

Librarian's Shelf by Karen Connell

Building Project Development

Your library is an active part of the community of Columbus. The Columbus Public Library provides public computers, WiFi, magazines, movies, ebooks, and quality programs for all ages. An average of 291 visitors per day used the library and the meeting rooms were used 140 times during April. Over 13,000 items were checked out at the library, on the Bookmobile, or in digital format. Library visitors logged over 2,000 public access computer uses in the 29 days the library was open the month of April.

In the month of April, there were seven Children's programs conducted at the library and 23 outreach Story Time programs at local schools and daycare centers for around 1,629 participants. Four Young Adult STEM programs for Columbus High School students were conducted at the Columbus Public Library and the high school. Our annual Book Festival was enjoyed by 55 attendees, and we continued to teach Makerspace users how to 3D print, use a laser to engrave and cut wood and acrylic, print posters, and more.

Your library could do so much more in a building designed for the future, with flexible space built to adapt to the community's needs. The City of Columbus, Columbus Library Board, and Library Foundation are seeking community input regarding the development of a new library building project to serve the community of Columbus.

Over the past few months, Tara Vasicek, Columbus City Administrator, and I have conducted community roundtable discussions and collected surveys to help us understand the public's thoughts regarding the 2017 library project that was not approved by voters, and what they believe a great library would include.

We have met with service clubs, book clubs, coffee groups, and community organizations to listen to their thoughts and ideas, and an online survey was distributed to employees of a variety of Columbus businesses and organizations. These roundtables and surveys are part of the first phase of project development for a new library building project.

According to the survey results collected so far, 75% of participants believe Columbus needs a new library, and 20% are currently undecided. Community Space is the most desired feature to include in a library building project, as indicated by 70% of participants. 67% of participants attended community roundtable discussions and 33% took our one user/one response online survey.

Now, with gathered data, we are ready to begin developing a future-ready project program that reflects the wants and needs of Columbus. The program defines which components would be included in the project and the approximate space required for those components.

In order to develop this community project, we are seeking public input at each phase of development, so we want your help to generate program options for the building project. Please join us Thursday, May 16, 2019 at 5:30pm in the Library Auditorium for a Town Hall Meeting.

Survey results will be reviewed at this meeting and architects from Alley Poyner Macchietto will facilitate a public discussion to develop multiple program options for the project.

Once program options are developed, we will solicit public feedback to rank them by preference. The next step in project development will be to develop a plan and costs, which will include evaluating the best location for the project.