

Building a Better Library FAQs

1. What are the average daily visits to the current library? What services are provided to the general public?

The library district boundaries cover the Stevensville and Lone Rock School Districts. Statistics compiled for 2023:

- 35,287 people walked through the library doors
- A total of 73,844 items checked out, including 11,891 electronic materials.
- Computers were used 5,734 times
- 896 WiFi sessions
- A total of 224 programs were offered, attended by 3,343 people
- 3,722 people have a card at the North Valley Public Library

Stats since January 2024 show weekday daily visits are anywhere between 82-171.

The library currently provides a wide array of services that serve thousands. These services include the checkout of books, ebooks, audiobooks, DVDs, etc.; programs for children, teens, and adults; use of computers; checkout of ipads and mobile hotspots (which were used widely during the Covid shutdown); digital learning, the Library of Things, and much more. The library also has a Community Room for free use by members of the Stevensville and Lone Rock communities.

2. Why do we need a new building? Why can't we remain where we are and remodel the current building?

Even though the Board did not pay the Architects to formally assess the cost of demolition of the current library and building a new one on the same site, the architects did explore the primary issues with the current site:

- Uneven floors with old torn carpet
- Unattractive, inaccessible stacks
- Lack of parking
- Structural problems with water leakage
- Poor lighting
- Lack of adequate staff workspace and overall storage space
- Limited youth space and no teen area
- No small collaborative workspaces
- Children's area not noise isolated

The costs to tear down and rebuild would be more costly than constructing a new building and would still not provide more library space or parking.

3. What is the square footage compared to the current library?

Our current library space in three attached buildings is approximately 7,200 square feet. The proposed new building has a footprint of approximately 12,209 square feet. It is a proposed increase of 5,009 square feet. However, actual sizes and proposed elements may change when construction commences due to costs at the time.

4. What about parking spaces, which are a problem in the current location?

The proposed new building will have a total of twenty-five parking spaces as required by the town (2 spaces per 1,000 net feet). These spaces will connect to sidewalks of the new facility and any other non-motorized networks like shared paths. Several of these spaces will be assigned as Disabled Parking near the entrance to the library.

5. What are the environmental and efficiency elements of the proposed building?

Several environmental and energy efficient elements will be included in the proposed building:

- Mineral wool or wood fiber insulation
- High performance windows to reduce UV heat gain and limit heat loss
- Low maintenance materials like stone, metal and locally sourced materials
- Solar panels
- Low flow plumbing fixtures with a recirculation system
- LED lighting
- Either zoned heat pumps or rooftop air-handling units powered by natural gas

However, proposed elements may change when construction commences due to costs at the time.

6. What are the accessibility elements of the new building?

All entrances and exits will be fully accessible to those with disabilities, as well as to older patrons, patrons with assistive devices or patrons with carriages. The proposed building will have sidewalks that are either shoveled or have heating elements in winter. Wherever transits of level occur, ramps as well as steps will be available.

Three accessible restrooms are planned for the new building. Two are near the building entrance so they are available to not only the library, but also the large meeting room and the Maker Space. These restrooms are unigender as in the current building. They are 86 and 92 square feet with lowered sink and grab bars. There is space for use of a wheelchair or assistive device. The new third bathroom is near the Children's area and is a family restroom of 100 square feet. (Staff also have a dedicated staff restroom).

The book stacks will be designed and arranged to permit accessibility of all materials to people with disabilities, in wheelchairs, or with age-related limitations. Service desks and book return areas will also be wheelchair assessable. All computers will have adaptive technology on board.

Signs will be in large print, and shelf identifiers and equipment will have both large print and Braille formats. Telecommunication devices will be available for those with hearing deficits. Hearing protectors, private rooms, or study carrels will be available for those who are distracted by noise and movement.

7. What are the key elements of the proposed Children's Area?

The large Children's Area in the proposed building measures 2,187 square feet and is subdivided into areas for children aged 0-4 years, 5-8 years, 9-12 years, and a computer area. The remainder of the space (1,020 of the 2,187 square feet) is devoted to youth materials such as books and audiovisual materials.

