

A Letter from Board President Gregory C. Davis

To the Hartford City Council,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the Hartford Public Library, I want to thank you for your robust support of the Library and the services we provide. As you know, the Board is finalizing an almost year-long strategic planning process that has paved the way for a new path forward for the Library. For many years the Library has struggled to maintain service quality across all ten locations, striving but unable to keep service levels steady in the face of declining revenue. The Board is committed to ensuring the current and future success of this wonderful institution, and are united in supporting the current plan, which enables the Library to improve service quality, expand hours of service, and ensure a sustainable library system in the years to come with seven locations.

Closing libraries is never an easy decision. The Strategic Planning Committee and board considered many criteria and ultimately made the difficult choice to close three and reduce service at a fourth— identifying any of the nine branch locations was a difficult choice, and we appreciate that the communities directly affected are distressed with the news. However, this new operational model will allow us to expand service hours across the remaining locations and improve our service quality, outreach, mobile delivery and days of service.

We are committed to continuing to deliver services across the City, and welcome an opportunity to work with community groups, NRZ's, the City and other institutions in creating plans to do this. For example, at the Goodwin Branch (a City-owned building) a collaborative effort between a group of community stakeholders such as the NRZ, other community groups, the City, the Library and Trinity College could develop plans for a community center or homework assistance center. The Library is open to considering leaving equipment such as computers and furniture in that location to facilitate a new use of the building. We would also welcome an opportunity to continue to offer programming at the West Middle School for the Asylum Hill community, and to work with community leaders in Blue Hills to create a plan for outreach services such as educational and cultural programming.

Thank you again for your support of the Library and for helping us to continue to serve the residents and visitors of Hartford.

Sincerely,
Gregory C. Davis
President, Board of Directors
Hartford Public Library

