

# Ballot Success

A Case Study  
with Riverside  
Public Library



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you'll  
receive...



A recording of  
this session

A survey link



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- ✓ Hire a NoveList expert to empower staff to tell your library's story, create effective marketing, and build readers' advisory skills.
- ✓ Training can be done remotely.

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# Welcome!



## Meet Our Presenters

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**Diane Silva**  
Assistant Dir., Riverside Public  
Library



**John Chrastka**  
Executive Dir., EveryLibrary



**Angela Hursh**  
Sr. Engagement Consultant,  
Novelist

# Riverside Public Library Ballot Initiative 2020



Presented by  
Diane Silva  
Assistant Director  
Riverside Public Library  
Riverside, IL



# Riverside Snapshot

- ▶ Located 10 miles west of downtown Chicago along the DesPlaines River
- ▶ Designed by Fredrick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux in 1869
- ▶ Considered one of the first planned communities in the US
- ▶ Village designated a National Historic Landmark in 1970
- ▶ Population ~8,900





# Library Snapshot

- ▶ The Library was built in 1931
- ▶ Historic Landmark #1 – a source of great pride
- ▶ After a 1985 referendum, the library more than doubled in size





# Library in 2018

- ▶ The addition focused on access to adult materials.
- ▶ Youth services had taken over most of lower level
- ▶ Minimal updates had been made since 1986





# Problem

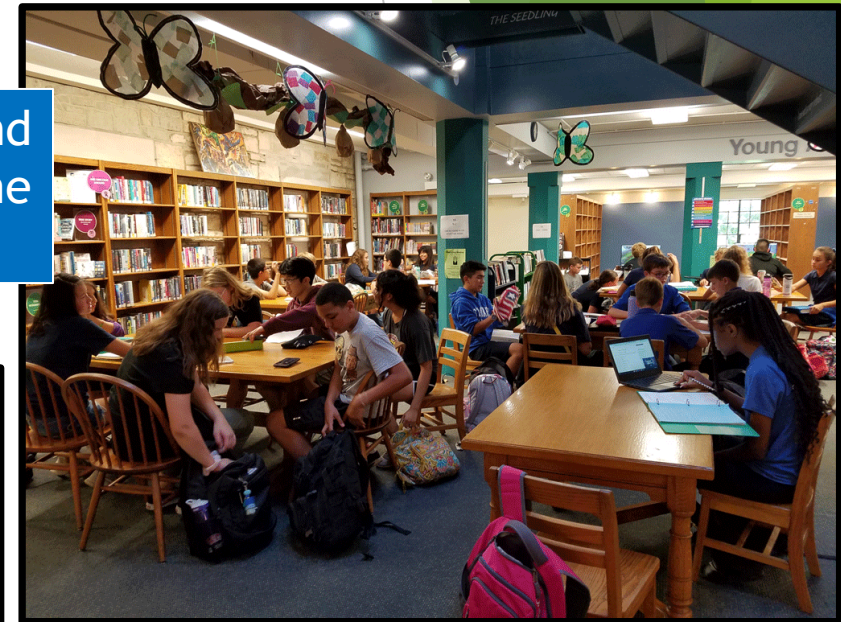
- ▶ Inefficient space and overcrowding
- ▶ Failing Infrastructure



Sound travels upstairs due to open concept.

