

Campaign FAQs: Questions about the Library Project

1. *How can the Town justify spending so much money to expand the library when other essential Town services and programs are being reduced?*

Studies have repeatedly demonstrated that dollars spent on libraries provide tangible economic returns to their communities. This economic payoff comes in many forms, not the least being higher property values and quality schools. The ongoing and productive collaboration between our Library and our school system maximizes taxpayer dollars in times of fiscal constraint.

2. *Who is this expansion really for?*

The library expansion supports residents of all ages. More than any other place, our public library is the heart of our community and provides us with far more than access to reading materials. Avon's citizens come to the library to use computers, participate in book discussions, and attend a host of cultural events. Young parents and their children attend programs that foster early literacy. Seniors and other adult users get help with tax planning, do research and simply gather with friends and neighbors. Every day after school, dozens of middle and high school students walk to the library to collaborate on homework projects, use computers, and interact with their friends in a healthy and stimulating environment. The library is truly for everyone, not just for one generation.

3. *Why can't Avon residents just use the libraries in Farmington and Simsbury and avoid the expense of expansion?*

All of the Farmington Valley libraries (Avon, Canton, Farmington and Simsbury) participate in a regional consortium that facilitates the sharing of resources. With Connecticard, residents are free to use public libraries throughout the state. However, the consortium alone, though a wonderful resource, is insufficient to support our needs.

The simple fact is that our Library does not meet the State Library's recommended standards for space. Our current use far exceeds our capacity, and population and future use projections continue to grow. We need to follow the example of our sister communities, Farmington, West Hartford and Simsbury, which recently expanded their library facilities to accommodate their town's population and increased library use.

4. *Will full Sunday hours be restored with the expansion?*

Sunday hours will be restored as the Town budget allows. We do plan to restore partial-year Sunday hours when the expanded library opens its doors in its first full year of operation.

5. ***Will an expanded library require more staff, thereby costing the Town more to run it?***

We have proposed the addition of one full time youth services librarian to supervise the programs and activities in the new young adult room, which is a desperately needed space for our community's youth. It is also our plan to add three additional part time staff, allowing us to provide more programs and services and thus respond to a number of pressing needs.

6. ***Why doesn't the town just use the new high school media center?***

When the planning for the existing library building and the new high school library were underway, planning committees at the Town and Board of Education level concluded that the two libraries differ markedly in purpose, organization, public served, and materials collection.

- *The primary purpose of a public library is to satisfy the diverse needs of a multi-generational population.* This includes providing recreational reading, reference and research, technology, and programs for children, young adults and adults.
- *The primary purpose of the high school library is instructional.* The focus of the school librarian is on formal instruction. This instruction is focused on planned units of study that bring together strategies and skills in the curriculum.

However, it should be noted that the Avon Public Library and the Media Centers in the Avon School system are partners in sharing resources, services and expertise, working hand in hand to improve literacy in the community. The Library welcomes class visits to the public library and also conducts **out-reach** visits to schools to sign students up for public library cards.

7. ***How much more will it cost to operate the expanded library?***

With the decision to use geothermal energy to heat and cool the building, we expect significant savings in utility costs.

8. ***Why didn't the town provide enough money to do the entire project?***

The library referendum stipulated that additional funds would be acquired through private donations and other fundraising efforts. This is a very common practice and many libraries in Connecticut and throughout the United States have sought private donations to augment municipal funding.

9. ***What is the timetable for the Campaign?***

The campaign is currently underway and will continue through the first quarter of 2011. Although the active campaign will conclude at that time, contributors may make multi-year pledges.

10. ***How much has the Library Campaign Committee raised so far?***

As of September 1, the Campaign has pledges totaling almost \$500,000.

11. ***What options for payment methods?***

You can contribute by cash or check. You can also contribute securities. If you have a financial advisor, he or she may suggest other alternatives.

12. ***Are contributions tax deductible?***

Yes, the Avon Free Public Library Board is a 501 (C) (3) organization and contributions are fully deductible to the extent of the law. The Avon Library Campaign Committee is a standing committee of the Board and will acknowledge all contributions for tax records.