

Library Building Program Essential Facts



St. Charles Public Library
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www.stcharleslibrary.org

TIMING

- Our Library District's service population has almost doubled since the last addition was built. The current collections at our Library exceed the Library's capacity by almost 70%. Meeting and study rooms are consistently booked, and the Library's parking lot is often completely full, including barrier-free spaces.
- Libraries are recommended to be designed for a 20-year service span.¹ It has now been 22 years since the 1988 addition was built. If a referendum is held and is successful in November 2010, construction could be completed by mid-summer or mid-winter 2013 depending upon the method the Library Board selects for managing the construction process.
- Construction costs are down (both materials and labor), and interest costs are at historically low levels. Chicago area construction costs are down 10% to 20% from construction costs two years ago.
- The present facility was a 20-year facility designed in 1985 and built in 1988 to serve the Library District to 2005 and a population of 45,000. We now serve an estimated 56,000 to 60,000 people.

COSTS

- The overall project costs estimates are as follows: \$19.9 million for the addition, \$12.6 million for improvements to the existing Library and \$2.5 million for the parking improvements. These estimates include architectural, engineering and other professional services.
- The architect is Chicago-based Lohan Anderson LLC. Also working on the project are the engineering firms of KJWW and CSA Associates, Inc. and Owner Services Group. A professional cost estimating consultant (Faithful

¹ Serving Our Public 2.0: Standards for Illinois Public Libraries (Illinois Library Association, 2009). (Hereafter referred to as "Standards".)

- & Gould) prepared a detailed estimate based on the current proposed design. All of these companies have been involved in numerous successful public library projects. Illinois law was followed in selecting the architect and other professionals in a competitive cost and quality based selection process.
- While use of library services generally is free, the Library charges some user-specific fees such as fines. Like public schools, current Illinois law requires public libraries to be funded by residents and taxpayers through the property tax. People who do not live in the Library District may purchase a card by paying a fee that is computed by a statutory formula based on the way a taxpayer's library tax is computed.
- Our number of employees is slightly above average when compared to similar libraries, but the percentage of our operating budget devoted to salaries is less than the average.

Based on the Standards, the St. Charles Public Library is right on target for the number of full-time equivalents recommended for a library serving a population the size of the St. Charles Public Library District and the level of service the Library sets as a goal. The Standards also note that salaries and benefits typically represent up to 70% of the Library's total operating budget. St. Charles Public Library salaries and benefits account for 59% of the budget including capital costs. The Library is open 72 hours per week and has four public service desks.

- The Library District will form a citizen-led bond committee to oversee the use of bond proceeds. An annual report from the committee will be posted on-line and be made available at our Library. The bond committee also will provide quarterly updates to the Library Board.

TAX AND LEGAL

- The last building referendum was in 1986, the last operating rate referendum in 1998. The 1964 addition

- to the 1908 Carnegie Building (built with private funds) was constructed with bonds approved in a referendum. The next referendum was in 1986, when the community approved bonds for the current facility and an increase in the operating tax rate to .28% of assessed valuation. At the time the “tax cap” went into effect in 1991, the Library’s operating tax rate was only .20, so the Library could not tax to the rate approved by the voters. The last referendum was in 1998 to restore the operating tax rate of .28 originally approved by the voters in 1986. The building bonds were then being retired, so the operating rate tax was substituted for the retiring bond tax; in effect there was no additional increase.
- The Library’s tax levy has decreased from .2954 in 1999 to .24145 in 2009 (an 18% decrease). Of every \$100 which a St. Charles Public Library District resident paid in taxes in 2009, \$3.60 went to the Library.
- Public library district boards of trustees may issue bonds only after their approval by the voters in a general election.
- Several library districts have had successful bond issues in recent years. The St. Charles Public Library has used reserve funds to purchase the property required for expansion and to fund architectural, engineering and consulting studies.
- Contrary to statements that have been made in local newspapers, the Library Board has never used eminent domain to acquire the houses on the block where future parking will be added. Nine houses were purchased between 2000 and 2008. The Board acquired all the needed property before calling a referendum asking the voters to fund an expanded facility.
- When the bonds are retired in 20 years, the bond tax will legally expire.
- The Library does not benefit from County impact fees, because there is no provision in Illinois law to allow this. (Several years ago, the tri-city library directors

- attempted unsuccessfully to change the law.) The Library does receive developer fees from the City of St. Charles. In negotiating occasional annexation agreements with developers for new developments located in territory within the Library District that will be annexed to the City, the City includes a unit fee for the Library.

Under the tax cap, (1) new homes produce “new” operating revenue for the Library only in the first year they are taxed, but it is not sustained additional revenue; (2) the Library’s tax income increase is limited to a maximum of 5% or the cost of living of the tax revenue it received the previous year, whichever is less; the last three years there has been a 0.99%, 5.1% and 3.77% increase.

- The proposed building bonds and increased operating rate would add approximately \$2.24 per month per \$100,000 of a home’s market value over last year’s tax.
- The operating levy increase is intended for things like increased utilities and maintenance. None of the operating levy increase will go toward increased staffing or administration, other than maintenance personnel in the proposed use of the operating levy increase.
- If approved in November 2010, the tax associated with the bond and the operating levy increase would go into effect in 2011.

