mobile library options, unstaffed vending options, or temporary "pop-up" locations.

Space Provision Target

In addition to geographic coverage, library service levels are also evaluated against a Space Provision Target, which compares the total library facility area to the network area's total population. This Facilities Master Plan update recommits to the existing target of 0.6 square feet per capita. Today, RHPL is not meeting its target, and with significant future growth outlined in the Official Plan, nearly 50,000 square feet of new library space will need to be provided in the next 20 years in order to meet and maintain this standard of service.

Due to changes to AODA regulations, building codes, and the ongoing need for community "third places", advisory bodies in library planning in Ontario recommend that libraries should be seeking to increase their Space Provision

Targets, and other York Region library services have acknowledged this need as well. Given the existing level of service and expected growth in Richmond Hill, 0.6 square feet per capita has been deemed an acceptable and achievable target for RHPL; however, consideration should be given to increasing this target in the next Facilities Master Plan update.

Recommended Actions

This Facilities Master Plan update covers recommendations over the next 0-10 years and 10-20 years. The recommendations include improvements to existing services and new facilities within a sustainable funding strategy that has been developed alongside the staff in Financial Services at the City of Richmond Hill.

2023-2032:

1. Make improvements to indoor and outdoor spaces at Oak Ridges Branch to address immediate need for more study and workspace.
2. Deliver a new Community Branch coordination with future development at the Yonge and Bernard KDA.
3. Deliver a new Neighbourhood Branch offering Basic to Enhanced Service co-located with the future North Leslie Community Centre while assessing the need for Richmond Green Branch.
4. Implement Phase 1 of Central Branch revitalization plans, including refresh and reorganization of the ground floor children's area and café/lounge area.
5. Prepare and implement a plan to address geographic gaps in the north and east of Richmond Hill through the implementation of Express Branches, including the short-term delivery of one mobile branch that can provide as-needed services in underserved areas immediately.

2033-2041

6. Deliver Phase 1 of a new Community Branch offering Comprehensive Service in coordination with future development at Richmond Hill Centre.
7. Deliver two new Express Branches. The form of these branches will depend on outcomes of the plan developed in Item 5.
8. Complete the Phase 2 and Outdoor improvements at Central Branch, including interior renovations and construction of the new east and west wings and fifth storey. Scope and design of outdoor improvements to be determined through a separate joint process with the City of Richmond Hill.

While activities beyond 20 years are not included within the time horizon of this Facilities Master Plan, some future recommendations have been identified in response to other long-term planning programs. Staff at Richmond Hill Public Library should continue to have discussions with various departments at the City of Richmond Hill to identify opportunities for libraries that arise as part of long-term planning. Such long-term considerations may include securing real estate early on, or executing agreements with developers or other third parties to co-develop future facilities.

Implementation

While the recommendations within this Plan update provide a roadmap for growth and development for RHPL's facilities, it also acknowledges that flexibility is essential to a realistic and implementable plan. This document details the planning approach for locating new facilities and determining their service level; presents innovative development scenarios such as integration with mixed-use development or adaptive re-use; suggests opportunities for new sources of funding and creative cost-saving approaches; and presents a catalogue of new types of spaces and services and sustainability measures that will keep Richmond Hill Public Libraries community-oriented and future-focused.



2.0 Introduction

The following Richmond Hill Public Libraries Facilities Master Plan report provides strategic recommendations for Richmond Hill's library facilities for the next decade and beyond. These recommendations are based on extensive consultations with Library users, community members and key stakeholders. The report maps out strategies to address the demand generated by population growth in Richmond Hill, while noting that the emerging predominant forms of higher density urban growth have an influence on increased demand for library facilities as well as providing new opportunities in the delivery of library spaces.

This report builds on the directions contained in the 2013 Library Facilities Master Plan, and the progress that has been made since then. Many events and trends have emerged since 2013 that have profoundly reshaped how people use libraries and will continue to influence the services and facilities that are in increasing demand. In its most general sense the rising need for, and relevance of, libraries reflects the fact that there are today very few public institutions and places that bring people together in a safe, trusted, non-commercial space that is open to all, generally free, and associated with a shared communal ideal that honours the pursuit of knowledge and empowers people to advance their success in life and their careers.

Libraries have always been relied on as centres of learning and self-advancement but as new technologies reframe our relationship with access to information and how we learn, the library is increasingly relied on as a place of affordable training with access to digital technologies, hardware, and software.

The concept of libraries as the “third place” reflects how libraries serve a critical role as a social space for people to come together either formally through programming and family-oriented activities or informally as a place simply to be with others. In the context of a rapidly aging population, many of whom live in isolation, the need for these safe spaces is profoundly important.

Post-Pandemic Trends

Libraries have taken on new roles as a result of the changing nature of work initially triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic where many employees were forced to work from home. Work from home and hybrid work arrangements have continued as an enduring legacy of the pandemic and as a result, libraries are now being used as defacto work spaces especially for those whose residential environments are either too small or non-conducive to work from home.

Urban Intensification

Similar to trends in urban intensification across the GTA, as Richmond Hill densifies with more people and families living in compact apartments and condominiums, the demand for alternative spaces for study, work, children's programming, quiet reading and social exchange is intensifying and is placing increased needs for more multifunctional spaces.

Housing Crisis

The current housing deficit and the aggressive policies emerging to address this crisis will only intensify the development of vertical and compact housing formats which will directly result in increased demand for library spaces.

Alternative Delivery Models for Library Capital Projects

Richmond Hill's Official Plan policies focus the bulk of growth within transit-supportive density nodes and will be the areas where the urgent need for more housing and affordable housing can be addressed. This emerging pattern connecting vertical living with increasing library demand has, in other densifying urban locations, resulted in innovative delivery models for library facilities wherein new developments are designed as mixed-use buildings integrating libraries within the lower floors of new multi-story residential buildings. These public-private partnership models are mutually beneficial resulting in reduced capital costs for libraries and a desirable amenity for residents. Given the constraints on municipal budgets to fund new public capital projects, the timing is excellent to pursue this alternative delivery model for new library facilities in Richmond Hill as a way to meet increasing demand.

An Adept Flexible Approach

This report provides multiple approaches to address Richmond Hill's current deficit in library space as well as the expansion needs associated with population growth in the coming decades. This menu of strategies is diverse and wide-ranging equipping the Richmond Hill Library to be adept in deploying creative and entrepreneurial tools to address the challenges today and tomorrow. These strategies include for instance new stand-alone facilities, libraries in new mixed-use buildings delivered through public-private partnerships, libraries paired with municipal recreation centres, pop-up libraries in vacant commercial plazas, libraries in converted big box stores, and mobile libraries. The key to this approach is to acknowledge the need for flexibility to quickly address new opportunities as they unfold and to keep in step with public demand for services in the growing and thriving community which is Richmond Hill.



3.0 Background

3.1 Provincial Policy Statement

3.2 RHPL Strategic Plan 2021–2025

3.3 2013 Facilities Master Plan

3.4 City of Richmond Hill Official Plan

3.4.1 Intensification

3.5 Facilities Master Plan Engagement

3.5.1 Summary of Engagement Activities

3.5.2 Engagement Opportunities

3.5.3 Engagement Outcomes

The following section highlights key policy documents and details of the Facilities Master Plan engagement program that provide important context for the recommendations and strategies contained in this report.

3.1 Provincial Policy Statement

The [Provincial Policy Statement \(PPS\) 2020](#) is a guiding document that sets out policies for land use planning across Ontario. Issued under Section 3 of the Planning Act (1990, as amended 2022) decision-making at the municipal level shall be consistent with the PPS. This Facilities Master Plan has considered the policy direction provided by the PPS 2020.

The PPS 2020 provides policies with respect to public service facilities, which are considered part of sustaining healthy, liveable, and safe communities (1.1.1). The PPS 2020 states that public service facilities should be co-located in community hubs where appropriate (1.6.5) and “before consideration is given to developing new infrastructure and public facilities: a) the use of existing infrastructure and public service facilities should be optimized; and b) opportunities for adaptive re-use should be considered, wherever feasible” (1.6.3). These considerations underpin this Facilities Master Plan.

The PPS 2020 recognizes the historic and ongoing role which Indigenous communities play in land use planning, and expresses the importance of meaningful and early engagement and cooperative relationship building with Indigenous communities to facilitate decision-making and knowledge sharing. Policy 1.2.2 of the PPS states that “Planning authorities shall engage with Indigenous communities and coordinate on land use planning matters.” This direction to engage with Indigenous communities informed the public consultation strategy and recommendations of this Facilities Master Plan.

At the time of writing, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is consulting on an integrated province-wide planning policy document that seeks to combine A Place to Grow and the PPS. The April 6, 2023 Draft Proposed Provincial Planning Statement (Draft PPS 2023) includes policies that encourage engagement with Indigenous communities, including: “Planning authorities shall undertake early engagement with Indigenous communities and coordinate on land use planning matters to facilitate knowledge-sharing, support consideration of Indigenous interests in land use decision-making and support the identification of potential impacts of decisions on the exercise of Aboriginal or treaty rights.” (6.6.2).

The Draft PPS 2023 notes, regarding public service facilities, that “Planning authorities shall plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impacts of a changing climate through approaches that... b) incorporate climate change considerations in planning for and the development of infrastructure, including stormwater management systems, and public service facilities” (2.9). This language has influenced the this Facilities Master Plan in emphasizing sustainability measures and Indigenous engagement and design of facilities.

3.2 RHPL Strategic Plan 2021–2025

The Richmond Hill Public Library’s 2021-25 Strategic Plan outlines the purpose, vision and mission of the Library, as well as its key values and strategic model.

The strategic model focuses on customer priorities, innovative priorities and enabling priorities. This Facilities Master Plan builds off this model by prioritizing the need for more creative, flexible, convenient, and inclusive spaces and services at libraries, a focus on modern digital experiences, and curating stronger community partnerships.

The Richmond Hill Public Library Strategic Plan also endorses four key values:

- We champion our difference: We believe that understanding and embracing diversity enriches us; that our services should be accessible to everyone; that freedom of expression ensures we can exchange ideas and perspectives.
- We are adaptable: We believe that embracing ambiguity and responding quickly to change is necessary in a fast-paced world; that curiosity and creativity fuel new thinking; and that our failures make us stronger and smarter.



- We focus on impact: We believe that our customers are our top priority; that doing the right things and doing things right will help us focus and be more impactful; and that we need to balance short and long-term grow.
- We actively engage: We believe in co-designing with our community; that hands-on and collaborative experiences make for more memorable learning; and that accountability means being part of the solution.

This Library Facilities Master Plan Update provides six Guiding Principles for RHPL's Facilities that inform and direct the growth and development of libraries in Richmond Hill. These Guiding Principles were developed with library staff and have been informed by the Strategic Plan 2021-2025. The Guiding Principles for RHPL Facilities are discussed in Section 5.0 of this report.

3.3 2013 Facilities Master Plan

This report succeeds the 2013 Library Facilities Master Plan, prepared by Monteith Brown Planning Consultants. The 2013 Plan provided specific direction for the development of library space in Richmond Hill to the year 2023. The development strategy provided short- to medium-term priorities for Richmond Hill Public Library.

The key development strategies outlined in the 2013 Facilities Master Plan and progress to date are noted in Table 1 at right.

3.4 City of Richmond Hill Official Plan

Official Plans are statutory documents required under the Planning Act that guide how land is used and where growth and development will occur within a municipality. Official Plans help transform cities into vibrant, complete communities that serve the needs of their residents and visitors and that support long-term sustainable city-building.

The 2010 Official Plan directs the majority of growth within the City of Richmond Hill to intensification areas (comprised of a network of centres and corridors) and the majority of job growth to intensification and employment areas. It is intended to manage growth and guide development to the year 2031.

The City is presently in the process of updating its Official Plan to respond to changes in Provincial Plans and Regional policies. The update process, entitled

Table 1: Progress on Recommended Actions from the 2013 Facilities Master Plan

Key 2013 Facilities Master Plan Development Strategy	Target Delivery Date	Progress to Date
<p>1 Relocate the existing Oak Ridges Branch to a larger and more prominent site situated on Town-owned land at Yonge Street and Regatta Avenue, providing a total gross floor area of 16,000 square feet.</p>	2013–2015	<p>COMPLETE: In 2019, Richmond Hill Public Library opened the Oak Ridges Branch at Regatta Avenue and Yonge Street. This location is 2-storeys and features a green roof, a designated teen area, makerspace technologies, audio-video equipment, a computer lab, study rooms and other services and facilities.</p>
<p>2 Expand the Central Library by 17,000 square feet (in collaboration with the Richmond Hill's Civic Precinct Initiative) to bring its total gross floor area to 90,000 square feet.</p>	2017–2021	<p>CARRIED FORWARD: In response to this recommendation, in 2017, Diamond Schmitt Architects were retained by RHPL and the Town of Richmond Hill to prepare a feasibility study for the expansion of the Central Library Branch. The library expansion was approved and construction of the Civic Precinct Project was expected to begin in February 2023 and completed by February 2026; however, plans for the Civic Precinct project (and therefore the branch expansion) are currently on hold.</p> <p>This Facilities Master Plan update supports in principle the recommendations of the 2017 feasibility study, with some changes, which are discussed further in this report.</p>
<p>3 Undertake a Study to develop a library space provision strategy to determine how best to meet the needs of the southern portion of the Town with specific focus on the Richmond Hill Centre (i.e. the provincially designated Urban Growth Centre). It is expected that this Study will examine the potential relocation of the existing Richvale Neighbourhood Branch to the Richmond Hill Centre and creating a new 15,000 square foot Community Branch which is a similar approach to that proposed for the Oak Ridges area.</p>	2022–2026	<p>COMPLETE: Potential locations for new branches to meet ongoing population growth have been provided as a part of this Facilities Master Plan (see Section 7.2)</p> <p>This study recommends the retention and renovation of Richvale Branch, in alignment with directions provide better geographic service coverage (see Section 7.3.4)</p>
<p>4 Retain the Richmond Green branch in its current form unless future needs require an expansion in which case opportunities should also be investigated to optimize the existing configuration to provide enhanced opportunity for collaborative learning and personal study.</p>	2027–2031	<p>CARRIED FORWARD: Recent renovations have been made to improve Richmond Green Branch and no immediate intervention is recommended at this time. As surrounding neighbourhoods grow in alignment with the Official Plan, the long-term future of this branch should continue to be evaluated.</p>
<p>5 Pursuant to ongoing monitoring of all library branches and an update to the Library Facilities Master Plan, the provision of any outstanding library space required to meet long-term needs between the years 2027 and 2031 should be explored through expansion to the Richmond Green Branch, construction of a new branch in the Elgin West/East community, and/or an alternative service approach.</p>	2027–2031	<p>COMPLETE: Recommendations for needs anticipated between 2027 and 2031 have been updated with this Facilities Master Plan update.</p>

“City Plan”, builds on the policies of the 2010 Official Plan and continues to direct growth to intensification areas. One of the Key Directions in the City Plan update is to “facilitate development and provide commensurate infrastructure to accommodate the Regional growth forecast for Richmond Hill”¹. The Official Plan update process will provide direction on intensification, which is discussed in Section 3.4.1 of this report.

Official Plan Amendment 18.4 (OPA 18.4) was recently approved and provides policy direction to address matters relating to the achievement of “15-minute” complete communities and permissions for gentle density within the Neighbourhood designation where appropriate, while balancing the desire to protect distinguishing features of Neighbourhoods. By adopting OPA 18.4, the City promotes actionable measures that facilitate the creation of complete communities and improve residents’ access to activities, services, and day-to-day needs within a 15-minute walking distance from their home.

3.4.1 Intensification

City Plan identifies an Intensification Hierarchy to direct growth within the City. The greatest priority for growth in Richmond Hill is Richmond Hill Centre (RHC), located at Yonge and Highway 7. This area of the City will be considered a new downtown for the City and region, supporting two subway stations. It will be developed with

¹ This is one of the Key Directions as listed in the City Plan 2041 Key Directions Report (City of Richmond Hill, November 2021)

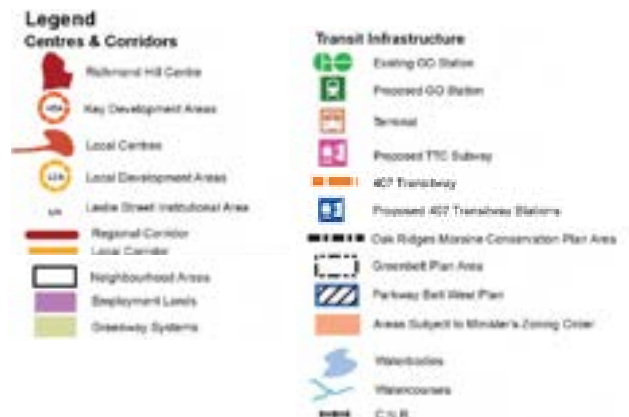
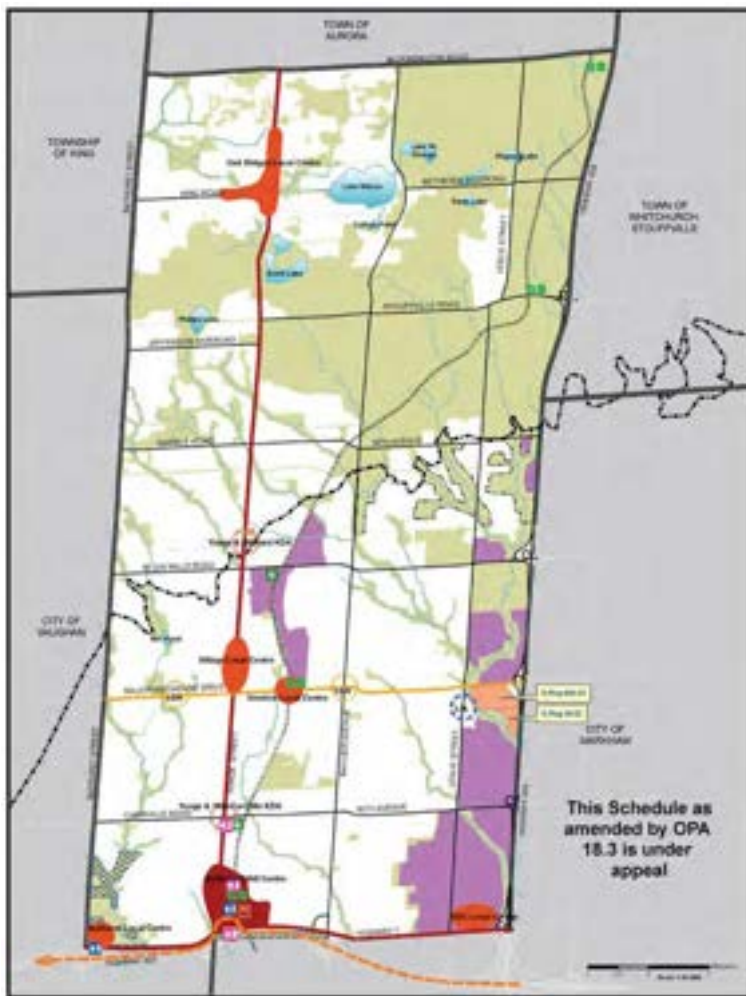


Figure 1: Richmond Hill Official Plan Schedule A1: City Structure (January 2023 Consolidation)

transit-oriented development principles, containing new open spaces and mixed-use development. Most of the development in RHC will be located in a Transit-Oriented Community surrounding the future High Tech Station. Major transformation for this area is described in more detail in the Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan.

Key Development Areas (KDAs) are next in the intensification hierarchy, and are located along Regional Corridors where public rapid transit services intersect with major nodes of retail and commercial development, and where opportunities exist for redevelopment of large land parcels that can support new public streets. The purpose of the KDA designation is to establish mixed-use service centres serving the surrounding neighbourhoods and future intensification along Yonge Street.

Two KDAs have been designated on Yonge Street, one located at Carrville/16th Avenue and one at Bernard Avenue. They are both identified on Schedule A1 (Urban Structure), and on Schedule A2 (Land Use) of the Richmond Hill Official Plan as Key Development Areas. Both KDAs are planned to be sub-centres for mixed-use and high-density development due to their proximity to public rapid transit on Yonge Street and the opportunity to intensify underutilized lands in the area.

Other intensification opportunities are located in designated Local Centres, Local Development Areas and along the Major Mackenzie Drive Local Mixed Use Corridor, and select portions of the Yonge Street and Highway 7 Regional Corridors. Through the Official Plan Update, additional intensification areas have also been identified at Highway 7 and Bathurst Street, and at Highway 7 and East Beaver Creek Road. These areas will also accommodate future growth and intensification in accordance with the policy direction that will be established through the update to the City's Official Plan. Small-scale neighbourhood infill opportunities also exist within the City's neighbourhoods, which are to be guided by the policies of the City's Official Plan.

3.5 Facilities Master Plan Engagement

3.5.1 Summary of Engagement Activities

Stakeholder consultation and engagement were completed in Phase 1 and 2 of the Facilities Master Plan (FMP) with internal and external stakeholder groups as part of the research and analysis component of this report.

Prior to this Facilities Master Plan, Richmond Hill Public Libraries recently completed two large-scale consultations – the Richmond Hill Public Library Service Design Report (2022) and the Environics Data and Analysis report (2020). These studies were undertaken to better understand the population demographics of Richmond Hill, and determine typologies for library users to better understand customer activity. Outcomes of these studies have been taken into consideration during the development of this FMP update.

Engagement activities sought to identify development priorities for both new and existing branches, including but not limited to: space needs, programming needs, and existing branch conditions and constraints. Outcomes from these sessions advised key guiding principles which helped inform and identify opportunities, needs, gaps, and design considerations for all current and future branches.

Themes including improvements to study and quiet spaces, enhanced children's play areas, partnership and community collaboration, access to collections, indoor and outdoor space programming, and increased resources emerged through the consultation and engagement sessions.

To ensure a range of voices were heard, the consultation program included a range of engagement methods:

- Site Tours at all branches;
- Presentations to the RHPL Executive Leadership Team (ELT), Branch Managers, and City Staff;
- In-Person Workshops;
- Pop-Up engagement displays at Central, Richmond Green, Richvale and Oak Ridges Branches; and
- An Online Survey

The following stakeholder groups were engaged with as part of the Facilities Master Plan process:

- Richmond Hill Public Library Staff;
- Indigenous Communities from the Richmond Hill/York Region area;
- RHPL Customers; and,
- City of Richmond Hill Staff.

Table 2: Engagement Opportunities During the Facilities Master Plan Update Process

Date	Phase	Group/Session Title	Type	Responses/ People Engaged
August 2022	1	Site Visits (4) - Central, Richvale, Oak Ridges, Richmond Green	Site Visit/Meeting	4
September 2022	1	Stakeholder Interviews (2) with City of Richmond Hill Staff	Meeting (Virtual)	6
October 2022	1	Stakeholder Workshop w/RHPL ELT & Branch Managers	Workshop (In-Person)	9
January 2023	1	Presentation to RHPL ELT	Presentation (Virtual)	
February 2023	2	Indigenizing the Library Workshop	Workshop (In-Person)	11
April–May 2023	2	Public Pop-Up (4) with information displays at Central, Richvale, Oak Ridges, and Richmond Green branches (two weeks)	Pop-Up(In-Person)	115
April–May 2023	2	Online Survey + Hard Copy Survey (two weeks)	Online	142
May 2023	2	Creativity Day: RHPL Staff Development Day	Pop-Up (In-Person)	182
June 2023	3	Presentation to RHPL and City ELTs	Presentation (Virtual)	10
August 2023	3	Presentation to Steering Committee #1	Presentation (Virtual)	
February 2024	3	Presentation to Steering Committee #2	Presentation (Virtual)	
All Engagement Opportunities				478

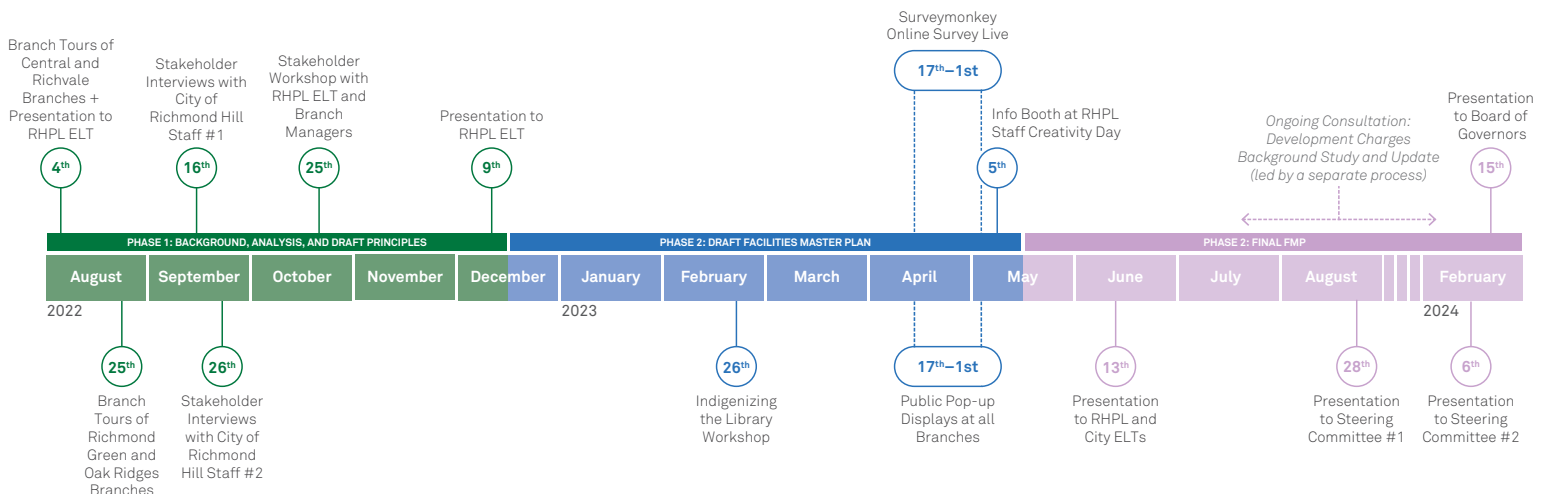


Figure 2: Richmond Hill Public Library Facilities Master Plan process engagement timeline

3.5.2 Engagement Opportunities

Branch Tours

Branch Tours to all four RHPL branches took place in August 2022. Branch Managers at each location led the project team on a tour of their facilities. Brook McIlroy undertook a qualitative survey of the facilities, which included photo documentation.

