



Sparta Free Library

“Enduring Legacy; Enhancing Community”

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the vision for the renovated and expanded Sparta Free Library; how will the new structure achieve that vision?

The Sparta Free Library has a strong history of serving the community including using a grant from Andrew Carnegie in 1902 to build a library that represents our community’s tradition. However, it is now clear that the library needs to grow to keep up with the needs of the community and to attract new families to Sparta. The library is one of Sparta’s most important assets and we want it to be the best it can be.

Library visitors will enjoy a bright new children’s area that is much larger than the current area. Additional meeting rooms, study rooms for proctoring tests and confidential discussions, maker space that allows people of all ages to test new ideas, areas for the community to gather for programs and activities, additional technology, and ADA accessibility are all part of the current plans for a 22,000 square foot library. This is the size dictated by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction library standards for a community our size.

Are libraries really needed in the age of technology?

Libraries are more vital and necessary than ever! Studies show that public libraries experience an increase in usage when their libraries have been expanded and renovated. This includes both materials checked-out and program attendance, even while technology is more and more available in homes. Particularly in difficult economic times, libraries ‘level the playing field’ - offering all people equal access to the tools they need to stay informed, educated and connected. Communities throughout Wisconsin are expanding their current libraries or building new ones.

How will the new library use technology?

Public libraries have never been just buildings with books, but destinations for lifelong learning. They are a place for personal growth and reinvention, a place for help in navigating the information age, a gathering place for civic and cultural engagement, and a trusted place for preserving the culture of a community. While the technology in every library continues to change, we expect to offer the following technology, which is designed to be flexible for the future:

- Downloadable media including e-books, audiobooks, and magazines that a patron can access from their own devices;

- Innovative technology and wireless Internet access throughout the building, along with charging stations that are easily available so patrons can recharge laptops and other electronic devices;
- Mobile computer training equipment for the public to learn about the latest technology and that turns any room into a training center for hands-on assistance and training from professionals;
- Laptops and tablets available for patron check-out to use within the Library;
- Seamless integration between the Library's online catalog, databases and electronic downloads and patrons' electronic devices including tablets and smartphones.

Will the library have public meeting and gathering spaces?

The library recognizes the need for both meeting and gathering spaces in Sparta. The new library will provide sizeable and flexible public meeting space that can be used by people and organizations throughout the community. The space will be designed to accommodate groups of different sizes and ages and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Smaller meetings spaces will accommodate study groups or one-on-one interactions.

How will the library partner with local business, community organizations and the community?

The library will have opportunities to work with local businesses and organizations by providing adequate space to use if they have a meeting, reception or training needs. Businesses will be able to use it in many ways, such as interviewing candidates by video, which saves time and expense. The library will also work with people and organizations, such as military families, to bring speakers, seminars and workshops to our community.

How much will it cost and who will pay for it?

The budget for the new library is approximately \$5 million. The City of Sparta has passed a resolution to fund 70% of the total cost or approximately \$3,500,000. This is a challenge to the people and organizations of Sparta to raise the additional \$1,500,000 needed. The "***Enduring Legacy; Enhancing Community***" capital campaign has been launched to raise these funds. It is important to note that even if the library was not expanded, more than \$900,000 would be needed just to bring it up to code.

How will donors be recognized?

Every gift to the library is an important step toward making the vision of a new library a reality. Gifts will be recognized in many ways ranging including naming rights for rooms and areas within the library, as detailed on the Recognition Opportunities. All gifts will be recognized on an electronic donor wall in a prominent place in the library. While we feel strongly that support at all levels should be publicly acknowledged, anonymity will be strictly respected if requested. All donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.