

CONNECT. ENRICH. INSPIRE.

# Building Update

## Summer 2016

## Why Downtown?

The Library Board wants to thank the community for its patience as we worked diligently and in good faith to remove bias and politics from the library location recommendation decision. Please note that this decision came after much public input, data collection, thought, and analysis by the Board. Our rationale was as follows:

**Land Acquisition** – Costs for at least one top downtown location are very competitive, and possibly cheaper, relative to other options.

**Population Density** – A downtown library puts our programs and services closer to the most densely populated parts of the city and closer to a higher percentage of our users. In an average month over half of our users come from homes north of 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. South (see graph on back page).

**Schools and Income** – Downtown is closest to the elementary and middle schools with the highest percentage of children on free and reduced lunches and who could benefit most from library programs and services, especially in the summer.

**Walkability** – Downtown has the highest ‘walkability’ score as rated by urban planning professionals.

**City Bus** – The Public Transit hub downtown means that more Grand Forks citizens from across town can access the library via City Bus as ALL routes go downtown.

**Traffic** – The Federal Highway Administration scored the Washington Street intersections around midtown slightly less ‘safe’ on average than those downtown. Downtown sees almost 10,000 fewer cars per day, all driving at slower speeds than on the much wider Washington St.

**Parking** – Engineers and architects tell us that a downtown library on the right block could easily be designed to have nearly 100 stalls on-site with no streets to cross for patrons to access the library building. This represents a 100% increase in patron parking compared to the current site (50 patron car stalls on-site).

**Safety** – While anxiety over loitering patrons may be legitimate at times, this will occur at almost any location. Other downtown libraries have dealt with this situation for a century and have developed creative solutions. Also, the right communication and coordination between the Library, City, County, and Police Department can mitigate some of these social concerns at the same time as we continue to provide all people with the tools and technologies they can and do utilize to improve their lives.

**Best Practices in the Industry** – Downtowns are where many area cities have chosen to place their new libraries in the last decade – or are reinvesting in their existing downtown libraries to *keep* them there. This includes not only Fargo but Billings, Bozeman, St. Cloud, Madison, Sioux Falls, and others. This decision is in line with industry best practices in design and construction.



The mission of the Grand Forks Public Library is to *connect the community, enrich the mind, and inspire the imagination.*

### Our Community Library Vision:

- To create a culture of production in addition to consumption of information in Grand Forks.
- To expand the public sphere and facilitate gathering in a robust and versatile commons – a community “living room.”
- To increase ALL citizens’ access to information and the technologies that enable such access.
- To serve as a bridge between institutions and organizations from City government to UND to the public schools to the arts community to area nonprofits.

# Why Not Just Remodel?

New construction is typically ideal for several reasons:

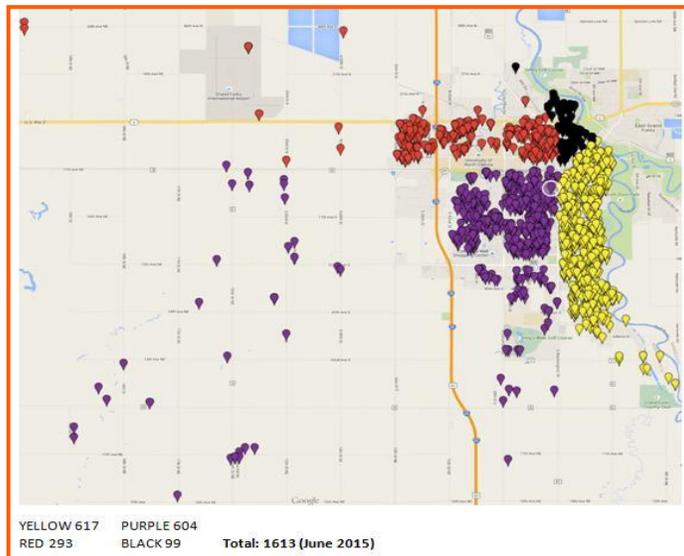
- The library can have exactly what is best for serving the public and operating efficiently. Remodeling always requires facility sacrifices;
- The cost of remodeling in order to upgrade the current building with all the 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies and accommodating all the evolving building codes and the Americans with disabilities Act can be nearly as costly as building new. Architectural standards indicate that when remodeling costs total 60% or more of the cost to build new, it's best to build new (see costs below);
- Building new also allows the old library to continue operations uninterrupted. Remodeling requires moving costs (twice), leasing fees, and disruption of library services during construction during on-site renovations.

Since 2009, it's been recognized that remodeling the current facility is not the best option for the Grand Forks Public Library. Many community members, as well as professional library experts, have weighed in on the Grand Forks Library location options over the past 7 years and have recommended new construction over remodeling.

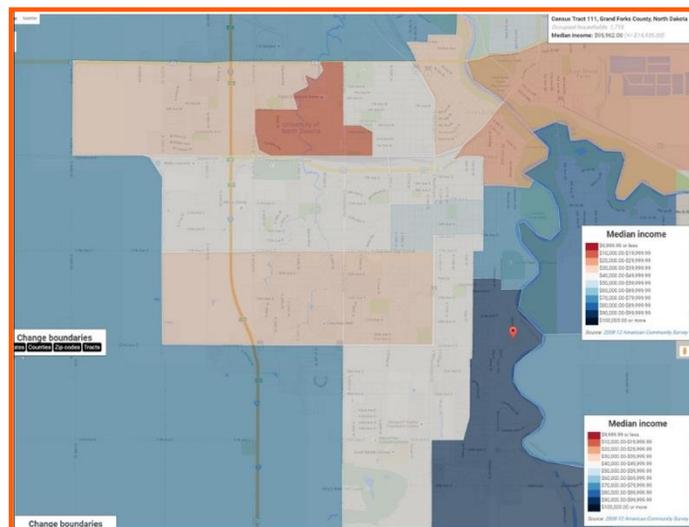
### Cost Comparisons:

- \$8-9 Million - Cost for renovating current structure (updated HVAC and mechanical systems / re-ducting and elimination of underground air circulation tunnels are one of the biggest expenses). This will result in loss of 30-40% of materials and no increases activity space.
- \$14-15 Million – Cost for renovating current structure and *expansion* to keep collection and add space for technology/events/library users.
- \$22-23 Million – Cost of new building designed specifically for long-term community needs.

**Bottom Line: When investing in a community asset, it's important to build for the long term. Don't shortchange community members of tomorrow by cutting corners today.**



Above: User Profile 2015. A vast majority of library users live north of 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue South. As many as 40% live north of or near Demers Ave.



Above: 'Wealth' in Grand Forks neighborhoods; more red signifies lower median income and often greater population density.

## Next Steps



Ultimately, the future Grand Forks Public Library building will be owned by the City of Grand Forks. The ultimate decision regarding location, as well as the responsibility for negotiating a price for land and overseeing construction, belong with the City Council. In addition, determining funding mechanisms and potential voting opportunities are up to City Council.

In addition, the Grand Forks Public Library Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit created to raise supplemental private funds for the new library. If you are interested in making a tax-deductible donation to the project, please contact Library Director Wendy Wendt at [Wendy.Wendt@gflibrary.com](mailto:Wendy.Wendt@gflibrary.com) or call her at (701) 772-8116.



### PLEASE NOTE:

Information in this document and more is available by clicking on the 'Future of the Library' button on the Grand Forks Public Library's website: [www.gflibrary.com](http://www.gflibrary.com)