

Central Library Proposal: Repurposing Education Square

Proposed Location

1111 “O” Street — the current Southeast Community College (SCC) Education Square building

- 80,000 square feet
- Includes attached, City-owned parking garage with 1,057 spaces
- Direct skywalk connections to downtown buildings
- Formerly known as Centrum Mall (opened in 1979)
- SCC has occupied portions of the building since 1995

Vision for a Modern Central Library

Lincoln’s new central library will be a dynamic, 21st-century space designed to support lifelong learning, creativity, and community connection.

Key Features Will Include:

- Flexible community spaces
- Interactive youth areas
- Makerspace & digital labs
- Rooftop auditorium
- Quiet reading room
- Coffee shop open beyond library hours

Cost-Effective Investment

- \$46 million total project cost
- Saves nearly 35% compared to building new (\$70M Pershing site estimate)
- Less than modernizing Bennett Martin (\$57M)

Funding Breakdown:

- \$23M municipal infrastructure bonds
- \$5.2M interfund loans
- \$18M in private contributions
- No general obligation bond required

Why Repurpose?

- Reduces cost while meeting long-term library goals
- Speeds up timeline compared to new construction
- Builds on Southeast Community College’s strong partnership with the City

Project Timeline

- June–July 2025: Public forums & community input
- August 2025: City Council consideration
- Fall 2026: Begin internal demolition and renovation

Background

The existing Bennett Martin Public Library, located at 136 S. 14th Street, was built in 1962 with additions in 1968 and 1978. It no longer meets modern library needs in terms of space, accessibility, and function.

Learn more: lincolnlibraries.org