



DC Public Library

NEXT LIBRIS FACILITIES MASTER PLAN **UPDATE**

WINTER 2025



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Next Libris Facilities Master Plan Update, Winter 2025

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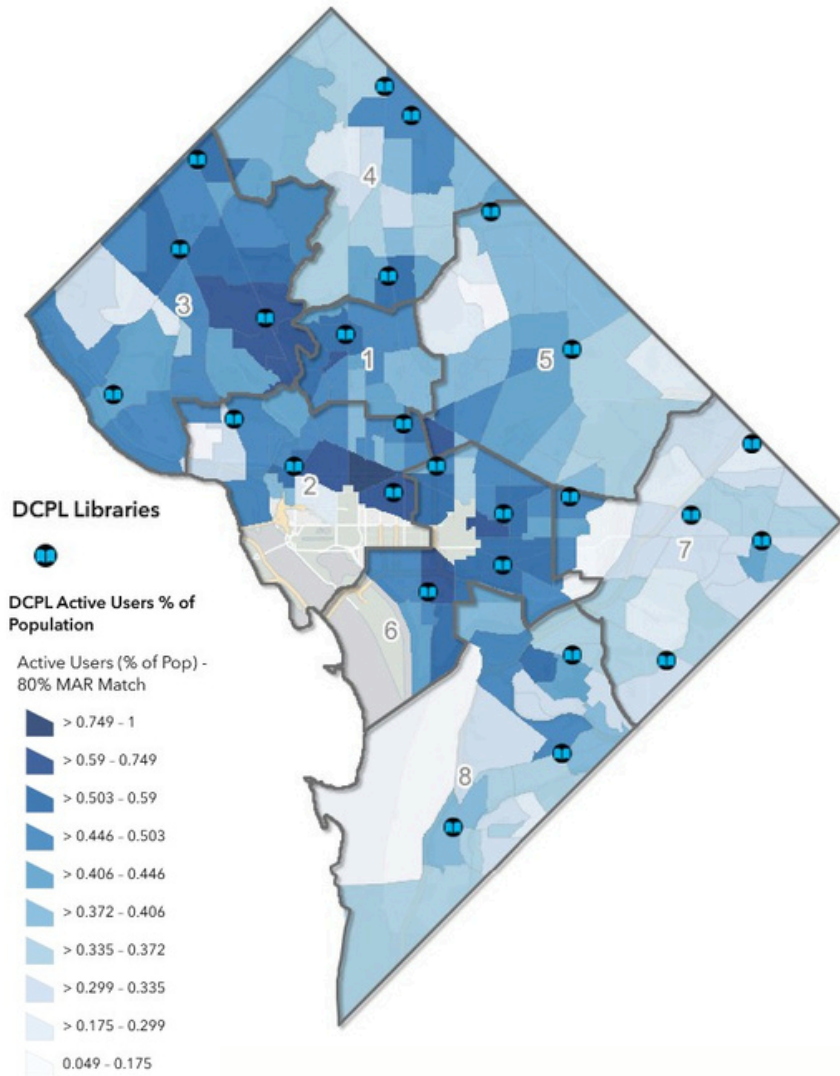
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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ACTIVE USERS BY CENSUS TRACT



This update to *Next Libris*, DC Public Library's 2020 Facilities Master Plan, comes four years after the plan was first published, and takes into account revised demographic data, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on library usage, and the city-wide impact of the modernized Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library (which was closed for renovation during the creation of the original plan).

KEY FINDINGS

- Following years of sustained growth, D.C.'s population decreased during the pandemic, tempering the assumption of increased demand for libraries.
- Physical visits to neighborhood libraries have decreased as a result of the pandemic and related changes to how residents use libraries.
- The use of ebooks and other online resources increased dramatically during the pandemic, impacting visits to libraries and providing an opportunity to rethink the physical library service model.
- The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library (MLK) reopened in September 2020 after a three-year modernization and has become a major draw for residents from around the region, impacting the use of local neighborhood libraries.
- With 737,000 visits in FY24, MLK has been a resounding success story for the Library and the District of Columbia. However, its 2015 design is already showing signs of needing a refresh.
- The concept of a "service gap," introduced in *Next Libris*, implies a lack of access to library resources. New data suggests that physical proximity to a library does not always correlate with more usage.
- The proposed approach to and cadence of systems renewal and functional refresh projects called for in *Next Libris* should be revisited.
- The estimated implementation costs in *Next Libris* must be updated to reflect current economic conditions and the District's new climate goals.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Beyond those projects that are currently funded, including new Chevy Chase and Shepherd Park/Juanita E. Thornton libraries and the replacement of the four smallest libraries (Parklands-Turner, Deanwood, Northwest One, and Rosedale), DC Public Library (DCPL) should not consider adding libraries to its campus at this time.
- Reimagine “service gaps” as “opportunity areas” and devise creative and cost-efficient ways of reaching more residents without the need to add new full-service libraries. Piloting a “community commons” in the Brightwood Park/Manor Park area is an innovative idea for a new service model.
- Merge the original plan’s “systems renewal” and “functional refresh” projects as “holistic renovations” and create a new timeline by which these new projects will take place.
- Incorporate the District of Columbia’s new climate goals for all of the Library’s new projects and renovations.
- Consider what has been most successful about the modernized Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library and prioritize a plan to refresh the building program by 2030.

CONCLUSION

As stated in the original plan, “*Next Libris* is a living document that will be updated as new information is available so the Library remains responsive to community needs.” The 2025 update accounts for the recent local and global disruptions that impact how DC Public Library approaches changes to its physical campus. It is important to note that the update does not change the overall thinking of *Next Libris* as a ten-year plan ending in 2030. The update also does not change the original plan’s stated goal to contribute to the success of the District’s Comprehensive Plan and housing production goals.

Lastly, the recommendations provided in the update are not a commitment to move forward on any project without broad support from the Library Board of Trustees, elected officials, and District residents.



