

Defiance Public Library System Levy Community Information Session

Date: Wednesday, September 30, 2026

Time: 1:00PM

Location: Defiance Public Library

(With questions & answers compiled from sessions held Sept. 30, Oct. 5 and Oct. 6)

Purpose of the Session

Library director Cara Potter provided an overview of the Defiance Public Library System's proposed levy and the planned annex project, including the project's history, proposed uses, timeline, financial structure and planned improvements to the Carnegie Library.

Proposed Levy

- DPLS has placed a 1.65-mill levy on the November 2026 ballot.
- The levy consists of:
 - 0.75 mill to renew the library system's existing operating levy, which has remained at the same millage for 24 years.
 - 0.9 mill in additional millage.
- The additional 0.9 mills would provide funding for annex operating costs and construction debt associated with the project, which includes renovations to the Carnegie building.
- The existing 0.75-mill operating levy supports operations throughout the library system, including the Defiance Public Library and the Sherwood and Johnson Memorial Library locations.
- The County Auditor's estimated cost to property owners is \$47 per \$100,000 of county auditor market value.
- The levy would collect a fixed dollar amount; therefore, as overall property values increase, the effective rate paid by individual property owners decreases. Additional fundraising and/or faster debt retirement would directly reduce the amount collected from taxpayers.

- Construction debt would be paid from the library's Public Library Fund (PLF) revenue, with the additional levy revenue providing funds to replace the portion of operating revenue used for debt payments.

Proposed Annex

The proposed annex would be located across Fort Street from the Carnegie Library on property donated to DPLS.

The approximately 14,375-square-foot building is designed to provide additional library space as well as meeting and community space.

The project originated in part from the library system's need for additional program and meeting space. The Carnegie Library does not have a dedicated public meeting room large enough to accommodate many of the library's programs, and existing space is also limited for children's, teen, MakerSpace, storage and other services.

Proposed Annex Uses

Current plans for the annex include:

- A children's department on the second floor, including space for infants, preschoolers and elementary-age children
- A larger children's craft room
- Children's collections and public computers
- A MakerSpace with additional room for 3D printing, sewing, crafts and other activities
- Two smaller meeting rooms
- A large community meeting room with a maximum capacity of approximately 130 people when standing (without furniture)
- An adult literacy office, space for an adult literacy program
- Public restrooms, including an adult changing table
- Staff and custodial spaces
- Storage space
- A basement for Friends of the Library book-sale storage and staging, mechanical equipment and additional library storage

- An elevator serving the basement, first floor and upper floor

The large community meeting room would be available for library programming and would also provide meeting space for local government and nonprofit organizations. The meeting rooms are expected to use an online reservation system.

The large meeting room is designed so it (as well as a restroom) can be accessed after regular library hours for approved meetings, with the remainder of the building secured.

Children's Services

The proposed children's department would provide substantially more space than the current children's room. The design includes open sightlines from the children's service desk to improve visibility and safety throughout the department.

The additional space would also allow children's programs, including storytimes and larger gatherings, to be accommodated more effectively.

MakerSpace

The existing MakerSpace is heavily used for activities including 3D printing, sewing and crafts. The proposed annex would provide additional space for MakerSpace activities.

Some MakerSpace activities currently have a small materials charge, such as 3D printing. Most MakerSpace programs and activities are free of charge.

Adult Literacy

The annex design includes an office for an adult literacy coordinator. The proposed program would use a part-time coordinator to train and coordinate volunteer tutors who would work individually with adults or older teens seeking literacy assistance.

Tutoring could take place at a library or another appropriate public location.

Design and Construction Process

The library has completed the design-development phase of the project, which established the proposed uses, layout and overall design.

The next phase will involve detailed construction drawings and preparation for construction.

If the levy is approved, the library plans to begin the process of selecting a construction manager at risk through the public process required by law.

The construction manager would work with library administration, the design firm, and subcontractors to help ensure that the plans are buildable and to manage construction.

The current project cost information includes an updated opinion of probable cost, which was described as an estimate rather than a final construction cost.

Project Timeline

If the levy is approved and the necessary processes proceed as anticipated:

- The library expects to begin the construction-manager selection process.
- Fundraising for the project would begin after the levy decision.
- Potter reported that construction could begin in 2027, although the exact date has not been established.
- Potter said the current expectation is that construction could take approximately one year, although the actual construction schedule will depend on the final construction process, availability of materials, labor and other factors.

Annex Property

The annex property was donated to the library by Anthony Sansalone.

Under the property agreement, the library has a five-year period from the transfer of the property in January 2024 to commence construction as defined by the agreement. If construction has not commenced within that period, the donor has a 6-month window to exercise an option to reacquire the property for an option price of \$10.

