



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact:

Miriam Meza, Aurora Public Library Communications Manager

meza@aurorapubliclibrary.org

630-264-4125

Aurora Public Library West Branch to stay in its current location

The Aurora Public Library (APL) Board of Directors voted 6 to 0 Tuesday night to keep West Branch at its current location. The vote came after library administrators made a formal recommendation to the board at its January meeting. This recommendation was based on information gathered over a year of concentrated study of West Branch, including, usage, benchmarking of other libraries, community input, and operating costs.

Library administration set goals in late 2017 intended to increase usage, improve visibility, add value, expand programming, and restore hours on the West Side. These goals were developed as a result of wanting to meet customer needs with limited resources, acknowledging customer desire for increased hours and programming, and seeing circulation statistics remain consistent after the reduction in hours in 2016.

APL considered several options, including renovation, new construction, and relocation to a rental space. Many hours were spent researching other library branches and exploring reconfiguration options for the current West Branch location. Possible locations for a new facility and relocation within the West side were explored, but eventually ruled out based on lack of funding as well as a determination that the available sites would not fulfill the library's goals.

As administration assessed options, community input was gathered through face-to-face listening sessions, an advisory group, and an online survey. The advisory team, made up of

representatives from each ward on the West Side, has met twice; it will continue to provide recommendations to library administration on the future of the branch. Themes that emerged from the community input include improving hours and programs as well as a desire for the library to remain in its current location.

Library administrators said that although their goals for West Branch remain the same, they have eliminated the possibility of moving and can begin developing a plan for the future of the branch at its current site. Here is a snapshot of West Branch in 2018:

- Circulation: 142,463
- Visitors: 88,309
- Program Attendance: 4,620

With community and staff input, plans for rearrangements of service points, plans to hire a manager for West Branch early this year, and plans to formulate a multi-year facility improvement plan for the entire library system can be expected. Executive Director Daisy Porter-Reynolds says, "The library administration is committed to improving and expanding library services on the West Side and will continue to explore ideas to reach that goal."

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