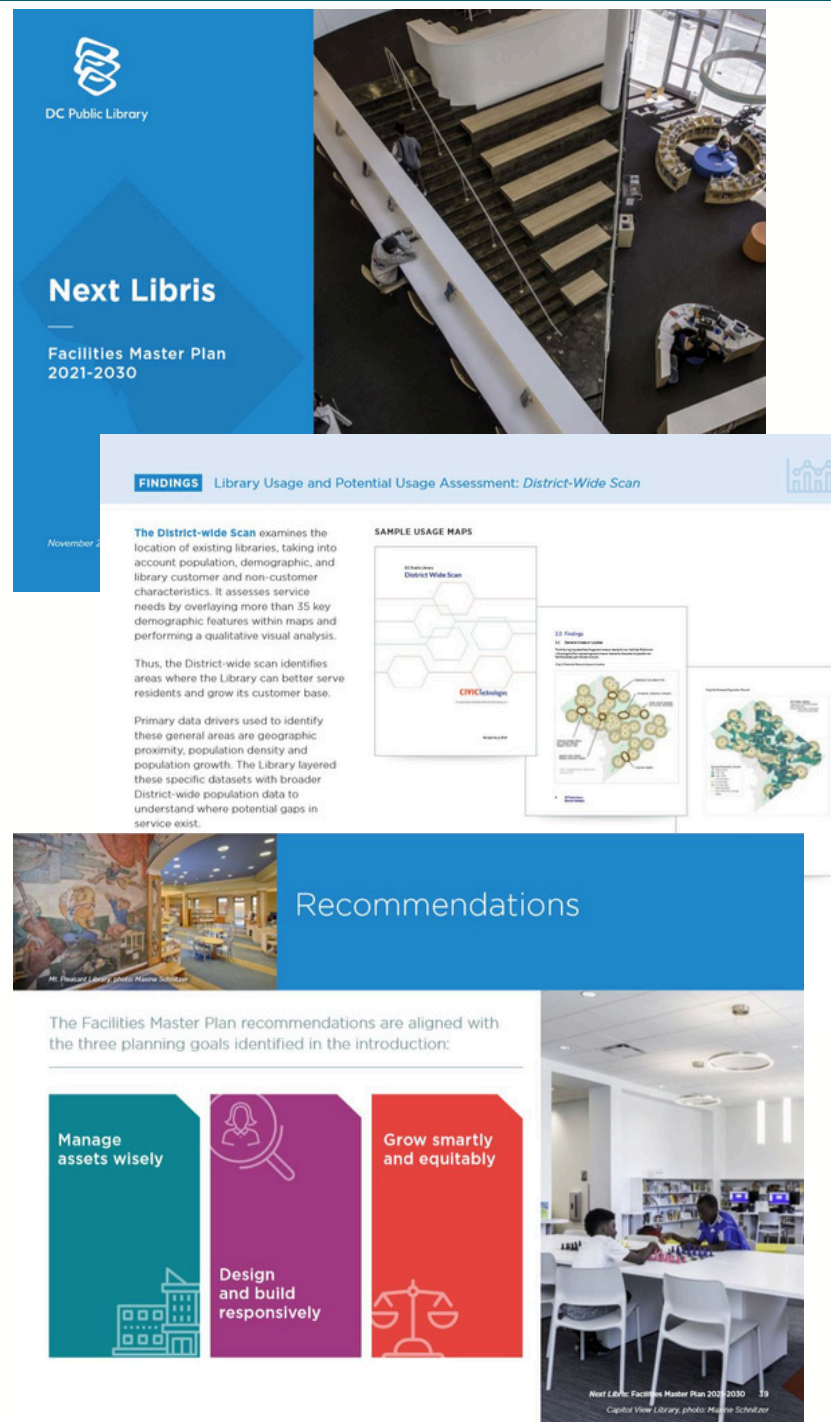
II. INTRODUCTION

In November 2020, DC Public Library (DCPL) released its award-winning Facilities Master Plan, *Next Libris*, an aspirational document that informs the Library's decisions to grow equitably and protect and adapt its buildings for future generations of District residents.

DC Public Library is thankful to Mayor Muriel Bowser and the D.C. Council for providing funding for many of the recommendations in the plan. We are excited to move forward with library projects in Chevy Chase, Congress Heights, Deanwood, Edgewood/Eckington, Rosedale and Shepherd Park that will better serve residents.

We are also excited about this update to the plan, an effort necessitated by the seismic events that have occurred since the plan was first published that impact not only the Library's physical footprint but more fundamentally what it means to be a library. The data that informed the original plan was gathered prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, at a time when the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library was closed for modernization. The original plan briefly references the pandemic only to emphasize the need to later explore the dramatic behavioral shifts that might influence the thinking behind the recommendations. And resident behaviors have indeed changed since 2020. Specifically, the Library has witnessed fascinating changes in the use of library collections, technology, and spaces that required additional analysis.

Now is the right time to publish an update to *Next Libris*. This update takes a fresh look at the 2020 document in light of new demographic and library usage data, impacts of the reopening of the MLK Library, and budget considerations, providing updates to proposed projects to better guide the Library's decisions through 2030.



The update includes some new elements. First, it embraces climate-forward design thinking for the entire library campus. Second, the update will touch on ideas for how the small co-located libraries, once vacated, might address future community needs. These existing District-owned properties that average 5,700 square feet in size may be repurposed to serve functions the Library and community have yet to consider.

Finally, the update rethinks the concepts of systems renewal and refresh projects for existing buildings as “holistic renovations” – renovations that embrace climate-forward design thinking. This shift recognizes that design of interior spaces, upgrades needed for building systems, and performance of the building envelope all intersect and influence each other. To support this, the update moves away from the previously recommended cadence for refresh projects to allow for logical sequencing of holistic needs assessment, cohesive design processes that inform each budget request, and approval of funding resulting in renovations that better serve the public.



As stated in the original master plan:

“Next Libris is a snapshot in time; it represents the Library’s understanding of future needs as known today and lays out a plan of action to address them.”

DC Public Library will continue to adapt its recommendations as new information becomes available in consultation with residents, elected officials, and other stakeholders.

III. THE LIBRARY AFTER THE PANDEMIC

D.C.'S CHANGING POPULATION & LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

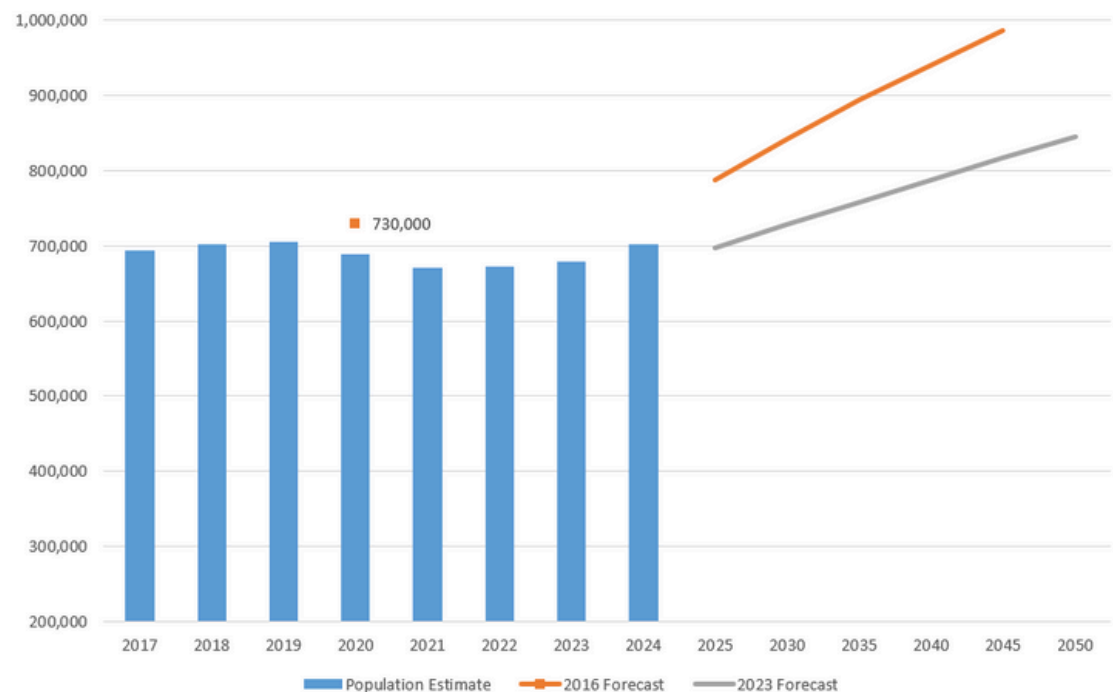
Following significant growth during the 2010s, Washington D.C.'s population fell from an estimated 705,749 residents in 2019 to 670,050 in 2021, a 5% decrease attributed to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The downturn tempered the expectations set in prior forecasts that the city's population could approach one million residents by 2045.

