

## Library blames recession for wanting to cut fundraising goal

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The Kitchener Public Library wants to cut the fundraising goal for its expansion project by nearly 90 per cent and says the recession is to blame.

KPL was originally committed to raise \$4 million of the \$40 million dollar project, which will add 33,000 square feet of space, address accessibility issues and improve energy efficiency in the 47-year-old building.

Instead, the library has asked council to approve a change that would leave them on the hook for raising \$500,000.

The initial \$4 million target was suggested by a consultant who examined fundraising feasibility back in 2005, when the library was looking at constructing a new building on the Centre Block site.

After consulting with the public, the library decided against the new building and instead chose to undertake an extensive renovation project at the existing Queen Street structure.

That \$4 million target however stayed in the funding plan for the project, which was approved by council in October 2008.

Late last year, the library hired another consultant to take a second look at the fundraising goal.

That report suggested they aim much lower, given the state of the economy and the fact that the library doesn't have a strong donor base already.

"It is a (significant drop), but we've also had the largest economic downturn since the 30s," said Dan Carli, chair of the library board. "It really has had an impact on people's bottom lines. People are pulling in the reins."

The funding needed for the project will remain unchanged. The reduction in fundraising dollars will be offset by increasing development charges allocated to the expansion. Development charges are fees that developers must pay to the city before constructing new buildings. The library derives its charges from residential development.

If the proposal is approved, the development charges devoted to the library expansion will rise from \$528,000 to just over \$4 million.

The majority of the \$40 million approved for the project will come from a special development fund. The rest will come from fundraising, development charges, deferral of other library capital projects, other capital dollars and \$266,000 which was set aside for roof improvements.

KPL decided to delay extensive roof repairs this year because they could cause problems in the larger plan to

make the renovated building meet the Gold level environmental certification.

The library doesn't yet have a firm plan in place to meet the new five-year \$500,000 fundraising target.

The latest consultant's report suggested raising funds could be a challenge since the public sees libraries as tax-supported and therefore asking for another donation is like being asked to pay twice.

The library recently hired a development manager, Paul Dickson, to work on a plan for the campaign.

"We're still in the very early stages in sorting out the strategy," he said.

"It's really going to be an effort to get the community engaged in the library."

The library does receive some community support for things like special collections and outreach programs through the Kitchener Public Library Foundation.

Recently, some foundation donors have specified money be put toward the renovation project, Dickson said. However, because the project is so new, that pot is still fairly small.

He said more details on the fundraising campaign will roll out in the spring.

The KPL renovation project is expected to be complete in December 2012.

The library's proposal to change the funding plan was presented to council last month. Final budget decisions won't be made until Jan. 18.