

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Stephanie Cargill, Marketing & Communications Director
Phone: 330.268.4425
Email: scargill@starklibrary.org

Stark Library to Relocate the Sandy Valley Branch

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE (Canton, Ohio) – As part of Stark Library's project, Re|imagine 2.0, the Stark Library Board of Trustees announces the relocation of the Sandy Valley Branch to Southgate Shopping Center in Canton South. This announcement comes after many months of research, data collection and analysis, and meetings with community leaders and patrons.

During this process, the Board and Administration worked with consultants from the Kent State University Cleveland Urban Design Collaborative (CUDC), an organization that works to improve the quality of life in Northeast Ohio through community-driven design processes. The CUDC is developing a master plan for all of Stark Library's facilities.

"As we analyzed the data of Library usage, community demographics, and traffic patterns in Stark County, it became clear to us that the current Library location on Route 800 in East Sparta is serving a very small portion of Stark County's population and that moving the Library branch further north would enable us to impact more lives with Library services," says Steve Pittman, President of the Stark Library Board of Trustees.

The Library Board and Administration evaluated several properties and locations in an effort to secure the best location to serve the greatest number of residents. The new Library location in Southgate Shopping Center is centrally located in Canton South, south of Route 30, with easy access for residents and commuters on a highly traveled road in a commercial hub.

While the Library location may be moving, Stark Library will continue providing Library services to the residents of East Sparta, Magnolia, and Waynesburg, as well as the Sandy Valley School District.

"We are committed to continue serving the patrons in the Sandy Valley area," reports Mary Ellen Icaza, CEO & Executive Director of Stark Library. "When the branch relocates, we plan to continue our robust outreach to the schools, provide regular programming in the Fry Family Park Visitor Center, increase our bookmobile visits to the community, as well as provide other Library services to the community.

The information we gleaned during the community listening sessions and from community feedback over the last several months validated what the data told us," states Icaza. "The Library services that the Sandy Valley patrons use most often are borrowing books and

materials, accessing WiFi, and using document services like printing and copying. We plan to continue to provide these services to the community, albeit in a non-traditional way."

"We are working closely with Stark Parks as we develop a new concept of Library service for residents of southern Stark County," states Chris Butler, Stark Library's Fiscal Officer and Facilities Director. "This concept, which we call 'Library Express,' will be located within five miles of the current Sandy Valley Branch.

The property will have Library lockers, where patrons can pick up items on hold from a secure locker at their convenience, 24/7 WiFi services, and a book drop for Library materials."

At the September Stark Library Board of Trustees meeting on September 25, 2023, the Board unanimously passed a resolution enabling the Library leadership to pursue this project.

"As a Board, it is our responsibility to be good stewards of the funds entrusted to us by taxpayers as we advance the mission of the Library," concludes Pittman. "We are confident that this decision will increase the Library's impact in Stark County and bring us closer to our vision of a thriving, literate, equitable community."

The Library plans to solidify the design of the Southgate Branch and begin construction this year, with the intent of relocating the branch in mid-2024.

###

ABOUT THE LIBRARY

Inviting. Informing. Transforming. At Stark Library, we invite everyone into a welcoming place, inform them about the resources that will help them grow, and then send them back out to transform the world.

One of the nine largest library systems in Ohio – and the county's oldest library – Stark Library serves the community through [10 locations](#), six mobile libraries, and a [24/7 digital branch](#).

A seven-time winner of the Library Journal's America's Star Libraries, Stark Library serves more than 240,000 residents. Each year the library presents programs for the community and provides publicly available computers and WiFi in each location.