Though D.C.'s population increased in 2022 and again in 2023, the latest population numbers released by the DC Office of Planning show a city-wide population of 702,250 in 2024, still fewer than the city's previous pre-pandemic peak in 2019. Continued population growth is forecast throughout the next decade with a projected city population of 728,606 residents in 2030, 757,186 by 2035, and 844,411 by 2050, well below the prior forecast of nearly one million residents.

These latest projections are consistent with Mayor Muriel Bowser's 2023 *DC Comeback Plan*, which sets a goal of reaching 725,000 residents by 2028. The plan also contains the stated goal of adding 15,000 residents to D.C.'s downtown core.

The Library will continue to adapt to the changing needs of the growing population. While DC Public Library serves as a vital learning environment and social space for the District's growing youth population, it should be noted that the city's elderly population is projected to grow at an even faster rate over the next decade. Designing, sustaining and maintaining libraries that are accessible to, and offer programming for, D.C. residents of all ages will ensure they are relevant, community-serving spaces for years to come.

DC POPULATION ESTIMATES AND FORECASTS 2020-2050



Source: US Census and DC Office of Planning

THE SHIFT TO DIGITAL USAGE

After experiencing growth from FY18 to FY19 in most trackable metrics, DC Public Library's system-wide physical usage dropped dramatically in the wake of the global pandemic and the city's overall population decrease. While there has been slight increases in library usage metrics from FY23 to FY24, overall a direct comparison of the Library's data from FY18* to FY24 demonstrates this downward trend.



Across all 26 locations in the library system, the total visits fell from 3,632,539 in FY18 to 3,374,454 in FY24, a 7% decrease. Even factoring in the 2020 reopening of the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library – which represents approximately half of the library system's physical footprint in terms of square feet – the data show that far fewer people visit libraries post-pandemic. The popularity of the MLK Library obscures the fact that many of D.C.'s neighborhood libraries have experienced a post-pandemic attendance decrease of more than 30%.

The downturn in physical library usage also comes through in an analysis of other metrics including Computer Sessions and Physical First Checkouts. From FY18 to FY24, Computer Sessions are down 26% system-wide. Physical First Checkouts have fallen 18%. Meeting Room reservations have increased system-wide by 5% in FY24 compared to FY18, however the gain is entirely at the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library. At the neighborhood libraries, Meeting Room reservations have decreased by 44%.



**NEIGHBORHOOD
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FROM FY18 TO FY24.**



**FROM FY18 TO FY24,
COMPUTER
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DOWN 26% SYSTEM-
WIDE**



**PHYSICAL FIRST
CHECKOUTS
FELL 18%**

Physical First Checkouts are initial lending transactions of physical items at a branch of the library and do not include renewals.

*The analysis published in *Next Libris* utilized FY18 usage data, which will also serve as the baseline in this update.

A closer look at the data for each individual library reveals that some neighborhood libraries suffered even greater usage decreases than the system-wide figures mentioned above. This discrepancy can be partially attributed to the reopening of the MLK Library, which drew library users who visited the neighborhood libraries during MLK's modernization from 2017-2020. For instance, the Shaw/Watha T. Daniel and Northwest One libraries, both located just over one mile from the MLK Library, saw their attendance decrease by 42% and 48%, respectively from FY18 to FY24, among the highest rates of decrease for any DCPL location.

Usage of the library's physical spaces and materials is beginning to rebound, however between the impact of the pandemic and the reopening of the MLK Library, most neighborhood libraries are experiencing less physical usage compared with FY18.

While physical usage has decreased, one notable metric increased system-wide from FY18 to FY24: digital circulation.

