



CBRM Special Council Meeting

# Sydney Public Library Waterfront Development Update

March 31, 2021



CAPE BRETON REGIONAL  
**CHAMBER**  
OF COMMERCE



*Harbour Royale  
Development Limited*





CBRM Special Council Meeting  
**Sydney Public Library**  
**Waterfront Development Update**

March 31, 2021



## 1785 Founding

Why is the waterfront culturally significant?



**Early-Century Sydney Harbour**

# Mid-Century Sydney Harbour





**Late-Century Sydney Harbour**

# Last Decade Boardwalk Development



## Last Decade Boardwalk Expansion





**The McConnell Library**  
Designed and constructed during late 1950



**McConnell opened its doors to the public in 1960**

# McConnell Expansion in the mid-1980's for CBRL and Sydney Library





**Cape Breton Regional Library**

**James McConnell Memorial Library  
Feasibility Study  
Facility Planning Report**

Prepared by:  
**dma** Planning & Management Services Inc.  
24 Harbourside Dr Unit 2  
Wolfville, NS B4P 2S3  
November 30, 2011  
[www.dmaconsulting.com](http://www.dmaconsulting.com)

In association with  
Trifos Design Consultants  
Sydney, NS.

**In 2011, CBRM commissioned  
a Feasibility Study and  
Facility Planning Study**

## Public provides feedback on library renovation

By ERIN POTTIE  
CAPE BRETON POST

**SYDNEY** — During a public meeting at the James McConnell Memorial Library, people voiced concerns that an expansion and redesign of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality's largest library will leave little room for future growth.

As part of a feasibility study commissioned by the CBRM, the public gathered Tuesday evening in the children's section of the library to view a renovation concept by Sydney-based architect Spyros Trifos of Trifos Design Consultants.

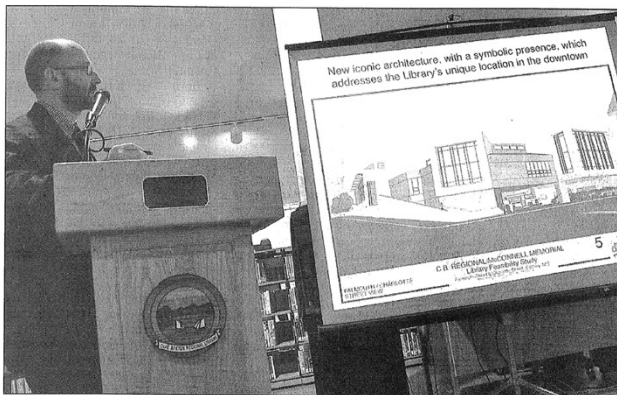
The study explores the possibility of renovating the library, which borders Falmouth, Charlotte and Bentinck streets.

Trifos said the site has size constraints and topographical challenges.

"We're on a very urban, almost like a New York City type of plot, in terms of our ability to grow here. You know, you either go down or we go up," said Trifos.

However, Trifos added that the building was not designed for vertical expansion.

The proposed renovation includes a centrally located elevator so staff would no longer have to use a canvass bag to haul books from the basement. The elevator would also allow the public to use the corridor to reach



Spyros Trifos, the principal architect at Trifos Design Consultants, points out aspects of a proposed renovation of the McConnell Memorial Library in Sydney. During a public meeting Tuesday, many people in attendance requested the municipality also explore the option of a new library location. Erin Pottie - Cape Breton Post

other levels of the library.

The design features a cafe, an upgraded entrance, a children's area, a sunken courtyard, a study lounge, a multi-purpose program room and meeting rooms. Improved air ventilation and heating systems are also factored into the project.

Trifos said the redesign, which

would expand the library by about 10,000 square feet to a total 34,000 square feet, is expected to cost up to \$9 million.

Building a new 34,000-square-foot library could cost up to \$12 million, he said.

Charles MacDonald of North West Arm said although the redesign addresses many current

deficiencies, it appears to be the end of the road for renovations at the public space.

He questioned if another location for the library could be found that wouldn't limit its future growth.

Dist. 12 Coun. Claire Detheridge echoed the sentiment. "The future flexibility in

growth has to be there," said Detheridge. "I am a believer that this municipality is going to turn around and I'm a full believer that people are going to come back to this community and we are going to be busy and we are going to need the space. We can't just build it just to fit."

Near the end of the meeting, CBRM Mayor John Morgan asked the members of the public in attendance if they would prefer the municipality explore its options for a new library location. Most in attendance agreed the municipality should explore its options.

Another concern raised during the meeting was the proposed design's lack of parking.

Wolfville-based library planner Jim Morgenstern of dmA Planning and Management Services said parking doesn't factor high in designing libraries for urban downtown areas.

He said most people feel strongly about keeping the library downtown.

The library, named after former Sydney mayor James McConnell, was built in 1959 and expanded in 1986. The library serves as headquarters of the Cape Breton Regional Library and the Cape Breton County Bookmobile service.

epottie@cbpost.com

Study was presented to the public and stakeholders in 2012 - a New Facility on a new site was recommended

## VII. CONCLUSION

The James McConnell Memorial Library Feasibility Study, conducted by the Consulting Team of Trifos Design Consultants and dmA Planning and Management Services, has addressed key trends in library planning and development, as well as the crucial and dynamic role that the library plays in the life and vitality of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality and downtown Sydney.

dmA Planning and Management Services has clearly established, through their study efforts, that the existing library is too small, and cannot meet current and future design trends.

Trifos Design Consultants' architectural and engineering evaluation has revealed that the building has deficient environmental conditions, poor accessibility for patrons, occupational health and safety issues facing staff, and a lack of safe passenger drop-off accommodations. Furthermore, the two conjoined edifices lack suitable symbolic architectural quality and civic character for such as important building.

