The Library building at 120 S. Last Chance Gulch has been an anchor of the community since it was built in 1976. It has seen many transformations over the years. The most recent renovation was fifteen years ago. Since that time, Libraries have evolved; the Helena community’s needs have changed; technology constantly advances. The Library’s 2018 Strategic Plan has guided us towards a re-imagining of the interior spaces of the Library. And the Strategic Plan tells us we need to make the building safe and accessible for all users. The Strategic Plan clearly states that our children and teen spaces need improvement and modernization.

All of these changes are being made with the Library’s increased demands on programs and community space in mind. The Library is a popular building, open to the public, and a community gathering space. The Library strives to be the community’s Living Room and we want to make it as comfortable for our guests as possible.

PROJECT info

BUDGET: Approximately $6 Million

FUNDING:
$4 Million Library Depreciation Reserves (Savings)
$2 Million TBD

ARCHITECT: Mosaic Architecture

GENERAL CONTRACTOR/CONSTRUCTION MANAGER: Dick Anderson Construction

TIME LINE: Approximately 8-10 Months, with demolition and inside construction beginning late November. Anticipated project completion: August 2020.
Meeting rooms will be improved and expanded; bathrooms will be relocated and modernized; Children’s and Teen spaces will be enlarged and relocated; collections will be redistributed with careful consideration; four new quiet study rooms will be created; and finally, the existing Circulation and Information service points will be united into one single-service desk. One of the highlights of the design is to bring the outdoors into the library, and to allow the outside to see just how full of life the Library is inside. Windows will provide that opportunity.

And to ensure another forty years of service to the community, construction will improve the building’s structural integrity, making it safer during a large earthquake. The building’s seismic capabilities will be modernized, just as the interior design will be modernized. The renovation will also improve the Library’s accessibility by making all public areas of the building, inside and out, accessible according to ADA guidelines. The parking lot will be reconfigured to improve ADA access and safety. Entryways will be improved and made accessible.

NEXT STEP: construction!

Construction will drastically improve the first floor of the Library. The main floor will be transformed during the phased construction process, to begin in late fall 2019.

The Library has no physical room to grow, so all renovations will be confined to our current space. During the staged construction process the Library will maintain as many services, programs, and hours as possible. Occasionally, those services and programs may be off-site. We will do our best to continue to serve the public during the process.