

FREIGHTWAY FAQ



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We want to hear from you!
Send your comments and questions to:
freightway@scarsdale.com

FREIGHTWAY FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

December 2019

1. WHAT IS THE FREIGHTWAY SITE?

- The Freightway Site is approximately 2.5 acres of Village owned land south of the Popham Road Bridge and west of the Metro-North train tracks and is primarily utilized for commuter permit parking. The center of the Site is occupied by the aging and unsightly 5-story Freightway Garage.
- The Freightway Garage, built in 1971, requires an investment of approximately \$2.5 million over the next 3 years to provide critical repairs and renovations.
- Within another 8 to 10 years, the Garage will require more extensive rehabilitation and possibly a complete replacement at a cost well in excess of \$25 million.

2. WHY ARE WE DISCUSSING A REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SITE NOW? IS IT BECAUSE OF THE NEEDED REPAIRS?

- A potential redevelopment of this site has been discussed for decades. Most recently, the focus of a public-private partnership to develop the site has been to: (i) eliminate taxpayer liability for necessary garage repairs, (ii) defray costs for and provide Scarsdale with new enhanced parking, (iii) generate a net fiscal benefit to the community, and (iv) add vitality to our Village Center.
- Transit-oriented developments (TODs) have been used and are being examined by many of our neighbors and countless communities throughout the country to enhance vibrancy, livability, walkability, and sustainability near public transportation hubs.

3. ARE WE LIMITED TO THE TWO DESIGNS PRESENTED?

- We are not forced to choose between the two designs currently proposed. The designs are conceptual and preliminary. We hope to hear from all residents about which elements of each project might be more or less appealing. The community's priorities have informed the project to date and we seek as much additional

feedback as possible before we enter negotiations with the preferred developer.

4. WILL THE FREIGHTWAY PROJECT HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON MY TAXES?

- One of the primary goals of redeveloping the Freightway Site is to provide a fiscal benefit to the community. And, the community includes the Village and the School District. This has to be the right course of action for the community as a whole.

5. IS THIS MY LAST CHANCE TO BE HEARD? CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE PROCESS AND NEXT STEPS?

- Maximizing resident participation has been, and will continue to be, an essential part of the effort to redevelop the Freightway Site.

VILLAGE BOARD NEXT STEPS

- Meet to discuss presentations; synthesize preliminary community feedback; develop questions for finalists
- Collect community feedback through February 9, 2020
- Visit sites developed by the finalists and continue due diligence into each team
- Review and discuss the totality of the community input and use the data to further develop and enhance questions for the finalists
- Interview the finalists
- Discuss/evaluate all quantitative and qualitative information collected about each finalist and the teams' proposals
- Select a Preferred Developer

6. WHAT HAPPENS AFTER 60 DAYS? DOES THE DEVELOPER TAKE OVER? IF SO, THIS SEEMS LIKE A DONE DEAL.

- This is far from a done deal.
- The methodical process is intended to show the community the best option to develop the Freightway site. There will be a lot of expert analysis and community conversations that need to happen before we get there.
- And once there, it will have to be clear that any such plan



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is the better option instead of simply repairing the garage.

7. WHAT WILL THE PREFERRED DEVELOPER DO ONCE SELECTED?

- Negotiate and execute a non-binding term sheet with the Village that outlines primary terms and deliverables.
- Perform property-level due diligence with Village oversight. This will help the Village and preferred developer better understand and define the options for a final design.
- In conjunction with the Village, confirm and present a refined development plan for community review and feedback.
 - The plan presented at this point will have been influenced and modified due to community input, Village Board feedback, negotiations, and site due diligence findings.
 - The Village (with expert consultant(s)) will have conducted an in-depth economic analysis of the proposed project's impact on the community. This fiscal impact analysis will be shared with the public.
- Finalize and execute Public-Private Partnership/Land Disposition Contract with the Village
 - Even though a contract might exist, the project will still undergo a required thorough environmental review process (SEQRA) where the impact of many issues will be studied and scrutinized by all stakeholders including, but not limited to, school, traffic, parking and noise – during construction and on a long-term basis. Such reviews, including review by the Village's expert land use consultants, and approvals by Village

Staff and Resident Land Use Boards are still necessary and will include community input. Any contract would be subject to the SEQRA review.

8. WHAT ABOUT PARKING AT FREIGHTWAY?

- As expressed in the 2018 Freightway Site Redevelopment Study's Vision Statement, "Any future development at the Freightway site should [maintain] its current function as a commuter lot." There is an expectation that there will be no net reduction in the resident parking capacity after redevelopment of Freightway is complete.

9. YOU ARE REQUIRING AN INCREASE IN PARKING? AREN'T PARKING GARAGES ABOUT TO BE OBSOLETE?

- There are a wide range of opinions as to the overall impact of autonomous vehicles and ride sharing programs. Scholars regularly debate when individual automobile ownership will no longer be necessary.
- None of us can be certain whether this transformation in personal transportation will happen over the next 10 or 50 years but, we can all agree that it is expected to happen.
- The Village of Scarsdale has been concerned with this trend and how it should impact the design of a potential redevelopment for years. The Freightway Steering Committee spent time discussing this in 2017 as well as the ability to repurpose garage spaces for other uses (also known as anticipatory retrofitting).
- The Village Board has spoken with a ride sharing service for possible solutions during construction but also to understand whether residents would accept such an option in the future.

