



Ann Arbor
District Library

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WLBPD @ AADL NEWS

Washtenaw Library

for the Blind and Physically Disabled @ AADL

(734) 327 - 4224

• WLBPD@AADL.ORG

AADL Board Places Bond Proposal for New Downtown Library on November 6 Ballot

The Vision | The Vote

The Vision

1. What will a new Downtown Library offer our community?

Here are ten things that are possible in a new building, but are not possible in the current building:

- A destination, multi-age, youth area that can simultaneously accommodate open play, story times, and other youth programming
- A grand, quiet reading room
- A 400-seat auditorium to comfortably accommodate the crowds that AADL's lectures, movies, discussions, and performances already bring to Downtown
- An accessible downtown location for AADL's Local History collections, specifically the collection from The Ann Arbor News
- Individual and group study and workspaces throughout the building with adequate comfort, power, and acoustic privacy
- An array of meeting spaces that can simultaneously accommodate

events that range from messy, hands-on programs to formal public assemblies

- A café that is open before and after the library hours
- A Friends of the AADL shop in the lobby
- A Media Production Lab that provides high-end computer production bays adjacent to larger, comfortable, public computing areas
- An environmentally sound, comfortable, efficient structure that is accessible to all

2. What will the new library look like?

The Library Board has not commissioned any specific plans at this time. The Board is, however, using the work that was done and paid for in 2008 to develop a program for a 21st century library building in Ann Arbor. Even with ongoing changes in technologies, that building program is valid, and we are confident that replacing 110,000 square feet with 160,000 square feet will result in a building that reflects the increasing use of Ann Arbor's Downtown Library with the flexibility to change spaces in the future without major renovations. The Board is asking the

community to first decide if it is willing to invest \$65 million. If we receive an affirmative answer from voters, then we would move onto the next step and select an architectural firm and a construction management firm. The Board considers this a prudent, fiscally conservative approach.

3. Is \$65 million enough?

Yes, it is. The bond amount covers every aspect of the proposed project, and the actual amount estimated to be spent on construction would necessarily be less than the total.

In 2008, we estimated spending \$334 per square foot on a new downtown facility. In the library's experience managing construction projects, that cost per square foot is sufficient to deliver an outstanding facility. That these numbers hold true in today's construction market is a very important factor in the Board's decision to move forward with a bond proposal at this time.

4. Why can't you just renovate the existing facility?

The work that was done in 2007/2008 included a thorough review of many options that had been brought forward by staff and consultants. The architect and construction management firms at that time, with the Library Board and staff, concluded that two of the options provided the best opportunity to build a library building for the 21st century. One option was to replace the current building with a new 160,000 square foot facility and the other was to

completely renovate the 1990's portion and to replace the 1958 portion with a four-story addition. It was determined through construction cost modeling that the renovation option cost would save less than 10% of the cost of a new facility. After careful consideration, the Board determined moving forward with a request for a new facility was a better return on the requested investment.

5. Why hasn't the Library Board chosen to build the new library on the top of the underground parking garage on Library Lane?

The Library Board considered this option in the 2007/2008 process and ruled it out for two major reasons. The first is that public library space is safest and most efficient when arranged on large floor plates with direct sight lines on each floor. The buildable space on the parking garage is too small to provide necessary large floor plates. The second reason is that the AADL owns the property at the corner of Fifth Avenue and William Street, and that property is zoned public land. In short, the parking garage space is too small, and we have more flexibility on property owned by the Library to build a facility that will meet the community's needs in a public library space well into this century.

6. Why doesn't the Library Board sell the property at Fifth and William and build elsewhere?

The AADL owns the property at

Fifth and William streets where the Downtown Library is located. However, in the separation agreement with the Ann Arbor Public Schools in 1995, the AAPS reserved the right of first refusal if the property was to be sold. The AAPS also has a year in which to make such a decision. In addition, the AAPS would pay only 65% of the estimated value of the property in such a sale, and if the AAPS chose not to purchase the property, but it was sold, the AAPS would receive 35% of the proceeds. The AADL Board has determined that this cost is too great to consider selling the site.

7. Are libraries needed in the age of EBooks and the Internet?

EBooks and the Internet are a big part of why a new library is needed. The explosion of digital content has not decreased demand for library services; in fact, demand continues to grow, and that demand is increasing for new and different services. The current downtown building was not designed to accommodate, and cannot be retrofitted to enable, the delivery of 21st century library services. EBooks and the Internet have changed and expanded the demand that AADL enjoys and works to meet. A building built around warehousing one particular format no longer serves this community well.

8. How many people use the downtown library?

- The Downtown Library averages over 600,000 annual visits, about

1,700 visitors per day.