SITE DESIGN

- The downtown area is a central location in the community and in the Library District. At its location at the intersection of Rts. 64 and 25, the Library is accessible from all points. When the Red Gate Bridge is completed, residents in the northwest quadrant of the Library District will have more direct and convenient access to the Library via Rt. 25.
- The option of a completely new location and a new library was reviewed and abandoned because it would likely cost significantly more money. The land required for the project

- already has been purchased using a special reserve fund.
- The St. Charles Historic Preservation Commission and the City of St. Charles have approved the architectural design, that incorporates their recommendations.
- The proposed building area will be about 86% larger and the amount of parking provided will be about 115% larger. All parking will be located south of the building. Parking on some neighborhood streets is also allowed and this has been factored into the building plans. The plans have been reviewed and accepted by a professional Traffic Engineering consultant.
- The design includes a larger covered portico (than currently exists) to offer more protection from the weather.
- There are no empty buildings that are centrally located in the Library District that provide the amount of floor space or parking that the Library requires.
- The possibility of a popular materials satellite facility west of the Fox River is under consideration, but is not included in the plans now under discussion. The Library Board believes it is most cost-effective to maintain a main library that is as centrally located as possible, given available real estate. The Standards recommend that “travel time to the library under normal conditions does not exceed 30 minutes.” The Board supports the Red Gate Bridge that will offer west side residents easier access to Rt. 25 and then south to the Library.

Another standard for deciding when to add a branch is at the point the service population reaches 100,000, which our Library District has not yet reached and is not expected to reach within the next 30 years.

BUILDING DESIGN

- The proposed improvements will add approximately 46,900 square feet to the existing Library.
In 2005 and 2006, the Library engaged architects at

- Lohan Anderson and library consultant Richard Thompson to conduct a needs assessment survey and develop a building program following the current standard for Illinois libraries. The various sizes of public collections, meeting rooms, and staff spaces needed were determined through extensive interviews and discussions with the Library staff, the Board and Library patrons.
- The Center for Governmental Studies at Northern Illinois University conducted the population analysis and estimate. NIPC (Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission) and US census data on a block-group level was used in projecting district population growth.
- The present Library was designed in 1985 for a 20-year service span. If the new addition is approved and built, it will have been 24 years between when the 1988 addition was built and the new addition is opened. The proposed facility is designed to serve the Library District to 2030 and a population of 74,000.
- Over the past five years, the Library has undertaken several projects to optimize use of existing space. The Library was designed to house 218,000 items. There now are over 368,000, approximately 14,000 of which are electronic that do not take up actual space. We have gained space on the west end of the building by replacing as many reference books as possible with subscriptions to electronic databases.
- The demand for books, DVDs and CDs continues to increase; circulation in 2010 exceeded 1.6 million. Unfortunately, the addition of more shelving to house the growing collection has necessitated the elimination of reader and study seating and tables. Due to the elimination of seating to make room for more shelving, the Library's reader seating is at 273 rather than the originally planned 390, even though more seating was added to the mezzanine than originally planned in 1985.
- Meeting room seating has declined from 248 to 212 due to the installation of a much needed kitchen and serving area

- in the large community meeting room.
- Staff work space has been increased and optimized to keep pace with the 370% increase in circulation since the expanded 1989 Library opened. Impact included the loss of two small public study areas. A mobile computer lab was developed with grant funds, expanding the possibilities for locating computer labs and classes in other areas, to supplement the Tech Center.
- Floor space for shelving and the shelving itself have been optimized. Over the past several years a space utilization plan was implemented to include a thorough study of collection growth and its space needs, modify the collection development and maintenance guidelines, withdraw many duplicate copies of book titles as well as individual titles, discard duplicate copies of popular titles more quickly, and eliminate older audiovisual formats such as audiotapes and cassettes. The adult collection was reorganized to provide for as much collection growth as possible over the next 4 years.
- The new building program includes systems – especially heating and air conditioning – which will be more efficient and will lower utility costs substantially.
- Expansion space in the 1985 building program and construction plan was the second floor mezzanine, Phase 2 of the building project. By 1991, it was clear that the mezzanine space already was needed to accommodate the high circulation and patron requests for group study rooms. In 1994, the mezzanine was finished and equipped, using reserve funds and a state grant.
- The Internet, e-books and other technologies and new forms of library offerings have added to space needs. The rise of the Internet has paralleled an increase in library patron use and circulation increases in all public libraries, including St. Charles.

The Internet, e-books and other technologies have eased the need for additional library space with regard to reference materials, periodicals, newspapers and portions

of the adult and children's collections. However, the equipment necessary to support internet access often takes up more space than the space gained by eliminating physical format. Future plans for the Library include expanding the current collection of and access to e-books and other electronic resources. The first of planned download stations already is installed. The Internet and other technologies have not eliminated the need for additional space associated with study areas, group study and meeting rooms.

The role of the public library always has been and will continue to be to make recorded information readily and affordably available and accessible to the community, including making the Internet, e-books and other technologies accessible to the entire community, while at the same time offering printed materials and community space.

