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## **City of Highland Park Senior and Youth Services Relocation and Highland Park Public Library Expansion Frequently Asked Questions**

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The City of Highland Park (City) and the Highland Park Public Library (Library) are exploring a possible expansion of the Library to better meet community demand for space and services as well as improve parking and traffic flow. In addition, in an effort to provide the highest level of services and improve efficiencies, the City is also exploring the relocation of Senior Services and the City's Firehouse After School Club Youth Services program to an expanded library facility. In light of the aging infrastructure and space constraints at the current Senior and Youth Services buildings, the City established the Senior and Youth Services Advisory Groups in 2014 to discuss Senior and Youth operations and to provide feedback on opportunities to move the respective services to new facilities.

In 2016, the two properties immediately east of the Library located at 444 and 466 Laurel Avenue were purchased by the City of Highland Park. These adjacent properties would make a facility and/or parking expansion more feasible. The expanded facility would be known as the Community Campus. The City Council approved the residential real estate contract at the October 24, 2016 City Council meeting and closed on the properties in December, 2016 for a total of \$1.55 million.

An agreement with Williams Architects was approved by the City Council at the April 24, 2017 meeting. Williams Architects was selected following a comprehensive review of proposals by an eleven-panel committee consisting of City and Library representatives. The consultant will perform a formal needs assessment and provide architectural design and preliminary engineering.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **1) Why is the City evaluating the relocation of Youth and Senior Services?**

The current Senior Center located at 54 Laurel Avenue is a 9,500 square foot house built in 1928 which was converted into a Senior Center facility in 1976. The City's Senior Services offers over 900 various programs through the year to over 1,200 senior center members. The current Firehouse Youth Center is a 6,100 square foot former fire station built in 1940. The City's After School Club Youth Services program provides an afterschool activity center for students in grades 6-8. The Senior Center has very limited parking availability, requiring individuals attending events and classes to park and walk long distances. The Senior Center staff need to drive and pick up members from an offsite parking lot and transport them to the Senior Center due to the distance from available parking to the building. The Senior Center and Youth Center structures also present space constraints, non-functional spaces, inaccessibility, and escalating capital and maintenance costs for upkeep.

### **2) Why is the Library in need of expansion?**

The Library first opened in 1931 as a 20,000 square foot facility. An 8,000 square foot Youth Services addition was built to the west of the building in 1960. The Library last underwent an expansion in 1976 when a 19,000 square foot adult services section was built. The current Library facility lacks many modern features and also has operational constraints. Notably, the Library's Youth Services area is smaller compared to comparable community libraries and is not conducive to provide a full level of youth library services for the community. In order to better meet the needs of the community's youth, the Library would like to expand the Youth Department to provide more programming and educational spaces. An expansion of the Library's Youth Services area could possibly allow the relocation of the City's After School Club from the current Firehouse facility to the Library Youth Services facility.

The Library also significantly lacks collaborative meeting spaces. The Library also desires technological training facilities which are found in many modern libraries and thus proposes to include a new dedicated technology training room within an expanded facility.

In addition to the operational needs, the Library also faces parking shortages, accessibility issues, and is in need of modern restroom facilities, a fire sprinkler system throughout the building, and new electrical and lighting systems.

More information on the operational and functional space needs of the library can be found by clicking [here](#).

### **3) How many people use the Library?**

The Library hosts an average of 1,000 visitors per day. Youth participation is notably on a rise with a 23% increase in youth program attendance between 2003 (16,571 attendees) and 2013 (20,435 attendees). The youth story time attendance has also risen by 242% from 2003 (2,299 attendees) to 2013 (7,871 attendees). The Library receives meeting room requests from various community groups such as book groups, the League of Women Voters, Scout Troops, Military Family Support Groups, condo associations, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Sister Cities Foundation.

### **4) What are the advantages of the proposed Highland Park Public Library expansion?**

The expanded Library will offer ample parking, accessibility, up-to-date amenities and improved services to all residents in a central location. It would meet the needs of our Senior and Youth Services Programs while achieving community-wide efficiencies achieved through facility consolidation and cost savings. The end result would create a multigenerational community campus that supports the educational, social, and cultural needs of residents of all ages for many years to come.

