

Indian Trails library officials view concepts for a Buffalo Grove branch



Architect Tiffany Nash tells Indian Trails Library District board members about possible options for a branch facility in Buffalo Grove on Wednesday as fellow architect Dan Pohrte looks on. *(Russell Lissau | Staff Photographer)*



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An Indian Trails Public Library District branch in Buffalo Grove should occupy a custom-built structure rather than existing space, library officials informally agreed Wednesday.

The potential size and location of such a facility are very much up in the air, however -- as its potential cost.

"There are a lot of unknowns at this point," said Louise Barnett, president of the Wheeling-based library board. "But we have to start somewhere if we're going to get anyplace."

Architects Dan Pohrte and Tiffany Nash of Product Architecture + Design (<http://www.product-architects.com/>) presented three conceptual building layouts to the library board during its meeting Wednesday night.

Their designs called for rectangular buildings of 7,500 square feet, 10,000 square feet and 12,000 square feet, but they noted an actual library building could be any shape.

The larger the proposed size of the building, the more amenities it contained.

But even the smallest one included adult and youth collection space, seating, meeting space, study rooms, staff offices and an outdoor patio. That last amenity is particularly important to modern library patrons, Pohrte said.

"Outdoor space has become incredibly, incredibly necessary," he said.

Buffalo Grove doesn't have a public library in town.

Indian Trails serves the southern half of Buffalo Grove's population; the Vernon Area Public Library in Lincolnshire serves the rest.

The main Indian Trails Public Library is at 355 Schoenbeck Road in Wheeling. The district has a storefront branch in Prospect Heights, too.

Indian Trails officials have talked about opening a branch in Buffalo Grove for decades, but it's never been financially feasible, Executive Director Brian Shepard said. When the main library was being renovated and expanded a few years ago, a temporary facility that operated in Buffalo Grove resulted in a lot of positive feedback from patrons, he said.

It was "certainly clear" that a lot of people liked the idea of a permanent library in Buffalo Grove, Shepard said.

Last year's creation of a special tax increment financing district along the Lake-Cook Road corridor in Buffalo Grove could help make such a building a reality.

The taxing district runs through Indian Trails' service area in Buffalo Grove. Tax revenue generated by increasing property values or new development will be diverted to a fund that can pay for land purchases, infrastructure improvements and other projects.

A relatively small storefront operation like the one in Prospect Heights likely won't meet the needs or expectations of patrons from Buffalo Grove, Shepard said.

Two trustees said they preferred the architects' 7,500-square-foot or 10,000-square-foot options. But board members agreed that community need and the potential construction and staffing costs should determine the size of the project.

Shepard said he's meeting with Buffalo Grove officials later this week to discuss the proposal.

