

The Ferndale Public Library Requests Approval of a Library Improvement Plan

What is the Library Improvement Plan?

The Ferndale Public Library is asking for approval of a millage that will be used to improve library space, materials and services. If the millage is approved, the Ferndale Public Library will:

Renovate the building and add:

- A new children's room, area as large as the current space.
- An space designed especially for teens.
- A reading room with new books and magazines.
- Small- and medium-sized conference space available for use by local groups and businesses.
- More computers and new technology spaces for classes and meetings.

Double the budget for new materials including:

- 3,500 new books a year, including nearly 1,000 new children's books and 300 new large-print books.
- 500 DVDs and 800 CDs per year, and free DVD borrowing.
- Twice the number of magazines and newspapers.
- New databases on business, investment and employment.
- Twice as many audiobooks and unlimited downloads.

Increase staff in order to offer:

- New programs for teens, and more programs for children.
- Senior outreach, lectures, book clubs, other adult programs.
- Longer hours of operation during the week as well as longer Saturday hours and (during the school year) Sunday hours.

Why is the Improvement Plan needed?

Ferndale residents want more. The current library budget has steadily decreased since the mid-1970s. In real dollars, the library's budget now is only two-thirds of what it was thirty-three years ago. The library's surveys find that Ferndale residents want the library to do far more than just sustain its services at current levels.

How will the Improvement Plan be funded?

On May 8, 2007, the Ferndale Library Board will request one mill of additional funding for 20 years in order to achieve what our community wants for its library. The average Ferndale homeowner—assessed at around \$130,000—currently pays \$5.41 per month (\$65 per year) to fund the library. Under the library improvement plan this will increase to \$10.80 per month (\$130 per year), an overall increase in property tax payments of only 2.2%.

A Vision of the Future

The library is working with award-winning architects who specialize in libraries to create a beautiful space. Look at what we can do.



How much is a better library worth?

The Ferndale Public Library enriches the entire community and focuses attention on the importance of reading and learning. Public libraries are one of the finest expressions of a community's values and it is no surprise that forward-looking cities across the country have put libraries at the center of renewal plans. Improving our library will have a long-term, positive impact on our community's quality of life, on property values and on the educational and cultural enrichment opportunities that are available to all residents.

How does Ferndale compare to others?

Because of steady budget cuts between the mid-1970's and 2004, the Ferndale Public Library has less space than any neighboring library and has one of the smallest operating budgets. As the charts on the right show, Ferndale now lags far behind many other communities. The proposed mill will help the current situation, allowing for the major improvements that are necessary for Ferndale's library service to approach that of comparable communities.

| Square Feet per Resident | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Southfield | 1.6 |
| Huntington Woods | 1.6 |
| Hazel Park | 1.0 |
| Berkley | 1.0 |
| Ferndale Proposed | 0.8 |
| Royal Oak | 0.7 |
| Oak Park | 0.6 |
| Ferndale Now | 0.5 |

| Operating Budget per Resident | |
|-------------------------------|------|
| Southfield | \$89 |
| Huntington Woods | \$70 |
| Berkley | \$41 |
| Ferndale Proposed | \$41 |
| Royal Oak | \$40 |
| Ferndale Now | \$27 |
| Hazel Park | \$26 |
| Oak Park | \$25 |

What happens if the millage is not approved?

Ferndale's library services are in danger of eroding due to increased costs for books, computers and other operating costs. Likely cuts in state aid could make the situation even worse. Our library would struggle just to maintain its current limited services. Ferndale's citizens tell us they want much more: a 21st century library that complements the renewed energy of our community.

Do you have any other questions?

We welcome your questions and comments. When you contact us, please ask about opportunities to participate in our Community Planning Workshops.

Quick Facts

- The library was built in 1954 and has had no major improvements since then.
- The library has about 1/2 square foot per resident, only half of what the American Library Association recommends.
- Library space has been squeezed further by books on tape, music CDs, videos and DVDs, computers, and photocopiers, additional books magazines and newspapers.
- The library's budget has decreased steadily over the past 30 years.
- The library today can only afford half as many staff members as it could in the mid-1970's.
- In 2006 the library lent 120,000 books, DVDs, audiobooks and other materials and answered 12,000 reference questions.
- Library circulation has increased by 5% in each of the last two years.
- In 2006, only 2.2% of the property taxes paid in Ferndale went to support the library. The mill will raise property taxes by an additional 2.2%.
- A 2005 survey found that the average Ferndale household saves \$18 per month by using the library. By adding books and services, the Improvement Plan will increase these savings.