



Frequently asked questions

1. Why now?

The answer to this question requires a two part answer. First of all, this is the third time that the Board of Library Trustees, previous Directors and community members have asked for a new or improved library to accommodate the requests for materials, and space over the years. The last attempt was in 1998 when the Wilbur School was being considered. The current building cannot accommodate all the requirements and resources that a new and improved library can. The current building was designed for a population of 8,000, while Sharon's current population is close to 19,000. Secondly, funding is available through the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP), but the process to obtain this funding can take 5 to 10 years.

2. How will it be paid for?

An approved grant application will secure partial funding through the MPLCP will cover up to 45% of the funds needed for the project. This would include the extra funds that are available for a LEED Certified project. (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design). Some of the funds will also be raised by the Friends of the Sharon Public Library. Funding the remaining expenses would be up to the Town. Some communities fund these through various funding instruments such as, bonds, debt exclusions, etc.

The State also awards a Community Economic Need Factor which is determined by using 2014 State Equalized Evaluation (EQV) and 2012 Department of Revenue income figures and is applied to every municipality in the state. The rates range from .45% to 15.0%. The Need Factor for the Town of Sharon is 3.40% which will be added to the base award for a construction project.

3. How long will it take to get funding?

The first step is to complete the feasibility study on the current building, as well as a preliminary design document on the potential library site. That site could be the current site or an alternate site. Once this is completed, then a grant application will be completed and submitted by January 2017. There are 35 Towns in the current round. All applications will be reviewed by a committee chosen by the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, approved or denied. If funding is approved by the state and local town vote, the library will be placed on a waiting list and given a number. The number represents when the Town of Sharon is eligible to receive state funding. During this time, the Friends of the Sharon Public Library will begin their fundraising efforts.

4. What about LEED Certification? Is there extra funding for that?

Yes, there is funding for a LEED Certified project. It is called Green Library Incentive and must be used to offset the library's project costs or other features that enhance the operation and maintenance of the library.

It is considered an additional incentive by the Code of Massachusetts Regulations, 605 CMR 6.08(f). LEED-certified buildings are resource efficient. They use less water and energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. As an added bonus, they save money on utility bills. LEED certification levels and funding amounts as follows: Certified (basic) = +2.0%. Silver = +2.5%. Gold = +3.0%. Platinum +3.5%.

5. Why did we spend money to make repairs on the current building?

Like your home, repairs and upkeep are always required to maintain any municipal structure to keep the public safe and repairs will continue to be made as necessary.

6. Will there be parking?

The new library at 1 School Street will have a total of 31 designated parking spaces on site. Current State of Massachusetts guidelines require for every 400 GSF of building, the municipality must provide 1 space unless there are different zoning bylaws by the Town. Grant guidelines follow the same law. The additional spaces required for the library project can be obtained by using some street parking and the municipal parking lot off High Street.

7. What about the Carnegie Building, isn't it in the historic district?

Yes. The Carnegie Building is on both the federal and state registers for historic structures. It is also part of the local historic district. The first feasibility study which was completed in May 2016 at this site was denied by Sharon Historical Commission. The Board of Selectmen voted and approved the 1 School Street site as the new library site.

8. Will the library still be downtown and walkable?

Yes, the library would be built at 1 School Street.

9. Why does 1 School Street work better for this project?

This site was originally chosen as the alternate site for the new library. Library Construction Grant funding requires an alternate site that would comply with the requirements for projected population growth of 20 years out. The architectural preliminary study showed that it would be a preferred site due to the following reasons:

- a) The lot size is almost 3 times the size of the current library
- b) The 1 School Street site is not in the historical district nor is it on the state or federal register of historic places. It has been remodeled and rebuilt three times from its original two story structure.
- c) On-site parking could be provided, making it easier for patrons and especially the physically challenged.
- d) There would be significant savings in construction costs. A new build is less expensive than shoring up and building inside an historical structure. The Town wouldn't have to pay to provide a temporary site for the library during construction, in accordance to State regulations.
- e) Lower demolition costs because equipment can work from on-site rather than the street.

10. Is it possible to use the 1 School Street Building?

No, for the following reasons:

- a) The building cannot hold the weight of a library. Load bearing requirements for a library is 150 lbs. per square foot. A school building only requires 50 lbs. per square foot.
- b) The old school administration building is too small and in very poor repair. According to the 2011 structural assessment done by School

Administration, there is structural damage to both the foundation, roof and walls. Hazmat conditions also apply.

- c) The placement of the building is not in an ideal place on the property. In order to building a two story library with parking, a new library building would need to be placed closer to North Main Street in order to provide enough on-site parking to the rear.
- d) The land would need to be leveled so that patrons can enter on level ground to comply with ADA compliant building standards, something the school can't provide in its current state.
- e) The cost to repair, renovate and expand would cost more than it would if a new building could be built in its place.

11. There is a great deal of sentiment by town's people with regard to the old Centre School. What is the Library Building and Selection Committee (LBSC) doing to preserve this history?

- a) What you see now is not the original Centre School. The original building was a two-story building built in 1892. There is another postcard image of the Centre School that illustrates a different pattern of windows. Then there is the current building with a one-story structure with a hip roof. Speculation is that there may have been a fire in the original building, and instead of rebuilding, a decision was made to remove the entire second floor and install a hip roof.
- b) The LBSC and architects examined the building to find original design elements and details that could be either used, re-built or recreated, such as; cornices, dentils, the half window over the door, and original flooring that has been refinished.
- c) The architects, LBSC and representatives of the Sharon Historical Commission reviewed the historical photos and designed a new rebuild of the original school. In terms of construction costs, a new build is usually less expensive due to current construction code requirements.

12. Will the Town of Sharon have a modern new library?

- a) Yes. The main entrance to the new 25,675 GSF library is a bright, pleasing entrance right off the parking lot. All interior spaces are designed to serve the community for 20 to 40 years out.