

To: The Mayor and Trustees, Village of Scarsdale
Subject: Scarsdale Public Library Expansion Project

Dear Mayor Mark & Village Trustees,

We are long time frequent users and supporters of the Scarsdale Public Library, and we are very pleased with the transformation of the library under the leadership of Library Director Beth Bermel. She has improved the quantity and quality of programming for children & adults that has increased the number of patrons visiting the library.

However just because it is working well does not mean that we need to launch into a major expansion of the library. We feel that the proposed \$19 million expansion project is unnecessary and extravagant at this point. We appreciate that the building could use some infrastructure and technology upgrades and maybe a modest addition of another meeting room and restroom facilities to meet current needs of the citizens. We would be willing to support such a modest expansion.

1. **Need:** The proposal seems to envision a variety of expanded uses for the library: a community center, an annex to the school, a Kinko style business center, a Coffee Shop, preschool, and a disaster relief center. There are alternatives to all of these in the village, and our current librarians probably do not have the special training required to staff these functions. Scarsdale has many coffee shops already, not to mention that all of us have beautiful homes where we can certainly share a cup of coffee and snacks with friends, and most of us residents have one or more country club memberships that provide dining facilities and meetings places. The High School will be constructing a huge student commons area and plenty of collaborative spaces for student. We don't need to duplicate those functions. Disaster relief should be a coordinated effort led by the Village. We should evaluate all the available existing space before considering something new without full consideration.
2. **Initial and ongoing cost:** We believe the current estimate is \$19 million, with \$12 million taxpayer funded. This does not include the impact of increased operating costs or potential for cost overruns. Nor is there a backup plan if private funds fail to materialize. Property taxes in Scarsdale have always been high but we are reaching a tipping point where they are approaching prohibitive levels that may start to affect property values. Let us not minimize other competing needs for taxpayer dollars – ongoing maintenance and upgrades to Village infrastructure; various options regarding the Greenacres school building (all expensive), etc. Towns like Greenburgh and Mamaroneck have a large commercial tax revenue base so their economics can't be compared to Scarsdale.
3. **Short and long term disruption:** a two year shut down is not an acceptable situation. The current plan does not address the potential change in traffic patterns in the neighborhood around the library, nor does it provide for any additional parking space if there is an increase in usage. For example, the eating and drinking area might attract many high school students who would like to purchase coffee or a meal at the library, and perhaps even park their cars there during school hours. Convenient easy access from the Post Road may also attract external traffic, diminishing its attractiveness to the community.

As we said before, we are big fans of the library and its leadership; however, we cannot support the current library proposal for the reasons stated. Thank you.

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