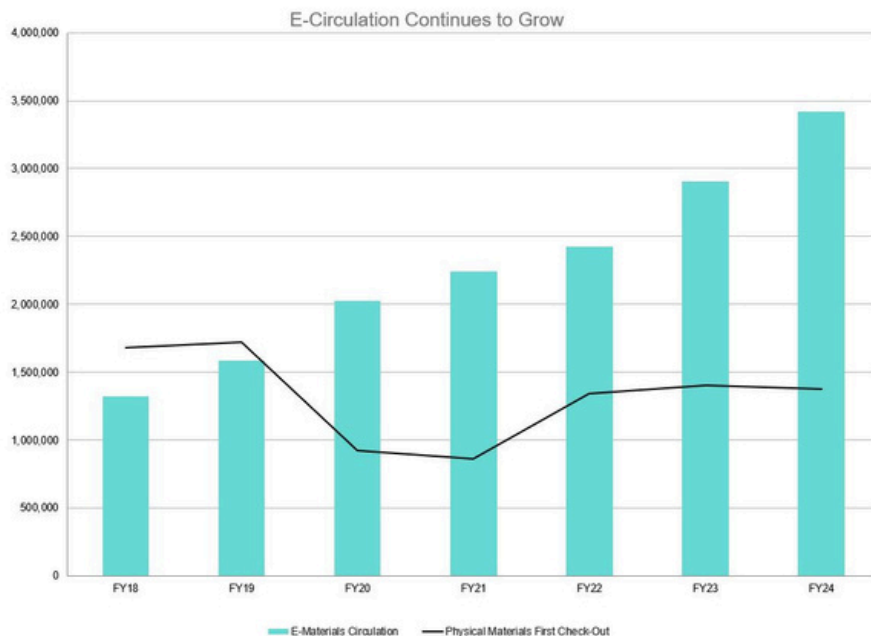
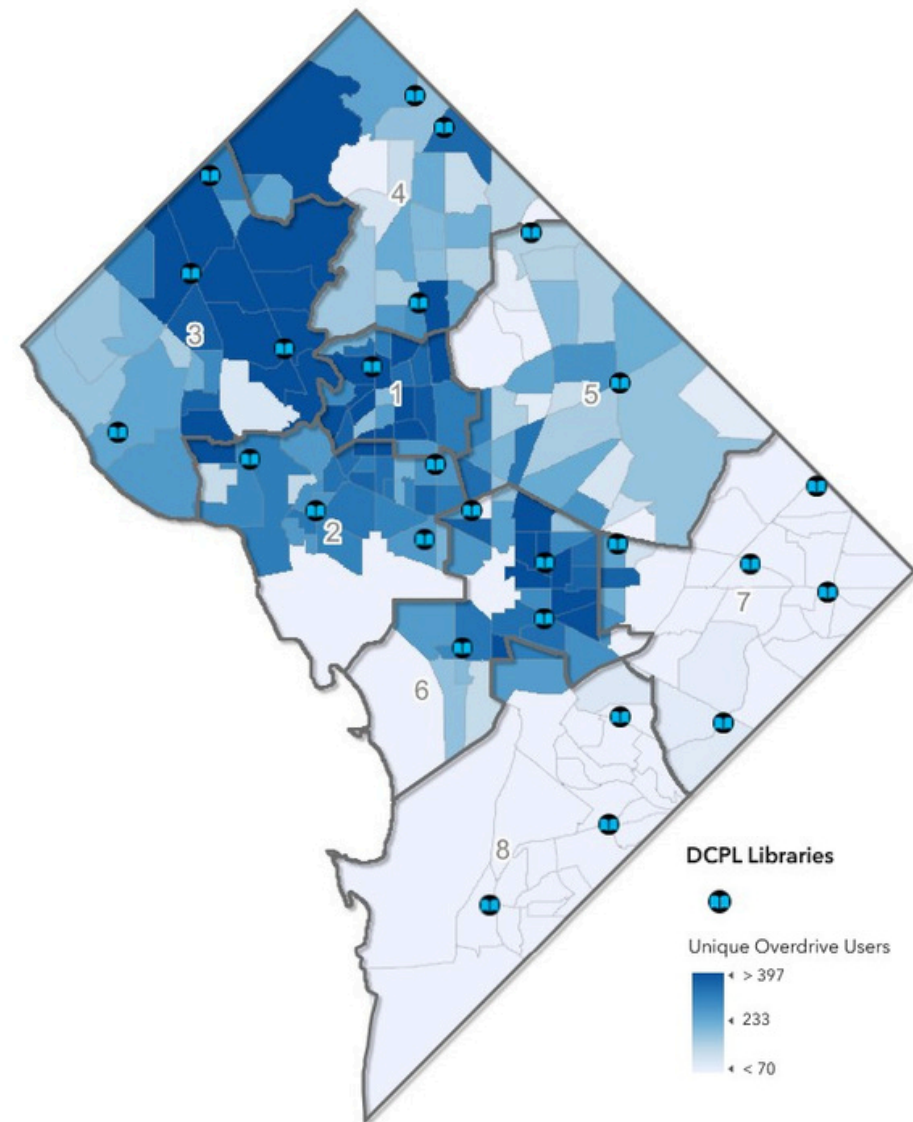


The increasing popularity of e-books and other digital materials is not a new trend. The Facilities Master Plan noted that the increase in digital circulation accounted for the near entirety of the Library's overall increase in circulation from 2014-2019.

From 2018 to 2024, digital circulation more than doubled. Since the pandemic, the value of digital materials has increased significantly for readers. The circulation of over 3 million digital materials in 2024 raises the question of how to balance access to physical materials with digital materials availability, and the implications this has on library buildings, spaces and budgets.

An important caveat regarding digital usage: the increase is not uniform city-wide. In looking at the usage data for the Library's main e-book platform, Overdrive, the map clearly shows that users predominantly reside in Wards 1, 2, 3 and 6.

UNIQUE OVERDRIVE USERS BY CENSUS TRACT



REIMAGINING LIBRARIES TO RESPOND TO COMMUNITY NEEDS AND INTERESTS

Washington D.C.'s latest population forecasts along with the notable changes in DCPL's physical usage since the publication of *Next Libris* in November 2020 necessitates a reimagining of how existing library space and library offerings can be used to meet the changing needs of District residents.

“THE WAY IN WHICH RESIDENTS ARE CURRENTLY ACCESSING THEIR READING MATERIAL SUGGESTS THAT THE LIBRARY RETHINK THE AMOUNT OF SHELF SPACE DEVOTED TO BOOKS AND CONSIDER REDUCING IT IN FAVOR OF OTHER PRESSING COMMUNITY NEEDS SUCH AS STUDY ROOMS OR PROGRAMMING SPACE.” (FACILITIES MASTER PLAN)

The decrease in the use of physical library spaces and of physical books since the pandemic, in conjunction with the significant growth in digital usage (e.g. Internet use, E-Books), lends further support to the above conclusion. While physical books remain a fundamental and important aspect of the DC Public Library system, the data shows that physical books may not be the primary use of the libraries in the future. That reality provides an opportunity for DCPL to make adjustments to its physical spaces and programmatic offerings to better serve the interests and needs of the diverse communities in Washington, D.C. **To this end, the Library will continue to analyze usage trends to ensure its spaces and offerings best suit the demands and interests of the community.**



IV. UPDATES TO ORIGINAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In the Facilities Master Plan, DC Public Library affirms its commitment to serve residents more equitably across the city. In light of this equity framing, *Next Libris* outlines a number of recommendations, including the potential to shift library locations or even construct additional libraries. A more recent analysis of data and usage trends was conducted for this report, indicating that additional library locations are unnecessary. Moving forward with currently funded projects, especially addressing the operational deficiencies as a result of their small size of the current Parklands-Turner, Deanwood, Rosedale, and Northwest One locations should remain a priority.

Projects identified as priorities in the 2020 plan and are in process as of 2025:

- Planning and design for renovations at the Petworth and Shaw/Watha T. Daniel libraries are underway.
- A site was selected for replacing the small Parklands-Turner Library with a full-service library in Congress Heights, and the project is in the design phase.
- The Deputy Mayor for Economic Development (DMPED) is leading the redevelopment of the Chevy Chase Library, slated to be rebuilt as part of the mixed-use development that will include a new library, a new Chevy Chase Community Center and housing.
 - The DMPED-led RFP process is currently underway, and the developer proposals are under review by a multi-agency panel that includes a DCPL representative.
 - Based on DMPED's published timeline, construction is expected to start in late 2026.
 - Developer selection and terms of agreement will inform any additional funding burden for the District and the actual construction timeframe.

Other recommendations from *Next Libris*, including the plans for replacing small libraries and exploring solutions for identified opportunity areas, are detailed in the following pages.



REPLACING SMALL NEIGHBORHOOD LIBRARIES

The Facilities Master Plan set forth the Library's commitment to pursue strategic opportunities to grow and give more residents equitable access to this vital engine of community life. The plan recommends replacing the following three small library locations with full service libraries. These libraries, currently co-located with other city services, lack meeting rooms, study rooms, and programming space. They also fall short of suitable space for collections, seating, and other critical library services. Tensions between the differing needs of customers (teens tend to want space where they can spend time with friends; adults may prefer space to work quietly) further exacerbate the operational challenges of these locations.

