

Norwell Public Library Building Project
Frequently Asked Questions
Updated December 3, 2017

Why do we need a new library?

The current library building, now over 40 years old and with much of its infrastructure past its useful life, is one of the smallest library buildings in the state in Norwell's population group. Simply put, we have outgrown this space and it is no longer adequate to meet the needs of the community or to provide the resources of a 21st century public library. Building issues include structural problems that require a complete upgrade to the lateral bracing, a lack of accessibility, the need to replace original rooftop mechanical units and the need to remove asbestos. The building would also require upgrades for the electrical and plumbing systems to meet current codes, along with a roof repair and replacement of the insulation.

Who uses the library these days with so much information available online?

Lots of people do! Consider the following:

"Even in this online age, more people visit their public library each year in Massachusetts than attend Patriots, Celtics, Bruins and Red Sox games combined."

- *Building Hope*, Celeste Bruno, 2009

"We're sometimes asked whether libraries are still necessary in this digital age," said MBLC Chair Mary Ann Cluggish. "The answer is an overwhelming 'yes'. Libraries are busier than ever assisting residents with job searches or business start-ups, teaching residents to use new technology or simply providing the only free space where everyone in the community can continue their education."

- MBLC News Release, July 13, 2017

Norwell Public Library Use in FY17:

4,700 Norwell residents had active library cards, averaging over 1 card per household

120,000 items, including books, movies, music, magazines and more, were borrowed

There were 70,000 in-person library visits, averaging 25 visits per hour

The library held 300 programs, including programs for children, teens, and adults

6,000 attendees enjoyed library programs such as author talks, story times, jazz concerts, STEM workshops, paint nights, genealogy series, independent films, ...

The meeting room was used 400 times by the library and many community groups

What is the proposed plan?

This is tomorrow's library! The proposed plan is a new construction, 22,300 gross square foot, one story building. The new, larger, energy efficient design will provide more space, not only for an outstanding collection, but for PEOPLE. Highlights include:

- Meeting space that can be used after hours.
- Small meeting/study rooms
- A variety of seating & study areas
- Welcoming teen & children's rooms
- Flexible design to accommodate changing use of space
- Technology Learning & Resource Center including Makerspace Lab
- Community Gathering Space
- Center for Lifelong Learning

What is the proposed design based on?

The basis for the design is the Library Building Program, which is a space needs study that serves as a set of instructions to the architect. To develop the Building Program, the library director worked with a consultant, trustees, staff, and the community to determine the space needs of a new library. The final 64 page document was then submitted to the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners as one of the requirements to apply for a state construction grant. In order to be eligible for a grant, the proposed design must be based on the space needs identified in the Building Program.

Then the Library Project Committee worked for a year on planning and design. They hired and worked with an Owner's Project Manager and licensed Architect to develop the best possible design solution for the town and to complete the steps required for a construction grant application. The Committee considered renovation/addition and new construction options at length and ultimately concluded that a new building, based on the space needs identified in the Building Program, was the best choice and most cost effective solution for the town.

How much will it cost and how will it be paid for?

Total estimated project cost:	\$15.4 million
Less construction grant:	- 6.4 million (42% of project cost)
Less library trust fund:	- 0.3 million
<u>Less feasibility study (paid)</u>	<u>- 0.1 million</u>
Town investment	\$ 8.6 million

In July, 2017, Norwell was 1 of 9 out of 33 applicants from across the state to be awarded a provisional construction grant. The remaining 24 communities are on a waiting list to receive grants as funds become available. Norwell's \$6.4 million construction grant would cover 42% of project costs. A library trust fund and feasibility study expenses already paid further reduce the balance by \$0.4 million. Contingent on

local funding approval, the town would pay the \$8.6 million balance with a 20 year bond. A capital campaign is planned with a fundraising goal of \$1 million, which has the potential to reduce the \$8.6 million cost to the town.

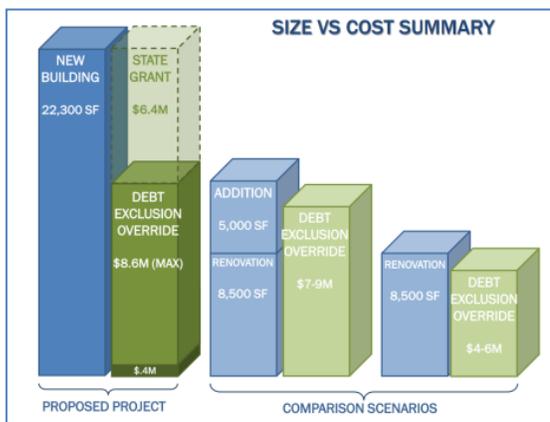
The estimated average cost of the 20 year bond for a home assessed at \$600,000 would be \$153/year. To calculate the cost to you based on the assessed value of your property, go to the Tax Rate Impact Calculator on the town’s website.

