

# Kitchener Community News

www.kitchenercommunitynews.com

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Marc Arseneault D.Ped., D. Ac.

## KPL prepares for its extreme makeover

by Laura Murray

Schematic designs for a renovated and expanded Central Library, showing basic floor layouts, the proposed location of services and collections, and plans for a three story underground parking complex were well-received at the recent open houses hosted at both the main branch of the Kitchener Public Library (KPL), and the Kitchener Farmers' Market.

"The feedback that I've received has been all positive," said Dan Carli, Chair of the Library Board. "Everyone seems genuinely excited."

"We're one big step closer to realizing our goal of creating a remarkable library space for the city of Kitchener," Carli added. "We're excited by what can be achieved through renovation and expansion on our current site."

It's been quite a journey to get to this point. A series of public meetings, community consultations and opportunity for residents to provide input were essential components of the planning and direction of the project. Sonia Lewis, CEO of the KPL, believes the message was clear from the beginning that the community wanted the main branch of the library to stay in its current location, while acknowledging the need to improve and expand.

"I have received incredibly positive feedback," Lewis said. "It's very clear that we must respect the current building, while we keep our eye on the end goal."

Lewis acknowledged that, like any renovation and expansion project, there will be disruption to the day-to-day business of the Library. She added, however, that detailed planning at this stage is key in creating a

successful space.

Lewis explained that several factors are being evaluated: how people will use the Library, how staff need to work and how best to accommodate collections, including the beloved Bechtel Mural which is being preserved, intact.

Dale Dyce, KPL's co-ordinator of marketing and communications, added that the Board and Library staff believe they are merely "custodians of a community building." Enhanced accessibility, improved layout and increased space, parking and programming are some of the improvements the library is working on.

In addition to discussing the schematics of the library, visitors to the open houses also an opportunity to view and comment on a series of concepts for the development of a future Civic District urban square.

The Civic District, bordered by Queen, Ellen, Frederick and Weber Streets, includes such notable institutions as the Centre-in-the-Square, KW Art Gallery, the Registry Theatre, and Kitchener Public Library.

The Civic District has all the ingredients to become a focal point for arts and culture in Waterloo Region, and the Civic District partners encourage the community to "imagine the possibilities" through a revitalization of this key cultural landscape. As one of the anchors within the District, the renovation and expansion of KPL's Central Library building is seen as an important catalyst to the Civic District revitalization vision.

The Library has launched a new website dedicated to this project. Visit [www.kpl.org/central](http://www.kpl.org/central) for more information, visuals and forums to provide feedback.



## Lest we forget

*Unveiling ceremony of the new Veteran's Green park - page 3*

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