

Library Building Projects FAQs

This is a working document and will be updated frequently.

General Library Questions

Why do we need a new library?

The library serves everyone and is a key part of Appleton's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Based off the City of Appleton and Appleton Public Library strategic plans, which gathered input from thousands of citizens, the current facility does not meet the needs of the community. As the library strives to fulfill its mission and vision, the facility is falling behind on standards for contemporary urban libraries.

What is wrong with the current building?

The library building is 40 years old and was designed for different uses than the community needs today.

- a. Safety and security are issues in the current building that can be addressed by innovations in library building design.
- b. The current facility did not have any computers when it was built. We currently have 61 public access computers and limited options for expansion.
- c. Limitations of the current facility do not allow for the volume and type of meeting and programming space that users need.
- d. Patron parking spaces are often blocked by delivery vehicles due to inadequate space for loading and unloading library materials.
- e. Inflexible infrastructure makes changing library spaces difficult and costly.
- f. The children's area is outdated and inadequate for the population it serves.
- g. Staff spaces impede workflows.

I don't use the library. How will I benefit?

A public library provides many direct and indirect benefits to the community. As an institution, a library provides access to a broad array of educational and recreational resources ranging from materials, programs, services, events, and the physical space. The library demonstrates our community's investment in itself by:

- a. Supporting job seekers, small businesses, corporations, and non-profits, especially during times of economic crisis.
- b. Serving as an anchor to the Washington Square neighborhood, resulting in additional foot traffic to area businesses and non-profits.
- c. Remaining an essential part of our community's educational and civic infrastructure.

How will the pandemic change library service and design?

The pandemic will result in new ideas and may reprioritize some past assumptions. Flexible space design has been essential in planning the future library and will continue to be.

Questions About the Project

Is there a chance the library project on Soldier's Square could still happen?

At this point, the City of Appleton is moving forward to plan and complete a project on the site of the current library.

How big will the new or remodeled library be?

Recent studies show that the library should be approximately 115,000 square feet. It is currently 86,600.

Will the project be mixed-use?

This is TBD.

How will the library function during a remodel/addition?

This is TBD.

How green will the new library be?

This is TBD.

What is the timeline?

Planning and design in 2021. Start construction in 2022.

How do I stay informed and involved?

Stay informed and involved by visiting the library building project page at www.apl.org/planning.

Questions About the Location

Is the Transit Center going to stay where it is?

Convenient access to Valley Transit has always been an important element of the library planning as many individuals rely on public transportation to access the library.

Is the neighborhood safe?

Investing in the library in conjunction with a thorough neighborhood redevelopment is an important goal of this project. An unintended consequence of the time it has taken to make a decision about the library has meant prolonged uncertainty for this area. Moving forward on the library project on the current site is key to addressing this concern by providing a vibrant anchor to revitalize this neighborhood.

Have you considered branch libraries?

A decision was made earlier in the library planning process to focus on a single library in the central downtown area after an analysis regarding the viability of a branch system. In general, people are willing to travel 15 minutes to access their library and downtown is within that radius throughout the city. In addition, a single site library is more cost-effective in that branches require duplication of infrastructure and delivery systems that would drive up the capital and long-term operational expenses.

Have you thought of other sites?

This process will focus on a project at the site of the existing library. This option will help address some of the affordability concerns of previous concepts and does not require the city to significantly redesign supporting infrastructure, including transit routes, to serve the library.

Questions About the Cost

What is this building going to cost?

It is premature to know the costs at this time. Determining cost is an important part of the next phase.

How is it going to be paid for?

The library project is expected to be funded in the same manner as other city capital projects. The city will pursue any outside sources of funding when feasible including grants, philanthropic support and additional funding streams.

How much will this planning phase cost?

The cost of the planning phase is to be determined. The good news is that there is a great deal of work to build from, which should mitigate some of the expense of this phase of the project.

Questions About Parking

Where will library patrons park?

The planning process will ensure that the project incorporates adequate and accessible parking for library patrons.

Will library patrons park in the Yellow Ramp?

One objective of the project will be to maximize use of the Yellow Ramp. It is likely the project will include design changes to make it easier for patrons to park in the ramp if they're able to.

How much on street/accessible parking will there be?

We have heard the concerns of community members about accessible parking. The project will include accessible parking on the site of the redesigned building.

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