ROSEDALE

Status: Project funded*

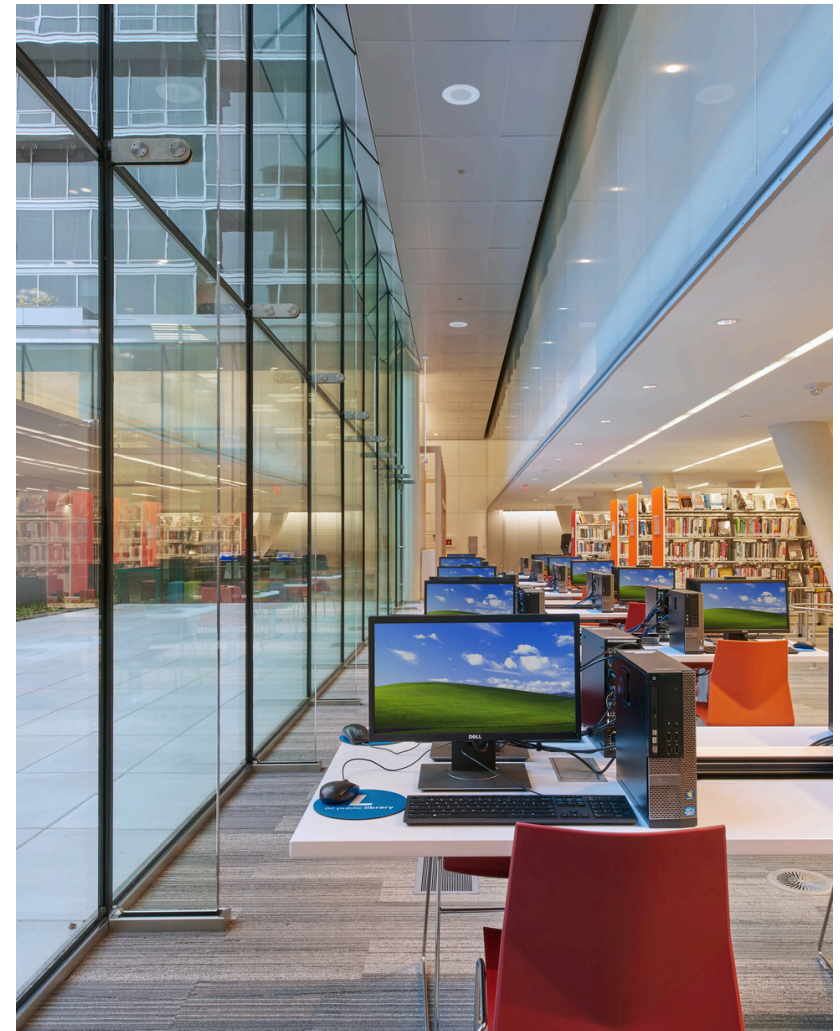
During a community meeting in January 2024, local stakeholders expressed a strong desire to rebuild the Rosedale Library at its current location. The Library's due diligence found few other good options for relocation in the immediate area, and as remaining on-site also avoids land-acquisition costs, the Library is currently working with the Department of Parks and Recreation to explore expanding the Rosedale Library on site.

DEANWOOD

Status: Project funded*

The Deanwood neighborhood is expected to see significant population increase in the coming years. Currently the Library is finalizing terms with WMATA to build a stand-alone library on a portion of the Deanwood Metro Station parking lot.

** The existing budget will not be sufficient to design and construct a new full service library. The Library will have a better sense of costs once the design advances with community input and estimates are provided by subcontractors.*



EDGEWOOD/ECKINGTON LIBRARY COUPLED WITH NORTHWEST ONE LIBRARY CLOSURE

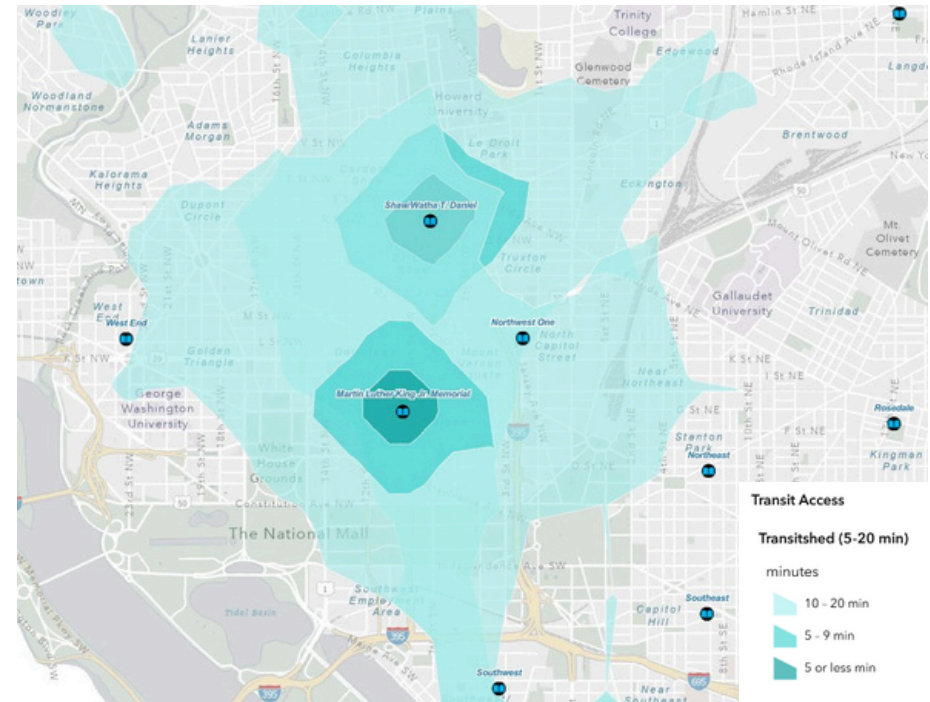
Status: Project funded*

The Facilities Master Plan recommends closing Northwest One Library and building a new full-service library in the Eckington/Edgewood area, to address the operational deficiencies of small libraries and solve the identified opportunity area for residents in the nearby Eckington/Edgewood neighborhoods along the Rhode Island Avenue NE corridor. The service area for the Northwest One Library overlaps considerably with the Shaw/Watha T. Daniel Library and the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library, and library usage data demonstrates that Northwest One Library cardholders are heavy users of locations other than their home library.

Analysis indicates that 81% of patrons residing in the Northwest One/Sursum Corda area who checked out physical materials in FY23 chose to do so solely from locations other than Northwest One Library. Similarly, 69% of patrons residing in the area who logged one or more computer sessions in FY23 did so only at other library locations, despite the many available computers at their home library.