- The Downtown Library averages over 1,000,000 annual checkouts: 32% of total AADL checkouts.
- The Downtown Library holds a collection of over 344,000 items, about 56% of AADL's total collection.
- The Downtown Library serves over 75,000 annual Internet sessions, about 30% of AADL's total.
- Since 2009, there has been a 21% increase in use of meeting rooms by outside organizations; 364 such uses, about one every day in 2011-2012.
- AADL produces over 500 downtown events per year for a total of over 26,000 attendees.

9. Why does the board think the public is interested in a new downtown library?

In March of 2012, the Board commissioned EPIC-MRA to conduct a scientific telephone survey of district voters, looking to see whether the library was valued by voters, whether they thought the library was an important part of the community's future, what they liked and disliked about the library today, and whether they would be willing to support building a new library. The survey showed that 45% of the respondents were willing to support a \$65 million bond for a downtown library project. An additional 15% of the respondents said they would likely vote yes to such a bond.

After reviewing that survey, the board held three community

forums to discuss the need for a new library, the interests of the public, and the opportunities presented in a new library project. The Board also reviewed past reports and studies about the need for and cost of a new or renovated library. After taking all of that information into consideration, the board decided, in the words of Facilities Committee Chair Prue Rosenthal, "The needs today are even greater, and now is the time for us to ask the community to support construction of a new library that can fulfill the community's requirements for information in many forms for years to come."

10. What is wrong with the current building?

The Ann Arbor District Library Board's Facilities Committee reviewed the shortcomings of the current building, first constructed in 1958 and updated twice, most recently in 1990.

The Committee found the facility has:

- Inadequate capabilities for meeting patron needs for safe, quiet reading space
- Outdated heating and air conditioning systems
- Insufficient meeting space for community events and large presentations
- Inadequate capacity for additional infrastructure to meet growing computer use
- No space for children's programming and services that reflect the needs of contemporary families and students

- Building was built before the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
- No auditorium

After reviewing renovation possibilities, the committee determined that a new facility built on the site of the existing building was the most cost-effective solution.

11. Where can I give my feedback?

Questions are important and helpful as the Board and staff move through this very important phase in the Library's history. Video of each of the three forums, held on June 9, 2012, June 12, 2012, and June 20, 2012, and a summary of the feedback from the public are available on the Director's Blog. Send your questions to downtown@aadl.org. All questions will be addressed and answers posted to the Director's Blog.

The Vote

1. What is a bond proposal?

A bond proposal is a request by the Library Board for voters to approve the sale of bonds, which will raise funds to build a new downtown library.

2. Why is a bond proposal necessary?

In 1994, in response to law passed in the legislature, the Ann Arbor Public Schools could no longer fund the operation of a public library with school millage. The AAPS and the City of Ann Arbor then established the Ann Arbor District Library in accordance with this new legislation.

The Library is not connected in any way with the budgets of the Ann Arbor Public Schools or the City of Ann Arbor. The Library is a completely separate institution with an elected governing Board of Trustees. In 1994, the voters approved the establishment of the district library, and at the same time approved a millage of 2.0 mills in perpetuity to fund the operations of the Ann Arbor District Library. Today, the Library could levy up to 1.92 mills. Due to the improved technologies and choices made by the Library to use all of our resources to return an investment to the taxpayer, the levy is now 1.55. The current difference between 1.55 and 1.92 is \$1.6 million, and that is not enough to fund a project of this magnitude.

3. What is on the November 6, 2012, ballot?

Shall the Ann Arbor District Library, formed by the Ann Arbor Public Schools and the City of Ann Arbor, County of Washtenaw, State of Michigan, borrow the sum of not to exceed sixty-five million dollars (\$65,000,000) and issue its general obligation unlimited tax bonds, in one or more series, payable in not to exceed thirty (30) years from the date of issuance of such bonds, for the purpose of paying all or part of the costs of constructing, furnishing and equipping a new main library building to be located at the current site of the downtown library building, including costs related thereto?

Yes []

No []

The following is for information purposes only:

The estimated millage to be levied in 2013 to pay the debt service on such bonds is 0.56 mills (\$0.56 per \$1,000 of taxable value). In accordance with State law, a portion of the revenue collected may be subject to capture by the City of Ann Arbor Downtown Development Authority and the Scio Township Downtown Development Authority.

4. Who can vote in this election?

Registered voters in the Ann Arbor District Library district boundaries can vote on this proposal. That includes all of the City of Ann Arbor and parts of Ann Arbor, Lodi, Webster, Pittsfield, Superior, Salem, and Scio townships.

5. Why did you put this on the November ballot?

This is the election when turnout tends to be highest. We wanted to give everyone an opportunity to express his/her view through the ballot box.

6. How much will the proposal cost the average taxpayer?

If the bond proposal is approved a property owner's taxes will be increased by approximately 0.56 mills. Property owners can use the following home value samples to determine their estimated individual tax increases.

