

Looking Forward Together

Registered voters in Columbus have the opportunity to approve the issuance of bonds for an exciting community building project on November 3. No additional taxes are needed to fund the development, construction, or furnishing of this building. These bonds would be paid using an existing half percent (½ %) sales tax that was approved by voters in 2016 for the exclusive purpose of constructing new fire, police, and library/cultural buildings.

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 in downtown Columbus to create community connections. This building would provide the community of Columbus with much needed gathering spaces, activities for families and individuals, access to technology, opportunities to collaborate, study, be creative, find entertainment and educational resources, and so much more.

"Library service continues to evolve. A recent Gallup Poll found that adults in the United States frequented the library more than any other single leisure and entertainment destination in 2019. The Columbus Public Library is used by community members for more than entertainment. People use technology and materials provided by the library to look for jobs, continue their education, and make connections to other community resources. A new library facility that is designed specifically for evolving library services can address the changing technology and information needs of our family, friends, and neighbors." -Rachelle McPhillips, Adult Services Librarian

I recently heard a few community members express concern about what would happen to the library during the two-year construction of this proposed facility. The library would continue to provide service to the community from the vacated Police Station. This temporary location is just southeast of the current building and would allow the library to offer many of the same services, albeit in a different way. The public would have access to a variety of materials in multiple formats for all ages, including high-demand and new items. A few meeting rooms, computer lab, and makerspace would also be available. Some library programs would be held off-site and a portion of the collection would be available through a request & retrieve system, similar to the curbside service provided when the library building was closed this spring due to COVID-19.

Final plans for the temporary location as well as design details for the building exterior, floor plan, parking, etc. will be completed if the special bond is approved by voters on November 3, 2020 during the general election.

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

Visit the Columbus Library Foundation's project website <https://buildingtogethercolumbus.org> to learn more.

The Columbus Library Foundation is continuing to raise funds for this project and has a matching grant in place through the Sherwood Foundation. If you would like to donate to the Library Foundation, you may do so care of the Columbus Public Library at 2504 14th Street.

Registered voters in Platte County who reside outside the city limits of Columbus and Humphrey will see a different question on their ballot next month. The Platte County Board of Supervisors has placed a question on the county's ballot regarding the continuation of library services for Platte County residents living outside city limits of Columbus and Humphrey. Those rural voters will be asked to vote "Yes" or "No" for a library services contract. A "Yes" vote results in the continuation of library service, including the bookmobile, through June 2023. A "No" vote will end library service, including the bookmobile, to rural residents. Visit the Bookmobile page on the library's website (columbusne.us/library) for more information.