

# Library expansion budget climbs

**CYNTHIA GAMBLE**  
Staff Writer

The new Georgetown branch of the Halton Hills Public Library will be bigger, better—and more costly.

At a special council meeting next Monday (Sept. 10), Halton Hills council will vote whether to support the preliminary budget of \$10 million for the library expansion project. That's up from the \$8 million placed in the capital forecast two years ago. However, the \$8 million was an estimate only for a 20,000 sq. ft. facility to be located at the Gellert Centre.

The new estimates now take into account a three-floor 28,000 sq. ft. renovation and expansion of the existing Church St. building as well as the adjacent property. Total cost is estimated at \$8.4 million.

"The Library Board is pleased that the Georgetown Branch renovation/expansion can accommodate a third floor of approximately 2,100 sq. feet which will release much needed space for collections as well as seating and study space. (Bigger collections emerged as the highest priority in a patron survey). The cost of the third floor represents three per cent of the overall budget, but the public service benefits are significant," said Library Director Jane Diamanti.

Also raising the total: the \$384,000 purchase price of the adjacent property (50 Market St.) and its demolition, hiring a project manager, the \$500,000 cost of the library's temporary quarters, the possible hiring of a LEED (environmental design) consultant, landscaping design services or possible higher than projected prices.

The money will come from development charges and reserve funds.

"As noted in the report, the construction budget for the expansion and renovation is \$8,438,000. Most of the additional costs beyond construction are associated with expanding on-

site, which include the acquisition and preparation of the adjacent property and the need to operate from a temporary location during the construction phase," said Diamanti. "The Georgetown branch will need to close for roughly 15 months in order for construction to proceed efficiently..."

"The conceptual drawings for the Georgetown Branch renovation/expansion incorporate the priorities identified during the extensive consultation process undertaken earlier this year with library patrons, staff, councillors, and other stakeholders. The Library Board eagerly anticipates Phase Two of the project, which will result in the development of detailed design drawings and commencement of construction."

At the same meeting Recreation and Parks Director Terry Alyman will outline to council that \$1.5 million could be invested in improvements to the Cultural Centre's Gallery, John Elliott Theatre and common areas with the library. Council already had committed \$1 million to upgrades and development charges could cover another \$529,000.

Among the many recommended improvements are a theatre balcony, shop and café space, new entrance atrium including stair and elevator, lower level washrooms and community room, and lobby upgrades.

Many of these improvements are already included on the architects' design concepts, which are posted on the library's website, [www.library.hhlp.on.ca](http://www.library.hhlp.on.ca)

At the same meeting, the Recreation Department is recommending closure of the Dick Licata Pool to be replaced by a \$670,000 splash pad in Dominion Gardens Park.

The special meeting gets under way in council chambers at 5 p.m.

Finance director Ed DeSousa will also make a presentation on how the Town will pay for the future capital projects.



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