(see page 6)

<u>Property Market Value</u>	<u>Property Taxable Value</u>	<u>Library Bond Millage Per Year</u>
\$150,000	\$75,000	\$42
200,000	100,000	56
250,000	125,000	70
300,000	150,000	84
350,000	175,000	98
400,000	200,000	112

7. If the ballot issue passes, when will property taxes be levied?

If the bond proposal passed on November 6, 2012, the first tax levy related to the bond would be in July 2013.

8. Where and when can I register to vote?

You may register in person with your city, township, county clerk or any Secretary of State office. You may also download printable voter registration forms at:

http://www.michigan.gov/sos/0,1607,7-127-1633_11473--,00.html#Voter

Please follow the instructions carefully. For polling locations, visit: http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/clerk_register/elections/el_precincts.html

9. What are the key dates coming up for the election?

The election is November 6, 2012. To vote, you need to be registered by October 9, 2012.

No date has been given yet for when absentee ballots will be available. Absentee ballots are usually available about six weeks before the election, which would be about mid-September.

2012 WLBDP Patron Survey Summary

The 2012 WLBDP Patron Survey, mailed to all (446) active WLBDP patrons on March 19, 2012, was created to measure value and effectiveness of WLBDP@AADL services so that based on the findings, WLBDP may make efficient and meaningful improvements. The survey was also in compliance with 2011 NLS Revised Standards and Guidelines of Service, requiring (Section 8 sub-section 8.3) that "Network libraries shall develop and implement methods for evaluating patron satisfaction at least every 3 (three) years. When patron satisfaction is evaluated, the results shall be used to improve services."

Survey Data Collection

- An article in the Winter 2012 WLBDP@AADL News (<http://wlbpd.aadl.org/>) announced the survey in advance.
- Large Print hardcopy surveys were mailed to all 446 active WLBDP patrons on March 19, 2012.
- The survey was also scheduled to coincide with the annual WLBDP patron account review so that patrons, if needed, were provided the opportunity to have a staff person assist them in completing the survey over the phone on his/her behalf.

Survey Completions

In total, 167 (37%) surveys were completed.

- 140 (31%) of the hardcopy sur-

veys were completed and returned by mail.

- 26 (6%) of the surveys were completed online by a staff member during the patron's account review.
- Only 1 survey was completed online by a staff member with the call initiated by the patron.

Overview of Results

General

- The greatest percentage of respondents indicated they learned about the service:
 - through a friend or family member (32%); or
 - through a variety of "other" word-of-mouth or outreach-related means (26%).
- While most respondents (63%) indicated that they do not visit the Library in person:
 - 24% visit annually and
 - 13 % visit monthly or more frequently
- 87% of respondents rated their overall experience as either excellent (51%) or good (36%).
- 85% of respondents rated in-person service as either excellent (52%) or good (33%).
- 94% of respondents rated phone service as either excellent (63%) or good (31%).
- 97% of respondents indicated they would recommend WLBDP services to friends and family members.

Specific Services

- Of those who responded to the

question "When you receive a WLBDP newsletter, do you read it?" 59% responded yes and 23% responded sometimes.

- 91% of respondents rated their experience with the new Digital Talking Book Machine either excellent (68%) or good (23%).
- 54% of respondents indicated they are familiar with BARD.
 - At the time the survey was mailed, approximately 27% of WLBDP patrons were registered BARD users, one of the highest percentages in the country.
- Close to 80% read large print or have access to someone who is available to read printed items.
 - 64% of respondents also indicated they are aware that WLBDP offers large-print-by-mail service.
 - 45% of respondents indicated they are aware of the Assistive Technology Lab at the Downtown Library and that training and/or assistance is available in using Assistive Technology (42%).
 - 28% of respondents indicated they or a family member have visited the WLBDP website.
 - Only 12% of respondents have ever emailed the WLBDP@AADL, and only 4% have done so more than once per year.

For more information, visit
wlbpd@aadl.org

To request a copy of the summary,
contact us at (734) 327-4224

**Washtenaw Library for the Blind and
Physically Disabled @ AADL**
343 South Fifth Avenue
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

**FREE MATTER
FOR THE BLIND
AND HANDICAPPED**

CONTACT US:

Phone: (734) 327 - 4224
Email: wlbpd@aadl.org
Website: wlbpd.aadl.org

WLBDP LOCATION & HOURS

The WLBDP collection is housed in the Downtown Ann Arbor District Library at 343 S. Fifth Ave., Ann Arbor, at the corner of Fifth Ave. and William St.

The Library is open:

Mon.	10:00 AM - 9:00 PM
Tues.-Fri.	9:00 AM - 9:00 PM
Sat.	9:00 AM - 6:00 PM
Sun.	12:00 PM - 6:00 PM

LIBRARY LOCATIONS

Downtown
343 S. Fifth Ave.
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Malletts Creek Branch
3090 E. Eisenhower Parkway
Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Pittsfield Branch
2359 Oak Valley Dr.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

Traverwood Branch
3333 Traverwood Dr.
Ann Arbor, MI 48105

West Branch
2503 Jackson Ave.
Ann Arbor, MI 48103