LAKE OSWEGO PUBLIC LIBRARY

Planning for the Future

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The existing library facility has critical deficiencies that constrain safe, reliable, and equitable service delivery. The City is engaged in a multi-year process to identify and evaluate options to meet our community's long-term needs.

I LOVE THIS LIBRARY. WHY CHANGE SOMETHING THAT MEANS SO MUCH TO THE COMMUNITY?

Many community members have a deep personal connection to the Library. An important goal of the public input process is to preserve the welcoming and warm qualities people value while ensuring the Library can continue serving future generations.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE CURRENT BUILDING?

The existing library has significant and worsening seismic, water intrusion, building system, and accessibility deficiencies. The estimated cost for repair is $10M, without resolving core building limitations.

HOW HAS DEMAND FOR LIBRARY SERVICES CHANGED OVER TIME?

As Lake Oswego has grown, so has demand for Library services, while the Library building has remained the same size since opening in 1983. Today, the 27,100-square-foot facility serves more than 41,000 residents with a collection of more than 300,000 physical and digital items, circulating approximately 800,000 items annually.

WHY NOT JUST USE SCHOOLS, EXISTING CITY FACILITIES AND OTHER SPACES INSTEAD?

The library currently partners with schools, parks, and existing spaces while also using the bookmobile to extend services. Capacity exceeds these spaces, availability and accessibility for all ages remains an issue.

WHY CAN'T THE CITY BUILD TWO LIBRARIES?

Two facilities would significantly increase long-term operational costs. The City does not currently have the financial capacity to support both effectively.

DOESN'T REPAIR COST LESS THAN REBUILDING?

Repairs can be less expensive upfront, but they do not address the building's core limitations or expand service capacity. Significant investment would still be required over time, and those repairs would not substantially extend the building's useful life.

WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO THE EXISTING SITE?

Any reuse of the current property will be part of a broader community planning process, including opportunities for public input and an Existing Site Reuse Task Force. The future of the current site will balance neighborhood perspectives with long-term community-wide service needs.

More information, project updates, and participate in the planning process.

lopl.org/future-library

libraryvisioning@lakeoswego.city

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WHY NOT KEEP THE LIBRARY IN ITS CURRENT LOCATION?

The current site has constraints, including parking, needed space, and surrounding impacts, that limit expansion. Library services are designed to provide equitable access across the entire community.

WHY DO WE NEED SPACE FOR MORE BOOKS? AREN'T PEOPLE USING DIGITAL ACCESS MORE ?

While digital access has grown, print books remain the most widely used format in our community. Children rely on print materials for early literacy, many adults prefer print reading, and community members consistently value the ability to browse books in person. At the same time, the need for space goes beyond books. Community feedback has consistently highlighted the need for more meeting rooms, event and flexible learning spaces for people of all ages, technology access, and quiet study areas.

WHAT CRITERIA ARE BEING EVALUATED FOR A FUTURE SITE?

Key considerations include site that is equitable and accessible, adequately sized, and financial feasible, with a priority on urban renewal funding.

HAS MAINTENANCE BEEN DEFERRED? HOW DID WE GET HERE WITH MAINTENANCE ISSUES?

Regular maintenance and repairs throughout the life of the building have helped keep it operational and safe for the public. In the last five years alone, the City has invested $2.5M in the building to address water intrusion, debris falling from the ceiling in the Children's Library, deteriorating flooring, and problems with the elevator. Investment has helped extend the usability of the building, many challenges are tied to the age, design, and infrastructure of the building rather than a lack of maintenance.

HOW MUCH WILL A NEW LIBRARY COST?

The cost of a future library will be determined through ongoing community engagement and a phased, fiscally responsible approach to evaluating expenses and exploring all funding strategies, including the appropriate use of urban renewal funding where available.

WHERE WILL THE NEW LIBRARY GO?

A future library location has not yet been selected. Any future site recommendation will be informed by criteria-based analysis and public input. Key considerations include site scope and suitability, geographic needs, community priorities, and financial feasibility, with a priority on urban renewal funding.

WHAT OPPORTUNITIES WILL THERE BE FOR PUBLIC INPUT IN THIS PROCESS?

City Council meetings are open for public comment, there will be two Community Task Force groups, and numerous upcoming opportunities for public engagement. We are committed to hearing a broad range of perspectives to help shape decisions that reflect community needs, priorities, and long-term goals.

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