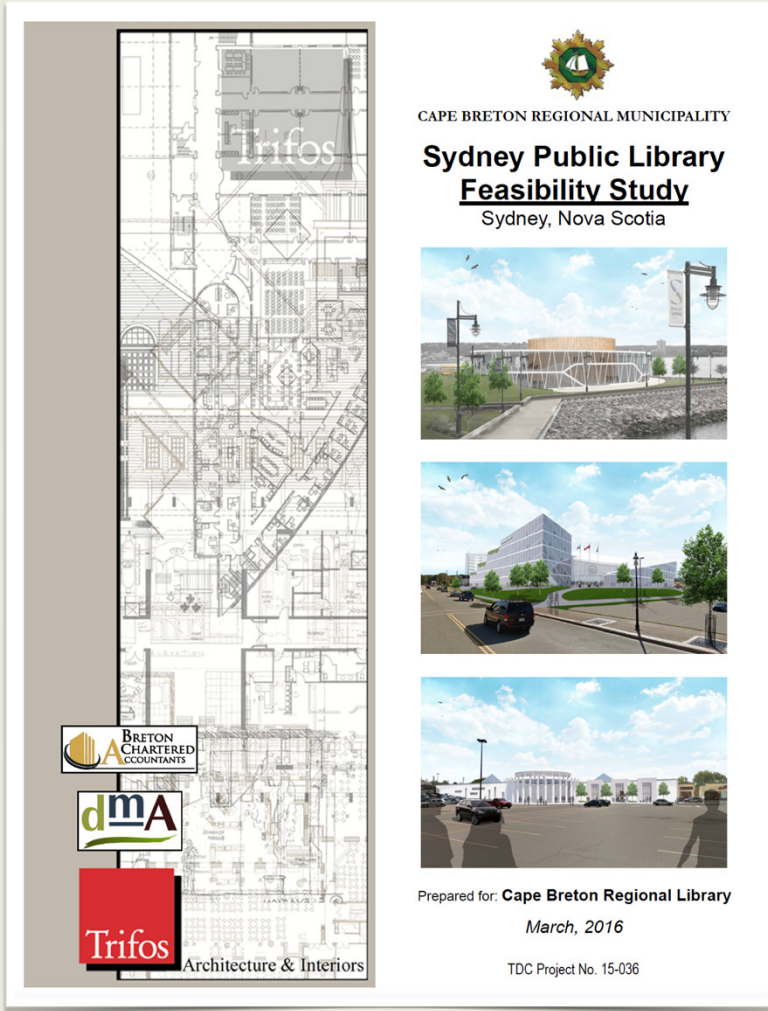
The architectural study revealed that additional floor area and various amenities could be added to the existing building, in order to satisfy the existing space/program deficiencies.

The confined and constricted sloped site poses planning challenges and implementation difficulties; however, a solution has been outlined in the report. The proposed architectural design will consume all of the usable available expansion area on the site, and will not accommodate any future expansion.

Finally, due to the extent of renovation efforts required to mitigate existing building deficiencies, the cost of an addition to the existing building would most likely be as much as three-quarters of the cost of a new building constructed on a greenfield site.

Consensus among most of the stakeholders was that further investigation be conducted into the feasibility of constructing a new facility on an alternate site.

# Summary of 2012 Report Recommendations



# Origin of Waterfront Concept: New Sydney Library Study 2016 with Three (3) Options

**Total Capital Costs**

	<b>Option 1 New Build</b>	<b>Option 2 Shared Tenancy</b>	<b>Option 3 Retrofit of Existing Edifice</b>
Floor Area of CBRL, Sydney Library, and Partner Space <i>(Refer to Note 1)</i>	40,000 sq. ft.	40,000 sq. ft.	40,000 sq. ft.
LEED/Contemporary Capital Construction Cost (\$425/sq.ft.) <i>(Refer to Note 2a)</i>	\$17,000,000	\$17,000,000	n/a
LEED/Contemporary Capital Construction Cost (\$325 sq.ft.) <i>(Refer to Note 2b)</i>	n/a	n/a	\$13,000,000
Fixtures, Fittings, Equipment (\$50/sq.ft.) <i>(Refer to Note 3)</i>	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
Site-Costs Allowance <i>(Refer to Note 4)</i>	\$2,000,000	\$3,200,000	\$600,000
SUBTOTAL	\$21,000,000	\$22,200,000	\$15,600,000
Soft Costs (14%) – Includes Legal, Accounting, Testing, Consultation, LEED <i>(Refer to Note 5)</i>	\$2,940,000	\$3,108,000	\$2,184,000
SUBTOTAL	\$23,940,000	\$25,308,000	\$17,784,000
Land Acquisition (Waterfront Properties) <i>(Refer to Note 6)</i>	\$2,000,000	\$2,500,000	n/a
TOTAL COST (Not Including HST)	\$25,940,000	\$27,808,000	\$17,784,000
TOTAL COST PER SQUARE FOOT	\$600	\$695	\$445

NOTES:

1. Facility Floor-Area Requirements are based on the following:  
 Sydney Library Gross Floor Area ..... 28,000 sq.ft.  
 CBRL Gross Floor Area ..... 8,580 sq.ft.  
 Partnership Space Allowance ..... 3,420 sq.ft.  
 TOTAL GROSS FLOOR AREA ..... 40,000 sq.ft.

# 2016 Study of Capital Costs for 3 Options

# New Stand-Alone Building - Vision Rendering for Waterfront



**Harbour Royale  
Development Limited  
made aware of Public RFP  
(Request for Proposal)**

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**CBRM**

*Cape Breton Regional Municipality*

*A Community of Communities*



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**REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

