

LAKE ZURICH ROAD REALIGNMENT PROPOSAL

Findings and Recommendations to Cease Negotiations
with the Village of Barrington at this Time

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The information presented by the Village Board to the Library Board and to Village taxpayers is **advocacy**; it is a pitch to the Library Board to support its desired outcome which it has determined is in the best interest of the Village.

The Library Board's responsibility is to its taxpayers to assess the **merits of the proposal based on the facts** and what is in the best interest of the Library District.

Framework for Library Board's Decision on this Proposal

What is relevant in making this decision?



The Village Board's desires



The Library Board's legal obligations



Fiscal responsibility



The input of the District taxpayers



The input of the Library's staff

What is relevant in making this decision?

The Village Board's Desires

1

The desires of the Village Board are important but not given unlimited deference, nor do they outweigh other considerations.

2

The Library Board considers the Village Board's desires in the spirit of intergovernmental cooperation and shared needs of our overlapping taxpayers.

3

The Library Board also considers the Village Board's desires out of respect for the current Village officials' commitment to sound decision-making for the common good of the Village.

What is relevant in making this decision?

The Library Board's Legal Obligations

1

The Library Board's first obligation is to carry out the duties and responsibilities it has to the District in supporting and maintaining a public library (or libraries) to provide library service.

2

Under the Public Library District Act, the Library Board "may sell or otherwise dispose of real or personal **property that it deems no longer necessary or useful for library purposes** under terms the board seems best."
(75 ILCS 16/30-55.30)

3

The Library Board may only "donate" land if it is being donated to another tax supported library or library system under state law.
(75 ILCS 16/30-55.32)

What is relevant in making this decision?

Fiscal responsibility and fiduciary duty

Public resources are scarce; tax-cap public entities must be particularly cautious with the expenditure of public money and the disposal of public assets.

In our role as trustees, both the Village Board and the Library Board have a duty to act primarily for the public's best interest in all matters we undertake.

The Village's proposal put the Library Board in a **fiduciary predicament**: swapping out a **stable and appreciating asset – real property** – for a **depreciating asset – a parking lot – along with capital** that the Library District is unable to reinvest in property at this time. The excess cash would be placed in fixed income investments.

What is relevant in making this decision?

The Input of the District Taxpayers

- The Library Board has received numerous emails and letters from District taxpayers and related homeowners groups, as well as other local governments. Many community members have also spoken to us in person.
- The Library Staff has received numerous comments from Library patrons in person regarding the proposal.
- **More than half of those communications are urging the Library Board to approve the sale of its property for the project, while the remainder have urged the Library Board not to sell the property.**
- The Village has campaigned vigorously for Village taxpayers and other local governments to encourage the Library Board to vote in favor of the property sale, and would like the community to believe this is a unanimous position of the residents.
- The bulk of the input has come from taxpayers living in neighborhoods near Lake Zurich Road.

What is relevant in making this decision?

The Input of the Library Staff

The Library Staff is the reason the Barrington Area Library has been successful in delivering library services that are appreciated and well-loved by its patrons.

As professionals in library services and experiencing the use of the library services, the Library Staff is best-positioned to assess the needs and the goals of the Barrington Area Library in delivering library services.

The Library's administrative leadership is uniformly against the proposed sale of the property, and has expressed its assessment that the project would have a catastrophic impact on the Library's operations ~~for many years~~. **during the 5-year construction easement.**

Recruiting and keeping excellent Library Staff is critical to the Library's success; if this project goes through, the Library risks losing staff to other libraries.

WHAT DATA SUPPORTS THE SAFETY CONCERN AT LAKE ZURICH ROAD?

Analyzing the Illinois Traffic Crash Reports from 2012 to 2016



Village Board: The intersection of Lake Zurich Road and Route 14 is unsafe

“The current Lake Zurich Road/Route 14 intersection sits on a curve of Route 14 with no traffic signal; its history includes 14 accidents in a recent 18-month period and has been the site of fatalities as well.”

See Village of Barrington’s Village Report (April 2018)

In making this determination, the Village has considered **“all the traffic accident reports on U.S. Route 14 (from Main Street [Lake Cook Road] to IL Route 59 [Hough Street]) that were used in determining the safety issues along that stretch (and in particular the existing Lake Zurich Road Intersection).”**

See email from Greg Summers, Director of Development Services, Village of Barrington (July 15, 2016)

What makes the intersection of Lake Zurich Road and Route 14 particularly unsafe? **More specifically, what safety concern are we trying to mitigate?**

Answer:

Making a **left turn from Lake Zurich Road onto Route 14** is very difficult



Why:

- Curve of the road – visibility impaired
- Speed of the traffic
- Amount of the traffic and how it arrives
- Number of lanes to cross -- four

What does the accident data reveal about turning left from Lake Zurich Road onto Route 14?

