

## Aging building...

THE VILLA PARK PUBLIC LIBRARY Board of Trustees is exploring a renovation and expansion of the current facility, which opened in 1969. The 24,500-square-foot building, located at 305 S. Ardmore Ave., reportedly had over 240,000 visitors during its 2014-15 fiscal year. The building reportedly requires extensive repairs to its roof and heating, ventilation and cooling (HVAC) system. In addition to upgrading the building, the board is also exploring an addition of 10,000 to 12,000 additional square feet. The library board is reportedly working with the Diocese of Joliet and St. Alexander Parish on a property swap of land north of the library. The diocese owns the lot directly north of the library. The library owns the vacant lot and house to the north of that lot. A building project, which would reportedly ask voters to approve the borrowing of \$9 million to \$12 million, would require a referendum to obtain voter approval. The Villa Park Village Board would have to authorize a referendum question to be placed on the ballot. A potential question could be placed on the ballot as soon as this November. The library will hold an open house on Feb. 15 to gain feedback from residents. For more information, visit [www.vppl.info](http://www.vppl.info).

*Photo by Chris Fox*



# VILLA PARK REVIEW

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# Library seeks residents' input on future building plans

by Chris Fox

The Villa Park Public Library is gathering input from residents about potential building upgrades and additions. The current library building, located at 305 S. Ardmore Ave., opened in 1969. A facility analysis completed in March 2015 estimated that addressing all of the building's known issues, including heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) and boiler concerns, would cost over \$5.3 over the next five years and over \$7.9 million over the next 20 years. According to the facility

analysis, which was conducted by the Chicago firm of Nagle Hartray Architecture, those expenses would not provide any new features or services for patrons, and would not increase existing space. The building currently occupies 24,500 square feet.

According to Villa Park Public Library Director Sandra Hill, the library's board of trustees is exploring the option of expanding the current facility, adding another 10,000 to 12,000 square feet of space. Hill said the library board is hoping to complete a property

swap with the Diocese of Joliet and St. Alexander Parish of Villa Park. The diocese owns the lot just north of the library. The library owns two pieces property (a vacant lot and a house) just north of that lot.

Hill noted that the library board recently decided not to renew the lease for the property that had been used as an annex. The lease for that building, located just south of the library at 317 S. Ardmore Ave., expired on Jan. 31. The library used 3,000 square feet at the annex for the last eight years.

To gather feedback from residents, the library held an open house in January. There will be two more open house events, including one that will take place on Monday, Feb. 15. That open house will run from 1-3 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. Another open house is scheduled for April 18.

The library board has contracted with Williams Architects of Itasca to address the needs for major repairs to the building, and to evaluate options for expansion.

The facility analysis of the library reportedly indicated that the building's heating and air conditioning systems are failing. The analysis also indicated that the roof is failing, and that the changes made to the electrical wiring system in 1999 are insufficient to meet today's demands. Additionally, the building's current water supply and plumbing are unable to meet current demands. Hill noted that the library does not have a sprinkler system. Any renovation plan would include the installation of a sprinkler system.

Any potential building project would require a referendum to provide the necessary funding. The Villa Park Village Board would have to authorize a referendum request. Hill said that a potential referendum regarding renovation and expansion, which could be on the ballot as early as November 2016, would likely ask voters to approve the borrowing of between \$9 million to \$12 million.

Hill said the library board's consultants have stated that a renovation and addition would probably take place in three phases, and implemented in an attempt to limit disruptions to the public.

"We're having to spend more money on HVAC," said Hill in outlining some of the

problems at the library. "Some people don't know how to work on older equipment, and finding parts is getting to be a challenge. The infrastructure is aging. We need to address some of these building issues. We're spending a lot of dollars on upkeep."

In an effort to reduce expenses, Hill said the library board has reduced Friday hours, with the building closing at 5 p.m. instead of 9 p.m. She said the library is open 68 hours per week. According to Hill, there were 246,339 visitors to the library in its 2014-15 fiscal year, which ended on April 30, 2015.

Hill stated there are nearly 50 staff members at the library, including 13 full-time employees.

In addition to addressing repairs, a potential upgrade and renovation would potentially be directed at other several other issues, including parking space, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant shelving, technology updates, storage space for library materials and the need for increased space to accommodate larger study rooms, children's programs, concerts and guest speakers.

Hill said the input provided by residents will help determine the most important needs. Residents are invited to complete a community survey available at the library's Web site—[www.vppl.info](http://www.vppl.info).

In November 2008, Villa Park voters rejected a referendum proposal to issue \$24.9 million in bonds to pay for the construction of a new library facility, located at property just south of the current site (at 317 S. Ardmore Ave.—the building that included the library annex). The proposition failed by a margin of about 63 to 37 percent, with 6,506 residents voting against and 3,423 voting in favor.

Hill said that Williams Architects recently related that construction of a new library would cost about 30 percent more than a renovation and expansion of the current site. That information helped to lead the board to explore renovation and expansion.

"The slabs are good, the bricks are good, and we won't have to move the utilities," said Hill of the current facility.

For more information, visit the Villa Park Public Library's Web site at [www.vppl.info](http://www.vppl.info), or call the library at 630-834-1164.



## Sweepstakes winner....

H&R BLOCK presented a \$1,000 check to Jose Daniel Herrera Gonzalez last week at its Villa Park office in Hi View Center at 415 W. St. Charles Road. The presentation was part of H&R Block's "1,000 Win \$1,000 Daily" sweepstakes. The tax preparation company is awarding \$1 million a day for the first month of the tax season, giving out \$1,000 a day to 1,000 people each day from Jan. 16 to Feb. 15, plus a final drawing on Feb. 19. A total of 32,000 people will win a combined \$32 million in the sweepstakes. The above photo shows (left to right) Adriana Guzman, who is a senior tax advisor at the Villa Park office, along with Herrera Gonzalez and his wife Gina.

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