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HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY BREAKS GROUND ON NEW BARBOUR STREET LIBRARY

Construction is scheduled to begin this summer

[HARTFORD, CT] – Today, Hartford Public Library (HPL), Speaker of the House Matt Ritter, Hartford Mayor Arunan Arulampalam, and community members ceremoniously broke ground at the site of the new future Barbour Library at 234 Barbour Street.

The project's estimated cost of \$24 million is being funded by the City of Hartford, State of Connecticut Community Investment Fund, Connecticut State Library's Construction Grant program, and contributions from The Hartford, Travelers, and Aetna, a CVS Health Company, and a capital campaign that will be launched in early 2027.

Speaker of the House Matt Ritter said, “The new Hartford Public Library – Barbour Library is an important resource for the neighborhood and community. This is the type of transformational initiative the Community Investment Fund was designed to support. I’m so pleased the Hartford legislative delegation was able to secure funding for the project.”

The current Barbour Library, 1,850 sq. ft., located in a leased storefront in Unity Plaza, is not large enough to provide the services, technology, and programming needs of the community. The new 16,000 sq. ft library, designed based on feedback and recommendations from the community, will include a children’s room, dedicated teen space, an adult learning center with classrooms and a technology lab, a 125 seat program and community room, a food distribution center, and a large makerspace area, along with seating areas and outdoor spaces to read, learn, create, and connect.

“Today’s groundbreaking represents a shared commitment to the future of this community,” said Bridget E. Quinn, HPL President and CEO. “We are grateful to our partners at the City of Hartford, the State of Connecticut, our generous corporate supporters, and to the residents whose input shaped this vision. The new Barbour Library will be a welcoming hub for learning, connection, and opportunity. We look forward to opening a space that truly reflects, supports, and inspires the community.”

Resident and stakeholder focus groups were engaged to ensure the neighborhood’s needs were reflected in the plans. Based on community input, the new Library will include a Community Room for meetings, cultural events, and programming. A dedicated food pantry will enable expansion of the twice-monthly food distribution service currently offered in partnership with Connecticut Foodshare. An enclosed courtyard for outdoor programming will foster additional collaboration with KNOX and the Mount Moriah Community Garden located adjacent to the new Library site.



“The groundbreaking of the Barbour Street Library marks a transformative investment in the heart of our community,” said Mayor Arulampalam. “This space will be far more than just a place for books; it will serve as a vibrant hub for learning and connection for Hartford families. By bringing these vital resources directly into our neighborhoods, we are ensuring that every resident has the tools they need to thrive, learn, and succeed right here in their own community.”

The new Library will feature the NextGen Adult Learning Center, a space for expanded workforce and career development classes and training, as well as enhanced educational and skills-based training opportunities offered by HPL and community partners. The new Barbour Library will ensure that the Library’s Boundless partnership with the Fred D. Wish Museum School continues to be strong.

Construction is expected to start this summer, with a 12-18 month completion timeline.

About Hartford Public Library

Founded as the Library Company in 1774, Hartford Public Library has remained at the forefront of redefining the urban library experience for over 250 years. The Library has seven full-service locations, two Boundless Library locations, and multiple outreach services, including the Library on Wheels and Story Stash, a 24/7 pickup locker. HPL provides education, intellectual enrichment, and cultural development for thousands of children, youth, and adults. HPL has gained local and national recognition for its wide range of new initiatives and partnerships designed to meet the needs of a diverse and dynamic city and region, including immigration services, employment assistance, and youth leadership training. For more information, visit hplct.org

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