

Lexington, Massachusetts



# Cary Memorial Library

## Lower Level Renovations

### Conceptual Design

FINAL REPORT

03-21-2023



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## **Acknowledgements**

### **Consultant Team**

The following Report was prepared for the Cary Memorial Library from February 2022 through December 2022. The study was produced by the following members of the project team:

#### **Architects**

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#### **Mechanical Engineers**

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#### **Project Estimators**

**AM Fogarty & Associates**  
175 Derby St., Suite 5, Hingham, MA

The following people participated in the development of this study for the Town of Lexington.

#### **Conceptual Design Study Working Group**

Mark Barrett, Facilities Project Manager  
Koren Stenbridge, Library Director  
Alissa Lauzon, Head of Youth Services  
Ita Dennehy, Children's Librarian

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## Executive Summary

Johnson Roberts Associates, Inc. (JRA) was engaged by the Town of Lexington's Department of Public Facilities (DPF) in February 2022 to perform a Conceptual Design Study for the Cary Memorial Library (CML). JRA worked closely with the Library Director and DPF's Project Manager over the spring and summer to review various possibilities of reconfiguring existing spaces to enhance usage of space within the library building to support the CML as a community gathering place and cultural destination.

The goal of this study is to create a design approach to bring the Children's Library and Meeting Room up to today's standards, to update existing spaces to support emerging and growing trends in library use, and address the needs identified in Children's Room/ Large Meeting Room Renovation Project Overview and Room Needs Assessments. The Cary Library was designed in the late 1990s and constructed in the early 2000s. At that time, Children's Rooms were designed to maximize collection space with programming space taking lower priority. Meeting Room was originally designed to hold 90 patrons in a lecture format. The actual programming has changed significantly, prompting a review and redesign to allow for a variety of uses.

Although the CML is still considered by many to be "new", there have been significant developments in the way that libraries are used, improved safety in public spaces and a commitment to inclusive design and this study shows how the patrons' current and future needs can be met.

In preparation of this Report, JRA and its Team of Consultants have assessed the existing conditions, reviewed Library goals, including universal access and sustainable design goals, and key program requirements, developed several schematic design schemes, prepared cost estimate based on the preferred scheme.

**Sustainable Approach:** Preserving and protecting existing building is an inherently sustainable endeavor. Renovation and modernization to be designed to current sustainable standards wherever possible.

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### Project Goals

- To create a joyous and welcoming space for children and families
- For the space to be designed using inclusive, people-centered design principles
- That our space is culturally and linguistically representative of our community
- To improve safety and oversight throughout the Children's Room space
- For the staff space to expand to allow for our larger Youth Services team
- The Children's Room project to focus on analog, tactile, natural materials, and activities
- Reimagine Children' space, making it colorful, creative, and fun for young patrons and their caregivers
- The Large Meeting Room project to feature technology, making, cooking, innovation capabilities

### Library Mission

- Ignite curiosity • Engage Minds • Connect Community

### Library Core Values

- Accessibility
- Civility
- Community
- Diversity
- Education
- Innovation
- Intellectual Freedom
- Stewardship

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### Key Program Areas

Children's Room - the busiest space in the library, with more than 50% of total library circulation happening here.

The Story Time Room is too small for most library programs prompting use of Large Meeting Room for more of Children's programming.

Preschool Play Space, popular but out of sight of the staff.

Staff Room is too small to meet current staffing needs.

The Learning Center is directly adjacent to the Children's Room - may be incorporated into the Children's Room.

Library Collection - the library is looking to maintain a large children's book collection.

Computers – Library will continue to loan iPads on demand and plan to introduce laptops for use in the space.

Needs to be addressed:

- Clear sightlines throughout
- Better accessibility throughout
- Logical and well-designed flow
- Updated service desk
- Clearly designated areas for various ages and activities
- A variety of seating to accommodate multiple sizes and needs of children
- Staff workspace that is flexible enough to be able to be reinvented in the future
- Story Hour Room and the Learning Center – assess to determine their continuing usefulness.

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Large Meeting Room – currently often used for Children's programming to accommodate the growing number of young attendees.

Broadcast booth – assess to determine continuing usefulness.

Kitchen – too small to fulfill the programming needs.

Needs to be addressed:

- Greater flexibility for programming moving forward
  - Children's story programs for younger children
  - Children's technology programs for school-age children
  - Maker Space programs for all ages
  - Cooking and craft programs for all ages
- Improved meeting room and technology, including adaptive technology
- Expanded and improved teaching Kitchen
- Updated furniture and storage
- Reoriented lecture format (facing Clarke Street)



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## Design Process

JRA and its Consultant Team reviewed the existing space usage and made a visual inspection of the existing condition of the building, assessed existing uses and evaluated the adequacy of spaces to support current and proposed functions. The Architect was joined by Mechanical Engineers to review the existing building systems, and modifications to building systems necessitated by the proposed renovations. The attached reports outline the findings of existing conditions review.

Architect prepared CAD base-plans of the existing spaces to serve as the basis for conceptual design studies.

Through an integrated design process, Johnson Roberts Associates developed alternative conceptual design studies for renovations to the interior of the Children's library and Large Meeting Room. We met with the Library Working Group, and the LDF at appropriate intervals to review the development of the alternatives, based on comprehensive understanding of library patrons, materials, services and operations.

Based on an approved preferred alternative, we developed floor plans showing conceptual design and proposed renovations, complete with furnishings.