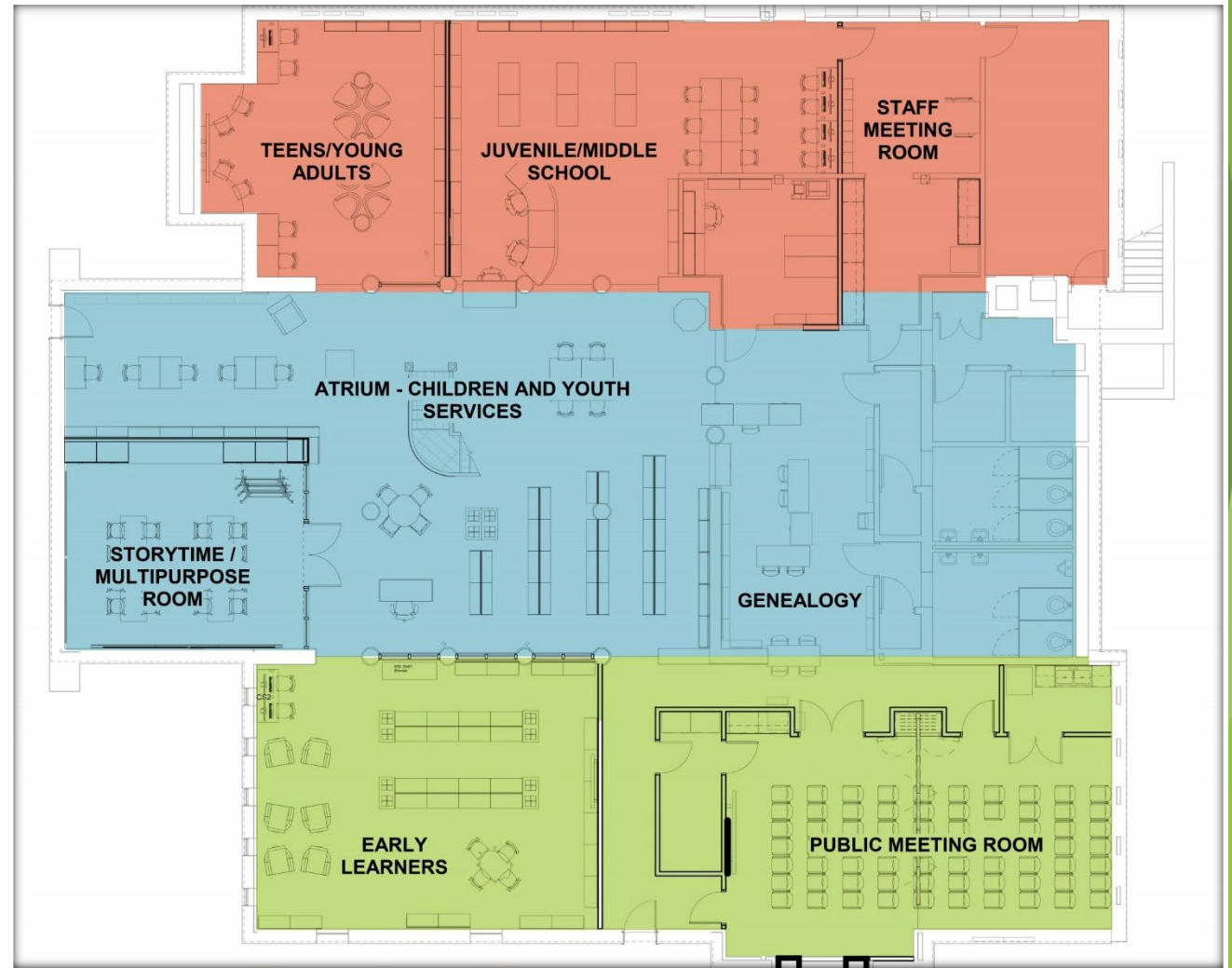


Young children and teens occupy same space.



# Solution

- ▶ A complete renovation of the lower level space
- ▶ Planning began in 2013
- ▶ Estimate price tag was 1.5 million





# Funding

## \$1.5 Million Project Cost

- Board initially opposed referendum
- Fundraising strategies 2016 - 2019:
  - Capital Campaign Mailing
  - Wine Tasting fundraisers
  - Grants and gifts from local groups
  - \$57,000 donation earmarked for teen space
  - Art sale donations
  - Transfer of existing gift funds
- \$217,000 raised
- Board moved ahead with \$160,000 Phase 1 Renovation

Fundraising at that rate would take 15 – 20 years to complete the project

2016 - 2019  
Fundraising Efforts



# Taking Action

First stop: Talk to John Chrastka at EveryLibrary

## TO DO LIST

- ▶ Develop Focused Message
  - ▶ Create information marketing materials
  - ▶ Identify and talk to community stakeholders
- ▶ Identify community volunteers to manage 'Yes' campaign

## NOT TO DO LIST

- ▶ No public time or funds for direct campaigning



# Develop Focused Message

- ▶ What is the problem?
- ▶ What is the solution?
- ▶ How do we get support?

