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Fitchburg Public Library renovation, construction project set to begin this year

Fitchburg, Mass.—The Fitchburg Public Library building project, a transformative effort that will create a community resource and destination for the next several decades, is moving forward despite a structural design issue that delayed the start of the construction.

The project encompasses two major changes, including the renovation of 29,700 square feet of the existing Wallace Building, which was first built in 1967, and the creation of an entirely new youth library wing of 25,730 square feet of new construction, as well as the new library and learning center which encompasses approximately 55,430 square feet. In total, the library will offer a new community room to replace the current auditorium, several meeting rooms, a Learning Lab, a Makerspace, improved access to the library collection, various seating areas throughout the building to study and engage, and more accessible, improved parking.

The adjusted construction timeline is the result of delayed federal flood map approvals and revised design criteria, and a plan revision has been authorized to address those criteria while ensuring the new building meets all building code regulations.

“The public library is the true ‘building for the people,’ and the city is committed to ensuring this central piece of community social infrastructure moves forward with a state-of-the-art library that benefits all people,” said Fitchburg Mayor Samantha Squailia. “We have worked through the design challenges on this major capital project with our design team, project managers, and city officials and will continue to work in close collaboration to oversee the project and ensure we remain within budget.”

“The Fitchburg Public Library holds a very special place in my childhood, in my heart, and in our community,” said Fitchburg City Council President Anthony Zarrella. “It’s not just a place to get books—it is a vital nucleus of civic and community involvement. I continue to look forward to bringing my own daughter to enjoy a modernized and revitalized library, and the library will have all the support I can give to it.”

“The library project is a multi-stage, multi-faceted project overseen by collaborators including the design team, project managers, library staff, the library board, and other city officials,” said Fitchburg Public Library Board of Trustees Chairman Matthew Bruun. “Through this collaborative effort, we have identified a solid solution that

will enable this transformative project to move forward despite a brief delay in breaking ground. The result will be a vital and inviting resource that enhances the entire community.”

“Our team is working diligently to revise the plans, and we are confident the project will be completed in a manner that will enable the library to enhance its mission. This will be a building that inspires and stimulates generations of users, and we are both proud and humbled to play a role in bringing it to life,” said Jeff Hoover, project architect.

Despite this unexpected issue, the overall project remains within the budget approved by the city’s leaders and will not impact Fitchburg taxpayers. While this delay may impact the construction timeline, it does not affect the services and programs at the library’s temporary location at 166 Boulder Drive in the city.

The library renovation is one of many large-scale developments taking place in and around downtown Fitchburg.

The library is set to break ground on the project this year.

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About Fitchburg Public Library

Founded in 1859 and home to one of the first children’s rooms in the country, the Fitchburg Public Library is a centerpiece on Main Street in the city, providing generations the opportunity to experience programming and services that open to a world of learning. For more information visit <http://www.fitchburgpubliclibrary.org/>