

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: Moorhead Community Center & Regional Library

Q. What is being proposed?

A. The building of a new Community Center and Regional Library in Moorhead. The Moorhead City Council approved a fall 2022 general election ballot question asking citizens to consider a city sales tax to fund the project.

Q. Why is this being proposed now?

A. Moorhead residents have asked for more community center space and places to gather. Further, the current regional library is more than 60 years old and has a long list of repairs and needs to meet the standards of modern libraries. Moorhead city leaders asked the Minnesota Legislature to allow Moorhead to put a local option sales tax referendum in front of voters in November 2022 and the Legislature approved. The City Council then voted to place the sales tax question on the ballot.

Q. How will it be funded?

A. A local option sales tax allows Minnesota cities to put a sales tax on non-food and clothing items. The Legislature authorized the collection of \$31.59 million for financing and construction of a community center and regional library. (Cars and certain similar items are exempt from a local option sales tax.) The current sales tax in Moorhead is 7.375%, which includes a state sales tax rate of 6.875% and a 0.5% Clay County sales tax. Clay County's 0.5% sales tax is set to expire in 2038. By comparison, Fargo and West Fargo have 7.5% sales tax rate (which includes 5.0% state, 0.5% Cass County, and 2.0% city. In North Dakota, clothing is taxed.)

Q. How much of the sales tax paid in Moorhead comes from Moorhead residents and how much comes from out-of-town visitors?

A. An independent study done by the University of Minnesota Extension Service (using 2019 data) shows approximately 30 percent of sales tax paid in the City of Moorhead comes from out-of-town visitors, so Moorhead residents would pay for about 70 percent of a new community center and regional library.

Q. How much money would this sales tax raise each year and how much will each resident pay?

A. Projections show the City sales tax would generate about \$1.6 million per year. While spending varies among residents, the average Moorhead resident would pay just over \$2 a month (or \$25 a year) in sales tax to fund the project.

Q. Will this affect my tax if I buy a car in Moorhead?

A. Motor vehicles are covered by a separate tax and are not subject to a local sales tax. Motor vehicles include cars, motorcycles, motor homes, pickups, trailers, commercial and non-commercial trucks, semi/truck-tractors, tractors and vans.

Q. How will citizens provide input?

A. Citizen input is key to making the community center and regional library a reality. Citizens can attend public input sessions and share their ideas at cityofmoorhead.com/library.

Q. Where will the Library and Community Center be built; how will the site of the Regional Library and Community Center be selected?

A. A citizen-led Task Force appointed by Mayor Shelly Carlson considered a number of factors in site selection including overall location, access to public transit, connections to other amenities, parking, and other factors. After working through that process, the Task Force recommended a to-be-determined downtown location.

Q. What is the timeline?

A. Now that the City Council has approved bringing the local option sales tax to the public, the Task Force is seeking more citizen involvement and input between now and the election on November 8, 2022. Public input sessions will be held in April to gather input and ideas from residents.

Q. How will the new Community Center and Regional Library tie into other civic amenities?

A. With thoughtful planning, the new Community Center and Regional Library will blend in with other spaces to create opportunities for connection and collaboration with nearby amenities. It is hoped that this project will become a “cultural anchor” for the downtown.

Q. Why doesn't this include an athletic center or aquatic center?

A. The need to replace the 60-year-old public library is evident, as is the need for more community gathering spaces. That doesn't mean an athletic center or aquatic center isn't also needed in Moorhead, but that would be a different project.

Q. Will the envisioned science museum be part of this?

A. At this time, the science museum is not anticipated to be part of the new Community Center and Regional Library, but the possibility exists that it could still be part of a greater Moorhead downtown.