



## VILLAGE OF SCARSDALE

### **Mayoral Community Update**

*COVID-19 and Other Information: June 10, 2021*

Dear Scarsdale community,

In the brief time that I have served as Mayor, I have been deeply moved by the dedication of Village staff and Board colleagues to quality of life and service delivery excellence. All have demonstrated a strong desire to listen to feedback and make an appreciable difference in the lives of our residents. I am also greatly impressed by the energy and enthusiasm of our volunteer boards and councils and the time community members devote to helping to productively shape public policy, exchange ideas and collaborate to achieve shared goals.

The kindness and giving spirit of our community makes Scarsdale among the best places to live, work, and play. Based on your feedback, I understand that you find these updates informative and appreciate coverage of both immediate news as well as plans for the future. I will now cover some timely topics of community interest, beginning with a COVID-19 update.

#### **COVID-19**

It is great news that the pandemic metrics continue to trend downward. On January 14, 2021, there were over 1,000 new positives in Westchester County; on June 12, there were only 21. County-wide, there are presently 333 active cases, only two of which are in Scarsdale.

In response to significantly improved public health metrics, New York adopted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) "[Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#)," applicable to most businesses and public settings. The state also published related [Implementation Guidance](#). Governor Cuomo recently [reported](#) that once 70% of New Yorkers aged 18 or older have received the first dose of their COVID-19 vaccination series, all COVID-19 public health mandates will be suspended for most activities and businesses; as of June 13, the NYSDOH [reports](#) a 67.3% vaccination rate.

In the Scarsdale area, roughly [68%](#) of persons 12 and older have been vaccinated, which suggests room for improvement. Please get vaccinated and make sure that your children ages 12 through 17 do, as well.

To incentivize increased vaccination rates amongst persons ages 12 through 17, the State of New York has launched the "[Get A Shot To Make Your Future](#)" campaign. Parents or legal guardians of any New Yorker ages 12 through 17 can enter their child who has received at least their first COVID-19 vaccine dose for a chance to win one of 50 four-year, full-ride scholarships (including tuition, fees, room-and-board, and expenses) to any New York State public college or

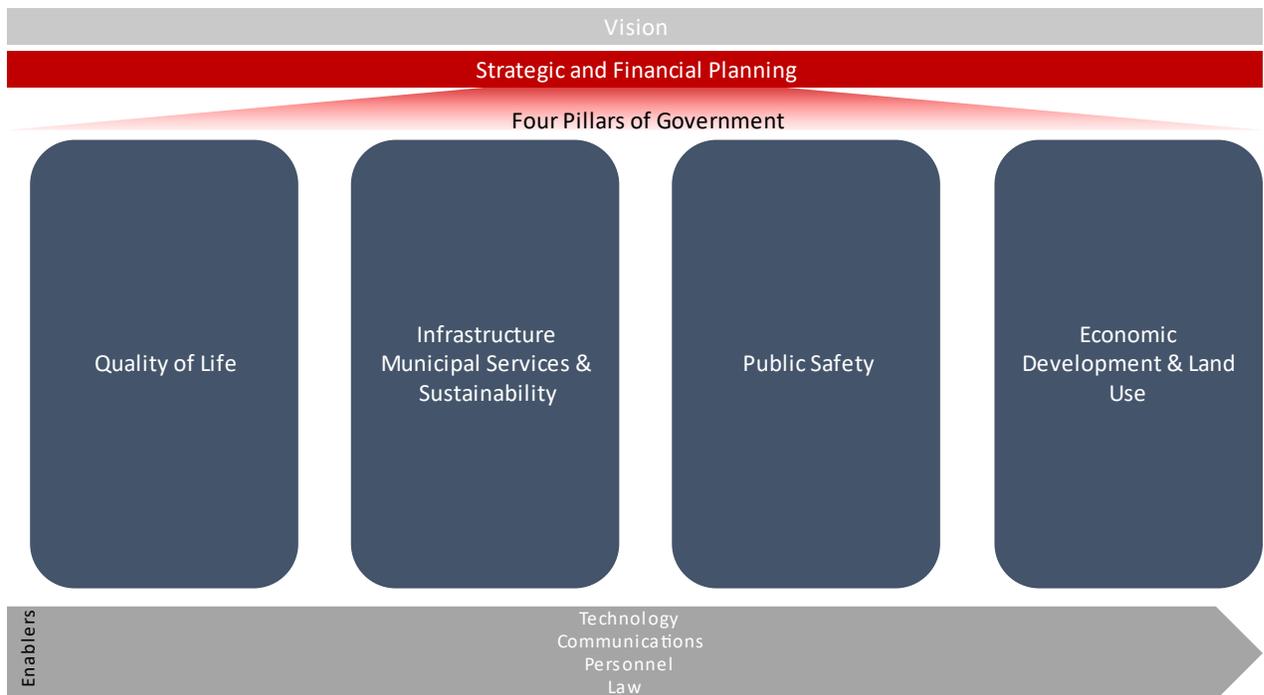
university. Be sure to [register soon](#), as only three additional weekly drawings of ten scholarships remain – the next entry deadline is today, June 14, 2021, at 11:59:59 PM.

