



VILLAGE OF SCARSDALE

## Mayoral Community Update

November 09, 2021

Dear Scarsdale community,

Scarsdale in the fall is breathtaking.

Walking the Bronx River trail, driving through our tree-lined streets, or enjoying an outdoor meal in the Village Center, the colors of fall dramatically enhance our visual experience and reinforce our collective embrace of Scarsdale as the *Village in a Park*. We owe a great debt of gratitude for the planning foresight our community displayed in cultivating such a special place, as well as to every resident and business for their efforts to maintain the aesthetic appeal that helps to distinguish Scarsdale as a premier place to call home.

Your local government – the elected officials, staff, and volunteer boards and councils comprising the Village of Scarsdale – are stewards of the Scarsdale experience. Through active listening, caring and deliberate action, and a commitment to public service excellence, we faithfully discharge our responsibilities to be fiscally responsible, forward-thinking in our efforts to navigate change, and responsive to community needs and expectations.

One of the hallmarks of the Scarsdale civic experience is that our community members – experts in their respective fields of personal and professional endeavor – positively and productively engage in local government affairs to effect positive change. As a result of such insightful and expert engagement, our policies are improved, the projects we deliver are more strategic and well-aligned with community-supported outcomes, and we experience greater success in overcoming challenges. The strength and capabilities of our community shine when we collaborate with one another to maintain and enhance our community character and our local quality of life.

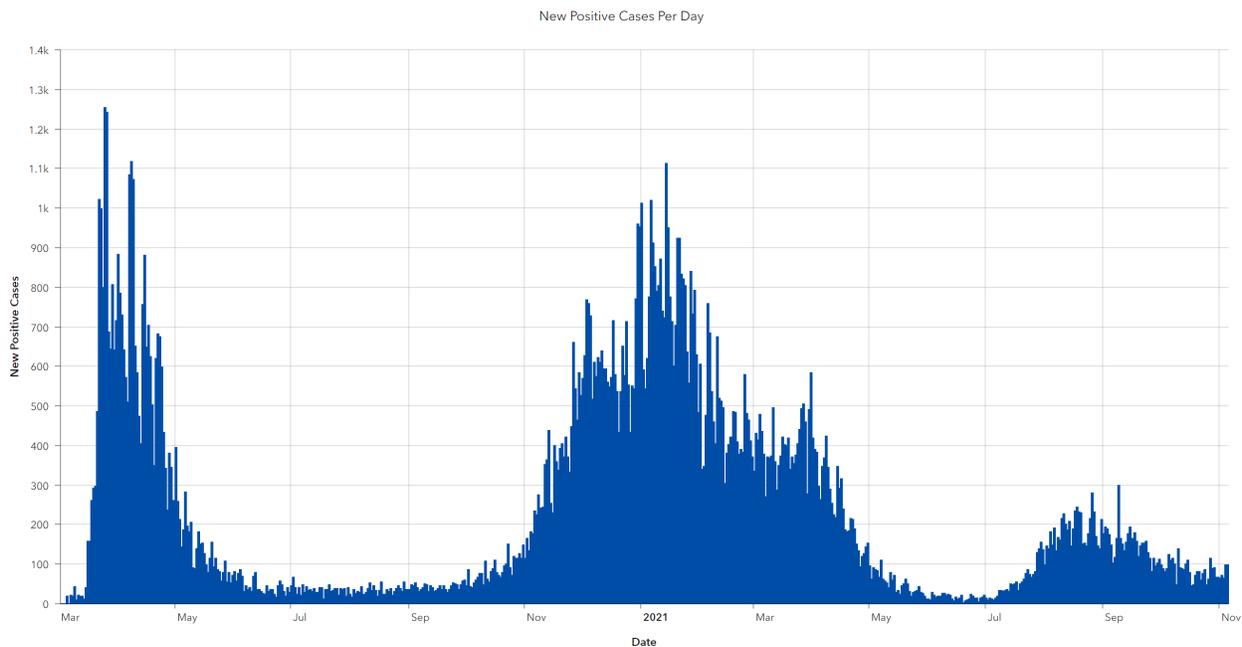
In the coming months, the Village will be asking each of you to be our partners in charting the future. Two priority studies are getting underway, the Scarsdale Pool Complex Study and the Village Center Mobility and Placemaking Study. Both projects will exert multi-generational influence on the Scarsdale experience. At the same time, and with a focus on transparency and emphasizing outcome-orientation, we are beginning to reimagine our annual budget process. All the while, we will continue to tackle problems both simple and complex, both as an organization and a community – we are strongest in partnership and I look forward to working with each of you to advance our priority projects, navigating and overcoming any challenges that may arise along the way.