Following the tour of Central Branch, an initial visioning session was held between the Brook McIlroy project team and RHPL's Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to discuss high-level aspirations for the future of Richmond Hill's libraries.



Stakeholder Interviews with City of Richmond Hill Staff

Two Stakeholder Interview sessions were held with the City of Richmond Hill in September 2022. Representatives from Planning, Facilities Development, Economic Development, Community Services, and Policy Planning and Infrastructure Development were in attendance to discuss recent and planned development growth in Richmond Hill to determine demand for new RHPL facilities. Topics discussed included sustainability, population growth, space and programming needs, facility accessibility, and potential partnerships with other community facilities.

A number of recent and upcoming City of Richmond Hill initiatives relevant to planning for new libraries were discussed, including the City Plan 2041, OPA 18.3, the City's Sustainability Metrics Program update, and upcoming major developments, including Richmond Hill Centre, the Bridge Station TOC, and the Hillcrest Mall redevelopment. Subsequent correspondence on the above took place between Brook McIlroy and City representatives over the following months.



Figure 3: Members of RHPL's ELT and Branch Managers participate in a visioning exercise to imagine the future of Richmond Hill's libraries.

Stakeholder Visioning Workshop

A workshop with RHPL's ELT and Branch Managers was held to identify indoor and outdoor space needs and to explore the future of libraries in Richmond Hill. The workshop involved four modules: a collaborative card storming exercise to develop a vision for RHPL's facilities; a presentation and discussion on service gaps and growth in Richmond Hill; a presentation and discussion on opportunities for existing and new branches; and a collaborative dot voting exercise to explore the potential of a 21st century library.

Themes from this workshop were collectively agreed upon by the group, which were further refined to form the Guiding Principles for RHPL's Facilities (see Section 5.0 of this report).

Indigenizing the Library Workshop

Brook McIlroy and RHPL identified the need for a targeted conversation with local Indigenous Peoples to understand how they are connected to libraries and to discuss the best ways to build an environment of mutual support between the libraries and local Indigenous communities through programs, collections, displays, and more. The workshop served to connect the library with Richmond Hill's Indigenous community as an entry point for increased collaboration and partnership opportunities in the future.

The talking circle was held with Odeiwin, a local non profit in Richmond Hill that represents Indigenous voices in Richmond Hill and York Region. Through this engagement, opportunities for understanding the specific needs of Indigenous service users in the redevelopment of the Facilities Master Plan emerged, including:

- Opportunity to have ceremonial spaces accessible for smudging, sacred fire and connection to support cultural practices and teachings.
- Family programming in libraries to preserve language and maintain cultural teaching practices.
- Land-based learning opportunities (e.g. an outdoor garden for medicine planting and teaching opportunities).
- Indigenous art installations for Indigenous representation and presence.
- Commitment to coordination with RHPL staff to plan for workshops in the future that may require special accommodations, such as drumming and rattle-making workshops.
- Enhanced partnership and collaboration between the Indigenous community and Richmond Hill Public Libraries to support the needs of service users.

It was also determined that further and continued dialogue and engagement should occur between Richmond Hill Library staff and the local Indigenous community in order for authentic truth and reconciliation to occur within library spaces.

Since the workshop, a number of short-term initiatives have been implemented, including allowing for smudging indoors, and plans for a medicinal garden. Representatives from Odeiwini have also been invited to participate in a number of other library initiatives not related to this Facilities Master Plan, including participation at staff development events and standing involvement in RHPL's Multicultural Advisory Group.

RHPL Staff Creativity Day Information Booth

Richmond Hill Public Library hosted their annual staff development day at Central Branch on May 5th, 2023. Brook McIlroy facilitated an information booth at which staff could ask questions and provide feedback on the proposed changes to RHPL's existing facilities. Participants were able to provide comments via sticky notes, dot voting, and in-person discussions.

Pop-Up In-Branch Displays and Online Survey

Consultation Pop-Ups were held at all four branches for a duration of two weeks to engage the larger Richmond Hill community. The Pop-Ups included display boards showing proposed changes to existing branches (both indoor and outdoor spaces) and information on existing library gaps and projected growth in Richmond Hill. Participants were asked to provide their feedback on the proposed changes. Comments could be submitted via a public sticky note comment board, dot voting, or in-branch comment forms, depending on the individuals' preference.

To complement the in-branch Pop-Ups, an online survey was launched on SurveyMonkey to obtain



Figure 4: Comment boards collected feedback and ideas from members of the public during in-branch pop-ups in April and May 2023 and from RHPL staff during Creativity Day in May 2023.

additional input from Library customers regarding their thoughts on the proposed changes. The online survey ran concurrently Pop-Ups, and included the same materials hosted online.

In the online survey, respondents were asked to comment on the type of library branch they prefer. Out of 59 survey participants, 63% preferred small neighbourhood branches and 37% preferred to travel to a central branch with a greater variety of services, indicating that proximity and community connection are priorities for RHPL users.

» Refer to [Appendix A: Consultation Summary](#) in this report for a complete summary of all engagement feedback

3.5.3 Engagement Outcomes

The following contains a high-level summary of feedback received during engagement activities conducted during this Facilities Master Plan process:

Overall Spaces Valued Most:

- Collections
- Comfortable reading and study spaces
- Community spaces
- Space variety and furnishings

Overall Spaces that Need Improvement:

- Comfortable quiet spaces
- Children’s areas
- More seating
- Community resources (computers, software etc.)

Support for bringing the library outside

“more trees, more green!”

Support for Indigenous placemaking and programming

“an outdoor medicinal garden”

Desire for more community facilities

“community kitchens, art displays, space for non-profits”

Support for social spaces and lounges/cafés

“the community living room”

63%

Prefers to visit small neighbourhood branches close to their home

37%

Prefers to travel to central branches with a greater variety of services



4.0 Library Facility Trends

Third Places:

A “third place” is somewhere where people spend time outside of their homes (the first place) and their work or school (the second place).

They must be comfortable and accommodating, and must feel like a home away from home.

As third places are public-serving, they must accommodate meeting, gathering, and socializing between people of diverse backgrounds and be based on universal design principles.

RHPL’s Strategic Plan 2021-2025 and the recent brand update both envision a library network that is creative, engaging, adaptable, and inclusive, recognizing the need to reimagine the role of the library in a modern, evolving society. They challenge the idea of the “traditional” library, with more emphasis being given to spaces for gathering, community, and innovation. While the resource function of libraries will always be important, new and growing libraries in Canada are providing more spaces that serve a wider civic function, such as performance and exhibition spaces, spaces for incubation and innovation, for cultural literacy and – even moving away from the idea of the quiet library – spaces for socialization, meeting, and gathering. As their role in serving community, their spaces must be reflective of the people who call it home.

Supporting a Growing, Urbanizing Population

In the meantime, the population of the City of Richmond Hill is growing and the demographics are changing, leading to an increase in demand for libraries, and a greater importance for these libraries to fulfill their role as trusted and objective spaces for socializing, gathering, and finding information.

The City of Richmond Hill’s Official Plan Update recognizes the demand for mixed-use, walkable, and increasingly vibrant and urbanized places to live, work, and play. The Official Plan Update also acknowledges the intent of the Key Directions includes addressing “key issues, such as housing affordability... and accommodation of diversity of lifestyles among city residents and workers”¹. Essential to creating vibrant, mixed-use, and urban communities is ensuring that inhabitants have access to amenities, services, green space, and public life. These “third places” within dense communities are essential gathering and recreational spaces that become all the more important in the context of improving housing quality and affordability, social isolation, and community-building, as well as during increasingly frequent climate events, such as heatwaves and wildfires causing poor air quality conditions.

In growing areas of Richmond Hill, community uses are expected to be accommodated “in a compact, urban form which may include the location of the use on small sites or the co-location of uses on a site or within a building, including multi-storey buildings.”² Co-locating libraries with other civic facilities or neighbourhood amenities help to build strong, walkable community hubs (supporting the objectives of OPA 18.4) and can achieve significant cost savings through more efficient use of land and services.

1 City of Richmond Hill. 2021. Key Directions Report for the Richmond Hill Official Plan Update. p ii.)

2 Policy 3.1.7(4), Richmond Hill Official Plan, January 2023 Consolidation

New Services and Facilities

There is a growing demand for new technologies in libraries, along with programming and resources needed to teach customers how to use them. This may include, but is not limited to, maker spaces, innovation and entrepreneurial spaces, multi-media production spaces, rehearsal rooms, technology-equipped classroom spaces, pitch rooms, and exhibition and performance spaces. Many libraries across Canada are also blending arts and cultural programming into their facilities to fill the need for accessible and low cost space for exhibitions, community performances, and cultural events.

Updates to building codes, accessibility guidelines (AODA), and sustainability building programs are adding new requirements (often meaning more space) for new development, particularly for civic facilities.

» Refer to [Section 7.4 New Spaces and Services](#) in this report for more information.

Library Space Provision

There are two main organizations that provide guidance on library development in Ontario – the Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario (ARUPLO), and the Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS). Ongoing research from these organizations recommend a higher level of space provision compared to what is being delivered in Richmond Hill today, in alignment with the trends above. Both of these organizations provide helpful guidance for growing library services. It has been observed that the footprints of newer library branches across Canada are increasingly larger and designed to be more flexible, to accommodate changing needs.

» Refer to [Section 7.1.1 Service Level Targets](#) in this report for more information.



5.0 Vision and Principles

Richmond Hill Public Library has reimagined the role of the library in the lives of the community to evolve into a 21st century library that connects library patrons to the past, present, and future. The Library will be a creative community hub for a growing, diverse community.

Richmond Hill Public Library has undertaken the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan to provide a roadmap for the future of library services. The Strategic Plan recognizes the increasingly interconnected and fast-paced world we live in and has reimagined the role of the library in this 21st century context. The Strategic Plan sets out the strategic objectives of the Library which include providing inspiring in-person experiences with creative, flexible, and inclusive community spaces, while also providing accelerated digital experiences to help users adapt to evolving technologies.

In addition to its updated Strategic Plan, the Richmond Hill Public Library is putting its best foot forward with a new brand strategy: “Yes, at the library”. Rooted in devotion to the community and promising the resources of today and tomorrow, both the brand strategy and the Strategic Plan will be supported by this Facilities Master Plan in re-creating the Library as a series of community hubs.

The RHPL Branch Vision and Guiding Principles for Library Facilities

Richmond Hill Public Library facilities will provide spaces that **reflect** the diverse community of Richmond Hill, allowing library patrons to truly see themselves here. The libraries will **connect patrons to one another** as well as library staff and inspire the community through the creation of an **unexpected and innovative experience**, reinforcing a sense of wonder and creativity. Library **services will be disseminated** and allow patrons to experience all the library has to offer, whether they be in a branch, outdoors, or at home.

The Richmond Hill Public Library Branch Vision will be realized through six Guiding Principles for Library Facilities:

1. **Inclusive Identities**
2. **Adaptive and Universal**
3. **Interactive and Immersive**
4. **Empowered Communities**
5. **Natural Outdoor Experiences**
6. **The Commons**

Adaptive and Universal

Richmond Hill Public Libraries will continue to adapt and evolve. They will employ universal design best practices and be flexible to respond to the evolving nature of media. Any new buildings and spaces will accommodate the ongoing transformation of information technologies into the future.

Inclusive Identities

Richmond Hill Libraries will be a place where people feel welcome and safe, and where people see themselves represented. Providing spaces that support varied needs ensures that a library is a place of belonging.

Interactive and Immersive

Richmond Hill Libraries will offer technologies, spaces and resources to encourage and foster collaboration, connection and discovery. Richmond Hill Libraries will be a community destination with a future focus.



The Commons

Richmond Hill Libraries will act as a community living room, bringing people together. They will be a destination space but also link people together as citizens of Richmond Hill.

Empowered Communities

Richmond Hill Libraries will be a destination for self-empowerment, transforming to meet the new trends. Visitors will have the resources to discover and help themselves and will have a personalized experience.

Natural Outdoor Experiences

Incorporating natural features into Richmond Hill Libraries will provide opportunities to learn and connect with nature to support health and wellness and act as additional programming opportunities. Indigenous placemaking features and ways of teaching and learning will connect the Libraries to the lands they occupy.



6.0 RHPL's Facilities Today

- 6.1 Central Branch
- 6.2 Oak Ridges Branch
- 6.3 Richmond Green Branch
- 6.4 Richvale Branch

Richmond Hill Public Library’s network is made up of four physical branches. RHPL benefits from being part of a network with York Region Libraries that allows for free and full access to all libraries in York Region municipalities. In addition to physical branches, RHPL is continuously updating and improving the “virtual branch” experience by offering digital materials and access to resources through their website at rhpl.ca.

In total, RHPL has approximately 121,915 square feet of space in its physical branches:

Table 3: Existing RHPL Branches

Branch Name	Year Opened	Branch Size	Collection Size	Weekly Hours of Operation
Central Branch 1 Atkinson Street	1993	82,315 ft ² *	187,870 items	66.5 hours
Oak Ridges Branch 34 Regatta Road	2019	19,300 ft ²	74,198 items	64 hours
Richmond Green Branch 1 William F Bell Pkwy	2005	12,100 ft ²	43,807 items	55 hours
Richvale Branch 40 Pearson Ave	1983	8,200 ft ²	43,807 items	35 hours

* The total area of Central Branch is 107,515 square feet, which includes 25,200 square feet of space at P2, which, at the time of writing, is not being actively used for any library related function.

Today, RHPL is falling short of its space provision target by about 6,000 square feet. Forecasting population growth and future development as identified in the Official Plan, the deficit will grow to 32,000 square feet by 2032 and to 46,000 square feet by 2041.

Table 4: Business-as-Usual Projected Library Space Deficit to 2041

	2023	2032	2041
Population (Projected)	213,000	256,263	279,870
Existing Library Space	121,915 ft ²		
Service Level Target	0.6 ft ² /capita		
Actual Service Level (Projected)	0.57	0.48	0.44
Library Space Needs (Projected)	127,800 ft ²	153,758 ft ²	167,922 ft ²
Space Deficit (Projected)	5,885 ft²	31,843 ft²	46,007 ft²

6.1 Central Branch

Central is the flagship branch at 82,315 square feet, and is prominently located at the corner of Yonge Street and Major MacKenzie Drive, on a hill overlooking the south of Richmond Hill. It opened in 1993 and was designed by A.J. Diamond of Diamond Schmitt Architects and received a Governor General's Medal in Architecture Award of Merit. The building consists of four storeys, with two underground levels. The building is primarily constructed of concrete, and the south façade features a colonnade with prominent glass canopies. The branch contains a children's area, a small café space, large reading rooms and areas for collections, a local history room, several bookable program rooms, and office spaces for RHPL administrative staff. The building was designed to accommodate building additions in the form of east and west wings, and future fifth storey.

Issues and Opportunities

Flexibility: Furnishings at the branch are mostly static, which allows little opportunity for people to adjust their environment to their needs, or for the branch layout to shift and adapt. Mobile furniture, shelves on wheels, and adjustable tables are desired.

Children's Area: The children's area is large and well-used and provides an important amenity for families in Richmond Hill. The area is separated from other parts of the branch, mitigating noise travel concerns. The furnishings and design of the space could be improved to include shorter shelves and smaller furnishings, and to add more colour and a sense of playfulness. The existing location does not allow for expansion to outdoor space.



Figure 5: (top) The green spaces at the Central Branch provide an opportunity to bring elements of the library outdoors and reducing the presence of vehicle infrastructure like the circular drive pictured.

Figure 6: (middle) The Central Branch children's area features shelving at different heights. A small play space is pictured in behind.

Figure 7: (below) Computer desks in the Central Branch children's area.



Outdoor Spaces: Central Branch benefits from a large open site, with many opportunities to bring the library outdoors. The library grounds today are very car-oriented, with much of the site dedicated to large surface parking lots, which often fill up (there is also one level of underground parking, and an additional underground level that is not currently used for any library function). Access to the main entry is through a large circular driveway. The center of the circular drive is a small garden area which was provided in partnership with the Richmond Hill Garden & Horticultural Society (pictured on the front cover of this report).



Technology: The branch is beginning to roll out digital screens for catalogue search throughout the branch, but there are more opportunities to increase access to information through digital signage, including library news, information about programs, suggestions, and much more. Tablet lending kiosks are available. Central Branch has ample AV equipment that can be utilized for patrons, including livestreaming. While Wi-Fi is available within the branch, connections outdoors are limited. Some maker space technologies are located at Central Branch; however, there are no designated multimedia production spaces or innovation spaces.



Social and Gathering Spaces: Central Branch has a small cafe on the ground floor. Spaces to sit and gather here are limited. There are plenty of work spaces (tables/desks and chairs) and comfortable seating (individual lounge chairs) areas, but few are appropriate for socialization. There is an unprogrammed space on the third floor with a fireplace, but furnishings in this area are not conducive to gathering or conversation, and it is reported that acoustics in this space do not support louder or collaborative activities. There are program rooms on the second floor that can support louder activities and gathering, but they are often access-restricted and must be booked.

Figure 8: (top) The main entrance of Central Branch is oriented toward vehicle users over people arriving by other transportation modes. The horticultural garden in centre of the circular drive can be seen at right.

Figure 9: (middle) A small cafe provides food and beverage service to patrons of Central Branch. Seating and gathering options are limited.

Figure 10: (below) The third floor at Central Branch contains ample places for quiet study and work.

Cultural Representation: While the library continually strives to increase representation of Richmond Hill's multicultural community in its collections, visible representations of culture are lacking in the space, and there are few elements that acknowledge the site's Indigenous past. While the local history room at Central is a valuable space for researchers, it may not be representative of the full historical picture of Richmond Hill, particularly its immigrant and Indigenous populations. Further, access to the history room is controlled and feels exclusive, which may cause a barrier for people wishing to learn more about their community and family past. There are glass displays at the ground floor which host rotating art displays, often with a cultural context.

Washrooms: There are currently no universal, family, or gender-neutral washrooms, although changing tables are provided in both men's and women's washrooms. There is a desire for a dedicated quiet area for nursing parents.

6.2 Oak Ridges Branch

Oak Ridges is RHPL's newest branch. Opened in 2019, it replaces a 6,000-square-foot facility to better serve the north end of Richmond Hill. The branch is located at the corner of Yonge Street and Regatta Avenue, and is two storeys, including a children's play and reading area, program and meeting rooms, a teen area, and a maker lab. It is LEED Silver certified.

Issues and Opportunities

Space Needs and Growth: Although Oak Ridges is a new branch, staff and visitors report that it has already outgrown its capacity. In particular, more opportunities for study and work spaces are greatly desired. Current study rooms must be booked in-



Figure 11: (top) Glass displays at the entrance of Central Branch showcase rotating art collections and installations with cultural significance.

Figure 12: (middle) The roof level of Central Branch was designed to accommodate a future expansion. Views southward look over much of Richmond Hill.

Figure 13: (bottom) A double-height covered entry plaza, inviting landscaping, and a large sliding glass door provide good conditions for an outdoor seating and gathering space at Oak Ridges Branch.



Figure 14: (top) The interior of Oak Ridges is bright, open, and inviting.

Figure 15: (middle) Small bookable rooms (shown on the left at the rear of the space) are available on a first-come, first-serve basis, and are often fully booked.

Figure 16: (below) Oak Bridges branch features RHPL's largest collection of maker space technologies and is staffed full-time.

person, and are often fully booked at beginning of the day. With the new secondary school planned to replace the Dr. Bette Stephenson Centre for Learning to the immediate north, it is expected that the influx of students will put great pressure on this branch to accommodate the demands for study and work spaces. It has been suggested that the library re-evaluate the amount of space dedicated to collections versus space for people and activity.

Sustainability: The building has received LEED Silver certification and contains many visible elements that promote sustainability, such as low-maintenance plantings, integrated rainwater management, and the use of mass timber.

Maker Spaces and Technology: The new branch features a dedicated maker lab including multimedia production equipment, 3D printing, laser cutting and other craft maker supplies, sound production software, and more. The teen area also features gaming consoles and a computer lab runs programs to increase technical literacy.

6.3 Richmond Green Branch

Connected to Richmond Green High School at 1 William F. Bell Parkway, the Richmond Green Branch is operated through a joint agreement with the York Region District School Board. It primarily serves neighbourhoods in eastern Richmond Hill. The library opened along with the school in 2005. The library contains children's areas and some creative maker equipment. It also serves as the school's library and is heavily attended by students.

Issues and Opportunities

Population Growth: Richmond Green is the only library serving eastern Richmond Hill, and new and planned subdivisions surrounding the library will continue to strain the library's resources.

Secondary School: Staff report that balancing the public library function with school use and student traffic can cause conflicts at times. The large, contiguous area can create unwanted sound travel throughout the space. The library shares an entrance with the school and does not express a strong public identity. The buildings are oriented toward the parking lot at the rear, with very little presence when arriving from Leslie Street.

Space Concerns: Staff at the branch noted that more seating space is desired by visitors, and that the 6-foot tall shelves are outdated, as they are not accessible and reduce visibility. Storage is a concern for this branch. During development of this report, the children's area has been expanded and reconfigured, however, staff had previously reported that the storytime space was too small.

Parking: The library and the school share the same parking lot entrance, but orientation to the area designated for library parking is not clear and results in a long distance between accessible spaces and the entrance to the library. Along with the parking, the site has vast paved areas with little greening near the entrance.

Partnerships with School: Opportunities exist to enhance programming in partnership with the School Board and students at the secondary school. Recently, students from Richmond Green Secondary helped design and produce a signature mural for the library interior in collaboration with Indigenous artist Keith Gattie.



Figure 17: (top) The exterior of Richmond Green Branch and its outdoor spaces lack transparency and greenery and do not feel welcoming. The main entrance is shared with the adjoining high school.

Figure 18: (middle) The branch has many tall shelves, creating challenges with visibility, security, and accessibility.

Figure 19: (bottom) Long study tables are used by high school students to study. A small program room and collections area for children are seen behind.



6.4 Richvale Branch

Opening in 1983, Richvale Branch is RHPL's oldest and smallest library branch. Within its current size of 8,200 square feet, it contains a small children's area, a program room, and a small solarium housing a reading area with comfortable seating. It is a single storey with a traditional pitched roof. An extension of the roof creates a canopy over the middle of the parking lot.

Richvale is considered an important neighbourhood amenity, and nearby residents appreciate the small-scale feel of the branch where the community can connect and get to know each other. Staff note that they see new generations of families visiting the branch over the years, contributing to this branch's identity.

Issues and Opportunities

Entryway: The entry of the library is located under the large canopy, leading to a small round vestibule. Staff have noted that the entryway to the main library area, with the prominence of the security gates, appears closed off and is not welcoming. Staff note that once inside the library, there is little space for merchandizing and the information desk feels closed off and too formal.

Children's Programming: While the children's area and programs are appreciated, there are concerns with noise travel impacting other areas designated for reading or study. The children's storytime programs are very popular.

Space Concerns: Staff at the branch noted that more seating space is desired by visitors, and that the 6-foot tall shelves are outdated, as they are not accessible and reduce visibility. There are concerns about lack of space for collections if reading areas are expanded and smaller shelves are installed.



Figure 20: (top) Richvale Branch is RHPL's oldest branch, with house-form architecture. Staff report that many people arrive by car to this branch and parking is limited.

Figure 21: (middle) Tall bookshelves and flexible furniture fill the main collections area.

Figure 22: (below) The sunroom reading area is a popular place to spend time, but direct proximity to the children's area leads to unwanted sound travel.

Staff also report that more storage space is greatly needed, as one of the program rooms is currently used for storage and cannot otherwise be used.

Outdoor Space: The library benefits from green surroundings, including many large mature trees located at the south and west of the building. These spaces, however, are not very accessible and are not designed to accommodate visitors or programs. A small outdoor space at the rear of the building is sometimes used by staff but is generally not in good maintenance.

Parking: Parking is very limited to accommodate staff and visitors.

Service Level: It has been contemplated to tear down and replace Richvale Branch with a new branch in the South of Richmond Hill. Consultation with RHPL users identified that they prefer to visit small local branches, and staff at the branch report that many families appreciate the space, and it is well-used by students at Charles Howitt Elementary School to the immediate south.

Electrical: The library is currently at capacity with outlets and energy infrastructure. There is currently very limited space for visitors to plug in devices, and outlets that are available are not conveniently located.

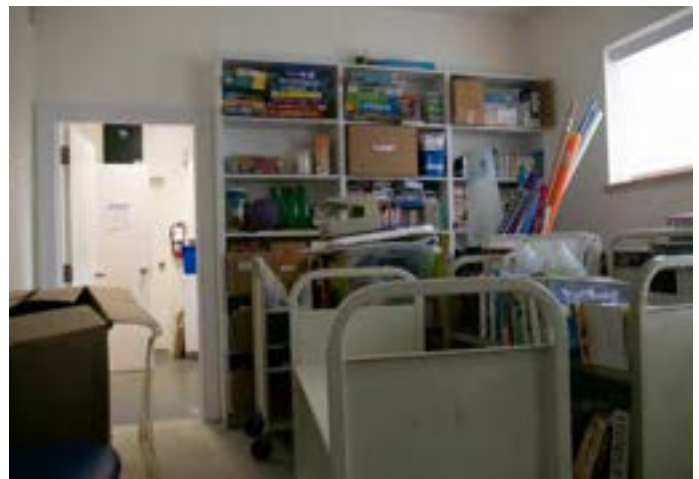


Figure 23: (top) The children's area at Richvale Branch is a popular for its storytime programs and as an after-school destination.

