



## **Elk Rapids District Library Library Improvement Project**

HopkinsBurns Design Studio / Daniels and Zermack Architects  
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### **Project Update and Report**

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## **Conceptual Design and Planning Process Summary**

As we understand, the Library's planning process began in 2014 with their commissioning the firm of Hartzell-Mika Consulting, LLC to assist the Library with the development of a Strategic Plan in order to properly plan for the future and to make the most thoughtful and best use of the generous donation they received from Mr. Heffer. Following completion of that initial planning process, in 2016, the Library commissioned the combined design team of architectural firms HopkinsBurns Design Studio and Daniels and Zermack Architects to assess the current library facility and to develop conceptual designs for the expansion and renovation of the library, bringing their respective expertise in historic preservation and library design to this very important project and historically sensitive site.

The Hartzell Mika (H-M) study included a review of the library's operations and data gathering through focus group sessions, surveys, interviews with key leaders, and discussions with Library staff, administration, and Board. The study also included a comparative statistical analysis of the Elk Rapids District Library (ERDL), comparing the Library across numerous metrics and benchmarking the ERDL against nine identified peer libraries serving similar communities with relatively equivalent library service populations.

The H-M study served as the initial basis of the Design Team's understanding of the current library. The final H-M published report is available from the ERDL; therefore, the complete specific findings and recommendations are not repeated herein. Building upon this initial planning document, the Design Team then used their professional expertise and knowledge of Library Planning to supplement the findings of the H-M study where it fell short on specific programmatic recommendations that are necessary for planning and developing a schematic design for expansion and renovation.

For example, the H-M study included documentation of the Library's collections and benchmarked ERDL against nine of its peer libraries of similar service population. For the data set included in the peer comparison, the peer library service populations ranged from 4,168 to 6,621 with an average of 5,480 persons. The ERDL legal service population is just below the average at 5,432. A summary of the total items per capita for the peer comparison group are as follows:

- Peer Group Low 5.34 items per capita
- Peer Group High 10.12 items per capita
- Peer Group Average 6.45 items per capita
- Michigan Class 2 Average 5.26 items per capita (75 libraries in Michigan)
  
- **ERDL 3.75 items per capita**

The ERDL collections are **42% below the peer group comparison average** and **29% below the average of all Class 2 Libraries** (total of 75) in the State of Michigan. **The H-M report noted this deficiency is due to lack of adequate space and recommended increasing the size of the collection.**

A key part of the H-M study recognized the unique nature of the ERDL service area as a community that experiences significant seasonal change in population and activity levels. The peer group libraries for comparison were specifically identified as communities that experience similar season fluctuations in an attempt to quantify the impact that such seasonal variation has on library services. Per the H-M report, housing data for the township’s served by the ERDL indicates seasonal housing ownership ranges from 27.5% to 52.1%. While specific statistical seasonal population data was not readily available, anecdotal evidence and feedback from stakeholders suggests the seasonal summer population increases substantially over the ERDL’s reported legal service population of 5,432 permanent, year-round residents. Anecdotally, one might assume the summer population of the geographic area served by ERDL may nearly double to approximately 10,000 persons during the busiest summer months of June, July, and August.

The typical methodology for library planning uses the population served by the library as the metric by which the Library’s projected services and resources are determined. A twenty year planning window is typical, projecting population growth 20 years into the future and planning accordingly. Thus, understanding the ERDL’s service population becomes key for planning purposes.

It is generally understood that municipal services and a community’s infrastructure, such as municipal sewer and water, police, fire, and other safety services, road infrastructure, etc. all must be planned to accommodate the upper range or peak level of use that is anticipated in order to effectively support a vibrant and healthy community. As a similar public service, planning for a library could use the same methodology. However, for the ERDL, using a projected service population of 10,000 peak summer residents for the ERDL would likely produce a projected space needs that exceeds what ultimately may be required and result in a facility that is overbuilt for the community. As such, the H-M peer library benchmark comparison was informative for determining relevant service goals for ERDL.