Year	Accidents at intersection of Lake Zurich Road and Route 14 resulting from left turns
2012	One
2013	Two
2014	One
2015	Three
2016	Five
2017	Two
2018 (as of April 21, 2018)	One

Historically, the Village advised there has been one tragic fatality from 2006 involving driver making a left turn from Lake Zurich Road onto Route 14.

What does the accident data reveal about turning left from Lake Zurich Road onto Route 14?

- From 2012 to present (a five-year and nearly four-month period of time), there have been **15 accidents involving a driver taking a left turn from Lake Zurich Road onto Route 14.**
- Of all the drivers involved in those accidents, **the vast majority (19 drivers) were not from the Village of Barrington.** Seven of the drivers were from the Village of Barrington.
- Barrington drivers – particularly those who live in the neighborhoods off of Lake Zurich Road – are most likely to be traversing Lake Zurich Road and are likely more cognizant of the hazards of taking left turns onto Route 14 and have become more skilled at taking those turns safely.
- Because the Village has not taken any small measures to mitigate the left turn hazard at that intersection (such as right turn only restrictions), **it raises the question as to whether the traffic data actually supports a right-only restriction – or if the Village believes the residents do not want a right turn only restriction.**

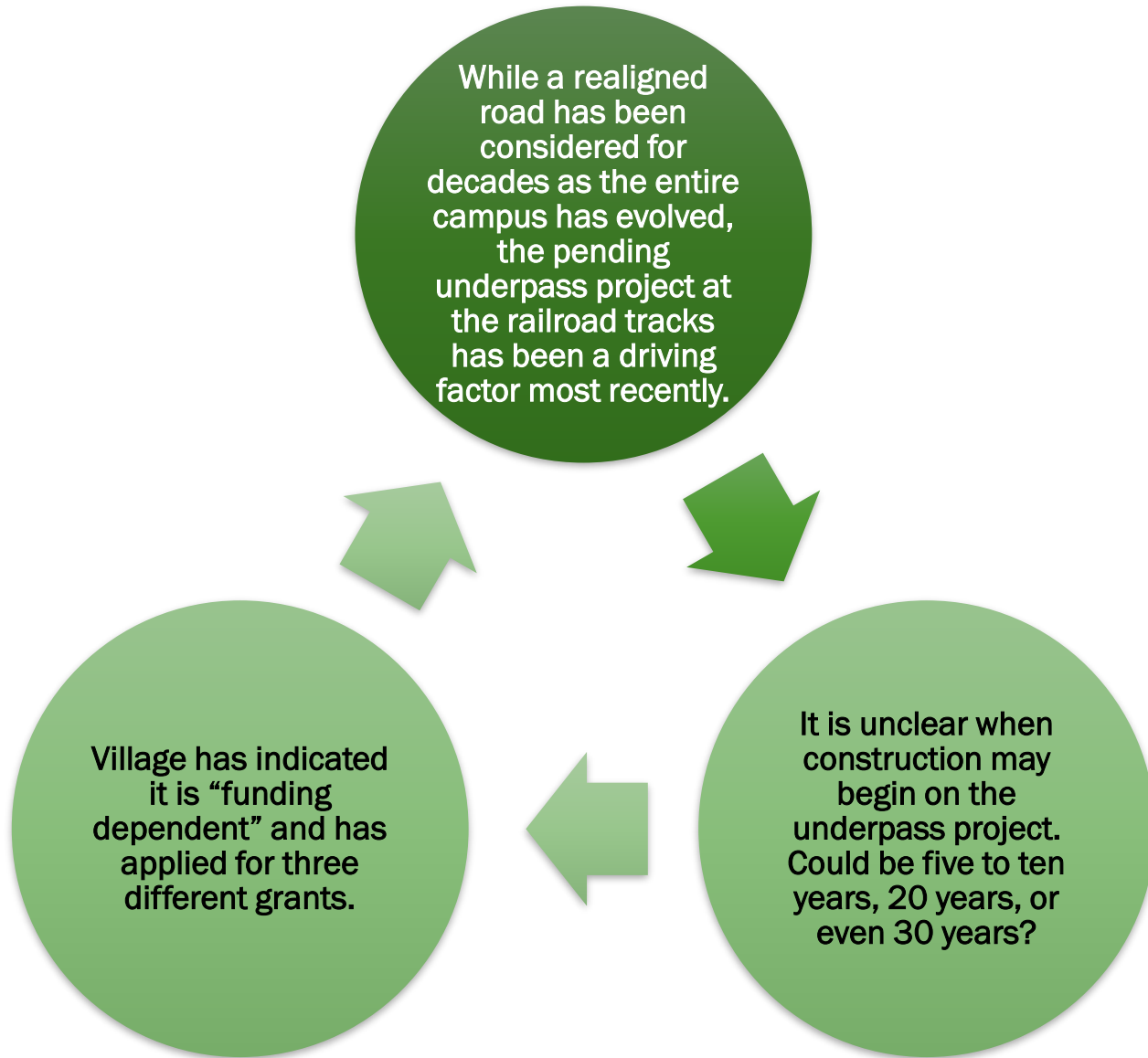
What does the accident data reveal about turning left from Lake Zurich Road onto Route 14?

