

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Why does the Lee-Whedon Memorial Library need to renovate and expand now?

- According to a 2022 community needs assessment, users want larger collections, more programs, dedicated program space, and quiet areas for small meetings and tutoring.
- Participation in library events – 237 conducted in 2022 alone - are capped due to space and parking constraints. Of the 287 days a year that the library is open, events – created for a diverse user base - are scheduled 80% of the time.
- The library’s open floor plan, unchanged since 1965, impedes any private or age specific programming.
- Despite community demand, there are no dedicated meeting or tutoring spaces. The library’s only designated meeting space is multi-functional, housing local history and microfilm collections and providing additional programming space.

2. Are Library staff and volunteers working with building and fundraising professionals?

The Library Board of Trustees has engaged Passero Associates, an engineering and architecture firm with locations across the east coast including Rochester, Albany, and Hudson Valley. Working with input provided by a 2022 community needs assessment, these “design and build” professionals have provided volunteers and staff with a series of informed schematics with cost estimates based on a 1-year construction window. Passero Associates have worked on multiple library projects including the Greece Public Library, Chili Public Library, Irondequoit Public Library, Henrietta Public Library, and Livonia Public Library. Volunteers and staff have also engaged IvyPartners, a management consulting firm, to determine the feasibility of conducting a community-wide capital campaign to support proposed construction. Ivy was engaged by the Hoag Library of Albion as it transitioned from its historic home to its present location.

3. What will the project include and how much will it cost?*

Volunteers and staff have prioritized 2 new meeting rooms, 2 restrooms, 2 tutoring rooms, large programming area, teen room, Friends of the Library room, expanded children’s area, additional parking, expanded adult collection space, and a quiet research room. A cost estimate of \$5.2 million has been provided by Christa Construction and Passero Associates. This total encompasses all professional fees and construction costs. (*Updated Oct 2024 to reflect new numbers)

4. How will the project be paid for?*

Given the scope of the project, the board of trustees is dedicated to pursuing all potential funding opportunities in addition to using \$175,000 in bequests. Grant writing is already underway with \$795,320 secured. IvyPartners determined that a community capital campaign of \$500,000 can be successful. The library has not conducted a capital campaign since relocating from the Medina Central School in 1965. The Library will be holding a bond vote for the entire project as fundraising has not begun and grant funds will not be received in full until the completion of the expansion. (*Updated Oct 2024 to reflect new numbers)

5. When will construction begin?

Once a bond vote has been passed, our architects will begin working on engineering drawings and a bid packet. We anticipate that construction will begin in 2025.

6. Will the cost of operating the library increase?

It is reasonable to expect only modest increases in operational costs for a new and improved library.



7. Who uses the library now and how are they using it? Is there a need for an improved library?

A library's design can make programs and services easy or impossible to deliver. Completed and occupied in 1966, the Lee-Whedon Memorial Library was designed to hold books. But in roughly 6 decades of service, it has evolved to become a vital community hub in Medina and provider of global content. Today our library is a classroom, safe space, entertainment and business center, and portal to the world, all under one roof. Consider the library as a:

Meeting Venue: Utilizing the library for meeting space are the following community organizations: Village of Medina, Sandstone Society, Medina Historical Society, YMCA, Social Services, Staffing Agencies, Cornell Cooperative Extension, GO-Art, Medina Alumni, Orleans Mental Health, and the Parade of Lights Committee. Community organizations also set up displays in the library program area. ALL community meetings/displays must be scheduled around the 237 annual library events/programs to avoid space conflicts and to ensure adequate parking.

Educational Classroom: Tutors regularly use library study tables for students, and the library hosts its own tech tutoring sessions. Homeschooling groups utilize the library for multiple resources and programs. Library print and A/V collections are continually being used by patrons of all ages from within Medina and across the NIOGA system.

Technology Center: Library patrons utilize free Wi-Fi and an array of equipment that can be used in-house or borrowed, including computers, iPads, tablets, hotspots, scanners, printer/copier/fax, projector and screen, VHS to DVD conversion and slide scanner.