Carnegie Library Improvements

The proposed project also includes improvements to the existing Carnegie Library.

Planned improvements discussed during the session include:

- Replacement of the building's HVAC system
- Conversion of the current children's room into a teen area
- Additional staff office space

- Additional storage
- A small meeting room
- Expansion of local history space
- Reopening a previously existing doorway in the Reading Room to improve access between spaces

The current children's room was not originally designed to serve as a children's department and has several smaller, enclosed spaces. Moving children's services to the annex could allow the existing space to be repurposed for teen services and other library functions.

Sherwood and Johnson Memorial Libraries

The Sherwood and Johnson Memorial Library locations are part of the Defiance Public Library System.

DPLS provides staffing, collections, programming support, cleaning and other operating expenses for the branches. The buildings themselves are owned by their respective landlords and building maintenance responsibilities remain with those property owners.

Questions and Answers – Compiled from questions asked at Community Information Sessions held Sept. 30, Oct. 5 (Hicksville), & Oct. 6

Question: How will the additional 0.9-mill levy be used?

Answer: The additional millage would provide funding for operating and maintaining the annex and for construction debt associated with the project, which includes renovations to the Carnegie building. DPLS plans to borrow against future Public Library Fund (PLF) revenue for construction, reducing the amount of PLF revenue available for library operations. Levy funds would replace the portion of operating revenue used for debt payments.

Question: How much would the levy cost a property owner?

Answer: According to the County Auditor's estimate, approximately \$47 annually per \$100,000 of the County Auditor's market value.

Question: When could construction begin?

Answer: If the levy is approved and the necessary processes proceed as anticipated, Potter said she expects construction could begin sometime in 2027. The exact date has not been established.

Question: How long would construction take?

Answer: The current expectation is approximately one year once construction begins, although the final schedule will depend on the construction process and factors such as materials and labor availability.

Question: What will happen to the current children's room?

Answer: The current children's room is planned to become a teen area after children's services move to the annex. The space would also allow for additional staff offices and other library functions.

Question: What renovations are planned for the Carnegie Library?

Answer: Planned improvements include replacement of the HVAC system, additional staff office and storage space, a small meeting room, expansion of local history and teen spaces, and possible improvements to the front entrance doors.

Question: What are the parking plans for the proposed annex?

The library is working with SHP (architectural and design firm) on a parking variance application. The application process takes approximately six weeks, with documents expected to be submitted to the city by October 9 for consideration by the Planning Commission in November.

The library has been advised that, if the levy does not pass, an approved parking variance would remain valid and would not need to be reapplied for.

To maximize available parking, the library also plans to work with staff to return to the previous practice of parking in the public lot behind the McDonald building to make more of the nearby parking spaces available to library visitors.

The current plans also include adding a limited amount of parking behind the building, including an accessible parking space. The library is seeking to provide as much

parking as possible while maintaining green space and preserving the appearance and character of the surrounding property.

The goal is to balance the library's parking needs with the community's broader interest in maintaining an attractive, green setting rather than maximizing the amount of paved area.

Question: Will the library continue providing services at the Sherwood and Johnson Memorial locations?

Answer: Yes. The branches remain part of the Defiance Public Library System. DPLS continues to provide their staffing, collections, programming support, cleaning, and other operating expenses.

Question: Are grants being pursued for the project?

Answer: Potter explained that most library grants are intended for programs and equipment rather than major capital construction. The library plans to pursue grants and other funding opportunities for eligible portions of the project, including furnishings and equipment.

Question: Why is the annex being built rather than moving the entire library to another location?

Answer: Several alternative locations have been considered over the years. The proposed project is intended to add space while retaining the Carnegie Library as the main library. The annex property is directly across the street, allowing the two facilities to function together for operational efficiency while preserving the existing Carnegie building.

Question: What is planned for exterior lighting?

Answer: Exterior lighting has not yet been addressed in the project's planning phase. When that work begins, DPLS will consider lighting that provides appropriate safety and visibility while complementing the building and surrounding neighborhood.

Question: Does the adult literacy coordinator position exist now?

Answer: No, it does not.

Question: Who is the design firm and how was it selected?

Answer: SHP Architecture & Design (shp.com) was chosen by our Board of Trustees after following the selection process outlined in the Ohio Revised Code.

Question: Do you anticipate the project bringing more traffic to the area?

Answer: It is difficult to estimate how traffic patterns may change once the building opens. Library Director Cara Potter said some increase in traffic is likely as residents visit the new facility, with activity expected to vary depending on the time of year and scheduled programming.