Shifting the library location north of New York Avenue would provide better geographic distribution of libraries across the city without depriving Northwest One Library customers of library services.

NORTHWEST ONE LIBRARY PATRONS LIVE WITHIN 10-20 MINUTES TRANSIT FROM SHAW; MLK LIBRARIES



The Edgewood and Eckington neighborhoods are forecast to experience high concentrations of growth and development activity, accentuating the need to address this opportunity area. As of Winter 2025, the Library is in the final stages of selecting a site.** Following site selection, the project will proceed to the design phase for a full-service library that will serve the Eckington/Edgewood neighborhoods and surrounding areas.

* The existing budget will not be sufficient to design and construct a new full service library. The Library will have a better sense of costs once the design advances with community input and estimates are provided by subcontractors.

** The Library's site selection process and community engagement efforts are available in detail at www.dclibrary.org/news/new-edgewood-eckington-library

FUTURE USES FOR CO-LOCATED SPACES

In FY23, the Library conducted community engagement in the immediate neighborhood around the Northwest One Library. Outreach included one-on-one stakeholder interviews and a survey to gather community preferences regarding possible services that could be provided within this space once the library is relocated.

Community Preferences

The community's top preferences for services to replace the Northwest One Library included:

- Community Center
- Fitness Center
- Co-working Space
- Social Services Hub
- Community Space for educational and cultural activities
- Computer Access
- Health Clinic
- Teen Center
- Early Childhood Space
- Homework Help
- Job Placement
- Business and Career Center
- Technology Training Center

When asked what the most pressing needs are in the community that could be addressed in this location, the top three were:

1. A place for youth
2. Meeting space
3. Health services



EXPLORING LIBRARY OPPORTUNITY AREAS

SHEPHERD PARK / JUANITA THORNTON

Status: Project funded*

The Facilities Master Plan suggested that the Library explore the possibility of relocating the existing Shepherd Park/Juanita E. Thornton Library south of the existing site to address a service gap in the Brightwood Park/Manor Park area and to serve more Ward 4 residents with one centrally located library. A community survey conducted in 2023 determined that support for moving the library was mixed. While there was some interest in relocating the library to the Parks at Walter Reed south of and adjacent to the Shepherd Park neighborhood, there was doubt that that move would serve resident needs in Brightwood Park and Manor Park.

As a result, DCPL plans to rebuild the Shepherd Park/Juanita E. Thornton Library on its existing site, leaving unanswered how best to provide additional services elsewhere in Ward 4. An analysis of the Brightwood Park/Manor Park area shows that residents are accessing library services, with a higher than average percentage of residents using public computers and copying services, and slightly below average percentage using study rooms and checking out physical materials. Coupled with the current usage of nearby libraries, data suggests that a full service library is not the only possible solution.

One of a number of ideas that could be piloted is that of a “community commons,” envisioned by DC Public Library as a multi-purpose public space. Its collaborative aspects and community service spirit would make it unique from traditional library offerings and programming. A pilot program would also provide the opportunity to evaluate the success of the initiative prior to engaging in additional pilots elsewhere. The Library remains open to exploring options with the community and elected officials.

COMMUNITY COMMONS

Core services include the most popular offerings of D.C.’s new public libraries: a large flexible meeting/program room for ANCs and other affinity groups and program activities; small group study rooms for tutoring, school projects and private consultation; a laptop kiosk for in-house computer use; open seating area; free printing/scanning/copying services; and the ability for residents to pick up books placed on hold that are delivered from libraries throughout the system.

In addition, the Commons will include a dedicated space for government and non-profit partners to deliver community services on a rotating basis. Examples may include job placement assistance with the Department of Employment Services; healthcare enrollment with the Health Benefit Exchange Authority; housing placement with the Department of Human Services; tax preparation with Community Tax Aid, etc.

While the space is primarily intended for adults, regular programs for children (such as a weekly Saturday morning arts and crafts or story time programs) are also a possibility.

* The existing budget will not be sufficient to design and construct a new full service library. The Library will have a better sense of costs once the design advances with community input and estimates are provided by subcontractors.

ADAMS MORGAN/U STREET

Status: Project unfunded

When *Next Libris* was published in 2020, visits to center city libraries like Shaw/Watha T. Daniel, Mt. Pleasant, Cleveland Park, and West End, all well exceeded 200,000 annually. Shaw/Watha T. Daniel and Mt. Pleasant especially were regularly overcrowded, creating a poor experience for visitors and staff. The Facilities Master Plan suggested that a new library in the Adams Morgan/U Street/Dupont Circle area would relieve some of the pressure from those other facilities. In 2024, attendance at those libraries was well below what it was in 2019. The decline in neighborhood library visits, the draw of the new MLK Library, and the shift to online library usage now suggests that a new library in Adams Morgan/U Street is not recommended. To better understand this, DCPL conducted a community needs assessment in the summer of 2024. Through a library usage analysis, consideration of demographics and population forecasting of the area, stakeholder mapping, and community engagement, the Library sought to understand how to best support existing and future library users.

A survey was distributed through pop-up events across the Adams Morgan/U Street/Dupont Circle area and shared online through neighborhood listservs and newsletters, and focus groups were conducted for immigrant and Spanish-speaking parents and seniors, youth, and Single Member District Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners (ANCs). Through these engagement efforts, non-library users articulated challenges such as a lack of awareness of what the library offers, language barriers, or a sense of relevancy/value to them, and current library users expressed interest in a more convenient location (to borrow books). While some current library users mentioned 1617 U Street NW as a desirable site for a new library, there was no consensus on the need for a full-service library in order to meet community needs.

An analysis of this area indicates that a significantly higher percentage of the residents access digital library services compared to the city overall, while their usage of study rooms and physical materials is comparable to the citywide average.

DC Public Library should focus on other low-cost ways to serve this neighborhood, including marketing of existing library services – especially to underserved populations – as well as enhanced collections and pop-up services to meet community needs.





EXPLORING OPPORTUNITY AREAS

CATHEDRAL HEIGHTS AND FORT LINCOLN

Status: Projects unfunded

The Cathedral Heights/Wesley Heights/Glover Park and Fort Lincoln/Gateway/Arboretum neighborhoods are both identified as service gaps in the Facilities Master Plan, with a recommendation for the Library to conduct additional research and outreach to inform future decisions about possibly bringing library services to these areas. **In the current timeline, both opportunity areas are scheduled to be re-evaluated in 2030 for possible next steps.**



V. HOLISTIC RENOVATIONS AND DC'S CLIMATE GOALS

Next Libris provides a timeline for both functional refresh projects (to address building programs that no longer meet community needs) and systems renewal projects (to ensure major building components are being replaced on a regular schedule). DC Public Library originally intended for the functional refresh projects to be short and relatively inexpensive interventions and recommended doing up to two projects per year. In actuality, based on the two projects currently in design at Shaw and Petworth libraries, refresh projects – if they are to provide demonstrably improved customer experiences – are more complex and therefore more expensive than anticipated.