Figure 24: (middle) Multi-purpose rooms at this branch have become defacto storage areas,

Figure 25: (bottom) The outdoor green space at the rear of the building is quiet and features large mature trees, but is not well-maintained nor accessible to the public.



7.0 Library Development Strategy

7.1 Development Methodology

7.1.1 Service Level Targets

7.1.2 Branch Typologies (Library Service Model)

7.2 New Branch Opportunities

7.2.1 Potential Locations

7.3 Revitalizing Existing Branches

7.3.1 Central Branch

7.3.2 Oak Ridges Branch

7.3.3 Richmond Green Branch

7.3.4 Richvale Branch

7.4 New Spaces and Services

7.5 Sustainability Recommendations

7.1 Development Methodology

7.1.1 Service Level Targets

A space provision target is a figure that compares all library spaces within an area to that area's population. In 1991, The Richmond Hill Public Library Board adopted a space provision target for RHPL facilities of 0.6 square feet per capita. The 2013 Facilities Master Plan upheld this target.

Today, RHPL is not meeting its service level target. With Richmond Hill's population expected to grow rapidly with new large population centres being established (as set out in the Official Plan), this will require approximately 32,000 new square feet of library space over just the next 10 years in order to keep pace. At the same time, the municipality faces ongoing budget constraints with recent provincial policy calling into question how municipalities can fund community services. With this in mind, it has been determined that maintaining a target of 0.6 square feet per capita is appropriate during the time horizon of this Facilities Master Plan and represents a target that is acceptable and achievable.

At the same time, there is a growing demand for libraries to fulfill the role of the community hub (see Section 4.0), with new types of spaces focused on technology, programming, and socializing. Additionally, more recent building code requirements call for additional spaces to ensure buildings are meeting AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) requirements. As part of the modern vision for RHPL, "Yes, at the library" means that libraries offer unique, destination experiences that are innovative and technologically sophisticated, and new large program spaces, for example, event rooms, exhibition halls, and/or theatre spaces.

Ongoing research from the Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario (ARUPLO) and the Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS) align with these trends, generally recommending that library services should now be targeting between 0.8 and 1.25 square feet per capita.

To quote ARUPLO's Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems¹, "library facilities should be developed to meet local community needs, library service strategies, projected populations and compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, building standards, other regulations and municipal policies." ARUPLO recommends a target of 1.0 square foot per capita to meet these needs.

¹ Administrators of Rural and Urban Public Libraries of Ontario. 2017. Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems. 3rd edition.

In the model presented in the SOLS's Making the Case for your Library Project², square footage targets align with three tiers of service (Basic, Enhanced, and Comprehensive), ranging from 0.8 to 1.25 square feet per capita for service areas with 75,000 or more people.

Other Public Library Services in the Greater Toronto Area continue to fall short of their service level targets as well, but some acknowledge the recommendations from ARUPLO and SOLS in their own strategic planning documents with some recommending new, higher targets in the future.

While imminent rapid growth makes increasing the service level target not realistic at this time, it is strongly recommended that RHPL consider increasing the service level target to at least 0.8 square feet per capita. Such a target would bring RHPL within the range recommended by the SOLS guidelines, and could make RHPL a leader in the GTA. As RHPL is partnered with York Region Libraries, seeing other municipalities increase their targets would lead to more and better service for RHPL's customers.

The space provision target is just one tool for measuring service levels and is commonly used as it provides a good basis for comparison against other public library services, but there are other factors that influence a library service's effective service level. Chief among them are: outdoor spaces (which are presently not accounted for in measuring space provision targets), which can offer invaluable passive and active programming space beyond a branch's walls; and geographic coverage — i.e., ensuring that all residents within a region have equitable access to library facilities. These factors should also be considered when determining an overall measure of service level provisions, and are further discussed in other sections of this report.



² Southern Ontario Library Service. 2010. Making the Case for your Library Project.

Figure 26: The Central Branch at the Vancouver Public Library features a public rooftop patio that functions as an outdoor extension of the library within an urban context. It incorporates local plantings and solar panels.

7.1.2 Branch Typologies (Library Service Model)

The Library Service Model describes how library services are disseminated throughout their service area. RHPL's current Library Service Model is a tiered model, with a main Central Branch supporting other Community and Neighbourhood Branches. Branch classification is generally based on the catchment area population, facility size, and the service tier. Service tiers — basic, enhanced, or comprehensive — describe the level of resources, programs, and services offered.

- **Basic Service:** Provides essential programming, collections, technology, and branch staffing to meet the needs of its immediate surrounding population.
- **Enhanced Service:** Meets the standard for Basic Service, with additional administrative and technical services to serve a larger geographic area and population. Typically includes enhanced programming and may include other civic service functions beyond traditional library spaces (e.g. maker spaces, language collections tailored to the catchment demographic).
- **Comprehensive Service:** Meets the standards for Enhanced Service, while providing other civic spaces services beyond the traditional library spaces (e.g. event and exhibition spaces, non-profit offices). Houses many destination services and specialized collections (e.g. specialized programming, local history collections, media production space). Typically houses all administrative staff for the entire public library system in addition to branch staff.

In general, this Facilities Master Plan update supports the tiered model, and recommends the addition of an “**Express Branch**” tier to provide a greater level of flexibility and access for Richmond Hill as it continues to grow. Express Branches will have a service or catchment area of 1.2 km, representing an approximate 15-minute walk.

Table 5: Richmond Hill Public Libraries Branch Typologies

Branch Typology	Service Tier	Expected Size	Catchment Area	RHPL Branches
Central Branch	Comprehensive	35,000 ft ²	2.5 km	Central
Community Branch	Enhanced/ Comprehensive	15–35,000 ft ²	2.5 km	Oak Ridges, Richmond Green
Neighbourhood Branch	Basic/Enhanced	5–15,000 ft ²	1.5 km	Richvale
Express Branch	Basic	up to 5,000 ft ²	1.2 km	

Express Branch Opportunities

Express Branches do not have a size requirement, but they are the smallest of all branches, intending to offer localized access and fill any geographic gaps in which it would otherwise not be feasible to provide a dedicated, permanent branch. They can be highly flexible and adaptable, being able to directly respond to the needs of their immediate communities, and can even provide mobile services, temporary services at events, or act as “pilots” to evaluate the demand for future permanent branches.

Express Branches should be quick and inexpensive to implement. In its most simple form, an Express Branch could offer pick-up and drop-off of resources ordered online to an underserved community, but they could also house small collections (such as bestsellers, or theme-specific books and media at an event), offer specialized programs, and even basic technology services. They should provide wireless internet access.

Mobile Branches



Mobile branches allow library services to provide access in locations that are not close to a physical branch or where physical barriers create access constraints to physical branches. They can also be used to provide thematic materials at special events — for example, showcasing Indigenous authors at events recognizing

National Indigenous Peoples’ Day.

Many libraries have bookmobile services that operate on a schedule. Toronto Public Library has two bookmobile vehicles that visit 28 locations throughout the City. In the summer months, Oakville Public Library operates a Library on the Go Book Bike program that provides access to mini collections and offers programming in different locations, such as outdoor storytimes or hands-on arts and science programs.



Clockwise from top left:

Figure 27: Library on the Go Book Bike, Oakville Public Library

Figure 28: OPL Express vending machine, Oakville Public Library

Figure 29: Kirstein Business Library & Innovation Centre, Boston Public Library

Figure 30: Bookmobile, Toronto Public Library

Book Vending Stations



Book vending allows for self-service access to materials in high-traffic public locations, such as community centres or rapid transit stations, without the requirement for a dedicated brick-and-mortar location or staffing. They offer a location to drop off returns, pick up

holds, and even to browse popular collections.

Oakville Public Library’s OPL Express Branches have been implemented in four locations across the City. Their Holds Lockers provide more locations for library customers to pick up materials after ordering online and to drop off returns. Browse and Borrow machines in some locations allow customers to browse and sign out a small collection of curated materials.

Semi-Permanent Branches



Express Branches can be used to provide interim access to library services in growth areas or to evaluate local demand. They can act as “pop-ups” in new developments or activate in-transition

areas by leasing out new or existing retail spaces. Because they operate in an existing space, set-up costs are much lower than for new branches.

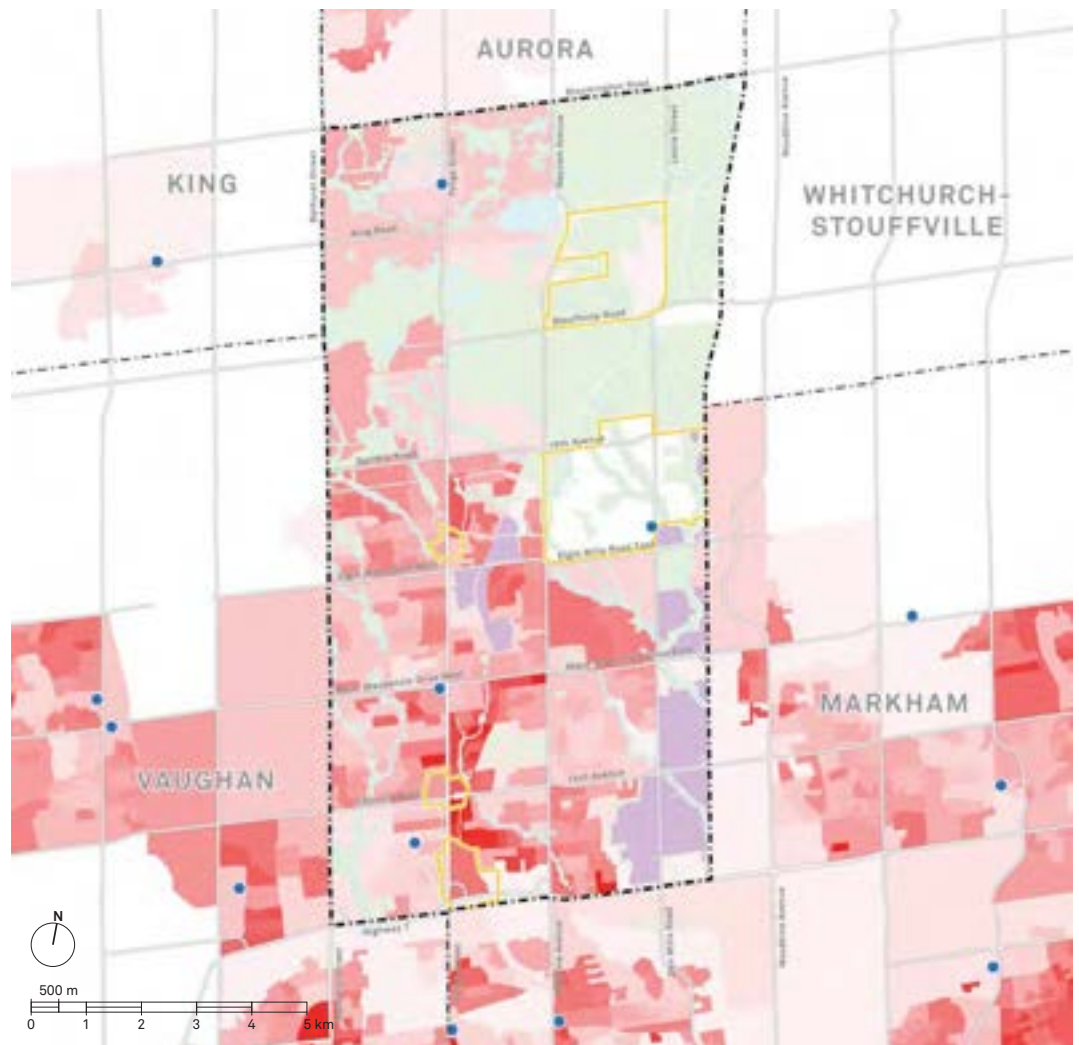
These small-scale branches can also become destinations offering specialized services. The Kirstein Business Library & Innovation Centre in Boston occupies a 5,000-square-foot space dedicated to entrepreneurship and innovation. It houses the bulk of Boston Public Library’s business-related materials and offers state-of-the-art technologies.

7.2 New Branch Opportunities

The Branch Typologies and Service Levels mentioned in Section 7.1.2 can be implemented in a number of different forms depending on their location. Following the Library’s Service Model, RHPL should ensure that new larger and higher-tier branches are located near growing population centres, with new neighbourhood and express branches being deployed to fill geographic gaps around the city. It is highly recommended that RHPL and the City of Richmond Hill work together to co-locate new branches with other community facilities, such as new fire and/or police stations, daycares, or community centres.

Figure 31: Population Density Map, Richmond Hill and Surrounding Municipalities

(data sources: Statistics Canada, Profile of Population and Dwelling Count by Dissemination Area, 2021 Census; City of Richmond Hill GIS Services; York Region Open Data)



In growing development centres, the City Plan 2041 recommends that new community amenities take on a compact form and be co-located with other facilities or with mixed-use development. RHPL and the City of Richmond Hill should engage with landowners and developers early on the planning and development process to secure sites and agreements for new branches. Where possible, new branches in growing development areas should be delivered in early phases of development to ensure that new residents have access to community facilities from the time they move in. Where new libraries are co-located with mixed use development, it is recommended that library spaces be provided as turnkey space with the necessary mechanical services to ensure development and delivery of new libraries is as efficient and quick as possible. This will require that new urban branches be designed early on with a high degree of coordination between RHPL, the City of Richmond Hill, and the developer.

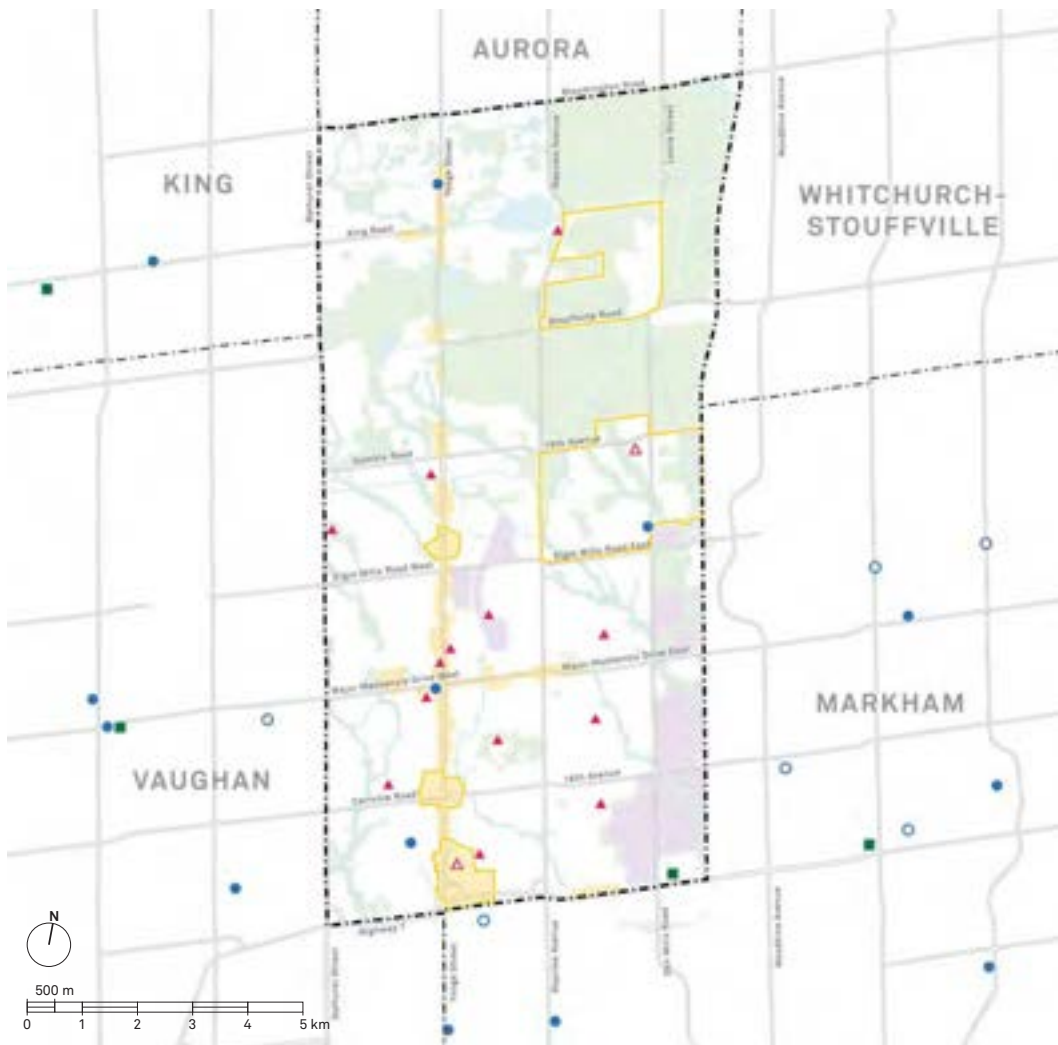


Figure 32: Community and Civic Facilities in Richmond Hill and Surrounding Municipalities

(data sources: Richmond Hill Recreation and Culture Plan, November 2022; City of Markham – 2019 Integrated Leisure Master Plan Update; City of Vaughan 2018 Active Together Master Plan Review & Update; City of Richmond Hill GIS Services; York Region Open Data)

- Legend**
- Existing Library Branches
 - Proposed Library Branches
 - ▲ Existing Community Facilities
 - △ Proposed Community Facilities
 - Existing Municipal Halls
 - Employment Areas
 - Secondary Plan Areas
 - Local Areas and Corridors
 - Municipal Boundaries

7.2.1 Potential Locations

Richmond Hill Centre

» [Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan \(Chapter 10, Richmond Hill Official Plan\)](#)

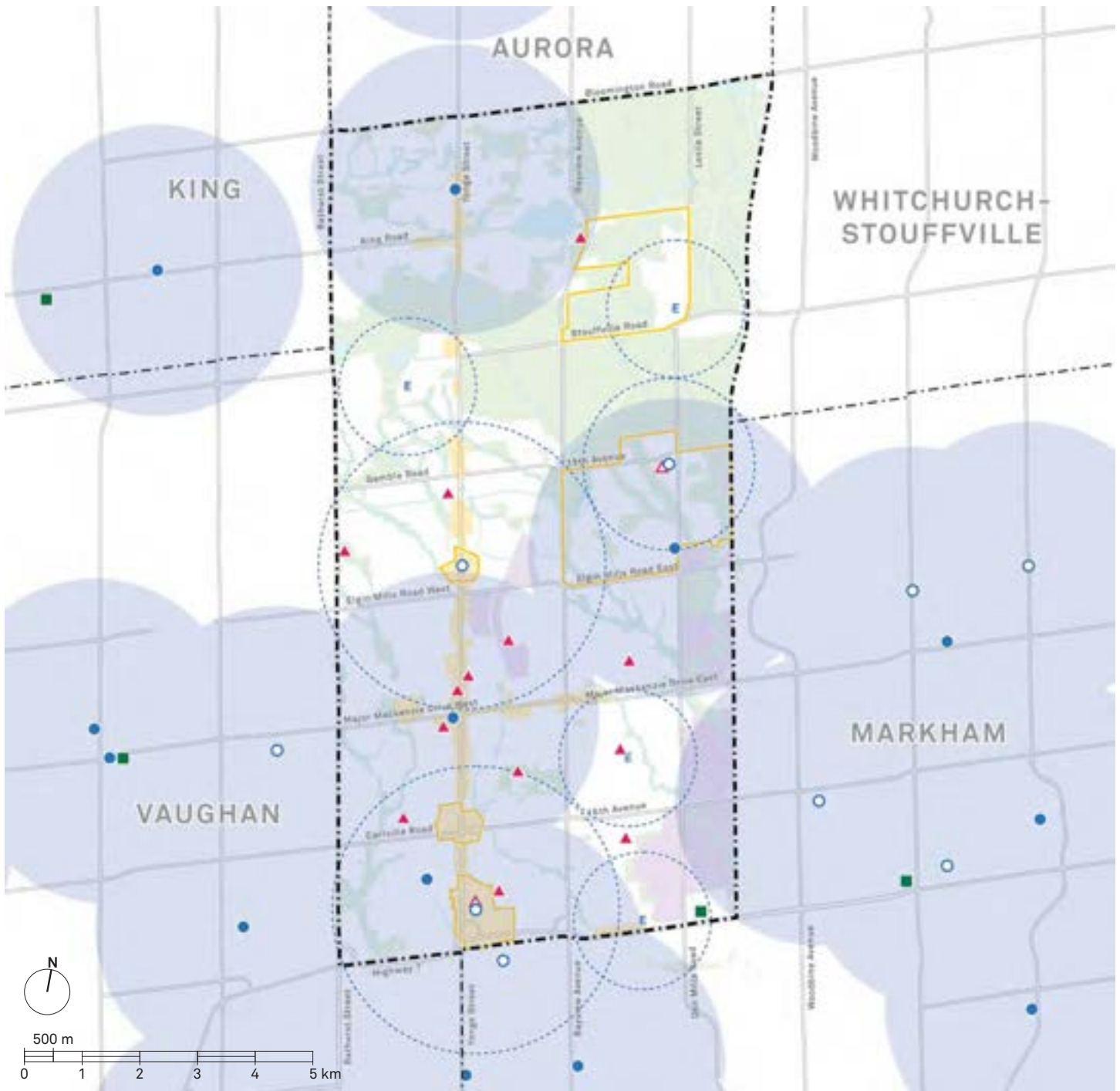
As identified in the Richmond Hill Official Plan and the City Plan 2041 Update, Richmond Hill Centre will be the primary growth opportunity in the city, providing a new downtown centre for the region. At full buildout, it is anticipated that Richmond Hill Centre will accommodate up to 51,000 new residents. The growing population within Richmond Hill Centre area will require new community amenities and services, including libraries.

Although Richmond Hill Centre is in the geographic catchment area of Richvale Branch, this small Neighbourhood-scale branch would not support the population growth expected. It is recommended that a Community-scale library offering Enhanced Service be located in Richmond Hill Centre.

Richmond Hill Centre is expected to be delivered in multiple phases over many years. In order to serve its first residents, it is recommended that a new library be constructed in the early phases of development. It should be located close to rapid transit (taking advantage of the new High Tech subway station that will be located centrally in Richmond Hill Centre) and be located near or with other community facilities. It is strongly recommended that in this highly urbanized area, new civic facilities be co-located with mixed-use development in order to achieve a compact urban form, such as at the base of a mixed-use building.



Figure 33: Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan Study Report (City of Richmond Hill)



Legend

- Existing Library Branches
- Proposed Library Branches
- E Proposed Express Branch
- Existing Library Catchment Area
- Proposed Library Catchment Area
- ▲ Existing Community Facilities
- △ Proposed Community Facilities
- Existing Municipal Halls
- Employment Areas
- Secondary Plan Areas
- Local Areas and Corridors
- Municipal Boundaries

Figure 34: Existing Library Catchment Areas, Geographic Gaps, and Recommended New Locations, RHPL and Surrounding York Region Libraries

(data sources: see Figure 32)

» [Yonge and Bernard KDA Secondary Plan \(Chapter 12, Richmond Hill Official Plan\)](#)

Yonge and Bernard KDA

The previous 2013 Facilities Master Plan identified the potential for a new branch in the Elgin West/East community (see Item 5 in Table 1 in Section 3.3 of this report). Being along the Yonge Street corridor and representing a significant geographic service gap between north and south Richmond Hill, a new branch as this location should be considered a high priority. The Yonge and Bernard KDA provides an opportunity to co-locate a new library with development along a major transit corridor.

The Yonge and Bernard KDA will be the third most intensely developed area in Richmond Hill after Richmond Hill Centre and the Yonge and Carrville/16th KDA. At full buildout, the Secondary Plan for this area anticipates between 10,600 and 11,300 new residents and will require new community amenities and services. Within this area, new community facilities, including libraries, are encouraged to be co-located with other developments to achieve a compact urban form (refer to Section 12.2.5 of the Yonge and Bernard KDA Secondary Plan).

Plans for development within the Yonge and Bernard KDA should identify and secure a location for a new branch early on in planning stages. Efforts should be made to locate the new library in the first phases of development to ensure that early residents have access to community services when they move in.



Figure 35: Character Areas, Schedule 1, Yonge and Bernard KDA Secondary Plan (Chapter 12, Richmond Hill Official Plan)

North Richmond Hill

Oak Ridges Branch, though constructed in 2019, is already outgrowing its capacity. Ongoing development of Oak Ridges Local Centre and the new Secondary School to the north will continue to put pressure on this branch. New development anticipated following the [West Gormley Secondary Plan](#) will further increase demand for library services in north Richmond Hill.

» [West Gormley Secondary Plan \(Chapter 8, Richmond Hill Official Plan\)](#)

The implementation of Express Branches in north Richmond Hill would, in the time frame of this Facilities Master Plan, help address the ongoing and incremental growth in these areas to service existing and early residents and address the existing geographic gap in north Richmond Hill. Opportunities for Express Branches in this area include:

- A mobile branch serving multiple sites within north Richmond Hill (and elsewhere in the City) on a rotating basis;
- A book vending station located at the Oak Ridges Community Centre and Pool; and/or
- A semi-permanent branch co-located with new community facilities in West Gormley and/or in developing areas along the north Yonge Street corridor.

Pursuant to ongoing demand monitoring in these areas, these Express Branches may identify potential candidate sites for a permanent Neighbourhood-scale branch in the future.



Figure 36: Development Concept, West Gormley Secondary Plan (Chapter 8, Richmond Hill Official Plan, 2023)

North Leslie

North Leslie is a developing area in east Richmond Hill, generally bound by Bayview Avenue at the west, 19th Avenue at the north, and Elgin Mills Road East to the south. The approved [North Leslie Secondary Plan](#) anticipates approximately 19,300 new residents and 3,200 jobs in a mix of primarily low density and medium density residential areas, with a new medium/high residential density areas at key nodes.