# Creating Informational Materials With No Marketing Department

- ▶ LibraryAware was essential starting place
- ▶ Templates guided look and feel AND content considerations
  - ▶ What to cover and how much to write!
  - ▶ Hone your message
  - ▶ Unique Branding
- ▶ Widgets streamlined website and social media updates
- ▶ Posters, postcards, emails, widgets



# Marketing Sample Poster

RIVERSIDE PUBLIC LIBRARY

## REFERENDUM

Learn About the Library's Request



**VOTE**

▶ March 17, 2020

RIVERSIDE PUBLIC LIBRARY

## REFERENDUM

Learn About the Library's Request



**VOTE**

▶ March 17, 2020


**What is the library requesting?**  
On the March 17 ballot, the Riverside Public Library will ask residents to vote on a \$1.5 million bond issue to be used for a renovation of the lower library level.

**Why is the library requesting this?**  
The lower level of the Library is Riverside's unofficial youth center. More than 1,500 students and young children spend time in the library each month, leading to overcrowding and insufficient spaces for children of all ages to learn and grow. New age-appropriate youth rooms/areas will be built as part of the renovation, complete with improved technology, furniture, shelving and more. The renovation also calls for expanding the community room and making critical updates to existing infrastructure including lighting and electrical systems. These changes will impact not only Library patrons, but all residents who value the role the Library plays as a community hub.

**“If the referendum passes, our community will get a top-rate learning destination for the next generation.”**  
- Joan Wiaduck, Library Board President

| IF IT PASSES:  | IF IT FAILS:   |
|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reorganization of space to support modern library needs                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cease renovation plan  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creation of age-specific spaces  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continued inefficient use of space and after school overcrowding |
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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reduce noise throughout library  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reduced access to technologically appropriate meeting spaces     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Modernization of lower level infrastructure                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Current noise levels will remain                                 |

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



- Is this just a cosmetic change?**  
No, the plan goes well beyond the cosmetic to allow us to better meet the needs of a modern community hub. The new design creates a new teen room and a large youth program room. It expands and modernizes the Public Meeting Room and brings us more in line with 21st Century demands of libraries.
- What is the Library's budget?**  
The Library's current budget is \$1.15 million which covers staffing, materials, technology, programs, insurance, maintenance, etc. Leaking roof? Masonry issues? The Library saves money to cover these costs, just like you do. In the last 10 years, \$500,000 has gone to protect this historic building and all of it has been covered using existing funding.
- How much will it cost me?**  
The proposed referendum is for funds limited to the renovation plan. It is not a request for a permanent increase to the Library's operating budget. The bond issue will have a 15 year term only. The tax increase expected is \$36 per year for a \$300,000 home and \$76 for a \$600,000, or \$3 and \$6 per month respectively.

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▶ What and Why? Maximum Info, fewest words

# Marketing Sample

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**IF IT PASSES:**

- ✓ Reorganization of space to support modern library needs
- ✓ Creation of age-specific spaces
- ✓ Renovation of meeting space to improve community access and technology
- ✓ Reduce noise throughout library
- ✓ Modernization of lower level infrastructure

**IF IT FAILS:**

- ✗ Cease renovation plan
- ✗ Continued inefficient use of space and after school overcrowding
- ✗ Critical infrastructure improvements delayed or cancelled
- ✗ Reduced access to technologically appropriate meeting spaces
- ✗ Current noise levels will remain

- Real benefits and risks based on what influences voters (nobody cares about the carpet)
- Effective language – improve community access, **modernization**, inefficient, critical, reduced access

RIVERSIDE PUBLIC LIBRARY

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# Marketing Sample



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► Identified 3 questions we thought everyone would ask



