



**DEFIANCE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM**

**READ, CONNECT, GROW**

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**FEASIBILITY STUDY 2024**



## FEASIBILITY OBJECTIVE

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By authorization of Defiance Public Library System (DPLS), philanthropic research (Study) was performed by The Hodge Group (THG) during May and June of 2024. The purpose of the Study was not just to determine how DPLS can best go about building a new learning/community center, but how it can do so in a way that leads to the long-term philanthropic sustainability of the Library.

A few questions THG specifically explored through the Study was:

1. What is the feasibility of raising philanthropy toward building the new space?
2. What volunteer resources exist for any capital campaign?
3. What should be the message to the community on why the annex is needed?

## CELEBRATING DPLS

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THG heard during our interviews that:

- DPLS is a trusted institution
- The library is seen as a community treasure
- This project is viewed as a need
- The staff, board, and associated organizations of DPLS (i.e., the Friends) are viewed positively
- Both the library board and the foundation board have a strong culture

## FEASIBILITY ELEMENTS

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During the first few weeks of our work, THG examined multiple documents to assess DPLS's internal readiness to embark on a capital campaign. Some of the items we examined included:

- Bylaws
- Strategic Plan
- Community Survey Data
- Donor Records
- Social Media
- Annual Report

The community survey data, in particular, revealed a want for this project. We also conducted multiple internal interviews that revealed the following:

- There is a common refrain from stakeholders that this project is needed
- There is a good relationship between DPLS and its associated groups (i.e., the Friends)
- The availability of the site is seen as a once in a generation opportunity, but it is time-sensitive.
- There is a 120-year tradition of philanthropy within DPLS



# CORE OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATION

Speaking to over thirty community leaders, it became clear that the concept of moving the children's library and developing new meeting/learning space was positively endorsed.

"Having additional programming space is a good investment."

"Taking the kids out of the basement is a good idea from both a learning and safety perspective."

"More community space is a good idea."

"The project is a need."

"We've outgrown this facility."

The project will be funded through a mix of private philanthropy and government.

Fundamentally, we believe a 6-month sprint is critical to the future of this project. These 6 months will be focused on obtaining gifts, and will also focus on message refinement and community education. The project will take longer than six months, but this will assure a strong beginning.

- Supporting tools for philanthropy need to be developed as part of a communications suite of materials.
- Specific talking points/FAQs will be developed.
- The next six months will focus on three committees. One will be focused on communications, one will be focused on fundraising, and a third will focus on non-philanthropic instruments and resources.



## WHY NOW?

- The library has a strong trusted reputation.
- The city has identified this as a need.
- The land is available for a limited period of time.
- A leadership gift is viable.
- Experienced executive leadership team.

*"It's very fortuitous that we're able to do this across the street."*

## THANK YOU

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Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of DPLS's continued plans. It is our confident assertion that the findings and recommendations presented herein address the critical growth needs of DPLS and we are honored to work with you to accomplish these goals.

It has been a privilege to be part of this important effort. Libraries are near and dear to THG's heart, and we want to thank you again for allowing us to come alongside you on this project.