<https://www.townofnorwell.net/home/news/tax-rate-impact-calculator-proposed-library>

Why not renovate and build a small addition or just fix up the current building?

The Library Project Committee consulted an independent cost estimator to determine the likely costs of these scenarios should the town decide not to fund the proposed project. Either option would likely cost the town almost or as much as the proposed project and result in little to no improvement in library services.

The only project eligible for the \$6.4 million grant is the proposed new library. This is the design approved at Annual Town Meeting 2017 and submitted in Norwell’s grant application. An independent cost estimate for a renovation and small addition (5,000 square feet) is \$7-9 million. Since it would not be eligible for the grant, the town would pay the full cost. Library service improvements would be limited to an expanded children’s room. Even a renovation of the existing building is estimated to cost roughly \$5 million. Again, it would not be eligible for the grant so the town would pay the full cost and this would provide no library service improvements. In fact, it would result in a loss of usable service space after addressing, accessibility, technology, storage, and other needs.



	NEW CONSTRUCTION (PROPOSED PROJECT)	RENOVATION + 5,000 SF	RENOVATION ONLY
SIZE	22,300 GSF	13,500 GSF	8,500 GSF
ESTIMATED TOTAL COST	\$15.4 M	\$7-9 M	\$4-6 M
ELIGIBLE FOR STATE GRANT	YES	NO	NO
ESTIMATED TOWN CONTRIBUTION	\$8.6 M	\$7-9 M	\$4-6 M
COMPLIANCE WITH BUILDING CODES	YES	YES	YES
EXPANDED CHILDREN'S ROOM	YES	YES	NO
ADDITIONAL PARKING	YES	NO	NO
DEDICATED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS	YES	NO	NO
TECH LAB (EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING)	YES	NO	NO
COMMUNITY ROOM (AFTER HOURS ACCESS)	YES	NO	NO
SMALL MEETING ROOMS	YES (4)	NO	NO
LOCAL HISTORY ROOMS	YES	NO	NO
SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS (GENERAL)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ADDRESSES IDENTIFIED LIBRARY SERVICE NEEDS, BASED ON A 20 YEAR PROJECTION DEDICATED & FLEXIBLE SPACE FOR CHILDREN, TEENS, ADULTS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIMITED SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS EXPANDED CHILDREN'S ROOM ACCESSIBILITY COMPLIANCE, DATA ROOM/TECHNOLOGY, LOBBY, STORAGE, RESTROOMS, ... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NO SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS REDUCED SIZE OF PATRON SERVICE AREAS DUE TO SPACE NEEDED FOR COMPLIANCE, DATA ROOM, STORAGE, ...

Would operating costs increase in a new library?

An increase of 2.5 to 3 FTEs (full-time equivalents) would likely be needed to staff the larger new library. These additional part-time, non-benefited positions would increase the library’s annual operating budget by about \$100,000 or 15%. Utility (gas and electric) costs are also likely to increase by 2 to 3 times the \$22,500 currently budgeted due to the larger building size. But the new building, while larger, will be energy

efficient, which will help to control costs. Overall, the library's annual operating budget accounts for just over 1% of the town's total budget. Modest increases in the library's operating costs will not significantly impact the town's annual budget.

Where will the new library be built?

The new library would be built at 64 South Street, which is the site of the current library. After an extensive study of several sites, it was chosen as the best site for a new library. The Board of Selectmen, Library/Town Hall Study Committee, and the NPL Board of Trustees all voted in favor of 64 South Street as the preferred site for a new library. It offers a beautiful wooded setting, close proximity to Norwell High School and Norwell Middle School, and easy access to main roads.

Would the library remain open during construction?

Yes, the library would move to a temporary location and continue to operate during construction. The temporary location is to be determined.

Will there be more parking?

Yes. The parking plan includes 65 parking spaces, which will more than double available parking.

How long will it take to complete construction of a new library?

Contingent upon approval of local funding by January 12, 2018, a new library could be completed by mid 2020.

What is the next step?

The provisional grant awarded on July 13, 2017 is contingent upon local funding approval by January 12, 2018. This will be decided at a Special Town Meeting on Monday, December 4, 2017 at 7:30 pm at the Norwell Middle School and a Debt Exclusion Override Election on Saturday, December 9, 2017 from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm at the Norwell Middle School.

What happens if the town says “no” to funding the project?

If residents do not approve funding the project, Norwell would lose the \$6.4 million grant. Those funds would be offered to the next community on the waiting list and Norwell would pay the full cost of any alternative library improvement project.

How can I learn more?

Visit the *Building Project* page at norwellpubliclibrary.org
<http://norwellpubliclibrary.org/index.php/about-us/building-project>

Contact Library Director Judy McConarty at 781-659-2015 X111 or jmconarty@ocln.org