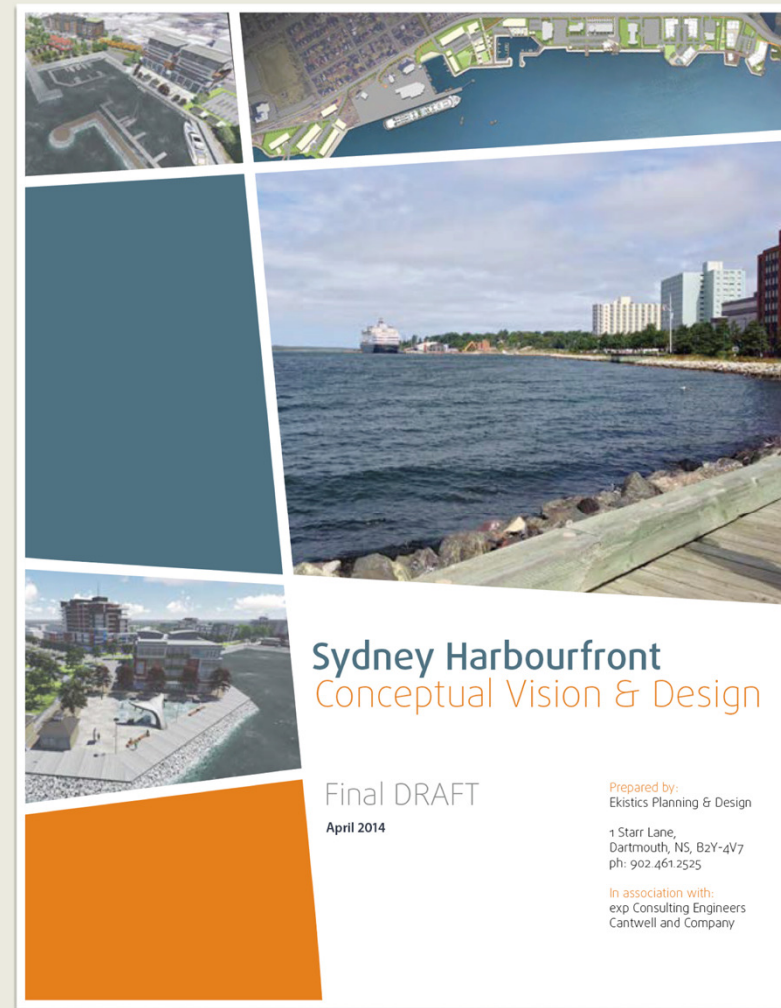
**CBRM\_E01-2017**

**REDEVELOPMENT OF SYDNEY WATERFRONT**

**Closing: MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2017 at 4:00 pm local time**

Cape Breton Regional Municipality  
Procurement Section  
Suite 104, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor  
320 Esplanade  
Sydney, NS B1P 7B9

**CBRM RFP  
is consistent  
with Ekistics vision  
for Waterfront**



HRDL responds to RFP  
submitting a bold mixed-use  
vision with the Sydney Library  
as the centrepiece

## Sydney Waterfront Development Concept



CBRM\_E01-2017

Request for Expression of Interest  
Redevelopment of Sydney Waterfront  
Closing Date: 16 Nov 2017

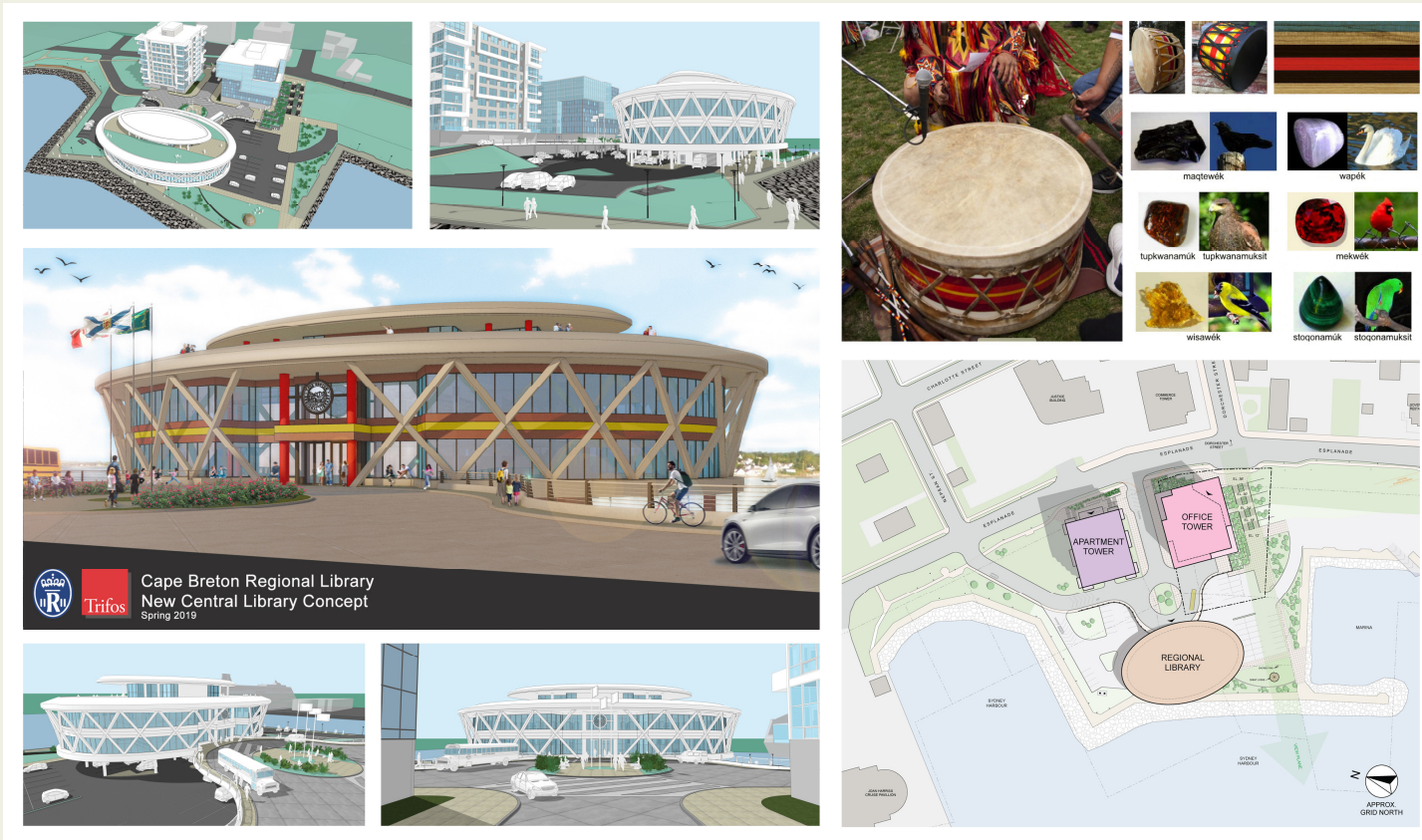


Harbour Royale  
Development Ltd.





