

Your Questions Answered

| September 22, 2014

After an article about the possible DCL relocation appeared in the Post-Standard on 8/13/2014 (http://www.syracuse.com/news/index.ssf/2014/08/dewitt_library_eyes_new_site.html), many DCL library patrons and community residents have asked for additional information about our plans for a new facility. Please find below our answers to some of the most frequently asked questions.

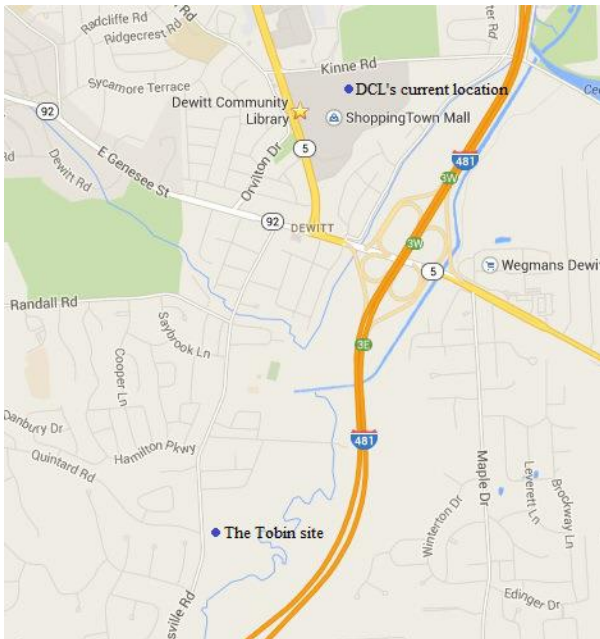
Why Do We Need a New Library?

Eight years ago, DCL patrons approved funding to finance the construction of a new, free standing library to improve the services, programs, and collections that our library can offer. In short, we are looking for bigger and better space! The community has asked DCL to increase the size of its collection, provide more room for browsing new titles, and increase the number and quality of community meeting spaces. There is great demand for more computing options, multi media facilities, and modern technologies in the library. We are continuously reminded in various patron surveys that a dedicated children's programming area with play space and an inviting teen area with room to study, work on projects, and access technology would be warmly received.

What options does DCL have for a new building site?

Frankly, not many! As soon as the building fund was approved eight years ago, the DCL board worked tirelessly – at times with great frustration – to find an appropriate site within our “charter to serve area” (basically Jamesville and DeWitt). This included sites within and around the ShoppingTown Mall property and every imaginable site the Board understood to be on the market.

Why has the DCL proposed building the new library at the Tobin site?



The library has not finalized a location for a new building. However, the DCL Board of Trustees is currently exploring a property on Jamesville Road near the JK Tobin Construction property, subject to conditions and approval by the Town of DeWitt. Positive attributes include its central location in our charter to serve area, easy accessed to I-481, Route 5, and Erie Boulevard, and its ample space for building with room to grow. Very different from the Mall, this site is situated in a natural environment that would allow for attractive views, outdoor seating and programming. There is potential collaborations with the Town of DeWitt to extend existing sidewalks and to create links to bike paths by working with the Town of DeWitt. We would also work with Centro to consider extending a bus line to the new site.

Why not keep the library at ShoppingTown Mall?

There are people in our community that clearly oppose the idea of moving the library outside of the Mall footprint. It's the place which the library has always occupied and change is never the best option for ALL people. There is no doubt that the Mall has many attractive attributes. People can shop as well as go to the library in one trip. It is located on a major thoroughfare, has regular bus service, and surrounding neighborhoods have walking access to the site. An additional concern expressed by some is the potential negative impact a library move would have on the ultimate viability of the Mall as a commercial space. We hope the community understands that we have considered all these concerns and are always open to further discussion. It's the DCL board's job to respectfully consider all opinions and do our best to weigh fairly each variable in this complicated equation.

Our main impediment to considering options at the Mall is that we do not have any at the moment. The Mall changed hands recently and we have reached out to them. The DCL board would gladly respond to any viable proposals from Shoppingtown Mall. At present, we pay roughly \$60,000 per year to rent 12,000 sq. ft. in the mall. We are looking to roughly double the DCL space to 20 – 24,000 sq. ft.

How will the DCL pay for its new building?

Regardless of where the new library resides, the DCL board assumes that we have sufficient resources (roughly \$2.5 million in cash and financing capacity built into the DCL budget) to construct a high quality library. The DCL will actively seek out NY State grants to support our construction project and we also envision a modest community fund raising campaign to supplement the monies that tax payers have provided.

What's Next

The obvious next step in the process is for DCL to engage the Town of Dewitt to clarify whether local authorities support the construction of a new library at the Tobin site. If approved and the sale of the property goes through, DCL would naturally reach out to the community once again to ensure there is active involvement in the building design process to construct the most appropriate library possible and to overcome potential weaknesses of the site.

At this point, it is too early to confirm a start date for construction. More on that as the process unfolds!