The Design Team found the H-M peer comparison acceptable and appropriate for use in projecting a target collection size. The H-M study recommended increasing collections across all genres with an emphasis on audio/visual materials, however, no specific collections targets were noted. Informed by the benchmark comparison statistical information, the Design Team projected a recommended service goal for collections and had library staff conduct a collection audit to understand in greater detail the space allocation for the existing collections. This information, in addition to conversations with staff and board, was used to project areas of growth in the collection by genre. The collection service goal established was 6.15 items per capita. This figure represents approximately 75% of the difference

between the peer group comparison average of 6.45 and the average of all Michigan Class 2 libraries of 5.26. One could have chosen to use the peer group average or higher; however, the adjustment was seen as adopting a less aspirational goal for the community. Utilizing a projected service population of 5,500 persons, representing a very modest growth over the next twenty years, the projected total collections are as follows:

- **Initial Collection target of 34,000 total items** (6.15 items per capita based on 5,500 projected service population)

The above collection target was used by the Design Team and library staff to project growth across all collection genres in developing the program. Due to potential space and budget limitations, the initial collection growth projections were perceived to be too ambitious and were scaled back to reflect the primary priorities of expanding Children and Teen collections and only modest growth in adult collections. Total collection inventory held by public libraries nationally peaked in 2009 and has declined approximately 5% since, primarily due to a reduction in print materials. This less aspirational collection goal also acknowledges current national trends. The revised collection target is as follows:

- **Revised Collection target of 24,000 total items** (Reduced, equivalent to 4.36 items per capita)

The final reduced program dated July 8, 2017 included these reduced collection targets with proposed growth from 2014 collection count (items owned) as follows:

- Adult collections minor growth increase from 10,484 items to 11,779 items (12% increase)
- Young Adult collections growth increase from 531 items to 1,593 items (300% increase)
- Children's collection growth increase from 4,462 items to 8,891 items (200% increase)
- Maintain status quo for periodical, audio / visual, and miscellaneous collections

Note, the above targets formed the basis for the initial conceptual design planning effort that resulted in the development of the four expansion concepts with the East Option 1 plan identified as the preferred option. Following review by the State Historic Preservation Office, the current 6,300 sf expansion plan was developed to respond to preservation concerns. This revised plan, the current 6,300 sf expansion concept, achieved increased adult area capacity by the nature of the expansion strategy over the original four expansion concepts that were primarily focused on significantly increasing Children and Teen areas.

The H-M study did not specify a target for reader seating, public computers, or staff workstations (different from number of staff or Full Time Equivalents (FTE) ). The Design Team used our experience with planning other similar libraries to propose recommendations for those programmatic elements in developing a detailed Building Program Outline. The H-M study also did not include specific recommendations for special use spaces which was also incorporated into the program.

At the time of the Design Team's initial site visit, the existing ERDL had a total of 29 reader seats including 26 located in the Adult / Teen area (including a two seat sofa) and 3 located within the Children's area. However, 3 or more of the seats included in this tally were located within stack aisles or blocking stack aisles such that they are not appropriate seating locations. These three seats, and possibly more, based on the Design Team's observations, block patron access to shelving, limit maneuverability, and may be

considered a violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act. As such, we recommended these seats be removed. As a result, the effective existing reader seating count should be as follows:

- **Existing Total Reader Seating of 26**

Library planning principles suggest recommended seating quantities for public libraries serving a population of 5,500 person should total 49 reader seats. For libraries serving a population of 10,000 persons, the recommended seating quantity should be 75 reader seats. These seating recommendations are in addition to dedicated public computer stations, special use type space such as group study and tutoring rooms, and the programs room. Given the evolving nature of libraries in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century becoming more people-centric than their 20<sup>th</sup> Century collection-centric counterparts, the current ERDL falls far short in providing adequate space for people to utilize the library and its resources in the manner that national trends in library usage suggests and patrons demand. Recognizing space constraints and potential limitations and a primary focus on expanding children and teen areas, the recommended reader seating service goal was identified at the lower end of this range which would still provide a substantial increase over the current setting. Part of this calculation also acknowledged that the programs room may provide overflow seating for adults when not in use for scheduled programs, if the library layout supported adequate staff supervision of the space. No adult reader seating increase was anticipated. The Reader seating recommendation is as follows:

