

Brooklyn Public Library testimony to the Subcommittee on Planning, Dispositions, and Concessions

March 9, 2017

Thank you Planning, Dispositions, and Concessions Subcommittee Chair Salamanca; Land Use Committee Chair Greenfield, and staff of the Land Use Committee; and Council Member Menchaca; for the opportunity to present our plans for the new Sunset Park Library.

We face many challenges at the current branch and have a unique opportunity to address them with this project.

There is no such thing as a slow or quiet day at Sunset Park Library. At 12,000 square feet, Sunset Park is the 23rd-largest of Brooklyn's 60 libraries. Yet it consistently ranks among the top 5 branches in daily visits, circulation, and program attendance. The branch is always crowded, and often overcrowded.

Thanks to a failed HVAC system, the temperature *inside* Sunset Park Library is usually not much different from the temperature *outside*. We currently rely on four noisy, inefficient chillers to cool the branch in the summer, our busiest season.

Unfortunately these machines must remain in place year-round, taking up floor space that is already at a premium. As a result, though the branch serves a large number of young families, there simply is not enough room for a dedicated children's area—a feature found in most of our libraries, and urgently needed at Sunset Park.

Sunset Park Library also has no elevator, just an unreliable lift with room for a single rider. There are only twelve electrical outlets, several of which are difficult for patrons to access. And presiding over all of this is a leaking roof that is long past its useful life.

In short, nearly every essential mechanical system and critical piece of infrastructure at Sunset Park Library is in need of replacement—including the roof, HVAC, and boiler.

The branch is outdated, overcrowded, and unable to meet the needs of a neighborhood that has grown considerably since the building opened in 1972.

Sunset Park needs a new library.

Yet while the building itself is in terrible condition, the staff members who work there provide terrific service. Because of them, Sunset Park residents love coming to the library. Last year, Sunset Park received the Neighborhood Library Award, the city's highest honor for libraries. Branch manager Roxana Benavides is a recipient of the Sloan Public Service Award, known as the "Nobel Prize of New York City government." Roxana and her team work wonders, but even they can no longer compensate for the failures of a badly aging facility.

If it were within our power to simply repair Sunset Park Library or build a new branch, we would do so. However, we are burdened with \$280 million in outstanding capital needs systemwide.

To bring Sunset Park’s infrastructure up to date, to modernize its layout, and to make it big enough to serve the neighborhood, would cost approximately \$20 million—or roughly what we receive from the city each year to maintain our entire physical plant.

And so we have worked with several partners to develop a creative solution to build a new library for Sunset Park.

In conjunction with the building of 50 units of affordable housing, the Fifth Avenue Committee will pay for the core and shell of the new, expanded branch, spending an amount equal to the appraised value of the property. BPL will outfit the new library’s interior, using proceeds from the redevelopment of the Brooklyn Heights branch.

The new Sunset Park Library will be nearly twice as large as the current location. At least 18,000 of its 21,000 square feet will be open to the public, rather than devoted to back-office or maintenance functions. We are able to offer so much public space because the building’s mechanicals will be located outside of the library, another advantage of this partnership.

Physically, the new library will be everything that the current one is not: bright and comfortable, with an open, flexible design and up-to-date technological infrastructure. Its essential components, including the HVAC system, boiler, and roof, will be brand-new.

In other words, the new building, unlike the current one, will be worthy of Sunset Park Library’s staff and patrons.

BPL and the Fifth Avenue Committee held dozens of meetings with residents and stakeholders before undertaking this project. There have also been a number of public meetings, including three community board meetings and a public planning session at the Sunset Park Recreation Center.

We will leverage our own resources and those of outside partners to reach as many residents and get as much feedback as we can on the design of the new branch. BPL has engaged the Hester Street Collaborative to begin a community-driven planning process. The public will contribute to the design of the new branch at workshops, at the current location, and online. BPL and FAC will work with Community Board 7 and neighborhood organizations to encourage broad participation in this discussion. Patron and stakeholder feedback will ensure the new library reflects what Sunset Park residents want.

The construction of a new library is a large undertaking, but we will minimize as much as possible the disruption of service to Sunset Park.

