



**2025 Annual Town Meeting
Article 29**

**Library Renovation: Young Adult Area Construction Frequently Asked Questions
Request: \$2,386,000**

Why do we need to renovate the library interior?

The last major renovation of the library was completed in 2004-6. Over the past 20 years library programs, collections and functions have shifted with the changes in technology, publishing, demographics of visitors, and library patron needs. The library spaces, seating, technology, audio, digital and hard copy collections need to be adjusted to respond to these transitions and prepare for the next two decades.

Was a Feasibility Study or Master Plan completed first?

Yes, the 2022 Annual Town Meeting appropriated \$60,000 to conduct a feasibility study for the library. The Final Report for the Needham Free Public Library Space Utilization Framework Study was completed by the designer, Utile, Inc., in August 2023. A full copy of the report is available at the library reference desk and on the Library's website: <https://needhamlibrary.org/nfpl-space-utilization-framework-study/>. This study started in conjunction with the library's FY2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Then the designer engaged in discussions with residents, patrons, staff, Library Trustees and Friends of the Library. Multiple issues were identified, and alternative designs were studied with conceptual cost estimates. Four priority projects were identified:

1. Create a new dedicated Teen Area on the second floor,
2. Provide an improved Children's Area on the first floor,
3. Improve the Rosemary Entrance and create a multipurpose room,
4. Improve the Highland Entrance and enhance staff workspace.

PROJECT SCOPE – Phase 1

What is the scope of the Phase I/Teen Room Renovation and Expansion?

The "Young Adult Room" was designed 20 years ago for fixed desktop computer use with a reference librarian's technological assistance. It is no longer adequately sized for all the teens that use the library. The built-in furniture is not flexible enough when most students have individual laptop computers. Overheating of the west-facing space in the afternoon is also an issue.

The renovation proposes expanding the Young Adult study area from 800sf to about 4,000sf on the second floor, constructing a new glass and solid wall to enclose a variety of seating options and collection stacks with a front desk for a young adult librarian. There will be four zones within the new space:

- 1) Craft Area
- 2) Lounge Area
- 3) Group work Area
- 4) Quiet Study area

Seating for over 90 people will include library carrels, clusters of reading chairs, and banquets with tables and adjustable seats. This will provide space for collaborative learning, laptop desks with recharging stations and quiet reading carrels, seating and a laptop study bar. Upgrades to the HVAC system, lighting, furniture, acoustics, and interior glazed enclosure are part of the plan.

Why was this chosen to be the first renovation project?

While most public libraries find it difficult to reach and engage with teen library patrons, the Needham Free Public Library is fortunate to be a go-to destination for many teens. In addition to the 70-100 teens using the Library to work on group projects or to study individually after school, attendance at teen programs and the use of the teen collection continues to grow. The immediate need for additional space for teens to study as well as for programming and for the collection led to this project being chosen as the first renovation project. Also, this project's design includes sound isolation, sound masking, and sound absorption.

Are there any changes to the exterior of the building?

No, all the proposed modifications will be inside the building. Some repairs / replacement of interior mechanical equipment will be included to address the temperature controls in the Quiet Study area.

Will temporary facilities be needed during the construction project?

No full-scale temporary facilities are anticipated currently during Phase 1 but some program offerings for teens will be held at nearby Town or community partner locations. Some collections will be relocated within the Library to enable construction. The plan is to start construction in September 2025 and be finished before February 2026.

How will the Library provide teen patrons with spaces, collections, and programs during the construction project?

During the construction project, the Library will be using the historic Bosworth Room near the Highland Avenue entrance to house part of the teen collection and to provide seating and tables for teens to study. In addition, the Library will reserve the large Community Room on weekdays after school lets out for teens to use to study. Also, part of the teen collection will be temporarily located on shelving in the reference department near the three study rooms. Teen programming will be held in the Community Room as well as at nearby Town and community partner locations.

During the construction project, will there be enough seating and tables for other patrons to use on the second floor?

Library staff have begun to plan the redistribution of the chairs and tables that are currently located within the construction zone to other areas within the Library in order to ensure we have enough seating available for all patrons to use during the six months of construction. Library staff will work to ensure the relocated chairs and tables do not encroach on clearances needed for ADA accessibility and to avoid overcrowding.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

What is the Phase I project schedule?

The estimated Phase I schedule is as follows:

- May 2024: Annual Town Meeting—Approved Design Funding (complete)
- Summer 2024: Schematic design and preliminary cost estimates (complete)
- Fall-Winter 2024: Detailed design, cost estimates and permitting (complete)
- March-April 2025: Public bidding process (complete)
- May 2025: Annual Town Meeting—Approval of Construction Funding
- June 2025: Contract award, review submittals, order long lead items
- Fall 2025 to Winter 2026: Construction of Phase 1

What is the proposed timing for future phases?

For the FY26-30 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), the library requested capital funding for the future phases on the following schedule:

Phase 2: FY27 design, FY28 construction

Phase 3: FY29 design, FY30 construction

Phase 4: FY31 design, FY32 construction

This sequence may be modified in future CIP submissions based on the availability of funds.

PROJECT COST & FINANCING

What is the expected cost of the project?

The current estimated budget for the library renovation (Phase I/Teen Room project) is \$2,960,000. Design funds were approved at May ATM 2024/Warrant Article #25 totaling \$454,000. Construction funding for Phase I at May ATM 2025/Warrant Article 29 is \$2,386,000. This will cover estimated construction costs, contingency, furniture, fixtures & equipment (FF&E), moving and soft costs. In addition, the Friends of Needham Public Library and the Library Foundation of Needham have generously offered \$120,000 for FF&E, if needed.

How will the project be funded?

This initial design phase was funded with Free Cash. Article 29 of 2025 Annual Town Meeting proposes that the Town funds construction of the project by borrowing \$2,386,000.

What are the projected costs for future phases of the library master plan?

The NFPL Space Utilization Framework Study Final Report provided project costs in August 2023 dollars. The cost of future phases needs to be escalated to the mid-point of construction.

What are the additional costs to the Town if the project is delayed?

The escalation rate is projected at 6% per year for future phases of the library renovations. This may vary depending upon future construction market conditions.