**A bold  
mixed-use vision  
with the Library  
as the centrepiece**



# HRDL and Trifos Design Consultants prepare architectural planning concepts

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## Sydney Central Library Study Service, Programs and Operational Plan

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*Report Submitted to  
Cape Breton Regional Municipality  
CBRM\_P25-2019*

*February, 2021*



in association with

**Beth Ross & Associates**



**Trifos Design Consultants**  
Architecture & Interiors  
Sydney, NS, Canada

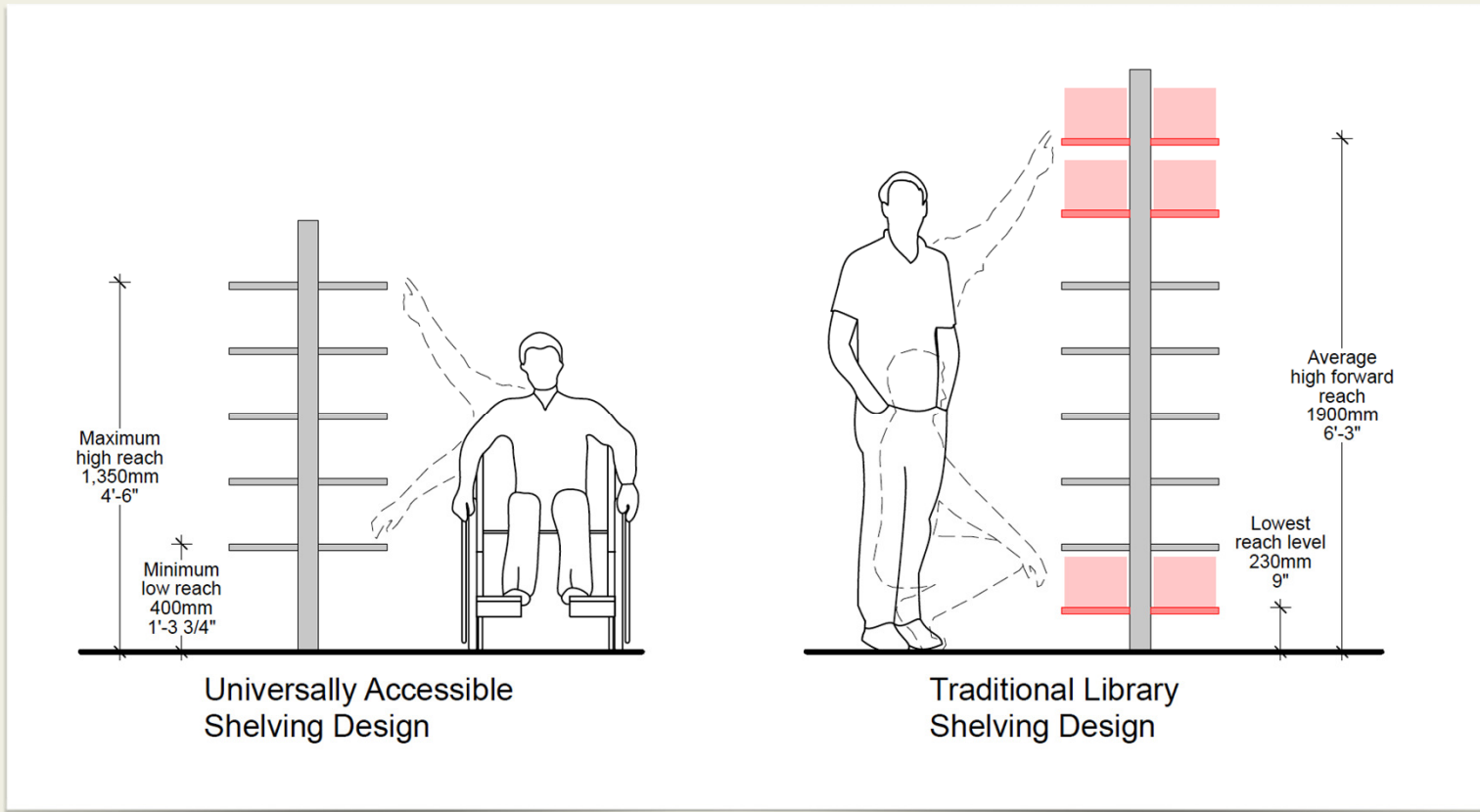
**In 2020,  
CBRM commissions  
A Services, Programs,  
and Operational Plan**

## Executive Summary

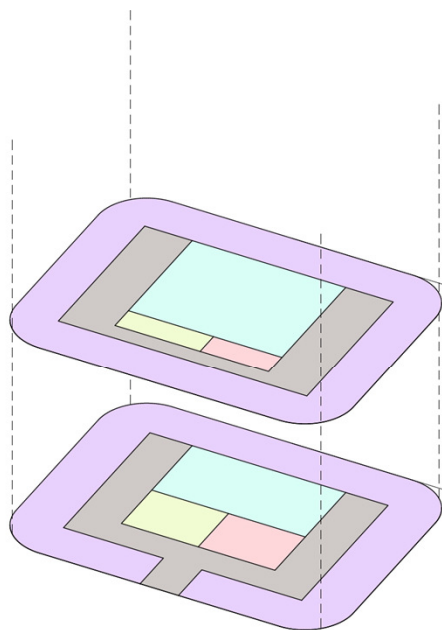
### Main Points

- The existing McConnell branch is old, small, crowded, inefficient, and inaccessible, and is therefore unable to fulfil the current and anticipated social, economic, and educational needs of the population it serves.
- A new building with expanded and more flexible programming space will enable the Sydney Central Library to expand its increasingly important role as a “community hub”.
- To meet universal accessibility standards for public shelving of books and materials, the amount of floor space devoted to shelving will have to be significantly increased to accommodate a significantly reduced collection of materials.
- For reasons of efficiency and flexibility, the administrative functions of the Cape Breton Regional Library should continue to be housed in the Sydney Central Library building.
- A library building of approximately 45,000 sq. ft. will be required to meet these public service and other functional requirements.
- The capital cost of such a building on the waterfront location, excluding the value of the land contribution, is projected to range from \$31.3 million to \$34.4 million.
- The annual operating costs of such a building are projected to be \$337,800 which is approximately \$250,000 more than the McConnell building; however, McConnell’s operating costs are artificially low as its building systems are substandard, it is not able to operate effectively year-round and excludes considerable deferred maintenance.
- The design of the building should visibly and respectfully incorporate elements of the First Nations culture in Cape Breton.
- New policies regarding collection and retention of materials should be adopted.
- Sydney Central Library should be open to the public seven days a week.

