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Milwaukee Public Library Moves Forward With New Martin Luther King Branch

In preparation for construction of a mixed-use development that will house a new Milwaukee Public Library Martin Luther King Branch, Director Joan Johnson has announced Saturday, May 6, 2023, as the last day MPL will be open at the current branch located at 310 W. Locust Street.

The project development team, which is a partnership between General Capital Development, LLC and Emem Group LLC, will acquire ownership of the existing Martin Luther King Branch parcel, two privately-owned parcels, and two City-owned properties in order to construct the shell of a new nearly 18,000 square foot Branch Library and 93 housing units affordable to a range of household incomes.

The new Martin Luther King Branch is scheduled to open in the fall of 2024. In order to maintain service for library users during construction, a temporary branch will open on Monday, May 22, at 2767 N Dr. Martin Luther King Drive.

"This type of development reflects the Library's strategic objective to provide community resources that are neighborhood-based, accessible and provide a wide array of programming designed to meet specific needs identified by our residents," said Johnson. "This cost-effective model of sharing space mirrors recent investments at the Villard Square, East, Mitchell, and Good Hope branches where conscious efforts have been made to address racial and economic disparities by providing increased access to vibrant spaces and vitally important services."

"Milwaukee's libraries continue to play a critical role in the lives of this city's residents," said Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson. "Libraries play an important role in literacy and learning and in offering access to resources that might not otherwise be available at a community level. The advancement of this development reflects this city's continued investment in a strong and connected library network."



Milwaukee Public Library

“Martin Luther King Branch Library was my neighborhood library as a child, I had the opportunity to create many fond memories,” said Sixth District Alderwoman Milele Coggs. “New construction will soon begin at Martin Luther King Branch Library and I look forward to the new construction as well as new memories for those that use the library being created at the new location.”

The Milwaukee Public Library Board of Trustees voted on March 28 in support of a Purchase Sale and Development Agreement that will provide library patrons and area residents with a new Martin Luther King branch that will honor the legacy of Dr. King by offering flexible-use community rooms, a makerspace, improved access to technology, new furnishings, and an updated and refreshed presentation of library materials and resources. The library interior and some key exterior features are being designed by Moody Nolan Architects, the largest African-American owned and operated architecture firm in the United States.

MPL is also working with the developer to pursue green energy features in this project that include a geothermal heating and cooling system and solar panels for the roof to make it the “greenest” library in Milwaukee and likely Wisconsin.

The developer will provide 45 parking spaces adjacent to the library building for library use. The apartment project and exterior of the library building is designed by JLA Architects.

The Milwaukee Public Library is thrilled to be bringing this project to fruition after nearly seven years of planning and is thankful for the support of Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson, the Milwaukee Common Council, Governor Tony Evers, and the Library Board of Trustees in helping to fund this catalytic and essential project.

About Milwaukee Public Library

Milwaukee Public Library is an anchor institution that helps build healthy families and vibrant neighborhoods – the foundation of a strong Milwaukee. Since 1878, Milwaukee Public Library has been a free provider of education and information for residents of Milwaukee and beyond. With 13 locations and more than three million items in circulation, MPL offers free access to a rich collection of materials both physical and digital, access to technology, classes, exhibitions, programming and more. From toddlers to scholars, MPL serves nearly one million patrons who come through its doors annually and many more around the globe who use its resources at www.mpl.org. To offer this wide array of free programming, MPL relies on both public and private funding. Learn more about how to support Milwaukee Public Library at www.mpl.org/support.

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