- **Proposed Total Reader Seating Target of 49** (increase of 23 over current)

ERDL currently has a total of six desktop computers and six laptops for public use. These include two educational computers in the youth area and four desktop computers in the adult area. There are no dedicated computers for use by teens. Today, computer stations can be thought of more broadly as technology stations. Such stations may go beyond the traditional desktop workstation to include other technology platforms such as laptops, tablets, and other portable electronic devices. There remains a need for patron space for use of these electronic devices, whether provided by the Library or patron owned. If there are adequate and diverse reader seating available, some of the reader seating can also support patron use of portable technology devices, thereby serving a dual role as a technology station.

National statistics for computer resources within public libraries indicates a trend toward the average of one computer station for every 1,100 in service population. For libraries serving smaller populations, this national average ratio may not provide sufficient access to computers necessitating a higher per capita figure be used. A community's demographics also strongly influences the need for access to computers as access to computers in the home or place of business and access to high speed internet can vary widely from one community to the next. For ERDL, the recommended computer inventory was to increase desktop computers to 8 to 10 stations with an emphasis on providing dedicated computer stations for teen use. The desktop stations would be further supplemented with the six laptops, or more if budget allows, provided adequate readers seating space is provided for laptop use. This recommendation parallels the national average ratio applied across the projected increased summer seasonal population when demand may be greatest and is further supported by the additional laptop access. The recommended traditional computer station quantity is as follows:

- **Proposed Computer station Target of 10** (increase of 4 over current)

In the present ERDL facility configuration, there is insufficient staff space to properly support library operations, both at public service desks and within staff workroom areas. The H-M report identifies that the ERDL, in comparison to its peer libraries, has below average number of staff while serving the community with 300 more hours open per year than the peer group average. H-M recommended increasing staffing to address this shortfall. The library facility needs to also accommodate this increased staff and provide a functional layout that supports effective and efficient delivery of service to the community. The number of staff workstations (not staffing) to accommodate the various tasks and duties staff must undertake were recommended as follows:

- **Proposed Staff Workstation total of 9** (including one volunteer, increase of 4 over existing 5 stations)

Conducting library programs is an important aspect to further the library's mission of service to the community. In discussions with staff and community stakeholders, a recommended seating capacity for the Library's programs room was established. The seating capacity target was developed to accommodate the majority of programs the Library would typically conduct over the year, but it is understood that the largest attended events – typically summer reading programs – may not be accommodated in a permanent, on site meeting space. These largest events are typically limited to a handful of days during the year. Thus, the programs room capacity was established to support the typical monthly programs the library conducts rather than the extreme maximum. The recommended Programs Room seating capacity is as follows:

- **Proposed Programs Room Seating Capacity of 65 seats** (increase over existing, at best 27 seats)

In addition to the above programmatic elements, the library should include special use spaces that provide additional resources and amenities not specifically included in the programmatic elements above. These include such items as online public access catalog stations (OPACs), copy areas, group study rooms, tutoring rooms, fireplaces, children's activity areas, café / vending areas, Friends book sale area, staff breakroom, and similar. The recommended library program included various special use spaces, including the following:

- **A Group Study room to seat 6**
- **A Tutoring room to seat 2**
- **Friends Book Sale area**
- **Staff Breakroom**
- **Miscellaneous special use elements**

The Building program also includes unassignable space that is required to support the programmatic elements of any building. These elements include the building support infrastructure such as toilet rooms, mechanical, electrical and data rooms, janitor's closets, general storage, stairs and elevators, entry vestibules, lobbies, horizontal circulation, and wall thicknesses.

The Building Program Outline statement was developed through the above planning analysis and interactions with library staff, administration, Board, and community stakeholders. The Program document represented an approximation of the space required to accommodate the identified programmatic elements and served as the basis for developing conceptual design alternatives for review

and discussion with stakeholders. Any building program is a fluid document and not absolute, subject to revision and testing against other design considerations once conceptual plans are developed in response. Various design objectives, other design opportunities, and the physical site constraints ultimately determines the final space efficiency of any plan in comparison to the initial program document. The final Program Document dated July 8, 2016 projected a total building size of 11,912 square feet.

