



Planning the Peterborough Library of the Future Community Input Report Summary June 30, 2013

After four months, many listening sessions, several tours, and online and on-site input, the 1833 Society is getting a clearer vision of what the Peterborough community wants in its Library – both today and tomorrow.

Following February's Library of the Future Forum, the Library Outreach Group (LOG), a working committee of the 1833 Society, spent several months soliciting and listening to community input about what works, what could be improved, and dreams for Peterborough's Library of the Future. The Outreach committee conducted a series of six community sessions covering a variety of topics and users. The group also gathered detailed input from Peterborough Elementary and South Meadow School students, staff and parents, and reached out to other groups including the downtown business community, seniors, and town leaders. Members of the Library staff and the Friends of the Library added their suggestions, as did a number of individuals via email, the new online suggestion box, and comments left at the Library itself. The Library continues to welcome input from groups and individuals, and in fact hopes for an ongoing dialog with the community as to what it wants and needs.

The input from these varied community sessions primarily focused on services and programs, and was added to the February Forum information. In early June, the Outreach group filtered and sorted the material to create seven key visions that capture the diverse ideas that were heard from many sources about the Library of the Future.

What are the community's visions about the Library? In random order, our community wants a Library that is:

- effective, efficient, safe, and professional;
- a central information resource for the community;
- a welcoming, diverse, engaging, flexible center for the community;
- a fundamental component of lifelong learning, with connections to other area organizations;
- fully accessible by all, both within the library and out into the community;
- a distinctive architectural component of the community;
- user-friendly and user-owned, so patrons can feel independent and self-sufficient with resources, and also aware of how to use staff and facility to meet their needs.



There are many specific items, programs and services that the community would like to see at their Library – things like self-checkout, drive-thru drop-off, more comfortable seating areas, quiet spaces, multi-purpose meeting spaces, charging stations, maker spaces, outdoor seating, better coordination with schools, easier access to digital resources (with training), engaging programs, performance areas, better gallery exhibit space, an elevator, a business section/center, and a café of some sort.

These community visions and suggestions will require careful consideration and prioritizing as the 1833 Society works with Library trustees, staff, architects, the Town and other partners to continue the planning process for a renovated and updated library facility.

The next step in the Library of the Future project will be the design development and schematic drawing phase, turning the vast array of themes and ideas generated into architectural concepts and designs. The 1833 Society will be working on this jointly with Trustees, planning partners and architects.

Meanwhile, Peterborough Town Library staff and trustees continue to build services and programs for today's Library, guided by input received from the community. A number of new initiatives are already in place, with more in coming months:

- Online Mondays, providing individualized and group instruction on internet resources available to patrons, including audio and e-book downloads, online research, and more.
- TumbleBook, allowing free online home access to children's books and games.
- Bridging Cultures: Muslim Journeys program, a Library collaboration with the Mariposa Museum, featuring poetry, dance, book, film and music events.
- Monthly Library email newsletter and informational e-updates for subscribers.
- Library online suggestion box for comments, ideas, feedback.
- Library Blog, connecting with Facebook and Twitter accounts.

The 1833 Society wants to thank the many community members who added their voice and their assistance to this outreach effort, including the staff, trustees and Friends of the Peterborough Town Library; Richard Dunning and the South Meadow School staff; Ben Loi and the Peterborough Elementary School staff; Dorothy Peterson, John Vance, and the staff at RiverMead; Bill Littles of Steele's; Chris McCall; Peter Robinson of Roy's Market; Johanna Wilson-White; and the Forum Steering Committee.

To stay current with developments, those interested are encouraged to sign up to receive email updates by visiting the Peterborough Library blog at www.peterboroughtownlibrary.org or the Library section at the Town website, www.townofpeterborough.com. They can also sign up at the Library, or send an email to library@townofpeterborough.us.

The 1833 Society is an independent nonprofit organization working with Library trustees to raise funds through private donations and grants to finance a major upgrade of the Peterborough Town Library and to assist in its design. The full Outreach report is available at the Peterborough Library and on the 1833 Society and Library websites.