### **5) What will happen to the current Senior Center and Youth Facility if services are relocated?**

The City will explore the possible sale of both properties which would alleviate the need for costly ongoing maintenance and capital investment, while creating revenue from the sale of property.

**6) How many square feet is the existing Library space?**

The existing Library space is 47,050 square feet.

**7) When did the Library begin evaluating the need for an expansion?**

FGM, a Chicago-based library design firm, was hired in 2006 to review the current library facility and future space needs. FGM's findings recommended an additional 25,000 square feet.

Engberg Anderson, a Milwaukee-based architectural firm, was hired in January 2008 to provide pre-construction services. The scope of the expansion project was reduced from 25,000 square feet to 10,000 square feet due to budgetary constraints. \$6 million was earmarked for the project by City Council in the summer of 2008. The 2008 10,000 square foot addition was to be located on the south and west sides of the library with the majority of the structure built on property owned by the library. A small portion of the building was to crossover to Park District land. The library received assurances from the Park District Board that use of the Park District land would be allowed. Designs for the addition were presented to the Design Review Commission in May of 2009. Soon thereafter, the project was suspended due to the nationwide economic downturn.

The City Council approved funding in 2012 to remodel the Adult Services wing and building entries. The project included the addition of four small group meeting rooms, but did not address the need for an expanded Youth Department and several other critical space needs.

In October 2014, Library staff presented the Case for Space to the Library Board. The presentation identified unaddressed critical space needs including a larger Youth Department, a dedicated youth programming room, technology training room, additional collaborative meeting spaces, appropriate space for the local history archives, additional parking, an ADA-compliant elevator, and more.

The Case for Space was presented to the City and reviewed in 2015. Funding for a Library expansion was included in the City's FY2016 budget with an anticipated construction timeline of 2020.

**8) When did the City begin evaluating relocation of the Firehouse Youth Services program and the Senior Center?**

The City is always looking for opportunities to share space, increase efficiencies and better serve the public. In 2013, the City conducted an evaluation of the Senior Center through a resident and member survey, along with a facilities assessment to ascertain capital improvement costs to meet general building maintenance standards. The results of that report identified a number of improvements necessary to be made to the building. A summary of the survey results can be found by clicking [here](#). The City has identified more than \$400,000 in capital investment necessary to continue operating the Senior Center facility. In addition to the capital needs of the Senior Center, the City has identified more than \$350,000 in capital needs to maintain the Firehouse Youth Center.

In 2014, the City formed the Youth and Senior Services Advisory Groups with the intent of evaluating the long range levels of services desired by the community as it pertains to either Youth or Senior Services. In light of increasing facility capital infrastructure and maintenance costs, the Advisory Groups with the City discussed opportunities to relocate the Firehouse Youth Services programming to a new facility and to relocate the Senior Center to an accessible and more functional facility.

The City evaluated a number of opportunities within the community for potential relocation of the Senior Center and the Youth Services After School Club programming to the following existing facilities however the locations were ultimately deemed unfeasible for varying reasons:

	<u>Property</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Sq. Ft</u>	<u>Zoning</u>	<u>Parking</u>
1	Fire Station #32, 692 Burton	City owned	10,456	RV	Lot & Street parking
2	JCYS, 800 Clavey Road	Privately owned	0	RV	Large Parking Lot
3	North Shore Sanitary District, 1210 Clavey Road	Owned by the Sanitary District	0	RV	Lot, with room to expand
4	Redeemer Lutheran Church, 1731 Deerfield Road	Owned by Church	189,846	CI	Ample parking with adjacent lot to Kelly Spaulding Funeral Home
5	Highland Park Country Club/Recreation Center, 1201 Park Avenue West	City owned, going to Park District,	4,086,218	RV	Lot, with room to expand
6	Greenburg Radiology Property, 1535 Park Avenue West	For Sale last listed at \$7,000,000.00	328,007	CI	Lot, with room to expand
7	Centennial Ice Arena, 3100 Trail Way	Park District Owned	n/a	RV	Lots, with room to expand
8	3500 Western Ave	For Lease \$2,000/month For Sale \$300,000	29,021	CI	Street parking, near train & parking lot
9	2625 Waukegan & Bloom	Vacant lot for sale	11,560	CI	

