



LIBRARY RENEWAL PROJECT FAQ

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*BUILDING OUR FUTURE
TOGETHER*

We're busier than ever, but our building can't keep up! We are simply out of space, and our infrastructure is facing catastrophic failure. Taking action will save taxpayer money tomorrow.



What is the Library Renewal Project?

The Library Renewal Project is an initiative to revitalize the Pearl River Public Library building located at 80 Franklin Avenue. We believe that now is the right time to be proactive with making sure our building complies with modern building codes, and have a plan in place to phase in new mechanical equipment and structural upgrades that will establish a library that the community deserves, rather than the more costly solution of attempting to repair and renovate the failing existing structure.

We created a Facility Master Plan to identify areas of the library building that need improvement. As you may recall, we began this process over 24 months ago as a result of catastrophic mechanical failure in the building. We retained the services of architecture firm Butler, Rowland, Mays to perform a full building study to evaluate every aspect of the facility, from the infrastructure to floor layout and more.

We also solicited feedback from you, our patrons, in the form of surveys, dot board exercises, focus groups, and town hall meetings. Your responses helped us to further identify areas where we can improve, for example more parking, a lack of quiet spaces, and lack of space in the children's room for collections and programming.

With all these data points, the architects have been hard at work creating a design plan for an upgraded library that can handle serving a 21st Century community.

Taking action now will not only save taxpayers money in the future, it will add lasting value to our community that will be evident in the lives of our patrons every day, for many years to come.

For homeowners, it will cost less than \$0.51 per day to enable us to better serve you.



Failing chiller unit dating back to 1961 - beyond repair.

Why does the renovation have to happen now?

We're glad to be of service. We love what we do, and our patrons remind us every day of just how vital we are to the future of this community. But our building can't take us to the future together. In fact, every day, our aging building is becoming less efficient to run and more expensive to repair. The situation has become unsustainable. Our renewal plan not only addresses all the challenges we've been facing, it also takes into account the changing role the library must fulfill as the educational, vocational and recreational needs of the community evolve with the times.

The air conditioning experienced catastrophic failure, necessitating equipment rentals as an emergency band aid solution. Not having working air conditioning would necessitate extensive service hour cuts and closings, is uncomfortable and dangerous for patrons and staff, and air conditioning will cost more to repair than replace- it's a big waste of your taxpayer money, highly inefficient and expensive energy wise, bad for the environment and your wallets. We should replace it, and save taxpayers money in the long run, as well as energy cost savings to run new more energy efficient equipment.

Our roof only has 2 years of useful life left. A big storm? Hurricane? We don't know if we'd make it through and want to make sure that in case of a disaster, the library remains a refuge for those displaced, with access to electrical outlets, bathrooms, etc. And upgrades to the HVAC necessitate using the roof for new equipment instead of our humongous second floor mechanical room. Remember the leak in the Adult Room? Computers and Pearl River Room out of service. Mold, health issues, damage, unusable collections, unsafe conditions for the staff and public. It is most cost effective to replace the HVAC and the roof simultaneously.

We also need to address the fact that the building is not ADA compliant. We serve our entire community: families and individuals young and old. We need to bring our building up to code, completely renovating the restrooms as well as the shelves, so that all our patrons have full use of the building.

What have you been doing to fix these issues?

The building actually hasn't had a renovation since 1991. That's a long time, and a lot has changed technologically. The electrical infrastructure is severely outdated. In order to stay current and relevant to meet 21st Century demands, we need to update the facility. The last time that we asked for money from you, our taxpayers, for a library bond was 34 years ago in 1986.

We're also responding to feedback from you, our patrons, who agree that the library is lacking these vital features: adequate parking, flexible meeting space, and upgraded technology. In order to meet the needs of the community, the library building must be renovated. Over 1,000 members of our community participated in a feedback survey and you told us what you thought were our biggest challenges, and we agree with you!

How much will this project cost? And what will it cost the taxpayer?

For less than a weekly Frappuccino, you can help support us in creating a library that is capable of providing the community with the full range of services it requires.

The annual household cost would be \$187 a year, or for many homeowners, .51 cents a day.* That's 15 dollars a month. The length of the term of the bond is 30 years.

The exact cost of our project totals \$23,822,769. The Library has earmarked \$322,769 toward the project, and \$23,500,000 is proposed in a bond referendum for voter approval. We'll also embark on a targeted fundraising campaign, including seeking donors for naming rights. The last time that we asked for a library bond was in 1986, over 34 years ago. We have secured a \$125,000 SAM grant to help fund our present and future building needs. Since I became director in 2018, we've received more grant money than ever before, but grant funds are not a sustainable or stable way to fully fund the project. We will continue to actively pursue each and every grant possible, including NYS Library Construction grants, money that is specifically set aside to fund public Library construction projects.

Why renovate and expand?