The *Next Libris* Update recommends rethinking the “refresh” concept, to incorporate anticipated systems renewals, and reimagining these projects as “holistic renovations.” Beyond replacing existing fixtures and finishes (e.g. paint, carpet, furniture, and other modest improvements), these projects will seek to transform, improve, or repurpose library spaces for user needs and behaviors. This may entail reconfiguration of an entire floor for improved sight lines or to better serve a particular user group (e.g. children and caregivers, youth/teens, etc.) requiring more seating or study areas, universal access, logical placement of power, data outlets, audio-visual equipment installation, security system reconfiguration, integration of high-performing furniture, millwork, and high-efficiency lighting.

The Library should make every attempt to conduct holistic renovations in concert with major systems upgrades as recommended by facilities condition assessments conducted as part of the original master planning exercise. DCPL will develop a new timeline by which it should strive to conduct these renovations and seek dedicated funding through the annual budget appropriation process.



THE DISTRICT'S CLIMATE GOALS

The District's climate action plan for reducing energy use in buildings and increasing renewable energy generation has put into effect **Building Energy Performance Standards (BEPS)**. BEPS was created to help meet the energy and climate goals of the District's *SustainableDC* plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption by 50% by 2032.

What this means for the library system in practice is that the lowest performing library within its portfolio is required to demonstrate improvements in energy performance; and as soon as that is accomplished, by default the next lowest performing building will be required to demonstrate improvement. This cycle is expected to repeat itself until the entire library campus achieves NetZero Energy.

Climate-forward design thinking requires reducing the library portfolio's energy consumption as well as preparing the buildings to endure and ideally serve as resilience hubs within communities in preparation for extreme weather events.

A combination of interventions to the building enclosure and selection of high performing Building Automation controlled heating, cooling, ventilation, and lighting systems needs to be planned for and budgeted. Climate forward thinking entails above-code insulation, air and vapor barriers in walls and roofs (the building enclosure), and replacement of existing glazing with high performing systems. To position library spaces as resilience hubs in the face of area-wide power outages and extreme weather events, risk analysis for flooding and onsite power generation and storage strategies are critical.



- BY 2030:
 - Achieve Net-Zero Energy For New Construction and Retrofit Existing Buildings To Reduce Energy Consumption By 50%
 - Advance Preparedness For Resilience To Climate Change
 - Increase Renewable Energy Production
 - Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions By 50%
- BY 2050:
 - Achieve Carbon Neutrality

VI. BUDGET PLANNING

Since *Next Libris* was published in 2020, the construction industry has experienced dramatic volatility. While the supply chain disruptions associated with the pandemic have somewhat normalized, cost escalations in the Mid-Atlantic region have not let up despite the national construction demand beginning to cool. For the foreseeable future, construction in the District will continue to compete for labor and material with privately funded data centers and federally funded projects in the D.C. metro area.



COST ESCALATIONS DUE TO MARKET SHIFTS

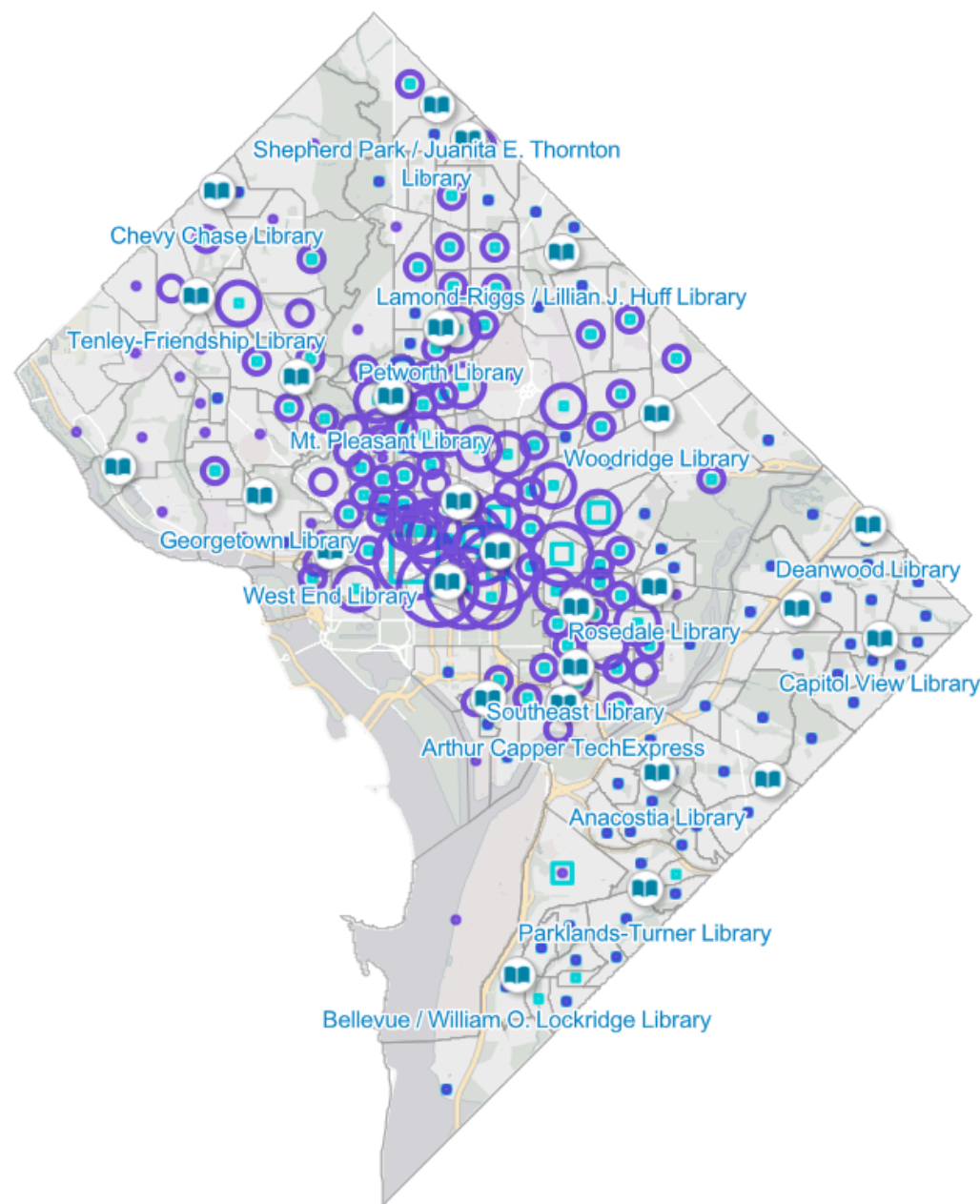
Historically, the Library's capital funding requests to the City have incorporated a 3% year-over-year escalation, and annual escalations between 3% to 6% were recommended in 2020 when the Facilities Master Plan was published. In the aftermath of the pandemic (during which escalations for certain materials increased by 40%) and based on market data, **an annual escalation of 8% to 10% is more realistic.** The Library will also approach design and construction work in phases, seeking design funding ahead of projecting construction costs. Finalized designs will serve as the basis for credible construction funding requests for new libraries, as well as for holistic renovations of existing libraries.