The final Building Program Space Outline is available from the ERDL.

The H-M study included a recommendation of a 2,000 sf main floor addition with a similar sized unfinished basement for a total addition area of 4,000 sf. However, apart from the square footage identified, the study was relatively vague, perhaps intentionally so, in identifying what this proposed floor area would house in terms of collections, reader seating, computers, staffing, etc. with the floor area recommendation appearing somewhat arbitrary in nature. As such, the H-M space recommendation does not appear to be based on actually housing a specific program but, we believe, was offered more as one possible expansion strategy that may be considered to provide general information to the board and subject to further confirmation and thorough planning development by an architect, once hired by the Library. The H-M addition “recommendation” lacked the programmatic detail outlined above to substantiate this recommendation. As such, the Design Team did not give much credence to the validity of their recommendation as no basis for it was explained in their report that could be analyzed and either confirmed or modified. Hartzell-Mika did not intend this initial recommendation to be absolute. In fact, their report states the following regarding their initial recommendation: **“It will eventually take the work of an architectural firm together with the staff and Library Board to plan the most logical space utilization based upon specific programming needs for the facility.” (page 76)**. The Design Team’s planning effort undertaken with the library did just that where we developed a defined basis for the proposed expansion, that included input from library staff, administration, the Board, and the general public, gathered through numerous community meetings and interactions.

The Design Team utilized the Building Program Outline, their assessment of the existing facility and site, and input from community stakeholders to develop four initial expansion concepts for review by the Library Board. All four expansion concepts maintained all public library patron space across the main level for efficiency and ease of staff supervision. The Board determined the East Option 1 concept as the preferred option to consider. This expansion design concept met with resistance from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). As a result, an alternative plan, the 6,300 sf addition expansion and renovation plan, was developed. This alternative plan provided a less efficient layout necessitating public library services be spread across both the main and lower levels of the building. The alternative plan, in how the addition connected to the existing building, also offered new opportunities for increasing space devoted to adult collections and seating that was not included in the initial building program. The alternative 6,300 sf expansion plan concept received positive support from SHPO regarding expansion and renovation of the historic structure.

In response to Village Council consideration of the 6,300 sf expansion concept, The Village Council requested the Library study a reduced expansion plan to target an addition of 4,000 sf as an alternative consideration.

## Proposed 4,160 SF Expansion Conceptual Design

The reduced expansion concept plans indicate an addition of approximately 2,100 sf across the lower floor and 2,060 sf across the main floor for a total proposed addition size of approximately 4,160 square feet across both floors. With the existing building floor area of approximately 6,380 sf, the total building size would be 10,540 sf.

The reduced plan concept includes the proposed reconfigured library entry and book return and reconfiguration of the circulation desk, staff workroom, adult computers, new director's office, laptop bar bay window area, enhancement of the parlor area, and maintaining the porch area essentially as is, as originally contemplated within the previous 6,300 sf expansion concept. These proposed renovations are intended to remain the same in the new reduced plan concept.

The reduced expansion plan concept includes a two-story addition (main floor and lower level) of reduced footprint from the previous 6,300 sf expansion concept. The reduced plan main floor addition includes new single occupancy men's and women's toilet rooms, a janitor's closet, copy area, new larger elevator, and new stair access leading to the lower level. Also located on the main floor of the addition is the Programs room to seat 64 persons – the same seating capacity as the previous expansion concept. An adjacent storage room for tables and chairs and mechanical equipment room to serve the main level addition is also included.

Within the lower level of the new addition, at a mid-landing level of the new stair, the new Teen area is created on the same floor level as the existing basement, which, by necessity, will have a lower ceiling height similar to the existing basement space. The existing Friend's area is reconfigured to remove the existing stair and small elevator for a newly reconfigured Friend's book sale area, a new Tutoring room, and a new Group Study room. The existing brick oven area may be used for Friend's support and storage. As with the previous 6,300 sf expansion concept, the existing meeting room is reconfigured into a new staff breakroom and support area and the existing staff office area remains as staff space.