Johnson Roberts Associates worked with the Working Group to develop an implementation strategy for accomplishing the proposed renovations over time. We discussed potential project impacts to Library operation during construction, reviewed potential project timeline and developed estimate of probable construction cost for the proposed renovations.

In order to better utilize Children's Library to reflect and meet changing needs, we attempted to:

- Create a welcoming space where children and families can meet and explore.
- Upgrade the Children's Room to provide opportunities for inclusive, tactile, hands-on learning.
- Update Story Room and Preschool Play Area to allow for flexible use, based on programming needs.
- Improve overall accessibility throughout the space, including in the restrooms.
- Improve sightlines throughout Children's space.
- Provide additional comfortable reading and play spaces for users.
- Maintain things that are well-loved by the community, like the book sale cart and Lego display.

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- Introduce flexible design approach to create agility of the future library, including movable furniture, wireless support for mobile devices, charging stations, additional electrical & data outlet locations.
- Create a “Welcome Area” including Children’s Service Desk and new materials browsing.
- Create additional display opportunities.

### **Existing Conditions**

The Children’s Space at the Cary Memorial Library is the busiest space in the library, with a heavily circulated book collection. Our findings are based on visual field surveys, discussions with library staff, review of existing drawings and assumption of continued use of the building as the Children’s Library.

Overall, the exterior and interior of the building appear to have been maintained very well. Some of the applied finishes show wear consistent with age and use and should be updated.

Johnson Roberts Associates assessed existing capacities of circulated materials, as well as the effectiveness and usability of spaces they occupy. We also reviewed conditions and quantities of existing furnishings, including soft seating, study table seating and computer station seating.

### **Proposed schemes**

During the design process, several space utilization layouts were presented and discussed in detail. The proposed layouts consisted of Schemes A, B, and C.

The following are solutions reviewed, listed by project area.

- Children’s Library:
  - Reconfigure entrance to Children’s Library to provide more visibility and more efficient use of space.
  - Reconfigure stacks to allow for better accessibility and visibility, add patron-friendly book solutions for younger readers.
  - Use colors to identify different book collections.
  - Identify locations for hands-on learning areas.
  - Reconfigure Story and Craft area to improve efficiency and provide adequate craft space.
  - Provide accessible sinks in Craft area suited for different ages.
  - Reduce number of computer stations to reflect patrons’ requests and preference to keep the library “analog”.
  - Add soft seating and study seating.
  - Reconfigure play area and locate non-gendered public restrooms to improve accessibility, visibility, and flow.
  - Avoid creating permanent barriers within the space.
  - Relocate staff workroom and service desk to allow for better circulation within the space.

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- Improve functionality of the workroom for growing Children's Library Staff and provide connection to adjoining Teen Room.
- Improve general and task lighting.
  
- **Large Meeting Room:**
  - Reconfigure existing room to provide flexibility for a variety of uses.
  - Increase kitchen space and open to the meeting room to allow for cooking and crafting demonstrations.
  - Provide opportunities for various room orientations and configurations.
  - Improve technology, including adaptive technology, within the space.

Throughout all areas in consideration, new floor and wall finishes were proposed as well, based on age, wear, change of use and scheduled maintenance.  
The Scheme A-1 was eventually developed into the Preferred Scheme.

**Preferred Scheme:**

Following project estimate and budget process and a critical review and value engineering of the proposed scope with the Working Group, the preferred scheme emerged, including the following project areas:

- **Children's Library:**
  - Reconfigure entrance to Children's Library to provide more visibility and more efficient use of space;
  - Relocate staff workroom and service desk to allow for better circulation within space;
  - Connect workroom to service desk and add storage;
  - Improve functionality of the workroom for growing Children's Library staff and provide connection to adjoining Teen Room;
  - Reconfigure stacks to allow for better efficiency and visibility, add patron-friendly book solutions for younger readers;
  - Use colors to identify different book collections;
  - Identify locations for hands-on learning areas;
  - Reconfigure Story and Craft area to improve accessibility and provide adequate craft and storage space;
  - Provide accessible sinks in Craft area, suited for different ages;
  - Reduce number of computer stations to reflect patrons' requests and preference to keep the library "analog";
  - Add soft seating and study seating;

