

An ever-increasing amount of patrons has already made building a new Hilliard branch of the Columbus Metropolitan Library an overdue need, according to the branch director.

Columbus Library officials announced March 4 they have reached agreement to purchase four acres of land on Cemetery Road for the new Hilliard branch. The land was purchased for \$610,000 from Mid-Ohio Development and Herbert J. Murphy Jr.

Anticipated to include about 20,000 square feet of space, the new facility will more than double the size of the current Hilliard library, branch director Grace Kendal told ThisWeek March 30.

Funding for the Hilliard land purchase has come from both state property taxes and from a 15-year, 2.2-mill local property tax passed in 1986, said Larry Allen, director of the Columbus Library's communications department.

The Hilliard branch was not originally included on the list of projects resulting from the '86 levy.

But the need that exists for expanded facilities in Hilliard is reflected by library statistics comparing February 1989 with February of this year, she said.

In February 1989, 18,518 items were circulated at the Hilliard branch. In 1993, the figure was 42,017. In 1989, the library received 12,127 user visits during the second month. This year, the library received 22,527 visits.

"I think those numbers reflect the growth the community has experienced," Kendal said.

Although no design has been made yet for the new facility, the increased space will allow the Hilliard library to offer additional services to its patrons, she said.

One of the most pressing problems to be solved with the new location will be parking, Kendal said. The new facility will have about 150 parking spaces, while the current library has less than 50.

"The library did investigate adding to the facility we have now before purchasing the land," she said. "We found that we just wouldn't have enough space, especially for the additional parking spaces we need."

In addition to increased parking, the new library will likely include a larger meeting room, a quiet study room, additional tables and a larger children's area, all needs for which library patrons have expressed a desire, Kendal said.

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"We can't serve everybody's needs. We're not meeting graduate students' needs, that's not our role," she said.

High school students have also been a small percentage of the patrons who use the library because it has not had a lot of the materials they need, she said.

"We expect that population to use the new facility."

Other groups of people are well served by the existing collection.

"For consumer information, enrichment, homework assignments, books to curl up with at the beach, we are going to be the primary library."