



A Haverford Township Free Library [HTFL] Building Concept for the Future

HTFL Building Project FAQs

Q. Why does HTFL need a new building?

A. The current building, (with additions), was designed at a time when libraries, although valued, were not active hubs of the community. The design also pre-dated computers. As a result, the current space does not provide adequate areas for children, teens, and adults to use the library as a community center, study space, to comfortably attend programs, tutor or be tutored, etc. The current library has difficult sight lines, restricted wiring, limited use of collection and program space, and practically no parking. The building is difficult and expensive to maintain because of its age and because of the poor quality of the construction of the addition.

Q. Is there adequate parking at the library's current site?

A. No. The parking at the current location is abysmal. A total of 17 spaces serve almost 300,000 people a year, and there is only one designated handicap parking space. Yes, there is street parking, but it is difficult for the elderly and people with children to park away from the library and then have to negotiate traffic, children, canes, cargo, etc. We lose customers because of our lack of parking, and constantly frustrate those we have.

Q. Could HTFL get by with less space?

A. No. In fact, we have half the space we need now. In 2003, HTFL hired Library Consultant Rich Bowra to conduct a study of the current library space. The study indicated that not only was the current space inadequate for the library's collections and programs but that it would become more compressed as the demand for modern library collections and services grew. Less space means that the library cannot adequately provide collections and programs for children, adults, teens and community organizations.

Q. What would happen to the current building?

A. The Haverford Township Free Library could use its sale to help pay for a new facility. This would ensure that dollars spent in the past to acquire, renovate and expand the current building will be, in part, recouped, and help pay for a new library.

Q. What are ideal building specifications and what are the particular benefits of an ideal model building?

A. The current facility is 21,000 sq. feet. Planning a 50,000 square foot building would incorporate flexible use of space and “zones” for children, teens, quiet study, business resources, etc. One of the overarching benefits of a future design is that it would provide a healthy environment for both customers and staff. It would be used to teach others about long term benefits of sustainable design and green practices. Other benefits would include a larger program space both inside and out, the café, the incorporation of technology, and the parking.

Q. Who is responsible for acquiring the land for a future site?

A. The Library Board is officially responsible for land acquisition in an association-based purchase. In the event of a joint shared facility plan being implemented with Haverford Township, Township Officials and the Library Board would both assume leadership responsibilities.

Q. How much would a potential facility construction project cost?

A. The cost of constructing a building of the specifications so outlined was estimated at \$13 million in 2008 terms. This would include building and furnishings. It is a cost within keeping of other new libraries across the country and in the area. As stated in question #4, campaign costs may change depending on whether/how much the library must pay for the land, development of detailed architectural drawings based on the concept renderings, bidding, and many other variables. It is the goal of the Library@Large Capital Campaign Committee to get the most value for every dollar while not compromising on sound and sustainable construction.

Q. Why a “green’ building? Aren’t they more expensive?

A. A green building is environmentally healthy both for the earth and for customers and staff. It is also a responsible way to build and can be used as a teaching tool and example for the community and beyond. Because building green is no longer the exception they are not more expensive. In fact, there is a savings in overall maintenance and energy costs.

Q. Would you need more staff to run the library?

A. More staff would not be necessary because a new planned layout would make staff time and interactions more efficient and interactive.

Q. Where would the money come from?

A. The library would conduct a capital campaign and seek federal, state, corporate, and foundation grants.

Q. Would it cause my taxes to go up?

A. The yearly township appropriation is approximately 75% of the library’s budget. The library is approximately 4% of the overall township budget. The library’s portion of the overall township budget goes into the mix of taxes but it is not one of the major driving forces of increased taxes.

Q. How much would it cost to renovate the existing site?

A. A conditions study performed in 2003, indicated that an interior renovation, not including mechanical, would cost 3 million dollars. This figure has obviously increased markedly since this study was done. A renovation would not increase the size of the library, change the layout, provide for future growth, or add more than the existing 17 parking spaces. A feasibility study is slated to be done

Q. How much would the township contribute?

A. The township gives the library a yearly appropriation from taxes collected from township residents.

Q. How much would the state contribute?

A. State funds would be sought in the form of grants.

Q. How can you get foundation and corporate gifts?

A. The library provides a variety of resources, programs, and services that appeal to foundations and corporations. The library also serves populations that foundations and corporations like to support. We will work hard to cultivate these relationships and present the needs and opportunities.

Q. Can HTFL borrow money for a new building?

A. Yes, although we would prefer not to. If we can save more money in construction costs than we spend on loan interest payments, HTFL would consider 'bridge' financing for the construction period. The library has discussed the process with the Nonprofit Finance Fund and other organizations that advise non-profits on how to manage growth in a fiscally responsible manner.

Q. Can a new building be built before all the money is raised?

A. Many colleges have a policy requiring that 100% of pledges/funds be in place and 75% of cash in hand prior to breaking ground. How much would HTFL spend to raise the amount of money needed for the new building? HTFL has no fundraising staff, and only started its annual appeal in 2004. Major colleges with a large staff and sophisticated fundraising programs often spend 10-20¢ to raise a dollar. Generous gifts now can help keep fundraising costs down.

Q. Is this a worthwhile way to spend money?

A. Yes it is. For each \$1 dollar you give, The Haverford Township Free Library provides \$8 in value, based on what it would cost you to purchase books, rent videos, secure research and internet services, access job search resources, database fees and pay for programs for adults and children. Quality libraries, just like good school districts, improve the value of a community. A 21st century library is integral to the health and welfare of this community.

Q. What is the back-up plan?

A. The Haverford Township Free Library has needed a new library for the last 40 years, and, despite stop-gap improvements and addition/expansion in the 1970's and 1990's, the need has exploded just since 2002. The back-up plan is not whether the township will have the working, modern "Library@Large," but how long it may take to secure the funds to create it.

Q. What is the proposed timeline?

A. We do not yet have a firm timeline. We would like to have a new library within the next few years. Community support of a new library building is important in moving the process forward. The Board and I would like to hear from you and we strongly encourage you to let your Commissioner know that you support a new library.

Q. How can I get involved?

A. You can become a member of the Haverford Township Free Library Association (no cost), join one of the Board Committees, become a member of the Friends of the Haverford Township Free Library, and be a good library customer by using the library and letting others know what a great place Haverford Township Free Library is.