Continuing further down the stair from the main level, the new Children's area is located a half level below the Teen and existing basement level to provide a higher ceiling and to accommodate necessary space for mechanical ductwork and utilities above the ceiling. This level also includes a new family toilet and a two-side elevator that provides barrier free access to all floor levels within the building. A small mechanical room is also included to house mechanical equipment to serve the lower level of the addition. A possible exterior entry and exit is located at the northwest corner that may connect to exterior walks connecting the library with the existing carriage path and parking areas.

The lower level staff public service desk is strategically located at the base of the stair to provide convenient and accessible interaction with the public as they enter this floor as well as the ability to properly serve and supervise the Teen area beyond. The service desk is optimally located to provide line of sight and acoustical connectivity with main floor circulation desk staff to enhance staff interaction and communication between staff distributed across both levels of the building.

The location of the new stair and elevator near the main floor circulation desk enhances staff's situational awareness of patrons moving through the building and across both floors of public service. Likewise, the location of the new main floor toilets, sufficiently remote from the circulation desk to afford a sense of privacy, remain within line of sight of the staff desk to maintain proper supervision and enhance building safety.

## 4,160 SF Conceptual Design Programmatic Comparison Summary

The following is a brief comparison of the programmatic element changes between the proposed 6,300 sf expansion plan concept dated August 8, 2017 and this most recently developed reduced expansion plan representing an addition of approximately 4,160 sf. While there are likely other combinations of programmatic elements that could be housed within a reduced expansion plan, ultimately, a smaller addition will accommodate less collections, reader seating space, computers, and other resource amenities available to the public than the previous expansion proposal. The final balance of desired programmatic elements can be adjusted as the library moves forward, however, simply put, less space will provide fewer resources to the community.

The basic building support infrastructure (e.g., toilets, elevator, horizontal circulation, mechanical, etc.) and properly designed staff support space to allow staff to efficiently and effectively operate the library in support of delivering exceptional library services to the community are relatively unchanged in any reduced plan concept. Thus, any reduction in building expansion size primarily reduces space devoted to public patron use areas.

National trends in library usage data and the design of libraries show that libraries continue to evolve to meet ever changing needs brought about by changes in demographics, usage patterns, collection resources, emerging technologies, etc.

The library of the 20th Century was rather different than the library of the 21st Century today. Library planners have noted that the 20th Century library was more collection-centric, primarily a place for housing a lot of “stuff” that patrons could access. Conversely, the 21st Century library is becoming more user-centric, a place for people to gather and connect. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century library is devoting more space for people *in addition to* space for collections.

Despite this national trend, our experience working with smaller libraries -- especially those who may have a history of underserving their respective communities – suggest they tend to prefer an emphasis on collection space recognizing their collections may have substantially lagged behind their peer libraries in providing adequate services their community. As such, in the proposed reduced expansion plan, we have attempted to preserve collection space at the expense of reader seating and other resource amenities as a starting point for discussion. Defining the right balance for the Elk Rapids District Library expansion can benefit from continued discussions with library staff, board and community stakeholders.

Beyond the reduced floor area square footage, a summary of programmatic changes are as follows:

### A. Main Floor Level – Adult Area:

1. Elimination of 18 single face shelving units for collection (includes growth beyond East Option 1 plan)
2. Elimination of four two-place study tables for a total of 8 fewer adult reader seats. (growth beyond East Option 1 plan)

3. Remaining adult seats of approximately 30. (approximately 36 included in East Option 1 plan)
4. Elimination of three seat Group Study room on main level.
5. Elimination of exterior deck and outdoor reader seating space above lower level floor areas.

**B. Main Floor Level – Programs Room:**

1. Reduction of chair and table storage by approximately 12%
2. Elimination of Crafts Storage and Program Preparation room
3. Elimination of kitchenette space within Programs room.
4. Elimination of outdoor deck (could be added as an amenity but new concept eliminates lower level roof area that could be used as main floor exterior roof deck space).