## Cary Memorial Library

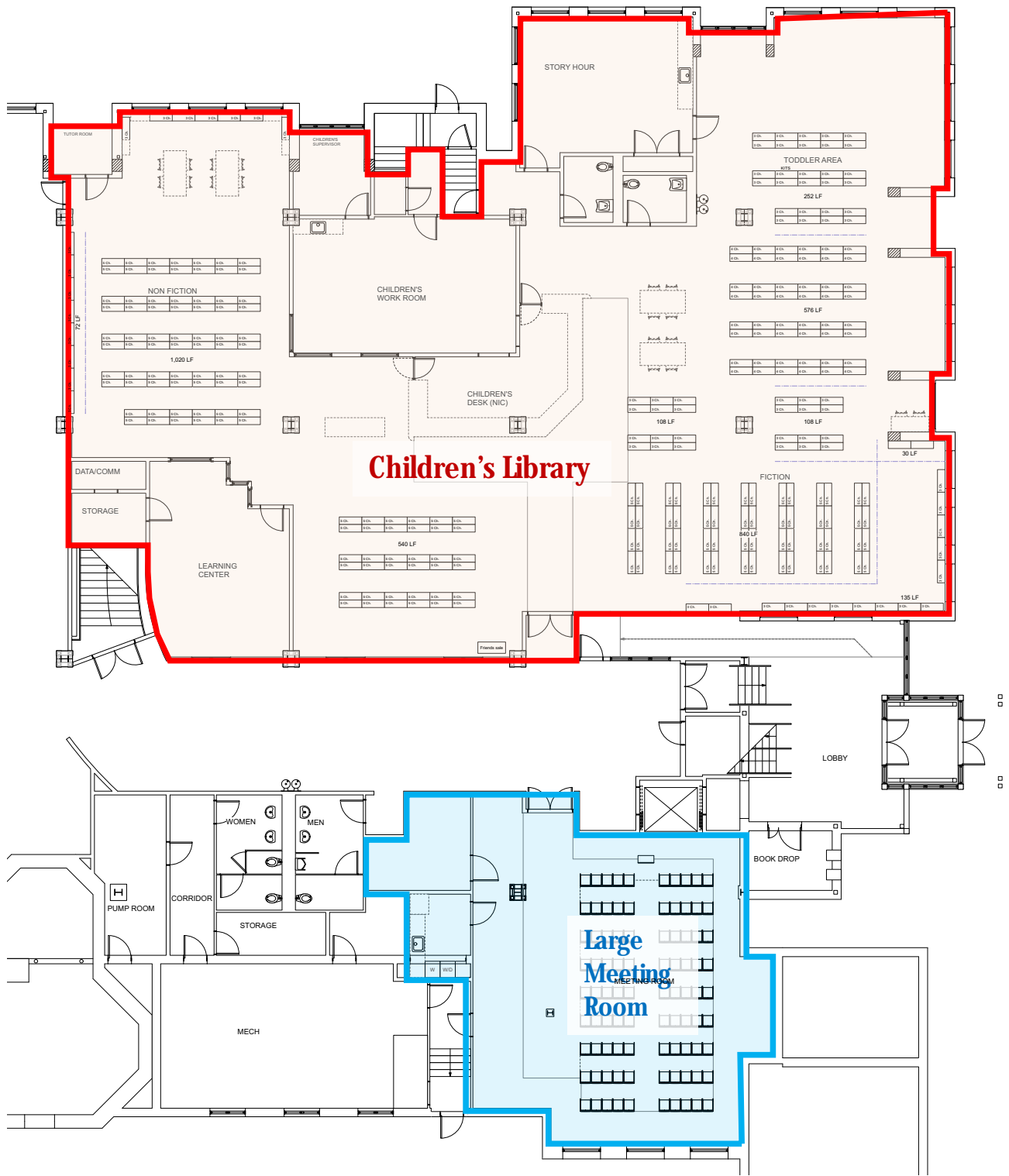
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- **Reconfigure Play Area and relocate non-gendered public restrooms to improve accessibility, visibility and flow;**
  - **Avoid creating permanent barriers within the space;**
  - **Add book sale area and display opportunities;**
  - **Relocate staff workroom and service desk to allow for better circulation within space;**
  - **Connect workroom to service desk and add storage;**
  - **Improve functionality of the workroom for growing Children's Library staff and provide connection to adjoining Teen Room;**
  - **Improve general and task lighting.**
- **Large Meeting Room:**
    - **Reconfigure existing room to provide flexibility for a variety of uses;**
    - **Increase kitchen space by combining with storage;**
    - **open Kitchen to the meeting room to allow for cooking and crafting demonstrations;**
    - **Add a barn door to close off the kitchen when not in use;**
    - **Add separate storage for tables and chairs;**
    - **Use mobile cooking/craft demonstration island that can be stowed away when not in use;**
    - **Provide opportunities for various room orientations and configurations.**

