

## **Swansea Library Renovation & Expansion FAQs**

### ***Why do we need an expanded Library?***

There are many reasons why Swansea Library is a Library in NEED:

- Swansea has long outgrown its original building. The library was built at the turn of the century for a population of 1600. Swansea's population today is approximately 17,000 – half of which are registered library members.
- The current library is not ADA compliant. Restrooms are inadequate and inaccessible.
- The Children's room in the basement is without heat and air conditioning. The area is windowless, has mold and poor air quality and is not ADA compliant. It is not adequate for the children of Swansea.
- There is no distinct Teen Space to provide help with research, a place for teen-focused programs, and a safe space for teens to gather in Town
- There are no quiet study spaces
- There are no program or meeting spaces for more than 10 people
- Shelving is inadequate for the library collections
- Insufficient data and electricity to support today's technologies
- Inefficient and inadequate staff work space
- There is deterioration of foundation and exterior wood trim, roof, and windows
- There is no fire protection sprinkler system
- The plumbing and electrical systems are near the end of their useful life
- There is Insufficient parking

### ***Why is a library essential to the community?***

- A Library is the heart and soul of the community offering opportunities for intellectual growth, entertainment, cultural awareness, and social engagement and much more
- Not everything is available on the Internet for free
- There is no single source of information – not even Wikipedia
- The unemployed use the Library's technologies to search and apply for jobs
- Small business owners use the library as workspace, for meetings, access to computers and WiFi, photocopier, fax machine, Notary Public, business databases, and other free materials
- Families save money by borrowing books (both print and electronic) and DVDs rather than buying them
- Summer reading programs keep children engaged in learning throughout the whole year.
- After school programs help keep teens focused, safe and engaged
- Early literacy programs help the little ones learn to read so they can be ready to learn
- Libraries provide the resources, programs, services and spaces for cultural and educational enrichment for all ages
- A library is a collaborative community space for all

### ***How will an expanded library benefit me?***

The library is the hub of the community and serves as a town resource. Every individual uses the library in a different way. We support everyone! The new library will have:

- An inviting Children's Room with inspiring spaces for story time and programs
- Safe and welcoming areas to gather together, or to sit quietly and read
- Flexible design to meet evolving community needs

- Create Space for technology and maker/crafter activities for all ages
- Community Meeting Room for gather of up to 100 people
- Enhanced technology and technology areas
- A Welcoming Teen Space for study and programs
- Appropriate space to house library collections in an accessible way
- Local history room for special collections, genealogy, and research
- ADA Compliant and accessible to everyone
- Facility can host local trainings and events offered by the State and specialized organizations
- Opportunity to bring state tax dollars back to Swansea

***How was the size of the building determined?***

The state has minimal space standards for new or renovated Public Libraries. The size of the building is determined by a rigorous analysis of the Library’s Program needs with assigned square footage for collections, children’s services, meeting and program spaces, historical collections and staff work areas.

***What happens if we DO NOT expand the Library?***

The building will not be sustainable for future generations. Parents will not have a safe and inviting space to bring their children for the development of early literacy skills. The Library currently does not have accessible restrooms, shelving, seating, or an accessible children’s area. The original building needs to be preserved and new spaces that benefit our community of 17,0000 are overdue. If we wait and do nothing, the costs will continue to escalate.

***How much will this project cost? Who is going to pay for this?***

The cost of the project is \$19M dollars. \$ 6.8M is available from a State library construction grant that was awarded to Swansea in 2017. In order to secure the grant, the Town must approve a vote at Special Town meeting for the full \$19M. The \$6.8M will be disbursed to the Town over five years upon the completion of mandated construction benchmarks. This helps taxpayers know that high level construction practices are being followed, and allows for the yearly bonded disbursement from the State budget. This reimbursement will be *guaranteed* once a contract between the Town and State are signed upon the Residents’ vote for the full project amount.

The funding plan approved by the Selectmen is to use combination of \$15M in available funds (“free cash”) and \$4M short term borrowing to be voted on at Swansea Special Town Meeting, October 24, 2022. This will have very minimal impact on Swansea taxpayers.

Swansea will get a \$19M twenty-first century library designed to take the people of Swansea 50+ years into the future for \$12.2M.

***Will Town Hall be part of this project? Where will the Town Hall go?***

Town Hall is not part of this project. Town Hall, along with the Council on Aging and Highway Department, is part of the Capital Planning Project for the Town of Swansea. The Selectmen and the Capital Planning Committee are investigating options for the Town Hall, the Annex, and multiple other projects around Town. The Town Hall can function where it is during this project. Please check the Swansea Capital Planning Committee page for updated information, located off the Selectmen’s webpage at swanseama.gov.

***Will the Library continue to operate during construction?***

Yes, Library services and a portion of the collection will be moved to a temporary location in town during construction. A site has not yet been determined.

***Are we getting more parking?***

Yes, at minimum, there will be 42 library dedicated parking spaces.

***What will happen to the lovely gazebo and garden area?***

It will be preserved in a grassy area off from the proposed meeting room.

***Will this affect access to Village Park?***

No. However, we can encourage bicyclists and walkers to access the park from behind the Middle School during construction.

***How will the interior of the existing library change?***

The intent is not to change the character of the interior of the original library. The spaces will be painted, the wooden features will be retained, the floors redone, and some of the later modifications will be adjusted – but the intent is to retain the original quaint and comfortable feel of the space.