» [North Leslie Secondary Plan](#)
(Chapter 9, Richmond Hill Official Plan)

Richmond Hill's [2022 Recreation and Culture Plan](#) identifies a new North Leslie Community Centre located near the intersection of 19th Avenue and Leslie Street. The centre will be a highly multi-purpose facility and is planned to include ice pads, an aquatic centre, a gymnasium, fitness facilities, spaces for youth and seniors, and other multi-purpose spaces.

Co-locating civic facilities can achieve significant cost savings by reducing land costs, sharing facilities and mechanical systems, and splitting site servicing and construction costs. In developing areas, these co-located facilities quickly can become attractive community hubs. Co-locating civic facilities is supported by the Richmond Hill Official Plan and the Recreation and Culture Plan and the Official Plan).

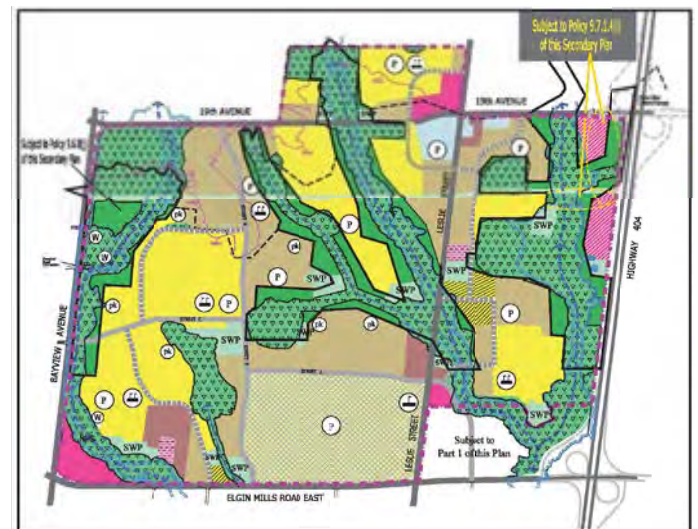


Figure 37: Land Use Plan, North Leslie Secondary Plan (Chapter 9, Richmond Hill Official Plan)

As planning for the North Leslie Community Centre is currently ongoing, it should be a high priority for RHPL to engage Recreation and Culture to plan for co-location of a Neighbourhood-scale library at the future North Leslie Community Centre.

While the Richmond Green Branch is located just south of the future site of the North Leslie Community Centre, the need for this branch needs to be assessed for further consideration. Ongoing growth in east Richmond Hill is already putting this area at risk of being underserved by libraries. A new branch located in North Leslie will serve new and existing residents and expand library access to east and northeast Richmond Hill.

Hwy 7 Corridor – Large Format Retail Space

Multiple sites along the Highway 7 corridor are designated intensification areas with many opportunities for growth. A new branch at Richmond Hill Centre providing Enhanced library services will be much closer than the next closest Branch, Central, but it would not provide coverage within a walkable distance, and growth in this area will necessitate the creation of a new branch.

In the short term, it is recommended that this area be served by an Express Branch. Opportunities include:

- A mobile branch that will be able to serve new development along the Hwy 7 corridor and geographic gaps to the immediate north.
- A semi-permanent branch that utilizes existing space on a temporary, leased basis, and used as a pilot to determine future demand and needed services in this area.
- Repurposing of an existing large-format retail space along the Hwy 7 corridor. While the size of such a space would likely greatly exceed the requirement for this area, utilizing these large spaces is a sustainable option and could provide a new, innovative type of library for Richmond Hill. A library of larger size and greater service level in this location would better address the geographic gap to the immediate north, better serve workers in the surrounding employment areas, and help fill a geographic gap in Markham, to the immediate south. Such large-format conversions have been employed to great success in other North American library services. Temporary in nature, these branches can be located in late-phase areas of development to provide immediate library service to new residents while a new permanent home is constructed as part of early-phase mixed-use development.

Yonge and Carrville/16th KDA

The Yonge and Carrville/16th KDA will be the second most intensely developed area in Richmond Hill after Richmond Hill Centre. At full buildout, the Secondary Plan for this area anticipates accommodating between 12,000 and 14,600 new residents. Within this area, new community facilities are encouraged to be co-located with other development to achieve a compact urban form.

This area is already covered by two existing library catchments, including Central Branch and Richvale Branch. New residents will have immediate access to comprehensive library services on day one. This KDA will also be within the catchment of the future Richmond Hill Centre Branch, giving it some of the best access to library services within the City. Therefore, the Yonge and Carrville/16th KDA should not be a priority location for development of a new branch. There may be demand for hyper-local library access through the provision of an Express Branch, pursuant to ongoing population growth and demand monitoring in this area.

Status of the Yonge and Carrville/16th KDA Secondary Plan

At the time of writing, the Yonge and Carrville/16th KDA Secondary Plan has not yet been approved and is in a draft stage. Particulars of this Secondary Plan may be subject to change.

» [DRAFT Yonge and Carrville/16th KDA Secondary Plan](#) (proposed Chapter 11, Richmond Hill Secondary Plan, April 2018)



Figure 38: The McAllen Main Library in McAllen Texas is a successful example of adaptive reuse of a former large format retail space into a library

7.3 Revitalizing Existing Branches

7.3.1 Central Branch

In 2017, Diamond Schmitt Architects were retained by RHPL to produce a Feasibility Study for the Expansion of Central Library (the “Feasibility Study”) to investigate an expansion to Central Branch and responding to recommendations in the 2013 Facilities Master Plan. At the time, it was estimated that an additional 17,000 square feet would be required along with a parallel initiative to construct a new Civic Precinct on the east side of the Central Branch, at the corner of Major Mackenzie Drive and Yonge Street. The two facilities would be physically connected and would benefit from space efficiencies by sharing new spaces. At that time it was expected that construction would begin in 2023, and conclude in 2026.

Since then, the Civic Precinct Project has been put on hold, halting planning for the Central Branch Expansion. In the meantime, the population of Richmond Hill has continued to grow, without commensurate expansion of library facilities.

As two separate but connected facilities, realization of the Central Branch Expansion does not preclude the delivery of a Civic Precinct, and the conceptual design as proposed in this Facilities Master Plan would require little, if any,

alteration to accommodate such a facility in the future.

It is recommended that RHPL proceed with plans to expand Central Branch. The expansion proposed in this report is generally in alignment with “Option B” in the Feasibility Study, including the full east, west, and rooftop expansions. More details are provided in the following sections.

It is recommended that the Central Branch expansion be carried out in two phases to satisfy more pressing needs in the short term. Phase 1 proposes renovations to the ground floor to make the library’s main entrance more accessible and

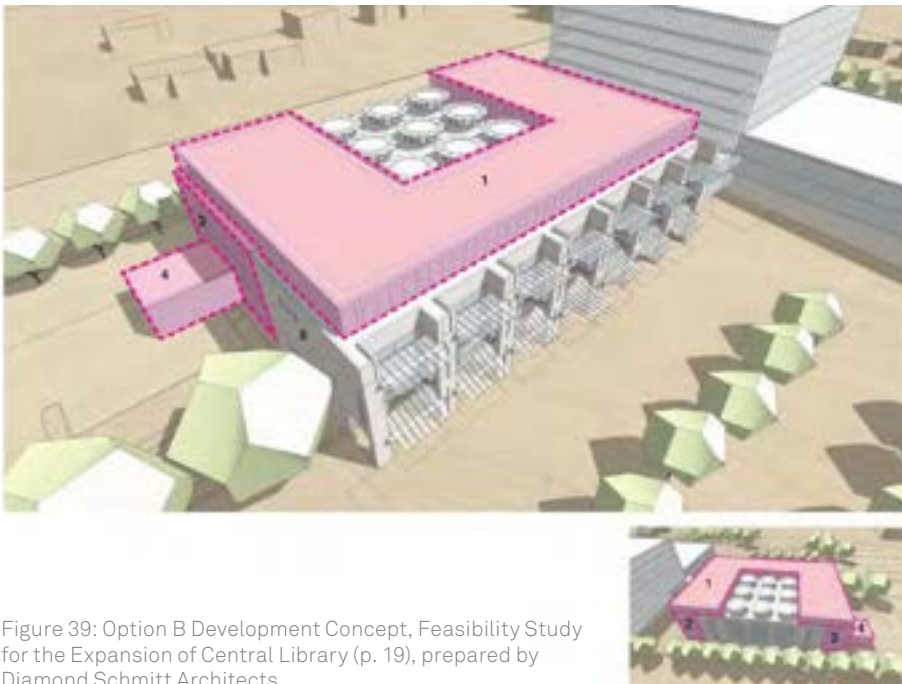


Figure 39: Option B Development Concept, Feasibility Study for the Expansion of Central Library (p. 19), prepared by Diamond Schmitt Architects

welcoming to more users. It will include renovations to the ground floor of the branch only, providing improved children’s areas (that will allow a future outdoor connection), and a community living room space with a café. As the ground floor is separated from the rest of the core library facilities, there is a great opportunity here to provide vibrant and engaging gathering spaces for the community without impacting quieter functions on the upper floors.

The Phase 2 expansion will complete the remainder of the Central Branch expansion, including new spaces that help to realize the library’s ambition to be a destination civic venue with state-of-the-art technology, unique experiences, and opportunities to gather, share, and connect with one another. Multi-purpose event spaces, co-working and non-profit office spaces, and other bookable services have revenue generating opportunities to support ongoing innovation at the library.

Phase 2 improvements also include significant changes to outdoor spaces to reduce the amount of space dedicated to vehicle circulation and create many opportunities for passive and active library programming in the outdoors. The design of outdoor spaces takes inspiration from Richmond Hill’s history as a forested area, and many design elements incorporate Indigenous Placemaking and opportunities for Indigenous-focused programming to make these histories more visible for all residents of Richmond Hill. These elements are large in part in response to opportunities identified through engagement with Indigenous Community in York Region. In addition to at-grade spaces, expansion of the fifth floor also incorporates a publicly-accessible rooftop terrace.



Figure 40: Conceptual renderings of the Phase 2 Central Branch expansion

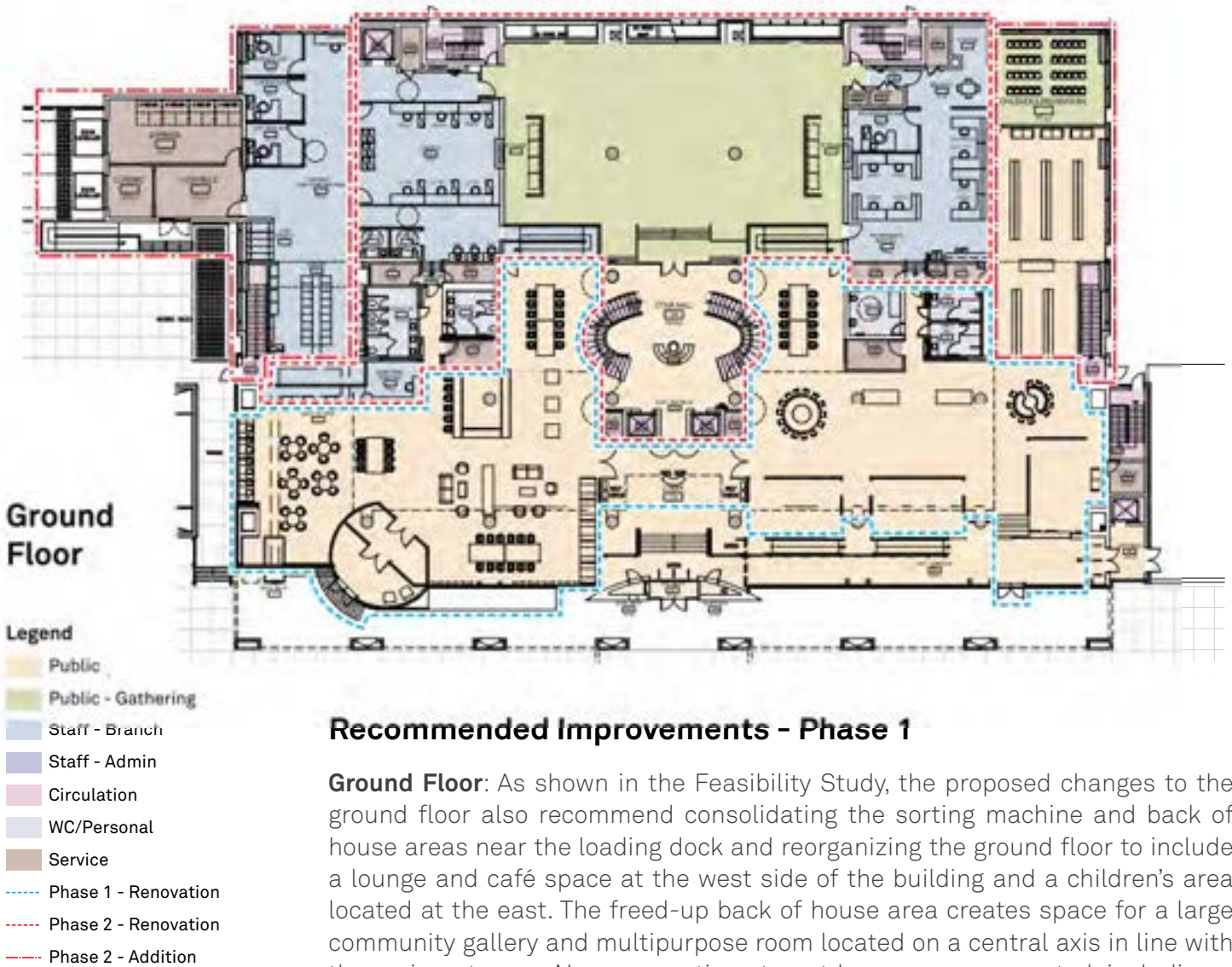


Figure 41: Ground Floor Plan, Proposed Central Branch expansion

(base plan source: Feasibility Study for the Expansion of Central Library; modified and annotated by Brook McIlroy)

Recommended Improvements - Phase 1

Ground Floor: As shown in the Feasibility Study, the proposed changes to the ground floor also recommend consolidating the sorting machine and back of house areas near the loading dock and reorganizing the ground floor to include a lounge and café space at the west side of the building and a children’s area located at the east. The freed-up back of house area creates space for a large community gallery and multipurpose room located on a central axis in line with the main entrance. New connections to outdoor areas are created, including a new accessible entrance to the west of the main entrance (adjacent to the new accessible drop-off and connecting directly to the new café and lounge), and a new children’s entrance directly connecting the new children’s areas inside to the outdoor children’s play area. The new children’s play area should include elements of exploration and discovery, with child-size furniture and shelving. Three small “houses” create distinct, child-sized play or program areas for young children.

Recommended Improvements - Phase 2

Site and Landscape: In alignment with the Guiding Principles of this Facilities Master Plan update (particularly #5. Natural Outdoor Experiences, which seeks to expand the library into the outdoors), reconfiguration of the Central Branch grounds are recommended, including a reoriented roadway and accessible drop-off, outdoor children’s play areas and storybook paths, and outdoor Indigenous gathering and placemaking elements, including a gathering structure and medicinal plantings. Many new trees are planted to quieter, contemplative areas that evokes the land’s original forested state.

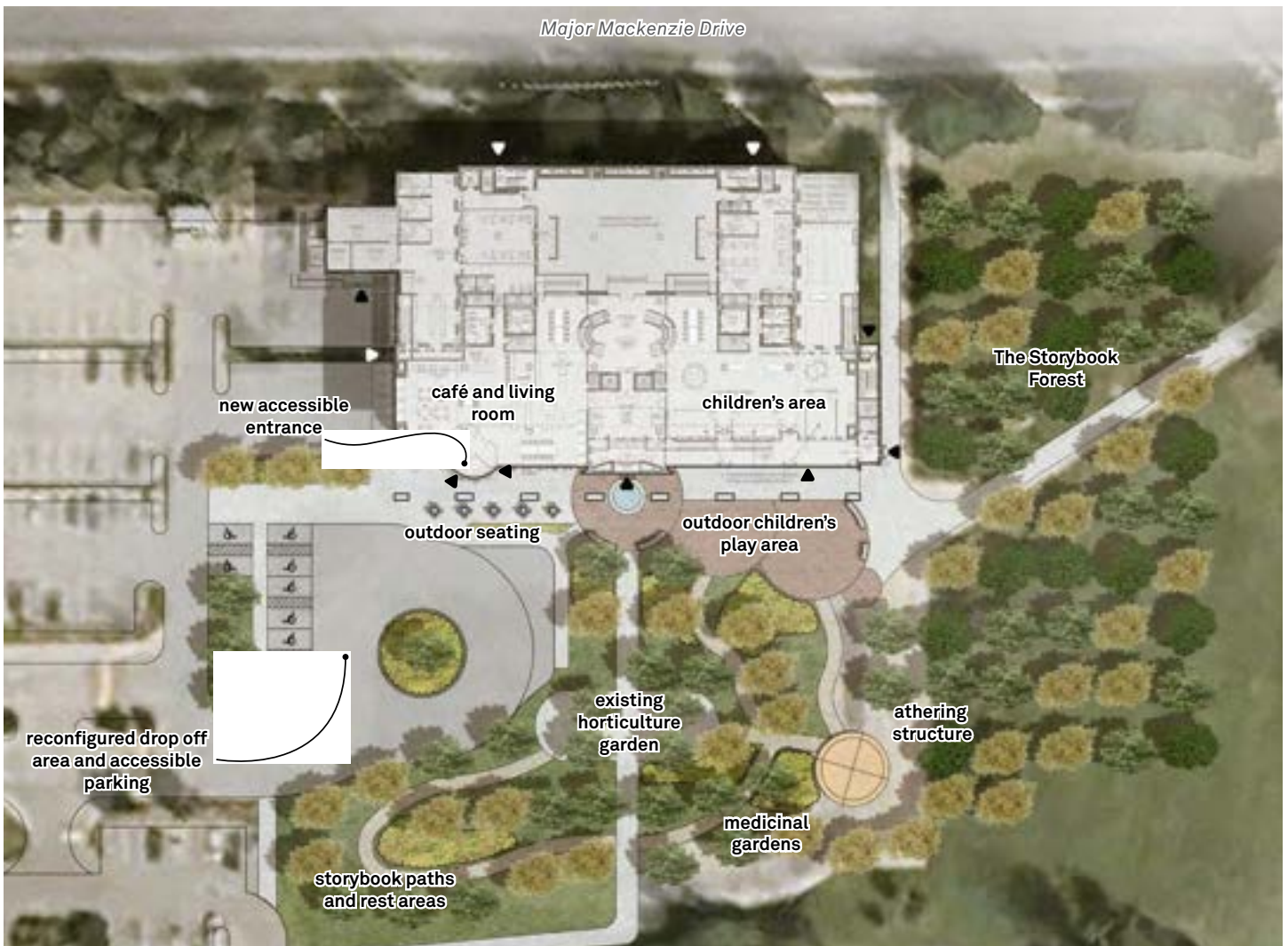
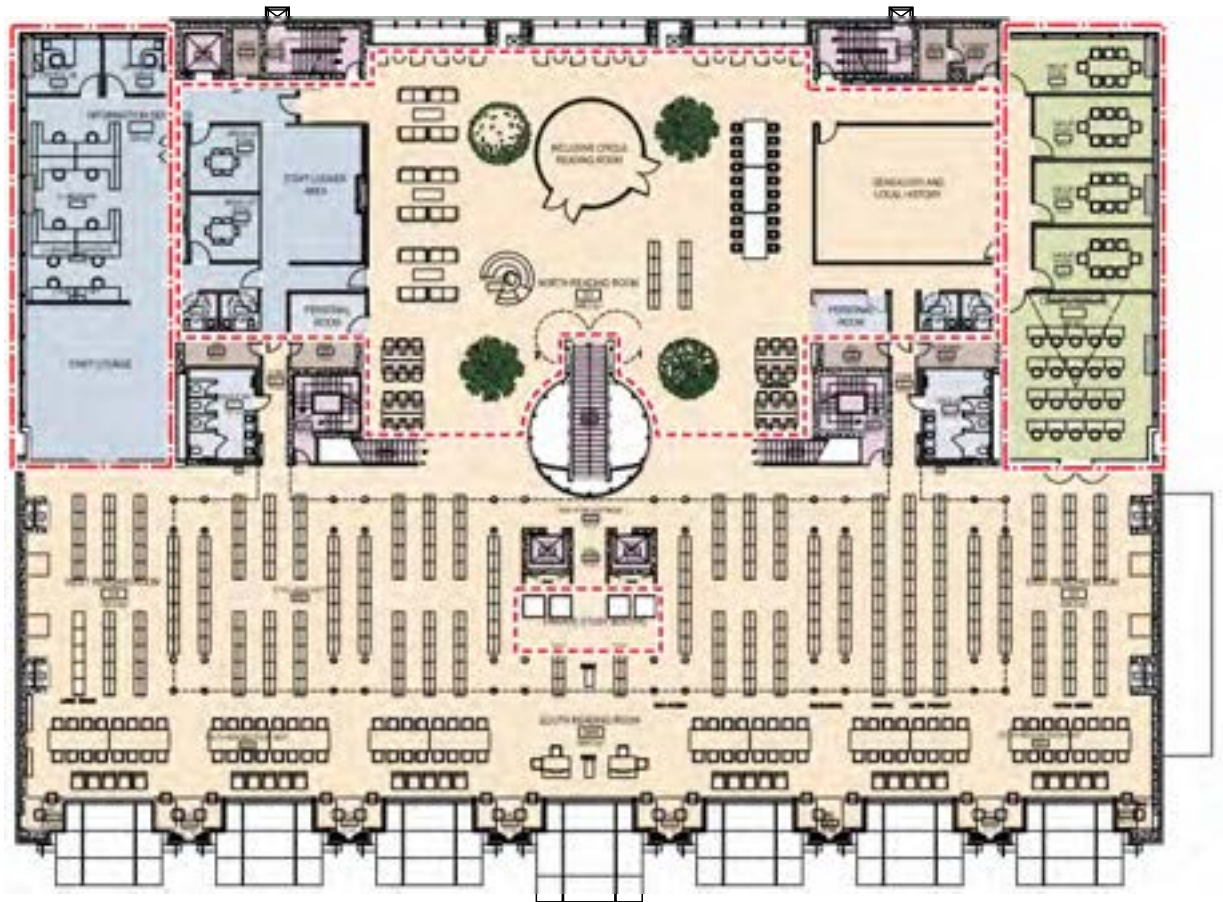


Figure 42: Illustrative landscape concept of the improved outdoor spaces at Central Branch (artists depiction for illustrative purposes only. Future design of the ground surrounding Central Branch will be subject to a future joint process with the City of Richmond Hill)

Although plans for the Civic Precinct have been halted, other City agencies have expressed an interest in utilizing the grounds surrounding Central Branch for other functions. The Site Plan shown above is illustrative of RHPL’s space needs and vision for its facilities; however, outdoor improvements to the site will be subject to a separate process held by the City of Richmond Hill, which is expected to begin in Spring of 2024. Plans to improve these outdoor spaces should involve direct engagement with RHPL. Engagement feedback gathered from RHPL stakeholders, customers, and Indigenous communities as part of this Facilities Master Planning exercise should be considered in this upcoming process.

Ground and Second Floor: Improvements to ground floor are completed as part of Item 4: Central Branch Phase 1 Improvements and no changes are proposed to the Second Floor. Additional circulation routes will be required to provide fire access; however, layouts of program rooms and circulation are unchanged.



Third Floor

Legend

- Public
- Public - Gathering
- Staff - Branch
- Staff - Admin
- Circulation
- WC/Personal
- Service
- Phase 1 - Renovation
- Phase 2 - Renovation
- Phase 2 - Addition

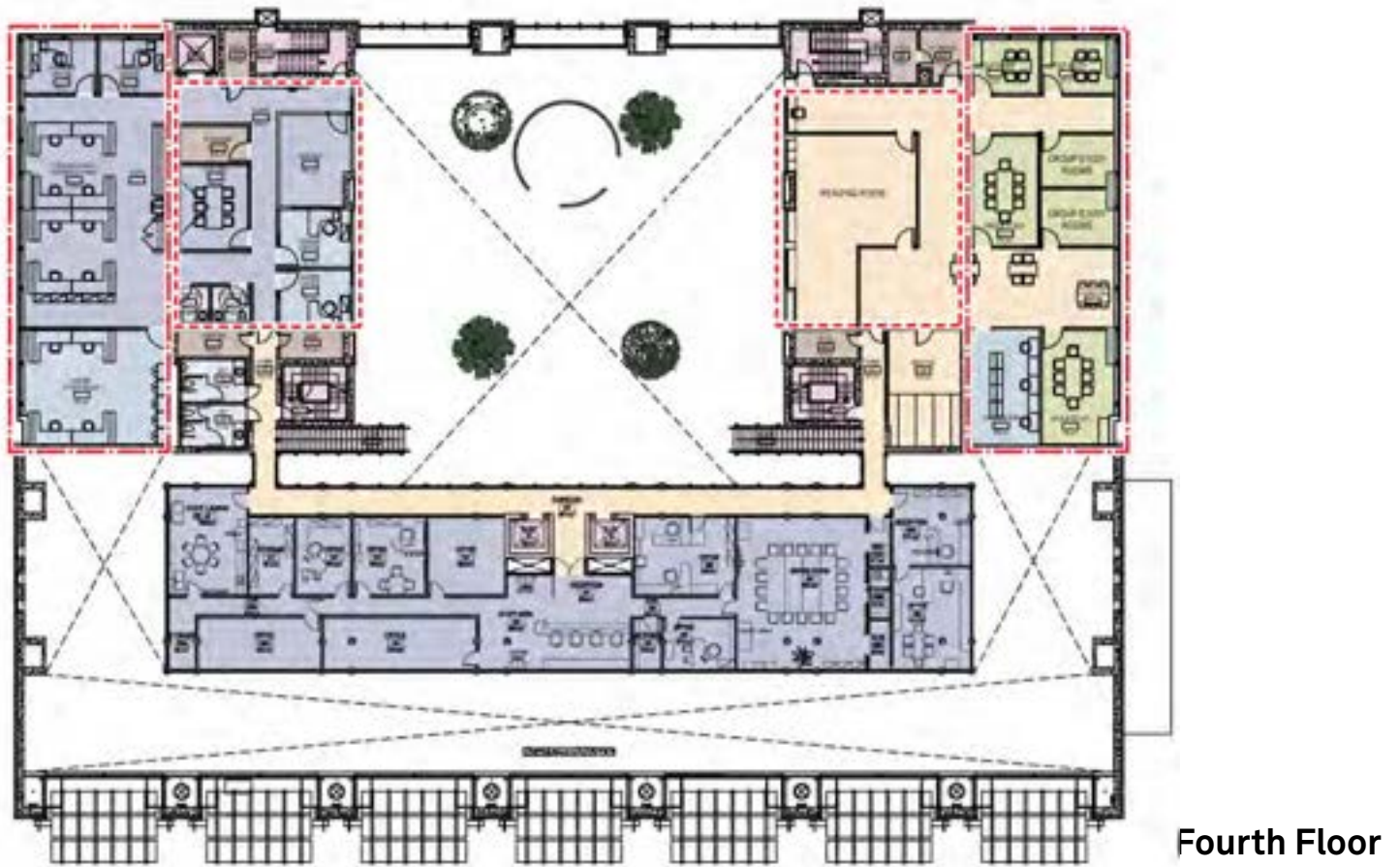
Third Floor: The new building additions create new areas for branch staff at the west, and additional group study and meeting rooms at the east. More group study and meeting rooms of varying sizes (including individual or double-occupancy “pods”) are located throughout the third floor. A prayer and nursing room are added on the east and west sides of the north reading room.

