

Building Together

Residents of Columbus will have a ballot question regarding the Library this November. Registered voters in Columbus will have the opportunity to approve the issuance of bonds for an exciting building project. These bonds would be paid using an existing half percent ($\frac{1}{2}$ %) sales tax that is currently being collected.

The City of Columbus began developing this community-designed building project in early 2019 and has solicited feedback prior to each decision making step. We first asked for the community's input on what they believe a great library would include. These started out as small group discussions and grew to surveys and a town hall meeting. Along the way, we listened to the members of our community to understand the types of spaces and functions that are important to you.

As the specific functions of a community room, art gallery, and children's museum rose to the surface these were again brought back to the community in the form of surveys and small group meetings. Early in 2020 a final program outline was selected for the project using those survey results.

The City and architecture team then reviewed a number of potential building locations for consideration. Boyd Jones, our project construction partner, worked to identify a cost range for each site option. These options were presented in February during a town hall meeting and a public survey was launched online to collect input from the community. Located in downtown Columbus, the most popular site option adds City Hall offices to be included in the building project.

Over the past few months, a design partner developed a configuration plan for the various entities and spaces in response to the community's input. Encompassing the Library, community room, Art Gallery, City Hall offices, City Council Chambers, and leased space for a Children's Museum and coffee shop, this proposed building brings together multiple entities to create community connections. Final design details for the building exterior, floor plan, parking, etc. will be completed if the project bond is approved by voters in November 2020 during the general election.

Over the next few months we will continue to educate the community about the project, communicate the costs, and answer your questions along the way. Check out our website (www.columbusne.us) or visit our Facebook page next week for a video with more details, including conceptual floor plans and funding information.

Please submit questions or comments regarding the building project to building.together@columbusne.us.

You may have seen news recently regarding the Platte County Board of Supervisors' decision to place a question on the county's November ballot regarding the continuation of library services for Platte County residents living outside city limits of Columbus and Humphrey.

The recently approved 2020-2023 Platte County Library Services Agreement arranges for Platte County residents living outside of Columbus city limits to use all library services and have a bookmobile visit their schools and neighborhoods free of charge. Over the past six years, items checked out from the Library and Bookmobile by cardholders residing outside of city limits have accounted for an average of 32% of materials checkouts. Depending on the outcome of this ballot question for Platte County residents outside Humphrey and Columbus city limits, the current agreement would continue until June 30, 2023 or until 90 days after the November election.

The Columbus Public Library and Platte County Bookmobile are open and serving the community. Call 402-564-7116 or visit our website for details including modified hours of operation.