

The New Mendenhall Valley Library



The *Amazing Bookstore* and the *Friends of the Juneau Public Libraries* have been working to bring a new Library in the Valley to fruition for almost 30 years. With your help, it will shortly be a reality. You may be wondering -

Why now?

The timing could not be better - we are presented with a golden opportunity to build a new library. The State is currently investing heavily in new library projects across the state. A total of 14 Library projects (including Juneau) are now approved, with 6 more in the works.

The Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA), as well as the State Legislature, saw the value in constructing a new library in the Mendenhall Valley. They perceived such a need that they have just granted the City \$7,000,000 for half of the project. In addition to that, the Friends of the Juneau Public Libraries have raised and committed **\$1,000,000** in funds for the project. The Library Foundation has also committed \$300,000 for this worthwhile cause. The city purchased land back in the *mid 1980s* in Dimond Park for this new library.

At this time, a full 2/3 of the project is already paid for - the remaining amount of \$4,700,000 is all that is needed for this to now become a reality. This amount is only 10% of the proposed total sales tax initiative. If the Library is not included and passed in the ballot initiative, we run the risk of losing the \$7,000,000 appropriated from DCRA and Legislature.

Why not leave the library in the mall?

The Valley Library was moved out of co-located space in Floyd Dryden Middle school in 1983. At that time, a “temporary” location was selected in the Mendenhall Mall until a new, permanent location could be constructed.

This rented space was never intended to be a library, nor can it perform well as a library – it is merely a place that houses the functional aspects of a library. By the end of 2014, the city will have paid over \$6,000,000 in rent when measured in 2010 dollars.

The rent payments cover the mall space as well as utilities and minor maintenance. So how can the city save money by owning its own facility? The rent is currently about \$200,000 per year. By owning its own Library facility, the city will be able to re-allocate these dollars and more than adequately cover the costs of utilities and maintenance – and still have a savings of approximately \$40,000 per year (this savings will increase as time goes on and rents continually climb).

How do I know this Library design is “right-sized”?

The size of the new facility was derived through two needs assessments conducted over the past 5 years. These assessments had put the desirable square footage between 19,000 and 23,000 square feet. After value-engineering the initial design, it was determined that the most efficient and economical footprint is 20,600 square feet. The plan’s design elements allow the library to be operated at current staffing levels as well as having an open floor plan to accommodate future needs.

Here is how the current Mall location and the new Valley Library stack up:

Square Feet per Population Served					
Community	Population Served	Square Feet	Square Feet per Capita	DCED grant?	
<i>Existing Libraries:</i>					
Haines	1,713	8,400	4.90	N	
Homer	5,003	17,000	3.40	N	
Wrangell	2,369	5,930	2.50	N	
Unalaska	4,376	9,400	2.15	N	
Palmer	5,937	11,400	1.92	N	
Wasilla	7,831	7,687	0.98	N	
Mendenhall Mall	17,000	9,391	0.55	N	
<i>New Libraries Funded by DCED Grant:</i>					
1	Talkeetna	876	7,840	8.95	Y
2	Cordova	2,239	8,452	3.77	Y
3	Petersburg	2,948	9,770	3.31	Y
4	Seward	2,693	7,661	2.84	Y
5	Ketchikan	8,050	16,250	2.02	Y
6	Sitka	8,881	14,000	1.58	Y
7	Fairbanks N. Pole	14,580	18,625	1.28	Y
8	Juneau: Dimond Park	17,000	20,600	1.21	Y
9	Kodiak	13,592	16,000	1.18	Y
10	Sutton	1,447	unknown	unknown	Y

The mall location currently has one meeting room (one of the few public meeting space in the valley), which is used for groups in size ranging from 4 to 50. This one room is reserved every day, and is often in use during most library open hours. Frequent scheduling conflicts often disrupt the plans of both large and small groups. The new design incorporates a large gathering room for public meetings as well as 3 “project” rooms that can accommodate smaller group needs.