



## Hennepin County Library

### Capital Projects Office

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### **A Vision for the New Hennepin County Library - Walker**

Situated in the heart of Uptown in the East Isles neighborhood, the Walker Library is located on the northwest corner of Hennepin and Lagoon Avenues at 2880 Hennepin Avenue. It serves a large and diverse group of neighborhood communities, including Bryn-Mawr, Cedar-Isles-Dean, Kenwood, Lowry Hill, East Isles, Whittier, Lowry Hill East, Ecco, Carag and northwestern Lyndale. Hennepin County is seeking to create a new Walker Library on the current library site that reflects its Uptown community - bustling, diverse and high energy. In an ever-changing culture, this new library will serve as a welcoming community gathering place for people of all ages and walks of life and be a gateway to the world's information and culture. A vision for the new Walker Library has been developed over the past several months through the cooperative efforts and engagement of the Walker Library Community Advisory Committee, along with many other community members and Hennepin County staff. The mission of the Community Advisory Committee was to envision a 21<sup>st</sup> century library that will serve and enhance the Uptown community both now and well into the future. The following key objectives reflect the consensus that was developed to support the vision for a new Walker Library.

### *Needs and Services*

Hennepin County Library offers a wide range of programs and services that respond to customer demand. Services for people of all ages have expanded and outreach has intensified to bring library resources to a larger and more diverse audience. Increasingly, customers rely on libraries as community gathering spots, request a broad collection of materials and technologies, and depend on libraries for services ranging from early literacy initiatives to senior resources. While the current Walker Library provides many of these programs and services to the Uptown community, the vision for the new library seeks to improve and expand upon them. During the community engagement meetings, potential areas to improve services were identified:

- *A refreshed and expanded library collection incorporating a variety of current formats*
- *Comfortable places to read with natural light*
- *Community gathering spaces to support a variety of functional needs*
- *Flexible, welcoming space for browsing library collections*
- *An inviting space for children and youth collections that is attentive to acoustic and safety needs*



Augsburg Park . Brookdale . Brooklyn Park . Champlin . East Lake . Eden Prairie . Edina . Excelsior . Franklin . Golden Valley . Hopkins . Hosmer . Linden Hills . Long Lake  
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Rockford Road . Rogers . Roosevelt . St. Anthony . St. Bonifacius . St. Louis Park . Southdale . Southeast . Sumner . Walker . Washburn . Wayzata . Webber Park . Westonka

- *Expanded adult and children programs and special events*
- *Outdoor spaces that respond to the unique setting adjacent to the Mall, Greenway and the streets*
- *Flexible spaces to work and study, with access to more public computers and wireless access for laptop users*
- *Incorporate features that contribute to the customer experience and community identity, such as a small coffee shop, exhibit space for art or cultural attractions*

### ***Access***

The high density, urban nature of the Uptown area promotes an active, mobile population. Located at the busy intersection of Hennepin and Lagoon Avenues, the library site is also adjacent to the Midtown Greenway and the Uptown Transit Station. The unique location of the library provides residents with a large variety of commuting options and encourages pedestrian, transit and bicycle modes over driving. Access to, and within, the new library will be an important aspect of the project. Some key objectives related to access are:

- *A library that is highly visible with welcoming entrance(s) and that is engaged with the busy street activities along Hennepin and Lagoon Avenues*
- *Fully accessible to all visitors that provides clear wayfinding within*
- *Promotes pedestrian and bicycle access with connections to the Greenway, Hennepin and Lagoon, Uptown Transit Center, and the Mall*
- *Ensures a safe and secure environment while maintaining an open and friendly atmosphere*
- *Provides a location to safely drop off children and other users to access the library*
- *Encourages bicycle access with increased parking capacity for bikes.*
- *Improves vehicular parking options while maintaining focus on alternative transportation modes*

### ***Sustainability***

Environmental sustainability is a core value for both Hennepin County and the Uptown community. The Uptown area, with its high-density land utilization, multimodal variety of commuting access options, and connected green spaces and trails, exemplifies a “greener” lifestyle. The new library facility should stand as a model of environmental sustainability for the community and the region, promoting and demonstrating the benefits of energy conservation practices, where appropriate. The following objectives have been identified as critical considerations in the new library design:

- *Seize the opportunity to create a library that is an outstanding example of sustainable design*

- *Incorporate opportunities for education and demonstration by integrating sustainable design elements, both inside and outside*
- *Achieve balance between initial capital investment and long term operational needs*
- *Sustainability features and strategies for consideration:*
  - *Energy efficient building systems and energy neutral design strategies*
  - *Intensive use of day lighting*
  - *Use recycled, local, renewable and sustainable material alternatives*
  - *Efficient land utilization and storm water management*
  - *Alternative features such as green roof, solar collection*

## ***Design***

The new Walker Library will stand as a landmark destination, providing access to the world's information and culture. Located in the heart of a thriving urban setting, the new library should reflect the unique character and diversity of the Uptown area, creating a highly visible building that is fully engaged with its surroundings. Spaces will be flexible, designed to adapt to new ideas, changes in services and evolving technology. The following design considerations and objectives have been identified for the new library:

- *Provide welcoming, accessible and approachable facility open to all*
- *A landmark building that is easily identifiable as Uptown's library with a strong daytime and nighttime street presence*
- *Site design that incorporates green space and enhances the connection to the Mall and Greenway*
- *Reflect the unique urban character and diversity of Uptown, its people, a busy live/work community, embracing independent lifestyles*
- *Provide a creative response to the unique blend of historic and modern buildings that form the core of Uptown*
- *Appropriate density to fit the scale and context of neighborhood*
- *Provide inviting interior spaces that are open and spacious with ample natural light*

## ***Technology***

Providing public access and training in the use of information technology is a core principle of the Hennepin County Library system. This is accomplished by providing access to a variety of electronic resources, computers and associated technology support services, including knowledgeable IT and public service staff. Expanded technology service is a primary objective for the new facility, including the following key areas:

- *Increased access to computers and support services for computer activities*
- *Expanded access to self service library functions - catalog, material reservation and check-out, fine payment and room reservation*
- *Adequate workspace and utilities to support computer and laptop activities*
- *Increased access to current technologies, including wifi, internet and a variety of software*
- *Flexible spaces and building systems designed to accommodate future changes in program services, technology and staffing*