

ON THE BALLOT: LIBRARY EXPANSION GOES TO THE POLLS

REFERENDUM IN A NUTSHELL

The Library will take its project to the voters this spring.

- **Date:** March 17th, 2026 (or earlier with early or mail-in voting)
- **Purpose:** The Library has outgrown its home and we need to expand.
- **Background:** After years of planning, we have a strong design that will meet the needs of the community for the fewest dollars possible.
- **Funding:** The Library has committed or identified funding for 15% of the \$10,500,000 cost. There will be a referendum for the remaining \$8,925,000.
- **Impact:** This project will increase your property taxes by less than 1% – \$5.33/month for a \$300,000 home.

As the community grew, the Library grew with it, offering creative programs for all ages; providing new material types to meet changing needs, such as Roku sticks, Vox books, board games, and educational kits; and rearranging our furniture and shelving as needed. We have done the most we can do with the space that we have, but now we are simply overcrowded:

- Our children's area is often crowded with children and their caregivers, making it difficult for them to comfortably use the space and access materials and activities.
- Our community room is too small for our most popular programs, forcing us to either limit participation or have patrons standing outside the doors, struggling to see and hear.
- We only have one study room and one community room, forcing us to regularly turn individuals and community groups away.
- Our shelves are full, and we can only make room for new materials by removing other items long before we would prefer to do so.

A GROWING LIBRARY NEEDS TO GROW!

When we opened the doors to our current building in 2010, library usage immediately jumped by over 30%, as the community enjoyed the larger space, dedicated children's area, new community and study rooms, and more materials than our old building could have ever held.

RIGHT:
View of the new Children's Library





TOP: View of the expanded Library from the west side

BOTTOM: View from the main entrance

AN EXPANDED LIBRARY

We are excited to share that, after years of planning and preparation, we have a library design that will give the community more free space to gather, work, and study; more programs and events for children, families, teens, and adults, and more space to house books, movies, and other materials.

NEW CHILDREN'S LIBRARY & DEDICATED TEEN SPACE

The largest and most prominent part of the expansion will be a new 7200 sq. ft. Children's Library with a dedicated Teen Room. The children's area is the most heavily used, and most crowded area, in our existing Library. The new space will have more room for children to read and participate in activities, and a glass wall will separate this area from the main body of the Library to help reduce sound in the rest of the Library. This space will take up a new wing located north of the existing children's area.

Libraries across the country have found that making a dedicated space especially for teens makes it far more likely that teens will use the Library. We want our community's teens to know that we welcome them and that we have a friendly space for them to use, so we have designed a Teen Room just for them.



LARGE, DIVIDABLE COMMUNITY ROOM

The Edgar Room, our only community room and programming space, is booked daily for library programs and public use, often hosting multiple events in a single day. The addition of a significantly larger community room that can be subdivided into two rooms, will double the number of groups we can serve.

PATIO & OUTDOOR PROGRAM SPACE

One lesson we learned during the COVID-19 pandemic is that our patrons really enjoy outdoor programming during warm weather months, but the Library doesn't have shade to offer protection from the sun during these events. A covered outdoor patio will provide space for programs, concerts, and even studying or working outdoors.

CHANGES TO THE EXISTING SPACE

Moving children, teens, programs, and meetings into the expanded library will allow us to rearrange our current space to better meet community needs:

- The current Edgar Community Room will become a free gathering space for informal meetings and visits, with food and drink allowed.
- The current teen area will become a new study room.
- The adult collection and work areas will expand into the current children's areas.

A THOUGHTFUL PLAN

This is not an impulsive decision, but one driven by data: we are out of space and we are struggling to provide for the community's library needs. Once we realized this, library staff and trustees took several years to create a plan that would meet the needs and yet be as cost efficient as possible:

- We worked with a library consultant, who developed a requirements plan based on input from staff, trustees, and public surveys.
- We hired an architect who specializes in public libraries to create a design and provide cost estimates.
- We hired a financial consultant to create a plan that would allow us to not only build the expansion, but also maintain the facility and continue to provide library programs and services.