# MARKETING VIDEOS



# Communication Lessons

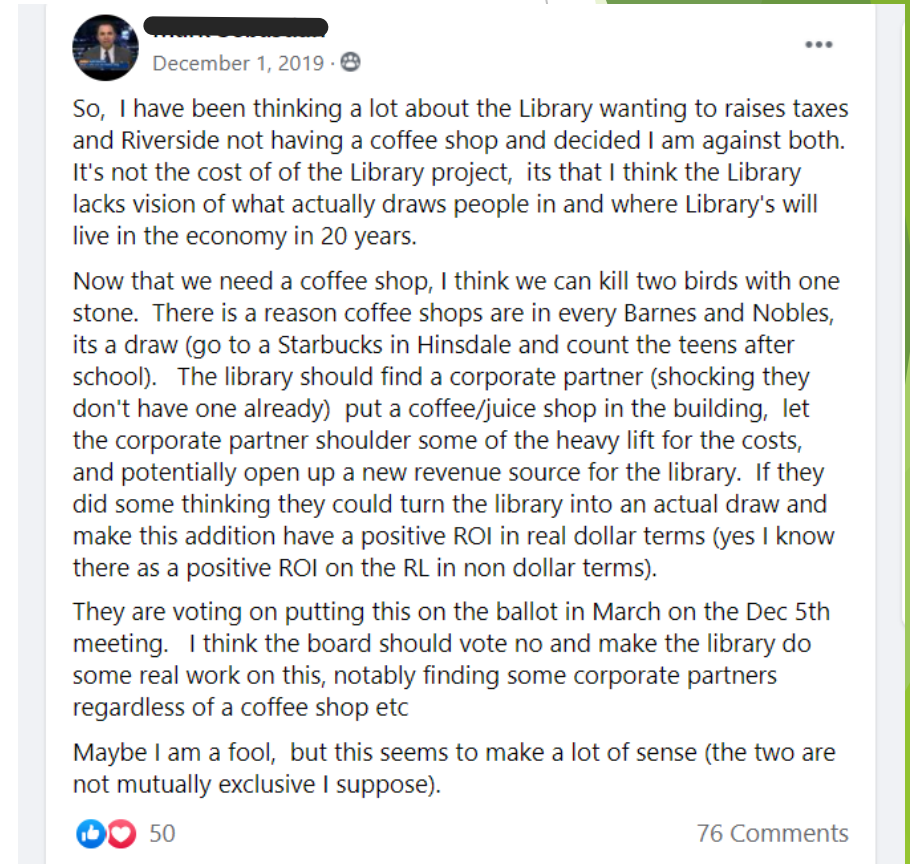
- ▶ Focused, transparent message
  - ▶ Why, what, how much does it cost
- ▶ Determine your central focus
  - ▶ We focused on pride – the community deserves MORE
- ▶ Outline immediate impact of No
- ▶ Don't campaign, but sell your vision
  - ▶ “The goal of the referendum is to...”
  - ▶ Vary elevator pitches to audience


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# Communication Lessons

- ▶ Bring in stakeholders
- ▶ Focus on what makes you unique
- ▶ Control your message
  - ▶ No social media debate
  - ▶ Social media blurs lines between campaigning and information
  - ▶ Let stakeholders and Yes campaign members carry the banner





 December 1, 2019 · 🌐

So, I have been thinking a lot about the Library wanting to raises taxes and Riverside not having a coffee shop and decided I am against both. It's not the cost of of the Library project, its that I think the Library lacks vision of what actually draws people in and where Library's will live in the economy in 20 years.

Now that we need a coffee shop, I think we can kill two birds with one stone. There is a reason coffee shops are in every Barnes and Nobles, its a draw (go to a Starbucks in Hinsdale and count the teens after school). The library should find a corporate partner (shocking they don't have one already) put a coffee/juice shop in the building, let the corporate partner shoulder some of the heavy lift for the costs, and potentially open up a new revenue source for the library. If they did some thinking they could turn the library into an actual draw and make this addition have a positive ROI in real dollar terms (yes I know there as a positive ROI on the RL in non dollar terms).

They are voting on putting this on the ballot in March on the Dec 5th meeting. I think the board should vote no and make the library do some real work on this, notably finding some corporate partners regardless of a coffee shop etc

Maybe I am a fool, but this seems to make a lot of sense (the two are not mutually exclusive I suppose).

  50

76 Comments



# Why LibraryAware?

- ▶ Existing Templates
  - ▶ Guided us in design and content
  - ▶ Forced us to think about a focused approach
- ▶ Widgets
  - ▶ Seamless distribution to social media and website
- ▶ Ease of use
  - ▶ Less time on look, more time on message

***YOU WON!***

All of Riverside will benefit from the lower level renovation!

Thank you to our YES committee members; Friends of the Library; and everyone who displayed a sign, talked to a neighbor, and/or voted 'YES'.

The Library Board and staff are humbled by your support and look forward to making the community's vision come to life.