10	555 Vine Plaza, Vine & Green Bay	Partially vacant building	52,884	CV	Parking lot that can hold 150
11	NSSD 112 Childhood Center & Admin Offices, 1936 Green Bay Road	Owned by SD112	n/a	RI	Limited, would need to expand parking
12	Community House, 1991 Sheridan Road	City owned	n/a	n/a	Shared parking with TAC
13	Half Day Road properties	Privately owned			
14	Old Deerfield Road properties	Privately owned			
15	Central Road properties	Privately owned			
16	Former Hadassah House, 1710 First Street	Privately owned	7,000	CI	Some private parking in rear, street parking, a deck would need to be built off the existing Metra lot, or additional properties purchased

17	Lake County Health Department, 1840 Green Bay Road	City owned	8,523	RV	Ample parking shared with Karger and Firehouse
18	Ravinia School, 763 Dean	Possibly available after SD112 consolidation	22,696	RV	Lot & Street parking
19	Braeside School, 150 Pierce Road	Possibly available after SD112 consolidation	0	RV	Lot & Street parking
20	Edgewood School, 929 Edgewood	Possibly available after SD112 consolidation	110,336	RV	Lot & Street parking
21	Red Oak School, 530 Red Oak Lane	Possibly available after SD112 consolidation	0	RI	Lot & Street parking
22	Sherwood School, 1900 Stratford Road	Possibly available after SD112 consolidation	0	RI	Lot & Street parking
23	West Ridge Center, 636 Ridge Road	Depending on Park District Master Plan	0	RV	Lot & Street parking



24	Oak Terrace School, 240 Prairie Avenue	Possibly available after SD112 consolidation	9,304	RV	Lot & Street parking
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**9) Is there parking availability in the parking lot located at the northwest corner of St. Johns and Laurel Avenues during the day?**

Off-site parking usage surrounding the Library will be analyzed by the City as part of the needs assessment project.

**PROPERTY ACQUISITION**

**10)When was the acquisition of the Laurel properties considered by the City Council publicly?**

The properties located at 444 and 466 Laurel Avenue were listed for sale in approximately the beginning of March, 2016. In light of the Library’s interest in expansion of the Library based on the Case for Space analysis of the existing facility, the City began negotiations with the property owners of the subject properties in the first quarter, 2016 to negotiate a possible purchase of the properties with the intent of exploring a Library expansion with increased parking capacity and to also evaluate the possibility of relocating Senior and the City’s Youth Services programs to an expanded Library facility. The purchase of the two properties make a facility or parking expansion project more feasible.

The City Council approved the residential real estate contract for the acquisition of the subject properties at the October 24, 2016 City Council regular meeting. The staff report from the agenda item can be found by clicking [here](#). The City closed on the properties in December, 2016.

**11)What are the terms of the real estate contract for the Laurel properties which the City purchased?**

The Residential Real Estate Contract can be found in PDF format by clicking [here](#). The purchase price is \$1,550,000 and reflects the \$900,000 for the sale of 444 Laurel and \$650,000 for 466 Laurel.

**12)Has the Park District agreed to allow use of their land located west or south of the Library?**

The Executive Director of the Park District of Highland Park indicated that the City and Library could explore the possible use of their land for expansion purposes. The Park District has not formally authorized the use of their land by the City or Library. If expansion to the west or south is deemed appropriate, the City and Library would seek formal approval from their respective corporate authorities.

**13)What other sites were considered for Senior Services?**

The City explored a number of locations for Senior Services including the Highland Park Country Club and B’Nai Torah, a private development that was for sale. Given the numerous amenities at the Library used by the City’s senior population and the positive feedback received from seniors regarding the possible relocation of Senior Services to a new facility adjoined to the Library, the City and Library chose to include the possible relocation of Senior and Youth Services in the library expansion project. For more information, please see the answer to previous responses within this Q&A document.

**ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING**

**14)Will the expansion match the look and feel of the current Highland Park Public Library facility?**

Yes. The expansion will complement the current design of the Highland Park Public Library.

