



Huntsville Public Library Master Plan Recommendations

PART C: SERVICE COMPONENT ASSESSMENT & STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Part C – 7. OPEN HOURS (Recommendations start p. 11)

- Advocate for additional funding to increase hours of operation to a minimum of 52 hours per week.
- Consult the community – library users and non-users – to determine what open hours would best serve their needs and preferences.
- Offer evening hours two or three evenings per week to provide access to library resources and programs for community members who cannot attend during daytime (working) hours.

Part C – 8. COLLECTIONS (Recommendations start p. 14)

- Ensure that a Collection Development Plan is in place prior to a building project. Determine a collection size that is reasonable for the community and responsive to needs. Track circulation percentages and budget percentages of each popular collection category to ensure adequate and appropriate resource allocation.
- Consider an On-Demand Leasing arrangement with external vendor for the development of an Express Collection and to supply additional copies of titles once the established Holds threshold has been reached (for example, ordering a leased copy once the number of holds on a title exceeds 6). Lease arrangements vs. purchases are similar in cost but are more responsive to actual need, and the items, once no longer needed, are returned to the vendor and a credit issued. Responsibility for the disposal of the items is transferred from the library to the vendor.
- Increase materials budget to allow for an annual per capita materials expenditure rate of no less than \$6.00. (Current rate is \$4.52. As a comparison, the 2025 per capita materials expenditure of Bracebridge Public Library is \$9.34; for Gravenhurst, \$6.90.)
- Consider the development of an “Adopt a Book” or similar program, to encourage the public to donate toward the purchase of library materials.



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- In the selection of new shelving, consider moveable shelving units (on casters) in areas where flexibility is desirable to allow for programming space and larger events held within the library's open areas. Consider shelving systems that create an open and inviting layout rather than tight corridors, to entice customers to explore, and offer maximum display and merchandising of collections.
- Square footage dedicated to local history collections should be reduced in a new facility, as the current Muskoka Room is oversized in relation to its use.
- Consider undertaking an inventory of Muskoka Room materials to determine which materials should be retained and which materials could be digitized in future.
- Consult with the Town's Records Manager to determine which physical files need to be retained.
- Given that the Huntsville and Area Historical Society undertook a digitization project this year to digitize LACAC files, work with the Historical Society to determine whether the contents of the filing cabinet of LACAC materials stored in the Muskoka Room were among those records that are now available online. Perhaps the Historical Society could consider digitizing these records if they were not digitized as part of their 2025 project.
- Discuss with Muskoka Heritage Place staff the feasibility of removing select Muskoka Room contents to the offsite storage MHP is using for its archival materials, if the materials are not wanted in the library's collection and cannot be repatriated.

Part C – 9. USER SEATING

GUIDELINES RE USER SEATING:

Standards for seating vary, depending on whether the branch encourages users to spend longer periods of time in the library for such activities as collections browsing and leisure reading, private or group study, or collaborative/creative activities.

The ARUPLO Guideline for User Seating recommends a range of 60 to 200 user seats for Large branches. At least 2 seats should be barrier-free. HPL's inventory of 101 seats falls within the low end of the range.



Standards and Guidelines for Australian Public Libraries dictate a sliding scale for calculating the number of user seats based on population. For a projected population of 30,300, a library should offer a minimum of 171 seats. This falls comfortably within the ARUPLO Guidelines range.

The following is a proposed allocation of seating per functional area. It is meant to be a starting point for overall space calculation purposes, but would of course be revisited by staff during a design process. The purpose is to ensure that adequate square footage is allocated for lounge and study areas.

Note: Seating for separate multi-purpose and meeting rooms is not included in user seating calculations. This type of seating usually consists of comfortable stacking chairs, which are kept in adjacent storage rooms. Staff seating is also excluded from the user seating calculations.

PROPOSED DISTRIBUTION OF USER SEATING:

FUNCTIONAL AREA	SOFT SEATING	ACTIVITY SEATING (STUDY, CRAFT)	COMPUTER / TECH TASK SEATING	NOTES
Adult (main)	28	28	14 (incl. PACs, OPACs, Conversion station)	User seating should be flexible and interchangeable. Variety of seating – lounge seating, chairs for individual study and leisure reading as well as collaborative and creative spaces, and computer-device seating. Include seats that are wired, and/or seats positioned near work surfaces that are wired. 2 soft seats and 2 café seats are included, in expectation that a café area may be incorporated.
Children’s area	12	12	8	Combination of sofas and single soft seats for lounging and reading. Modest number of activity tables and chairs in the children’s area as most crafts and programming will occur in the Activity/Craft Room. Activities in children’s area would tend to be passive programming. Computers in children’s area could include 1 or 2 Early Literacy Stations or equivalent, and 2 iPads loaded with educational software. (At least) 4 PACs for school-age study and gaming should be located adjacent to the older children’s collection area, not near the preschool and primary area.
Youth Area	7	6	0	PACs in teen areas are uncommon. Personal devices are more likely, and/or library iPads etc. for programming.
Local History / Muskoka Room	2	6	3	Similar distribution of seating as found in current Muskoka Room.
Quiet Study 1		4		1 table and 4 chairs



FUNCTIONAL AREA	SOFT SEATING	ACTIVITY SEATING (STUDY, CRAFT)	COMPUTER / TECH TASK SEATING	NOTES
Quiet Study 2		4		1 table and 4 chairs
Quiet Study 3		4		1 table and 4 chairs
Board / Friends / Meeting Room		14		Possibly three reconfigurable tables to allow for Board meetings or breakout sessions.
Maker Space		16	6	Collaborative work tables as well as computer stations. Additional seating as needed could be brought in from multipurpose room.
TOTALS	49	94	31	174

Part C – 10. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (Recommendations start p. 22)

- In a new or renovated facility with expanded hours including evening hours, develop new programs to meet demonstrated community need.
- Base program planning decisions on outcome measures where appropriate.
- Continue to work with the Town’s Recreation Department to avoid duplication and to complement and support each other’s mandates.
- Expand the library’s use of community members and subject “experts” in the delivery of library programming.
- When ready to begin planning an expanded range of programs, consider undertaking a public survey to determine program needs.
 - While the practice of surveying the public is good due diligence, it should be noted that sometimes the public will indicate a desire for a wide range of programming but when those programs are attempted, there may not be the pick-up that the survey results would have suggested. HPL is currently building strong links with community groups, businesses, and individuals and those relationships will yield valuable insight and information into what might work and what might not. Each new program attempted is a learning opportunity and staff should be encouraged to experiment without fear of failure.
- Consider utilizing volunteers in order to increase the capacity of the Visiting Library Service.



Part C – 11. MULTI-PURPOSE SPACES AND PUBLIC WORK/STUDY SPACE

(Recommendations start p. 23)

- In the design of a new space, the following Meeting/Activity Rooms be included:
 - large multi-purpose room with kitchenette and attached storage room, available for outside use and after-hours use
 - activity/craft room with demonstration kitchen and attached storage room available for outside use
 - Board/Friends/meeting room available for outside use
 - 3 small private Study Rooms
- Develop an enhanced Library Room Use Policy clearly establishing the purposes of the program and meeting rooms, the priority uses and the excluded uses of those spaces, and limits of use.

A sample prioritization of use could be as follows:

- 1. Library and co-sponsored programs, meetings, and events
 - 2. Library-related groups and community partners
 - 3. Town of Huntsville/District of Muskoka departments and agencies
 - 4. Non-profit community groups and organizations
 - 5. Charitable organizations
 - 6. Others, including commercial organizations.
- Develop a Study Room Policy clearly establishing the purposes of the study rooms, the priority uses and the excluded uses, and limits of use.

A sample prioritization of use could be as follows:

- 1. quiet research/study/reading by library cardholders
- 2. team or group study or projects
- 3. literacy or other learning activities (such as exam invigilation)
- 4. non-profit small groups



- 5. remote work or virtual meetings.

Sample excluded uses could include:

- 1. ongoing or permanent location for any activity
- 2. commercial sales or activities (could include for-profit tutoring).

Part C – 12. TECHNOLOGY (Recommendations start p. 29)

- Incorporate a Makerspace in the design of a new or renovated facility.
- Develop a Technology Plan to align technology with the library’s service goals and help move HPL towards the goal of exceeding the basic technology expectations of library customers.
 - Section 11.1 of the Ontario Public Library Guidelines (2023) describes a Technology Plan as “defined goals, objectives and/or action plans for the acquisition, service, maintenance, upgrade and replacement of electronic networks, equipment, and software applications for both staff and patron use...”. These factors may already be adequately addressed in a Town Technology Plan (e.g. capital budgeting and replacement schedule), which could therefore be formally adopted by the Library Board. However, the OPLG Guideline 11.1 goes on to include as part of a Technology Plan “... the plan considers the library’s existing technology, technology potential, and the impact of future trends on library services. It includes strategies for funding, staffing needs, training, and technology support as required”.
 - Once strategic technology service goals are established, determine what equipment and software would be needed that is not already owned by the library. Determine options and a timeline for acquiring that equipment, the staff resources required, the training required for staff and the public, and develop training guides and performance measures for the evaluation of the program as well as marketing and promotion plans.
- Undertake a Technology Needs Survey of Huntsville residents to determine and understand:
 - the technological needs of the community
 - the role of technology in people’s lives