- Although the Village cites 14 accidents at that intersection in the recent 18-month period (September 2016 to March 2018), a review of the Illinois Traffic Crash Reports in that timeframe reveals three accidents involving a driver taking a left turn from Lake Zurich Road onto Route 14 in that timeframe.
- When asked for the traffic crash reports from the most recent years, the Village produced four – NOT 14 – accident reports from September 2016 to March 2018. Of those reports, only three involved a left turn from Lake Zurich Road onto Route 14. The fourth report has no narrative details or diagrams to determine whether it involved a left turn or if it was a rear end collision that occurred on Route 14 near Lake Zurich Road.
- In all the reports provided at the Library Board's request from 2012 to present, many of the accidents involved incidents at Lake Cook Road and Route 14 or Route 59 and Route 14, or other incidents scattered between the Route 14 corridor that runs from Lake Cook Road to Route 59.
- In short, the Village's data on the accidents do not support the representations made in the pitch for this Lake Zurich Road project – and appears conflated in order to gain the support of the public for the safety aspects of this project.

THE SECONDARY REASONS THE VILLAGE SEEKS TO REALIGN LAKE ZURICH ROAD AT THIS TIME

The pending underpass project at the railroad tracks (CN project)
and availability of state/federal funding

Pending underpass project at Route 14 and CN railroad tracks



Why now? Why must the Lake Zurich Road project proceed ahead of the underpass project?

When the Library Board has asked why the Lake Zurich Road project must proceed ahead of the underpass project, the Village has stated that it was decoupled from the underpass project to seek **separate funding** from state and federal sources.

The Village has also stated – but not emphasized publicly – the fact that it desires to complete the Lake Zurich Road realignment first, so that the **traffic can be diverted instead off** Route 14 onto Lake Zurich Road during the underpass project. This means significantly more traffic will begin using the realigned Lake Zurich Road once the underpass project begins.

Funding for the Lake Zurich Road project

01

The Village has funding from its own coffers, as well as state and federal sources which are controlled by the Northwest Council of Mayors STP Program.

02

It is unclear when the Village must use the money or when it might lose that money – deadlines have shifted several times.

03

Village has estimated that this project would cost \$5.9 million, but that does not include the cost of land acquisition which currently is \$3.9 million.

The project – which the Village has pitched to the Library and the taxpayers as a \$5.9 million project -- is closer to \$9.8 million project or more.

The Library has budgeted \$964,900 for the parking lot project to be completed in two phases: (1) lower lot and (2) upper lot. The Village plans to only assist the Library with financial support for the lower lot.

**Funding for
the Lake
Zurich Road
project and
Library
parking lot**

INPUT FROM THE LIBRARY'S PROFESSIONALS ON THE PROJECT

Reports from the Library District's Architect, Engberg Anderson;
Landscape Architects, Conservation Design Forum;
and Appraiser, MaRous & Company

Input from Library's Outside Professionals – Consolidated Concerns

The project would transition the Library from “a library in the park” to “a library on the highway.”

