

# Algonquin needs government's help for \$66 million expansion

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Algonquin College is planning to lobby the provincial government for funding to help it build a much-needed construction trades building.

Due to the total cost of the project, Algonquin needs contributions from outside sources.

The cost of the project is estimated at \$66 million. The building would be approximately 160,000 square feet and the largest building on the Woodroffe Avenue campus.

"The size will allow us to adapt to changing market trends," said John Paul Tapp, dean of the School of Transportation and Building Trades.

If the school needs to add a new course, for example, there will be room in the building to accommodate that.

The building will also contain many modern labs, design studios and private work spaces for the students. According to Tapp, the current facilities are dated and do not allow for much flexibility regarding course work.

"It will provide work spaces that [students] don't currently have," said Tapp.

Currently, all of the construction trades programs,

such as architecture and industrial design, are taught in different areas of different buildings across the campus. Tapp said this layout does not allow for any collaboration between the programs.

He agrees that the project is a major task but says that everything currently in the plans for the building is necessary.

"We would rather delay the project than change the project," said Tapp. "We hope it gets the support that's needed."

Jim Watson, MPP for Ottawa West-Nepean, is hoping to help Tapp with his goal.

"I think the project deserves our very serious consideration," he said.

Watson and Ottawa-Centre MPP Richard Patten are planning to lobby the government to receive some funding for the project.

Watson is worried because even though the Algonquin project is important, there are multiple other projects from many other colleges and universities that also need funding.

"Our big challenge is that there are dozens of colleges and universities pushing for money all around the province," said Watson.

He thinks that what sets the Algonquin trades building apart from the other projects is the community support for the facility.

"I'm very proud of Algonquin. It fills a very important need in our community," said Watson.

He is unsure of exactly how much money he will attempt to get from the province, but said he will do his best to get Algonquin the money it needs.

Watson said that the new building means more space and that more space means that more students can enrol in trades programs and the school can offer more courses.

"We want to make it a world-class facility," said Watson.

Watson also alluded that with many of those who are currently working in the trades industry close to the age of retirement, there is a larger need for new people coming into the trades.

If Algonquin has the proper facilities, it can help to educate students so they can fill the predicted void. If the school can find enough funding to build the facility and everything goes according to plan, Algonquin hopes to have the building open and ready for classes by January of 2009.