**15) Will there be a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) requirement on this project?**

No, there will not be a LEED requirement for this project, although environmental friendly design and construction elements will be encouraged as part of the planning process.

**16) What services will Williams Architects be performing as part of their professional services agreement with the City?**

The City Council approved a professional services agreement with Williams Architects at the April 24, 2017 City Council meeting. Williams Architects will evaluate the current operations of the Library, Senior Division and Youth Services Division, and assess new building needs and shared space opportunities. As part of the needs assessment, they will gather public input on the project through a variety of public engagement meetings. In addition, they will prepare preliminary plans and options for the expansion of the Library and inclusion of Senior and Youth Services, as well as expand on-site parking to accommodate all uses. They will also conduct preliminary engineering as part of the assessment and submit scenario-space designs and architectural design alternatives. The City refers to this work being performed by Williams Architects as Phase I of the Library expansion and Youth and Senior Services relocation project. Phase I will take approximately six to nine months to complete. If supported, plan and design would take place in year 2019 and construction in year 2020.

The agreement approved by the City Council at the April 24, 2017 meeting can be found by clicking [here](#). The proposal from Williams Architects can be found by clicking [here](#).

**17) How big will the Library be and how much space will be allocated to Senior and Youth Services?**

The needs analysis being performed by Williams Architects will address space needs for the Library, Senior Services, and Youth Services. This information will be contained in the final deliverables presented to the City and Library at the conclusion of Phase I.

**18)How will the rezoning process proceed on the 444 and/or 466 Laurel properties should the project move forward?**

Should the project move forward with an addition to the Library and increased parking, the City would proceed through the planning and zoning process pursuant to the City's Municipal Code. The project would proceed to the City's Plan & Design Commission process for planning and zoning consideration. The properties would be considered to be rezoned to Public Activity (PA). The application would require a workshop and public hearing. As part of a public hearing, notification is required to be mailed to property owners within 400' of the subject property. At public hearings, members of the public are allowed to provide comments on the application being considered. Upon closing the public hearing, the Commission will consider all the information presented along with public comments and issue findings of fact and a recommendation to the City Council. The matter will then proceed to the City Council for final consideration and approval.

**19)Is the City looking to find efficiencies within the existing building footprint as opposed to expanding?**

In light of the need for additional space to facilitate the many functions identified in the Library's Case for Space, the City and Library are pursuing the project as a possible expansion. The needs assessment will identify if increased efficiencies can be gained within the existing footprint of the Library; the Library, Senior and Youth Centers present operational and accessibility challenges that would be addressed through an expanded Library facility, relocated Youth Center into Library's Youth Services Department, and an adjoining Senior Center facility with dedicated as well as shared space with the Library.

**20)Why is the City conducting a needs analysis and obtaining preliminary drawings without having zoning approval first?**

Typically, applications to rezone a property proceed after a plan has been developed for the use of that property. The City is conducting a needs assessment in order for Williams Architects to prepare preliminary drawings of a possible expansion project based on the results of the needs assessment and taking into account community feedback. Should the City move forward with an application to rezone the properties at 444 and 466 Laurel Avenue, the application would include the preliminary plans in order

for the Plan and Design Commission to have plan and usage information to consider the application. Without plans to establish a nexus between the proposed use of the property and the request for rezoning, it would be difficult for the Zoning Board of Appeals to make a zoning recommendation and for the City Council to ultimately consider any zoning changes.

**21)What parameters were given to Williams Architects to help guide their needs assessment and preliminary plan preparation?**

Williams Architects is contracted to evaluate the existing conditions and needs of the Library, Firehouse Youth Center, and the Senior Center, and to take into account staff and public feedback in order to prepare a needs assessment report. That report will help with the creation of preliminary drawings for the possible expansion. Williams Architects is assessing the Park District owned land to the west and south, and the City owned Laurel properties to the east to ascertain what land and in which direction any expansions or parking additions can be made. Usage parameters are being established through the needs analysis process which will identify those functions for the Library, Youth Center, and Senior Center which would best serve the community and be feasible to construct based on available funding for any possible building expansion.

**CONSTRUCTION**

**22)When will the potential Library expansion commence?**

It is anticipated that the planned development would proceed through the City's Plan & Design Commission process in 2019 with construction anticipated in 2020.