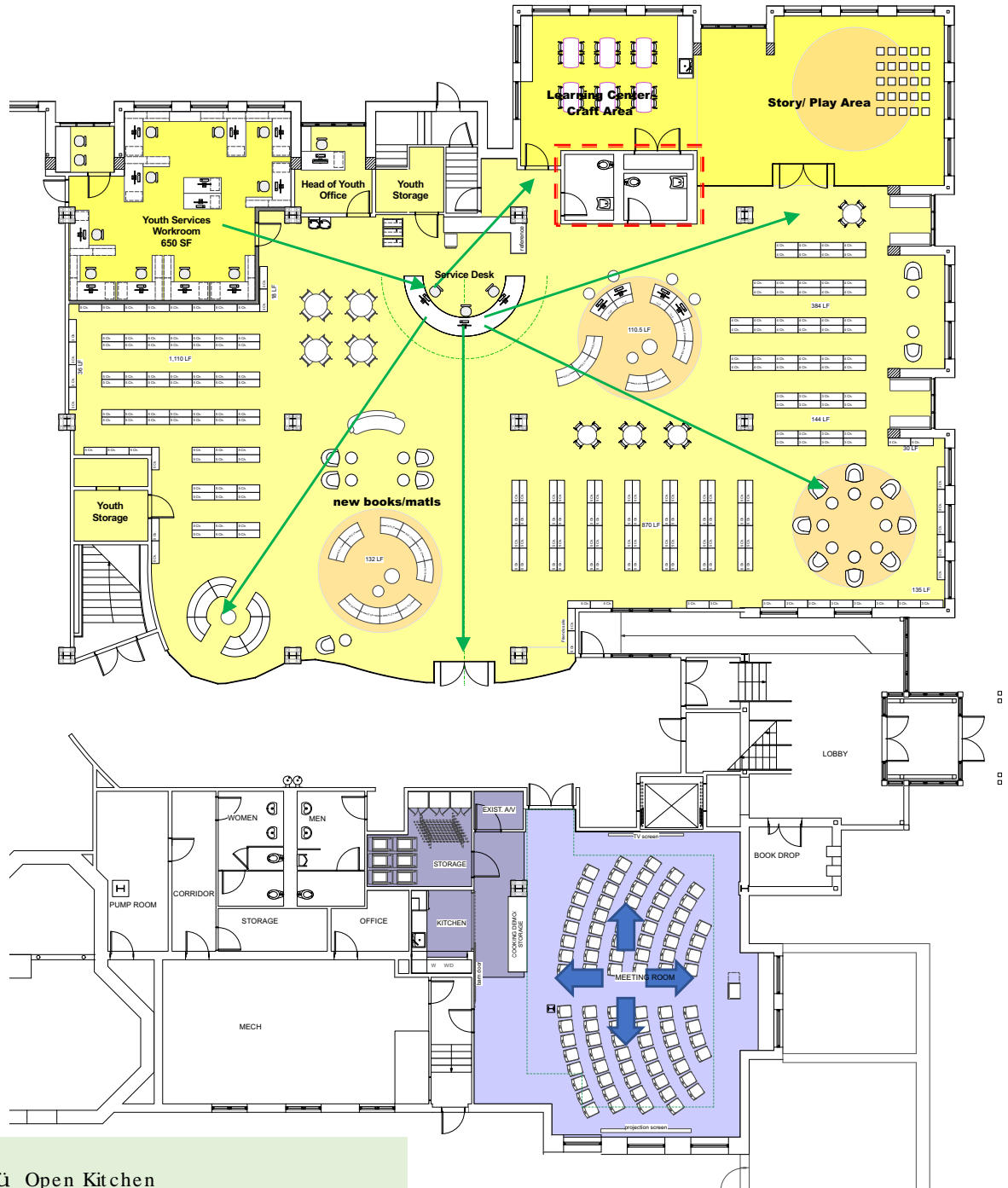
**Sustainable approach in recommended materials and methods was incorporated into the design. There is an additional opportunity in educating children about sustainability, recycling, reuse, and repurpose, through the interactive learning areas and related programs.**





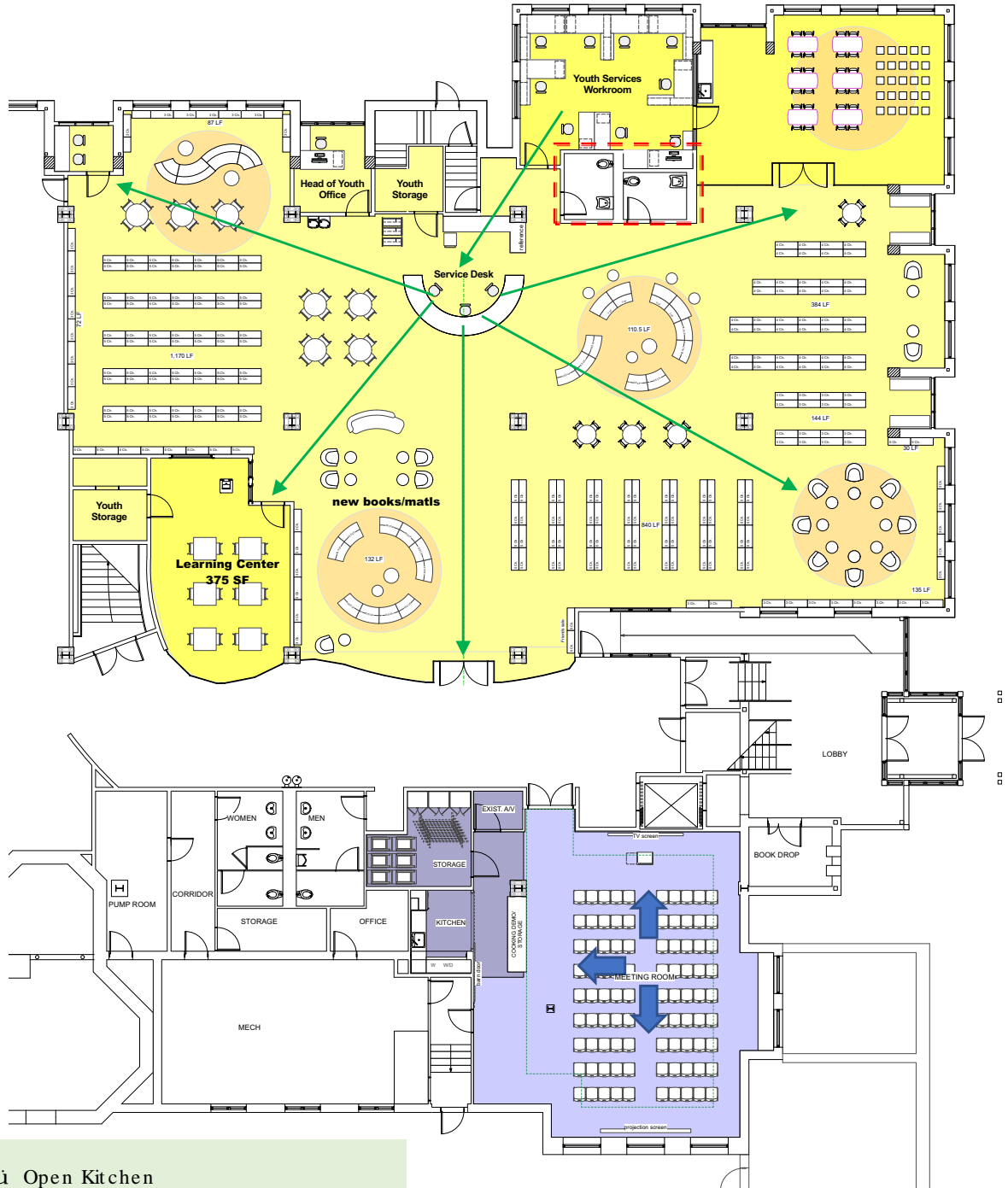
Cary Memorial Library - Existing First Floor Plan

