

The LWV of Appleton supports the current APL project. No surprise. Most people support the concept of the library. The LWV, however, supports the entire library project as an essential part of the downtown development. The League bases all of their governmental support on researched based positions, not opinions, and within the last five years, the League has done two separate studies on the public library and Appleton downtown development. What we have determined by this research is the need for supporting an environment that encourages employers to locate downtown, supporting businesses that serve downtown, supporting public/private partnerships, increasing housing options, promoting the use of mix-used buildings, promoting quality development and connecting the downtown to the Fox River, including going beyond the concept of downtown as just College Avenue.

So what does the current mixed-use library proposal do for Appleton? It meets most of the issues listed in our position. Issues that were determined again not by opinion, but by grass roots research done by members of the League. It increases housing options, supports new businesses, enhances the potential to increase tax revenue - tax revenue that will be used to fix roads, improve parks, increase police presence in our community, all of the things that the citizens of Appleton want for their community. The proposal works to connect the Fox River to the downtown, going beyond the concept of downtown as just College Avenue. The project proposes a modern library which is centrally located and an important part of the downtown. You see, it is not just the addition of a new library that makes it so important, it is the location that enhances its contributions to downtown.

I have heard people say that there is not enough parking and the streets are too congested. These issues either have been already addressed by the common council or are being answered in the current plan. There is a plan in place to reroute the streets in this area that cause congestion. The parking ramp is coming down no matter what else happens. US Venture plans to build an underground parking garage with hundreds of parking spaces, not all of which will be used by employees, especially on nights and weekends when social traffic is at the highest.

Why is all of this so important? A vibrant downtown will attract young professionals and young professionals will attract new businesses and will increase revenue in existing businesses. Young professionals bring young families which, in addition to increasing business, will enhance Appleton's reputation as a great place to raise your families. These families will want their public library to be a central part of their downtown.

My husband and I travel a lot and we see a lot of downtowns. What we have observed in our travels is the same as what the research indicates...a vibrant downtown is a sign of a thriving community and a neglected downtown is a sign of a dying community and a modern library in the heart of the downtown is an essential part of a vibrant downtown community.

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