The Case for Support

Campaign to Expand & Restore the Elk Rapids District Library
Discover the World from Our Porch

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The Elk Rapids District Library (ERDL) has been located in the historic Island House in the center of the Elk Rapids community for 70 years. It serves the community in a multitude of ways: creating educational opportunities for people of all ages, sparking creativity, serving as a gathering place for personal and social enrichment, and as an icon that enhances the appeal and charm of Elk Rapids for residents and visitors alike.

Library visitors love the location and beauty of the facility, but they want more: comfortable seating, quiet reading and work spaces, more programs and activities, better access to technology and training, a larger children’s area, a place for teens, more collaborative spaces, a bigger/better space for programs and meetings, and a broader range of materials.

As a designated Michigan Historic Site, there are unique challenges to adapting the Island House to the evolving needs of a modern public library. Working with the highly qualified combined design team of architectural firms HopkinsBurns Design Studio and Daniels and Zermack Architects, the ERDL Board has developed conceptual plans for a 6,300sf addition to the Island House Library that complements and retains its historic designation and also includes the restoration of some architectural elements of the original structure.

The $5 million campaign to expand and restore the historic Island House Library is an opportunity to build on the allure and history of a community treasure and ensure the success and vitality of a valuable asset for today’s users and future generations.
ERDL serves a population of more than 5,400 full-time residents in the village of Elk Rapids and the townships of Elk Rapids, Milton and Torch Lake. During the summer months, the service area swells to approximately 10,000 people, stretching limited space and resources even further.

The Elk Rapids District Library is at the heart of community life both literally and figuratively. Situated at the intersection of the E.C. Grace Memorial Harbor and marina, Veterans Memorial Park, and downtown Elk Rapids, the Library is centrally and conveniently located to serve area residents and visitors. This location contributes to the economic vitality of the community by drawing people into the central business district on a daily basis and through its participation in large public events such as the Downtown Holiday Open House, Green Elk Rapids, Harbor Days, art exhibitions, and more.

As a center of community life, the Library is a welcoming place for life-long learning where people of all ages and cultures can access free information and technology, gather to exchange ideas and participate in programs and activities for personal and social enrichment. Among the programs and services offered:

- Print & digital books and reading materials for adults, teens and children.
- Music and films on DVDs/CDs.
- Access materials from other libraries through the Michigan Electronic Library (MEL).
- Print & digital reference materials and information resources.
- Free access to computer workstations and internet service.
- Free, loaner laptop computers and internet hot-spot devices.
- Technology support including instruction and how-to information.
- Children’s programs including summer reading events, weekly story hour, and more.
- Adult programs including health & wellness, hobbies, support groups, and others.

“A modern library is books and quiet spaces, but also much more – the noisy joy of preschoolers, the gathering of diverse users, access to advancing technology, a small and large group presentation place, access to disabled and wheelchair bound citizens, and a historical site. Let’s preserve and honor the past and welcome the future.”

— Linda Travis, Elk Rapids

Community Asset

On a national level, surveys also show citizens recognize their local libraries as significant community assets. According to a recent study by the Pew Institute¹, the vast majority of Americans ages 16 and older say public libraries play an important role in their communities:

- 95% of Americans ages 16 and older agree that the materials and resources available at public libraries play an important role in giving everyone a chance to succeed.
- 95% say that public libraries are important because they promote literacy and a love of reading.
- 94% say that having a public library improves the quality of life in a community.
- 81% say that public libraries provide many services people would have a hard time finding elsewhere.

Teens Welcome Here

A dedicated, attractive, and teen-oriented space is a key objective of the Library expansion plan. Currently, there is no designated area for teens and the young adult collection is quite limited. The library board and staff look forward to addressing these shortcomings and working closely with teens to develop a space that meets their needs.

Kimberly Bolan for the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) describes libraries as “essential informal learning spaces within communities that bridge the gap between the classroom and afterschool. They provide an ideal environment for all teens to engage in connected learning activities—hands-on, teen-driven activities that enable teens to learn while exploring their passions and interests.”

Developing a dedicated teen space creates a positive, safe environment for learning, socializing, and leisure activities, adds Bolan. “It is a way to outwardly and interactively acknowledge teens and their needs by supporting adolescent development, creating an environment which encourages emotional, social, and intellectual growth, and building a sense of teen belonging, community involvement, and appreciation of how a library fits into their day-to-day lives.”

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Tech Savvy Staff Save the Day

Everyone has a computer, right? The librarians at Elk Rapids District Library know otherwise. Many hours each day are devoted to providing one-on-one support to patrons who don’t have access at home to a computer and/or printer. Generally, they have a specific online task to complete for a business or organization. Often describing themselves as “computer illiterate” and desperate for help, these library users rely on the expertise of the staff to guide them through the process of accessing websites, completing online forms, or printing important documentation from online sources.

