

April 23, 2025

As we continue to move forward with the St. Paul's survey I asked Rich Catalano, recently elected to the Board and with decades of experience as a senior accountant and CPA, to take a look at and analyze some articles that have appeared recently in the *GC News* and online regarding the Village's debt levels. Please see Rich's thoughts below:

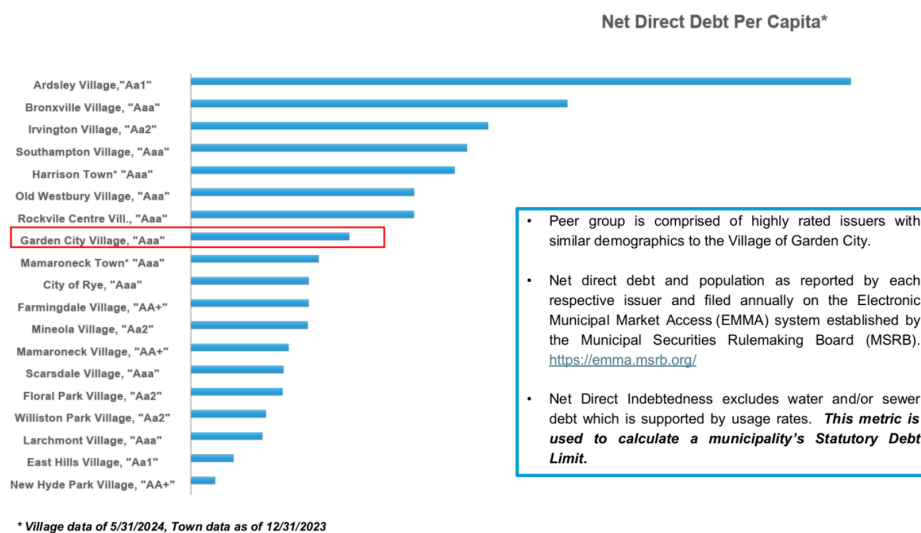
Certain advocates for the demolition of the St. Paul's Main Building have posted misleading graphs and statements about the debt of our Village. This misinformation includes:

- The existing debt shown in one graph includes obligations of our Village Water Department as of May 31, 2023. Approximately half of that debt was subsequently repaid with grants from New York State for our AOP water treatment systems.
- The debt service of our Water Department obligations is paid from our water bills. Most villages do not have a Water Department so it is misleading to include such debt in any comparison of per capita debt by Village.
- One of the graphs adds \$120 million to \$250 million of debt for the St. Paul's Main Building, which is well in excess of the range of estimates provided in the survey of \$35 million to \$83 million for the three options.

These are the facts:

- The Village's current general obligation indebtedness of \$34 million as of May 31, 2024 is comparable to communities similar to Garden City as reflected in the chart below.
- The Board of Trustees recognizes that any development of the St. Paul's Main Building would result in an increase in the Village's annual debt service. This is the reason why the six trustees insisted on transparency by providing residents with estimates of these potential tax increases in the survey.

We encourage all residents to send questions about our debt to stpaulsquestions@gardencityny.net or contact any one of the Trustees directly.



ST. PAUL'S SURVEY

Residents have shown great interest in the St. Paul's Survey, with hundreds of responses already received. The survey will continue to be open for the next few weeks. Residents also have the option to fill out the survey online at <https://gardencitystpaulsurvey.org>. Please note only one survey per household—whether written or online—will be counted. Finally, some residents of co-ops and rental units have not received their survey. We discussed this with BCI/ETC and they recommended re-mailing the printed survey to residents of all co-op and rental apartments to ensure they are received. These were mailed first class on Monday, April 21 to ensure they are received. To avoid duplication, as with all mailed surveys, the resident address is included on the survey, ensuring that only one response per household is counted.

STRATEGIC STEPS FOR USE OF ST. PAUL'S MAIN BUILDING

As the future of St. Paul's continues to be a topic of significant importance, the Board of Trustees has undertaken a series of strategic steps to gauge public sentiment and outline potential plans for the use of the Main Building. Here is a detailed look at what has already been accomplished and the next steps in this vital project.