- people's comfort and experience using technology
- the reliability and availability of high speed internet in the various areas of the Town where respondents live
- level of satisfaction with library technology
- software and services that would be useful for the library to offer
- needs related to technology training/assistance
- Based on the findings of the Technology Needs Survey, develop a public technology training program.
- Determine the Technology Core Competencies that should be required of public-facing staff and increase the training budget and part-time staff hours to ensure that staff can take advantage of ongoing technical training opportunities. Develop a staff Technology Training program or use available resources such as Ontario Library Service's LearnHQ.
- Consider going out to the marketplace to review available options for ILS services
 - The possibility of enhanced analytics, additional software and modules through consortial pricing and resource sharing should also be investigated. It is recognized that no ILS system is perfect and there would likely be trade-offs. While one ILS might provide a better user experience, it may have shortcomings from the staff end perspective. All such factors would need to be considered and weighed.

Part C – 13. OUTREACH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (Recommendations start p. 32)

It is worth reiterating that the outreach and engagement efforts that are already underway are impressive for any library of this size, but particularly for such a modest staff complement. From observations and discussions with staff, there are likely few recommendations to make that will result in actions not already contemplated or planned.

- Continue to develop strong community engagement efforts, both for input and advocacy reasons, but also to develop awareness of resources and build potential program partner relationships and volunteer resources.



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- In partnership with the Town, BIA, and Chamber of Commerce, and potential other partners, include as part of a design for a new or renovated library, an “Information Huntsville” functional component, providing a one-stop-shopping experience for new residents of Huntsville to access community information and connect with town services, local businesses and agencies.
- Given the capacity that exists on staff, consider the possibility of undertaking, in partnership with community organizations such as United Way Simcoe Muskoka, the Muskoka Community Foundation, and the Town of Huntsville, a series of Community Conversations either at the library or at outreach locations, based on the practices developed by the Harwood Institute and the Tamarack Institute.
- When next reviewing the Programming and Outreach Policy, consider:
 - reflecting and supporting the Town’s commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion
 - explicitly stating the library’s commitment to equitable access and its prioritization of inclusive programming and outreach that responds to the needs and interests of diverse, marginalized, and underserved communities
 - explicitly state that the library will proactively collaborate with Town departments and community partners to identify those underserved groups and individuals in order to develop alone or in partnership a variety of programs to meet their multiple literacy needs
 - prioritize relationship-building and the use of external presenters to grow the program offerings of HPL

Part C – 14. STAFFING ALLOCATION AND DEPLOYMENT (Recommendations start p. 37)

Staffing recommendations for a new/larger facility:

- If HPL was able to increase its number of open hours each week, there would need to be additional staff hired to cover the needs of the service desk during all open hours; if open into the evening several days per week, there would need to be two staff shifts, with a late afternoon/evening shift working until closing.
- An increase in programming, including teen programming and evening adult and family programming, is indicated as a high priority based on public feedback. Creating a “Program Assistant” position is highly recommended to support Lead



Team members in the provision of an enhanced calendar of programming. It will be necessary to spread the responsibility for programming duties across several positions in order to both ensure that programming is offered even during the absence of the primary programming staff and in recognition of the fact that sharing programming responsibilities among multiple staff draws upon varying talents and strengths and therefore enhances the offerings.

- A Makerspace is recommended for a new or renovated facility, as was strongly supported in the public survey and in other consultative exercises. A Makerspace will be successful only if there is dedicated staff available to make the resources accessible and to offer hands-on interactive programming and assistance. Determining how the core competencies relating to innovation – such as technical knowledge and expertise, and continuous learner – can be met through a combination of existing staff and new staff – for example, a Makerspace Coordinator who could also be tasked with developing and delivering technology-related classes and programs, as well as being available to provide technology-related help in the library – will be critical.

