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HARTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNOUNCES STRATEGIC PLAN

Hartford, CT (July 3, 2017) — Hartford Public Library Board Chairman Greg Davis announced that Hartford Public Library will be implementing a Strategic Branch Restructuring Plan to create an enhanced and more sustainable service model that will enable the Library to deliver more hours and better service system wide. This restructuring is the outcome of a nine-month strategic planning initiative and includes branch consolidations.

“Our Library serves, and must continue to serve, our diverse and changing neighborhoods and communities with services, programs, and collections so that all residents can learn, succeed, and thrive,” said Mr. Davis. “This plan will enable us to achieve those goals.”

While the City has worked to provide level funding for the Library, this funding has been unable for many years to support adequate staffing for the branches because of rising operational costs. This has resulted in service cuts over the years including reduced hours and days of service. And while foundation and corporate support has been generous, substantial revenue growth over the long term will be challenging.

Regarding the decision on which branches were identified for consolidation, Andrea Comer, HPL board member and Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee said “Each community’s needs were looked at in the context of its ecosystem of current services provided. The restructuring will keep open the Downtown Library, and the Albany, Park, Dwight, Barbour, Camp Field and Ropkins branches.

The Goodwin, Mark Twain, and Blue Hills branches will be closing and their staff will be redeployed across the system. There will be no layoffs with this plan.”

The HPL board unanimously supported the plan in a vote on June 29. TDC, a Boston consulting firm, assisted in researching branch demographics useful in making decisions about the sustainability and services of the Library. Library leaders have made 16 presentations about the findings to the staff and public and constituents in politics, business, nonprofit and other key parties.

“This plan, which starts in September, will provide service enhancement opportunities that will mean more hours, including Saturdays and evenings, at several locations, and additional programming in the branches,” says Bridget Quinn-Carey, HPL’s CEO. “We will also be exploring 24-hour self-service kiosks, expanding locations, and enhancing mobile services. This plan will enable us to expand services and ensure long-term sustainability for one of Hartford’s most valued institutions.”

“The Hartford Public Library is a vital resource for children and adults alike throughout our city, and the Library’s Board of Directors has conducted an open and thoughtful strategic review that look at usage, hours, service levels, and the availability of public transportation,” said Hartford Mayor Luke Bronin. “While the board has made the tough decision to close branches, they have done so with the goal of expanding hours and improving service through the city, in order to maximize accessibility and service for all residents. I want to thank the Board of Directors and Bridget Quinn-Carey for their leadership.

Quinn-Carey also announced three priorities for the future:

1. A new Barbour Branch library in the Northeast neighborhood with a goal of a 15,000-20,000 square foot building to replace the current Barbour and Ropkins locations.
2. Expand the Camp Field and Albany branches.

3. Offer a mobile technology lab and program vehicle and 24-hour kiosks

Hartford Public Library's budget for the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2017, was \$10,603,956. The City of Hartford provided 74 percent of that amount with the remainder coming from grants, donations, endowments and fines and fees. The Library has 124 employees, including full time and part time. It became a public library in 1893.