



SOMERS LIBRARY

P.O. Box 443, Somers, New York 10589 • (914) 232-5717 • Fax: (914) 232-1035 • www.somerslibrary.org

EXPANSION PROPOSAL

THE FACTS

Library history

Somers library was first constructed in Reis Park in 1981. Its square footage was doubled in 1993 to 14,847 to meet the needs of its growing population for the next ten years. In 2003 it had once again reached capacity.

Our growing community

According to the 1980 census, the population of Somers was 13,133. The 1990 census indicated 16,216; the 2000 census 18,346. The projected population for 2025 is 22,000.

Increased library usage

- Books and other materials borrowed increased 35% from 138,000 in 2001 to 187,000 in 2005
- The audiovisual collection grew 42% in five years
- The number of on-site patrons in 2005 went up 2% to 180,000
- The number of registered borrowers increased 3% to 10,193
- The Somers library online Internet access terminals were used by 4,977 patrons
- WiFi was added for patrons with their own laptops
- The game computer in the children's room was enjoyed by 2,035 children
- The number of book clubs jumped from 13 to 18
- The collection was increased by 6,872 books and 1,156 audiovisual items
- Somers loaned 19,000 items to other libraries
- The program room was used 585 times

A critical lack of space

Our children's programs are at full capacity and we have to turn children away. There is inadequate computer space. Our teen space must serve also as computer space, patron work area and display area. Phone books and cassettes are stored on study carrels and reference materials on drug abuse and alcohol awareness are located on our study tables. Boxes of overflow materials are blocking reference books. Aisles are too crowded to allow handicapped accessibility. In addition there are environmental issues such as air quality and mildew, an inadequate heating/cooling system and no proper handicapped or family bathroom.

Planning for 2025

In 2004, the increasingly critical need for space prompted the library board to initiate a town-wide survey. The top three requests from residents were: children's programming and materials; relocation of the fiction collection from the basement; and an increase in quiet areas for study throughout the library.

Based on this survey and other considerations, the following set of critical needs was established:

1. Children's and young adult spaces
2. Collection space
3. Computer and patron work stations
4. Program room availability for the public
5. Handicapped access compliance

The board spent months analyzing architectural alternatives. Finally it was concluded that a renovation alone would be merely a short-term solution and an ineffective use of taxpayers' money and that an addition was the only way to satisfy patrons' needs in the longer term.

How the expansion will meet community needs

The proposed addition will increase the size of the library to 21,845 square feet and will be adequate to serve the community until 2025. It is designed to match the existing structure and will not interfere with the surrounding park activities. The addition of a staircase lit by a huge skylight will open up the lower level, making it into a very pleasing and usable area. It will provide the community with:

- A new "child friendly" and "child safe" story hour/program room
- 51% more collection space
- A larger media area to accommodate growth for audio books and DVDs
- More space to accommodate double the number of public access computers
- More quiet study areas for groups and individuals
- An expanded teen area
- 39% more seating
- 85% more patron work space
- A larger reference/help desk area for patron information needs
- Improved indoor air quality, energy efficiency, temperature/humidity controls
- Two additional meeting/program rooms
- Additional space to store patron reserve materials
- Handicapped accessible bathrooms
- A new "family" bathroom in the children's area
- A new display area for the local history collection

A proposal was presented to the Town Board in July, 2005. The Town Board will send out its Somers Town Board Master Plan Survey this spring. The library expansion will be a capital project mentioned in the survey. We hope the preceding information will help you make an **informed decision** about the library expansion when you complete the survey.

To view the architectural plans, please visit the library or go to www.somerslibrary.org