Step One: Opinion Poll Reflects Public Sentiment

- The first step in this process was an opinion poll conducted in October 2023 by the then sitting Board of Trustees designed to better understand public sentiment. This opinion poll had two options to choose from – either “part or all preservation” of the St. Paul's Main Building or demolition. The results were clear: 61 percent of the Village residents voted in favor of preserving “part or all” of the building, demonstrating a strong community preference for its preservation.

Step Two: Formation of the St Paul's Advisory Committee

- Following the poll, former Mayor Mary Carter Flanagan appointed a St. Paul's Advisory Committee that included five non-Trustee residents. This committee embarked on months of research and put forward the idea of a Community Center for consideration. In March 2024, the BOT hired BCI, a recreational planning company, to conduct comprehensive research on two crucial matters: a full needs assessment of the Village's Recreation and Parks Department and a detailed plan for the use of the St. Paul's building.

Step Three: Surveys to Shape Future Plans

- BCI collaborated closely with the 2024-2025 BOT to develop two surveys. The first survey, focusing on recreation and parks, was completed in the early summer of 2024 and those results were shared with the BOT and residents. The second survey, which addresses the future of the St. Paul's Main Building, was mailed to every household in the Village in April 2025. Once the survey closes, the results will be tabulated and analyzed. (This process could take up to two months.) Once the BOT receives the survey analysis from BCI, we'll study and share it with all residents. Additionally, the BOT will provide the analysis with the new St. Paul's Advisory Committee so it can incorporate the findings/information into their final report, which will also be shared with the public. After incorporating the survey analysis, we would expect the Committee report to be published approximately six to eight weeks later.

Step Four: Presentation and Open Discussions

- The BOT will present its findings and recommendations to the residents, ensuring transparency and thorough understanding. To facilitate this, open discussions will be held at Board meetings, and Town Hall meetings will also be convened. These forums will allow residents to probe the recommendations, ask questions and become fully informed of the conclusions and plans. It is crucial to note that at this stage, the BOT will not have made any commitment to allocate or approve funds for the project. This decision will come later in the process when a Village-wide vote on potential financing options and the necessary funds to undertake the projects at St. Paul's will be held.

Step Five: Next Steps Post-Survey

- The subsequent steps in this process will hinge on the survey outcomes, the Advisory Committee's report, the BOT's analysis and resident comments. Generally, the next steps include hiring architectural, engineering, and other necessary firms to design a project for the building and the activities and programs the majority of residents wish to see in St. Paul's Community Center. Following this, the project will be put out to bid to several qualified general contractors under the control of the architects and the Heads of the appropriate Village Departments. Only after all these chores and duties are completed and a budget developed would the Board go to the public for a vote on a bond or the best financial vehicle we can obtain "to put a shovel in the ground" at St. Paul's. We will always do what is in the best interest of the Village, long-term. We will continue to provide you with as much information as possible via social media, the *Garden City News* and other forms of communication.

In summary, these steps outline a comprehensive, inclusive, and transparent approach to the future of St. Paul's, ensuring that every resident has a voice in the process and that the final project garners widespread community support.

SPRING HYDRANT FLUSHING

Monday night, April 28th through Saturday morning, May 3rd, between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m., the Water Department will be performing its annual maintenance program, opening and flowing (flushing) hydrants. Each spring the Garden City Water Department opens and flows (flushes) hydrants. This annual maintenance program is essential to the operation. Flushing water mains is a way to clean out a build-up of dissolved minerals inside our mains. This build-up is caused by reduced water demand during the winter months. These deposits settle to the bottom of the mains and must be cleaned out so that they don't cause discolored water in the future. While flushing is occurring in your area, you may have some slight fluctuations in water pressure and temporary water discoloration. If you experience discolored water, run your cold water for several minutes. If it does not clear, wait 30 minutes and try again. Here are some recommendations you can follow during flushing dates in your neighborhood:

- Draw water for cooking ahead of time
- Store bottles of water for drinking
- Be sure to check the water quality before using your washing machine or dishwasher

If you have any questions, please contact the Water Department at (516) 465-4003.