A 5,000 square foot interim library, located eight blocks from the branch, will provide nearly all of the programs and services patrons currently enjoy.

Visitors will be able to check out and return books and access technology. In fact, the interim library will have more public computers than the existing branch.

The current branch will close and the interim location will open this fall. The new Sunset Park Library is slated to open in July 2020—and when it does, the neighborhood will finally have the world-class library it deserves.

HOUSING PRESERVATION & DEVELOPMENT (HPD)
BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY (BPL)
FIFTH AVENUE COMMITTEE (FAC)

Sunset Park Library Expansion & New Affordable Housing

Presentation to the City Council Subcommittee on
Planning, Dispositions and Concessions
Uniform Land Use Review Process (ULURP) Public Hearing
March 9, 2017



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Agenda

- I. Introduction
- II. Library & Affordable Housing Development
- III. Proposed Redevelopment
- IV. Project Design
- V. Public Outreach
- VI. Next Steps: Timeline
- VII. Questions



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Introduction: Proposed Actions

Applicants

- NYC Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD)
- NYC Department of Citywide Administrative Services (DCAS)
- Brooklyn Public Library (BPL)

Proposed ULURP Actions:

- Urban Development Action Area Project (UDAAP)
- Disposition of City-owned Land
- Acquisition of Property by the City



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Library & Affordable Housing Development

Key aspects of the model to expand library branches and add affordable housing

- Provide a larger, improved library space
 - Sunset Park Library will increase its size by over 70% and more than double its publicly usable space
- Add 100% affordable housing above
 - Project to contain 49 apartments affordable to Sunset Park residents. Affordable at neighborhood (not regional) median incomes
- Create a library that reflects the community
 - Working with Hester Street Collaborative for extensive community participation
 - Space enables variety of classroom, computer, cultural uses
- Mandate that library branch and affordable housing in perpetuity
 - LDA, Regulatory and other commitments
- Maximum public value
 - Developer paid purchase price at appraised covers the cost of new Sunset Park Library branch “core and shell”



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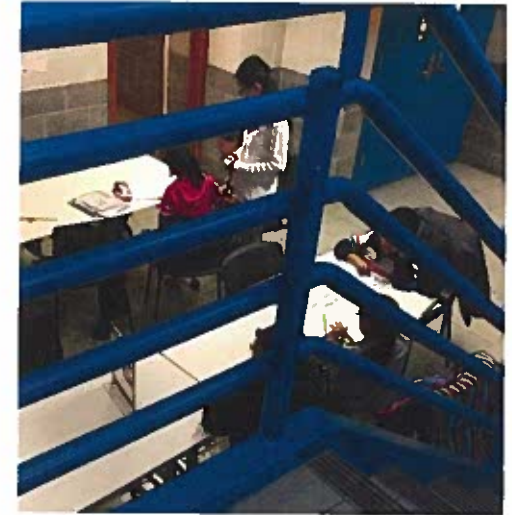
Library Challenges



Temporary Chillers



Crowded Children's Program



Getting creative to make room for programs



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Library Challenges

BPL consists of **60 neighborhood libraries** including Central library.

BPL has significant financial needs borough-wide, with **nearly \$280 million** in outstanding capital needs.

On average, BPL receives between \$15 and \$20 million a year for capital funds.



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NYC
Department of
Housing Preservation
& Development

Bklyn
Public Library

Library Challenges: Proposed Redevelopment

- An updated and expanded library
 - Grow the library from 12,200 SF to nearly 21,000 SF – and more than double the publicly accessible space to 18,000 SF, making it the 3rd largest in BPL system
 - FAC pays for the core & shell of the new library within project financing
 - Optimized & flexible layout, with updated technology infrastructure
 - Brand new infrastructure – including new HVAC, boiler and electrical systems



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Proposed Redevelopment: Overview

- 8 story building, 85', 72,007 GSF
- Library unit: 20,755 GSF, most of cellar and 1st floors and a portion of 2nd floors
- Residential: 51,252 GSF, a portion of 2nd floor and 3rd through 8th floors
- 50 Apartments
 - 11 studio
 - 13 1 BR
 - 13 2 BR (+ 1 super's unit)
 - 12 3 BR