- ü Bigger workroom
  - ü Better flow
  - ü Service Desk facing the entry
- Ø Toilets obstruct parts of Children's area
  - Ø Workroom further from service desk



- ü Open Kitchen
  - ü Added dishwasher, washer & dryer
- Ø Storage Room same size
  - Ø A/V closet unchanged

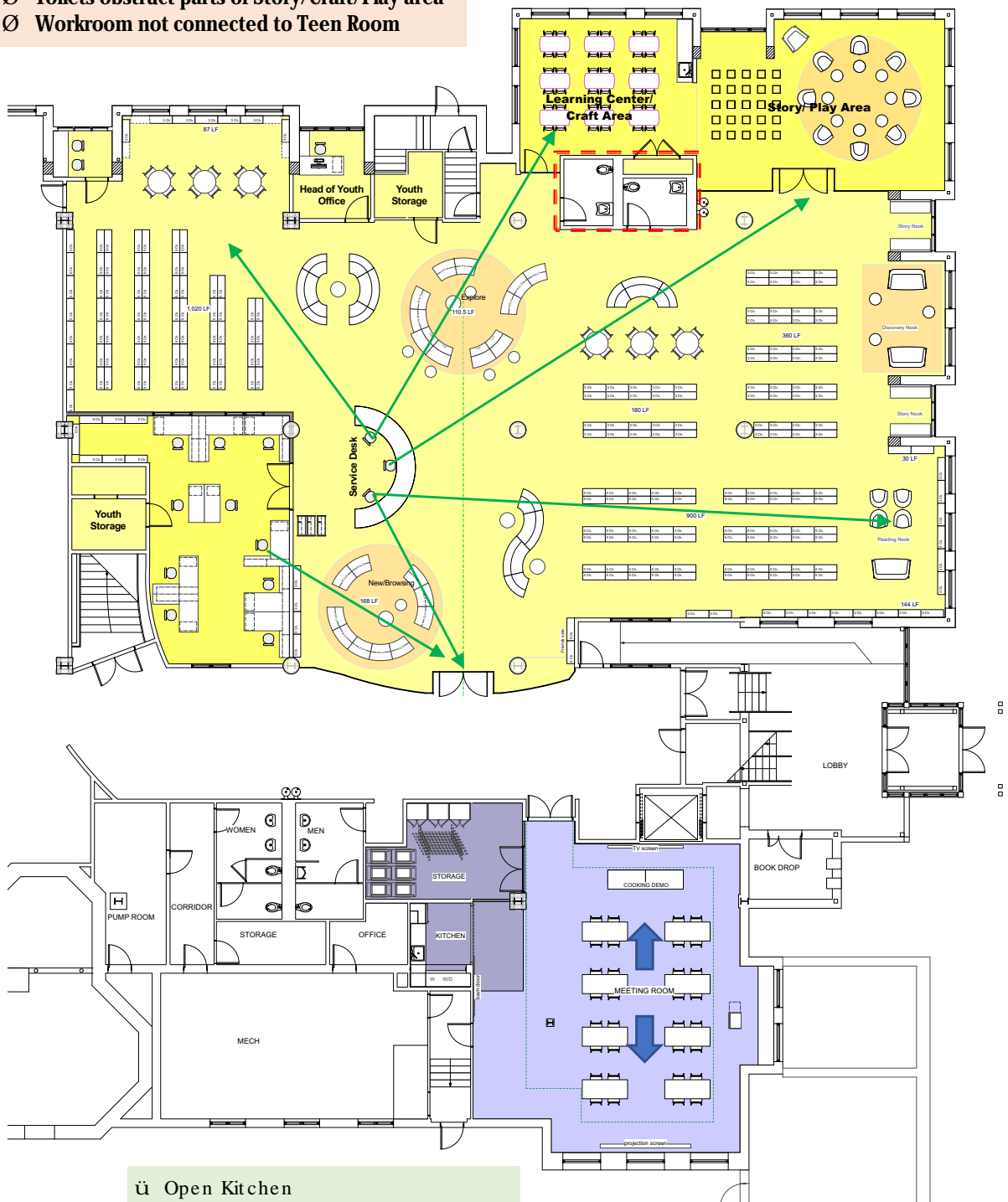
- ü Bigger workroom
  - ü Better flow
  - ü Service Desk close to workroom
- Ø Toilets obstruct parts of Children's area
  - Ø Learning Center remains a separate room



- ü Open Kitchen
  - ü Added dishwasher, washer & dryer
- Ø Storage Room same size
  - Ø A/V closet unchanged