In one situation involving an insurance company, the librarian even got on the phone with the visitor’s insurance agent to troubleshoot an online form that was not working properly. She ended up helping the couple with a work-around that involved printing, scanning and emailing the paperwork. As she reflected on the memory, the librarian wondered aloud, “Where else can someone go to get help like this?”
During its 70-year history as home to the Library, the Island House has been modified in various ways to accommodate the needs of the community and Library patrons. For example, the reading porch overlooking Grand Traverse East Bay is a much-loved, newer addition that provides essential space for reading and working as well as occasional small-group programs.

But in many ways, the historic Island House is no longer able to accommodate the changing needs of a modern library and growing demand.

Library Usage and Trends
The ERDL sees more than 44,000 visitors each year—nearly twice as many as the average of its peer group of 78 Michigan Public Libraries (MPL) serving a similar-size population (Class 2 Libraries).³

The following utilization statistics for ERDL illustrate trends affecting not only our Library, but also libraries throughout our region, across the country, and around the world. Libraries are evolving as popular gathering places supporting life-long learning, recreation, and socialization and serve as co-working spaces for transient workers. These types of activities are straining facilities that were originally conceived for more passive uses.

In summary, the Library expansion is driven by three critical factors:
1. **Changing needs of users and high utilization of the Library.**
2. **Historical and physical constraints of the facility.**
3. **Ensuring the value and vitality of the Library as a center of the community.**

A successful $5 million campaign for the Elk Rapids District Library will assure its continuing role as a vibrant community asset and focal point for today’s users and generations to come.

The combined design team of HopkinsBurns Design Studio and Daniels and Zermack Architects is uniquely qualified to lead this expansion and restoration project.

Since 1984, the historic preservation practice of HopkinsBurns Design Studio (Architects Four being the parent company) has participated in hundreds of preservation projects involving historic structures. Many of these buildings are National Historic Landmarks, listed on the National and State Registers of Historic Places, and play a significant role in local communities. The staff includes Federally Qualified Historical Architects and each project is overseen by a registered architect with a specialty in preservation.

Formed in 1950, Daniels and Zermack Architects, LLC is an architectural and interior design firm specializing in the planning and design of financial institutions and libraries. They have handled design and project management of nearly 1,000 projects.

Physical Space Requirements

The Design Team used data from the Library’s strategic planning process as well as its professional expertise and knowledge of library planning to provide specific programmatic recommendations for developing the schematic design for expansion and restoration. As part of this process, target numbers were identified for several key areas of Library improvement:

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<th>Service Area</th>
<th>Current Number</th>
<th>Target Number</th>
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<td>Physical Collection*</td>
<td>19,000 items (3.53 items/capita)</td>
<td>24,000 items (4.4 items/capita)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reader Seating</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Seating</td>
<td>6 desktop computers</td>
<td>10 computer stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Workstations</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Space</td>
<td>27 seats (at best)</td>
<td>65 seats</td>
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*Not including subscriptions or digital items

Special Use Spaces:
- A group study room to seat six.
- A tutoring room to seat two.
- Friends of Library book sale area.
- Staff breakroom.
- Miscellaneous special use elements.

In all areas, the target numbers were conservatively developed at the lower end of the population scale (5,432 year-round compared to 10,000 seasonal residents), which still provides substantial increases over current figures. The Library board and design team acknowledge that during the summer months when usage peaks, some programs and activities such as children’s reading are likely to be held in off-site facilities.
Preventing Isolation

We live in an age where we can communicate with friends and family members across the country and around the globe with a click of a mouse or a few taps on a smart phone. Despite these advances in communication technology, research indicates that as a society we are lonelier than we have ever been. Perhaps no other age group feels the pain of loneliness more than the elderly. And this loneliness has serious consequences, putting older people at increased risk for depression, illness and physical decline.

For some Elk Rapids’ seniors who live alone, regular hours at the library is a creative strategy to defeat loneliness. They spend many hours each week in the library with reading materials, puzzles, writing and other activities. More importantly, they connect with others, swapping stories, laughing, and engaging in meaningful conversations. “We have some that come so regularly,” comments a librarian, “they have become part of the library family even to the point of calling us when they can’t make it in and volunteering their time to help with little tasks around the library. We enjoy their presence and they reap the benefits of engaging with others.”
“Thanks to leadership that understands the importance of literacy for all, we now have an opportunity to considerably improve the Elk Rapids District Library that serves not only the village, but two townships. Across the country, libraries in towns of all sizes are becoming centers for many kinds of cultural activities. They are meeting places for various groups, an important support for public education and a center for electronic learning in this information society.”

