



## VILLAGE OF SCARSDALE

December 09, 2019

### *Open Letter to the Scarsdale Community*

Dear Scarsdale community,

The Village Board of Trustees is pleased to invite residents, merchants, and others to a community meeting about the proposed redevelopment of the Freightway parking garage site on Wednesday, December 11, at 7 pm in Rutherford Hall at Village Hall.

The idea for a potential project on this site has been discussed for decades. The recent interest has been rooted in two widespread trends: (i) aging infrastructure and (ii) weakening community retail hubs.

First, the Village owns the Freightway site and, based on an engineering study of the parking structure, the community is facing estimated costs of approximately \$2.5 million over the coming three years to repair, maintain and improve the nearly 50 year-old structure. Those repairs are expected to carry the structure for the next 8-10 years, at which time more significant expenditures are expected to be required.

Second, retail trends have not been kind to local merchants as e-commerce giants make it harder and harder for brick and mortar retail to survive. This is occurring throughout the country and unfortunately, our Village Center is not immune.

The fact that the Village owns the Freightway site, well-located by the train station, is a potential asset for Scarsdale. Any development would be expected to upgrade our primary commuter parking facility and enhance our Village Center overall. Transit-oriented developments (TODs) have been used and are being examined by some of our neighbors and countless communities throughout the country to enhance vibrancy, livability, walkability, and sustainability near public transportation hubs. This community discussion of the potential redevelopment of the Freightway site is an important opportunity to defray significant taxpayer costs while upgrading our primary commuter parking facility and enhancing our Village Center.

The Board of Trustees has selected AvalonBay Communities and a team led by LCOR and East End Capital as the two finalist development teams in the competition to be named the preferred developer of the Freightway site. Both development teams are highly qualified, and we are impressed with each team's commitment to this lengthy process.

The Board remains committed to seeking extensive community input, and we encourage residents and merchants to attend this community meeting. It will be an opportunity for the community to: (i) hear from both finalist teams, (ii) see preliminary design concepts for the project, and (iii) comment on your priorities and preferences for the development plans.

I am proud to be working with a talented and dedicated Board of Trustees who have rolled up their sleeves and committed significant time to this project. We have rigorous criteria for selection that includes the developer's track record, financial wherewithal, development programming, and the demonstrated ability to successfully partner with municipal governments. We take this responsibility and opportunity very seriously.

The Board remains focused on key issues that matter to the community, such as potential impacts on parking, schools, and traffic, as well as the effect on the Village budget – revenues and expenses. These matters have been discussed at every step and will now take an even more prominent role in our discussions. The Board is also considering the ramifications of the development program on open space and other public amenities, connectivity between the east and west sides of our Village Center, and the context of the development within our Village Center – one of the prize gems of our Village.

Scarsdale, we want to hear from you. We are keeping the public comment period open until February 09, which is a period of 60 days following the community meeting. If you are not able to attend the meeting on December 11, we encourage you to watch the video on TV or online as well as visit Village Hall, where poster boards will be available for viewing throughout this period. There will be comment cards available at Village Hall and residents may also comment via email – at [freightway@scarsdale.com](mailto:freightway@scarsdale.com) – or through a dedicated link that will be available on the Village website, [www.scarsdale.com](http://www.scarsdale.com), beginning December 11. During this public comment period, the Village will continue its due diligence on the two finalists with visits to comparable properties they have developed, as well as meeting with the two finalists to probe further on financial components of the development plan, among other things.

There is still much work to do to create a reimagined Freightway site, and there will be many more opportunities for the public to give feedback on the development plan as it evolves over the coming year and beyond. Your input has been instrumental to get us to where we are, and we will need your voices to continue to help guide us into the future. We hope you can join us on Wednesday, December 11.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MS', is positioned above the name of the signatory.

Marc Samwick Mayor