

Important Information

about the

Gold Coast
Public Library

The logo for Gold Coast Public Library features a stylized human figure with arms raised, positioned to the right of the text. From the figure's right side, three curved lines sweep upwards and to the right, suggesting movement or a rising sun.

Budget and Building Proposal

Dear Gold Coast Library District Resident,

We're writing to remind you that the vote on the Library's 2016 budget is right around the corner — Wednesday, September 9. We also want to correct unsubstantiated assertions being circulated around the community.

For information about the Library, please go to www.goldcoastlibrary.org.

For accurate and up-to-date information about the proposal for a new facility, please go to www.thenewgoldcoastpubliclibrary.org.

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The Library 2016 Budget Vote and Trustee Election are the ONLY items on the ballot.

A new building proposal is under development but is NOT part of the September 9 vote. No final decisions have been established on the new building proposal. Ample community dialogue will continue on this important concept.

The Library board presents a budget each year for the public to approve.

The proposed 2016 budget increase of \$11,890 over 2015, at 0.74%, is below the State Tax Cap.

The Library accounts for between 0.8% and 1.16% of your total property tax, depending on your address. For example, if your taxes total \$12,000 before any deductions, you pay between \$96 and \$139 annually to support the library.

The Library District created by referendum in 2001 became a real place ten years ago. The budget for the first full year of operation was \$1,044,604. The budget has increased in response to resident desires for programs and services, as approved in every annual budget that has been presented.

10 years later the proposed 2016 budget is \$1,616,845. This represents a 54% increase in a decade. When the Library opened, it was closed on Wednesdays and Sundays. There was no Annex building to provide regular programming to the community. In the 10 years since opening, Library circulation has nearly doubled, from 63,931 in 2006 to 112,323 in 2014. Offerings and attendance in programming have increased from 195 programs with 2,667 attendees in 2006 to 591 programs with 8,729 attendees in 2014.

Programs take place one at a time in our Annex, which has a space limit of 50 people, costs the Library \$60,000 each year to rent, and is being sold to investors. The Library's lease expires in May of 2016.

We value our employees. They provide you with library programs and services.

The chart below shows that salaries and benefits for our staff have increased by an average of about 2% each of the past several years, 10.2% total, not by the 50% asserted by unsubstantiated claim.

	2012	2016	Difference
Number of full-time employees	8	10	+2
Number of part-time employees	21	18	-3
Salaries and Benefits	\$969,743	\$1,068,625	\$98,882 or 10.2%

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The Board of Trustees oversees the Library's finances.

An independent CPA conducts an annual audit.

One claim circulating is that the reserves are hidden from the public. Perhaps this arises from a misunderstanding of proper reporting procedure. Generally accepted accounting principles place any reserve or fund balance on the organization's balance sheet and financial statement. A budget is a compilation of anticipated expenditures.

The \$1.5M reserve reflects conservative, mindful budgeting and cost savings over a period of several years. It is also the result of prudent investments and the realization of the payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT) from LIPA. The Library will continue to receive these PILOT payments through 2027. The Library now allocates a portion of these funds annually as reflected in our budget.

Over the years, we have generally used reserves to reduce taxes and for capital improvements to the building. This year, we had to use \$100,000 for a new elevator. The Board has set aside \$200,000 for future repairs of our HVAC system and for roof repairs if they are needed. These decisions were made so that we wouldn't need to ask the voters for additional funding. \$1.2M of the reserve will be used for the new building project, if voters approve the referendum, or toward other capital expenditure for future expansion.

The impact of LIPA is uncertain, but we monitor it carefully.

The contention that the impending loss of LIPA would have a sudden significant impact on the community's tax base remains undetermined. Simply put, nobody knows what is going to happen and it could be years before the outcome is known. We communicate with local legislators and elected officials. No one has been able to provide a definitive answer. **The best guess right now, based on interpretation of existing law, is that the impact of losing LIPA will be 1% a year.** We, along with the rest of the community, are interested in the outcome of pending lawsuits and legislative initiatives to offset LIPA's closing of its local power plant.

Public libraries are much more than just books.

The old paradigm of a building warehousing books and papers no longer applies to public libraries and the term "library" is not a one-size-fits-all description. Public libraries are community meeting places, cultural centers, creative venues, information hot spots and, most importantly, places for lifelong learning in all the ways that can happen — ink on paper, digital information, events, programs, etc.

The type of project proposed for Gold Coast is happening throughout Long Island, across New York and the nation. Libraries here and elsewhere have had to re-invent, re-task and add space to meet the evolving role they play in the communities they serve.

The notion that we don't need libraries anymore — because we have the internet, or that libraries are solely about reading — simply does not acknowledge that these transformative and vibrant community assets are not just buildings with books. Public libraries on Long Island are at least as well known for what goes on inside their buildings as the buildings alone.

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Developing opportunities is part of responsible stewardship of the community's resources.

The trustees have the responsibility to keep the Library vital and viable. Statistical analysis of surveys and focus groups held in 2010, plus ongoing experience, continue to point to lack of space in the wholly-owned building and lack of control as renters of the Annex.

The Library board looked at a variety of options before selecting the Halm Property for public consideration. In the proposed location, the Library would support all the activity in the area, including the ball fields. Adjacent, complementary parking creates efficiency of space, curtails costs and supports present and future use. Our present location has four 15-minute parking spots in a shared lot with LIRR commuters.

Staffing

The claim that the proposed building would double the Library's personnel expense is incorrect, but it does help show an important part of our quandary — the structural inefficiency that we cannot address in our current configuration. We presently have to staff two locations and more than one floor. A new building on one floor would require no additional staff other than a custodian.

Library v. Developer

To be absolutely clear, **the Library did not outbid any investor interested in the property.** The owners of the Halm property made the decision to work with the Library and accepted a lower offer than those proposed by other interested parties. The notion that a private developer would add noticeably to the tax base is not supported. Based on what had been proposed by a developer, the offset to the area's tax base would be about 0.3% — not enough to substantially lower anyone's real property taxes.

The proposed estimates of between \$14 and \$18 million dollars for a new building are just that, estimates. Designs remain the subject of a series of community input sessions currently scheduled. It should be noted that the board entered the process with the intention that any project add less than \$100 to the financial obligation of the majority of homes. Our independent financial consultant **estimates the maximum increase in your overall tax at 0.6% — that's 6/10s of 1%.** We do intend to sell the present building so that it is put back on the tax rolls.

The Library has a tax calculator available to you at www.thenewgoldcoastpubliclibrary.org where you can see what the impact of the funding for a new building will be to your taxes.

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions please contact the Library's Director, Michael Morea by phone at 516-759-8300, ext. 102 or by email at mmorea@goldcoastlibrary.org.

Thank You,

The Gold Coast Public Library Board of Trustees

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