# TCI Summary Points



## Accessibility Consideration on Program Areas



**LEVEL 2**

PUBLIC SERVICE AREAS.....	11,499 sq ft
PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF AREAS.....	590 sq ft
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AREAS.....	475 sq ft
TECHNICAL SERVICES AREAS.....	5,046 sq ft
NON-ASSIGNABLE SPACE.....	4,951 sq ft
<b>LEVEL 2 TOTALS</b>	<b>22,561 sq ft</b>

**LEVEL 1**

PUBLIC SERVICE AREAS.....	11,499 sq ft
PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF AREAS.....	1,200 sq ft
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AREAS.....	1,200 sq ft
TECHNICAL SERVICES AREAS.....	3,200 sq ft
NON-ASSIGNABLE SPACE.....	5,462 sq ft
<b>LEVEL 1 TOTALS</b>	<b>22,561 sq ft</b>

PUBLIC SERVICE AREAS.....	22,998 sq ft
PUBLIC SERVICE STAFF AREAS.....	1,790 sq ft
ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AREAS.....	1,675 sq ft
TECHNICAL SERVICES AREAS.....	8,246 sq ft
NON-ASSIGNABLE SPACE.....	10,413 sq ft
<b>OVERALL TOTALS</b>	<b>45,122 sq ft</b>

## Space and Program Summary

## 6. Operational and Financial Implications

In section 6 we address the operating and financial implications of the new Central library.

- High level capital costs are addressed in Section 6.1
- Operating costs for CBRL facilities and the McConnell branch are presented in section 6.2
- Operating costs at the new Central library are discussed in section 6.3
- Operating cost for the CBRL are addressed in section 6.4
- Conclusions about operating costs are addressed in section 6.5

### 6.1 Capital Cost Considerations

The space required for the new central library has been calculated as 45,122 which we have rounded to 45,000 square feet for costing purposes.

The capital costs associated with the library are based on the costs used by Harbour Royale Development Limited in its 2018 report which was based on capital costs of \$468 per square foot. This in turn was based on an increase of 10% from the 2016 study conducted by DMA.

For comparative purposes, the 2020 Altus Canadian Construction Cost Guide shows construction costs for libraries as \$280 to \$450 per square foot for Halifax, the nearest municipality included in the guide. However, historically, construction costs have been 15% to 30% higher in Sydney than in Halifax. The reasons for this include distance from markets, the distance to engage speciality trades, and the need in Sydney to respect its long-standing tradition of working within the unionized construction environment.

Construction on the Sydney waterfront will also be more expensive than the Altus Construction Guide because it will be a new, iconic, transformative civic landmark, with high visibility, uniquely designed to achieve LEED certification. Challenges will potentially include land assembly, complex engineering, construction and project management. The waterfront location will also require site remediation and preparation work, and extensive pile construction and footings to support its substructure.

Using the current construction cost indices for Halifax and allowing for some increase because of the local construction marketplace, the current construction costs are modelled at \$480 to \$500 per square foot for Sydney. This cost excludes land acquisition, site preparation, and furnishings, fixtures and equipment (FFE). These costs do not allow for any escalation as a result of Covid and do not allow for inflation that may occur between now and when construction commences. Construction costs therefore are calculated to range from \$21.6 million to \$22.5 million.

# Cost Considerations

The design to achieve LEED certification will also allow for some operating efficiencies.

Fixtures, furnishings and equipment have been calculated at 10% of construction costs.

Site preparation costs are estimated to be \$3,000,000.

Soft cost are calculated at 17% of the hard construction costs and would be \$4,566,000. The Altus 2020 Canadian Cost Guide lists **soft costs** as the following applicable items:

- Land and related costs
- Legal fees
- Site services outside the property
- Tenant incentives
- Soil and environmental tests
- Contingencies
- Architectural and engineering fees
- Special design consultants
- Interest charges and lenders' fees
- Permits and development charges
- Land surveys
- Government registered programs
- Special equipment and furnishings
- Marketing and advertising
- Purchaser upgrades
- Property taxes
- Other municipal fees
- Insurance and bond costs
- Management costs
- Levies
- Appraisals
- Broker commissions
- Developer profit
- Rezoning costs

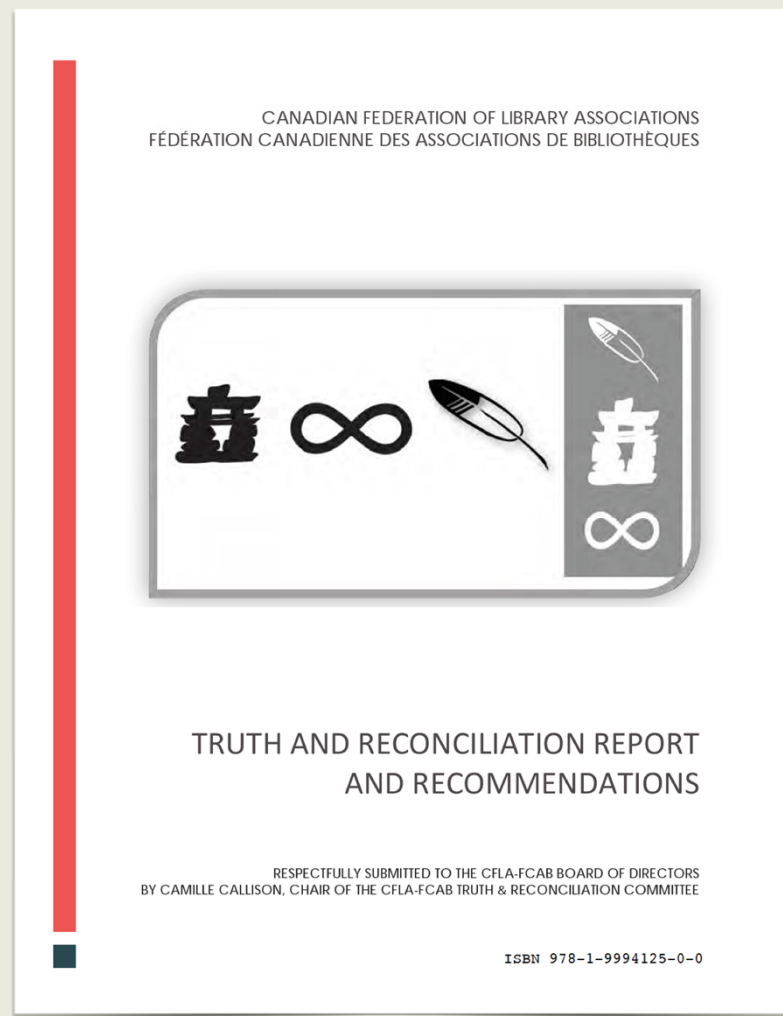
The table below summarizes these construction costs for a new Central Library build on the waterfront.

