

Quick Facts About Your Independent Shaker Library

Shaker Library is one of America's best library systems.

In 2016, Shaker Library was ranked in the top 2% of libraries its size nationally. Shaker Library's CLEVNET membership blends the cost savings and collaboration of regionalism with the accountability of local control.

Shaker residents use their library frequently and overwhelmingly say they think the library does a good job.

- Almost 4 out of 5 of survey respondents said they use Shaker Library annually.
- 51% said they use the library at least once a month.
- 77% are satisfied with the Shaker Library.
- 71% agreed the Library does a good job with its money.
- 73% strongly agreed a good library is important to Shaker's quality of life.
- 73% disagreed that the Internet and electronic books make libraries less important.

Shaker Library receives a tiny share of Shaker property tax revenue.

Shaker Library's 4.0 voted mills is just 2% of Shaker's total property tax millage.

Shaker Library plans to put a small millage increase on the May 2018 ballot, its first in over 20 years.

As a thoughtful steward of taxpayer dollars, Shaker Library has worked hard to minimize what it asks of taxpayers. The last time the library asked for an increase in millage was in 1997. Shaker Library's revenue is now the lowest it has been in 10 years. Since 2008, revenue from the state has decreased 19% and revenue from property taxes has declined 18%. In response, Shaker Library cut costs, including reducing staff 16%, rather than ask voters for more money.

In 2014, Shaker Library completed a comprehensive assessment that determined that its facilities require \$5.1 million in repairs and maintenance. The library held a series of public meetings, gathered feedback from residents, and worked with architects and engineers as part of an extensive study of seven possible solutions to the library's facilities challenges. Based on this study, the Board unanimously decided to renovate and update both facilities, which would require placing a levy on the ballot. Two-thirds of the funds generated by this levy would fund facilities upgrades. The remaining one-third would pay for operating expenses, including adding year-round Sunday hours. The cost to Shaker Heights property owners would be \$67 per \$100,000 of home value.

What is "inclusion"?

Recently, some have advocated turning over Shaker Library's buildings and operations to the Cuyahoga County Public Library (CCPL). This process, sometimes called "inclusion," means that CCPL would conduct library operations in Shaker in whatever way they determine works best for them.

Shaker Library conducted an in-depth study of "inclusion" in 2016.

Shaker Library's 2016 Facility Options Study included a formal written request for information from CCPL about how services might be provided to Shaker Heights under

“inclusion.” Shaker Library asked detailed questions about facilities, funding, and services to ensure its Board would have the information to decide if inclusion was the right option for Shaker. Shaker Library's Board President spoke with CCPL's Board President. CCPL did not wish for their staff to meet with Shaker Library staff to discuss these questions and would not provide written answers to them. However, CCPL representatives subsequently presented information to the Mayor's Financial Task Force and said they would need a letter of intent from Shaker Library requesting it be included in the CCPL system. Upon receiving this letter, CCPL said it would then perform the following due diligence:

- Conduct a forensic audit of Shaker Library's finances
- Conduct a facility and maintenance audit
- Undertake deed, title, and legal searches for property owned by Shaker Library
- Verify the process of changing the millage rate to CCPL's rate

To see the questions Shaker Library asked and a summary of the discussion, please visit the library's website: <https://shakerlibrary.org/category/library-facilities/>.

Shaker Library Board unanimously decided against a letter of intent requesting inclusion in the Cuyahoga County Public Library.

Under Ohio law there are no requirements preventing CCPL from working with Shaker Library on the question of inclusion. CCPL, however, required a letter of intent requesting Shaker Library's inclusion before discussing inclusion with Shaker Library. Shaker Library found this to be an impossible condition to meet: The Shaker Library Board could not develop the intention for inclusion without answers to its questions, but could not get those answers without expressing intent. Shaker Library chose not to deceive its community or CCPL about its intent just to get answers from CCPL.

What would “inclusion” mean for Shaker Heights?

- The Shaker Library Board of Trustees would be required to transfer all assets to CCPL and the Shaker Library would dissolve as an organization.
- After thoroughly studying CCPL's service model, Shaker Library concluded that comparable service in Shaker Heights would likely mean CCPL would operate one small library branch in Shaker.
- Inclusion would NOT reduce the number of taxing authorities in Shaker Heights. Both Shaker Library and CCPL can place tax levies on the ballot.
- Shaker residents would lose local control over what service is provided and how their library is funded. Currently, Shaker Library is accountable solely to Shaker Heights School District residents, and only those residents decide on the taxation level for the library. With inclusion, residents of 47 communities together decide how much library tax is paid in Shaker Heights.
- Taxation for library services in Shaker would NOT go away. The millage Shaker residents have approved for library services would be replaced by millage funding CCPL. In terms of the amount paid by property owners, the difference between these taxation levels is minimal.
- Shaker residents would lose the benefits of CLEVNET membership. The number of items available to library users in Shaker would be reduced by roughly two-thirds.