**C. Lower Floor level – General:**

1. Elimination of one single occupancy toilet. A family toilet remains as part of the Children's area. (total of three public toilets plus staff toilet remain - this constitutes the projected minimum plumbing fixture count required by code)
2. Elimination of Vending Area with sink and Casual Seating Area with three three-place reader tables for a reduction of 9 reader seats.
3. Elimination of Small Programs / Large Group Study room to accommodate 10 seats.
4. Elimination of one Tutoring room for two. One Tutoring room with two seats to remain.
5. Addition of Group Study room for four in lieu of first floor group study that is eliminated.

**D. Lower Floor level – Teen Area:**

1. Shelving for collections remains at an equivalent of 18 single face units
2. Elimination of two four-place booths for a reduction of 8 reader seats.
3. Elimination of two lounge seats and ottoman.
4. Addition of one two-place table for a total of two reader seats reduced from ten (80% reduction in Teen reader seating)
5. Possible addition of two barstool seats overlooking youth area.
6. Reduction of teen computers from four to two (50% reduction).

**E. Lower Floor level – Children's Area:**

1. Shelving for collections remains at 45 units.
2. Elimination of second staff station at children's public service desk.
3. Elimination of two four-place tables from grade school for a reduction of 8 reader seats.
4. Elimination of two large motor skills / play table areas (e.g., brio train, Lego table, puzzle table, etc.)

**F. Combined Building Total Reductions:**

1. Total public computers reduced to 8 from 10, a 20% reduction.

2. Reader seats (including within group study / tutoring rooms, not including existing adult areas) reduced to 25 from 72 seats, a 65% reduction.
3. Total reader seats for Adult, Children’s and Teen, not including special use group study / tutoring rooms, reduced to 42 from 74, a 43% reduction. (60 reader seats total in initial East Option 1 plan)
4. Shelving units for collections remains as per previous plan.
5. Staff workroom space and support areas remain as per previous plan.
6. Children’s and Teen area public service desk reduced from two staff stations to one.

## Proposed Budget Differential Summary

An expansion and renovation project that envisions a smaller addition will cost less than the previous 6,300 sf expansion concept. There are various cost pluses and cost minuses between the two expansion strategies, based on the unique aspects of each expansion concept. The reduction in floor area of the smaller addition will have the most significant impact on reducing project costs. Anticipated renovation costs will be essentially the same. Site development cost remain similar with small adjustments. Technology, furnishings and equipment cost, and other project soft costs remain similar to the previous expansion plan budget. Budgeted costs attributed to historic escalation and contingencies are reduced accordingly.

The largest construction cost differentials include the following:

- Reduced addition cost due to floor area reduction of approximately (\$481,500.)
- Elimination of Rooftop deck and associated railings of approximately (\$133,500.)
- Increased building tie in cost for elevator and lower floor \$45,000.
- Increased site costs for grading, retaining, paving, etc. of approximately \$30,000.

In developing a budget for this reduced expansion concept, the anticipated bid / construction start was kept the same, projected for 2020, as the previous 6,300 sf expansion plan budget. This earlier budget anticipated a three year timeframe for fundraising and completion of design and construction documents. The projected bid / construction start date has been held constant to avoid additional escalation cost from skewing a budget comparison between expansion alternatives. However, it should be noted that nearly a year has passed since the previous budget was developed. If the project approval and fundraising timeline cannot be shortened from previous assumptions, additional cost escalation of 5.1% per year of delay should be factored into the project budgeting as a fundraising target.

The preliminary opinion of probable cost budget for the construction portion of the reduced project is anticipated to be approximately \$2.7 million. The total project costs are approximately \$3.8 million. At this early stage of project development, often a range of anticipated cost to establish an appropriate budget may be more useful than a hard dollar amount, given the preliminary nature of the concepts developed thus far.

In summary, the reduced expansion plan represents the following differentials to the previous 6,300 sf expansion plan concept:

- A reduction in additional floor area to 4,160 sf from 6,300 sf – 66% of previous plan in added new floor area.
- A reduction in anticipated building construction cost of approximately 78% of previous plan budget.
- A reduction in anticipated total project costs of approximately 80% of previous plan budget.