

Project Summary

Engage, Enrich, Empower

In 1908, the Aram Public Library housed just 2,332 books. Today, it has 57,000 books plus nearly 16,000 audio, music, and video DVDs and CDs. With 24-hour on-line access to the library's catalog and an extensive collection of downloadable electronic items, the library is always in use. Yet even with all these enhancements, Aram Public Library still functions much as it did when it first opened in 1908: Delavan's community gathering place but with a high-tech twist.

Today, residents of all ages come to the library to linger and learn. They sift through the library's extensive collections, take on-line learning courses, research specialized databases, and use one of the library's 15 computer workstations. They can even check out mobile Wi-Fi hotspot routers!

Patrons of all ages enjoy a variety of free library programming, attend public events and meetings, or participate in programs developed with our community partners. For example, the popular Harvest Time Hullabaloo is a collaboration between the library, Delavan's Parks and Recreation Department,

and the Delavan-Darien School District. Residents engage in library-hosted clubs like the LEGO Club and Knit & Crochet Club. Parents and caregivers bring babies and toddlers to free drop-in playgroups. Kids and adults learn how to make edible holiday houses or how to brew kombucha!

We integrate STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math) into many of our youth programs, even offering STEAM kits for checkout. Our bilingual (Spanish/English) residents enjoy bilingual children's story times and adult English conversation clubs, while patrons affiliated with the nearby Wisconsin School for the Deaf attend the library's ASL (American Sign Language) programs.

Aram Public Library's evolution into Delavan's tech, learning, and community hub has pushed the library beyond capacity. The library's physical space, programming, equipment, and amenities are insufficient to meet current and anticipated demands of the Delavan community.

“Aram Public Library is one of my main sources for information when researching for the many books I have written on the history of Delavan. I would not be able to research my topics without the use of our library's fantastic microfilm collection of past newspaper articles that date back into the 1800s.

Our library staff is friendly, eager, and always willing to help me find the materials I'm looking for, especially when trying to navigate my way on the computer.”

