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Library patrons of the future speak up

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Well, what do the young people think?

The task force at the Grand Forks Public Library is asking citizens to speak up. They want to know how the people of Grand Forks visualize their library 20, 30, 40 years down the road.

People from various walks of life came Thursday evening to share their views. One of them was Laurie Hollifield, a Latin teacher, who brought some ideas written by her students. And after all, decisions made about the library now will most affect those running the show in Grand Forks in 2030 and 2040 and beyond. Some of these young people wrote about their love for the library. Others think it is not welcoming. Some think if there is a new library it should be connected to Columbia Mall where Target used to be. One would like to see it out by South Middle School because, after all, the student says that will some day be the center of Grand Forks.

Other students want to keep the present library and maybe use it for a branch library.

Here are excerpts of what they are thinking:

"Ever since I was a small child, I was an avid reader. I went to the library as often as I could. Years passed and I went there less as the school libraries opened up to me. Yet I look back on the doors of the public library. I remember the beautiful architectural aspects of the building and how much I loved the building's layout. And I still love it.

"Though it may be true that as the number of books joining the library's collection is causing it to become cramped, I believe this wonderful building should be preserved. Certain aspects of the building should be updated, but it shouldn't be forgotten."

"The library seems cold and unwelcoming and old. I like the children's section, but the rest just seems outdated."

"The library is a good source for books and information, but it just doesn't feel welcoming."

"We need wider aisles for more browsing. We need a more welcoming interior. The interior is so gloomy and musty it makes you feel like you don't want to be there. Just get my stuff and get me out. There should be more welcoming reading areas."

"I think the idea of remodeling is ridiculous because it would only meet demands, not leave room for expansion. I believe the idea of a branch library would be good, though the community would not pay for a new building. So a thought would be to use the old Target building and try to use most of it for new technology, such as computers."

"I feel the library is hidden between two streets and it should be noticeable to people driving on a busy road. If I did not grow up using the library, I feel I would not know where it is. The library needs room to expand, relocate."

"I don't like the idea of many little libraries because then a book might be at another one. I don't think you should use the Target space because I think that would be too many people and with people comes noise. Libraries are supposed to be quiet."

"I think the city should build a whole new library somewhere by South Middle School because the town is growing south, so it would be a good place to put it."

"Grand Forks needs a new library. It's a public building and it is important to keep those buildings nice."

"It would be cool having a library in the mall. The best thing would be to make it more high tech."

"If you build a new library, you should keep the pirate ship in the children's department because there are lots of people who enjoy that. And making a room with a lot of couches would be nice."

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