At the centre of the north meeting room is a new Inclusive Circle Reading Room, featuring Indigenous writing and art in a new permanent collection. To mitigate any perceived hierarchy between the new collections, the local history/genealogy collection is relocated to a new room at the east side of the north meeting room and will be designed to showcase the cultural diversity of Richmond Hill’s population and will contain culturally-relevant historic materials.

The four large columns in the centre of the north reading room are adapted to contain trees and greenery at their centres, creating a small indoor forest.

Figure 43: Third Floor Plan, Proposed Central Branch expansion

(base plan source: Feasibility Study for the Expansion of Central Library; modified and annotated by Brook McIlroy)



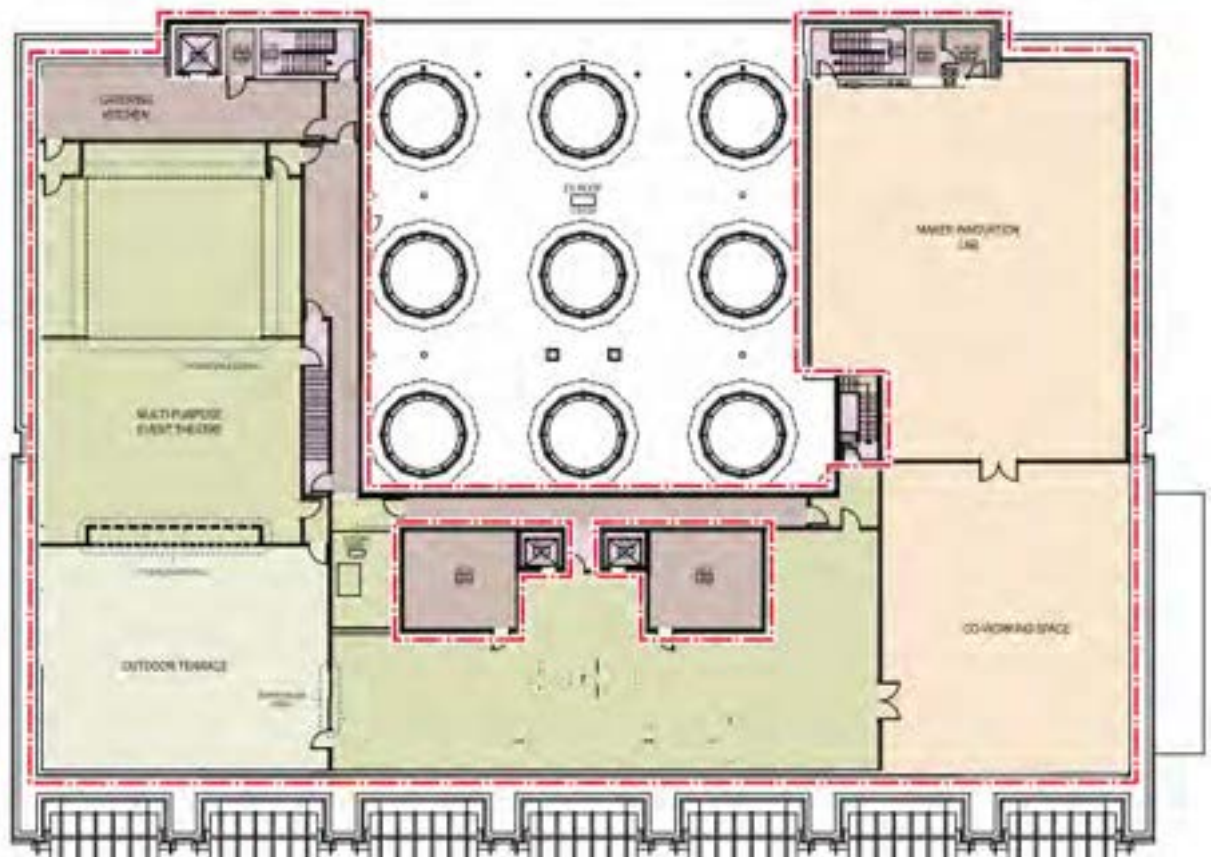
Fourth Floor: As shown in the Feasibility Study, the proposed changes to the fourth floor also recommend creating new administrative spaces at the west side of the building. Diverting from the study, however, the existing administrative spaces will remain in the central area of the fourth floor (allowing the roof level to be entirely public-serving functions). At the east area of the fourth floor, the former local history room is converted to a quiet reading room, preserving all of the original millwork and adding warm and comfortable seating. Soundproof glass walls will partition off this space and provide noise screening. In the expanded area there are additional individual study rooms. The archive, which has strict environmental requirements, is retained.

Legend

- Public
- Public - Gathering
- Staff - Branch
- Staff - Admin
- Circulation
- WC/Personal
- Service
- Phase 1 - Renovation
- Phase 2 - Renovation
- Phase 2 - Addition

Figure 44: Fourth Floor Plan, Proposed Central Branch expansion

(base plan source: Feasibility Study for the Expansion of Central Library; modified and annotated by Brook McIlroy)



Fifth Floor

Legend

- Public
- Public - Gathering
- Staff - Branch
- Staff - Admin
- Circulation
- WC/Personal
- Service
- Phase 1 - Renovation
- Phase 2 - Renovation
- Phase 2 - Addition

Fifth Floor: A new fifth floor provides destination civic functions and allows for almost entirely public use of the top floor, allowing for enjoyment of the expansive southward views of Richmond Hill. The new, modern addition will be able to provide all of the new state-of-the-art technological requirements to support a new innovation lab (including maker spaces, media production equipment, and entrepreneurial incubator spaces and offices for artist or writer residencies) and a new public-serving workspace (including co-working spaces and non-profit offices) in the east addition.

At the west, a new full-service destination civic venue can host graduations, weddings, community performances, and civic events. The venue will include the multi-purpose “Richmond Hill Room”, which can be used for gatherings and events, or as a reading room on a daily basis. It also acts as a pre-function room for a flexible event theatre, fitted with retractable seating and window treatments to allow for a “black box” performance space. The event theatre will include a retractable glass wall at the south, allowing it to fully open up to an outdoor terrace with sweeping southward views. All three spaces can be opened up to create a large singular space, or be closed off for smaller separate uses. Spaces for food and beverage services are provided, with the appropriate back-of-house functions located at the northwest, near the service elevator. Expanding to the fifth floor necessitates a rework of the northwest elevator, which may be upgraded to a freight elevator, if required.

Figure 45: Fifth Floor Plan, Proposed Central Branch expansion

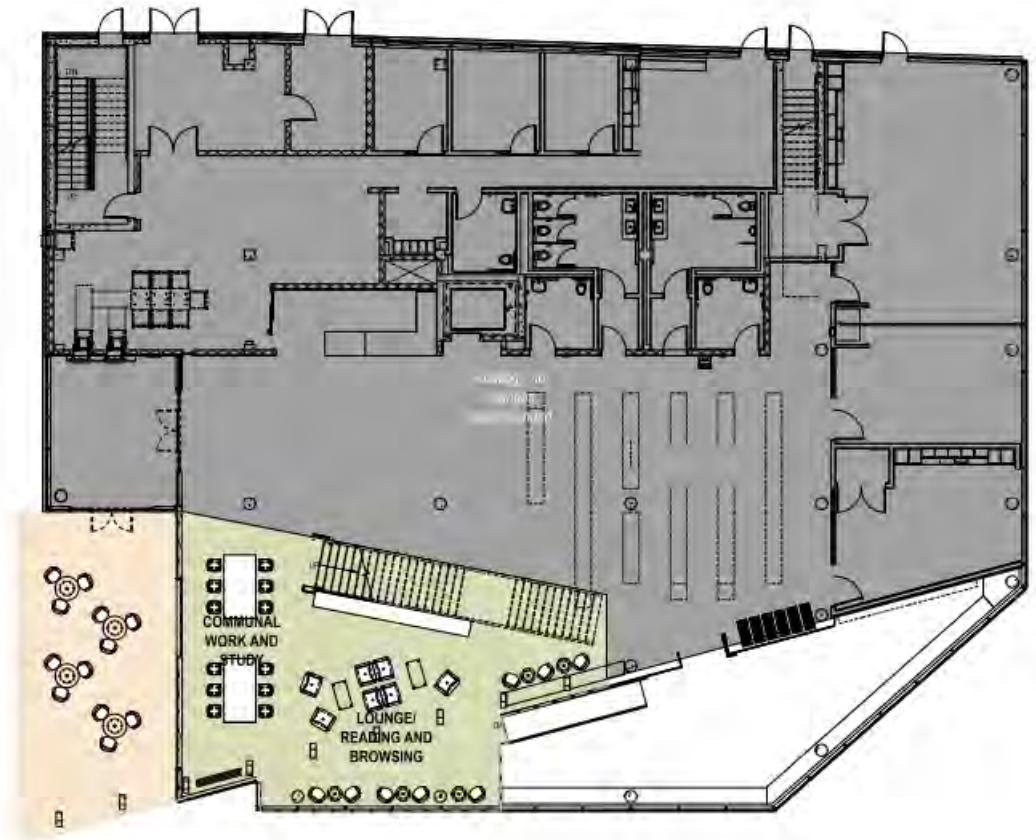
(base plan source: Feasibility Study for the Expansion of Central Library; modified and annotated by Brook McIlroy)

7.3.2 Oak Ridges Branch

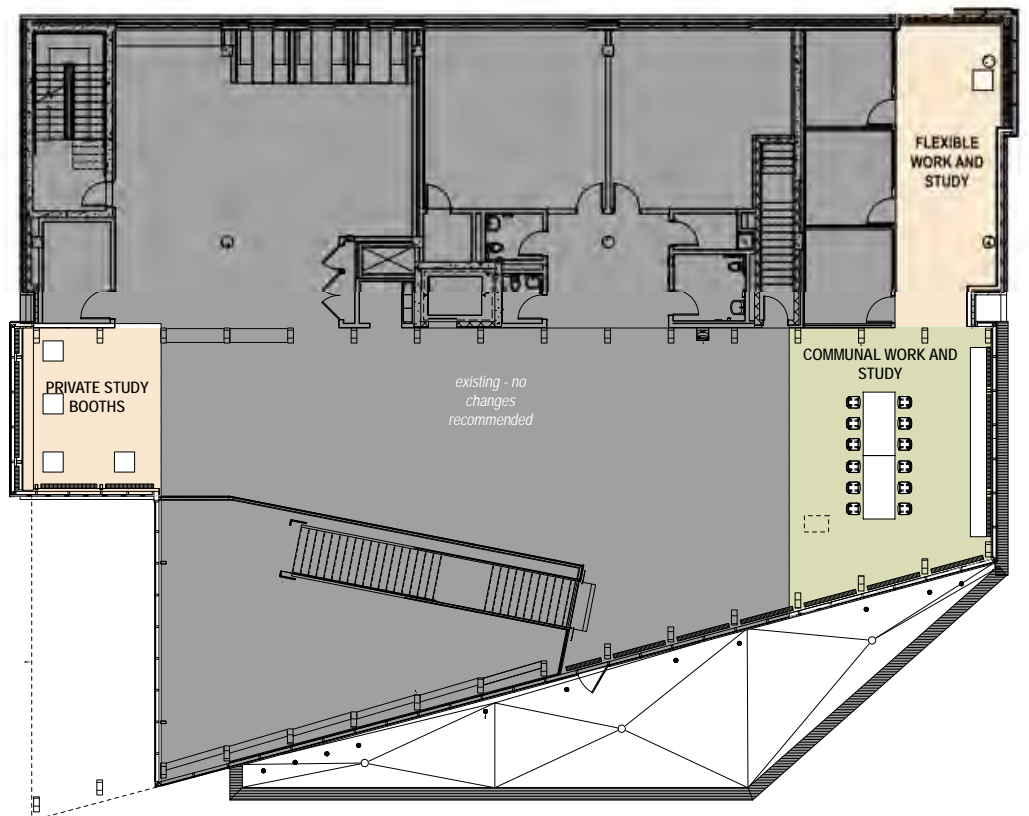
Oak Ridges Branch, opened in 2019, is RHPL's newest branch. Comprising 19,300 square feet of children's play and activity areas, program rooms, a teen section, maker spaces, a computer lab, and private study rooms, the branch serves as a community hub in northern Richmond Hill. Reports from branch staff and users note that demand for library services already has outgrown its size. In particular, more tables, study rooms, and quiet spaces are desired. York Region District School Board has approved funding for a new Oak Ridges Secondary School in the next 5-10 years. The new school will be located on the current site of the Dr. Bette Stephenson Centre for Learning, immediately north of Oak Ridges Library. As Oak Ridges is also designated a Town Centre in the Richmond Hill Official Plan, considerable population growth is expected in this area.

As the branch is very new, major renovations are not recommended at this time. Instead, improvements to this branch includes new furnishings that allow for more effective people-focused use of the space and flexible gathering spaces that can fulfill multiple functions. The most popular existing study spaces are located on the second floor in the teen area (which may not be suitable or welcoming for all users), and in the second floor private meeting rooms, which are booked on a first-come, first-serve daily basis, often being fully reserved for the day, early in the morning. The larger communal study table outside the meeting rooms is well-used. Informal, flexible tables will allow more opportunities for users that are not able to arrive early, and those who want a workspace on a more casual basis.

Ground Floor



Second Floor



Legend

- Public
- Public - Gathering

Figure 46: Floor Plans, Recommended Oak Ridges Branch improvements

Recommended Improvements

Short-term improvements are recommended at this branch to address the ongoing need for additional study and work space. New furnishings that allow for more flexible use of space and different study environments will help to address these needs without expanding the total library area.

Ground Floor: Improvements to the ground floor include creating a more accessible and engaging entry to the library. A variety of seating options — in the form of communal tables, smaller tables and chairs for groups of one or two, and comfortable chairs — is recommended to create a study lounge that can accommodate flexible uses, gathering, and groups. The lounge area may include an improved self-serve cafe, bottle-fill station, and/or digital signage and a catalogue search kiosk. During the warmer months, this branch can take advantage of the outdoor spaces to expand seating areas by utilizing the large glass sliding door in the lounge area. Seating opportunities and outdoor Wi-Fi access should be provided.

Second Floor: On the second floor, some existing furniture can be replaced with small, single- or double-occupancy freestanding privacy pods/study booths that allow for quiet work. Providing small spaces for one or two people will free up larger existing four- to six-person tables and study rooms to be used more efficiently.

While the above improvements can be made without impacting space for collections, if demand persists, it may be required to re-evaluate if collections space or seating spaces should take priority. On the second floor, a large communal study table can be provided if one row of shelving is removed. A new, fully-equipped maker space is located on the second floor of the branch in a separated room. It has been observed that usage of this room is not as high as expected, however, it provides a unique and valuable amenity to people in the community. Further promotion of the maker lab is expected to increase knowledge and usage of this space.

Ongoing consultation and monitoring is recommended to ensure that the provision of space for collections and the maker lab are effective uses of the space with the best outcomes for all users. Should the lack of seating and study space continue to be an issue, conversion of these spaces into additional study areas should be considered. RHPL should engage with the York Region School Board to discuss library needs for the future high school to ensure that sufficient library services are provided for both students and the public and so this branch can anticipate and plan for any changes.

» Refer to [Section B.1: Richmond Green Branch in Appendix B](#) of this report for further details.

7.3.3 Richmond Green Branch

Competition for space between Richmond Green Secondary School and RHPL's Richmond Green Branch have created ongoing challenges for this branch to serve both the student body and the general public effectively. It presently consists of a large open library area with many tall stacks, a significant children's area, and recently renovated study areas. Ongoing development and population growth in the vicinity area will continue to create space pressures for both the school and the library.

With recent improvements being completed at this branch, changes to Richmond Green have not been identified as a priority. It is recommended that ongoing monitoring and engagement take place to continue to assess the needs of both the branch and the York Region District School Board, as surrounding development will continue to grow and change the local population demographic, which may put additional pressure on this branch. Ongoing consultation between the School Board and RHPL should occur in the medium-term to continue to evaluate space needs and determine long-term strategic plans for the high school by the School Board.

It is recommended that RHPL create an "Express Branch" on the east side of Richmond Hill to help ease the pressures on Richmond Green Branch, and to begin planning for an eventual relocation. In the long-term and subject to the above ongoing consultation, it is recommended that one or two new Neighbourhood or Community branches be built in eastern Richmond Hill to eventually replace Richmond Green Branch. One of these branches should be located to the north along with the North Leslie Community Centre.

7.3.4 Richvale Branch

Opened in 1983, Richvale is RHPL's smallest and oldest branch, comprising 8,200 square feet of space for collections, program areas, and children's areas. It is an important neighbourhood branch for the community – it services many families, and in particular the children's programming is in very high demand.

Recognizing this branch's importance within its community, and RHPL's service model that includes smaller branches being supported by a central branch, it is recommended that Richvale Branch be retained in its current form and location. Indoor and outdoor renovations or expansions may be required in the future, beyond the time horizon of this Facilities Master Plan. Any future changes to this branch should create more flexible spaces for programming and reading, create more visibility for the branch within the neighbourhood, and improve its identity as a community hub.

Although parking continues to be a concern at this branch, there is little space for the parking lot to expand, although a few additional spaces could be added in direct proximity to the front door (to be confirmed through a future transportation analysis). It is therefore recommended that RHPL work with the City of Richmond Hill to improve cycling and public transit access to the site. Pearson Avenue and Scott Drive are designated "Shared Roadways" on Richmond Hill's cycling map, and access could be greatly improved by extending the dedicated bike lane on Bantry Avenue just one block west along Scott Drive. It is also recommended that bike parking at this branch be expanded and provided cover from the elements.

» Refer to [Section B.2: Richvale Branch](#) in [Appendix B](#) of this report for further details.

7.4 New Spaces and Services

When planning for new branches, there are important factors and amenities that must be considered to enhance the accessibility, comfort, and overall experience of Richmond Hill's public library users. In addition to traditional library spaces, the below recommendations should be considered when designing both specialized, destination branches as well as distributed services at neighbourhood or community branches.

Gender-Neutral/Universal/Family Washrooms

Universally accessible, gender-neutral washrooms allow for comfortable use for the greatest number of people. Universal washrooms are barrier-free and allow for ease of access for users with disabilities. Gender-neutral washrooms provide a more welcoming and comfortable environment for people of all genders whilst also communicating the values of diversity and inclusion held by the organization. Requirements for universal and gender-neutral washrooms include:

- A barrier-free path of travel;
- A door that is capable of being locked from the inside and released from the outside in the case of an emergency;
- A graspable latch-operating mechanism located not less than 0.9 metres above the finished floor;
- Provision of grab bars;
- Be designed to permit a wheelchair to turn in an open space not less than 1.7 metres in diameter;
- A door equipped with a power door operator if the door is equipped with a self-closing device;
- A mirror whose bottom edge is no more than 1.0 metres above the finished floor;
- An adult change table complete with a lift and sling of 600 lbs. capacity that allows an individual to move around the room;
- Waiting area for support workers;
- Accessible toilet, sink, soap dispenser, water, and hand dryer;
- Contrasting floor tiles to help those with a visual impairment to navigate the facilities; and
- Strategically located signage, at appropriate heights, indicating universal and gender-free washroom locations;

Prayer Rooms

Under the Ontario Human Rights Commission, employers, unions, and housing and service providers have a legal duty to accommodate people's held creed beliefs and practices. Providing spaces to accommodate different creed beliefs and practices promotes equal opportunities for everyone and enables people affiliated by a creed to fully and equally take part and contribute to areas like the workplace and services. Incorporating inclusive design principles in the initial phases of design development can eliminate the need for post-accommodation. Considerations for designing a prayer room include:

- Access to washing areas in preparation for prayer;
- Accessible entrance and barrier-free path of travel;
- Ramps and grab bars;
- Removable seating and space reserved for wheelchairs;
- Strategically located signage, at appropriate heights, indicating prayer room locations; and
- Rooms are not to be assigned to a specific faith, welcoming users of no faith who might also benefit from the facility.

Nursery Rooms

Nursery rooms offer a relaxing and private space that allows caregivers to provide for the needs of infants. Libraries are considered a safe space for caregivers to bring children and nursery rooms ensure caregivers are equipped with appropriate services. Design considerations for nursery rooms include:

- Entry doors equipped with a passcode locking system;
- Comfortable seating;
- Change tables;
- A washing station; and
- Strategically located signage, at appropriate heights, indicating nursery room location.

Sensory Rooms

Sensory rooms are a therapeutic space with equipment that provides users with a safe, quiet room to calm their body and decompress from over stimulation. Sensory rooms can benefit those users with vision and language difficulties, learning disabilities, and emotional disturbances. Considerations for designing sensory rooms include:

- Lack of windows if possible, or blackout curtains;
- Acoustic panels for sound absorption; and
- Inclusion of auditory, tactile, and visual components.

Technology

Each library network should have:

- Access to an Integrated Library System which includes public access catalogue of library holdings;
- An internet presence that provides access to Web-based information sources (e.g. information about the library, library catalogue, virtual reference services, government and municipal information, community information, links to other library collections, online databases), and provide trained staff to assist the public in the effective use of these information sources; and
- An active social media presence.

Each library branch should have:

- High speed, effective, reliable wireless internet access and public access workstations with high-speed access to the internet and online catalogue;
- The ability for the user to duplicate (copy, print) from the internet or online catalogue content or images;
- A minimum of three public access workstations. Branches that serve populations over 2,500 should have one additional workstation per 1,300 population;
- A variety of ways of accessing the internet, such as laptops and workstations for public use; and
- Access to reliable telephone service (cellular or landline).

Digital Signage

Digital signage is a low-cost, interactive, and adaptive method of delivering information to the library's users. Digital signage can take the form of kiosks or wall panels and can provide navigational information, scheduling, community bulletins, catalogues and other important library messaging. The content and style of digital signage can adapt over time and offer a tailored informational solution to its users. Considerations for employing digital signage include:

- Strategically locating displays around the facility at appropriate heights for accessibility;
- Monitoring and maintenance program for continuous improvements based on user needs;
- Branding, typography, and colour considerations for maximum accessibility; and
- Use in conjunction with comprehensive wayfinding program that allows users to easily navigate around the facility.

Digital Innovation Hubs

Digital Innovation Hubs offer access to technology, software, and workshops. A centralized location for fabrication and digital tools and technology allows users to create, experiment, and learn in a collaborative environment. These hubs are also a space where a variety of workshops and classes can take place that engage the community. While not every branch requires access to a full range of technologies, the library system should offer easy and cost-effective access to these services, as well as educational resources to support these services in the form of online resources or workshops. Digital Innovation Hubs may consist of:

- 3D printers;
- Computers equipped with design software and programming software to operate 3D printers, laser cutters, electronic equipment, and CNC technology;
- Recording spaces with access to mics, cameras, green screens, and audio and photography equipment;
- Sewing machines;
- Vinyl Printer/cutter; and
- Technology/Electronic kits (e.g. Arduino, Raspberry Pi).

End-of-trip Facilities

End-of-trip facilities are spaces that support active forms of transportation, providing services for those who cycle or walk to their destination. The provision of a dedicated space that provides

the necessities essential to active travel will further encourage activity that relies less on automobiles. End-of-trip facilities typically include showers, secure bike storage, changing space/privacy curtains, and lockers.

Sustainability Improvements

Planning for new branches and retrofitting existing branches offers significant opportunities to include sustainable practices in building design and operation and facilities contained therein. Appendix C of this report details the

strategic directions and associated actions required for more healthy, efficient, and cost-saving green buildings for Richmond Hill's public libraries. Buildings that use less water, energy, and natural resources will decrease their impacts on the environment and reduce operational costs.

Accessible Shelving

Incorporating low shelving in future branches is encouraged in order to increase accessibility to all users and provide clear sightlines across

library floors. Additionally, incorporating LED lights on every shelf is recommended to further increase accessibility. Shelving also offers a way to incorporate sustainable materials which can contribute to LEED status.