FIVE MAIN AREAS OF CONCERN:

- Impaired Library use of remaining land
- Proximity of Route 14 and Lake Zurich Road to Library building
- Creation of negative experiences for patrons
- Design concerns and lack of control over project
- Destruction of park-like setting

No. 1: Impaired Library use of remaining land

- **Character and functionality of property altered by project** – decreased size of property and significant change to the shape of property
- **Impairs Library's future options for expansion** – “There is clearly decided value in maintaining options for future generations.”
- **Book drop off dilemmas** for location and proximity to building for staff
- **Water detention and storm water issues**
- **Parking issues**, particularly with the elevation problems with moving the parking to the east (and the water tower impediment) and consuming more remaining space
- Impaired snow removal and storage would **increase annual maintenance and operational costs** (by approximately \$24,000/year)

No. 2: Proximity of Route 14 and Lake Zurich Road to Library Building

1

Route 14 would be significantly closer to the Library building

2

Negatively affects character of building, particularly with the loss of landscaping buffer along Route 14 adjacent to building

3

Increased safety concerns with significantly more traffic near the building and pedestrian areas

4

Library's 1000 daily patrons will now be mixing with another 3600 plus vehicles from Lake Zurich Road



No. 3: Creation of an unsafe and negative experience for patrons

- **Catastrophic to Library operations** during construction of Lake Zurich Road for as much as five years, and then later during construction of underpass and widening of Northwest Highway for many more years – projects this size would cause most libraries to relocate operations during construction
- **Safety to patrons significantly undermined** by increased vehicle and pedestrian interaction in reconfigured parking lot and near the Library vicinity in general – unsafe situation for both pedestrians and cyclists
- **Dysfunctional visitor drop off** – “Passenger drop off experience becomes quite convoluted.”
- **Less direct access to the building and large traffic backups into the Library parking lot via a roundabout**
- **Noise level** in building will increase
- **Views negatively impacted** by loss of landscaping
- **Less convenient parking**

No. 4: Library campus design concerns

01

The Library will not have much control over design and construction once intergovernmental agreement is signed

02

The current design from the Village is “a design that prioritizes the expedient realignment of the road over other concerns”

03

Village’s design and advocacy for the project shows its lack of interest in or understanding of the Library operations and use

No. 5: Destruction of park-like setting – Library experience changes from “a library in the park” to “a library on a highway”

1

The Library puts significant value and importance in maintaining the extent and character of current landscape

2

Much of the Library’s physical identity is associate with the site and its heavily wooded character (tree form is iconic element in building’s design)

3

The Village’s proposal would include the removal of 282 trees, plus more trees and landscaping would need to be removed to accommodate construction – it will take decades to recover any of this beautiful wooded landscape

4

Proposed parking islands are too small and do not contain the minimum amount of trees required by the Village’s ordinance

Bottom line message from the Library's professionals:

1

Tremendous loss of character and value of the Library's property in this proposed transaction

2

This is on top of a reduced functionality of the site by the reduction in area of the Library's remaining property

3

There is nothing of value for the Library District in this proposed sale – it is a **SACRIFICE** and an **IMPAIRMENT OF THE LIBRARY DISTRICT'S FUTURE**

One additional note: the impact to the Library District's budget and levy process

- If the Library District receives \$3.9 million from the Village for this property, what impact does this have on the Library District's budget and levy process – particularly in regards to the expectations of our District taxpayers?
- If the Library District has no immediate use for the money (which it does not), the retention of those moneys in the Library District's general fund could be subject to a tax objection based on excessive accumulation of funds.
- **This puts the Library District in an impossible situation: would the District's taxpayers expect an abatement or return of tax money on future tax bills?**
- If the Library District foregoes a tax levy until it pays down the excess funds, it essentially erodes and eventually destroys its ability to properly levy a tax to continue library services into the future. This is the result of the tax cap on non-home rule public entities, like the Library District and the Village.

NEXT STEPS: IS THERE A PATH TO FINDING A SOLUTION?

Recommendations for moving forward



Next steps to finding safety solutions

Village should consider making Lake Zurich Road a “right only” intersection onto Northwest Highway, either at certain high traffic timeframes or permanently. If compliance is an issue, consider increase police enforcement or add concrete intersection barriers to prevent vehicles from making turns.

Use electronic signs from time to time to warn vehicles to slow down and be aware at Lake Zurich Road intersection.

Once the Library Board sells portions of its land, it cannot undo the damage. The value of the land is better maintained and more likely to improve if left intact.

As the underpass project moves closer to reality, is it time to consider a new location for the Library campus that better aligns the Library's services for its constituents in the 72-square mile Library District?