— Dana Vannoy, Ph.D. Elk Rapids Township

- Modest increase in the size of print and non-print collections for adults, young adults and children.
- Dedicated areas for young adults and children that minimize interruption and noise for other patrons.
- Larger space for community programs.
- Increase in reader seating.
- Addition of an outdoor seating area.
- More computer stations and seating for laptop use.
- Display space for books, audio visual materials, community information.
- Group study room.
- Tutoring room.
- Improved book sale area for Friends of the Library.
- Improved and better location for public restrooms.
- Increase in staff workstations.
- Staff break room.
- Restoration of several historical elements including the parlor, the fireplace located near the front desk, and a conservatory located to the west of the porch along the face of the building.
Project Description

The proposed Library addition is two levels aligning with the current building: a main floor and lower walkout level. Combined, the two levels are roughly 6,300sf. The plans show the addition extending from the southwest corner of the Library and connecting to the existing west wing of the building.

The main floor features a program room, adult reading area and restrooms. The lower level contains the children and teen areas, casual seating and vending area, restrooms and tutoring room. The Book Cellar will remain in the lower level and the main entrance will stay in its current location as well. The generous use of windows throughout the design allows for views of the Island House property, trees and glimpses of the bay.

The plan also calls for the restoration of several historical elements of the Island House including the parlor, the fireplace located near the front desk, and a conservatory located to the west of the porch along the face of the building.

The additional space allows for reconfiguration and modest expansion of the adult collections and the addition of comfortable seating, work stations and quiet reading areas. The children and teen areas will have similar amenities and capacity for larger collections as well. Separate computer stations are planned for the adult, children and teen areas.
The historic Island House is owned by the Village of Elk Rapids. In 1949, it was donated and deeded to the Village of Elk Rapids for use as a library and/or community center. As elected representatives of the Village, members of the Elk Rapids Village Council have played a major role in reviewing and approving the expansion plans.

During the review process, two plans were considered, one for 4,000sf and the 6,300sf plan recommended by the Library Board. On September 17, 2018, the Council voted to approve the 6,300sf expansion plan.

Additional support has been provided by hundreds of citizens who have spoken during community meetings and written letters of support to the Library, Village Council and local paper, the *Elk Rapids News*. Additionally, a number of key community organizations and individuals have voiced their support including:

- Elk Rapids Chamber of Commerce
- Elk Rapids Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
- Elk Rapids Schools principals and teachers
- Elk Rapids E-team representing business and community leaders

"There is no question that Elk Rapids has legitimate needs for a better library. The facts support the case for expansion. There are literally hundreds of benefits that libraries provide to the community. It is a vital resource in a rapidly changing world and helps position the community for rapidly changing requirements."

— Rick Bellingham, Elk Rapids

**Historic Status Preserved**

The project has also been reviewed and approved by the Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer, an important consideration for the Library Board, Village Council and community members.

"After careful review of these documents and extensive conversations with the Hopkins Burns representatives, we have concluded that the proposed addition design represented therein appears to be consistent with the historic character, design and setting of the property and conforms to the guidance contained in the Secretary of the Interiors Standards for Rehabilitation. We appreciate the effort that your consultant, library board and the community have put into identifying and developing a design proposal that appears to meet the needs of the community and to maintain the integrity of this significant Michigan historic resource."

— Brian D. Conway  
*Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer*

**Early Financial Support**

During the Village Council review process, some prospective donors contacted Library officials offering their financial support. Following Village Council approval and before the formation of the Campaign Committee and close of 2018, some significant contributions were received from these generous donors. We are grateful and proud to have already received almost $790,000 in financial support prior to the official launch of our Capital Campaign.
The ERDL Board and Capital Campaign Committee are working to raise 100% of the funds for the expansion and restoration through private donations and grants. Board members have pledged not to use tax dollars for this project.

A fundraising feasibility study is being done by the professional fund-raising firm Zrimec/Wick of Traverse City, MI. The principals Jay Zrimec and Bob Wick bring over 40 years of combined experience in fund development, assisting small non-profits in raising over $50 million.

The construction portion of the Library project is estimated at $3.4 million with $1.6 million designated for furnishings and equipment for a total of $5 million.

The operations of the Library are funded primarily through taxpayers in the Library District, which includes the Village and Township of Elk Rapids and Milton Township. Of the total revenue for 2017/18, 90% was derived from the millage, which was established in perpetuity by voters in 2001.

Other income sources include a contract for Library services with neighboring Torch Lake Township as well as a small amount of state aid, penal fines, patron fines and fees, and donations.