Local History/Genealogy Room

Local history rooms and collections include materials of historical significance about a specific geographic area. These collections can include the neighbourhoods and communities served by the local branch library, a historical community, or the City as a whole. Typically, local history collections contain sensitive materials that may need to have controlled access of specific environmental conditions; however, many libraries are taking efforts to make their local history collections more accessible to the general public, as well as expanding the traditional scope of local history collections to include Indigenous histories and immigrant histories. Considerations for providing local history rooms and collections include:

- Inclusion of a wide variety of formats and mediums such as books, newspapers, photos, maps, artworks, and digitized information;
- Advertise, emphasize, and showcase secondary sources and copies of rare, original materials;
- Ensure programming includes a wide variety of subjects, including Indigenous and multi-cultural history; and
- Increase accessibility of local history collections through wayfinding and location within the branch, or consider locating some or all materials in open, accessible collections.

Outdoor Spaces

Outdoor Spaces offer an alternative area to read and host workshops and classes, expanding the library's usable space and allowing program opportunities that would otherwise not be feasible in indoor spaces (such as those that are loud or may cause a mess), or may be enhanced through the outdoor experience, such as sustainability programming, land-based education, and/or

Indigenous programming. Ensuring outdoor spaces are equipped with flexible and fixed seating, accessible tables, shade, wireless internet access, power sources will encourage use and provide comfort. Views from interior spaces of the library into outdoor spaces will also highlight the natural setting, further encouraging use. Utilizing the site and outdoor spaces offers many opportunities to contribute to overall sustainability.

Mobile Furniture

The use of mobile furniture allows for adaptive spaces and flexibility depending on the programming being offered at a given time. Mobile furniture also allows for flexibility of individual or

collaborative study and allows a greater range of seating choice for those who require the use of mobility aids. Consider incorporating furniture with castors or lightweight furniture that can be easily moved around.

Enhanced Service Desk

The Service Desk at a library is one of the most important spaces in a branch: it welcomes people, helps them navigate, and provides them with information. Service desks also leave users with the first impression of the space they are entering. Historically, information desks have been designed in a way that creates a formal, transactional relationship between library staff and customers. Through thoughtful design of the service desk, both customers and staff can benefit from more personal and engaging experiences at the library.

Ways to create more meaningful interactions between library professionals and users through the Service Desk area include:

- Providing smaller, lower desks with multiple angles of approach;
- Flexibility in furniture design and reduction in scale to eliminate barriers between professional staff and users;
- Allowing for multiple staff members that interact with users for a short or long term consultation, including more informal areas for conversations to occur without individuals being separated by furniture;
- Providing appropriate and accessible queuing spaces with seating;
- Accessible storage for requested books, equipment and general information; and
- Information display (digital signage, maps, brochures).

Enhanced Merchandizing of Collections

Effective methods of showcasing library content facilitates interaction, circulation, and learning. Showcasing library content is not limited to the physical space of the library, and can also take place on websites and digital signage. Often, it is narrowing the focus of the display to deliver clear and concise information instead of overcrowding and overstimulating users.

Merchandizing also offers a way to engage with users and understand preferences, while also encouraging opportunities for visual creativity from staff and community members. Through visual organization and strategic placement of collections, users can effectively and quickly engage with library offerings.

7.5 Sustainability Recommendations

The goal of this section is to identify the strategic directions and associated actions required for more healthy, efficient, and cost-saving green buildings for Richmond Hill’s Public Libraries. Buildings that use less water, energy, and natural resources will not only decrease their impacts on the environment by avoiding embodied carbon and reducing carbon emissions, but will also reduce operational costs.

RHPL’s facilities, both existing and future, will need to adapt to changing program needs to better support both the social and cultural needs of its users. By reducing its operational and environmental impact, RHPL will be able to redirect resources back into the community and promote more sustainable materials and green infrastructure, thereby enhancing the public’s quality of life.

According to the Sustainable Design and Construction of City Facilities policy, Richmond Hill has committed that any new city building with a total floor area of more than 500 m² must meet LEED Silver standards or an equal level of sustainable design. The Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook released by the City of Richmond Hill also provides a set of performance metrics to encourage and evaluate the sustainability performance of new developments. Submissions are to achieve at least a Bronze Score. Although Richmond Hill sustainability measures only apply to new development opportunities, LEED provides operation and maintenance rating systems and guides to improve energy performance and indoor air quality for existing buildings. Therefore, there are opportunities for all RHPL sites to decrease their carbon footprint and positively affect the health and wellness of their users.



There are many opportunities for RHPL to improving sustainability outcomes when it comes to construction, upgrades, and operation of its facilities. A detailed study on areas for improvement, including Energy and Carbon, Mobility, Health, Wellness, and Greening, and Water Management. are described in detail in Appendix C. References to relevant Richmond Hill Sustainability Program Guidebook areas are also identified.



8.0 Implementation

8.1 Development Recommendations

8.2 Funding Opportunities and Capital Cost Estimate

8.2.1 Funding Methods

8.2.2 Capital Cost Estimate

8.1 Development Recommendations

The time horizon for recommendations in this Facilities Master Plan extends to 2041, and focuses on short- and medium- term improvements over the next twenty years. As Richmond Hill expects significant and sustained population growth for the next several decades (as illustrated by development projections included in the Official Plan), it is important to ensure that future library sites are considered. While outside the time horizon of this Facilities Master Plan, additional recommendations are also provided to address long-term planning considerations beyond 2041.

Keeping with the recommendation to maintain a service level target of 0.6 ft²/capita, RHPL's has an existing space provision deficit of nearly 6,000 square feet. By 2032, it is projected that the deficit will increase to 31,843 square feet, and by 2041, to 46,007 square feet (see Table 6, below).

Table 6: Projected Library Space Deficit to 2041 with 0.6 ft²/capita Space Provision Target

	2023	2032	2041
Population (Projected)	213,000	256,263	279,870
Existing Library Space	121,915 ft ²		
Service Level Target	0.6 ft ² /capita		
Library Space Needs	127,800 ft ²	153,758 ft ²	167,922 ft ²
Space Deficit	5,885 ft ²	31,843 ft ²	46,007 ft ²

The library development strategy proposes a combination of renovations to existing branches, newly constructed branches, and new express branches in order to achieve the service level target in line with ongoing population growth. Details on recommended actions are provided in the next section of this report. Further research into real estate and lease opportunities, building feasibility studies, design and program studies, and further consultation will be required.

Library facilities in Richmond Hill are typically funded through Development Charges (as defined by the Development Charges Act), which, at the time of this report, are under review for the next nine-year funding cycle (to 2032). Table 7, at right, outlines estimated capital costs in alignment with this funding cycle. Recommendations for the remainder of this Facilities Master Plan time horizon (to 2041) are shown in Table 8, and will be subject to a further costing exercise at a later date.

Table 7: Development Recommendations - 2023–2032

Recommended Action	Extent of Development	Timing	Est. Capital Cost*
<p>1 Make improvements to indoor and outdoor spaces at Oak Ridges Branch to address immediate need for more study space.</p> <p>Ongoing monitoring of space needs at Oak Ridges in anticipation of the future Secondary School (expected to be delivered in the next 5-10 years).</p>	Furnishings only	2024	\$228,500
<p>2 Deliver a new Community Branch offering Enhanced service in coordination with future development at the Yonge and Bernard KDA.</p>	New Construction: 22,000 ft ²	2024-2032	\$19,342,000
<p>3 Deliver a new Neighbourhood Branch offering Basic to Enhanced Service co-located with the upcoming North Leslie Community Centre while assessing the need for Richmond Green Branch.</p>	New Construction: 15,000 ft ²	2024-2032	\$13,188,000
<p>4 Proceed with Phase 1 of Central Branch revitalization plans, including refresh and reorganization of the ground floor children's area and café/lounge area.</p>	Renovation: 11,000 ft ²	2024-2032	\$4,098,000
<p>5 Deliver a mobile branch that can provide as-needed services in underserved areas and attend events to create greater visibility for the library.</p> <p>Delivery of this mobile branch should be part of a larger strategy to address geographic gaps in the north and east of Richmond Hill through the implementation of Express Branches.</p>	Purchase of Bookmobile	2024-2032	\$600,000
TOTAL			\$37,456,000

Table 8: Development Recommendations - 2033–2041

Recommended Action	Extent of Development	Timing
<p>6 Deliver Phase 1 of a new Community Branch offering Enhanced or Comprehensive Service in coordination with future development at Richmond Hill Centre.</p>	New Construction: 35,000 ft ²	2033-2041
<p>7 Deliver two new Express Branches. The form of these branches (vending, mobile, or storefront) will depend on outcomes of the plan developed in Item 5.</p> <p>Continue to explore opportunities for Express Branches and mobile options to address geographic and capacity gaps throughout Richmond Hill.</p>	Renovation: 10,000 ft ²	2033-2041
<p>8 Complete the Phase 2 at Central Branch, including interior renovations and construction of the new east and west wings and fifth storey, as well as outdoor improvements (extent and design to be determined through a joint process with the City of Richmond Hill)</p>	New Construction/ Addition: 28,000 ft ² Renovation: 15,000 ft ²	2033-2041

8.2 Funding Opportunities and Capital Cost Estimate

8.2.1 Alternative Funding and Facility Delivery Methods

Development Charges (DCs)

Development Charges are fees collected from developers at the time a building permit to help pay for the cost of infrastructure required to provide municipal services such as library services.

Historically, new libraries, major improvements, and new collections materials have primarily been funded through Development Charges, which are allocated through a Capital Planning process. The Capital Budget allocation is typically based on previous years' levels of service.

Community Benefits Charges (CBCs)

Community Benefit Contributions are another method by which a municipality can fund facilities, infrastructure, public spaces, and other growth-associated improvements. CBCs can be delivered as cash, or in-kind. They work alongside Development Charges to ensure that municipalities have the resources to provide complete communities.

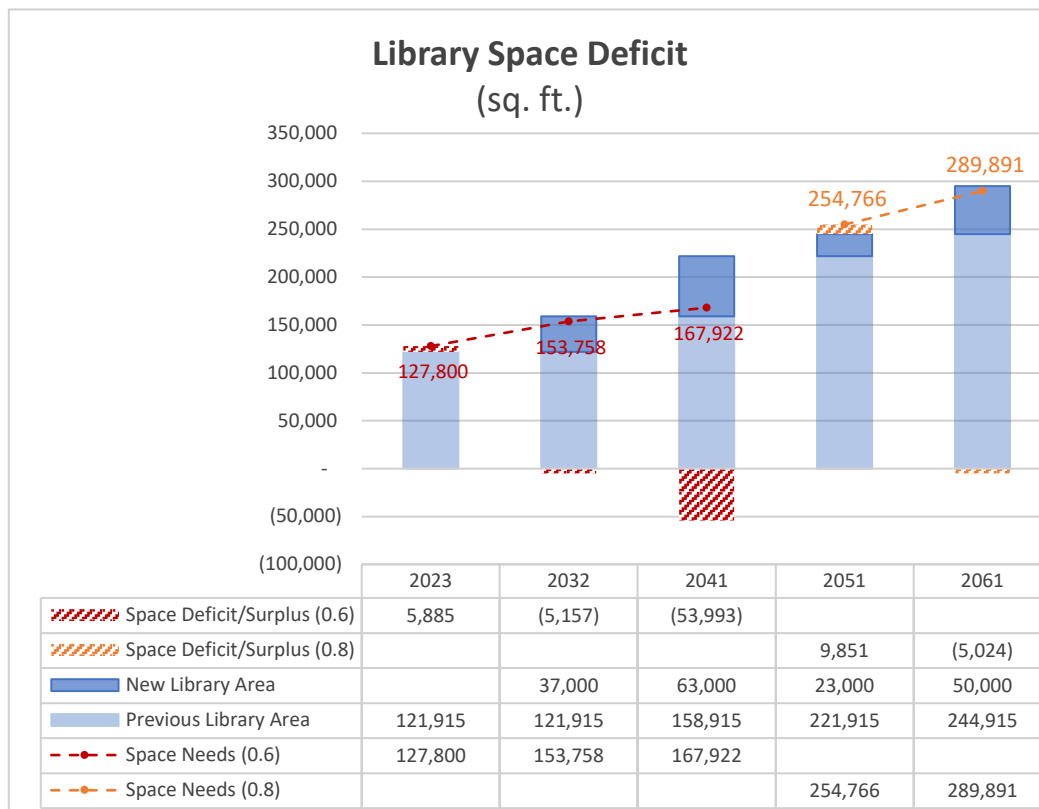
Typically, benefits can be funded through DCs or through CBCs, but cannot be funded through both. While historically, Richmond Hill has only used DCs to fund library facilities, CBCs have been used to fund libraries elsewhere in the GTA in certain circumstances.

Facilities in Mixed-use Development

In alignment with the Official Plan direction to co-locate future community facilities, libraries can also be provided within mixed-use development, and can be excellent ground floor uses that activate the public realm and provide a common community hub within urban areas. When community facilities, such as libraries, are provided as part of a private development, they are often negotiated as in lieu of DCs or CBCs, but can also be purchased by the municipality. Such facilities are stratified within development, meaning the City will retain full ownership of the facility

Table 9: Projected Library Space Deficit/Surplus, Recommended Actions

No.		Actions <u>within</u> this FMP timeline			Actions <u>beyond</u> this FMP timeline	
		2023	2032	2041	2051	2061
	Population (Projected)	213,000	256,263	279,870	318,457	362,364
	Existing Library Space (ft2)	121,915				
	Service Level Target (ft2/capita)	0.6			0.8	
	Library Space Needs (ft2)	127,800	153,758	167,922	254,766	289,891
	“Business as Usual” Space Deficit (ft2)	5,885	31,843	46,007	132,851	167,976
1	Oak Ridges Branch - New Furnishings					
2	Yonge + Bernard KDA Branch		22,000			
3	North Leslie Community Centre Branch		15,000			
4	Central Branch Expansion - Phase 1					
5	Express Branch - Bookmobile or Vending Option					
6	Richmond Hill Centre Branch			35,000		
7	Express Branches x 2					
8	Central Branch Expansion - Phase 2 + Outdoor			28,000		
	Richvale Branch Expansion				3,000	
	New Neighbourhood/Community Branch 1				20,000	
	New Neighbourhood/Community Branch 2					25,000
	New Neighbourhood/Community Branch 3					25,000
	“Recommended Actions” Space Deficit (ft2)	5,885	(5,157)	(53,993)	9,851	(5,024)



Case Study: Toronto Public Library, Perth/Dupont Branch Relocation



Figure 47: Toronto Public Library's Perth/Dupont Branch

The new Perth/Dupont Branch will be one of the first of Toronto Public Library's (TPL) first facilities that is physically co-located within a mixed-use building. The 10,000 ft² branch will take up most of the at-grade retail space in the new building.

Through an agreement between the City of Toronto, TPL, and the developer, this branch will be delivered as an in-kind benefit under the development's Community Benefits Charges obligation. The building is stratified, meaning that TPL will retain outright ownership of the space, rather than operating through a lease agreement. Reciprocal operating agreements have been put in place to deal with ongoing maintenance, repairs, snow removal, and other maintenance and operations requirements.

At the time of this report, the expected construction cost for new libraries in the GTA are up to \$850 per square foot. By receiving the library as an in-kind benefit, planned from the outset and constructed by the developer, TPL greatly benefits from major cost savings. The developer and future residents benefit by securing a long-term stable occupant of the building and an essential community service.

There are many benefits to having a new facility delivered in this manner: major cost benefits can be achieved (or avoided altogether) due to sharing costs associated with land, site servicing, construction, construction administration, and procurement. Depending on the agreement, facilities can be delivered as shell space, as a fully finished and furnished facility, or anywhere in between. Where facilities are delivered as a part of a mixed-use building, municipalities can also benefit from securing operating agreements to manage repairs, operations, utilities, and other ongoing maintenance of the building and/or facility.

Leased Facilities

Similarly to procuring new facilities through mixed-use development, libraries can also be located within leased spaces. While this is a practice not yet employed in Richmond Hill, exploring leasing opportunities can be a quick, cost-effective, and low-risk solution to addressing short-term space needs. The implementation of Express Branches through leased facilities in particular could be a very effective solution, allowing RHPL to provide basic services in growing areas and evaluate demand before a permanent facility can be delivered.

Revenue-Generating Services

Libraries can generate revenue through services in order to fund their operation and improvement. RHPL currently generates revenue through program registration, meeting room rentals, limited food and beverage services, and services like printing and use of maker space technologies.

As libraries operate on a not-for-profit model, these services are typically offered at-cost, in order to provide the greatest level of accessibility and benefit to the public.

New types of spaces can fund themselves through revenue-generating services. For example, additional multi-purpose rooms could be funded by rental revenues. Offering food and beverages services offer another stream of revenue for multi-purpose spaces or lounge spaces that have a café component.

Provincial and/or Federal Contributions

Past funding sources for libraries in Ontario have come from federal or provincial sources, for example, through gas taxes.

Federal grants are available for constructing new or retrofitting existing buildings to a high standard of accessible or sustainable design. RHPL should consider pursuing Net-Zero for new buildings, and retrofitting facilities to meet current AODA regulations. Federal grants include the Canada Community Building Fund and the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings Program.

Donations, Philanthropy, Grants, and Naming Rights

By partnering with non-profit organizations, RHPL may be able to jointly apply or support non-profit agencies in applying for certain grants. Any community-oriented spaces in new libraries, such as non-profit office spaces or spaces for Indigenous programming, may be eligible for grant funding.

Naming rights are a way to recognize community or corporate donations or philanthropic contributors who choose to support the growth of libraries. Any consideration to accepting funding through naming rights will have to align with the City of Richmond Hill's Naming Rights Policy.



Figure 48: The Simmons-Harvie Community Living Room at the Calgary Public Library recognizes the financial contributions of local benefactors.

8.2.2 Capital Cost Estimate

The following capital cost estimate provides an order-of-magnitude costing for the new and renovated library facilities as noted in the Recommended Actions. Cost estimates are provided for high-level information purposes only, and are subject to further refinement through feasibility study and/or detailed design.

The estimates are based on other costs for other typical library developments in the GTA, and current market rates for consultants, labour, and materials, and include:

- Hard construction costs with typical finishes
- Landscape improvements, including surfaces, plantings, and furnishings
- Typical indoor furnishings
- 12% design/contracting fees

Table 10: Capital Cost Estimate, Recommended Actions

Recommended Delivery	Item No.	Branch	Improvement Type
	0	Existing	Existing
2023-2031	1	Oak Ridges Branch	Existing Branch Improvement
	2	Yonge + Bernard KDA Branch	New Branch - Community
	3	North Leslie Community Centre Branch	New Branch - Neighbourhood/Community
	4	Central Branch (Expansion Phase 1)	Existing Branch Improvement
	5	Express Branch (Bookmobile)	New Branch - Express
			TOTAL 2023-2031
2032-2041	6	Richmond Hill Centre Branch (Phase 1)	New Branch - Community
	7	Express Branches x 2	New Branch - Express
	8	Central Branch (Expansion Phase 2)	Existing Branch Improvement
	9	Richvale Branch Expansion	Existing Branch Improvement
			TOTAL 2032-2041
<i>Beyond the time horizon of this FMP</i>	10	Richmond Hill Centre Branch (Phase 2)	New Branch - Community
	11	New Branch 1	New Branch - Neighbourhood/Community
	12	New Branch 2	New Branch - Neighbourhood/Community
	13	New Branch 3	New Branch - Neighbourhood/Community

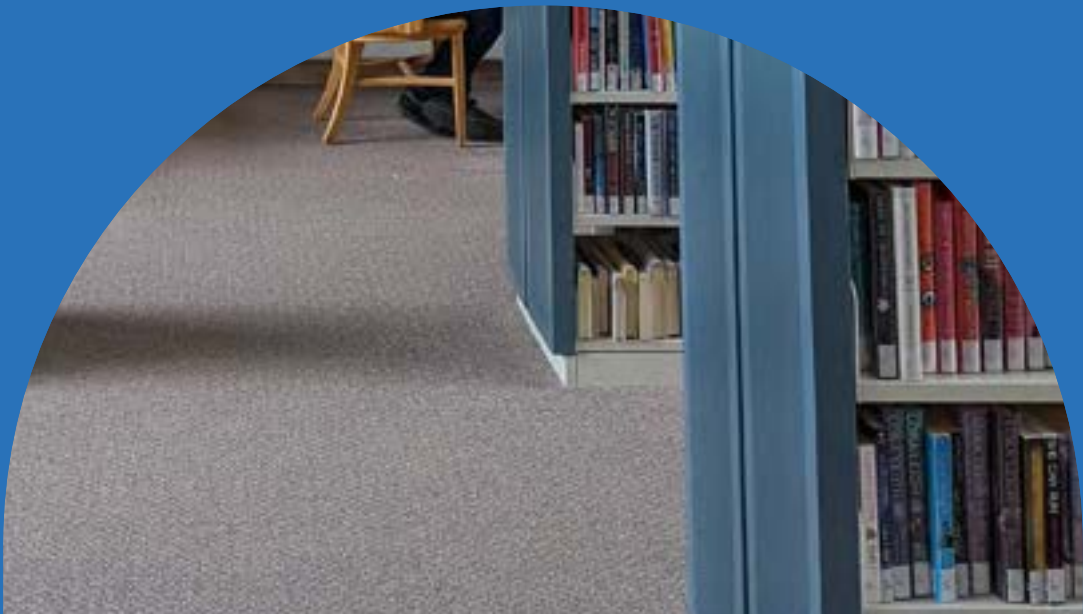
Hard construction costs are based on a typical per-square-foot cost for new construction, renovation, and furnishings. Landscape costs are based on the amount of hardscape, softscape, plantings, furnishings, and other elements included in the conceptual landscape designs as shown.

NOTE: Cost estimates are provided for high-level information purposes only, and do not represent a capital budget commitment until individually approved. They should be confirmed and refined through further feasibility study and/or detailed design. The estimates do not include any specialized equipment, land/lease costs or site servicing, environmental testing or surveys, contingency, escalation, HST, or other general fees. All figures are in 2023 dollars.

Renovated Space		Net New Space		Total Cost Estimate
m2	ft2	m2	ft2	
-	-	11,300	121,915	
-	-	-	-	\$ 228,000
-	-	2,000	22,000	\$ 19,342,000
-	-	1,400	15,000	\$ 13,188,000
1,000	10,900	-	-	\$ 4,098,000
-	-	-	-	\$ 600,000
1,000	10,900	3,400	37,000	\$ 37,456,000

-	-	3,300	35,000
900	10,000	-	-
1,400	15,000	2,600	28,000
-	-	300	3,000
2,300	25,000	6,200	63,000

-	-	1,900	20,000
-	-	2,300	25,000
-	-	2,300	25,000
-	-	2,300	25,000



A.0 Appendix A: Consultation Summary

- A.1** Pop-Up In-Branch Displays and Online Survey
- A.2** RHPL Staff Creativity Day and Information Booth

A.3 Pop-Up In-Branch Displays and Online Survey

During April and May 2023, an pop-up displays in each of RHPL's four branches and an online survey were made available for customers to inform them of the Facilities Master Plan process, and invite input on early findings and aspirations for future facilities, as well as to invite feedback on emerging directions for revitalizing RHPL's existing branches.

Feedback sought was both open-ended (allowing participants to indicate their likes/dislikes with post-it notes and stickers), and in response to specific questions. Example boards that were displayed at the in-branch pop-ups are shown on the following pages. Questions asked during the survey period (available online or via a paper copy in-branch) were as follows:

For the first question, respondents were asked to select which Branch they wanted to provide feedback on. Respondents has the option to provide feedback on multiple branches.

1. In your own words, please provide your feedback on the proposed changes to Branch (both indoor and outdoor spaces). - *long-form open ended response*
2. What library spaces do you value most? (e.g. comfortable reading areas, tables, private rooms, online user only). Please indicate which branch if applicable. - *long-form open ended response*
3. Which branch spaces or facilities do you think need improvement and why? Please indicate which branch, if applicable. - *long-form open ended response*
4. What new or improved spaces would you like to see at your library? Please indicate which branch, if applicable. - *long-form open ended response*
5. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the spaces and facilities at Richmond Hill Public Library? Please tell us which branch you are commenting on, if applicable. - *long-form open ended response*
6. Do you prefer: - *multiple-choice response*
 - a. to visit small neighbourhood branches close to your home?
 - b. to travel to central branches with a greater variety of services?

In general, feedback was positive for the proposed changes, and in many instances, changes to the proposals were made where issues were identified and where additional suggestions were made. A summary of the feedback received at each branch is provided on the following pages.

Richmond Hill Public Library **Facilities Master Plan**

Have Your Say!

The City of Richmond Hill is growing, and the needs of our community are changing. We're planning for the future of library spaces in our City, with modern, relevant and inclusive spaces designed to meet the future needs of our community.

As part of the process, we invite you to share your experiences with our spaces, and your feedback on our proposed updates to existing branches. Your comments will help us to build our Facilities Master Plan.

What is a Facilities Master Plan?

The Richmond Hill Public Library (RHPL) Facilities Master Plan will provide a roadmap for improving existing and future library branches in order to meet Richmond Hills changing needs and growing population. A Facilities Master Plan is a key tool to help ensure that:

- all residents have equitable access to library spaces and services.
- new spaces and branches are equipped to provide in-demand services and programs.
- branches provide the right types of spaces that will be widely used by all.
- Richmond Hill's libraries are culturally relevant and exciting places with state-of-the-art technologies.



Process

The RHPL Facilities Master Plan will take place over three phases, targeting completion in summer of 2023. We are currently at the end of Phase 2 and are seeking your feedback on the draft directions.



Engage with us online at www.rhpl.ca/future-spaces



Library BrookMcIlroy www.rhpl.ca/future-spaces

Richmond Hill Public Library **Facilities Master Plan**

Why Are We Updating the Facilities Master Plan?

Since the 2013 Facilities Master Plan, the local, regional, and provincial context has greatly changed, and Richmond Hill is situated to become the centre of York Region. Demographic change, the changing nature of work, increased urban development, and investments in public transit continue to respond to rapid population growth. Libraries are an essential civic service and an invaluable community resource for all residents. This Facilities Master Plan proposes expansion of RHPL's library network to keep up with this growth, and to provide more modern and relevant services for its existing and future communities.