- ü Improved visibility
- ü Better flow
- ü Service Desk adjacent to workroom

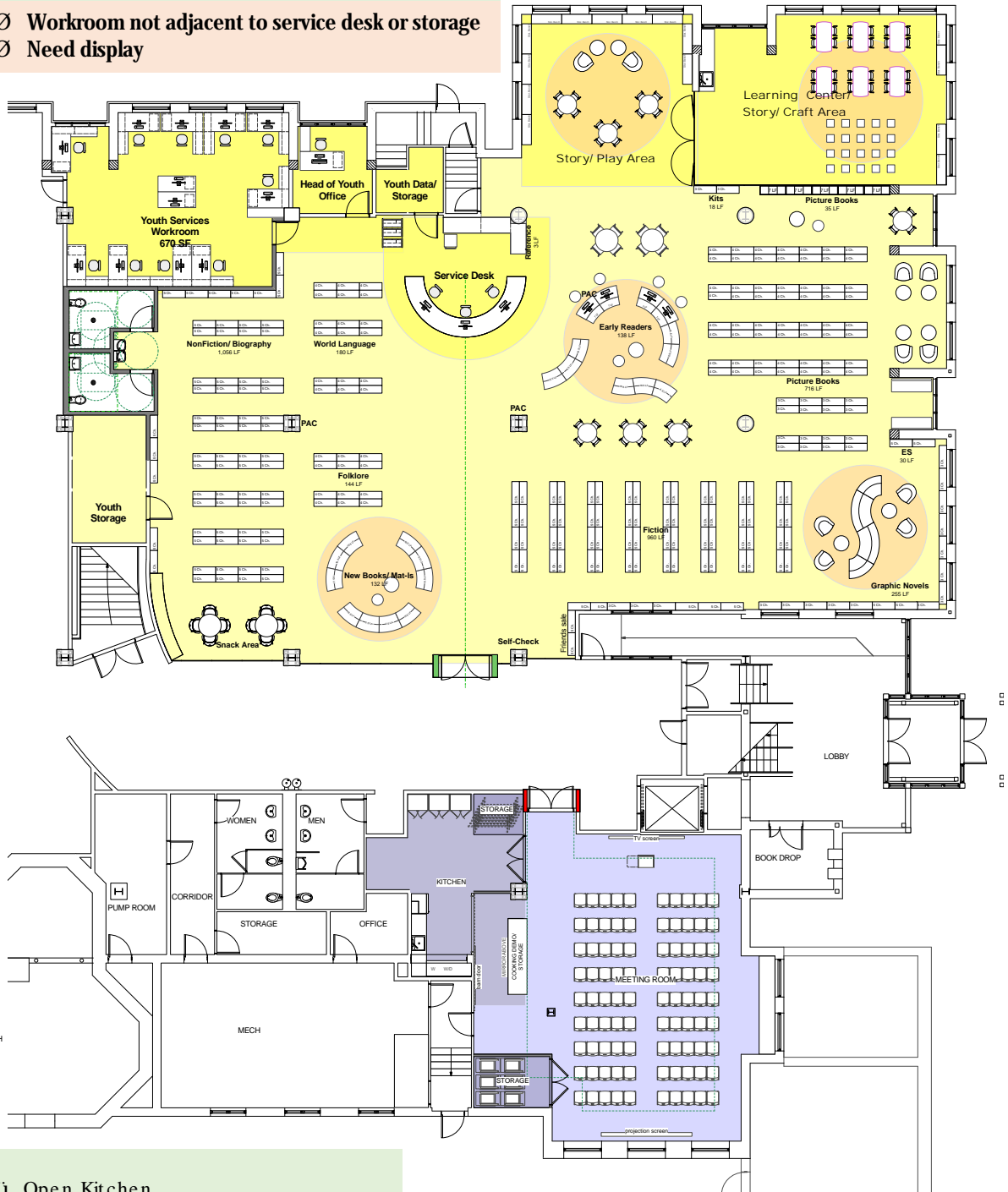
- Ø Toilets obstruct parts of Story/Craft/Play area
- Ø Workroom not connected to Teen Room