Additional staffing/role recommendations (also within Section 14):

- While the hours allotted for Shelves are currently adequate, it is likely that in a new facility with a larger collection and better collection displays and marketing, circulation rates will increase, thus creating need for additional Shelves hours. The current two staff Shelves are adults, but the Shelves position (otherwise known as “Page” in most libraries) is often filled by high school students. At HPL, one of the Shelves also works some hours on the Service Desk, which is something that a high school Page would be unlikely to do. In other systems, Pages also assist with program prep, set-up and clean-up. With an enhanced program roster, this programming assistance could be valuable. Rename “Circulation Clerk” to “Public Service Clerk” (or Public Service Associate) to reflect more customer-focused work.
 - That part-time Casual Pages be hired (to supplement the current two Shelves) to address increased shelving and shelf reading needs as well as to assist with programming duties. High school-aged Pages commonly work between 6 to 12 hours per week. Depending on the number of additional hours the existing Shelves could take on, two Pages in addition to the Shelves would likely be adequate to start. High school students are able to work during evening and weekend hours.



- That the position “Circulation Clerk” be renamed “Public Service Clerk” (or Public Service Associate) to more accurately reflect the change in job function from transactional, repetitive activities toward more customer-focused, value-added interactions.
- That values-based core competencies for the Circulation Clerk/Public Service Clerk position be developed, including a focus on technology competencies to ensure that all service desk staff can respond to basic technology-related questions, thus helping to reduce reliance on Lead Team staff for shifts on the Info Desk. This is predicated on the need to increase the use of self-check technologies and implement RFID to reduce the volume of repetitive circulation transactions.
- That Lead Team members no longer be stationed at the Info Desk for prolonged periods to answer technology-related or in-depth information requests. Having to spend one day each week on the Info Desk detracts from the Lead Team members’ primary duties and inhibits productivity and creativity. Instead, invest in the ongoing training needed to increase desk staff’s comfort level and knowledge base regarding technology. Recognizing, however, that it can be difficult to attend to the daily demands of the service desk and requests for technology help that might require more time and attention than would be reasonable for desk staff, depending on the volume of traffic at the desk at any given time, there needs to be qualified staff in addition to service desk Clerks who can be called upon to provide that help. This is already provided by the eLibrarian, who offers drop-in help at set days and times of the week, as well as by appointment. However, the eLibrarian’s portfolio is large. It is hoped that in a new facility, a range of technology-related programming such as Tech Talks, as well as hands-on, participatory learning in a MakerSpace can be offered as an option to one-on-one assistance.
- That in the design of a new service desk, the Information or Tech Help station be separated in order to more clearly identify Information Services and to reduce congestion and noise around the service desk.

RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE TO BETTER REFLECT SERVICE PRIORITIES AND CORE COMPETENCIES:

The following proposed new organizational chart includes the new positions of: Innovation and Digital Literacy Librarian; Makerspace and Teen Services Coordinator; Pages (to handle increased shelving needs and to assist during evenings and weekends with program prep, set-up, and clean-up); and Program