**23)Will Library services be disrupted?**

The Highland Park Public Library would continue to be open to serve the public during the construction and transition.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **24)What is the estimated cost of the new facility?**

The potential project is preliminary and in an exploration phase. The City will provide an estimate when planning and design work is complete for the building addition. The City will issue a Request for Proposal for professional architectural and engineering services for design and constructions.

### **25)Where will funding come from for a possible Library expansion?**

The City and Library will share in the cost of the construction. An intergovernmental agreement between the two parties will be developed which determines a proportional and reasonable cost allocation between the Library and the City. The City would include the proposed development in its Capital Improvement Plan.

### **26)What is the total financial impact of the professional services agreement with Williams Architects for the needs assessment and engineering study?**

The financial impact of the needs assessment and the engineering study is \$52,500 and is being funded by the Library.

### **27)Why is construction contemplated in 2020?**

Fiscal stability is a core priority of the City. As such, the City prudently plans its capital financing by annually preparing a 5-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget. The CIP allows the City to plan ahead for major citywide capital infrastructure projects. The CIP budget is reviewed annually for financial viability and need. The anticipated construction year and budget allocation may change based on financial conditions in light of the City's planned CIP projects as well as other operating expenses.

## **COMMUNITY FEEDBACK**

### **28)Will the public have input into this project?**

Absolutely. Public feedback is critical. The City and Library held three neighborhood meetings in the first quarter of 2017 in order to share information about the proposed project and invite preliminary feedback from neighboring property owners. Notification

of these neighbor meetings was issued to property owners within 400' of the subject site. This is the parameter that is used for all public hearings held within the City.

As part of the needs assessment being conducted by Williams Architects, the City and Library will be coordinating six community engagement meetings to solicit further input and feedback on Senior and Youth Services and Library operational and space needs related to the expansion project. Information about these meetings will be communicated via the Highlander, social media, e-news, media releases and direct mail to neighboring property owners. Individuals interested in this project can also request to be added to an email group that will receive regular updates about this project.

Six community engagement meetings will be held at City Hall in the Pre-Session Conference Room, 1707 St. Johns Avenue. The meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Wednesday, June 21, 8:30 AM
- Wednesday, June 28, 7:00 PM
- Tuesday, July 11, 3:00 PM
- Thursday, July 13, 8:30 AM
- Monday, July 17, 7:00 PM
- Thursday, August 3, 3:00 PM

Formally, the project will advance through the City's plan and development process that will include workshops before the Plan & Design Commission and a public hearing.

**29)What will be the format of the community engagement meetings?**

The community engagement meetings will be an open-house format whereby attendees may provide feedback regarding services and programs as well as facility use now and in the future. Each of the community engagement meetings will be the exact same format with the exact same information provided to attendees as there is a large segment of the community with an interest in providing feedback on the possible Library expansion and Senior and Youth Services relocation.

**30)Why is the online community engagement survey only open for a short period of time?**

The community engagement survey is available July 1 through July 31 on the City's website at [www.cityhpil.com/communitycampus](http://www.cityhpil.com/communitycampus). All feedback received will be compiled and presented to the City Council in August 2017 at a Committee of the Whole meeting. If it is determined that additional time is needed for the online survey, the City may extend the response period.

**31)Who can I contact about this project?**

If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback, please contact the City Manager's Office at 847-926-1000 or email [cityhp@cityhpil.com](mailto:cityhp@cityhpil.com).

**32)How can I stay informed on the City's next steps in preparing for a possible expansion?**

Regular updates will be posted on the City's web site at [www.cityhpil.com/communitycampus](http://www.cityhpil.com/communitycampus). You may also send an email to [cityhp@cityhpil.com](mailto:cityhp@cityhpil.com) or call the City Manager's Office at 847-926-1000 and request to be added to the project email distribution list. The City will send update emails related to the project to those individuals who request to be included on the project distribution list.

Contact the City Manager's Office to be added to an email group that will receive regular updates about this project. Please call 847-926-1000 or email [cityhp@cityhpil.com](mailto:cityhp@cityhpil.com).