

The Helen Plum Library in Lombard became a “library district” effective January 1, 2010. As a result, the Library can now expand its service area beyond the borders of the Village of Lombard.

What is a library district?

Library districts are a form of public library. They are independent units of local government, and not part of the Village or County. They are only answerable to the taxpayers who live in and pay taxes in their district.

Library districts are governed by a seven member board of trustees, elected at large from among the residents in the district.

What’s special about being a library district?

Library Districts can, with voter approval, form their own boundaries, which may include all or part of the village or city in which they are located, and often can extend out into the rural or unincorporated areas.

Library Districts have sole authority and responsibility to hold elections, levy taxes, approve referendum questions, put a bond question on the ballot, and fund staff retirements.

Why did you convert to a library district?

The Village has always been responsible for covering the Library’s retirement costs, with money they collect in property taxes from the residents of Lombard. Recently, because of poor earnings from investments, the retirement fund has become less than 100% funded. In turn, the retirement fund is raising rates for the Village. It is not fair for the Village to dip into their own funds to cover these increased costs for Library staff, but the only way for the Library to assume this responsibility is to convert to a district.

How does this affect me?

There will be no changes whatsoever in eligibility for Library cards, collections, services, staffing, building or technology. From a user point of view, there is no difference between a “village library” and a “library district”. You may not realize that of the 28 public libraries in the DuPage Library System¹⁵ are library districts, including the Glenside Library (serving Glendale Heights), the Wood Dale Library, and the St. Charles Library.

Will my taxes go up?

The total property taxes of the Village and Library combined will not increase. However, starting in 2011, the Library will get a bigger share, and the Village less. This is because the Village is “transferring” about \$312,000 from Village taxes to Library District taxes, to continue payments for the retirement fund.

How can I join the library district?

If you live within the borders of the Village of Lombard, you do not need to do anything.

If you live adjacent to the library district borders, you have two choices.

See the Illinois Compiled Statutes, 75 ILCS 16, or talk to Library Director Bob Harris for more information.

1. An owner of private property. Any “owner of record” of private property, which is contiguous to the library district’s borders, may petition the Library Board of Trustees to join the district (75 ILCS 16/15-30). The Trustees may then adopt a resolution to annex that person’s property. For example, one single homeowner whose home is adjacent to the library district can petition to join the district. See Mr. Harris for a sample petition.

2. Annexation of a group of homes. A group of at least 100 voters living within an unserved area adjacent to the Library District may petition the court for a hearing on action to join the district (75 ILCS 16/15-55 through 16/15-60). The petitioner must publish notice of the hearing, and perform other duties as spelled out in the law. Once the borders are identified, a judge orders that the matter will be on the ballot, to be decided by the voters. It is then voted upon both by residents of the existing district, as well as each precinct in the new area. It has to pass by a simple majority of the voters within the existing district, and by a simple majority of the voters in any precinct seeking to be annexed.

Bob Harris, Director
Plum Library District
630-627-0316
bharris@plum.lib.il.us

January 1, 2010