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CPL recommends creating 130,000 square feet of new library space by 2041

Caledon currently has 40,000 square feet of library space across seven branches

By Zachary Roman

Caledon is growing, and its public library system has big plans to grow along with it.

On July 11, Caledon Public Library (CPL) CEO Colleen Lipp presented a summary report of the CPL's new comprehensive growth plan to Caledon Council.

Lipp explained the last growth plan was approved in 2016 and included things like opening a branch in Southfields Village, the renovation of the Margaret Dunn Valleywood Branch, and moving of the Caledon East branch ? all goals that were completed or are nearly complete.

The CPL's new growth plan was approved by its Board of Directors in January of this year. As it is a detailed 130-page document, a 40-page summary report was also prepared to highlight key takeaways.

Caledon's projected population has increased since 2016, so the creation of a new plan was necessary, and Lipp said it ?will serve as a road map to effectively position the library to meet the future needs of our quickly growing community.?

The plan recommends the creation of 130,000 square feet of new library space by 2041. This includes upsizing a planned branch in Mayfield West from 20,000 to 30,000 square feet. For reference, Caledon currently has 40,000 square feet of library space across its seven branches.

That number includes the CPL's largest branch in Bolton, which is 15,000 square feet in size.

Lipp said adding new library space will help Caledon meet a recommended goal of 0.85 square feet of library space per capita. Right now, Caledon has 0.51 square feet of library space per capita. Lipp said meeting the space goal will ensure the CPL provides the absolute best service to residents in the years to come. It will also help the library become more accessible, she added.

With regards to libraries in rural communities, the plan includes suggestions for improving service by launching after-hours access, installing more remote holds lockers, and investing in service kiosks and/or a mobile library.

Over the next 20 years, if all recommendations in the new growth plan were to be implemented, the estimated capital cost of branch construction and improvement projects would be $120 million.

In her presentation, Lipp explained the library hired TCI Management Consultants to help it complete the large task of creating the report. She said the company has experts in public libraries, planning, architecture and more.

Lipp said the report found a strong desire to retain the CPL's smaller branches in Alton, Caledon Village, and Inglewood. Lipp added the report found residents find value in the CPL's online services and would like to see them continue and be expanded.

Another finding from the report is that there's a desire to see Caledon's diversity represented in CPL staff and board members. Additionally, the report highlights a need to continue work on making Caledon residents aware of all the CPL has to offer ? despite ?significant marketing and promotional efforts?.

In the creation of the growth plan, a survey was launched for residents that received over 1,000 responses. There was also consultation with the Library Board, Caledon Council, Town staff and other community partners.

Lipp said since December 2022, visits to the Southfields Village branch of the CPL have doubled.

She explained it's a great example of residents seeking more public places to meet and study, and said it supports the library's goal of adding more square footage. Lipp said the Southfields branch is so well-used that sometimes the staff meeting room is opened up to provide more study space for students using the branch after school.

?At our larger branches we are very pleased to see residents are using our spaces as destinations, meeting places, and places to spend significant amounts of time,? said Lipp.

One of the major recommendations in the CPL's new plan is adopting a four-stage growth plan. The first stage, to be completed by 2026, recommends refurbishing Ward 1 branches, creating a 30,000 square foot library branch in Mayfield West, relocating the Caledon East branch to the Caledon East Community Complex (in progress already), and implementing self-service and open access at branches after hours.

In stage 2, to be completed by 2031, the CPL recommends creating a 35,000 square foot branch in Macville or Caledon Station. In stage 3, to be completed by 2036, the CPL recommends a 20,000 square foot branch expansion in Mayfield West. In stage 4, to be completed by 2041, the CPL recommends a 40,000 square foot expansion of the Albion Bolton branch or creation of a new facility in the area.

For more information on the CPL's comprehensive growth plan, and to see the plan in its entirety, those interested can visit the plans, policies and reports section of the CPL's website: caledon.library.on.ca.