

Library Seeking Community Input

Through roundtable discussions and three public surveys conducted in the past twelve months, the community has created an approximately 52,000 square foot program containing a Library, Children's Museum, and multi-function community room with space for the Columbus Arts Council. Close to 500 responses were collected from the most recent survey. This means, in a community the size of Columbus, we can be 99% confident (with a 6% margin of error) that this program reflects the wants and needs of the community.

We want to hear from you again. Select a location for the new library building by taking the survey online at www.columbusne.us/librarysurvey or visit the library for a paper ballot.

Several potential locations were explored. Of those, only three met the requirements for availability, price, and space to accommodate the new building, connected parking and future growth.

Architects and construction professionals evaluated each of the three locations and developed five site options for the needs of the project. They provided cost estimates which reflect total project cost. Typically, construction costs alone are included in building project plans. The estimates for the proposed sites include "soft costs" such as furniture fixtures, equipment and signage. Soft costs also include fees for architects and engineers, testing and inspection, moving expenses, land purchase, and temporary operating space.

The "North" (48th Ave & 35th St) and "South" (8th St & 12th Ave) sites would both allow for the construction of a new, single story building with plenty of space for connected parking. The survey images suggest one possible configuration, but these sites offer flexibility to maximize building and parking efficiencies.

One of the three location options is downtown, where the current library is located along 14th Street. This location includes the existing fire station and vacated community center building, which are slated for demolition as part of the new fire station project. This location offered flexibility in configuration, and three viable "Downtown" options are included in the survey.

The three downtown site options would promote the revitalization of Downtown Columbus, result in a two-story library, and include additional connected parking with the closure of 25th Avenue.

Option "Downtown A" involves renovating the existing library and building an addition to the west side of the facility. The inefficiencies and divided layout of the building would remain, resulting in the potential for additional long-term costs. "Downtown B" occupies a similar site footprint, but involves the demolition of the existing library. New construction allows for open and connected spaces in a two-story facility designed to maximize efficiencies.

The "Downtown C" site option considers the long-term needs of our community and addresses the currently deteriorating City Hall building. This option involves the demolition of the existing City Hall building to create additional connected parking. City Hall offices would then be added to the square footage of the library program to construct a facility that encompasses both functions. The additional costs associated with the inclusion of City Hall in this option would be paid with funds separate from the existing sales tax that has been designated to fund a library project.

Visit our website at www.columbusne.us/library or stop by the library to view details of the five site options, then take the survey to rank your preference and help select the library's location.

The results of this survey, which ends March 27, will decide which location will move forward. Final design for the building, parking, and other details will be completed if the project bond is approved by voters in November 2020. Bonds issued for this project would be paid with the existing 1/2 cent sales tax that is currently being collected.