



September 27, 2018

Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber Statement of Support for Ypsilanti District Library Millage Proposal

The Ypsilanti District Library (YDL) has a millage proposal before voters in the city of Ypsilanti, Ypsilanti Township, and part of Superior Township on the November 6, 2018 ballot. The millage is a twelve year, 0.7 mills ask to provide funds for all district library purposes authorized by law. The A2Y Chamber is supportive of the proposal because of the benefits the YDL has and will provide for local businesses, potential employees, and the community.

The YDL has served the community for 150 years, providing a number of services to residents. The YDL currently receives about 90% of its revenues from local tax dollars. Approval of the operating millage will help the YDL to make needed building improvements and maintenance, along with ensuring construction of a permanent facility on Harris Rd. in Superior Township. This facility was a commitment made at the time Superior Township residents voted to join the YDL. In addition to these facility issues, passage of the millage will ensure increases in popular materials and upgrades to outdated computers and technology, along with preventing service cuts.

There are strong quality of life and educational arguments for funding the YDL, but in looking at this issue, the A2Y Chamber focused on the impact to businesses. The YDL allows businesses to host events and interviews at its facilities. These have been very helpful for employers and organizations such as the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), which has used YDL facilities for small business education programs. For job seekers, the YDL provides services which are vital for finding employment, particularly computer and internet access for work on resumes, training, and searching for jobs. The YDL also provides powerful databases with marketing, demographics, and other business information. These services are available for use by residents and local business owners, and the YDL has staff to provide assistance.

The A2Y Chamber also supports this millage request because Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township residents will still see lower library taxes even if it passes. Voters in these communities approved a building bond in 1998 that expires in 2018. It was levied at an average rate of 0.8154 annually. If the request for 0.7 mills is approved, the cost to property owners in Ypsilanti and Ypsilanti Township will be less than the expiring bond levy. Although this would be a new tax for Superior Township residents (they were not part of the building debt levy), library services there would be greatly expanded with the Harris Rd. facility near the McArthur Boulevard and Willow Run neighborhoods.

Passage of the proposed library millage will ensure the ongoing strength and operations of the YDL. This outcome will benefit the entire community and provide direct benefits for employers and future employees. For these reasons, the A2Y Chamber supports the November 6, 2018 Ypsilanti District Library millage proposal.