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NEWS

New \$16M Victor Farmington Library proposed. What you should know before vote



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VICTOR — Think of a library as an iPhone.

Cellphones are more than just a phone, with texting apps, news, games, information, and pictures — “there's everything on it,” said Tim Niver, library director of the Victor Farmington Library.

“This is kind of what libraries are now doing too,” Niver said. “We’re going to increase what we can do through a new library.”

Crunch time is nearing on a vote that could mean a new, larger library if a measure before residents passes.

If approved, the library would move to a 24,000-square-foot facility at 160 School St. in the village of Victor that currently houses a martial arts studio, pizza place and used furniture store.

The library’s existing 9,000-square-foot facility at 15 W. Main St. was designed in 1996 to serve up to 15,000 people, library officials said. But now, some 25,000 residents depend on the library for their education, research, casual reading, programs, and internet needs, Niver said.

Building a library that will serve both Victor and Farmington for generations to come — and keep costs reasonable for taxpayers — has been a top priority, said Library Board President James R. Myers.

“The design incorporates a variety of features that everyone can find useful,” Myers said in

a statement. "We're excited that the proposed library will bring new opportunities to Victor and Farmington residents of all ages."

Costs

The proposed project, which is expected to be completed in 2024, will carry an estimated cost of \$16.6 million and a projected tax rate of \$0.82 per \$1,000 of assessed value. The current rate is \$0.27 per \$1,000 value.

For the average home assessed at \$300,000, the tax bill to support the new library would be less than \$246 annually, or \$20.50 a month.

Myers said the library board has monitored expenses associated with the proposed library at every step in the process, which began more than four years ago.

"We've reviewed each cost line by line, eliminating nice-to-have features and swapping out construction materials," Myers said. "As a result, we've been able to cut nearly \$700,000 from the total cost, while still proposing an effective and efficient library."

The library has collected, to date, near \$300,000 in pledges, and officials are looking at grants everywhere they can — whatever else can be done to offset the cost, Niver said.

"We don't want to be irresponsible and place the entire burden on the taxpayers," Niver said.

Features

In addition to a larger facility, here's what's in store for a new library: More parking, for one. Also, a separate children's area, a larger community room for bigger programs and events, a drive-up book drop, room for more books and movies, and a new, locally owned coffee shop are among the features in the works. There will be room for outdoor programming as well.

Rooms will be available for business meetings or to read quietly with your coffee. A full teaching kitchen will be available for classes. The new library also would be built with flexibility in mind.

"It's a library that is going to be big enough to continue to meet expectations for generations, not just 10 years or 20 years. We're hoping 30, 40, 50 years that this is going

to be sufficient," Niver said.

And yes, there will be books. But you can also borrow snowshoes or hiking poles or pickle ball paddles or museum passes, to name a few, Niver said.

"The biggest point on what we're trying to do is make this library more than just a library," Niver said. "It's going to be a resource and destination for all community members."

Questions?

Residents will have a chance to ask library-related questions and give input at information sessions. The first is scheduled for 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 15, at Farmington Town Hall. Another is planned for 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 30, at Victor Town Hall.

Library officials also have and will continue to explain the project to community groups.

"We're trying to be as transparent as we possibly can be because we don't want people to come back to us and say, 'I didn't know anything about this,'" Niver said. "That's the last thing we want."

More details

Residents can find updates with the latest numbers and insights, along with a comprehensive list of FAQs and answers, posted at victorfarmingtonlibrary.org/new.

A YouTube video describing the proposed expansion can also be viewed.

Information sessions planned for 6 p.m. Tuesday, March 15, at Farmington Town Hall, 1000 County Road 8, and 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 30, at Victor Town Hall, 85 E. Main St., are in person. Those wishing to participate via Zoom should register online at victorfarmingtonlibrary.org/event-calendar.