



# The Belmont Library Project

## Begin the Next Chapter

### PROJECT UPDATE

**Final Schematic Design** - On November 12<sup>th</sup>, after more than 18 months of work by the Belmont Library Building Committee, the Library Board of Trustees, and Library administration, final schematic designs for a new Belmont Public Library were released. These designs are the result of reviewing the building infrastructure, analyzing usage data, interviewing library staff and patrons, conducting wide-reaching community surveys, facilitating focus groups, meeting with community members, town organizations and other key stakeholders, and holding multiple community forums. The schematic designs reflect a library that will meet the needs of Belmont residents for years to come.

**Capital Campaign Begins** – The Belmont Library Foundation has kicked off the first phase of a Capital Campaign to raise private funds for the Library Project, following the “public/private partnership” model established through the original Henry Underwood library gift over 100 years ago. The Foundation’s goal is to offset as much of the project cost as possible through donations from major benefactors and others throughout the Belmont community. At the conclusion of the campaign, the expectation is that the town will vote on funding the balance of project costs through a debt exclusion.

### FREQUENTLY ASKED PROJECT QUESTIONS

#### WHY DOES BELMONT NEED A NEW LIBRARY?

**Our Library, Our Community** – The Belmont Public Library is the center of our community, our town square, an essential resource that serves the needs of *all* of Belmont’s resident. The Library is free and open to all ages, backgrounds, and interests. The Library is more than a place to simply borrow books. It hosts cultural events and meetings, provides a place to study, work, and socialize, and offers a wide range of programming that enriches the lives of all Belmont residents.

Library usage numbers illustrate that the need for programs and services is increasing. However, infrastructure issues and space constraints severely impact the quantity and type of programming and services the Library can offer.

**Infrastructure** – Simply put, our building is failing. The future for libraries is bright, but we cannot move forward with the current Library facility. We are constricted by aging systems that have reached the end of their useful lives, accessibility issues that bar some citizens from accessing stacks and bathrooms, and insufficient space for meetings, quiet study, collaborative work, technology instruction, as well as inadequate areas for children and teens.

**Programming** – Library programs are immensely popular, from tai chi classes to children’s programs, movie nights, book groups, technology classes, and ELL conversation workshops. Due to the current building’s space constraints, it has become increasingly difficult to find space to host these programs and to accommodate all patrons who want to participate.

BELMONT LOVES ITS LIBRARY!	
FY19 NUMBERS	
10 <sup>TH</sup> HIGHEST COLLECTION USAGE	IN MASSACHUSETTS
600,000+	COLLECTION MATERIALS BORROWED
116,000	E MATERIALS BORROWED
254,883	VISITORS
772 LIBRARY PROGRAMS (379 CHILDREN, 115 YOUNG ADULT, 278 ADULT)	

## **WHY NOT RENOVATE THE EXISTING BUILDING?**

A 2016 feasibility study concluded that the current building is a poor candidate for renovation. Addressing all of the building's structural and design deficiencies would result in a significant loss of usable space and would not enable the Belmont Public Library to meet programming, study, or meeting space needs.

## **WHAT ARE THE PROJECT COSTS?**

The Library Building Project Cost is \$35.2 million, based on a 2024 construction date. This amount includes three years of predicted construction escalation costs. The Belmont Library Foundation is undertaking a Capital Campaign to raise private funds to defray project costs and the Trustees and the Foundation are actively investigating additional funding sources.

## **ARE STATE FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR THE PROJECT?**

At this time, state funds are not available through the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) for the Belmont Library Project. The most recent library construction grants were awarded in 2016 and nine projects were awarded provisional grants. 24 library projects were placed on a waitlist. The last of the waitlisted projects will likely reach completion in 2033. With this timeline, if there is another MBLC grant round, the earliest Belmont could be accepted into the grant program would be 2029, with funding between 2035 and 2045.

## **WHERE WILL THE NEW LIBRARY BE LOCATED?**

The new Library will be a two-story, brick and glass facade building of approximately 41,000 sf, which is 12,000 sf larger than the current building, and will be situated on the current site. The new building design includes a Veterans Memorial outside the Library entrance, a historical wing incorporating the Claflin Room, enhanced access to outside space, including the Woodland Garden and Wellington Brook, and more.

## **WHAT ARE SOME OF THE FEATURES OF THE NEW LIBRARY?**

Features of the new Library include: ground-level entry from Concord Avenue, a larger children's room with a dedicated story time/project room, additional space for books, movies, music, and other materials, a larger young adult area, a designated technology/media lab, a multi-purpose meeting/community room with after-hours access, individual study areas, group study rooms, a Belmont history room, and more. Detailed design renderings are available at [www.belmontlibraryproject.com](http://www.belmontlibraryproject.com).

## **WILL THE BUILDING BE A SUSTAINABLE DESIGN?**

The Library Building Committee has worked closely with the Design Team's sustainability engineers to design an all-electric building with rooftop solar panels, enhanced energy performance, and energy efficient glazing at a ratio that is appropriate for libraries.

## **PROJECT TIMELINE**

Schematic Design Completed	November 2019
Capital Campaign Begins	November 2019
Project Funding Secured	November 2022 (tentative)
Building Design Finalized	November 2023
Building Construction	2024
Building Opens	2026

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

To sign up for email updates and to learn more about the Library Building Project, including additional FAQs, project timelines, meeting schedules, presentation materials, and more, visit: [www.belmontlibraryproject.com](http://www.belmontlibraryproject.com).

Questions? [belmontlibraryproject@gmail.com](mailto:belmontlibraryproject@gmail.com)