Possible future considerations for the Library District

Excerpts from emails and letter from community members who are AGAINST the project

“With the library needs constantly changing, I feel the library should have options to expand its facility. I also feel the library is not responsible for increasing the safety at the current Lake Zurich Rd/Rt. 14 intersection. I believe there are many other options that can be utilized to increase traffic safety. And finally, I believe that the amount of traffic on Lake Zurich Rd will significantly increase as it will be used as an alternative to Rt. 59. This increase in auto traffic will in turn significantly increase the chance of accidents, both pedestrian and vehicle, at the library site.”

Excerpts from emails and letter from community members who are AGAINST the project

“Rerouting all of that traffic right in front of the library is a recipe for disaster! The Village of Barrington has an agenda that is not beneficial to its people. . . . We are all aware that when you make roads more convenient for people, it brings more traffic. More traffic means more potential for serious consequences.”

Excerpts from emails and letter from community members who are AGAINST the project

“It’s my opinion that the proposed changes to your parking, and the road and drive realignments, will be responsible for some major negative impacts . . . I think it is more than fair to assume traffic on Lake Zurich Road will significantly increase as a consequence. . . This new routing onto highway 14 and points south in effect becomes an ‘easy’ shortcut, which will per the proposed plans virtually be at your ‘front door.’ . . . I believe the traffic volume changes will be dramatic. . . . If things get relocated, traffic into the library will enter the far end of your lot, then traverse circuitously to go to the main entry area. Major come and go / drop off traffic going through a parking aisle to exit is a prescription for accidents and fender-benders, and unlike the way the drive currently approaches the entry, just plain inconvenient, illogical, and undesirable. . . . I respectfully ask the Library Board hold it’s ground on this, and turn it down.”

Excerpts from emails and letter from community members who are AGAINST the project

“Rerouting traffic through citizens park and jewel park is not in the best interests of those Village neighborhoods. . . . The proposed changes won’t alleviate traffic along the route but rather extend and delay it . . . At a time when fiscal management in IL should be cautious and conservative this Village would like to go on a spending spree of fed state and local tax dollars that ought to be spent on other far more necessary projects.”

Excerpts from emails and letter from community members who are AGAINST the project

“Please be aware that not all residents of Barrington are in favor of the Lake Zurich road straightening project. Please hold your ground and vote against going ahead with this project.”

“I hope you stand strong and reject this proposal for the good of the library community.”

Excerpts from emails and letter from community members who are AGAINST the project

“I wholly oppose this project. I believe the Village Board is misleading residents regarding this project (as has happened with prior projects) and I also believe this project will have a detrimental impact on library visitors and neighbors.”

“We would just like to express our concerns that there is absolutely no need to the Library to sell their property at this time.”

“Knowing that this construction project will greatly impact the library and the surrounding area is very disappointing. . . I moved up from South Florida and decided to settle my family in Barrington because of the small town feel. This major infrastructure project will greatly impact the surrounding area and even home values.”

Excerpts from emails and letter from community members who are AGAINST the project

“The Library property has been entrusted to the Board for many years with the intention of preserving the green space and for future possible Library expansion. The taxpayers did not envision the Library property to be sacrificed for road development and traffic management. The taxpayers of the Library do not just include the residents of the Village. The sale of the Library property does NOTHING to enhance the Library property. If the Village was actually serious about the intersection of Lake Zurich Road at Route 14 [it] would have initiated those many years ago with the less costly and readily available solutions.”

Excerpts from emails and letter from community members who are AGAINST the project

“As residents who live in the surrounding neighborhoods, this realignment poses a severe threat to our neighborhood, as well as the safety of our children, as well as library patrons.”

“This would be a travesty! The Library taxpayer[s] and supporters did not envision the property donated and provided as well [as] entrusted to the Board would be confiscated by the Village for a project that is not warranted.”

Excerpts from emails and letter from community members who are AGAINST the project

“I urge you to vote Against the sale of Irreplaceable Library property to the Village of Barrington. It is of NO benefit to the Library. A major safety issue to the Patrons of the Library, CHILDREN, MOTHERS AND SENIORS. Mixing through traffic with parking Library traffic is very dangerous. The Village constantly misstates the number of accidents at the intersection of RT 14 and Lake Zurich road. The Mayor says ‘14 in the last 18 months; the Barrington Police Department, via a FOIA request says ‘9 accidents in the last 27 months.’”

Excerpts from emails and letter from community members who are AGAINST the project

“I can’t help but feel you are being bullied and humiliated in public over this realignment of LZ Rd. Please keep to your values and keep the library as it stands today.”

“I urge you to vote NO. This project was originally intended as the precursor to the intended roadway project on Rt. 14. In my several conversations with members of IDOT, this project truly may never happen. It is not even in their sights.”