- ü Open Kitchen
- ü Increased Storage
- ü Added dishwasher, washer & dryer

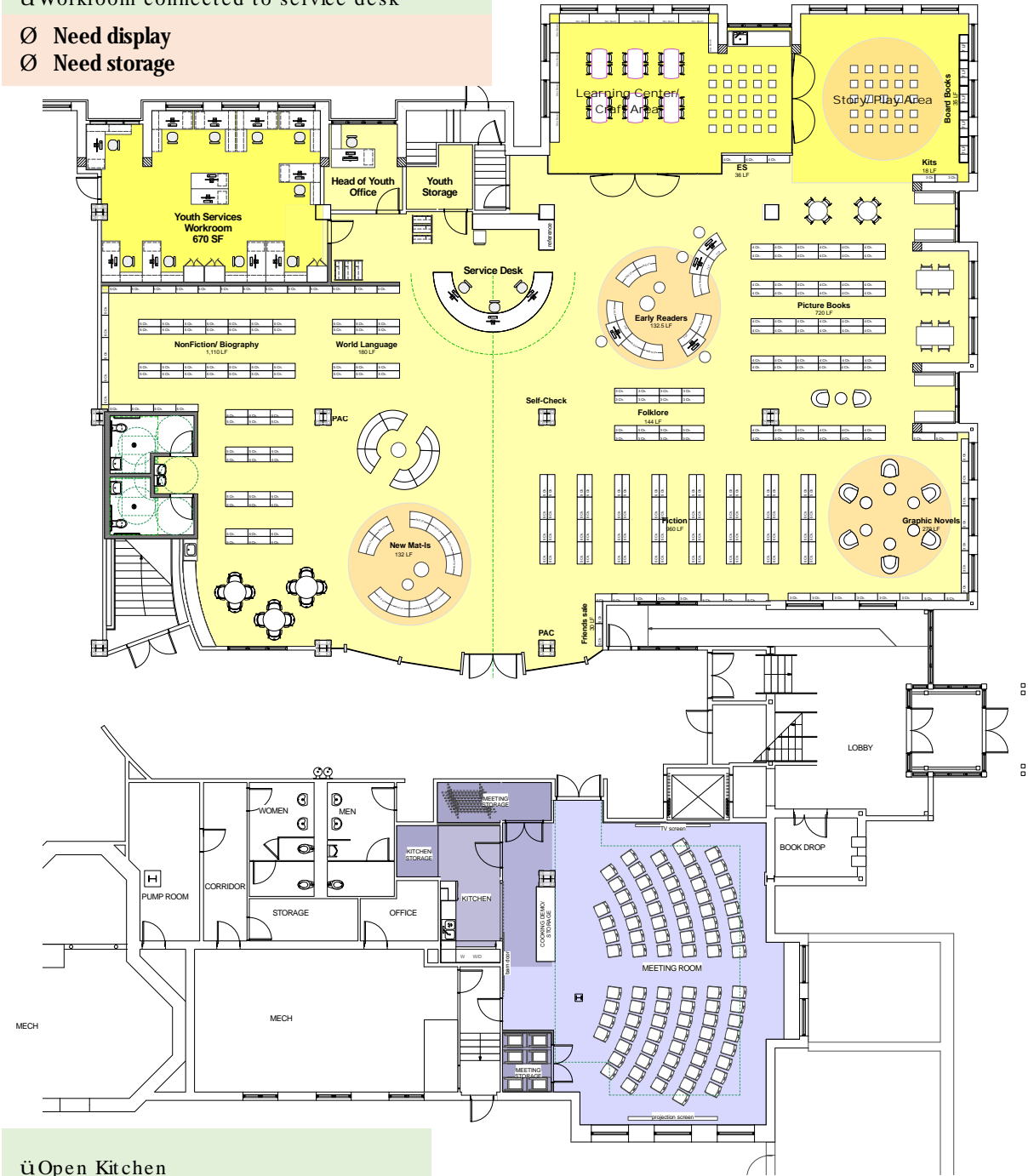
**Cary Memorial Library**  
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 Scheme C Plan

- ü Bigger workroom
  - ü Better flow
  - ü Service Desk facing the entry
  - ü Toilets relocated to improve visibility & accessibility
  - ü Stacks updated to reflect projected collection
- Ø Workroom not adjacent to service desk or storage
  - Ø Need display



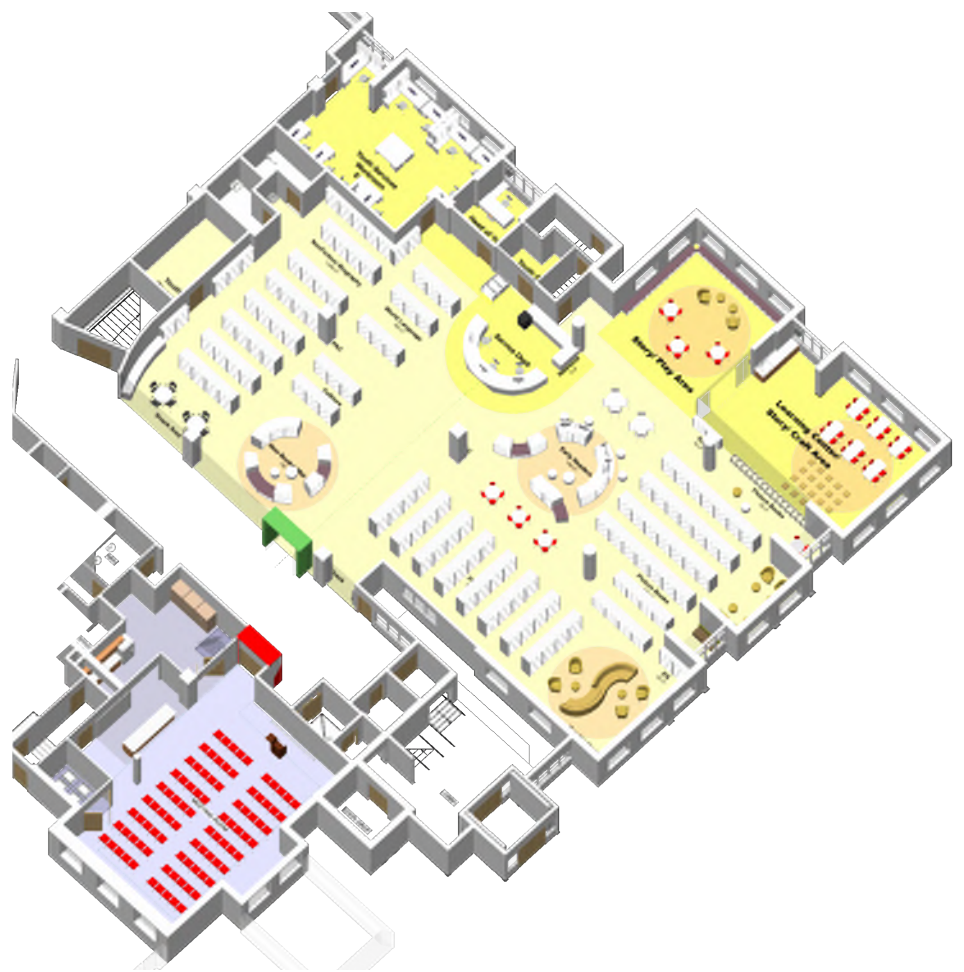
- ü Open Kitchen
- ü Added washer & dryer
- ü Kitchen combined with Storage
- ü Added storage for tables and chairs

