



Scituate Town Library Building Renovation Program

BACKGROUND: The current library, built in 1978, is 33 years old, and with the proper planning and attention it will meet community expectations well into the future. For many, a 33-year-old building might seem relatively young, but any building needs maintenance and updating. At this stage, one can expect to repair or replace roofs, windows, HVAC, and other elements of the infrastructure. Moreover, the library was built before the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and before the development of many of the technologies now standard in libraries. Finally, growth in library usage has begun to exceed the available capacity of the building as currently configured.

This beautiful brick building has served the town well, and for many years the original open and flexible design successfully adapted to rapidly changing technologies. The installation of networked computers for connection to the Old Colony Library Network, provision of public Internet access, online databases, WiFi, and the development of DVD, and also music and book CD collections have met a public demand and this has contributed to a rapid increase in building usage. In the past 10 years, circulation of materials has risen by 36%, to 309,115 items per year. Visits to the library have grown 59%, to 140,915. Attendance at children's programs grew from 1,957 for 87 programs to 10,522 for 251 programs, a stunning 438%. This tremendous growth has put even more strain on the aging and dated infrastructure.

SURVEYS: In preparation for writing long-range, five-year plans in 2005 and 2010, the Library Trustees conducted surveys to identify unmet user needs and identify infrastructure inadequacies. Survey respondents requested: noise abatement; space for larger collections of books, DVDs, audio books and CDs; more meeting rooms; quiet study areas; comfortable seating; more parking; and new restrooms.

EXISTING CONDITIONS REPORT: In 2007, the town contracted with CBI Associates to assess and identify current building needs. At the time, more than \$1 million of improvements were listed, including a new roof, refurbished restrooms, window replacement, etc. Currently, including the parking lot, there is at least \$1.5 million of identified improvements needed just to maintain the current building.

PUBLIC LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION GRANT: In 2010 a library construction grant round opened that would provide state funds for eligible projects. Knowing that there is at least a five-year gap between grant rounds, the Trustees felt obliged to explore this possible opportunity to seek outside aid for existing needs. They conducted a new survey, completed the required long-range plan and building program, and obtained funding for a feasibility study. The study, conducted by the architectural firm Johnson-Roberts, Associates, is based on the building program and the user survey responses. It conforms to accepted standards and provides sufficient flexible space for twenty years into the future.

The grant was submitted on January 26; Town Meeting approval of the feasibility study is required to complete the grant application process.



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THE FEASIBILITY STUDY: The feasibility study conducted by Johnson-Roberts, Associates considered the already identified \$1.5 million in improvements and the state-required projection of Scituate's library usage over the next 20 years. Based on their assessment, plans call for enlarging the library from 24,750 square feet to 33,710 square feet with a two story addition and significant improvements to the existing lower level. Renovations and expansion would address infrastructure improvements that are needed now, and also address crowding, noise levels, demand for meeting space, and security-related issues.

Approximately \$5 million of the projected \$12 million cost (43%) would be funded by the grant. Consequently, 43% of the \$1.5 million in previously identified improvements would be grant funded. Additionally, \$275,000 in private funding from the Library Trustees, the Library Foundation and The Friends of the Library has already been secured. A major fundraising campaign will be organized and additional grant monies will be sought. The remainder of the costs would be covered by a bond program.

The Building Program and Feasibility Study required for the Grant Application includes:

- A quiet area for reference, non-fiction and Internet PCs, including 3 quiet study rooms and sufficient study tables and comfortable chairs.
- A commons area, convenient to the entrance and circulation desk, for browsing new materials, fiction, large print books, audio books, DVDs, CDs and magazines with comfortable seating throughout.
- A larger children's room, with adjacent program/homework room, separated from the adult areas and near the meeting room.
- A separate teen area.
- ADA-compliant restrooms, doorways and elevator.
- Additional meeting rooms, including a training room, conference room and main meeting room, all accessible after library hours.
- State-of-the-art technology, including self check-out, PCs, wiring, WiFi, projectors and sound systems in the meeting rooms, etc.
- New, code-compliant stairway, lighting, electrical, and security systems.
- Updated wall and floor finishes and furnishing.
- Double the number of parking spaces for library users.
- High performance building strategy, including LEED certification, which dovetails with Scituate's recent adoption of the Stretch Energy Code. Efficient and sustainable features include: photovoltaic cells for generation of electricity, energy efficient lighting and mechanical systems, energy efficient windows, rain gardens and bioswales to manage and treat storm water, recycling receptacles, low flow toilets and faucets, etc.

Without the grant, the Town of Scituate will need, in the near future, to cover 100 percent of the costs of necessary infrastructure improvements. Delaying this process will inevitably incur greater costs, not only from inflation, but from potential damages from systems failures. With a successful grant application, this work can be accomplished with a mix of state aid, bond funding, and fundraising, and result in a renewed and expanded library that will serve all residents for generations to come.