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The Troy Public Library will start adding new amenities in the autumn, such as flexible and collaborative spaces, improved technology, and play areas for babies and toddlers.

Photo provided by Emily Dumas

## Upgrades coming to Troy Library

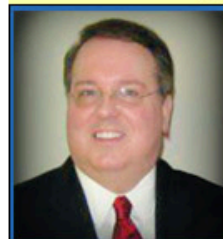
By: [Brendan Losinski](#) | Troy Times | Published March 15, 2022

TROY — Changes are coming to the Troy Public Library. Improved technology resources, play areas and a revitalized youth services area will soon be implemented in the building.

The project and its budget were approved unanimously by the Troy City Council at their regular meeting Feb. 28. The project will be fully funded by millage dollars approved by voters two years ago. The project was approved with a budget of \$2 million, with the first \$118,000 going toward the design phase.

“The youth area renovation is a major project funded by the 2020 millage. It was a promise during the runup to the millage,” said Library Director Emily Dumas. “The youth services room used to be the whole library after it was built in 1971. When the library was expanded in 1984, that then included the adult area and meeting room, and it hasn’t changed since then. We actually have a lot of the original furniture still there, and it looks very dated.”

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Dumas said there will be a variety of changes coming, adding that they had hoped to implement some earlier, but COVID-19 got in the way.

“One thing we kept hearing in 2019 was to start discussing a youth services renovation, and what they kept hearing from library users was that they wanted flexible and collaborative spaces, improved technology, play areas for babies and toddlers, and quiet spaces for reading and studying,” she said. “COVID sidetracked everything, so we are picking things back up with Integrated Design Solutions, and they put together a design for changes based on all of the public feedback we got.”

Keegan Sulecki, the head of youth services, was the driving force behind deciding which changes to make and said that they are very much needed to keep up with the level of quality the Troy Public Library has traditionally given its patrons.

“One of the things I saw since I began working here is that Troy is the busiest library I’ve had the privilege of working at,” said Sulecki. “People really take advantage of having this library in their community and they use it for several functions. It’s a place during winter weather for their kids to play and interact outside the home. So, one of the things we wanted was for it to have a good-sized play area for both babies and toddlers to play and crawl on the floor, and also a place for some more energetic, older children.”

Sulecki said that the additional room for storytime and other children’s activities was an important step for updating the library, particularly post-COVID.

“Our storytimes pre-COVID were very well attended,” she said. “Our current programming room is a long, skinny rectangle, so it was hard to use the whole room for programs like storytime. What we really wanted was a more opened-up programming space. This way we can include more families without cramming them into a small or uncomfortable space. Even as things get better from COVID, people are still more cognizant of how close and cramped together they can get, so we wanted to address that.”

Additional study space was also something Sulecki said was needed, particularly since they are updating several public areas inside the library as well.

“A lot of people, especially children or students working with tutors, come down there to study, so we wanted to add two new study rooms,” she said. “There’s also going to be a more relaxed and collaborative area for those who want to work together, so people can use the library in both ways.”

The timeline of the project is still being finalized, but work is expected to begin in the fall.

“It’s being funded fully through the millage funds. It looks like we will begin the work in the late fall,” said Dumas. “It’s less busy then, and construction is less expensive at that time of year. It is scheduled to take about seven months, but closures wouldn’t take place that whole time. We’ll be trying to move things around so service won’t be affected while the work is being done.”

She added that the work will not change the shape of the building, but it will bring about several internal differences.

“We’re not altering the building footprint, but the building floor plan will be rearranged,” Dumas said. “One of the most noticeable changes will be the current storytime room will be flipped to another part of the building to give more room for storytime. The entrance to the youth room will be moved so it’s easier to access from the front of the library. There will be a designated baby and toddler section, and a nursing room for moms as well.”

The library’s staff members said they expect these changes to help bring new opportunities and better services to what they already consider one of the best public libraries in Michigan.

“I am excited for people to see the plans and I think that people will get an updated, user-friendly youth services area that the kids in our city deserve,” remarked Dumas.

“It’s an exciting time for the Troy library,” added Sulecki. “The library is an evolving place, and we strive to continue to evolve and meet the needs of the Troy community both as a physical space and with our programs and activities. We are making these changes with the hope that in 10 years down the line, there is still room for flexibility as new needs arise.”