The Library has a long-term lease with the Village of Elk Rapids, which is responsible for all exterior maintenance and repair while the Library covers all interior maintenance and improvement expenses as well as operating costs.

The 2017/18 ERDL operating budget was $313,454.

The Library Board has prepared a five-year budget projection starting with the first year in the expanded building. It shows that current reserves and funding levels will adequately cover operating expenses for five years post-construction with a reserve balance of approximately $550,000 in year five.

Projected Operating Budget in year one – $343,450

Projected Operating Budget in year five – $386,575

Budget Increase of 11.2%

Estimated Reserve Balance after five years – $547,345

The greatest impact on operating expenses after the expansion will be higher staffing requirements. Because the children and teen areas will be on a lower level with the circulation desk on the main level, additional personnel will be needed in the building. The increase in utility expenses is expected to be fairly nominal due to the energy efficiency standards that will apply to the new addition.
To succeed today, libraries must master many different roles — some traditionally associated with libraries, some are [the result of evolving into a 21st century library]. Their new, multi-faceted missions must be supported with great design, flexible space, strong amenities, and popular programs. That’s a lot to juggle, but when everything works together, libraries become places that anchor community life and bring people together.”

— Project for Public Spaces

The Elk Rapids District Library is at a crossroads. We are fortunate to have in our Library many of the elements that contribute to greatness: a charming and welcoming place, a central location and easy access, a mix of services and programs providing learning, entertainment and social interaction, and a dedicated and creative staff with a desire to do more.

But the historic Island House has physical limitations that prevent it from fully realizing its mission to serve as a center of civic life and live up to its potential as a multi-purpose destination serving more people and a greater variety of visitors.

An investment in the Elk Rapids District Library Campaign will continue to sustain community by ensuring our Library remains as the vibrant heart of our downtown. Your gift is the kind that keeps on giving for our children, our grandchildren and all future generations of family and friends who will discover the world from our beautiful historic and expanded gem of a Library.

How You Can Help

The Capital Campaign for the Elk Rapids District Library is seeking $5 million in community philanthropy to restore elements of the historic Island House and expand the Library. You can help us achieve this ambitious goal by supporting this campaign through:

- A one-time cash gift
- A multi-year pledge commitment to be paid over three years
- A gift of appreciated assets
- An estate gift
- Volunteering at campaign events

Donations are being received by The Friends of the Elk Rapids District Library, a qualified 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Accordingly, your charitable gift is tax deductible to the full extent of state and federal laws. Donations can be made online at the Capital Campaign website at www.elkrapidslibrary.org. Checks made payable to The Friends of the Elk Rapids District Library can be sent to the Friends at PO Box 337, Elk Rapids, Michigan 49629.

“It is the belief of the Downtown Development Authority (DDA) that a vibrant library enhances the community and the downtown district. Upon communication with our district stakeholders, it was determined that 77% of the respondents felt the library had a positive effect on the community and their businesses.”

— Steve Thomas, Chair
Elk Rapids Downtown Development Authority

Elk Rapids District Library

Elk Rapids Downtown Development Authority

Steve Thomas, Chair
Elk Rapids Downtown Development Authority
Elk Rapids District Library Campaign Committee

The Library Capital Campaign Committee is led by community volunteers with significant experience in non-profit leadership and fundraising. The steering committee is comprised of strong volunteer leaders, each selected for their experience, expertise, community involvement and dedication. These individuals will tap additional community members to support specific initiatives and action items.

The professional fund-raising firm Zrimec/Wick of Traverse City, MI is providing consulting services and as mentioned, is conducting a Feasibility Study for the Campaign.

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Elk Rapids District Library
Board of Trustees

Barb Johnson, President (Milton Township)
Thom Yocum, Vice President (Elk Rapids Township)
Jane Stauffer, Secretary (Milton Township)
Diane Geddes, Treasurer (Milton Township)
Richard Hults (Elk Rapids Township)
Chuck Schuler (Village of Elk Rapids)
Sarah Ward (Village of Elk Rapids)
Chris Weitschat (Village of Elk Rapids)

Nannette Miller, Library Director

The mission of the Elk Rapids District Library is to –

• Excel in customer service
• Anticipate and meet lifelong learning needs
• Assure equitable access to the Library’s resources and services
• Be a dynamic force in the community

Steering Committee

Operating Income
Marc Langs, CFO

Major Gifts and Grants
Peg Asmus, Paul Moyer and Sarah Ward

Business Giving
Eric Ray and Karen Simpson

Community Giving
Paula Moyer and Gera Witte

Marketing
Terry Miller, Sarah Miller and Jim Witte

Data Management
Laura Savoie