

Media Release



City of Highland Park

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City of Highland Park and Highland Park Public Library Consider Expansion To Meet Community Needs

City of Highland Park to purchase adjacent properties

Highland Park, Illinois –The City of Highland Park (City) and the Highland Park Public Library (Library) are exploring a possible expansion of the Library to better meet community demand for space and services as well as improve parking and traffic flow. In addition, in an effort to improve efficiencies and provide the highest level of services, the City is also exploring the relocation of Youth and/or Senior Services to an expanded library facility.

The decision to pursue the inclusion of City services is the result of on-going discussion and input by residents, the City, Library, Youth Services Advisory Group and Senior Services Advisory Group. The advisory groups were created in 2015 by Mayor Nancy Rotering to help determine the future needs of the respective services.

Due to an ever-growing increase in the number of visitors to the Library and government campus, which includes Highland Park City Hall and the Library, the City is regularly searching for land or ways to expand the community space. Land acquisition for this purpose is highly desirable. The two properties immediately east of the Library located at 444 and 466 Laurel Avenue for sale by one owner are under contract with the City of Highland Park. These adjacent properties would make a facility and/or parking expansion more feasible. The City Council approved the residential real estate contract at the October 24, 2016 City Council meeting for a total of \$1.55 million.

"As residents we know the value of high quality community services. After careful consideration, the City is pleased to explore this possible partnership and development to meet current and future needs," stated Mayor Nancy Rotering. "The inclusion of

Senior and Youth Services is a way to better serve residents of all ages in a convenient, easy to access, state of the art facility while creating efficiencies and strengthening resources, programs and services."

"The Library approached the City with a request to assist with inadequate parking and a possible Library expansion to meet community needs," said City Manager Ghida Neukirch. "The purchase of the Laurel properties provides a possible solution."

Library Board President Jerry Aufox stated, "We are grateful to Highland Park's City Council and staff for collaborating with us to possibly expand the Library. We look forward to working with the City and residents as we plan to bring new concepts and services which will enrich our community and its residents for years to come."

Highland Park Public Library Executive Director Jane Conway stated, "The real estate acquisition provides an opportunity for us to consider solutions to longstanding issues including parking and an undersized Youth Services Department."

Senior Services are currently housed at the Highland Park Senior Center at 54 Laurel Avenue. The facility is a renovated 1929 residential property that has posed several service challenges including parking limitations, accessibility issues within the facility and limited space for programming. The Senior Services Division provides more than 900 services throughout the year to the public.

Youth Services are currently housed in the Firehouse located at 1830 Green Bay Road. The facility is a multi-purpose renovated fire station that includes an activity center, study room, counseling area, meeting room and staff offices. The Firehouse is in need of significant capital improvement.

For more information visit the City's web site at www.cityhpil.com/libraryexpansion or call the City Manager's Office at 847-926-1000.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When will the potential Library expansion commence?

It is anticipated that the planned development would proceed through the City's Plan & Design Commission process in 2019 with construction anticipated in 2020.

What are the advantages of the proposed Highland Park Public Library expansion?

The expanded Library will offer ample parking, accessibility, up-to-date amenities and improved services to all residents in a central location. It would meet the needs of our Senior and Youth Services Programs while achieving community-wide efficiencies and cost savings.

Will the public have input into this project?

Absolutely. Public feedback is critical. The City will continue to work with the Youth and Senior Advisory Groups as relocation is explored. The Library will also be soliciting input. Workshops will be held in advance of formal consideration by the Plan & Design Commission. The process will also include public hearings.

Will Library services be disrupted?

The Highland Park Public Library would continue to be open to serve the public during the construction and transition.

What will happen to the current Senior Center and Youth Facility?

The City will explore the possible sale of both properties.

What are the terms of the contract?

The Residential Real Estate Contract can be found on the City's web site at www.cityhpil.com (Link from the 10/24/2016 City Council meeting). The purchase price is \$1,550,000 and reflects the \$900,000 for the sale of 444 Laurel and \$650,000 for 466 Laurel. The closing of the properties will take place no later than December 31, 2016. Kurt and Robyn Silberstein own the properties.

What is the estimated cost of the new facility?

The potential project is preliminary and in an exploration phase. The City will provide an estimate when planning and design work is complete for the building addition. The City will issue a Request for Proposal for professional architectural and engineering services.

Where will funding come from for a possible Library expansion?

The City and Library will share in the cost of the construction. An agreement between the two parties will be developed. The City has \$7M in its five-year Capital Improvement Plan for the construction of a facility to house City and other services in year 2020.

Will the expansion match the look and feel of the current Highland Park Public Library facility?

Yes. The expansion will complement the current design of the Highland Park Public Library.

What are the City's next steps in preparing for a possible expansion?

Regular updates will be posted on the City's web site at www.cityhpil.com/libraryexpansion.

Who can I contact about this project?

If you have any questions or would like to provide feedback, please contact the City Manager's Office at 847-926-1000 or email cityhp@cityhpil.com.