8. Will the building project enable the library to expand programming?

Yes. Long considered and based on demand, staff are eager to provide increased adult, teen and children's programming including genealogy and local history, cooking classes, gaming opportunities, and story hours.

9. How can I make a gift to support the project or get involved as a volunteer?

Until the community votes on the bond referendum, contributions are not being solicited to support the proposed construction. When the campaign moves forward, gift options could include cash, non-cash contributions such as retirement accounts and gifts of appreciated securities, in-kind (if applicable), and more. The library is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization so any donation can be fully tax-deductible as allowed by the IRS. A 5-year pledge period is being considered. Other options can be discussed on an individual basis. If a capital campaign is implemented, all donors will be formally acknowledged for their giving for tax preparation purposes. They will also receive public recognition. There will be numerous volunteer opportunities available as the project moves forward.

10. Have library volunteers considered alternative plans if adequate funding cannot be secured?

Yes. If a capital campaign, grant activity, and state and federal appropriations fall short of financial milestones, library leaders will bond a portion of the project.

11. Have other options been looked at other than expanding the current library?

Other locations have been considered. Library leaders met with Zambito Realtors to discuss purchasing Towne School. They also discussed purchasing the property across the street from the Library, the former Ace Hardware. Both options were found to be cost prohibitive. Towne School needed significant renovation and is not centrally located within the village. Purchasing the property across the street would result in higher staffing costs, as 3 or 4 more staff would need to be hired, and the building would have to be renovated.

Leasing property has pros and cons. Maintenance of the facility and grounds would fall on the landlord. The library would not be able to apply for certain grants that they currently receive. Also, lease terms can change with little notice, rental costs would likely increase over time, leases can be terminated, high moving costs, and the difficulty of finding a centrally located, fully ADA accessible 15,000 sq ft building in Medina.

12. Has the library considered building a second floor?

Yes. The current building is not constructed to carry the weight of a second floor. Significant renovation would need to occur to safely carry the additional weight of collections and people. The new addition is also not being built to hold a potential second floor in the future. Our architect and engineering firm feels that building a second floor is not cost effective, stating that it would be less expensive to build a completely new building.

13. When will we know about additional funding?

The current grant application for \$789,520 has been submitted to NYS. We anticipate receiving a response in the summer of 2025. We are also actively writing several other grants at this time.

14. Is using a flat roof the best idea for Western New York?

The library currently has a flat roof without any issues. In fact, many businesses in New York have flat roofs. The term "flat roof" is also a misnomer. There is still a pitch to the roof with drainage so there is not standing water or piles of snow accumulating there. If the library were to use a more typical gable style roof, other liabilities come in to play such as snow and ice sliding off and landing on people or cars.

15. How long has the library been planning this project?

An expansion has been part of our long-range plan for over 15 years. Many options have been researched over the years, settling on an expansion to our existing building as the most cost effective proposal. We were not able to move forward until both neighboring properties were acquired. This was completed in 2020 at no additional cost to taxpayers.

A community survey was conducted in the fall of 2022 to see what the community needed from the library. A survey link was posted on our website, in an article on the Orleans Hub, on our social media, and was available in person at the library. That initial survey was used as the basis for our project.

In June 2023, we were asked to apply for part of Medina's \$4.5 million NY Forward grant. A survey was conducted by the NY Forward committee to see which projects were most important to the community as part of that application process. The library expansion received the most support from community members.

The library conducted a Feasibility Study in the fall of 2023. A community steering committee was created to assist our consultant. Information packets were distributed to a sample size of the community. Our consultant then requested meetings with those same individuals to gauge support for the project as well as gather additional community feedback. Study results can be found on our website.

16. How frequently is the meeting room currently used?

Our November statistics show that the meeting room was reserved on 21 of the 24 days that the library was open. This included 15 community organizations, 8 therapy sessions, 2 County Health meetings, 3 book clubs, 4 Library meetings, and 1 Digital Literacy workshop. Statistics are not available for how many times that same room, which also houses the local history collection, was used by researchers. There were also 55 tutoring sessions held in the middle of the library because they could not use the meeting room.

All questions on this page were discussed at the information meeting on Dec 3, 2024.