

# HPL Downtown Library Project Update June 2023

On December 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 the Downtown Library sustained catastrophic water damage from HVAC pipes that cracked during an unprecedented freezing weather event. The water infiltrated throughout four floors of the building (walls, ceiling, floors, panels, conduit, elevator shafts, etc.) damaging infrastructure and systems.

## **First response activities (December 24<sup>th</sup> 2022– January 2023):**

- Identified and engaged a vendor (ServPro) to remove the water from the Library and to commence the clean-up and drying out of the premises over the holiday.
- **Removal of all collections in water-damaged areas to secure, dry locations.**
- Notified the City and HPL's insurance carrier.
- Worked with the City to identify and hire a vendor to do environmental testing (Eagle Environmental)
- Hired Downes Construction to manage the demolition work.

## **First operational priorities (January 2, 2023- March 2023):**

- Relocated staff and programs to alternate Library locations and identified additional service locations in the community for programming.
- Alternate locations required support for technology set ups, staff workspace, moving and adding of furniture, etc. to be operational.
- Library staff who remained at the Downtown Library and whose offices were in water damaged areas required new setups for workspace and technology access.

## **Current Operational Status:**

- Enhanced hours and days of service at all branch locations (including opening the Hartford History Center annex at the Ropkins Library)
- Expanded services at West Middle Community School (The American Place, Boundless) Programs being supported in the community: Center Church, South Church, Capital Community College, UConn Hartford/Times Building, City Hall, The Artists Collective, Connecticut's Old State House, Knox Park, Bushnell Park, Connecticut Public
- Expanded outreach through HPL's Library on Wheels
- Introduction of the remote pick-up locker at the Downtown Library (June)
- Exploring ways to restore a level of service to the Downtown Library – café, patio, classrooms, HPL's Center for Contemporary Culture – as soon as possible.

## **Repair and Renovation Work:**

- HPL hired Downes Construction to manage the demolition work -- i.e., removing drywall, insulation, damaged furniture and material, coordinate work (i.e. removal of artwork) etc.
  - a. This has been a long process. The removal of the drywall, insulation, ceiling, flooring, and all other damaged items needed to be vetted and approved by the insurance adjuster's experts. Environmental testing must be performed in concert with the removal of certain materials.

A technology and furniture insurance claim is ongoing. HPL staff were required to secure and set aside damaged technology for inspection by the insurance adjuster's expert. This expert reviewed every piece of equipment the Library identified as damaged. A final list of equipment was provided to the insurance company with cost estimates. This list is currently under review.

- b. TSKP Studio was engaged to assist with the Library's claim of damaged furniture and to coordinate the renovation/repair work needed. HPL was required to identify damaged equipment item by item, with TSKP providing the pricing. This documentation will be reviewed shortly by the insurance company, a review the Library anticipates will take three to four weeks.
- Upon the advice of the City of Hartford's Risk Manager, HPL engaged BDO (<https://www.bdo.com/>) as an owner's representative to assist with the insurance process.
  - Extensive repairs to the Library's HVAC system are needed.
    - a. HPL's HVAC system is old and requires customized replacement of one major piece of equipment to make the system functional; a 30-day lead time is required to custom build equipment. The additional work needed is under review; reports and estimates were shared with the insurance adjuster and their experts will review and provide approval (or denial) of the work.
    - b. There are several HVAC issues that need to be addressed and an additional point to point investigation will be done to make sure that the entire system is functional. This work will take 2 to 3 months to complete; there will be elements the insurance will not cover which will need to be paid for from other funds.
  - The main elevator was extensively damaged and an elevator vendor inspected and documented the repair work needed. A report was submitted to the insurance adjuster. The insurance adjuster is requesting an onsite meeting to discuss the details of the report and upon completion of this meeting the adjuster's engineer will conduct his own onsite assessment of the damage. Upon agreement regarding the extent of damage and work required, the insurance company and library will discuss the reimbursement. With an agreement on the claim in place, the library can then move forward to repair the elevator.

The Library's (FOB) keyless entry system is not fully functioning and is being inspected to document the extent of damage. Once the repair report is completed it will be forwarded to the insurance adjuster for review. Upon completion of review the adjuster will notify the library if an insurance expert will be following up with an independent review. This process will potentially take approximately a month from the time the report is issued.

- The interior front door (Main Street) is not functioning properly, and water damage is evident around the door frame. The manufacturer has conducted a review and documented what is needed; this work was presented to the insurance adjuster for review and HPL is waiting for a response.
- Design documents and estimates for the repair work should be completed by mid-June. All documents and estimates must be negotiated with the insurance company. Following negotiations, the project(s) will go out to bid. The bid process will take 3-4 weeks, contracting vendors approximately 2 weeks, then construction can begin. HPL is prioritizing the ground floor (least damaged) and lesser damaged areas on the third floor that would enable employees to return to this location.
- The repair work is an opportunity to pursue needed renovations and improvements. A series of focus groups, surveys and community meetings are being scheduled in June to solicit input from stakeholders regarding what the community would like to see in the renovated building. Under TSKP's contract, Margaret Sullivan Studios has been engaged to lead the renovation design and community engagement work.

### **Ongoing Coordination and Related Work**

- Weekly meetings with insurance, risk management, BDO and other stakeholders as needed.
- Weekly meeting with the design team.
- Weekly project meeting update with Downes, TSKP, BDO and the Library.
- Review of investigation reports, follow up with vendors for clarification and finalization of reports prior to submission to insurance. HPL's finance department must validate approval for all invoices with insurance prior to issuing payments.
- Oversight and management of frontloaded insurance funds.
- Budgeting and cost estimating for overall project scope.
- Identification of funds for work not covered by insurance.