### *Scarsdale Volunteer Ambulance Corp Services (SVAC)*

As a reminder, please note that SVAC continues to offer in-home COVID-19 vaccinations for home-bound persons, as vaccine is made available. Appointments may be scheduled by calling SVAC at 914.722.2288 or by email using [covid@scarsdalevac.com](mailto:covid@scarsdalevac.com). From time-to-time, SVAC may also receive vaccine for members of the public, 18 years of age or older. To be placed on a waiting list to receive a vaccine at their office, as supplies are available, or to schedule an appointment for COVID-19 testing, please use the same contact information provided above. Importantly, SVAC has not only been a lifeline throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, but the organization provides life safety services to our community every day – for over 40 years! We are incredibly lucky to be served by a volunteer ambulance service and our community’s philanthropic generosity enables them to continue to operate. Visit SVAC online at <http://www.scarsdalevac.com/> to learn more.

Next, I will share the latest information about how the Village Board and staff have been operationalizing the Strategic and Financial Planning framework. As you may recall from my last update, the framework is a structured approach for transitioning to a model for 21<sup>st</sup> century governance, including enhanced governmental effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability.

### **Strategic and Financial Planning Framework**



While the background information I am providing is repeated from my last update, I believe it is important to restate the purpose and philosophy driving development and implementation of the framework, as some readers may not have had the opportunity to read my last Community

Update. Persons familiar with the background are encouraged to skip down to the *Current Status* overview.

## *Background*

Linking strategic and financial planning is critical to high performing organizations, whether public or private. One of the most publicly valued aspects of local government, as contrasted against business or larger units of government, is that members of the community have direct access to policy makers, administrators, and staff. Among other benefits, this high level of access supports short feedback loops, resulting in the ability to demonstrate responsiveness to immediate community needs. However, sometimes the day-to-day demands become all-consuming. Policymakers, administration, and staff may be pulled in many different directions in a reactive rather than proactive posture, sometimes leaving chronic problems unattended or resulting in strategic opportunities lost.

21<sup>st</sup> century local governance calls for a new paradigm, one that not only continues to provide a high level of public access, emphasizing transparency and public engagement, but also demonstrates the foresight and capacity for strategically identifying and seizing opportunities for improvement. With great anticipation for the future, I am pleased to convey that this is the path your Village government will pursue.

The graphic displayed above highlights our Four Pillars of Government: Quality of Life; Infrastructure, Municipal Services, and Sustainability; Public Safety; and, Economic Development and Land Use. Each of the Pillars embeds policy-level and administrative leadership to shape and advance related goals and objectives. One should also note the cross-cutting Enablers, which are Technology, Communications, Personnel, and Law. Collectively, these themes constitute foundational elements supporting the Pillars. Finally, our financial and staff resources are being aligned to support identified priorities, including such near-term Special Assignments as the Village Manager Recruitment, the Pool Complex Condition Assessment and Market Study, and the Village Center and Residential Safety and Mobility Study.

## *Current Status*

The Village Board held a [public work session on June 01](#) to discuss operationalizing the Strategic and Financial Planning framework, including the establishment of goals, objectives, and tactics, as well as their associated implementation priorities. The framework is outcome focused, will be supported by metrics to track progress, and identify any need for modification to our tactics, and reflect feasible community priorities.

To that end, each of the Trustee working group Chairs identified in the framework have been requested to:

1. Convene their working group to coalesce around goals, objectives, tactics, and priorities. To support this assignment, the June 01 presentation included examples for each Pillar and provided a suggested prioritization method.

