

## **Orcas Island Library Lid Lift and Building Project FAQs**

The Orcas Island Library District Board of Trustees has placed a property tax levy lid lift measure on the November 8 ballot.

**What will the levy pay for?** The additional levy revenue will be used to complete funding for the Library expansion and provide funds for maintenance and operations (M&O) of the expanded Library.

**What is the current Library levy rate and how does it compare with the other islands?**

The Orcas Library levy is currently \$0.303 per \$1000 valuation.

San Juan Island Library levy is currently \$0.50 per \$1000 valuation.

Lopez Island Library levy is currently \$0.40 per \$1000 valuation.

**What is the proposed Orcas Library Levy rate?**

The proposal is to raise the levy rate by \$0.147 to \$0.45 per \$1000 valuation.

**How much will the expansion cost?** Approximately \$4,200,000

**How much capital (expansion) funding does the Library already have?**

Approximately \$3,500,000, including

- \$1.4 million from the Bob and Phyllis Henigson Living Trust
- Approximately \$400,000 in additional private donations
- \$1.4 million in State capital funds for 2015-17 biennium
- \$100,000 from the Friends of the Library
- \$200,000 from Library Capital Reserves

**How much more do you need to fully fund the basic project?** Approximately \$700,000

**Why did the Board begin construction of the expansion without full funding?**

- To wait would jeopardize the \$1.4 million state capital funding, granted for the 2015-17 biennium.
- To defer the expansion for a year to raise additional funds would increase the amount to be raised by at least \$500,000 and might cause us to lose the \$1.4 million State grant. We would lose the current construction fixed bid and have to redo the bidding process in a hot construction market.
- The need for the expansion is now.

**By what date does the expansion need to be fully funded?** In order to access state capital funding in 2016, the expansion should be fully funded with cash, loans or lines of credit, and pledges by December 31, 2016.

## **When will the expansion be finished?**

Summer 2017

**The levy won't immediately fully fund the expansion. How will you achieve full funding by December 31st?** The approved levy will permit the Library District to obtain a six-year line of credit or loan to achieve full funding. A portion of the levy revenue will be used to fund repayment of that loan or line of credit.

**Does the Board have other plans to raise money?** The Board continues to solicit private funding and is pursuing grant opportunities, especially for additional capital items not included in the current project budget (see below).

**Has there been a previous levy lid lift for the Library?** No. The original (1988) levy was 50 cents per \$1,000; however, due to property revaluations and the effects of I-747, which limits tax revenue increases to 1% per year, the current rate is 30.3 cents. Even without the expansion, the Library would need to seek a levy lid lift, because tax revenues have not kept pace with inflation, causing the Library to draw down its reserves to pay for basic operations.

**After the expansion is paid for, what happens to the remainder of the levy dollars?** Tax levy dollars will

- fund maintenance and operations for the expanded Library;
- fund deferred maintenance and capital improvements to the existing building;
- restore reserves to a level consistent with best practices for libraries; and
- fund enhanced programs, services, and technology.

## **What is "Plan B" if the levy fails?**

- pursue alternative borrowing options;
- continue to seek private donations and grants;
- continue to drawn down reserves for M & O;
- continue dependence on Friends for M & O;
- potentially delay or halt construction; and
- potentially reduce services and defer maintenance of the Library.

## **Why does the expansion cost \$4,200,000?**

- "Hard" (construction) costs for the building are approx. \$3.2 million. State law requires that the Library pay "prevailing wages" for all construction labor. "Prevailing wages" are higher than local wage rates.
- "Soft" costs are approximately \$1 million. Those costs include architects, the project manager, engineering, permitting, furniture and equipment.

- The Design Committee, responding to community input — “We love our library; keep it beautiful” — has honored the quality and integrity of current building by selecting consistent finishes for the expansion, including metal roofing, cedar siding, and interior wood trim.
- It is more expensive to build on the island because of increased transportation costs.

**Did the Board do anything to lower costs for the expansion?** Throughout the design process, the Board eliminated or deferred non-essential items without sacrificing essential space and program needs or the quality and integrity of building. Those items total approximately \$300,000. An additional deferred item, the rebuilding of the Library Park stairs, has been funded by a San Juan County grant.

**How will these deferred items be addressed?** The Library District Fundraising Committee, composed of committed citizen supporters, has volunteered to raise funds for this component of the Library Expansion through private fund-raising. This portion of the funding is not time constrained like the full funding requirement for the basic construction.

**How much do you expect maintenance and operations to increase with the new building?** The Library projects that M & O for the expanded building will increase by approximately \$130,000 per year, to include an estimated 1 FTE additional staff.

**What does the Library currently do to hold down maintenance and operations costs?** The Orcas Island Library is fortunate to have a large and enthusiastic group of volunteers — 45 community members who typically donate three hours a week *each* to help with checkout, shelving, grounds maintenance, and preparation of materials to enter the collection.