10. THEN YOU ARE REDUCING THE NUMBER OF SPACES?

- The Village Board is looking at many options but



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reducing spots doesn't automatically equal a reduction in parking capacity. Other strategies, including additional reliance on valet, other parking consolidation measures and ride sharing options will also be considered and discussed by the community.

- Constructing parking spaces is very costly. A reduction in spots can allow a developer to invest that money in additional public benefits and/or provide a more attractive economic benefit to the Village.

11. I LIVE/WORK/SHOP/COMMUTE NEAR THE SITE. AM I GOING TO WANT TO AVOID THE VILLAGE CENTER DURING CONSTRUCTION?

- Realistically, some inconvenience is inevitable in order to redevelop the site.
- The Village is focused on these issues and has already begun discussing potential options to minimize inconvenience with the development teams.
- Not only will this be a topic during negotiations with the preferred developer, but SEQRA's environmental review will include a comprehensive study of construction impacts on the area and allow stakeholders to have input.

12. WHAT ABOUT OUR SCHOOLS?

- The Board of Education has been involved in the Freightway process since its inception. A member of the Board of Education served on the Freightway Steering Committee during 2017-2018.
- Regular meetings take place with the School District where Freightway is discussed. The last such meeting was on December 10, 2019.
- The potential for impacts to the School District will be a critical consideration. The assessment of school impacts cannot be completed until there

is a specific project proposed. School impact will also be evaluated in the economic impact analysis referred to above and shared with the community.

13. ISN'T THERE TOO MUCH TRAFFIC IN THE VILLAGE CENTER ALREADY?

- Traffic can certainly be heavy, particularly as trains arrive in Scarsdale during the evening rush hour. Redevelopment of the Freightway Site is expected to improve vehicular circulation at the Freightway Site compared to the existing conditions.
- Evaluating on and off-site impacts to traffic circulation is a consideration when selecting a developer and during negotiations and will also be an important component of the environmental review process.

14. WHAT HAPPENS IF WE DO NOT MOVE FORWARD WITH A REDEVELOPMENT OF THE FREIGHTWAY SITE?

- The Village will have to conduct ongoing repairs and potential replacement of the Freightway Garage at taxpayer expense.
- If Freightway is not redeveloped, the Village will not reap the potential benefits associated with TODs such as enhanced vitality, improved connectivity and place-making within our Village Center.
- We will also forgo any recurring net tax benefit and other public amenities.

15. WILL THE PROJECT HAVE RENTALS OR CONDOS?

- The type of housing that is built at the site has not been finalized. Based on all of the responses to the Village's Request for Proposals (RFP), the market has demonstrated that rental units are strongly preferred relative to condominium or co-op units. Therefore, a mix that favors rental units might provide the best economic value for the



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Village.

16. YOU STATE THAT ANY PROJECT MUST PROVIDE A NET FISCAL BENEFIT. WHY IS THERE TALK ABOUT CURRENT TAXPAYERS SUBSIDIZING THE PROJECT AND WHAT IS HOMESTEAD?

- The Village Board is viewing the net fiscal benefit of a potential project as a net gain to the collective interest of the School District and the Village relative to the status quo (the expected costs of not undertaking the redevelopment of the Freightway site).
- Homestead is an option for any community in New York State immediately following a municipal wide revaluation. It allows municipalities to apply different tax rates to residential and commercial real estate. It also classifies condominiums as residential and therefore assesses such units at full market value.
- Since there is no revaluation currently planned for Scarsdale, Homestead is not an option for the current Board of Trustees. It would therefore be unwise and potentially detrimental to the value of our land for the current Board to take a position on Homestead at this time. But, a future Board will have to make a decision about Homestead once the next revaluation has been conducted.
- It is worth repeating that any potential development must have a net positive fiscal impact on our community. All figures used in economic studies will be based on our current tax structure.

17. WHY ARE ALL DISCUSSIONS NOT DONE IN PUBLIC?

- Public officials conducting business in public is an integral part of our democratic system. New York

has specific code dedicated to ensuring that this occurs. It is known as the Open Meetings Law (“OML”).

- The Board of Trustees embraces the OML and insists that every action it takes complies or exceeds the standards set by it.
- But, the the OML contains specific exceptions where a legislative body is able to hold meetings in Executive Session or behind closed doors.
- One such example, and applicable to the Freightway project, is found in Article 7, Section 105(g) of the Public Officer Law. It makes Executive Session an option when the subject matter of a meeting deals with “the proposed...sale...of real property...when publicity would substantially affect the value thereof.”
- The Board of Trustees are fiduciaries of the public and must act to ensure that if a redevelopment of the site occurs, that the Village is positioned to receive the best economic benefit.
- Publicizing too much information could allow developers to adapt their strategies to the Village’s detriment. The Village could effectively be negotiating against itself.
- The Village Board acknowledges that the confidential nature of the process might be frustrating for some members of the community (and at times the Village Board as well). Please rest assured that an additional presentation to the community of the revised Freightway Site Project (including an analysis of fiscal implications) will take place before a contract is executed with the Preferred Developer.





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