2. Coordinate with Village staff in completing the tasks identified in (1). Staff needs and perspectives are important in considering several factors, including feasibility, resource constraints, and implementation timing. As staff will ultimately be responsible for carrying out most of the tasks identified, partnership and early engagement are essential to sustained progress in pursuing our shared goals.
3. Continue to emphasize community engagement and maximize opportunity for residents to shape and influence the framework, which is an iterative process. For example, we can collect feedback through our collective community connections, participation in Scarsdale Neighborhood Association (SNAP) meetings, conversations with community-based organizations, informal events, such as Coffee with the Mayor, and more. We want to listen to the community and have our work products reflect their input.

While we continue to flesh out the planning details of the framework, the Pillar working groups and staff continue to diligently advance our Special Assignments, which include the Pool Complex Study, Village Center Safety and Mobility Center Study, and the Village Manager Recruitment, as well as collaborate with staff to identify and implement cross-cutting strategies within the Enablers, which include Technology, Communications, Personnel, and Law.

To illustrate, a copy of the draft RFP for the Pool Complex study will be presented by the Pool working group for review and consideration by the full Board at our [work session tomorrow](#), after which we anticipate bid solicitation in July. The collaborative process used in developing the RFP is worth noting, as it mirrors our approach used in other facets of developing and operationalizing the framework. The Special Assignment working group worked in partnership with a multidisciplinary team to identify project goals and used an iterative process to develop a draft RFP. Subsequently, they researched potential consultants to target with the RFP. Once a vendor is selected, the Village Board, public, and staff will have all had some level of involvement in shaping this important phase of the Pool Complex project, rather than the former model of engaging the Board and public primarily at time of contract award. While the Special Assignments continue to advance, other fast-tracked implementation efforts parallel refinement of the Strategic and Financial Planning framework.

Cooperating with staff, the Technology Pillar working group examined opportunities to increase operational efficiencies, reduce transaction cycle times, improve the quality and accuracy of our reporting, and deliver improved internal customer experiences. Through an expansion of our financial and human resources software capabilities, the Village will automate manual processes. On May 25, the Village Board approved a resolution authorizing the purchase of necessary software and implementation scheduling is underway.

Routine work sessions focused on our Strategic and Financial Planning Framework have been scheduled, and members of the Scarsdale community are encouraged to check the [Village Board calendar](#) for upcoming dates and times. Please take time to participate and have your voice heard.

## **Village Manager Recruitment**

By the May 24 deadline, the Village's search firm GovHR received 56 applications for the Village Manager position. Since then, GovHR conducted further vetting and follow-up, having narrowed the field to the top 14 candidates. GovHR is now performing extensive background checks, social and mass media searches, reference calls, and zoom interviews. To support the interview process, the Board and GovHR developed carefully crafted questions specific to Scarsdale needs, reflecting the input we received on the community survey. After the completion of this evaluation round, the Board will receive a full report from GovHR.

The next step will be a comprehensive review and discussion to identify the top candidates who will be invited to advance to the next round. The Board anticipates conducting in person interviews the week of July 19. The Board will also provide an opportunity for staff and the public to meet the top candidates and to offer their input.

The following are some brief items of note.

## **Timely Snippets of Community Interest**

### *Property Tax Bills*

Watch the mail for your Village Tax first installment bill, which gets mailed July 01. To avoid the prospect of a significant late penalty for failure to remit the second installment on-time, property owners may pay the full amount due rather than paying in two installments. Please that property owners may now register parcel(s) [online](#) to receive tax receipts, bills, and reminders via email for Village, School, and County property taxes!

### *Tentative Assessment Roll*

The 2021 Tentative Assessment Roll has been filed and is available [online](#). Our [press release](#) issued on May 26, 2021, provides details about the grievance process if you are interested in contesting your assessment. Grievance hearings will take place via Zoom on June 15, 2021.

### *Library Hours*

The Scarsdale Library no longer requires appointments and patrons may now visit any time during normal business hours, which are:

- Monday & Wednesday: 9 AM to 8 PM
- Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 9 AM to 6 PM
- Saturday: 9 AM to 5 PM
- Closed Sundays

While curbside pickup services have been eliminated, the library will make exceptions if needed. At this time, there are no capacity restrictions and both social distancing and masks are

still required. Please also note that there is a 30-minute time limit in the café, where masks are not required while eating or drinking.

### *Parks, Recreation, and Conservation*

Pool Permits: Have you bought your pool membership yet? Enjoy and support this treasured community asset by [purchasing](#) one today!

Day Camp: We still have openings for all camps, except travel camp. Our summer Camp will run from Tuesday 7/6 through Friday 8/6 – [reserve](#) a spot today!