STEWARDS OF YOUR TAX DOLLARS

Library staff and trustees never lose sight of the fact that we are stewards of your tax dollars and we must meet the needs of the community in the most cost effective way possible. The Library has been adding countless programs and services while barely changing what you pay in property taxes! Check out this real example from a home in Mahomet:

Property tax history from an actual home in Mahomet

Year	Net Taxable Value*	Total Tax Paid	Library Tax	Schools Tax	Village Tax
2021	\$68,340	\$5,506	\$209	\$3,161	\$578
2022	\$72,650	\$5,815	\$215	\$3,359	\$603
2023	\$79,330	\$6,279	\$211	\$3,676	\$644
2024	\$87,860	\$6,815	\$219	\$4,068	\$671
% Increase 2021-2024	28.56%	23.78%	4.78%	28.69%	16.09%

*Net taxable value is approximately 1/3 of the full home value

Note: to find these numbers for your own property, look at your tax bill or visit the Champaign County Clerk property tax lookup site.

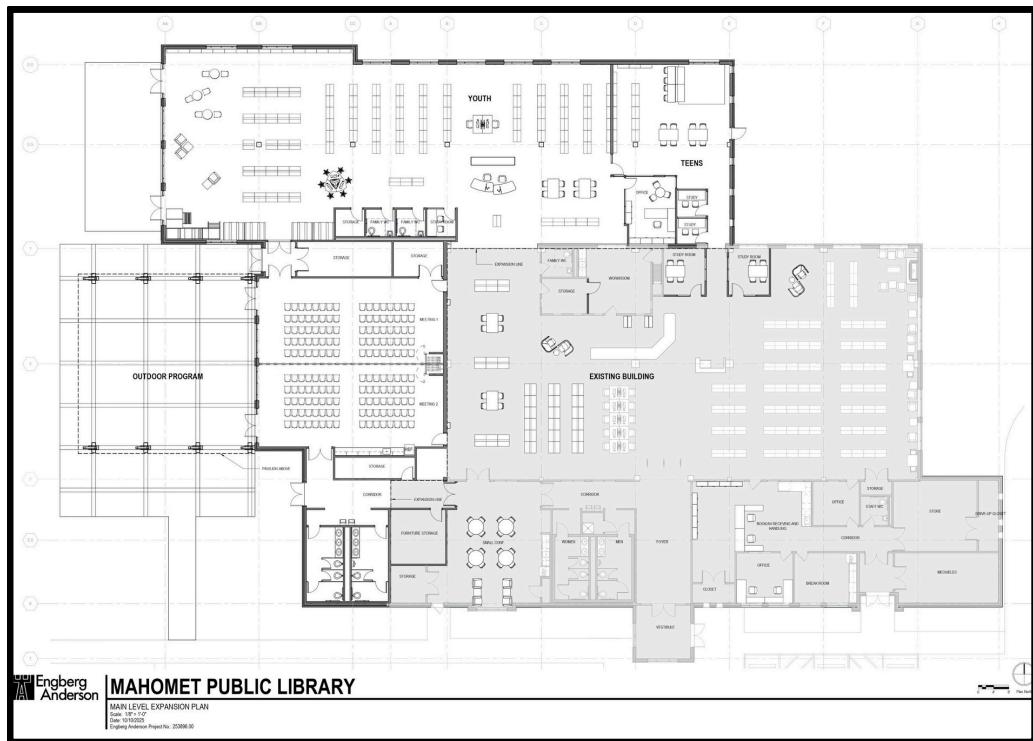
Library Tax Rate: The overall tax rate levied by the Library on Mahomet property dropped from 0.3061 in 2021 to 0.2494 in 2024. That is a reduction of 18.5%! For the property listed above, the increase in actual tax paid to the Library came almost entirely from the 28.5% increase in property value, not from the Library raising tax rates.

Refinancing Savings: In 2019, the Library Board went to considerable effort to refinance the bonds on the existing building. This work did not bring any more income to the library, but it did save taxpayers \$230,000.

