

Wauwatosa Library & City Hall Remodel Common Questions and Answers

Why is there not a referendum?

For a municipal capital project like City Hall or the library, the Common Council has the legal authority and responsibility to manage the city's capital budget and borrowing. Wauwatosa would be able to pay for this remodel using the capital budget (taxpayer dollars), grant dollars, and private donations.

Why is there not a “do nothing” option?

Choosing to do nothing would still result in significant taxpayer costs just to fund emergency repairs, without fixing the space constraints or safety issues. Option 1 serves as the baseline, focus-on-maintenance option.

Are the renderings representative of the final design?

No, the current renderings are conceptual. They are intended to show the scale, layout, and possibilities for each option, rather than the final architecture or interior finishes. Once a path/option is selected by the city, the formal design phase will begin. Public input will continue to shape what the building and spaces look like.

What would happen to the library during construction?

This will be complex, no matter which option is chosen. Depending on the final option selected, construction might be phased to keep parts of the library open, or a temporary, scaled-down library space would be established elsewhere in the city.

Would the city consider a private/public partnership? (housing or commercial mixed with the city building)

Yes, the city is open to public-private partnerships. We studied this about 10 years ago. The analysis found that while a public-private partnership could offset some of the costs of a new municipal building, it was not financially advantageous overall.

However, conditions change, and we are open to evaluating new opportunities. Any future partnership would need to make sense both structurally (ex: whether the library can physically support housing or commercial space above it) and economically.

Right now, our priority is maintaining and replacing aging public facilities. If the Council wants to explore private development in a future phase, that can certainly be considered.