Westchester Band: There will be six weekly concerts on Thursdays, starting July 01. Each concert will begin at 8:00 PM and end at 10:00 PM. In the event of rain, the concert will be canceled, as we do not have an alternate venue this year. Any necessary rain cancellation will be announced by 4:00 PM on concert day.

Pickleball: Yes, Pickleball! PRC is developing a pilot program for the Brite Avenue platform tennis courts – stay tuned for more info.

July 04: Unfortunately, the regulatory environment in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic precluded planning for a July 04 fireworks event at the Scarsdale Pool Complex. As is the case with other communities, PRC staff are exploring the options for a celebration later in the year.

Outdoor Mask Mandate: Consistent with public health guidance, masks are no longer required. However, unvaccinated persons are encouraged to continue to wear a mask. Of note, neither field sport athletes nor spectators are required to wear a mask.

### **Items Worth Repeating**

#### *Peak Water Usage Season – Monitor and Conserve Now!*

As the lawn irrigation season gets underway, don't forget that the base water rate for all customers is increased 3%, effective June 01, 2021. To avoid the stress of receiving an expensive water bill in August and thereafter, water users are strongly encouraged to amplify their water conservation measures. Take time to review our online [Conservation Tips](#), particularly those related to leaks and outdoor water use – the major drivers of exceptionally high bills.

Invariably, there is community angst when water bills spike with increased outdoor use during the watering season. Keep in mind that there is a lag between usage and billing, which sometimes causes confusion over a high bill. To illustrate, the August billing includes usage from mid-March through mid-June, with mid-June through mid-August not being billed until November. It is relatively easy to track your water consumption between billings – be proactive and don't wait to be surprised well after your ability to control your bill has passed.

Adopting conservation measures and proactive usage monitoring now can help to reduce or eliminate water bill sticker shock later. Leaks can be extraordinarily expensive.

### *Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Law*

Supporting the Quality of Life Pillar of our Strategic and Financial Framework, the Village Code was amended to further restrict use of gas-powered blowers, effective May 01, 2021. Elements of the new law are summarized below.

#### *Gas-Powered Leaf Blower Law Summary*

##### For 2021

May 01, 2021 – September 30, 2021: **DO NOT** use a gas-powered leaf blower.

October 01, 2021 – December 31, 2021: **CAN** use ***Monday through Friday***, but ***not*** on federal holidays.

##### For 2022 and Thereafter

January 01 through September 30: **DO NOT** use a gas-powered leaf blower.

October 01 through December 31: **CAN** use ***Tuesday through Friday***, but ***not*** on federal holidays.

*\* Electric or battery-powered leaf blowers are allowed year-round \**

To report a violation on a Monday through Friday between 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, please call the Building Department at (914) 722-1140. At any other time, please report the violation to the Scarsdale Police Department non-emergency number, (914) 722-1200.

Please help to educate any landscaper you hire about the law and demand compliance when work is being performed on your property. Violations are now subject to receiving a summons, which we hope to avoid but will not hesitate to issue. Also, be sure to consider mulch mowing as an alternative to blowing landscaping debris and leaves.

### **News on the Horizon**

There are several percolating projects and issues as related below.

#### *Village Center: Boniface Circle Furniture and Dine the Dale tent*

As part of our continuing efforts to activate public spaces in the Village Center, watch for new seating amenities to be provided in Boniface Circle park. Please also take a look at the beautiful planters adorning our Dine the 'Dale tent. SHS art students used their talent to brighten our space. The Dine the 'Dale tent is a happening spot with outdoor tables and periodic musical performances.

Also, if you have any ideas for activating Village Center public spaces, please feel free to email me using [mayor@scarsdale.com](mailto:mayor@scarsdale.com).

### *Annual Sidewalk Sale*

Mark your calendars for the Annual Sidewalk Sale scheduled in the Village Center from Wednesday, July 28, 2021, through Saturday, July 31, 2021. We'll issue a reminder as the event approaches, including more details. We're also hoping to welcome back the popular Chalk the 'Dale event during that week. Suffice it to say that we're happy to see the event return this year, and it will be great to see everyone back in the 'Dale!

### *Marijuana Legislation*

Join the Village Board at 5:00 PM tomorrow, Tuesday, June 15, to learn about key decisions our community needs to make this year in response to cannabis legalization in New York. The Village's legal counsel, Dan Pozin, of McCarthy Fingar LLP, will present an overview of the new law and highlight local implications requiring community and Village Board consideration. For more information, please read our [June 04 press release](#).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jane E. Veron', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Jane E. Veron  
Mayor