The cost model for new library and holistic renovations will also incorporate the cost of **climate-forward design** to not only meet the District's sustainability and climate resiliency goals but to also position the library as a leader in elevating the discourse on climate change within the city. Similarly, holistic renovation projects will include costs not previously factored for meeting BEPS.

VII. MLK 2030: THE FUTURE OF THE CENTRAL LIBRARY

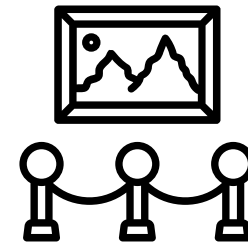
In 2020, D.C.'s historic Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library (MLK) reopened its doors following a three and a half year \$211 million modernization. In 2021, the library won the prestigious Richard H. Driehaus Award, the highest national recognition bestowed upon a preservation project by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. While its early fall opening was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, by 2024 usage of the new central library had exceeded expectations. The library welcomed 737,743 visitors in FY2024, confirming its incredible popularity. *Washington City Paper* named the library's roof deck the best co-working space in the city for 2022. Its cafe is also an extraordinary success; in 2023 it sold more than 15,000 cups of coffee. The MLK Library has taken its place as a flagship destination for District residents and visitors from around the region and beyond as part of D.C.'s downtown attractions.

The MLK Library's reach extends to all 8 wards of the city. This map presents the geographic distribution of unique users -- based on where they live -- who came to the MLK Library in 2023 to check out physical materials and use public access computers. It is truly serving DC as a central library.



A recent case study* highlights MLK Library's role in revitalizing and activating downtown D.C. as a key third space for gathering, convention and congregation. MLK Library's successful programming - highlighted by author events that can attract 500 attendees, and the annual Art All Night block party, among others - demonstrates that the building is a destination for residents well beyond the city's limits.

Perhaps the most surprising MLK success story has been the popularity of the exhibition program, as it has successfully attracted residents from all over the country and even tourists from overseas. These popular exhibits have featured important local, national, and international individuals and movements, including Emmett Till, Leonardo da Vinci, and Alma Thomas; the Leonardo da Vinci exhibit alone drew over 20,000 visits in the summer of 2023. There is no doubt that the MLK Library has been an overwhelming success for DCPL and the District, particularly in re-activating its downtown post-pandemic.

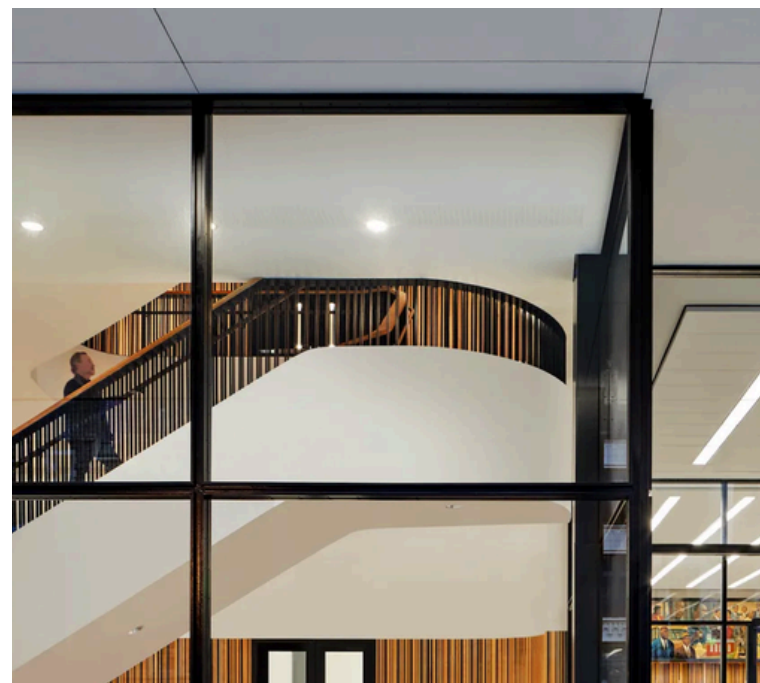


The exhibition of original drawings from Leonardo da Vinci's Codex Atlanticus drew more than **20,000 visits** in the summer of 2023.



**conducted by the Urban Libraries Council and Placer.ai*

Considering the demonstrated success of the newly renovated library, why should DCPL consider a 2030 plan for the MLK library? Although the library has only been open four years, the design was initiated in 2014 and will have aged considerably by 2030. Since reopening, the library has already felt the impact of its users' diverse needs. There is a high demand for program space, as well as spaces for art exhibitions and event rentals - core parts of the new MLK Library. In addition, the general changes seen across the library system should inform the future of the MLK Library. With a decrease in physical materials use city-wide, the MLK Library should consider how its spaces and offerings reflect current user trends. DCPL can creatively repurpose under-utilized spaces such as the large loggia to maximize the library's offerings and services.



A MLK 2030 plan offers an important opportunity to reimagine some of the library's spaces to ensure the continued success of D.C.'s central library. As proven by references made to the library in plans like the Office of Planning's Public Realm Plan and the Gallery Place/Chinatown Task Force Recommendations, the MLK Library is a key contributor to the revitalization of downtown. In order for it to continue to serve as an anchor for culture, reading, and community, its interior and maintenance needs must be continually considered. Aiming for 2030 is the right time for this reimagining to come to fruition.



VIII. CONCLUSION

The 2024 *Next Libris* Update accounts for the recent local and global disruptions that will influence how DC Public Library approaches changes to its physical campus. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated a significant shift to digital usage that the library industry was already experiencing prior to 2020. The Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library with its myriad meeting and study spaces, its cafe, major exhibitions, and rooftop terrace, has become one of downtown D.C.'s most popular cultural destinations, attracting visitors from around the city and beyond. Additional investment in the building will be required for it to continue to serve as one of downtown's cultural anchors.

The Update does not change the overall thinking of *Next Libris* as a ten-year plan ending in 2030. The Update also does not change the original plan's stated goal to contribute to the success of the District's Comprehensive Plan and housing production goals.

In 2025 the District of Columbia may enter a volatile political and economic future that could compel local agencies to rethink their plans and strategies in an effort to protect existing assets and continue providing core services. The Library will only move forward on capital projects where there is clear support for ongoing operating expenses, keeping in mind the original plan's core pillars of managing assets wisely, designing and building responsibly, and growing smartly and equitably. Therefore the recommendations provided in the *Next Libris* Update are not a commitment to move forward on any project without support from the Library Board of Trustees, and D.C.'s elected officials.



DC Public Library

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