

Background

The Crozet master planning process established a new and expanded public library in downtown Crozet as a critical priority. 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 expand opportunities for economic vitality for existing and new downtown businesses. As demonstrated in other communities, today's public libraries are more than technology centers, book repositories, and quiet reading spaces, they are also focal points for community gathering places and activity centers. Specific benefits expected from a downtown library in Crozet include 1) fewer car trips 2) the neighborhood model form of development 3) more opportunity for community interaction 4) promotion of pedestrian safety and access 5) additional downtown parking and 6) a community focal point and meeting space.

Current Status

Property has been purchased in Downtown Crozet for the new library, and the Board of Supervisors has approved construction of a 20,000 square foot library building, which will include space for complementary uses such as public meeting rooms and community space. In February of 2007, the Board of Supervisors supported pursuing LEED Certification for the Crozet Library and other County buildings. 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.

Next Steps

The next step for the County will be to evaluate the zoning for the library site to determine if zoning changes are necessary to make it compatible with the Crozet Master Plan. The Crozet Downtown Zoning project, currently underway, has been mindful of the library site when developing zoning recommendations, recognizing that the library is a cornerstone project for the new Downtown Crozet area. Once the design process begins, the project architect, Grimm and Parker, will work with the community and with County and library staff to identify critical programming elements for the library.

Completion of the zoning and streetscape elements are anticipated for 2008. At that time, the formal design process of the library will begin.

Highlights

Citizen input into the Master Plan called for a downtown library.

Downtown libraries are focal points for activity and economic vitality.

A site for the library has been selected and purchased by the County.

Citizens will be engaged in the library project as it moves forward.

Community Involvement Opportunities

Because of the critical nature of the library as a community focal point and activity center, citizens need to be engaged in the project to ensure its success. The architecture firm will work with the County to solicit community input through a comprehensive public participation process once the design and programming stages begin. There will be a number of opportunities for citizen involvement as the project progresses, including:

- Input on building features, amenities and programming needs
- Creating local business partnerships to support library activities
- Fundraising and volunteer support

Contact Information

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