The Library Facility Model

The current library branch system is a **tiered model, with a main Central Branch supporting other lower-tiered branches.** Branch classification is based on the catchment area population, facility size, and level of services offered. **This Facilities Master Plan update supports the tiered model, with an additional pop-up/local tier** to provide a greater level of access to library services for all of Richmond Hill:

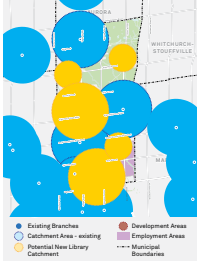
- Central Branch**
 - comprehensive service level, providing other civic services (e.g. event and exhibition space, non-profit office space)
 - houses many destination services and special collections (e.g. specialized programming, local history collection, maker spaces, houses all administrative staff)
 - 2.5 km catchment area
- Community Branch**
 - enhanced or comprehensive service level, providing access to a larger geographic area
 - common programming and services
 - 2.5 km catchment area
- Neighbourhood Branch**
 - basic service level, providing neighbourhood services
 - modest collection and programming
 - 1.5 km catchment area
- Pop-Up/Local Branch (new!)**
 - localized access to rotating collections and/or digital services
 - no permanent collection, can contain popular materials and create local pick-up/drop-off points
 - seasonal programming
 - 1.2 km catchment area (roughly equivalent to a 10-minute walk)

Library Service Levels and Population Growth

The library service level target is a figure that compares all library spaces within an area to the area's population. Since 1991, RHPL's service level target has been set at 0.6 square feet per capita. Due to the growing need for different types of spaces in modern libraries, changes in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and changes to building code standards, industry leaders recommend that libraries in Ontario should increase the service level target. **We recommend that RHPL adopt a new service level target of 0.8 square feet per capita.**

Projected Space Deficit (business as usual)

From 2021 to 2051, Richmond Hill's population is expected to grow from 202,022 to 317,000 people. If no new branches are built, this would result in a library space deficit of 142,300 square feet by 2051, roughly equivalent to two additional Central Branch-sized branches, or eight new Oak Ridges-sized branches.



Service Gaps

In July 2022, City Council approved an amendment to the Official Plan that would improve access to a variety of amenities and services within a 15 minute walking distance of residents' homes. Using the tiered library model (see The Library Facility Model, at left), **existing geographic gaps and future development areas can be addressed with mix of branch types, focusing on small and medium branches to improve neighbourhood walkability.**


Library BrookMcIlroy www.rhpl.ca/future-spaces

Richmond Hill Public Library **Facilities Master Plan**

Summary of Proposed Branch Renewals


In addition to planning for new facilities, The Facilities Master Plan will evaluate existing branches and how well they are serving their neighbourhoods. The proposed renovations will contribute to the longevity of existing branches, with new types of spaces and technologies for a 21st century library.

Central Branch



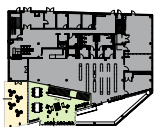
- Expanded and activated outdoor spaces including a gathering structure for outdoor programming.
- Expanded and new café spaces, children's activity area, community gallery, innovation lab, co-working spaces, quiet reading rooms and group study areas.
- A new rooftop terrace connecting to a multi-purpose civic performance destination.

Richmond Green Branch




- Activated outdoor green spaces and a new front door for the branch.
- A new signature mural by York Region District School Board secondary students in collaboration with Indigenous artist Keith Gattie.
- An outdoor gathering structure for programming and passive enjoyment.
- Evaluate feasibility of replacing with a new branch in the long term.

Oak Ridges Branch



- Enhancement to ground floor lounge and café area to create more flexible seating and year-round use of the "front porch"
- Additional study spaces on the upper floor, including a long study table and privacy booths for independent quiet work.

Richvale Branch



- A second-floor addition above the main entryway with comfortable seating and reading areas that can be used for programming and special events.
- Expanded, more transparent front entryway with a bright self-serve café space.
- Expanded front patio with seating, and a quiet forest reading room at the rear.
- Explore partnerships with the neighbouring school for outdoor program areas.

Library BrookMcIlroy www.rhpl.ca/future-spaces


Richmond Hill Public Library **Facilities Master Plan**

Please provide your feedback on the proposed changes to RHPL's Central Branch

(If you would like to comment on other branches, please indicate which one in your comment)


You can provide your comments by:

- writing your answers on a sticky note and placing it below,
- filling out our full survey at www.rhpl.ca/future-spaces (or scan the QR code below),
- OR
- filling out a comment sheet (please ask a member of our team).



Thank you!

Engage with us online at www.rhpl.ca/future-spaces



Library BrookMcIlroy www.rhpl.ca/future-spaces

Display boards similar to the four shown at right were provided at all branches.

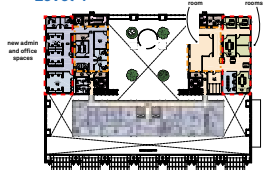
Participants expressed a need for more tables and furnishing to accommodate capacity needs; General comments were made around better access to Wi-Fi; Several participants expressed a need for more water bottle filling stations; Several participants noted the need for more and higher quality outlets to charge devices etc.

- Participants expressed a desire for more seating spaces.
- Participants requested simpler and more efficient furnishing.
- Comments were made on the need for more quiet reading, study and working space.
- Positive feedback was provided on the implementation of creative and multi-use spaces, including marker spaces and performance spaces.
- Participants expressed a desire for enhancements to the children’s play area.
- A comment was made on expanding the genealogical holdings.
- Participants expressed concerns about the relocation of the local history room.
- **Collections:** Participants expressed a desire to maintain and enhance book and DVD collections.
- **Library Resources & Programming:**
 - Participants expressed a desire for more technology and electronic resources i.e. computer stations and software.
 - Comments pertaining to increased teaching and learning resources and services were expressed.
 - A comment on more senior tailored programming was made.
 - Participants expressed a desire for more art displays.
 - Participants requested extended library hours – evenings and weekends to accommodate the community.

Richmond Hill Public Library **Facilities Master Plan**
Proposed Renewal of Central Branch

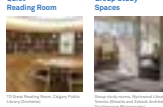
Legend: ■ New building addition ■ Reconfigured existing space

Level 4

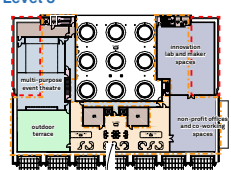


Level 4 will include new **administrative spaces** at the west extension, and new quiet and group study areas at the east extension. The millwork in the existing genealogy room will be preserved, visible through a soundproof glass wall to form a **quiet reading room**. Additional **group study rooms** are added to respond to the demand for bookable and semi-private work spaces.

Quiet Reading Room **Group Study Spaces**



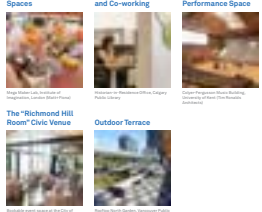
Level 5



Level 5 will house new **state-of-art innovation spaces**, able to house fully-equipped **maker spaces, digital labs, business incubators, non-profit offices, residences, and a creative co-working space**. A new "Richmond Hill Room" and multipurpose event theatre will be a **full-service destination venue** for civic events, performances, graduations, and much more. The **outdoor terrace** will provide sweeping southward views of the City and full evening sun.

Innovation and Maker Spaces **Non-Profit Offices and Co-working** **Multi-Purpose Performance Space**

The "Richmond Hill Room" Civic Venue **Outdoor Terrace**

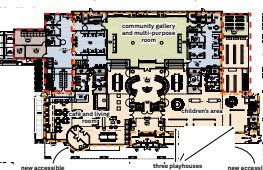


Library BrookMcIlroy www.rhpl.ca/future-spaces

Richmond Hill Public Library **Facilities Master Plan**
Proposed Renewal of Central Branch

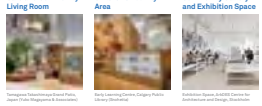
Legend: ■ New building addition ■ Reconfigured existing space

Level 1 (Ground Floor)

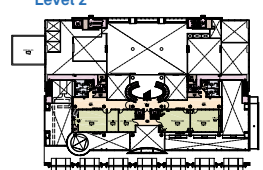


On the Ground Floor, a **new café and living room area** is relocated to the west side of the building, and an **expanded children's activity area** is located at the east, both with **connections to the outdoors**. Service areas on the Ground Floor are converted for public use, including a **community gallery and exhibition space**.

Café and Community Living Room **Children's Activity Area** **Community Gallery and Exhibition Space**

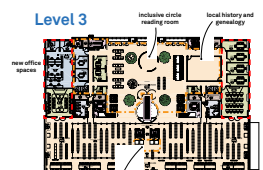


Level 2



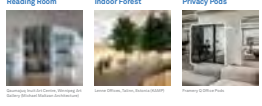
Level 2 will retain the **multipurpose program and meeting rooms** on the mezzanine, and will add improved circulation to Level 3.

Level 3



Level 3 will include a new **inclusive circle reading room**, featuring **Indigenous writing and art** in a new permanent collection. The **local history room** will be relocated here and designed to acknowledge the cultural diversity of Richmond Hill's population. Interior plantings will take advantage of the full height of the space, with a new **indoor forest** surrounding the reading room. Small **privacy pods** create additional quiet study or work space for individuals or small groups.

Inclusive Circle Reading Room **Indoor Forest** **Privacy Pods**



Library BrookMcIlroy www.rhpl.ca/future-spaces

Central Branch, *continued*

- **Spaces Valued Most:**
 - Children's area
 - Comfortable reading and study spaces
 - Collections
 - Space variety and uses
- **Spaces that need improvement:**
 - General upgrading ;space use and retrofitting
 - Enhanced parking infrastructure
 - Displays and collection
- **New or improved spaces:**
 - Outdoor spaces
 - Enhanced café space

Oak Ridges Branch

- **Study Spaces:** Users have expressed the need for additional study space at the branch, particularly quiet and individual study spaces
- **Infant Infrastructure:** Participants requested washroom infrastructure that is child friendly
- **Space Variety & Mix of Uses:**
 - Participants expressed a need for more quiet study and working spaces
 - Comments on the addition of more comfortable and usable furnishings- tables, chairs were made
 - A desire was expressed for more community programming
 - Positive feedback was made on the integration of study pods
- **Children's Play Area:**
 - Participants noted the need for a dedicated, soundproof children's play area
 - Comments on enhancing and expanding the children's play area were expressed
- **Collections:**
 - Participants expressed the need for additional space for physical books.
 - Concerns were expressed regarding the potential loss of collection space for study space

- **Outdoor Space Use & Design:**
 - Positive feedback was received on the outdoor space plans
 - Positive feedback was received on the patio seating spaces
 - Participants were supportive of the forest reading room
- **Spaces valued most:**
 - Children area
 - Collections
 - Comfortable reading and study areas
- **Spaces that need improvement:**
 - More study spaces
 - Children area
 - Collections
- **New or improved spaces:**
 - Furnishing
 - Outdoor spaces
 - Comfortable space

Richmond Hill Public Library **Facilities Master Plan**
Proposed Renewal of Oak Ridges Branch

Oak Ridges Branch is a prominent destination in its neighbourhood. Featuring program rooms, a teen section, maker spaces, a computer lab, and a unique children's play area, this branch serves as a community hub in northern Richmond Hill. Users of the library report that more study and quiet spaces are desired, and with a new high school planned for the site next door, study and work spaces will continue to be in high demand.

Oak Ridges Branch is RHPL's newest location, constructed in 2019, therefore only minor improvements are proposed. The renewal includes **privacy pods** for individuals or small groups, a **communal study table** on the second floor, a **community living room** with flexible seating at the ground floor, including reworked spaces for a **self-serve café**. Creating an **outdoor seating area** will expand this branch's usable space on a seasonal basis.

Level 1 (Ground Floor)



Level 2



Quiet Privacy Pods



Users have reported the need for more study space at this branch, and the small bookable rooms on the second floor are in high demand. Central Branch is currently undergoing a pilot project to test out small privacy pods for individuals or groups. If successful, they could be a welcome addition to Oak Ridges Branch.

Communal Study Tables



Large, communal study tables will provide new types of study space. New tables could be located on the second floor or in conjunction with the new self-serve café space on the ground floor. Tables should have integrated lighting and plug-ins for laptops and other devices.

Community Living Room



The current informal reading room and self-serve coffee station at the ground floor can be reconfigured into a single space with a variety of seating types. This new space will function as the community living room, with information on library programming and an informal space for community gatherings and library events, such as book readings, language meetups, or writing workshops.

Outdoor Seating



In the warmer months, the community living room and café space can extend outdoors through the large sliding glass doors. Flexible seating spaces will allow visitors to read, meet, and study, and can be reconfigured to hold special events. An outdoor area will also allow for greater variety of kids programs, with a new place to play, make noise, and get messy.



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Display board shown at Oak Ridges Branch

Richmond Green Branch

- **Outdoor Space Design:** Participants expressed positive feedback regarding the outdoor programming including the gathering structure and enhanced landscaping. Additional comments were made regarding the need for more outdoor furnishings to accommodate the school students and library users
 - Positive feedback on the outdoor space, noting it as inviting and welcoming feature of the branch
 - Participants expressed a desire for more and enhanced outdoor furnishings
- **Interior Improvements:** Participants expressed a need for more quiet study spaces with flexible infrastructure and furnishings i.e., whiteboards
- **Food and Beverage Accommodations:** Participants largely expressed the need for libraries to accommodate food and drinks; Comments were made regarding the need for a snack bar or café space with seating and tables; Several participants expressed a need for more water bottle filling stations

Richmond Hill Public Library **Facilities Master Plan**
Proposed Renewal of Richmond Green Branch

Richmond Green Branch is currently co-located with Richmond Green Secondary School. It provides service to much of the eastern side of Richmond Hill.

In the short term, the experience of the branch will be much improved by **greening the entry plaza** between the existing library and the high school, and providing **outdoor areas** for programming and passive enjoyment.

Enhanced signage, streamlined vehicle access, and a **new front door** will better identify the branch and distinguish it from the school.

As Richmond Hill's eastern neighbourhoods are growing, this Facilities Master Plan will evaluate if renovating the existing branch over constructing a new, dedicated branch in the area will better suit the local population.

Proposed Site Plan

Existing Site

Relocated Entryway

Trees and Greening

Outdoor Program Areas

Gathering Structure

A new, distinct entryway for the library will help reinforce the presence of the public library as a separate space from the high school. Locating the entry closer to accessible parking and in proximity to new green spaces will improve the user experience.

Increased permeable surface, trees, and greening will improve the image of the library and create a more welcoming outdoor space. These changes can offer educational opportunities around plants, water, and sustainability.

Outdoor program areas and outdoor classrooms would be a valuable resource both for the branch and the school. This can offer opportunities for children's programming for the library, as well as an outdoor reading room for passive enjoyment.

A gathering structure can be co-located with outdoor program areas to create a wayfinding feature and focal point, designed and programmed in consultation with Richmond Hill's Indigenous community.

Richmond Hill Public Library, North of Bay Street
 Rich Hillier Architects Ltd., Architects
 BrookMcIlroy
 www.rhpl.ca/future-spaces

Display board shown at Richmond Green Branch

Richmond Green Branch, *continued*

• Space Variety & Mix of Uses:

- Participants requested enhanced seating and table Infrastructure
- Participants expressed a need for more quiet study and working spaces
- A desire for enhancements to the children's play area was expressed

• Community Connection:

- A desire for Increased community programming was expressed.
- Participants were in support of increased Indigenous connection and collaboration.
- Participants commented on the desire for increased connection to Richmond Green high school.
- Comments on the library as a cultural hub were expressed.

• Spaces valued most:

- Children's area
- Collections
- Comfortable reading and study spaces

• Spaces that need improvement:

- Children's area (size)
- Collections
- Outdoor spaces
- More and enhanced spaces and seating

• New or improved spaces:

- Enhanced seating area
- Parking area enhancements

Richvale Branch

- Outdoor Spaces:** Participants expressed concern regarding the usability of the forest reading room. Suggestions were made to incorporate weather protection measures; Positive feedback was made regarding the forest reading room
- Interior Improvements:** The second storey addition was received positively as a space to accommodate more users and programs; Participants expressed a desire for more comfortable reading and study spaces; Comments were made regarding more reading spaces and general programming spaces; Participants expressed a desire for more after hour program spaces
- Noise Impacts:** Comments were made regarding the loud noise levels at this branch; Participants expressed a desire for more silent areas
- Community Infrastructure:** Participants expressed positive feedback regarding the self-serve café; Comments were made regarding more book variety and diversity to better serve the community; Participants requested extended operating hours, particularly to accommodate students at the nearby school; Positive comments were made regarding the free courses offered by the library
- Building Design:**
 - Participants expressed concerns with the modern and contemporary glass design of the building expansion
 - Comments were made on ensuring building expansion fits with the neighbourhood architectural context and with the buildings original and current aesthetic
- Outdoor Space Use & Design:**
 - Positive feedback was received on enhancements to the outdoor space
 - Participants expressed concern regarding the proximity of the forest reading room to the neighbouring houses.
 - Positive feedback was received on the outdoor gathering structure.

Richmond Hill Public Library Facilities Master Plan
Proposed Renewal of Richvale Branch

Richvale is RHPL's smallest facility, but an important neighbourhood-scale branch providing local services for the surrounding community. With the planned Yonge North Subway Extension and development around Richmond Hill Centre, nearby neighbourhoods, including those near Richvale Branch, will also experience growth. Today, the branch reports needing more space to meet the needs of its community.

A **second-floor addition** above the main entryway with can be used as a reading room, a program room, or a special event space, easing pressures on existing program and storage spaces.

The **expanded front entryway** includes a **self-serve café**, additional seating, and a double-height atrium. A **front patio** and a **forest reading room** at the rear extend library spaces to the outdoors.

Partnerships with the neighbouring school may be explored for other outdoor opportunities, including an outdoor program area.

Proposed Site Plan

Existing Site

Forest Reading Room

The forest reading room will be a quiet, contemplative space that will expand the library's footprint for the warmer months. It will preserve the existing mature trees and add new furnishings and planting.

Level 2 Addition

A new, contemporary addition to the second floor will create a visual focal point and wayfinding element for the branch. Additional space can be used as an informal reading room or study space with increased technology capacity. It also provides much-needed program space and could be booked by the larger community for after-hours events.

Existing Level 1

Proposed Level 1

Proposed Level 2 Addition

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Display board shown at Richvale Branch

Richvale Branch, *continued*

- **Space Variety & Mix of Uses:**
 - Participants expressed a need for more quiet study and working spaces.
 - Comments were made regarding the need for additional space for book collections.
 - A desire for more community programming was expressed.
 - Comments on enhancements and expansion to the children and teen play areas were expressed.
- **Transportation Infrastructure:**
 - Participants noted the need for enhanced bicycle parking accommodation
 - Comments were made regarding the need for increased parking spaces

- **Spaces valued most:**
 - Library staff
 - Space variety
- **Spaces that need improvement:**
 - Modernization
 - More and enhanced spaces
 - Children's area
- **New or improved spaces:**
 - Space variety and uses
 - Parking enhancement
 - Community resources.
 - Children's area

A.4 RHPL Staff Creativity Day Information Booth

On the May 5th, 2023 Creativity Day, staff across all branches and from administration had a chance to respond to the same information boards provided during the public in-branch pop-ups. Participants were able to provide comments via sticky notes, dot voting, and in-person discussions. The following themes emerged during the session:

All Branches

- **Outdoor Spaces:** General comments were made regarding the design and programming of outdoor space. Participants expressed positive feedback regarding the incorporation of medicine gardens, outdoor seating, and outdoor café spaces.

Central Branch

- **Outdoor Space Design:** Participants expressed positive feedback regarding the outdoor terrace and grade level outdoor space enhancements. Noted they would like to see more trees, outdoor green space and outdoor furnishings.
- **Outlets & Charging Ports:** Participants noted the need for more outlets and charging ports to accommodate users.
- **Community Space:** Participants suggested opening up the 5th storey of the building for community use.

Oak Ridges Branch

- **Children's Programming:** Participants requested more children programming.

Richmond Green Branch

- **Building Addition:** Participants expressed the need for a second storey to accommodate quiet spaces.
- **Study Spaces:** Participants expressed a need for more quiet study and maker spaces on the second storey.

Richvale Branch

- **Children's Programming:** Participants requested more children's space that support family interactive activities.



Appendix B: Revitalizing Existing Branches

B.1 Richmond Green Branch

B.2 Richvale Branch

B.1 Richmond Green Branch

Note: The following section is provided for information purposes only. The graphics and recommendations described within were developed during the FMP process; however, it was determined that improvements to Richmond Green Branch would be put on hold until further library demand monitoring of areas in Richmond Hill north east could be completed, and in anticipation of a potential new branch being co-located with the North Leslie Community Centre. Should improvements at Richmond Green Branch be contemplated in the future, the following recommendations can serve as a starting point, but should be revised based on the needs of the Library and the community at that time.

Continued from Section 7.3.3:



Illustrative Landscape concept of the improved outdoor spaces at Richmond Green Branch

Site and Landscape

The current entry sequence to Richmond Green Branch includes a vast amount of hardscape space dedicated to private vehicles, and those arriving on foot, bike, or by public transit must traverse large parking lot areas to reach the library entrance. To improve sustainable outcomes for the site and activate the library entrance, new green areas are proposed, including new trees and plantings. The new green plaza will include seating and an outdoor program area or gathering structure to be used for library activities or passive enjoyment. Enhanced signage, streamlined vehicle access, and the provision of a new front door located at the northern edge of the library will create a stronger identity for this branch and reduce the distance traveled for those using the accessible parking spaces.

Interior Renovation

The new entryway, directly connecting to the outdoor green plaza, creates an opportunity for a “garden path” that can be activated with artworks and merchandizing along the walls. Other short-term improvements to the interior include an expansion of the children’s storytime area, and the creation of a new multi-purpose program room.

B.2 Richvale Branch

Note: The following section is provided for information purposes only. The graphics and recommendations described within were developed during the FMP process; however, it was determined that such extensive improvements to the Richvale Branch would not be a priority in the wake of future branches being located at the Yonge and Bernard KDA and at Richmond Hill Centre. Should improvements to Richvale Branch be contemplated in the future, the following recommendations can serve as a starting point, but should be revised based on the needs of the Library and the community at that time.

Continued from Section 7.3.4:

The proposed expansion to Richvale Branch includes a second storey addition over the existing roof structure that extends across the driveway and parking lot. The new addition will be given a more contemporary design, with glass walls that views into library activity for passersby, and to provide light and activation in the evenings. A small renovation and expansion to the main entryway helps to expand seating areas and new outdoor spaces bring enjoyment of the library outdoors.



Illustrative Landscape concept of the improved outdoor spaces at Richvale Branch

Recommended Improvements

Site and Landscape: Two new outdoor seating areas are provided, tucked into the edges of the library building. The entry creates spill-out informal seating space from the new expanded entry, creating a neighbourly “front porch” to the branch, and activating the library at the street. At the rear, a new access is created from the children’s area to a new outdoor forest reading room, which is enclosed by many mature trees. Adding open-grid or other permeable pavers and seating to this area is a simple and inexpensive way to create presence in this space, which can be used as a shaded reading area, or an outdoor space for children’s programming. Other elements, such as artwork or a community garden plot, can be added to further enhance the space.

The branch directly interfaces with Charles Howitt Public (Elementary) School to the south, with a small grassy lawn area. Partnerships should be explored with the school to provide amenities that can benefit students, library patrons, and the surrounding community, such as an outdoor gathering structure, community garden plots, or other playful elements.

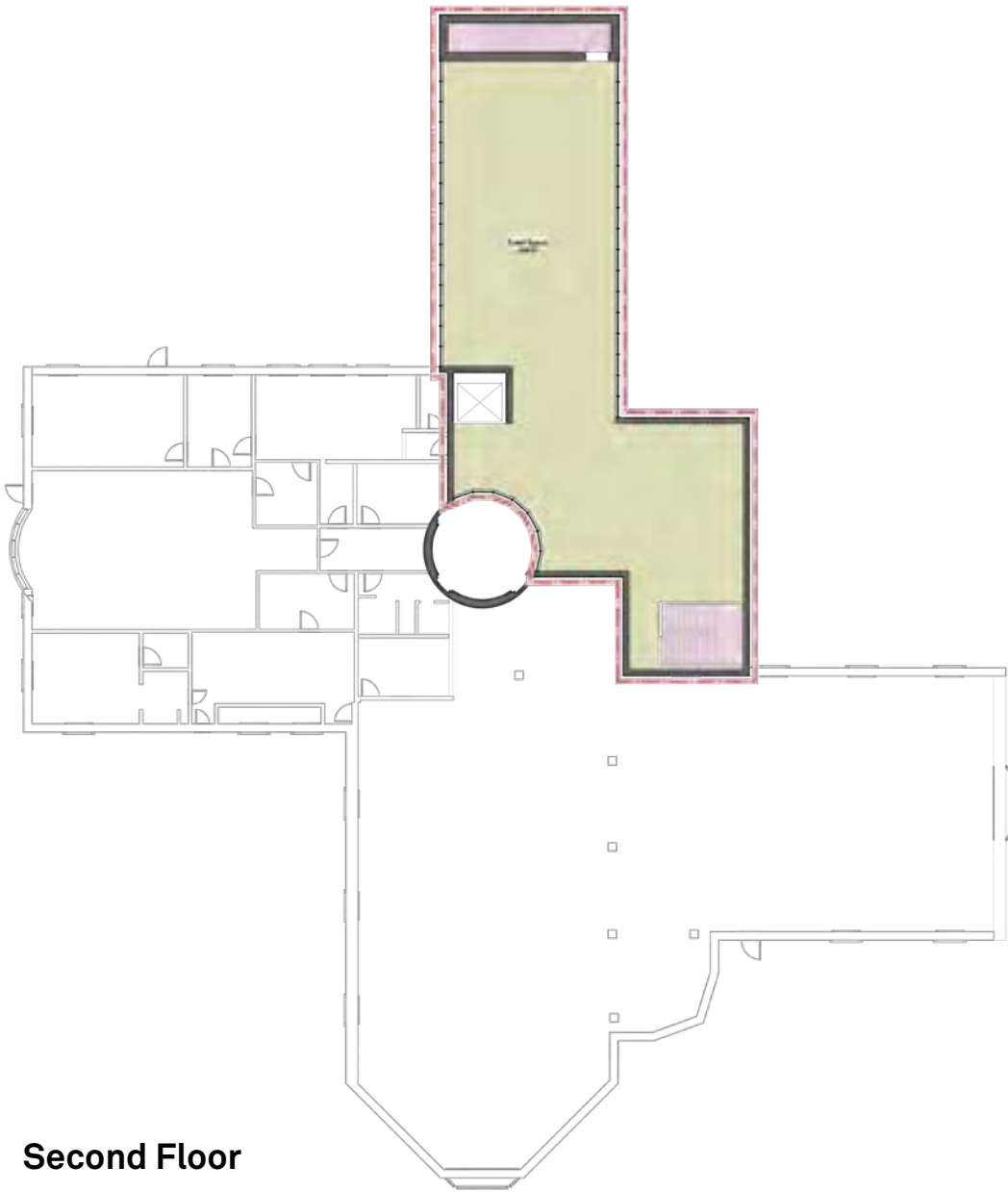


Legend

- Public
- Public - Gathering
- Staff - Branch
- Staff - Admin
- Circulation
- WC/Personal
- Service

Ground Floor: Most of the ground floor space is retained as is, with the addition of an expanded entryway. The new lobby will feature glass walls that will create more openness and provide a more welcoming entry sequence that is not dominated by the security gates. The new lobby space should feel like a community living room, with a community info board prominently located, and a self-serve café area. Movable tables and chairs or comfortable lounge seating will be able to shift and adapt to make room for small gatherings and community art displays. A new staircase and elevator in the lobby provide access to the second floor addition. Having access located within this outer “vestibule” area allows for the entry and second floor to be used independently from the main library space, for instance, to host evening or weekend events outside of library opening hours.