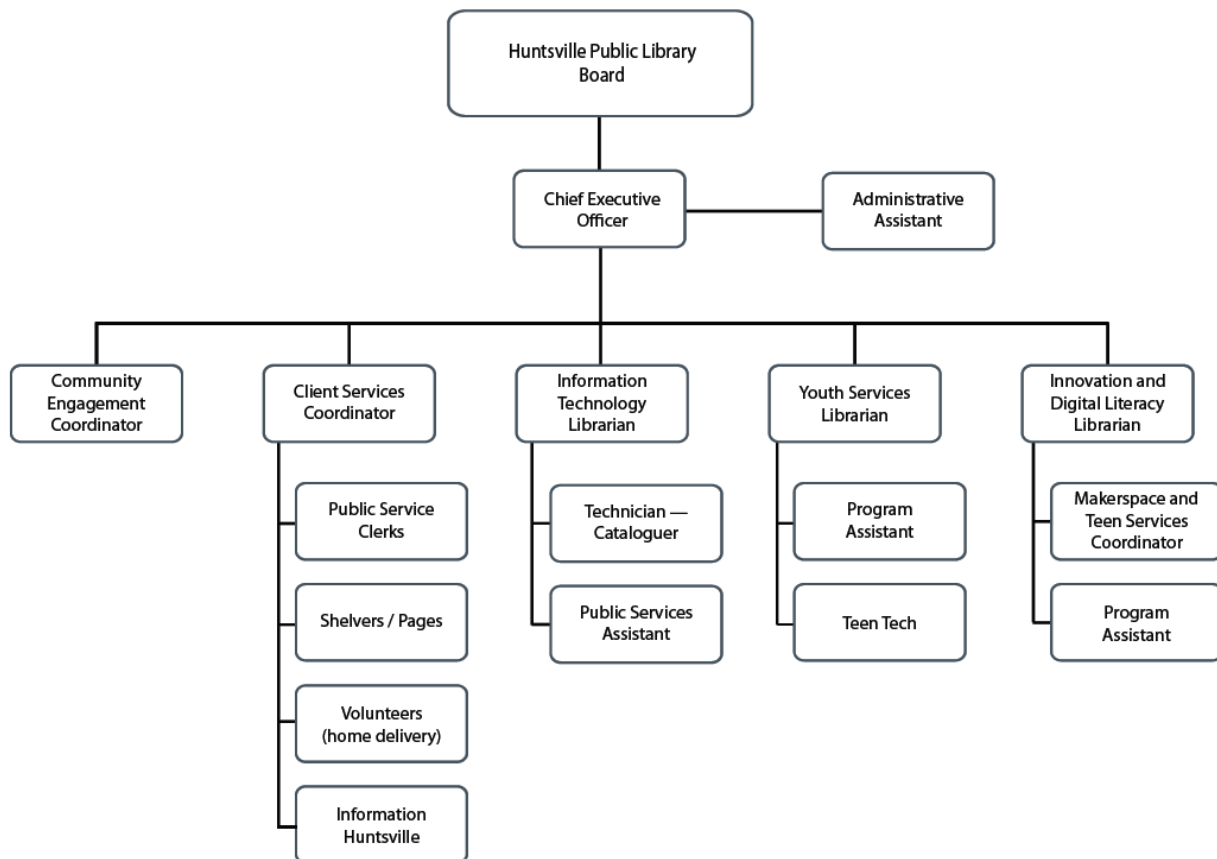


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Assistants. It is recommended that the Public Service Delivery Coordinator’s job title be changed to Client Services Coordinator, and it is recommended that the position of Library Operations Assistant be changed to Administrative Assistant, and that that position be made full-time. The Administrative Assistant could serve as Secretary to the Board, thus allowing the CEO to more fully participate in Board meetings. The Administrative Assistant could also assist with Annual Public Survey data collection and submission in addition to maintaining their role in facilities, finance, and records management.

An Information Huntsville function is included in the organizational structure as a placeholder, but is not included in the FTE staffing complement at this time.

With this structure, key strategic functions are adequately managed (e.g. community engagement, programming, technology, innovation, and customer experience).





POTENTIAL FTE STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:

The current FTE count is 10.14. This proposed organizational structure, with new positions and increased open hours, would represent an FTE count of approximately 15.8.

RECOMMENDED STAFF TEAMS:

The following staff teams based on strategic priorities are proposed as only one possibility -- the HPL Lead Team will be in the best position to determine what would work best.

Several of these positions do not currently exist, so this exercise is aspirational based on the service recommendations put forward in this report. It reflects best practices in comparable library systems which have realized successes in the areas of emerging technology and innovation, as well as systems which have achieved a new facility and increased levels of service.

These recommendations are not intended to dictate the staffing direction HPL should follow, but instead are intended to present one possible staff team option to address functional needs, in a manner that respects the need to limit and rationalize new staff positions as much as possible.

Lead Team: CEO; Information Technology Librarian; Youth Services Librarian; Innovation and Digital Literacy Librarian; Community Engagement Coordinator; Client Services Coordinator

Collection Development Team*: CEO; Information Technology Librarian; Youth Services Librarian; Innovation and Digital Literacy Librarian

Communications/Social Media Team: CEO; Community Engagement Coordinator; Youth Services Librarian; Information Technology Librarian; Innovation and Digital Literacy Librarian; Makerspace and Teen Services Coordinator

Innovation and New Technologies Team: CEO; Innovation and Digital Literacy Librarian; Information Technology Librarian; Youth Services Librarian; Makerspace and Teen Services Coordinator

Program Team*: CEO; Youth Services Librarian; Community Engagement Coordinator; Innovation and Digital Literacy Librarian; Makerspace and Teen Services Coordinator.

*As appropriate, invite other staff to attend meetings to gain their ideas and input, including Public Service Clerks, Program Assistants.



PART D: FUNCTIONAL SPACE ALLOCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The 4th edition of the ARUPLO Guidelines for Rural/Urban Public Library Systems was used in the determination of space needs for the various components of a new or renovated library facility. A draft space allocation recommendation was presented to the HPL CEO for consideration and comment.