One of your Library Board's primary responsibilities is to keep aware on how libraries will be used in the future. The Library Board has seen numerous area libraries renovate and expand their facilities and offer more public space and learning activities for their communities.

The Library Board agrees with American Library Association President Sari Feldman's statement that: "Libraries now must balance those traditional uses with a new responsibility: embracing the role of a community center for residents to gather, learn, study, be innovative, take classes, hold meetings, acquire skills and participate in group activities."

How many more employees would the library need to hire?

Zero. The size of our staff will not grow as a result of this project. Through retirements etc., our staff has never been leaner.

It simply gives our patrons more room to enjoy the library.

If approved, when would construction begin?

We don't know. Construction would begin a year after any referendum vote.

How can I learn more about the project?

We invite you to join us for two public information sessions with presentations and live Q&A will take place on Tuesday 12/1/2020 at 7PM and Tuesday 12/15/20 at 7PM online and in the Library. If you need any additional information, visit our website www.pearlriverlibrary.org, call us at (845) 735-4084, or come in and visit. We have all the answers to your questions. Thank you for your past and continued support.

Why a Library Referendum vote?

In order to maintain a safe, effective, and efficient building, the library's facility analysis indicates that the cost of the essential upgrades, repairs, replacements, and rebuilding would cost over \$23.5 million. To deal with these replacements and repairs more effectively, they should be done together. Severe, drastic cuts to hours, materials, and services would have to be made in order to pay off this type of debt without a referendum.

For example, going into debt would require reducing the library's hours of operation and severely cutting the budget for new materials, databases, programs, classes, and other services. This drastically reduced service would last for twenty years until the loan is paid off and would not address all the major issues.

After much discussion and community input, it is the Library Board's conclusion that it would make sound financial sense to invest in the library building with a referendum investment in order to meet basic maintenance and infrastructure needs, to address safety concerns, and to improve access to collections and services.

What are the details of the renovation?

The bond vote consists of a rebuilding of our current 22,000 square foot library, with a reconfiguration of spaces and better use and expansion of the second floor to bring the total square footage to 38,000.

Who is asking for an expanded building?

The Library Board asked residents at two open houses this past fall and winter for input on features and the types of space which residents would like to see in an updated library. Over 1,000 of you responded! When the architects used this information to create a plan, they removed a portion of the building to more than triple the size of the parking lot for public use, and designed a second floor addition to make up for the lost square footage on the ground level. The Library Board and staff felt that this was the best use of the .75 of an acre lot.

Will the library still serve the community during the renovation? How?

There will be no interruption to library services during the renovation. Although we will have to move to a temporary location, we will continue to provide the great collection, services, and programs that you've grown accustomed to.

How long is the renovated and expanded library expected to adequately serve the public?

The renovated and expanded library is expected to last for another 50 years.

**Interest rates fluctuate on a daily basis. These figures are accurate as of October 7, 2020.*

Why do libraries generally cost more than other facilities to renovate and expand?

Libraries generally cost more than other facilities because:

- Libraries contain relatively few columns or load bearing walls, resulting in higher steel costs.
- Library buildings and floors require more load bearing capabilities to sustain the heavy weight of books and other materials.
- Libraries must sustain the traffic of hundreds of users a day; therefore, carpet, walls, and other finishes must be long lasting and durable.
- Heavier concentrations of data connections, power outlets, and telephone collections all contribute to higher electric costs.
- Lighting levels that allow books to be seen on the lowest shelf and do not contribute to glare or reflections on computer screens add costs to the lighting fixtures.
- Contractors on public sector projects are required by State law to be paid prevailing wage. This requirement leads to higher construction costs for public projects than one would expect to incur for a residential or private commercial project.

I don't use the library. How will I benefit?

The quality of the library, schools, parks, and Town services all influence the overall quality of life in a community and the market value of homes.

“A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert” - Andrew Carnegie

What is the renovated and expanded building proposed to look like?

Check out some floor plans and renderings on pages 6 and 7.

Will the repaired, renovated, and expanded library be energy efficient?

These energy efficient upgrades and replacements are simply what is required in a building in 2020 to comply with codes. The Library will pursue a number of available energy efficiency grants to offset the costs of these code-required improvements, including grants from local utilities and New York State Library Construction Grants.

Is the library eligible for any financial aid?

Yes. In the past, NYS Library Construction Grant money has been available. We'll also embark on a targeted fundraising campaign, including seeking donors for naming rights. Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee has secured us a \$125,000 SAM grant to help fund our present and future building needs.

- Adult Collections
- Children's Collections
- Teen / YA Collections
- Study Rooms
- Lobby / Gathering / Stairs
- Local History
- Staff Areas
- Program / Activity Rooms
- Friends Spaces
- Mech / Elect / Other
- Rest Rooms / Kitchens