- ü Bigger workroom
  - ü Better flow
  - ü Service Desk facing the entry
  - ü Toilets relocated to improve visibility & accessibility
  - ü Stacks updated to reflect projected collection
  - ü Workroom connected to service desk
- Ø Need display
  - Ø Need storage



- ü Open Kitchen
- ü Added washer & dryer
- ü Kitchen combined with Storage
- ü Added storage for tables and chairs

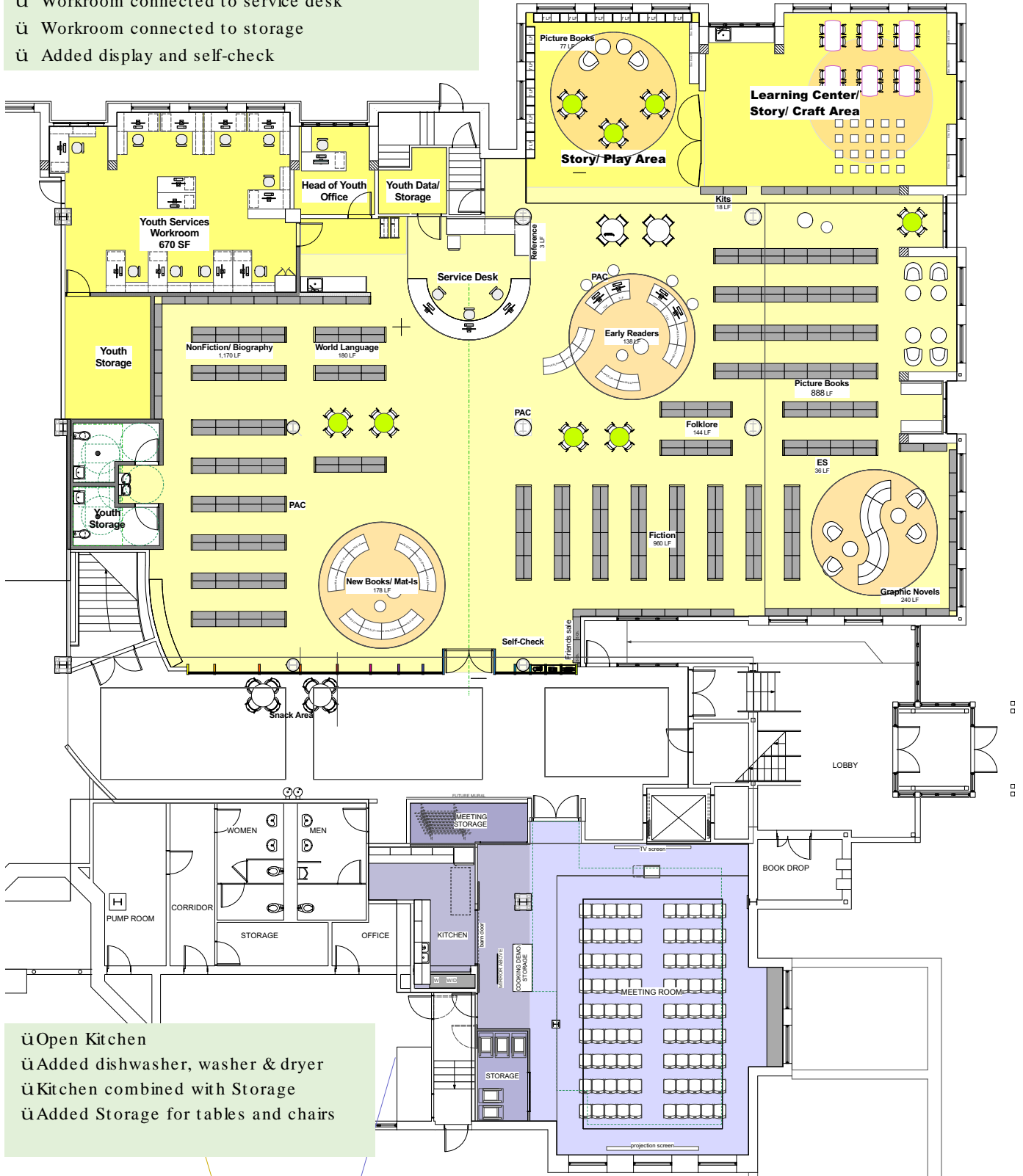
**A-1**



**A-2**



- ü Bigger workroom
- ü Better flow
- ü Service Desk facing the entry
- ü Toilets relocated to improve visibility & accessibility
- ü Stacks updated to reflect projected collection
- ü Workroom connected to service desk
- ü Workroom connected to storage
- ü Added display and self-check



- ü Open Kitchen
- ü Added dishwasher, washer & dryer
- ü Kitchen combined with Storage
- ü Added Storage for tables and chairs

# Preferred Scheme





CHILDREN'S LIBRARY ENTRY



CHILDREN'S SERVICE DESK



CHILDREN'S BROWSING, BOOK SALE AND DISPLAY

CHILDREN'S LIBRARY - VIEW TOWARDS PLAY AND STORY AREAS





CHILDREN'S LIBRARY - VIEW TOWARDS PLAY AND STORY AREAS



CHILDREN'S LIBRARY - PLAY AND STORY AREAS



CHILDREN'S LIBRARY - SERVICE DESK & PAC STATIONS



LARGE MEETING ROOM



LARGE MEETING ROOM - COOKING DEMO

