

Campaign Readiness Study Mini Case Summary: A Modern Library for a Modern Community

Eau Claire is planning a major transformation of downtown's most visited destination, with more than 1,200 visitors daily: the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library. The renovation and expansion plan includes upgrading the library's infrastructure; adding a third story; and expanding the first and second floors outward to the corner of Eau Claire and Dewey Streets. The proposed modernization of L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library offers a vision of the future, focused on meeting the needs of Eau Claire residents. Accessibility and sustainability will improve. Additional public space will also be developed for customers to explore innovation, community collaborations, creative endeavors, and technology.

We are looking for your input. A Campaign Readiness Study is underway to assess the viability and approach for a successful fundraising strategy to reach the proposed private fundraising goal of \$11.5M. The study, being completed by Crescendo Fundraising Professionals, LLC, will research and explore the goals of the proposed campaign with key library stakeholders, leaders within the philanthropic community, collaborating organizations, library customers, and the general public.

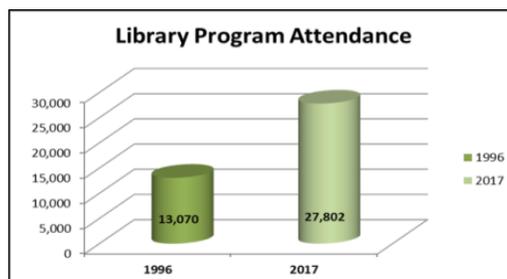
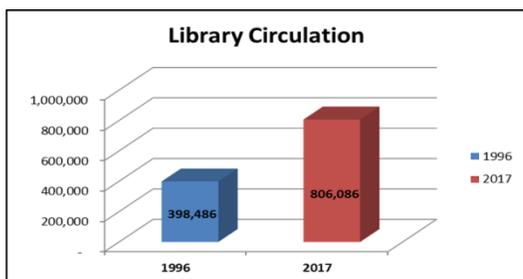
Crescendo advisors will make recommendations to the Library Board of Trustees, the Study Committee, and City Council based on its findings and experience with municipal and library fundraising campaigns in early 2019.

While not final, the recommended plan shows amazing possibilities, like a 250-seat event space to support library



programming and the city's burgeoning creative economy. It includes a technology commons with access to high-speed Internet through the Chippewa Valley Internetworking Consortium (CINC); a dedicated space for literacy and language-learning to foster lifelong learning and workforce development; a focus on net-zero energy use through smart facility design; conference rooms in various sizes to encourage community collaborations; and an expansion of the Dabble Box makerspace for creative and innovative exploration.

Library services and customer expectations have evolved and grown significantly since the facility opened at its present location in 1976, and the future continues to look bright. Library circulation has more than doubled, loaning 398,486 items in 1996 to 806,086 items in 2017. Library events offered annually increased by 142%, from 317 events in 1996 to 716 events in 2017. Likewise, attendance at the programs has risen by 113%, from 13,070 attendees in 1996 to 27,802 attendees in 2017.



The library has curated a collection of popular electronic resources, such as useful databases and more than 166,000 e-books; equipment, including laptops, iPads, and Wi-Fi hotspots; and Dabble Box makerspace experiences for all ages. Library services have also increased outreach at schools and community events; launched BookBike services; rolled out a Books on Buses program with Eau Claire Transit; introduced new collections featuring local authors and musicians; and so much more.

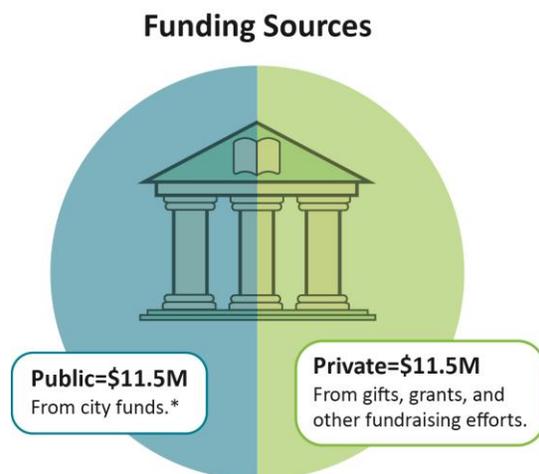
Although the current library facility has many good qualities, a 2017 building evaluation by Zimmerman Architectural Studios, Inc. determined a number of systems are at or nearing end of life. The study found a leaky roof system, poorly functioning and inefficient HVAC system, challenges with electrical and data, outdated plumbing system, unaddressed accessibility concerns, outmoded alarm system, uneven pavement, and obstructed sight lines. The firm determined 50% of the building is in “poor to fair condition.”

The optimum library space needed was determined by The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Public Library Standards, public feedback, and the needs assessment study. Based on these findings, Eau Claire’s library space should increase from its current 61,000 sq. ft. to 102,000 sq. ft. to plan for current usage and future growth.

Library customer feedback regarding an expansion is overwhelmingly positive. People love the library, but are looking for more options of both quiet and collaborative work spaces, more dynamic event spaces, and an improved floor plan to promote safety and security. The public desires additional space for materials to check out; more places to read, converse, and share; improved aesthetics, including daylight and art; expansion of the much-appreciated children’s area; and improved accessibility for all.

To fully realize the community’s dreams, a mix of public and private funding sources is critical. An \$11.5M tax levy has been bonded by the City of Eau Claire in 2019–20 to bring the facility into compliance with safety and accessibility standards. In order to go beyond the minimum upgrades, a partnership with the private sector is required to identify \$11.5M in gifts and grants.

The following table outlines a possible funding solution with public and private fundraised dollars.



*The cost to the owner of a home valued at \$150,000 starting in 2019 is an additional \$9 per year in property taxes for 20 years. Cost to the owner of a home valued at \$150,000 starting in 2020 is an additional \$30.50 per year in property taxes for 20 years. Thus, the total tax impact to the owner of a home valued at \$150,000 is \$39.50 per year for 20 years.