I will now cover some timely topics of community interest, starting with a COVID-19 update.

## COVID-19

As mentioned in my last letter, the Village Board and staff are sometimes asked about COVID-19 information and trends. To help interested community members to access this sort of information at their discretion, please note the following online resources, which are the same information sources that we rely upon:

[Westchester County COVID-19 Dashboard](#) (Note that Google Chrome does not perform well)  
[CDC County Data Tracker](#) (Shows county-level COVID transmission rates)  
[NYSDOH COVID Data Portal](#) (Catalog of NYSDOH COVID Data)



The image captioned above is a screenshot depicting new cases per day, as presented on the Westchester County COVID-19 Dashboard (November 07, 2021). As you will note, the total number of cases per day this year (83) is lower than it was at this time last year (234).

### *Boosters*

As you have likely heard, a booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine helps currently eligible persons to maximize their protection, prolong the vaccine's durability, and protect those at higher risk of infection and severe disease. Booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine are free and widely available statewide for eligible New Yorkers. Because booster information is regularly updated, please be sure to check the New York State Department of Health [Booster Doses](#) website for eligibility and other important information. If you're eligible, please get your booster.

## *Vaccinations for Children Aged 5-11*

On October 29, 2021, the Food and Drug Administration granted Emergency Use Authorization for the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for children aged 5–11 years. Subsequently, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices made an interim recommendation for use of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine in children aged 5–11 years for the prevention of COVID-19. The Centers for Disease Control reports that the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine has high efficacy (>90%) against COVID-19 in children aged 5–11 years, having added that the benefits outweigh risks for vaccination. The CDC [emphasizes](#) that vaccination is important to protect children against COVID-19 and reduce community transmission.

For the latest news about COVID-19, visit the CDC's [What's New and Updated](#) webpage.

Next, I will highlight the Scarsdale Municipal Pool Complex Study that is getting underway.

### **Municipal Pool Complex Market Study and Existing Conditions Study**

Development of the [Municipal Pool Complex Market Study and Existing Conditions Survey RFP](#) followed a very non-traditional, transparent process whereby staff and the Village Board collaborated to develop the RFP. The process was intentionally carried out publicly in work sessions to maximize public awareness of the initiative and to cultivate higher levels of public participation once the study gets underway. Historically, neither the Board nor the public would have had the opportunity to directly shape the study goals or scope of services prior to the procurement effort having been completed. This was the first major project RFP where our new process was applied and it has yielded positive outcomes, not the least of which being greater public visibility ahead of the contract having been awarded to the consultant, Lothrop and Associates.

Public participation will be critical to the study's success, which has three principle goals:

1. The Municipal Pool Complex is viewed by residents as a premier community recreation asset helping to further strengthen Scarsdale's preeminence in Westchester County as a superb place to live and raise children.
2. The Pool Enterprise Fund is fiscally sound, capable of supporting operating and projected capital expenses.
3. Pool membership trend is reversed, ultimately attaining historic membership levels.

Importantly, this study has no pre-determined outcomes. Lothrop Associates is charged with evaluating the facility's conditions, the details of which will be shared with the Scarsdale community, and undertaking a robust public engagement program to identify three fiscally constrained, community-supported concepts that achieve the project goals. Their efforts to collect community feedback will include extensive outreach, including a statistically valid community survey, a web-based survey, and in-person opportunities to learn about and discuss the future of the Scarsdale Municipal Pool Complex, the gem of our Scarsdale parks.

The project kickoff meeting is being held soon, during which the public engagement opportunities will be mapped as the project timeline is fleshed-out. Please stay tuned for more information, and I look forward to broad public participation in this important study.

Next, I will speak to the Village Center Strategic Mobility and Placemaking RFP.

### **Village Center Strategic Mobility and Placemaking RFP**

Following the procedural template used in crafting the Municipal Pool Complex Market Study and Existing Conditions Survey RFP, which yielded fabulous results, development of the Village Center Strategic Mobility and Placemaking RFP was both transparent and collaborative, with the final procurement document having been the product of staff and the Village Board collaborating through iterative steps, including public meetings, to arrive at a [final RFP](#). To reiterate, the level of Village Board collaboration and public transparency embraced in developing the RFP was exemplary and previously unheard of in Scarsdale's prior experience. On projects of such great import to Scarsdale's future, this procurement model is critical to establishing the foundation for future success.