**Will the expansion be green?** While the expansion will not be LEED-certified, it incorporates many green components, including the following:

- the roof includes infrastructure for solar panels;
- some of the “content” of the construction materials is recycled (for example, content of metal roofing, concrete, and wallboard);
- the cedar siding and Douglas Fir framing are regional materials;
- the expansion is designed to be “day-lit” (use natural light) as much as possible;
- the landscaping is low-impact and drought tolerant;
- paints, coatings, sealants and adhesives are low-VOC content; and
- the foam insulation is bio-based, and the batt insulation is mineral wool.

**What are the sources of Library funding?** The current annual budget of about \$713,000 is funded by

- taxes (85%)
- Friends (5%)

- private donations/endowments (2%)
- reserves (4%)
- front-desk fees (1%)
- other (3%)

### **How is this money spent?**

- salaries (51%)
- benefits (17%)
- print and online collections or resources (9%)
- professional and other services (8%)
- building and equipment maintenance and replacement (4%)
- programs/lectures/classes (3%)
- insurance (2%)
- utilities (2%)
- communications and internet (2%)
- supplies (2%)
- travel and training (1%)

## **Expansion Process FAQs:**

**How did the Library engage the community in the expansion process?** Three Boards, beginning in 2001, continuing in 2008, and again in 2013, did extensive surveys and held conversations with community members, library users, and Orcas schools and non-profit agencies to determine current and future library needs. Each time the Board concluded that the community desired more space for people, technology and books.

During 2014 and through the spring of 2015, the Board and Library staff conducted surveys and numerous meetings at the Library to discuss the current and future needs of the Library. Library Trustees and staff attended local community gatherings and organization meetings to gather inputs. Local architect David Kau volunteered time to develop preliminary schematics to be used in seeking additional feedback from the community. In view of the positive responses regarding expansion of the Library, active fundraising began in late 2014. In the fall of 2015, community members were asked to engage in the final Design Development process for expansion.

### **What other information and data did Board use to determine the need for expansion?**

- The Board gathered considerable data, including
- Library usage over 20-year period, which shows three-digit increases in several measures;
  - State, County, school-district demographics and population forecasts; and
  - projections on the evolving role of libraries in the 21st century, including statistics regarding print books, e-books, and electronic information sources.

**What space needs will the expansion address?** The expansion will be 5,900 square feet, including

- increased space for Children (from 450 to 800 sf)
- increased space for Young Adults (from 125 to 450 sf)
- more quiet-reading “pockets”
- more small work tables
- one each large- and small-group study/meeting room
- a dedicated computer area in the expansion
- 30% more shelving for a larger collection and to move books from hard-to-reach bottom and top shelves
- an outdoor patio for reading and wifi access
- two more restrooms
- a small store for the Friends of the Library

**How long will the expanded building meet Library needs?** The expanded building should well serve the community for 20 to 25 years based on current population trends. The open floor plan of the current and expanded building allows the Library to adapt to changing needs in the 21st century. Small, piecemeal expansions are more expensive and less effective in meeting program and service needs.

### **Relevance of Library FAQs:**

**Aren't eBooks and the internet replacing libraries?** Studies show that most Americans are “ambidextrous” in their reading habits, preferring the internet and e-books for some uses and print for others. The Library’s collection adapts to evolving technologies; it includes not only print books, but also DVDs, CDs, audio books, downloadable e-books, and free broadband wifi, 24/7. Both onsite and through its website, the Library offers free access to a variety of catalogs and databases, including foreign-language instruction.

**Who uses the Library?** The Orcas Island Library is free, democratic, apolitical, and welcomes everyone.

Orcas Island children are great users of the Library. Although children are only 16% of the island population, they account for 25% of all Library checkouts and 72% of attendees at Library programs, including twice-weekly Story Times, Book Clubs, and the Summer Reading Program.

San Juan County is unique in that 45% of adults possess Bachelor’s degrees, while 94% are high-school graduates. We are also an aging population; our most significant population growth is in the over-55 age group. Current trends indicate that by 2030 — only 14 years from now — a third of the county’s population could be 65 years or older.

San Juan County enjoys the second highest per capita personal income in the state, at \$54,000, slightly behind King County, at \$55,000, and well above the state median of \$42,000 (2013 data). However, our wage income is among the lowest in the state — \$31,000, compared to \$60,000 for King County and a state median of \$48,000.

What does this mean for the Library? Residents who enjoy high personal income and more leisure time *desire* high-quality information and entertainment. Lower-income residents — many of whom work several part-time jobs to make ends meet — *need* free access to high-quality information and entertainment.

**What do people use the Library for?** For information (both print and internet), connection (free wifi 24/7), entertainment, quiet reading, studying, meeting, community drop-off and pick up, and Library- and community-sponsored programs.

The Orcas Library is consistently in the top five libraries in Washington per capita for user visits, checkouts, cardholders, and collection size. Those numbers have increased significantly in the past 20 years (1995-2105):

- Library visits are 133,300 per year (2,500 per week), up 267%;
- Library cardholders are 6,300, up 210%;
- Annual checkouts are 123,000, up 162%;
- Library Collection size are 41,800, up 135%;
- Library Programs and classes are 220 per year, up 138%; and
- Library Program attendance are 4,200 a year, up 400%.

The Library is not only a critically important information resource; it is also a gathering place — a community hub for meetings, programs, and person-to-person connection.