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Proposed Redevelopment: Housing Need in CD7

- 2014 data from latest Furman Center report on CD7:
 - Median income: \$48,112
 - 49.2% of low income households were *severely rent burdened* (more than 35% of gross income paid in rent)
 - 8.5% of residents were *severely overcrowded* (>1.5 people per room)
 - Vacancy rate was 3.5%



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Proposed Redevelopment: Income Targeting

# of Units Provided	Affordability Level
9 Units	30% AMI
9 Units	40% AMI
9 Units	50% AMI
12 Units	60% AMI
10 Units	80% AMI

- Studio to 3BR units are distributed throughout each income band
- 50% of units (25) will have a preference for CD7 residents
- Disabled or hearing / visually impaired will receive preference for 7 units



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Proposed Redevelopment: Rents

- Completed Project will provide units at long-term and permanent affordability.
- 39 units offered below 60% AMI:
 - Studios and 1BRs - approx. \$500 to \$900 per month
 - 2BRs and 3BRs - approx. \$700 to \$1300 per month
- 10 units offered at 80% AMI (\$1,167 for studios to \$1,742 for a 3BR) but still well below market rents, as part of the mixed-income strategy of this building



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Project Design:

Corner View

Southbound 4th Avenue View



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Public Outreach: Education and Marketing

- FAC will begin conducting local outreach and affordable housing lottery education and marketing efforts, including workshops, to ensure a sizeable pool of eligible local residents apply for the affordable housing
- Outreach to assist potential applicants with credit counseling and applying for ITINs to enable eligibility



- Multilingual marketing – Spanish, Chinese, English and Arabic



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Public Outreach: Community Planning Process

- BPL has begun a community-driven planning process engaging Hester Street Collaborative, including planning workshops, in-branch and online feedback opportunities.
- BPL and FAC will work with Community Board 7 and neighborhood organizations to encourage broad participation in this discussion
- Patron and stakeholder feedback will ensure the new library reflects what Sunset Park residents want in their library



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Next Steps: Temporary Library

- 4201 Fourth Avenue, 1st Floor – 8 blocks from current branch
- Approximately 5,000 SF
- Accessible
- All existing Library Program to continue operating
 - Library stacks and reading area
 - Comparable programming and classes
 - Flexible program / meeting room
 - Will have more computers than the existing branch library (currently 15 laptops and 2 children's desktops)



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Next Steps: Timeline

	Milestones	2017					2018				2019				2020	
		Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	
1	Library Open at Current Location	█														
2	Library Open at Interim Location						█									
3	ULURP	█														
4	Community Planning Process for Library	█														
5	Construction						█									
6	Community Outreach for Housing Lottery											█				
7	Library Build-Out											█				
8	Residential Rent-Up											█				
9	New Library Opens															



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Questions & Comments

Thank you



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I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: _____

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Dorene J. Martinez

Address: 557 Atlantic Ave, BK

I represent: Community member

Address: _____

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Name: Tanica Codrington

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I represent: Turning Point

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Name: Juan Velasquez

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I represent: Myself

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Name: Dr. Stephen Ross

Address: 496 95th St. Street Brooklyn, NY

I represent: 11 South 1st St. Brooklyn Industrial Development Corp.

Address: 241 41st Street Brooklyn, NY

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I represent: _____

Address: _____

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Address: 100 Gold

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Name: DAVID WOLOCH

Address: 10 GRAND ARMY PLAZA

I represent: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Address: _____

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Date: _____

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Name: KOKILA FRANK

Address: _____

I represent: BROOKLYN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Address: _____

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Date: 3/9/17

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Name: TINA LOGAN

Address: _____

I represent: Center Against Domestic Violence

Address: 25 Chapel Street #904, Brooklyn 11201

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Name: Jay Murray

Address: 57th Avenue, Community

I represent: BD, Queens Hsept, Bldg - NY 11213

Address: _____

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in favor in opposition

Date: _____

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Name: Jordan Press

Address: 100 Gold

I represent: HPD

Address: _____

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