

The New Crozet Library

Frequently Asked Questions

Why are we building a new library in Crozet?

The Crozet Master Plan adopted in December, 2004, established an expanded downtown library as a critical community priority. The current Crozet Library, which is 1,900 square feet in size, was determined to be inadequate for the community's current and future library needs. The master plan envisioned a new downtown library that could provide improved library services and also could serve as an anchor for a revitalized downtown Crozet - a major public sector investment and visible presence that would help support critical infrastructure improvements like parking, sidewalks, and the new Main Street.

Where exactly will the new library be located?

The new library will be constructed on two parcels of property owned by Albemarle County along Crozet Avenue next to B&B Cleaners. These properties, known as the Harris and Amato properties, together provide approximately two acres to house the new library facility and associated parking.

Why was the downtown location selected for the Crozet library site?

Conversations about the new library occurred in a very significant way during the Crozet Master Plan process between 2002 and adoption of the plan in 2004, with a primary focus being on what positive contributions a new library could bring to the Crozet community as a visible presence and major public sector investment. Based on their input into the master planning process, citizens strongly preferred to place the new library in the heart of downtown to provide a focal point for community activity and expanded opportunities for economic vitality for existing and new downtown businesses.

As part of the initial phase of the project, 13 sites were identified and evaluated on a number of criteria. Those criteria included the strong community preferences established by the master plan; operational requirements specified by the Jefferson-Madison Library Director, Crozet Library Branch Manager, and the Library Board; objective evaluations conducted by independent consultants regarding transportation impacts and economic opportunities; and successful best practices for library projects in other communities. Following a public meeting and extensive citizen input regarding the location of the new library, the Board of Supervisors selected the Harris/Amato property which emerged as the downtown site which best fulfilled the intent of the master plan for the new library location.

How will the library support Downtown Crozet and fit with other downtown projects?

Construction of the library supports a host of infrastructure projects that have multiple benefits for the public including the sidewalk project, shared public parking for downtown, construction of Main Street, and the Crozet Avenue streetscape project. The library project uses public investment to stimulate downtown activity and economic vitality and represents a significant commitment to revitalization directly in the heart of downtown Crozet. Much of the work that is underway right now for these infrastructure projects is achieving important and necessary milestones for the design and construction of the library.

How big will the library be?

Based on the analysis of service area and population projections, staff recommended planning for an eventual 20,000 square foot library. Given the construction savings that can be realized by building the necessary square footage upfront together with the library's commitment to provide funding to keep the project close to its original budget, the Board of Supervisors directed that the building be designed and built at 20,000 square feet with the understanding that the space beyond what is currently required by the library be dedicated to a temporary compatible community-focused use until it is needed for library functions.

What is the service area of the new library?

The Jefferson Madison Regional Library approach for determining library service areas encompasses that area that falls within a six-mile radius around the library location. When a six mile radius is drawn with the Harris/Amato site as the center point, the circle includes the entire Crozet Development area and some adjoining rural areas.

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When will the new library be built?

The Amato property contract allows the current owners to remain for up to three years from the date that the County purchased the property. The library construction schedule is obviously dependent on this contract, which means that the County can not assume that the property will become available until December, 2009. Anticipating an approximately 15-month construction process that is scheduled to begin in spring, 2010, a completion date of late summer, 2011, is expected. It is important to note that the County is completing all necessary preliminary planning and design work so that construction can be undertaken as expeditiously as possible should the property become available sooner than the contractual date of 2009.

What will happen to the old library?

No decision has been made yet about the future of the current library structure. A determination of the appropriate future use for the building will be made in close consultation with community preferences after the new library is finished and open to the public.

Is the community involved in the design process?

The library project is a very visible and highly anticipated project in the Crozet community, and every effort will continue to be made to keep residents engaged in the process. Because of the critical nature of the library as a community focal point and activity center, citizen involvement is critical to ensure its success. As a first step in this involvement, the Board of Supervisors has appointed a steering committee which includes Crozet community representatives to help guide conceptual design of the library. Opportunities for public input into the conceptual design will be provided as that process moves along, and a comprehensive community engagement process will continue through the final design and construction phases of the project.

What kind of functions will be in the library?

The library will feature adult and children's books, videos, audio books, internet stations, and public meeting spaces and other features that meet the needs of the Library Board and the desires of the community. The library project when completed will also provide significant community meeting and gathering space that will house a variety of public functions.

Will the library have any kind of special environmental features?

In February, 2007 the Board of Supervisors expressed unanimous support for pursuing LEED Certification for all newly-constructed County buildings including the Crozet Library— LEED stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and is a nationally accepted rating system for designing and building green buildings. The new Crozet Library will be the County's first planned LEED Certified building project. Though this project is still in the planning phase, the County has taken several significant steps to ensure its success as a green building. The architectural firm of Grimm and Parker has been hired to design the project, as they have extensive LEED experience and a staff of over 23 LEED Accredited Professionals. In addition, the County is a member of the U.S. Green Building Council, along with the new local Central Virginia chapter, known as the James River Green Building Council.

How can I stay involved in the library project?

There are lots of ways to stay involved in the library project. Regular updates will be posted to the library page on the Albemarle County website at www.albemarle.org/newlibrary, and interested citizens are encouraged to sign up for the Crozet AMail list, which is an enews service that delivers information about Crozet projects like the library directly to your email. You can sign up for AMail by going to the County website at www.albemarle.org/AMail. We will be distributing regular printed newsletters as the library project moves through conceptual and final design and into construction. We will also be scheduling frequent public meetings, open houses, and informal opportunities to meet and talk with county staff and the consultant to provide feedback on the project.

Who can I contact at the County if I have questions?

The Albemarle County staff contact for the library project is Bill Letteri, Director of Facilities Development, who can be reached by email at: blletteri@albemarle.org.