Savings Toward Expansion: Despite continually increasing programs and services, the Library has set aside some funds every year to be used on this expansion project.

LEFT: View of the new dividable meeting room
BELLOW: Outdoor programming/gathering space





LEFT: Planned Floor Plan - Areas in grey indicate existing Library; White areas indicate new spaces

BELow: Social gathering space (currently the Edgar Room)



LET'S TALK DOLLARS

PROJECT COST

The total cost of the library expansion and near-term repairs and maintenance for the existing facility is estimated to be \$10,500,000. The Board of Trustees has committed to covering the first 15% (\$1,625,000) through a combination of:

- Library reserves that have been built up for this project since 2010,
- Voluntary donations from the community, and
- Grants.

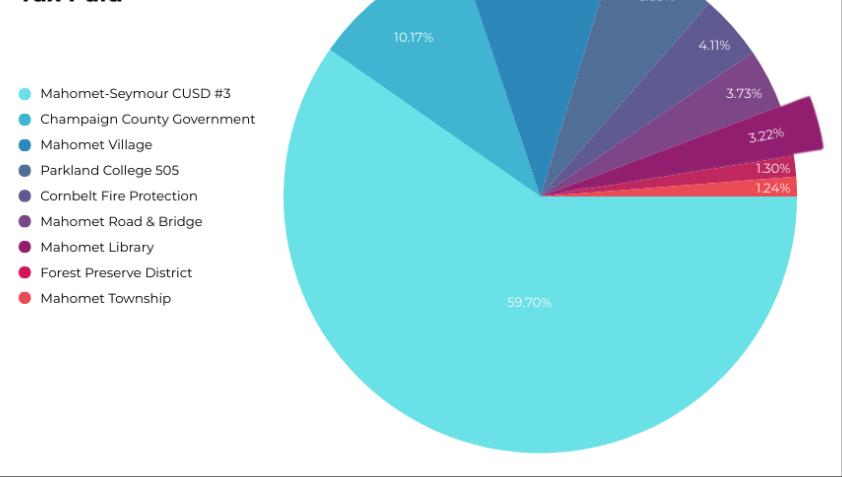
The remainder of the costs depend on passing a bond referendum for \$8,925,000 on March 17, 2026.

IMPACT ON YOUR PROPERTY TAXES

This project will increase your total property tax bill by less than 1%.

Less than 1%? How can it have so little impact? It's simple: the library represents a small portion of your property tax bill, so our request will have a minimal effect on your tax bill.

% of Total Property Tax Paid



Payments on the new bonds will begin immediately after the retirement of construction bonds for the current building, minimizing the increase in property taxes. The current estimated impact on property taxes is \$5.33 per month for a \$300,000 house.

HOME VALUE	ANNUAL INCREASE	MONTHLY
\$100,000	\$18.61	\$1.55/month
\$200,000	\$41.31	\$3.44/month
\$300,000	\$64.01	\$5.33/month
\$400,000	\$86.71	\$7.23/month
\$500,000	\$109.41	\$9.12/month

WHAT IF THE REFERENDUM DOESN'T PASS?

While we truly believe this expansion is in the best interests of the community, if we are not able to move forward we will continue as we have been doing, providing the best library programming, services, and materials that we can in our limited space.

Unfortunately, this means we will continue to:

- Turn children and families away from programs due to lack of space,
- Lack room for all the materials we need as the population grows,
- Have limited availability of meeting space for community groups,
- Lack sufficient quiet work/study space, and
- Have an overcrowded children's area, especially before and after programs.

The photos below were taken during a live animal program in summer of 2024. The room was packed, and the little girl in pink (top photo) found herself on the outside, missing it. We can only imagine how she felt.

Throughout our planning, we have kept this image in our minds. Children and teens want to be in our library. We want to be sure we have the space to welcome them. With this expansion, we can make that happen.



For more information about the expansion project, please visit the expansion page on our website: <https://mahometpubliclibrary.org/expansion-project/>



Families stand outside the Edgar Room during a program, trying to hear and see. Inside the Edgar Room, every bit of floor space is being used.