Key goals for the study include increasing pedestrian and cyclist safety, providing access for all users, improving traffic flow and circulation, activating public spaces, and increasing sustainability, all with an eye looking out decades into the future. Like the Pool Complex study, public engagement is paramount. To that end, the successful consultant will be required to undertake a comprehensive public engagement process, seeking to identify community-supported strategies to support the project goals.

Unlike the Pool Complex, for which a contract has already been awarded to the successful consultant to proceed with the scope of services, the Village Center Strategic Mobility and Placemaking RFP next step will be to narrow the field of candidates and then award a contract to the firm or team that best meets the projects requirements.

Interestingly, the Village Center Strategic Mobility and Placemaking RFP is not strictly focused on the Village Center, though our data indicates that it is the area in greatest need. Importantly, we will also examine the potential for a suite of investments embracing Complete Streets philosophy be applied on a test basis to Fox Meadow Road between Ogden and Crane. Additionally, we are seeking to implement traffic calming measures to reduce the speed of cars, decrease traffic conflict, and increase pedestrian safety along the Sprague Road corridor, where data indicates unusually high crash rates.

Importantly, neither the Fox Meadow or Sprague segments are viewed as one-offs. Rather, our intention is not only to solve existing problems in those locations, but to also establish the business case for making similar investments elsewhere in the community. The Village Board and staff are acutely aware of the many traffic safety-related needs that are of great import to the Scarsdale community. In addition to working toward establishment of a village-wide 25 mph speed limit for our residential streets, we also support launch of a Safe Routes to School program and other measures that help prioritize pedestrian safety over ease and speed of

vehicular traffic, particularly within our neighborhoods where our children play and go to and from school. Should our Fox Meadow and Sprague Road pilot projects yield meaningful benefits, we expect similar treatments to begin being deployed in other appropriate locations, as well.

Stay tuned for more information about this important project.

## Strategic and Financial Planning Framework

You may have heard me speak on the topic of the Village’s Strategic and Financial Planning Framework. To strategically align our resources with the outcomes they are intended to achieve, much of the work now being done in our local government contemplates the extent to which our choices, actions, and investments support the goals we intend to achieve. While we are still early in the process of operationalizing the framework, our local government is becoming more agile, increasingly relies upon active listening and double-looped learning to cultivate improved outcomes, and continues to exhibit a firm commitment to public service excellence.

As a refresher, or if you may be new to reading my Mayor’s Comments, below is a chart depicting the Strategic and Financial Planning Framework:

## Policy Level Teams and Working Groups



Revised 05/30/2021

While the background information I am providing is repeated from my last two updates, I believe it is important to restate the purpose and philosophy driving development and implementation of the framework, as some readers may not be familiar with it. Others may choose to skip to the next section of my update.

## *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 (completed), the Pool Complex Condition Assessment and Market Study (now in project kick-off phase), and the Village Center and Residential Safety and Mobility Study (now reviewing RFP responses).

## **Timely Snippets of Community Interest**

### *Annual Comprehensive Financial Report and Audit Results*

The Village Board is holding a work session tonight Tuesday, November 09, during which the Village's very first Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR) will be presented – a milestone that should not go unnoticed, as it is a financial reporting best practice advanced by Treasurer Scaglione. The ACFR includes the results from our internal audit for the fiscal year ended May 31, 2021. [Join the meeting](#) to hear the details. Spoiler alert . . . we've done a great job!

### *Cannabis and Smoking Legislation*

The Village will hold [public hearings](#) on Tuesday, November 23, on two related topics.

The first is a new local law proposing to prohibit the establishment of retail dispensary licenses and/or on-site consumption licenses within the Village of Scarsdale.

The second is a public hearing on a local law to prohibit the burning of a lighted cigar, cigarette, pipe or vape system which contains tobacco or cannabis in Village facilities, recreation spaces and vehicles and any business district located in the Village of Scarsdale.

All members of the Scarsdale community are encouraged to participate in the public hearings on Tuesday, November 23, to be sure that the decisions made by the Village Board reflect community consensus on these important topics.

### *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.

Please be sure to note that weekend and/or federal holiday use of gas-powered blowers remains prohibited during leaf season and that violators are subject to receiving a summons.

### *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.

## Upcoming Work Session Topics

Upcoming Village Board work session topics include:

- The updated Telecommunications Law
- Dog Park Update
- Tropical Depression IDA After-Action Discussion
- Signs in the Public Right-of-Way
- Historic Preservation
- Water Rate Study Results and Discussion
- FY 2022-23 Budget Discussions

Please monitor our Regular Village Board meetings and the [meeting calendar](#) for more information on work sessions topics as it becomes available.

Sincerely,

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

Jane E. Veron  
Mayor