Local needs must be considered in the determination of space requirements and recommendations based on guidelines can be adjusted to reflect those unique needs and considerations.

Given that the component approach to space planning was used, a square footage of 27,563 was determined to be the recommended size of a new facility to ensure that HPL will be in a position to meet the library needs of the Town of Huntsville moving into the future.

This proposed facility size falls somewhat below the widely accepted standard of 1 square foot per capita. The per capita approach to space planning, given the projected 2031 population of 30,300, would have recommended a facility of approximately 30,000 square feet. In an attempt to be frugal, the consultants' recommendation lies at the lower end of an acceptable space range

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COMPONENT	MINIMUM RANGE (SQ. FT.) (BASED ON ARUPLO GUIDELINES)	OPTIMUM RANGE (SQ. FT.) (BASED ON ARUPLO GUIDELINES)	NOTES	REVISED WITH LIBRARY FEEDBACK	NOTES
Collections*	7,000	8,400	Optimum range based on enhanced collection size of 60,000 vol – this includes adult, J, YA and AV.	13,162	
User Seating	n/a	6,090	Based on 174 seats @ 35 sf avg.		
Local History (Muskoka Room)	200	400		300	Current room is considered too large at approximately 500 sf.
Public computer area	350	490	Up to 14 PACs @ 35 sf – currently they have 15 –Adult PAC area should be separate from the J PAC area. Place greater focus on wired private study/work spaces as many are bringing their own devices.	393	Primarily for adult PACs. Children’s PACs to be absorbed in user areas.
Service Desk	350	525	Current service desk area approx. 360 sq.ft. Holds kept behind desk. Recommend self-serve Holds.	310	Convenient adjacency to workroom. Emerging trend for smaller service desks, self-check stations, and roaming staff. Info desk functionality could be relocated from service desk.



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COMPONENT	MINIMUM RANGE (SQ. FT.) (BASED ON ARUPLO GUIDELINES)	OPTIMUM RANGE (SQ. FT.) (BASED ON ARUPLO GUIDELINES)	NOTES	REVISED WITH LIBRARY FEEDBACK	NOTES
PROGRAM ROOMS					
Multipurpose Room	750	1,500	To serve the purpose of current "Friends Room". Kitchenette.	1,300	Includes 200 sf storage room for furniture, A/V and program supplies.
Activity/Craft room	n/a	n/a	Demonstration kitchen furnishings rather than basic kitchenette to enable food literacy programs	600	Includes a 150 sf storage room for furniture, equipment and supplies.
MEETING ROOMS					
Board/Friends Room	200	400	Multi-purpose, for Library Board meetings, Friends work space, staff meetings and training, outside use. Lockable storage.	375	
Small study room	100	100	Bookable, ideal for 1 to 4 people	100	
Small study room	100	100	Bookable, ideal for 1 to 4 people	100	
Small study room	100	100	Bookable, ideal for 1 to 4 people	100	
Makerspace	300	500	If music studio included, would need a soundproofed component	600	Larger size to include recording studio and to facilitate digital literacy classes.
Friends Shop	n/a	n/a	Current Friends Shop is approx. 150 sf	300	Larger size will reduce need to locate book sale tables elsewhere in library.



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COMPONENT	MINIMUM RANGE (SQ. FT.) (BASED ON ARUPLO GUIDELINES)	OPTIMUM RANGE (SQ. FT.) (BASED ON ARUPLO GUIDELINES)	NOTES	REVISED WITH LIBRARY FEEDBACK	NOTES
STAFF SPACES					
CEO's office	n/a	n/a		250	
Open office	n/a	n/a		364	Space for up to 4 staff, open plan.
Private staff offices	300	300	Offices for 3 Team members.	300	
Workroom	800	800	Tech services and receiving. Open workstations for up to 4 staff.	1,000	Space for e librarian (supervises workroom staff) could be private.
Admin storage	n/a	n/a	ARUPLO guideline of 200 - 300 sf inappropriate for HPL as no off-site HQ storage available.	500	Particularly important as "Library of Things" expands.
Staff lounge/ washroom	250	350		325	To include lockers, couch, table and chairs.
Service (washrooms, vestibule, mech/elec, janitor closet)	n/a	n/a		823	
Net floor area				21,202	
Grossing factor				6,361	30% estimate
Gross floor area				27,563	
TOTAL SPACE REQUIRED				27,563	

*Square footage for collections and user seating combined encompasses shelving and displays for all collection types, the Children's Area, the Youth Area, and adult lounge seating area and study/work areas.