Ground Floor Plan, Proposed Richvale Branch Expansion



Second Floor

Second Floor: The second floor addition provides much needed flexible space for the library, allowing the collections areas on the ground floor to be retained. The second floor addition will feature glass walls to activate the neighbourhood, and the existing lobby rotunda is carried upward to create a double-height atrium. On a day-to-day basis, the second story can be used as a casual reading or study area, with comfortable furnishings and communal study tables, or to create a second large program space to replace the former space at the ground floor currently being used for storage. The space can also provide a neighbourhood venue for small community events, gatherings, and exhibitions, and can even provide a revenue stream for the branch. It is essential that this new multipurpose space remains adaptable so it can continue to serve the community as the surrounding neighbourhoods grow in response to the nearby Richmond Hill Centre development over the coming decades.

Legend

- Public
- Public - Gathering
- Staff - Branch
- Staff - Admin
- Circulation
- WC/Personal
- Service

Ground Floor Plan, Proposed
Richvale Branch Expansion



Appendix C: Sustainability C.0 Recommendations

C.1 Energy and Carbon

- C.1.1 Building Siting
- C.1.2 Building Materials
- C.1.3 Building Envelope
- C.1.4 Site

C.2 Mobility

- C.2.1 Public Transit
- C.2.2 Pedestrian Connectivity
- C.2.3 Cycling
- C.2.4 Vehicle Parking

C.3 Health, Wellness, and Greening

- C.3.1 Indoor Environmental Quality
- C.3.2 Natural Heritage Systems
- C.3.3 Open Spaces and Greening
- C.3.4 Light Pollution
- C.3.5 Bird-Friendly Design
- C.3.6 Accessibility

C.4 Water Management

- C.4.1 Stormwater Management
- C.4.2 Water Consumption

C.1 Energy and Carbon

According to the Canadian Wood Building Council, an estimated 30-40 percent of all energy used in North America is consumed by buildings. In Canada, much of that operational energy is consumed for space heating. Luckily, numerous design opportunities and tools help reduce a building's energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. These include massing, orientation, building envelope performance improvements, highly efficient HVAC systems, heat recovery, and lighting solutions. Most cost-effective measures include maximizing the building envelope's thermal performance and increasing the envelope's airtightness.

C.1.1 Building Siting

The building design of new RHPL facilities should also take into consideration its orientation on the site to fully benefit from passive solar gains thereby reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy costs. There is also the possibility of storing solar radiation in key areas by utilizing the building's thermal mass.

Buildings can also be designed in consideration of the prevailing winds on the site throughout the year to maximize the benefits of passive cooling techniques. Although wind directions can vary according to the site, generally in this climate, there are advantages to orienting buildings with the long axis in the east-west direction. The design should also consider creating internal spaces that work to channel air through the building. Building systems that can assist with this are thermal chimneys and operable vent systems.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- [IB-11: Energy Strategy](#)
- [IB-15: Extreme Wind Protection for Ground-Oriented Development](#)

C.1.2 Building Materials

The environmental impacts associated with the extraction, transport, processing, fabrication, installation, reuse, recycling, and disposal of building industry source materials should be considered when designing for both new and existing branches. Choosing materials with identifiable recycled content, that are renewable, locally available, and made using a resource-efficient manufacturing process are all effective ways to reduce embodied carbon emissions.

The LEED credit library and the Sustainability Metrics Program suggest conducting a buildings Life Cycle Assessment to determine and report the carbon emissions for structural and envelope materials. Additional points are given if the project

commits to employing one or more carbon reduction strategies that would result in a reduction compared to the baseline.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- IB-4: Embodied Carbon of Building Materials: Supplementary Cementitious Materials
- IB-5: Embodied Carbon of Building Materials: Life Cycle Assessment
- IB-6: Embodied Carbon of Building Materials: Material Efficient Framing

Other opportunities to reduce the negative effects on human health and environmental harms associated with materials or products purchased for an existing building include:

- Implementing an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy to help identify, promote, and procure items with minimized or reduced environmental effects;
- Implementing a Facility Maintenance and Renovation Policy that includes guidelines for renovation and maintenance activities (addressing purchasing, waste management, and air quality), including outdoor maintenance; and,
- Providing storage locations for recyclable materials, including mixed paper, corrugated cardboard, glass, plastics, and metals, and safe storage and disposal of batteries and all lamps.

C.1.3 Building Envelope

Thermal Insulation and Airtightness

High performance enclosures with continuous external insulation will assist in reducing the energy needed to heat and cool buildings efficiently. An airtight enclosure would help to control the air exchange with the exterior of the building, reducing the need to reheat the air, and in turn creating energy efficiencies.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- IB-12: Building Energy Efficiency, GHG Reduction, and Resilience

Furthermore, these measures would assist in reducing discomfort from cold drafts, moisture, and condensation issues caused by thermal bridging.

High-Performance Glazing

Windows play an integral role in the space-heating performance of a building since they are the weakest point in the envelope, therefore it is important that they include frames that contribute to low thermal conductivity.

To mitigate radiation, glazing should be made up of multiple layers (usually 2-3), set apart with low conductive spacers, and filled with Low-E Argon gas which allows for a reduction in the window's U factor. A low U factor indicates better insulation performance; therefore, windows with a low U factor are preferred.

Overall, the design should also limit the window-to-wall ratio to a range of 30-40%. Another strategy to decrease the amount of radiation transmitted through windows is applying a ceramic frit pattern or employing exterior shading devices when and where passive heating is not desired. Usually, shading devices correspond with the need for summer shade and winter sun. The Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook provides points for employing exterior shading for all east and west-facing windows.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- IB-9: Solar Gain Control

Roofs

Cool Roof and Green Roof systems are excellent tools to mitigate solar radiation. Each system has benefits and costs which should be taken into consideration when choosing the most appropriate approach for each branch.

Cool Roofs provide a higher solar reflectance than traditional roof systems. This can be achieved in two ways: coloring the roof product white which reflects 60-90% more sunlight than typical roofing materials; or by using special colorants that reflect 30-60% of the near-infrared radiation. The Sustainability Metrics Program awards points for Cool Roofs if they are installed over 100% of the available roof space.

Green Roofs also provide a great opportunity to absorb and reflect direct solar radiation, with the additional benefits of being able to reduce stormwater run-off, extend the lifespan of the roof, reduce ambient noise inside and outside of the building, and attract wildlife such as birds, bees, and insects.

The Sustainability Metrics Program awards points for Green Roofs if they are installed over 50% of the available roof space. Additional points are offered they are installed for 75% of the available roof space

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- IB-8: Heat Island Reduction: Roof

Building Energy Use

Improvements to energy performance can be made using previously mentioned strategies to reduce the amount of energy expended to heat and cool buildings. In addition to designing high-performance enclosures and utilizing passive cooling and heating techniques, smart systems and sensors also provide an opportunity to cut HVAC operating costs.

By implementing advanced energy metering, a building's electricity consumption and demands can be recorded and analyzed to reduce estimated peak electricity demands. The Sustainability Metrics Program offers points for buildings that have been designed to include thermal energy meters as well as water meters. LEED v4.1 certification also offers credits for the installation of energy meters that show a building's total energy consumption (electricity, natural gas, cold water, steam, fuel oil, propane, biomass, etc.). In the case of the LEED certification, credits are only given if the data is shared with the U.S. Green Building Council for a 5-year period at a minimum of 1-month intervals.

Renewable energy sources such as photovoltaic or geothermal systems can provide on-site energy generation options. The Sustainability Metrics Program awards points if developments are designed for solar readiness. This includes designing to accommodate/support the future installation of PV's, including providing adequate space in mechanical rooms for future installation, additional conduits to accommodate the maximum electrical/thermal equipment controls and connections, and adequate structural capacity for the roof. Additional points may be awarded through the Sustainability Metrics Program if 1% of the total energy for the project is generated on-site with additional points per percent.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- IB-10: Solar Readiness
- B-11: Energy Strategy
- IB-12: Building Energy Efficiency, GHG Reduction, and Resilience

C.1.4 Site

Whether for existing or new branches, there are great benefits to enhancing green infrastructure assets for a site. As previously mentioned, Green Roofs are an effective means to reduce the energy loads of a building, but there are many other strategies to help reduce loads and increase building efficiency.

Planting trees around the site can provide exterior shading to help mitigate the **Urban Heat Island Effect** and act as windscreens/windbreaks to reduce heat loss through infiltration. Further, reducing the amount of hardscaping can further assist in reducing the heat island effect (open-grid paving can be a good alternative to concrete or asphalt where a hard surface is still desired) and decrease energy costs for air conditioning. Choosing planted materials and soft landscaping over hard surface materials can also contribute to better air quality conditions.

The Sustainability Metrics Program offers points for treating 50% of the site's non-roof hardscaping when using one or more strategies outlined below. Additional points are given if 75% of the site's non-roof hardscaping is treated:

1. High albedo paving materials with an initial solar reflectance of at least 0.33 or SRI of 29.
2. Open grid paving with at least 50% perviousness.
3. Shade from existing or new tree canopy within 10 years of landscape installation.
4. Shade from architectural structures that are vegetated or have an initial solar reflectance of at least 0.33 at installation or an SRI of 29.
5. Shade from structures with energy generation.

Alternatively, non-residential developments can waive the need to implement the strategies listed above as long as a minimum of 75% of at-grade parking spaces are under a cover.

Urban Heat Island Effect

A phenomenon in which urbanized areas experience higher temperatures due to an increased concentration of pavement, buildings, and other surfaces that absorb and retain heat.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- IB-6: Urban Tree Canopy and Shaded Walkways/Sidewalks
- IB-7: Heat Island Reduction: Non-Roof
- IB-9: Solar Gain Control

C.2 Mobility

C.2.1 Public Transit

Better access to public transit leads to lower emissions, less congestion and air pollution in our cities. Good access to public transit is essential for an equitable and accessible transportation network within a city that provides access to public amenities for people of all ages, abilities, and income levels. In order to encourage the use of public transit, access should be accessible, safe, and convenient.

When planning for any new branches, potential sites must have access to convenient and frequent public transit options. Providing direct connections (in the form of new pathways, lighting and signage, and enhanced, highly visible, and accessible building entrances) between public transit stops and existing or new branches is strongly encouraged.

The Sustainability Metrics Program awards points if a site is within 800 meters to an existing or planned commuter rail, light rail, bus rapid transit, or subway with frequent stops, or 400 meters to an existing or planned bus stop with frequent service.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- M-9: Distance to Public Transit

C.2.2 Pedestrian Connectivity

Providing opportunities for pedestrians to form connections with one another in the form of amenities, destinations, and open spaces can also contribute to a positive pedestrian experience in and around a site. Amenities and destinations may include benches, public art, map stands, interpretive signage, weather shelters, transit stops, existing trails, or pathways connections provided between the building entry and other surrounding destinations.

The Sustainability Metrics Program awards points for pedestrian amenities which are consistently included along on-site connections. Additional points are offered if more than one type is offered along on-site connections and between the site/adjacent destinations.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- M-5: Pedestrian Amenities

C.2.3 Cycling

Encouraging physical activity and active transportation is a focus of Richmond Hill's Sustainability Metric Program, and promoting cycling is an excellent way to build sustainable communities. Providing safe, direct, and convenient cycling options will reduce overall dependence on personal vehicles. It is especially important to connect core community amenities, such as public libraries, to their surroundings with safe cycling options.

When planning for any new branches, access to cycling connections must be evaluated in site selection. Should adequate cycling connections not exist, RHPL should work with the City of Richmond Hill to ensure that cycling connections are provided.

Ample bicycle parking should be provided for both short- and long-term visitors. Bicycle parking should be covered, and located near building entrances in highly visible, secure locations. Additional indoor (or otherwise secured and covered) long-term bicycle parking should be provided for staff. **End-of-trip facilities** should also be provided for staff to encourage commuting by bicycle.

There are also opportunities for RHPL to encourage cycling through programming, including learn-to-bike and road safety workshops for children (particularly where surface parking lots can be utilized for this purpose), promotion of community cycling events, and incentives for staff.

The Sustainability Metrics Program awards points if bicycle parking spaces are provided at a higher rate than the city's Parking and Transportation Demand Management Strategy. Points are also awarded for end-of-trip facilities, provided at least 1 shower and change room is provided (for men and women) per 30 bicycle parking spaces. Both Sustainability Metric Program as well the LEED v4.1 certification program award points for promoting bicycling by providing both short-term and long-term bicycle parking within a certain distance of the building.

End-of-Trip Facilities

Facilities and services that support active transportation and exercise. These may include secure, indoor bicycle parking and bike wash/maintenance stations, personal lockers, showers, and change rooms.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- M-6: Bicycle Parking

C.2.4 Vehicle Parking

For those arriving by vehicle, providing opportunities for carpooling, electric vehicle (EV) charging, and carsharing can contribute to overall reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution, and traffic congestion. Carpooling has the added benefit of increasing the opportunity for social connections.

Wherever possible, RHPL should promote efficient use of land, reduce surface parking on site, and support more pedestrian-oriented built environments. In the event that surface parking cannot be avoided, it should be located away from primary entrances and away from the public street.

Surface parking areas should be designed to include landscaped areas, trees, and green infrastructure features to help mitigate the urban heat island effect, stormwater run-off, and air pollution. Open-grid pavers or permeable pavement should be used wherever possible to increase stormwater infiltration on-site.

At both existing and new branches, designated priority parking spaces should be considered for carpooling and EV charging. Partnerships with carsharing providers should be explored to provide designated spaces at RHPL branches. Additional incentives for staff may be effective in encouraging carpooling options.

The Sustainability Metrics Program awards points if at least 3% of parking spaces on site are designated for carsharing, with additional points for 5% of parking spaces. Points are awarded for providing EVSE (electric vehicle supply equipment) at 10% of parking spaces, with additional points at 20%.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- IB-7: Heat Island Reduction: Non-Roof
- BE-8: Carshare and Carpool Parking
- BE-9: Surface Parking Footprint
- BE-10: Electric Vehicle Charging Station

C.3 Health, Wellness, and Greening

C.3.1 Indoor Environmental Quality

Establishing good indoor air quality contributes to the comfort and well-being of building occupants. This can be achieved through providing or upgrading mechanical ventilation systems and through reducing the use of materials containing high levels of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs).

Smudging is an important tradition common to many Indigenous peoples, which involves the burning of medicinal herbs, typically sage, sweetgrass, and/or cedar. Upgraded ventilation systems and protocols may be required at both existing and new RHPL branches to allow for smudging in library facilities. RHPL should implement a smudging protocol (in consultation with the Richmond Hill Fire Department, if required) to outline guidelines and intentions for how, when, and why smudging is practiced.

The use of plants indoors can help passively improve air quality, and can improve occupants' perception of space. A Facility Maintenance and Renovation Policy should cover ongoing monitoring and maintenance of indoor air quality systems and indoor plantings to ensure good indoor air quality and plant health is maintained.

To achieve third-party certification, LEED requires minimum indoor air quality performance standards. Mechanical ventilation systems must meet the requirements of ASHRAE Standard 62.1–2016, Sections 4, 5, 6.2, 6.5, and 7, or a local equivalent, whichever is more stringent. In addition, outdoor air monitors are to be provided for all mechanical systems.

Building materials and products used throughout a building can release chemical contaminants in the air and adversely impact air quality. Materials with low-emission or low-VOC materials should be selected, including finishes such as paints and coatings adhesives, and sealants that fit those criteria. The LEED v4 certification indicates the thresholds of compliance, and content standards, and assigns points to the number of compliant categories of products. Also included in the list of categories with emission requirements include furniture, composite wood, insulation, and flooring.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- IB-1: Buildings Designed/Certified Under an Accredited “Green” Rating System

C.3.2 Natural Heritage Systems

Having access or being near natural heritage systems can also be beneficial to overall health and wellness. Natural heritage systems are a network of interconnected natural features and areas such as forests, lakes, rivers etc. Already RHPL is well positioned in this regard, with multiple sites that provide great connectivity to green spaces with the opportunity to enhance these connections and systems.

Points are awarded through both the Sustainability Metrics Program's and LEED v4.1 for conserving existing natural areas to provide habitat and promote biodiversity.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- NE-4: Natural Heritage Connections
- NE-5: Natural Heritage System Enhancements
- NE-8: Park Access

C.3.3 Open Spaces and Greening

In addition to the natural heritage systems present around Richmond Hill, all of RHPL's existing branches include outdoor spaces that provide immediate access to the outdoors and green spaces. Access to outdoor and green spaces have numerous benefits to individuals' health and wellness, and can provide new programming opportunities for library patrons. Enhancing the library's exterior spaces can also greatly improve the perception of the library and improve in connectivity and wayfinding.

Branches with access to outdoor spaces should strive to utilize them as extensions of the library program area. These spaces should include ample greening and landscaped areas, as well as outdoor areas for programming, reading, and passive enjoyment, with strong and intuitive pedestrian connections. Conditions for mature tree growth should be provided for existing and new trees, and contribute to the City's canopy cover target of 25%, especially for new sites in more urbanized locations.

Expanding library spaces beyond their physical walls allows for a multitude of new program opportunities that may not otherwise be possible indoors, including children's play areas, outdoor reading rooms, land-based learning and

Policy Reference

» [City of Richmond Hill Urban Forest Management Plan, 2020-2040](#)

» [York Region Forest Management Plan for the York Regional Forest, 2019-2038 \(York Region\)](#)

programming, outdoor education, and can encourage physical activity. Features such as pollinator gardens, fruit and vegetable gardens, and medicinal gardens can also contribute to overall biodiversity, food security, and education. Providing access to outdoor facilities also allows users to benefit from fresh air while visiting the library, when desired (which has become more important to individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic). The design of sites and rooftops at new and existing branches should strive to include a variety of outdoor program opportunities and biodiverse landscape features. Important energy, financial, and spatial considerations to be made include the water source for the gardens and storage for gardening equipment.

The Sustainability Metrics Program's Natural Environment and Parks category awards points for a number of initiatives related to improving access to parks and natural systems and conditions for new and maintained trees, soil quality, pollinator habitats, and fruit and vegetable gardens. LEED v4.1 certification however awards points for creating exterior open spaces that encourage interaction with the environment, social interaction, passive recreation, and physical activities.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- NE-1: Tree Conservation
- NE-2: Soil Quantity and Quality for New Trees
- NE-3: Healthy Soils
- NE-6: Supporting Pollinators
- NE-7: Dedicated Fruit/Vegetable Garden Space

C.3.4 Light Pollution

Light pollution is a widespread issue in urban and developed areas with negative health and safety consequences for both humans and wildlife. Many species rely on natural light cues to regulate their migration, feeding, and reproductive behaviors. The dysregulation of these functions can lead to greatly disrupted ecosystems.

Existing and new branches can reduce light pollution through the careful design of exterior site lighting as well as the control of exterior and interior lighting outside of service hours. Exterior lighting fixtures should be Dark Sky Compliant to comply with the City of Richmond Hill Light Pollution By-law 63-95. Dark Sky Compliant fixtures will ensure appropriate lighting temperatures and properly shield lighting to direct light spill downward to reduce glare or sky glow.

The Sustainability Metrics Program awards points if all exterior fixtures are Dark Sky Compliant and additional points if lighting controls reduce the nighttime spillage of internal light by 50% from 11pm to 5am.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- IB-17: Light Pollution Reduction

C.3.5 Bird-Friendly Design

Birds are essential to any ecosystem due to their ability to pollinate flora, disperse seeds and control insect populations. In urban environments, many birds face significant threats due to habitat loss, climate change, and collision with structures. New and existing buildings can play a role in the conservation of bird populations and can help to avoid unnecessary bird collisions and fatalities. Glazing, lighting, and habitat all play important roles in the conservation of birds in an urban setting.

Bird-friendly design can be achieved by thoughtful orientation or minimization of glazed areas where possible. For example, glazing should be minimized where green roofs or habitat such as green roofs are located. Where glazing is proposed, the use of fritting, films, or patterning to alert birds to the presence of glass is recommended to reduce collisions. Birds will also benefit from the reduction or elimination of interior light spill at night.

The thoughtful inclusion of plantings and habitat to feed and shelter birds is encouraged to promote a bird-friendly site. Native plants that support pollinators, including birds, bees, and butterflies, are strongly recommended and can enhance library patron's connection to the natural world.

The Sustainability Metrics Program awards points for the use of bird-friendly glazing and design strategies on at least 85% of the first 16 metres of a building above grade where contiguous glass areas are greater than 2 square metres in area. Points are also awarded for the inclusion of either 25% or 50% or more native plants proposed in the landscaped areas.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- NE-6: Supporting Pollinators
- IB-18: Bird-Friendly Design

C.3.6 Accessibility

Buildings that are accessible are incredibly important to our built environment. Not only are certain accessibility standards a requirement, but creating more accessible spaces adds value by allowing for more equal, equitable access to building services and amenities. The Sustainability Metrics Program awards a point if 50% of emergency exits above the Ontario Building Code requirements are designed to be barrier-free. LEED v4.1 has also launched a pilot credit to encourage inclusive design strategies.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- IB-3: Building Accessibility (Barrier Free Entry/Egress)

C.4 Water Management

C.4.1 Stormwater Management

LEED v4.1 awards a credit for reducing rainwater runoff volume and improving water quality by replicating the natural hydrology and water balance of the site based on a region's historical conditions. Reducing rainwater runoff mitigates flooding downstream in frontline communities. Examples of accessible Low Impact Development (LID) techniques include planting rain gardens with native or adapted plant material (e.g. trees or shrubs); installing a green roof; using permeable paving consisting of porous above-ground materials, a base layer designed to drain water away from the building, and a subbase; and installing permanent infiltration or collection features (e.g. bioswale, rain gardens).

Stormwater quantity can be managed through infiltration, evaporation, re-use of runoff and rainwater, stormwater management ponds, and Low Impact Development. Strategies for managing stormwater quality include stormwater management ponds, oil-grit separators (ETV certified), bioswales, and filters. Strategies for multi-purpose stormwater management consist of beautification measures such as public art and visually pleasing infrastructure that offer simultaneous water retention technologies. The Sustainability Metrics Program awards points for elements that address and stormwater quantity, quality and multi-purpose management.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- NE-9: Stormwater Quantity
- NE-10: Stormwater Quality
- NE-12: Multi-Purpose Stormwater Management

C.4.2 Water Consumption

LEED v4.1 awards credits for reducing outdoor and indoor water consumption. Outdoor water consumption can be reduced by employing non-vegetated surfaces such as permeable and impermeable pavement, effectively reducing the landscape water requirement. Planting native and adaptive vegetation also reduces the need for outdoor water and instead relies on natural processes. Alternative measures include increasing efficiency through the use of smart scheduling technologies and using alternative water sources.

Indoor water consumption can be reduced by installing efficient fixtures, fittings and appliances in the design phase and utilizing alternative water sources that correspond to appropriate end uses. LEED v.4.1 lists compliant (Energy Star or EU A label) commercial washing machines and kitchen and medical equipment that reduces indoor water and energy use and contributes to less water use throughout a building's life cycle.

RHPL can maximize the use of rainwater and greywater (wastewater generated from dish and hand washing, laundry, and bathing) by capturing and treating water on-site through plumbing infrastructure and re-using the treated water for outdoor or indoor purposes. The Sustainability Metrics Guidebook awards points for rainwater and greywater use.

The Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook also awards points for installing water meters in commercial and retail buildings as indicated in a Site Servicing Plan. Water meters allow for tracking and monitoring water consumption, propelling users to understand how their behaviour drives energy costs. Additionally, maximizing the use of rainwater and greywater can also reduce water consumption and can be achieved by capturing and treating water on-site through plumbing infrastructure and re-using water for outdoor and indoor purposes.

Applicable Performance Metrics from the Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook for this section include:

- IB-13: Rainwater and Greywater Use
- IB-16: Sub-Metering of Thermal Energy and Water
- NE-11: Potable Water Use

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