This entire area will be defined by glass partitions to allow light and noise control while still providing direct visual connection by staff. Easily replaceable carpet tiles will also control noise levels as well as providing comfort. Bookshelves will be accessible to children. The Youth Library area will be expanded to permit purchase and display of more materials.

However, actual sizes and proposed elements may change when construction commences due to costs at the time.

8. What is the concept behind the Teen Area?

Like the Children's Area, the Teen Area (543 square feet) will be enclosed by glass partitions for general monitoring. This space will allow teens to be free to express themselves in their own area.

However, actual sizes and proposed elements may change when construction commences due to costs at the time.

9. What meeting rooms will be available in the new building?

Two types of meeting-rooms will be available in the proposed new building. The multipurpose Meeting Room (Community Room) is large (750 square feet) and located near the main entrance for easy access and access if the library is not open.

In the new design, there are also two small group meeting spaces designed for 2-4 individuals working together. These rooms are glass enclosed to create sound privacy but permit staff overview.

10. Is there still going to be a Maker Space?

Yes, the Maker's Space is a critical part of the library to permit DIY activities, including popular art and craft programming, science experiments etc. The Maker Space in the proposed new building will be 200 square feet, and located near the front entrance for access if the library proper is not open.

11. How much was paid for the architectural rendering and floor plans?

Between 6/22-6/23 the architects were paid \$45,909.18 for the preliminary architecture report that included current building survey, stakeholder and community involvement, Board and Foundation discussions, preliminary design and explanation. Donations paid for the digital walk-through. A Community Block Grant paid \$7,500 of the cost and allowed us free access to the Adaapta consultants. The NVPL Foundation donated \$15,000 towards the cost.

To put the architect fees in context, we have spent a total of \$218,881 on the building between August 2014-2022 and have been unable to address some of the most severe issues in the Rasmussen Building --- the current site --- such as rot and ongoing water seepage, which would require demolition and then filling in the cellars.

12. What is the projected cost of the new facility? How will it affect our property taxes?

The Board is in the process of having actual definition placed on the architect's proposal, like ceiling height, actual materials. These decisions will be made in the context of what is reasonable and affordable for the area. The proposed cost will be related to these decisions.

The Board is currently trying to locate land for a new building within or near the town of Stevensville. During this phase, the Foundation continues fundraising and providing information to the public. After land is identified, the Foundation will fund a feasibility study to identify if there is support for a new library. Then a capital campaign group will be identified, and a capital campaign will commence.

The plan is to identify several large donors and building grants as a first step. Then the Foundation will solicit donations from smaller donors and grantors as well as continue fundraising events.

As a last and very future step, the Library Board would consider a bond. The Board of Trustees are also taxpayers of the library district and aware of and concerned about recent tax increases. So, it is only after initial fund raising and grant applications that the board would choose to put a bond on the ballot. Because initial fund raising has not been completed, the amount of that bond is unknown.

If a bond passed it would raise property taxes for voters in the Library District (Stevensville and Lone Rock) but only after voter approval. And if it was on the ballot, there are Montana laws to make it very clear how much your yea or nay at that time. Library records show that an additional mill was last on the ballot last in 2006 property taxes would go up per home value, so you would know if you wanted to vote.

13. There has been much talk about the location for the new library. Has any decision been made regarding where the new library will be located?

A landowner approached the library board with a land option on Main Street [Eastside Hwy] just south of town at 116 Red Willow Drive. Although the Board preferred to have the new building located within town limits, they have concluded that there is not enough support or interest for either the park or school locations.

The Red Willow Drive location is now the only land option under serious consideration by the board. **Does this land have electric, well and sewer yet or no?**

The next step is to schedule a meeting with Ravalli County Commissioners to get the County's guidance in following all requirements including public notice, bidding, and other legal requirements. The Library Board Chair, Dianne Snedigar, recently had a conversation with Ravalli County Commissioner Greg Chilcott who is supportive of the library's new building goals and offered to help with the process.

One concern with the Red Willow Drive location is that the sidewalks on Main Street do not extend that far south. However, the new location is only 0.3 miles from the end of the sidewalk, and the board has been assured that constructing sidewalks and/or bike-walking paths are not insurmountable or overly costly tasks.