- The Library District is 40 square miles (this includes the City of St. Charles' 15 square miles). Estimates by the NIU Center for Governmental Studies are that the Library District's service population will grow to 74,000 by 2030.
- The plan is for the Library to continue to operate from the existing facility with a temporary entrance as the addition is constructed, then shift operations into the addition when it is completed so renovation of the current building can occur.
- Automated check-out stations will not eliminate in-person check-outs, and personal service still will be available to patrons. In fact, the equipment will free up additional time for staff to assist patrons in using the Library's resources. The staff's contact with and accessibility to patrons have been important consideration in designing the layout of the building and the location of staff and public service desks. The number of automated check-out stations will be increased in the new facility. Patrons still will have the option of having a person check out their materials.
- The building improvement will be sustainable and green

- with regard to materials and equipment and with the concepts that provide the best value at the least cost, and that also will reduce operating expenses. Many sustainable design concepts are proposed including: A) NATURAL RESOURCE EFFICIENCY such as energy saving mechanical systems, alternative energy sources and building insulation and seals; B) MATERIALS RESOURCE EFFICIENCY including existing building reuse and recyclable materials; and C) BUILDING LONGEVITY including flexible spaces and infrastructure for adaptive future.
- The current renderings, site plans and floor plans may be viewed on the Library website (www.stcharleslibrary.org) and in the Library lobby. Final renderings, site plans and floor plans would be developed following a successful referendum.
- A full scale coffee shop is not anticipated at this time due to initial costs and long term operating costs. However, the plans do include a reading and lounge area with high-end drink and snack vending machines adjacent to the Friends of the Library permanent book sale area.
- The Library Board decided not to incorporate a drive-through window due to the considerable amount of staff time it would require to staff the window, to handle calls and emails to schedule pick-up times, and to sort through all holds and other items and deliver them to the window as needed. Also, there is not room for cars to queue safely in the area on the south side where a window would be located.
- Regardless of whether or not a referendum passes, the present facility needs 30 more parking spaces. The houses purchased were affordable, but they were not historically or architecturally significant, which was confirmed by the St. Charles Historic Preservation Commission.
- Underground parking was considered but abandoned primarily due to the high cost.

- Various public groups and citizen meetings in the last three years have revised and refined the proposed design.

The Library Board has gone to great lengths over the past three years to inform residents and gather public input on the proposed addition and improvements. Results of an April 2010 survey showed that 53% of respondents would definitely or probably support a new program, 42% would definitely or probably be opposed, and 5% were undecided.

(Face of Ballot)

OFFICIAL BALLOT

PROPOSITION TO ISSUE \$35,000,000 LIBRARY BONDS

(INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS: Mark a cross (X) in the space opposite the word indicating the way you desire to vote.)

Shall the bonds of the St. Charles Public Library District, Kane and DuPage Counties, Illinois, in the amount of \$35,000,000 be issued for the purpose of building an addition to, improving the site of and repairing, remodeling and improving the existing library building and furnishing necessary equipment and acquiring library materials and electronic data storage and retrieval facilities in connection therewith?	YES	
	NO	

(Back of Paper Ballot)

OFFICIAL BALLOT

Official ballot for voting on the proposition to issue \$35,000,000 Library Bonds of the St. Charles Public Library District, Kane and DuPage Counties, Illinois, at the general election held on November 2, 2010.

Precinct Number: _____

Polling Place: _____

(Facsimile Signature)

 County Clerk, The County of Kane,
 Illinois

(Facsimile Signature)

 Executive Director, Board of Election
 Commissioners of The County of
 DuPage, Illinois

(Face of Ballot)

OFFICIAL BALLOT

PROPOSITION TO INCREASE THE LIMITING RATE

(INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS: Mark a cross (X) in the space opposite the word indicating the way you desire to vote.)

Shall the limiting rate under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law for the St. Charles Public Library District, Kane and DuPage Counties, Illinois, be increased by an additional amount equal to 0.023 % above the limiting rate for library purposes for levy year 2009 and be equal to 0.26445% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy year 2010?	YES	
	NO	

- (1) The approximate amount of taxes extendable at the most recently extended limiting rate is \$6,671,760.45, and the approximate amount of taxes extendable if the proposition is approved is \$7,307,297.79.
- (2) For the 2010 levy year the approximate amount of the additional tax extendable against property containing a single family residence and having a fair market value at the time of the referendum of \$100,000 is estimated to be \$7.67.
- (3) If the proposition is approved, the aggregate extension for 2010 will be determined by the limiting rate set forth in the proposition, rather than the otherwise applicable limiting rate calculated under the provisions of the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (commonly known as the Property Tax Cap Law).

(Back of Paper Ballot)

OFFICIAL BALLOT

Official ballot for voting on the proposition to increase the limiting rate for the St. Charles Public Library District, Kane and DuPage Counties, Illinois, at the general election held on November 2, 2010.

Precinct Number: _____

Polling Place: _____

(Facsimile Signature)
County Clerk, The County of Kane, Illinois

(Facsimile Signature)
Executive Director, Board of Election
Commissioners of The County of DuPage,
Illinois