

## Questions about the Library/Cultural Arts Center Project.

The community is being asked to vote on the Library/Cultural Arts Center for a third time this Tuesday April 11th. The polls will be open for City of Columbus residents from 8am to 8pm on Tuesday. Over the past month I have received a lot of questions about the project. The questions and comments have been varied but a few themes have emerged. I would like to address a few of the questions that I have received consistently.

Will the vote on April 11th increase my taxes? The answer to this question is no. The project will be funded with sales tax that is already being collected along with donations, and grants. The financing for the Library/Cultural Arts Center project is unique for a public project. The Library/Cultural Arts Center project has already been voted on twice. The first vote allowed the library to begin the planning and design phase for the facility. The second vote renewed the funding mechanism for the project by maintaining the current level of sales tax in Columbus. That second vote also named the Library/Cultural Arts Center and public safety projects as the recipients of the half-cent sales tax.

The third vote, scheduled for April 11, 2017, will allow the funds from the already authorized half-cent sales tax to be used for the Library/Cultural Arts Center project. The ballot question on April 11, 2017, will ask voters to approve up to \$8.5 million of bonds. The half-cent sales tax will be used to repay those bonds. Approximately \$2 million is generated every 12 months through the city's half-cent sales tax.

Will there be parking at the new facility? Yes, there will be on street parking on three sides of the proposed Library/Cultural Arts Center. There will be handicap accessible parking with easy access to the building. There will also be a pick up and drop off area in front of the building. A parking lot across the street to the south will include a walk way designed to help bring people safely across the street from the parking area to the front door. We recognize that easy access is necessary and it is a priority to be accessible to all visitors.

What impact will the Library/Cultural Arts Center have on operating costs? There are three major cost drivers in the library's operating budget that are connected to the physical space of the organization: staff, utilities, and maintenance. I am not predicting any increase in these budget lines. Currently Columbus Public Library is housed in a 1941 office building that is inefficient for the use of people, electricity and natural gas. The building also requires a substantial repair budget as its aging systems break down frequently. I am unsure if the operating costs will decrease with a new facility because of increased landscaping and cleaning costs but we are well positioned to keep these expenses near our current level.

Will the new library have books? The Library/Cultural Arts Center is a mixed use facility and I have received a lot of questions about the priority that will be placed on books. Books are not going away. The new facility will allow Columbus Public Library to expand the collection of physical items for many years. Electronic content is important and also a focus but books will remain a fundamental component of the library.

On behalf of the Columbus community, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to those who have already contributed financially to this project. Three hundred and ninety-seven people have come together to contribute \$4.3 million dollars to the construction of the Library/Cultural Arts Center.