~ **Frank Landi**

Delavan resident, author, and historian



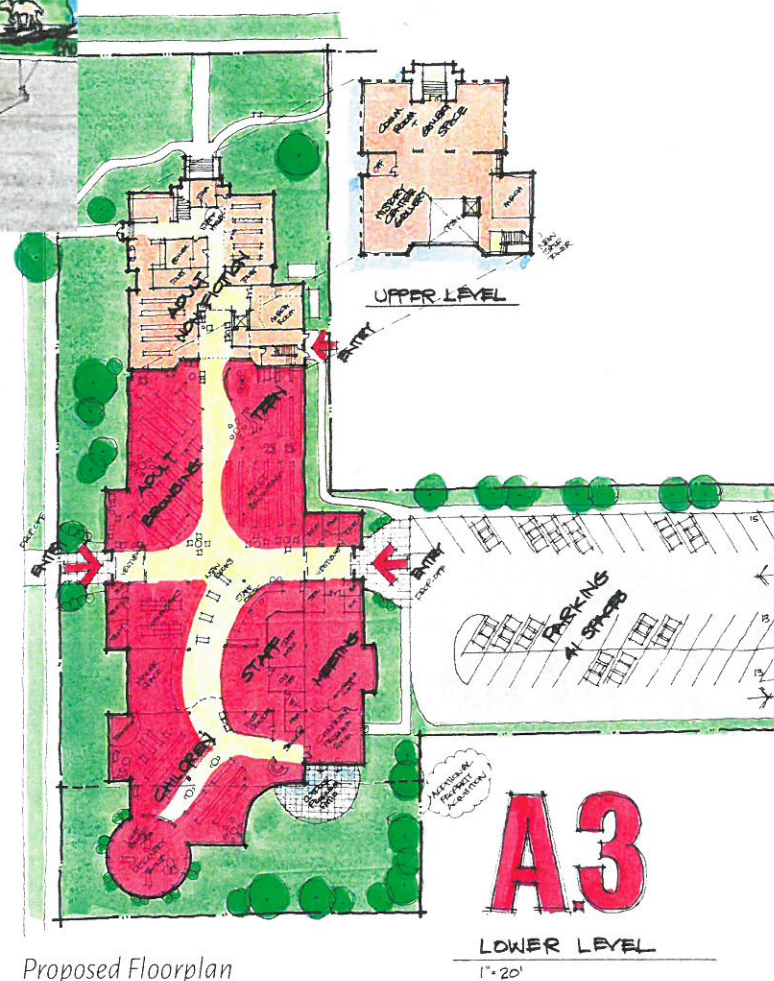
Growing Up and Out

In 1991, a major expansion doubled the size of the original 1908 library to 16,000 square feet. A new children's area, elevator, modernized restrooms, and a community meeting room were included. In 2004, the meeting room was sacrificed to house a rapidly growing youth collection and a dedicated teen area was carved out of space on the main floor that had previously housed AV materials. It was important to make those changes then and we continue to need more space today.

A Needs Assessment Study completed in November 2018 quantified what we already know: the library is crowded. There are more requests for services that simply can't be provided due to lack of space. To put this in perspective, in the first six months of 2019, the library could only accommodate 52 (23%) of the 231 requests to use the library's only community meeting room. Since 1999, kids and adult programming has grown from about 85 to 368 per year (77%). Book volume has doubled from 34,000 to 57,000. And audio, music, and video DVDs and CDs have increased from 1,889 to 15,713 (86%).

Plans For Our Future

Like many new modern libraries, the Aram Public Library has evolved beyond simply lending books. New libraries are today's community centers. As the library looks to the future, we understand that library patrons expect flexible and light-filled spaces with technological enhancements (hardware, software, and lots of outlets and internet ports) that promote creative work and study, on-line learning opportunities, and informal meeting spaces.



Proposed Floorplan



The 21st Century Library

An expanded Aram Public Library will feature:

Increased safety and comfort for all visitors

Multiple meeting rooms of varying sizes for community events, workshops, and group meetings

Individual study rooms

Increased cozy, comfortable seating throughout the facility from 30 to 90 seats

More shelving for library materials

Ample outlets and internet ports conveniently located to accommodate device usage

More parking

Expanded programming, including increased bilingual and ASL services, for kids and adults

Opportunity for more community engagement and partnerships

Access to the library's meeting rooms outside of library hours

Increased circulation of materials

Compliance with ADA requirements

Community Investment

Estimates for the library's renovation and expansion range from \$8,414,515 to \$10,047,370.

Grants and funds from partner agencies will offset a majority of the expenses, with philanthropic and community support needed for approximately 35% of total project costs (about \$3,500,000).

A New Library, A New Delavan

In 1897, Delavan residents James and Susan Aram bequeathed \$20,000 to the city in honor of their three young deceased daughters to establish and maintain a public library and reading room to be named the Aram Public Library. Their commitment – and yours – to promoting literacy and education to the Delavan community via a welcoming, state-of-the-art library is part of what makes Delavan such a warm and welcoming place to live, work, and play.

An expanded building with modern features will encourage and celebrate the diversity, curiosity, and talents of the Delavan community. Besides the practical and technological benefits of an improved library, your support will help Aram Public Library:

Satisfy curiosity with lifelong learning opportunities;

Celebrate Delavan's diversity with programs and services that promote appreciation and understanding of our personal heritage as well as that of others in our community;

Nurture and maintain a culture of excellence by the library's talented staff, board members, and volunteers;

Foster innovation with access to new technology and strengthening digital literacy; and

Extend and deepen the library's community partnerships with individuals, public and nonprofit agencies, community groups, educators, and businesses.

You're Invited

This brief project summary is intended as a beginning, not an end. As a valued friend of the Aram Public Library, you are invited to share your questions, concerns and ideas about our plans.

Your feedback will play an important role in shaping our future and will be a valuable contribution to this project.

“Aram Public Library has been an integral historical building, in downtown Delavan for over 100 years. Expanding the library is vital for our patrons and to all the residents of our community.”

~John Boland
Trustee

Contact Us

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