Total sf CBRL, Sydney Library and Partner Space (sf)	45,000	45,000
LEED/Contemporary Capital Construction Cost per sf	\$480	\$500
Library construction	\$21,600,000	\$22,500,000
Fixtures, furnishings, Equipment @ \$50 per sf	\$2,160,000	\$2,250,000
Site-Costs	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
Subtotal	\$26,760,000	\$27,750,000
Soft Costs (% of Subtotal)	17%	17%
Soft costs - legal, accounting, testing, etc.	\$4,549,200	\$4,717,500
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$31,309,200</b>	<b>\$32,467,500</b>
Land contribution value	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$34,309,200</b>	<b>\$35,467,500</b>

Excluding the land contribution value, the construction costs are \$31.3 million to \$32.5 million in current 2020 dollars. This cost could be reduced somewhat with the sale of McConnell branch. The assessed value of McConnell branch is \$1,891,700. However, this is likely to overstate the market value of the facility. Our analysis does not include the future use or possible sale of McConnell branch.

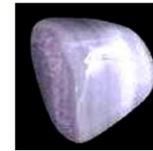
# Cost Considerations

# Canadian Federation of Library Associations - Truth and Reconciliation Report and Recommendations





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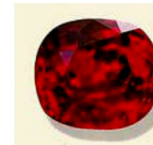
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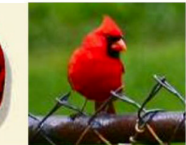
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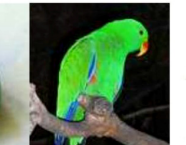
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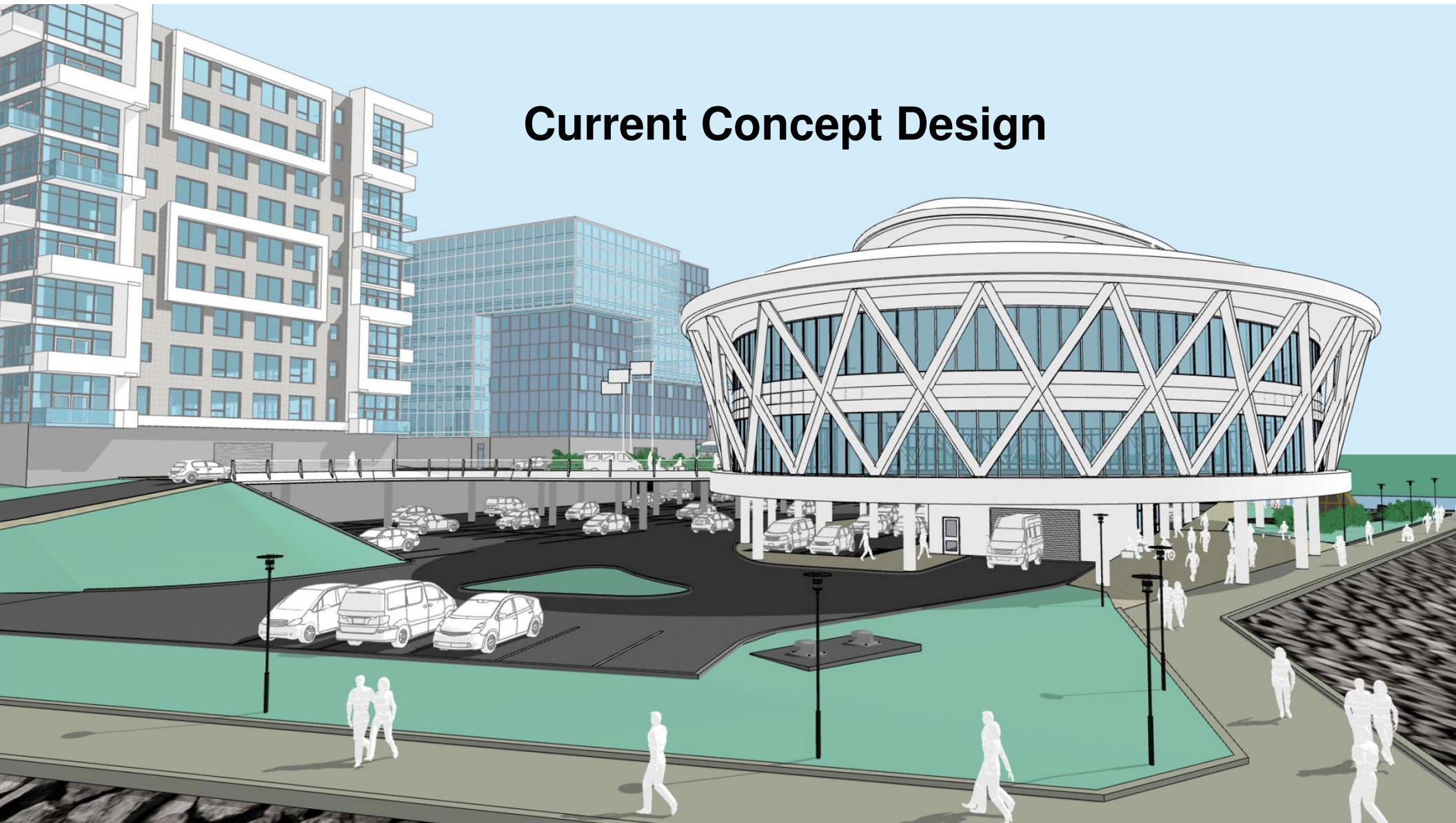
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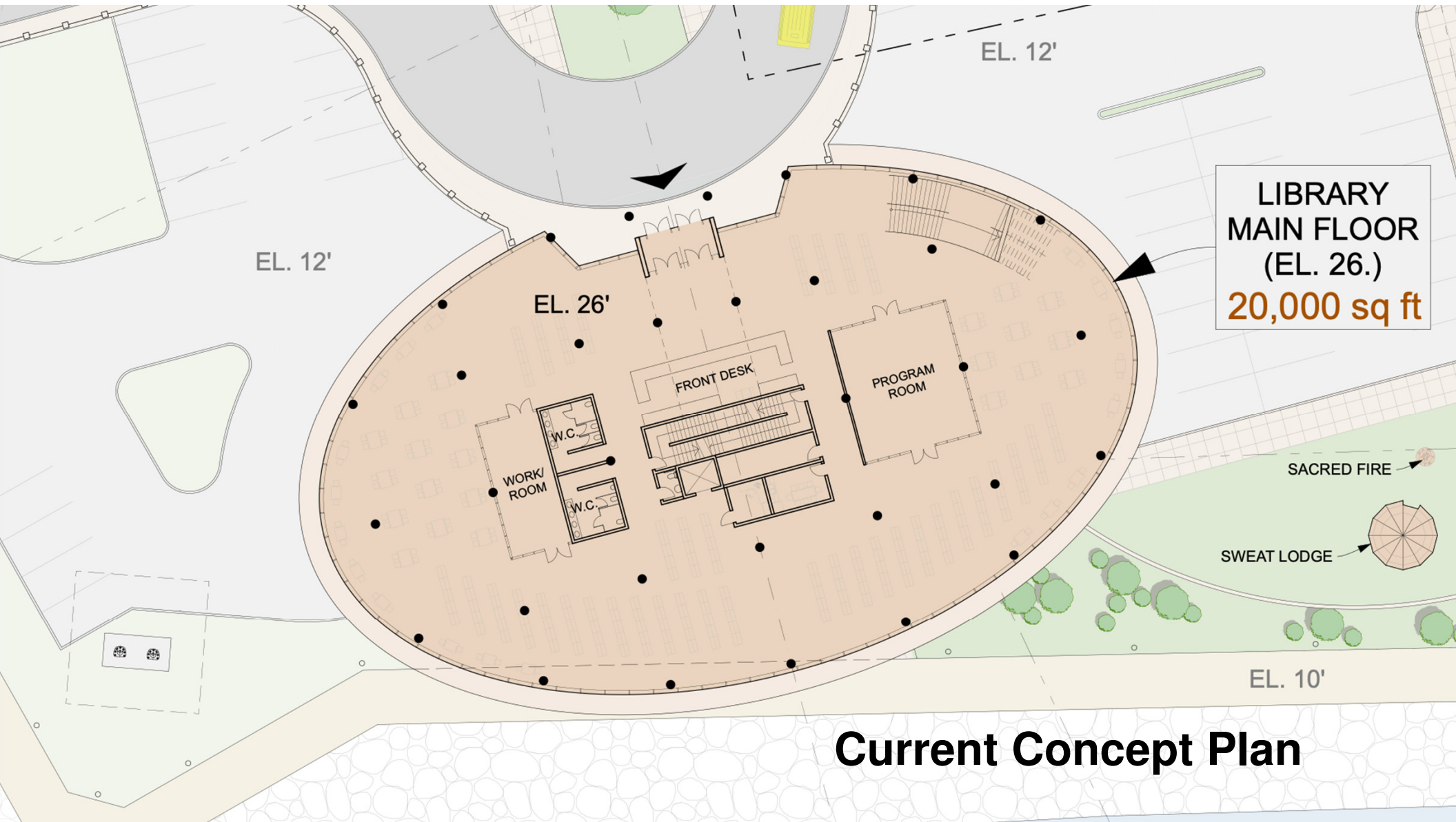