**Thank You!**

RIVERSIDE PUBLIC LIBRARY

# Riverside Public Library 2021





library  
Aware



# Communications Frames for Success

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LibraryAware – March 2021

John Chrastka, Executive Director

EveryLibrary





## EveryLibrary | 501(c)4 Political Action Committee

- Sponsorships, Government Relations and CSR Funding
- Spend money on “issues” and direct lobbying



## EveryLibrary Institute - 501(c)3 Research and Policy Think Tank

- Grants, Philanthropy, Federal and State Programs, Charitable Funding
- Spend on education and outreach

# *How people listen*

Understanding your audiences

- Compassionately Engaged
  - Populations and people
- Pride of Place
  - Interesting, thriving, and prosperous
- Data-Driven
  - Data as gateway into impacts
- Concerned or Fearful
  - Focused on filling gaps

# *Two Possible Frames for Any Audience*

Honestly representing your  
successes or your failures

- Stories of Success that demonstrate your competencies.
- Stories of Failure that demonstrate your integrity.



# *This is the Plan...*

As the only expert in town about libraries, they are inclined to believe you.

Talk about Plan B and Plan A

- Plan A = what happens if you are properly funded
- Plan B = what happens if you are under-funded

Then please stick to it.

# *Whichever Story is True*

Who else cares that you are effective?

- During a tough budget, stories of competency and measures of success are budget justifications that should make your library eligible for funding.
- During a tough budget, it is very important to root a true story of failure in your mission, vision, and values because folks who share those values want to see failures corrected.

# *Spend Some Money*

Outreach, Advertising,  
Marketing, Awareness-Building.

- Marketing *tomorrow* to encourage use and uptake
- Marketing *yesterday* to tell the story of your impact
- Spend a few dollars and a few minutes every day to do it



## *Who Else Cares?*

A lot of other orgs, agencies, groups, businesses, and stakeholders care about your budget – if they only knew about it.

- Health and Safety
- Economic Development
- Workforce and Re-tooling
- Early Childhood
- Grade Level Reading
- COVID-Slide
- Housing and Food Security
- Safety and Violence

# *What Funders and Donors Want*

If you are not involved as a coalition partner already, now is the time.

- During the ongoing COVID crisis, policymakers, elected officials, administrators, voters, and funders want to see their money go to effective programs and competent staffing in ways that deliver results.
- They want to support programs and projects that can be measured and justified through data as well as stories.
- They are looking for the right way to apply limited funding resources - whether taxes or philanthropy or grants - to solve problems.



# Questions and Comments?

*Communications Frames for Success*

**John Chrastka, EveryLibrary**  
**@everylibrary | @mrchrastka**

# Up next: LibraryAware microtraining!

**YOUR PUBLIC LIBRARY NAME**  
**REFERENDUM**  
What ballot approval would mean.

**VOTE!**  
November 4

✓ With ballot approval, our library can:

- Add library hours**  
Cupcake ipsum dolor sit amet gummies cake. Gingerbread chocolate cake gummi bears.
- Library renovations**  
Cupcake ipsum dolor sit amet gummies cake. Gingerbread chocolate cake gummi bears.
- Enhance services**  
Cupcake ipsum dolor sit amet gummies cake. Gingerbread chocolate cake gummi bears.
- Upgrade computers**  
Cupcake ipsum dolor sit amet gummies cake. Gingerbread chocolate cake gummi bears.
- Increase access to materials & programs**  
Cupcake ipsum dolor sit amet gummies cake. Gingerbread chocolate cake gummi bears.

**Did you know?**

**Enter FAQ**  
Cupcake ipsum dolor sit amet gummies cake. Gingerbread chocolate cake gummi bears ice cream danish powder donut halvah sugar plum.

**Enter FAQ**  
Lemon drops caramels pie danish sesame snaps fruitcake sweet. Sugar plum croissant pudding. Chupa chups cake jelly-o.

**Referendum Question as it will appear on the ballot:**

Cake jujubes sugar plum jelly-o liquorice sugar plum wafer chupa chups. Sweet roll cupcake sweet biscuit ice cream jelly beans caramels lollipop gummies.

**Learn about the library's request**

**What is the library requesting?**  
On the November XX ballot, the Public Library will request \$XX danish powder donut halvah sugar plum.

**Why is the library requesting this?**  
The Public Library is requesting this gingerbread chocolate cake gummi bears ice cream danish powder donut halvah sugar plum.

**WE WON!**  
Thank you for your support!

**THANK YOU!**

Here's what your support will fund:

- Add Library Hours**
- Library Renovations**
- Enhance Services**
- Upgrade Computers**
- Increase Digital Resources**
- Increase Materials & Programs**

**Questions?**  
Visit {add your website} for more information.

Made with ❤️ in LibraryAware • libraryaware.com





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# Questions? THANK YOU!

Angela Hursh | Senior Engagement Consultant



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