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## Mi'kmaw Drum Influences

# Current Concept Design





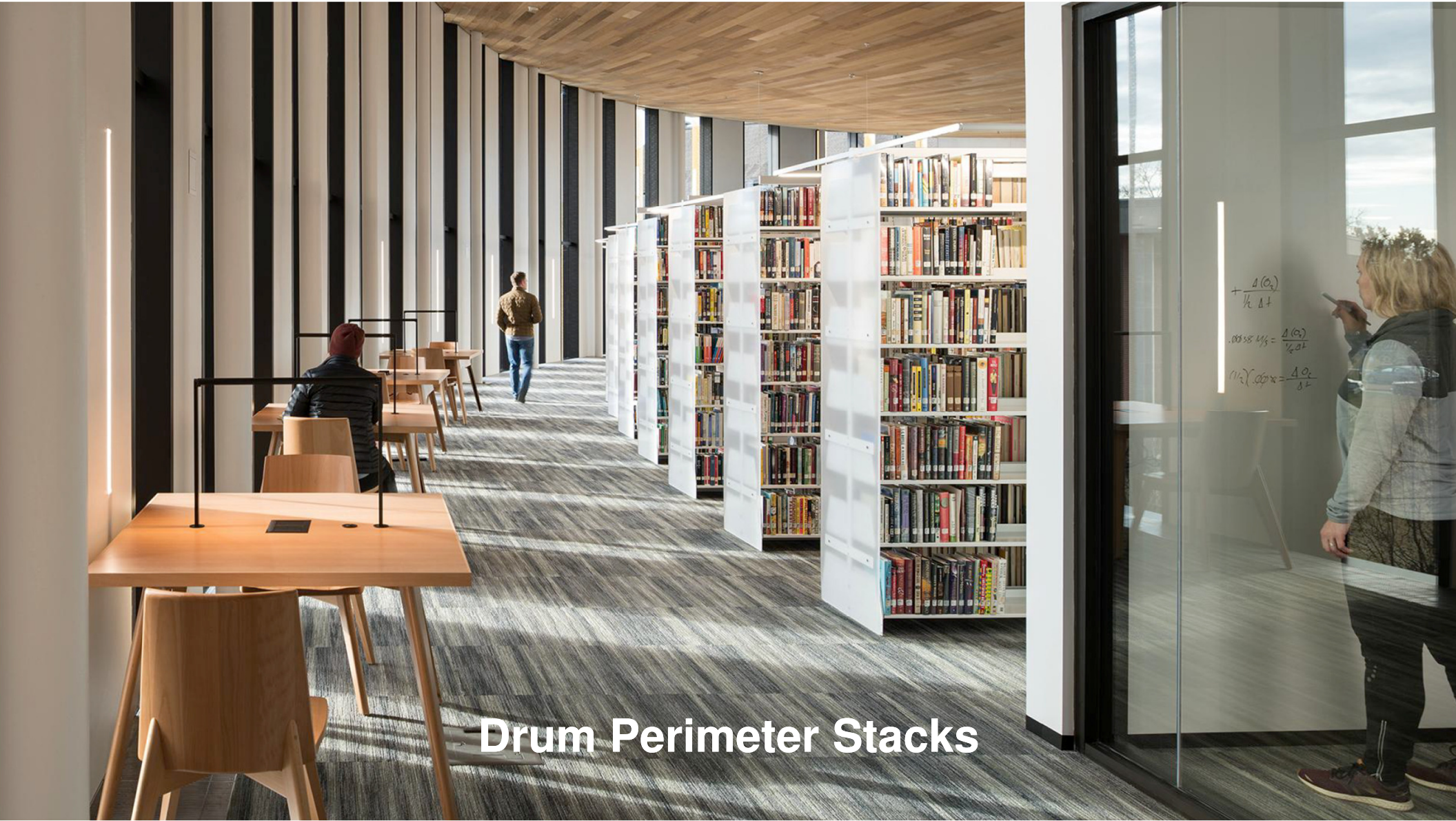
**Current Concept Plan**



**Drum Interior Staircase**



**Drum Perimeter Seating**

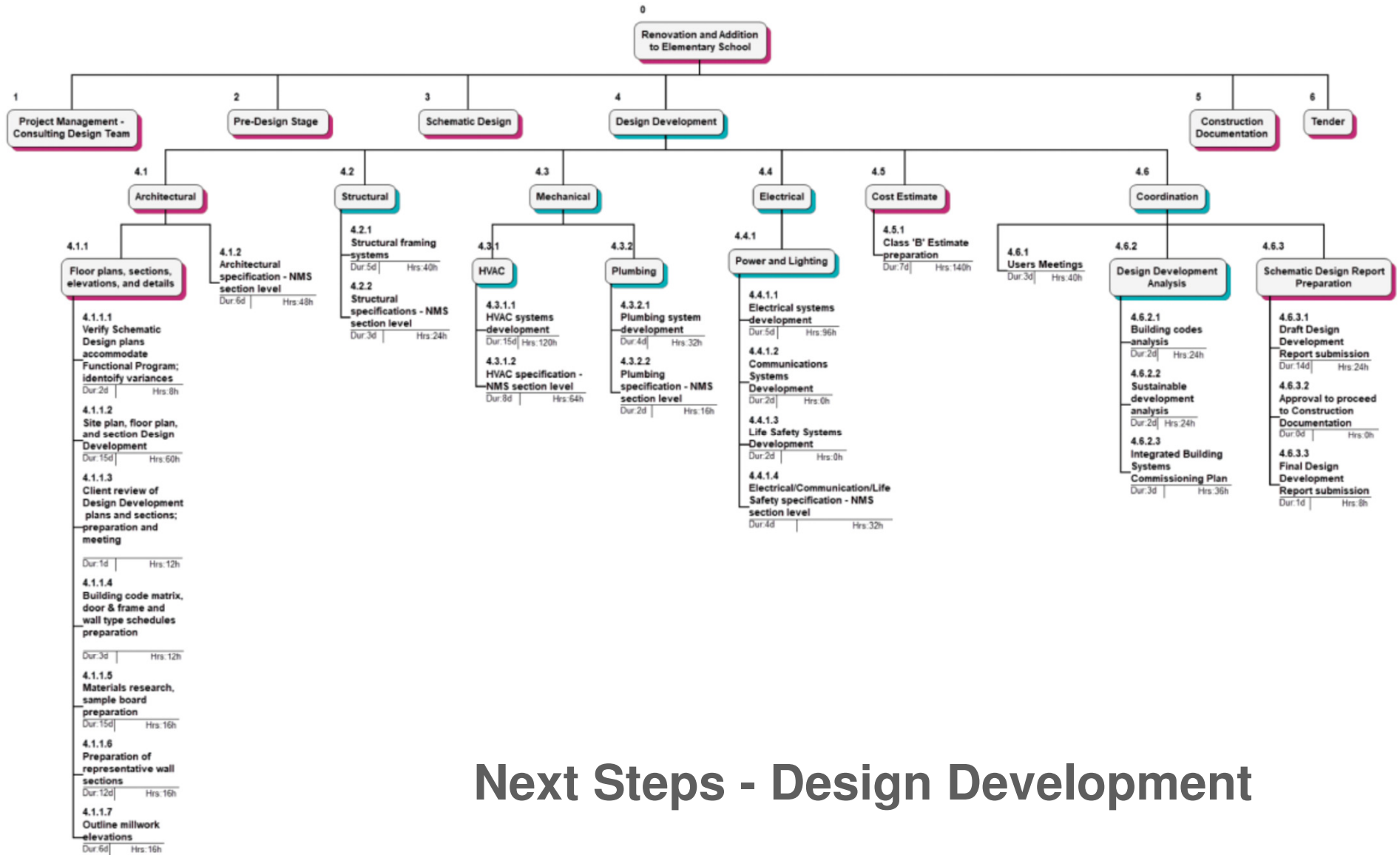


# Drum Perimeter Stacks

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**Current Concept Vision**



## Next Steps - Design Development



## Next Steps - Community Engagement

# Halifax Library Impact





# Final Thoughts Q & A