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**DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS, QUEENS BOROUGH PRESIDENT MELINDA KATZ,  
NYC COUNCIL MEMBER DONOVAN RICHARDS AND NYS ASSEMBLYWOMAN STACEY PHEFFER AMATO  
JOIN QUEENS LIBRARY PRESIDENT AND CEO DENNIS M. WALCOTT,  
FOR A CEREMONIAL GROUNDBREAKING ON NEW LIBRARY IN FAR ROCKAWAY**

*\$33.6 Million, Striking New Building Will Be Twice the Size of the Existing Branch*

**(Far Rockaway, N.Y.)** \_ Officials from the de Blasio Administration, Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, New York City Council Member Donovan Richards and New York State Assemblywoman Stacey Pheffer Amato Queens Library today joined Queens Library President and CEO Dennis M. Walcott, other elected and community leaders to break ground on a new Queens Library branch in Far Rockaway.



At 18,000 square feet, the new building will be twice the size of the original library at 1637 Central Avenue. The new building has a construction budget of \$33.6 million and is scheduled to be completed by mid-

2021. The NYC Department of Design and Construction is managing the construction of the new building for Queens Library, and the project is being funded through capital investments from Borough President Katz (\$21.25 million); Mayor Bill de Blasio and the NYC Economic Development Corporation, (\$19.4 million), Council Member Richards (\$3.24 million) and Assemblywoman Pheffer Amato.

The existing library building closed permanently on Sept. 28, 2018. A [temporary library](#) has opened nearby at 1003 Beach 20<sup>th</sup> Street, offering the same hours and days of service.

"We're pleased to break ground on this long-envisioned, world-class branch of the Queens Library system," said **Borough President Melinda Katz**. "Within the next three years, we will finally see through the fruition of substantial public investments issued as early as FY 2007 by my predecessor, the esteemed Helen M. Marshall. The new library building will serve as a much-upgraded anchor for the Far Rockaway community and its growing families."

"This library has had a special place in the hearts and minds of our staff and the community over the years, but never more so than in the aftermath of Super Storm Sandy in 2012," said **President Walcott**.

“It was a lifeline for many residents, becoming a meeting point, a food and supply distribution center and more. Its stunning new replacement will amplify the role of the library in the community even further, serving as a major learning and technology hub. We are grateful to Queens Borough President Melinda Katz, the late Borough President M. Marshall, Mayor Bill de Blasio, Council Member Richards and Assemblywoman Pheffer Amato for their investment in this project and understanding of the transformative effect of libraries on the lives of the people of our City.”

“With twice as much space for programming and patrons, and a design that aims for LEED Gold certification for environmental sustainability, the new Far Rockaway Library will be built to meet the needs of an expanding community and the future City,” said **DDC Commissioner Lorraine Grillo**. “DDC is very proud to be part of the improvements and innovations that Dennis Walcott is bringing to the borough’s library system.”

“The new library in Downtown Far Rockaway will be a bedrock of opportunity for this community for years to come,” said **NYCEDC President James Patchett**. “We congratulate the Department of Design and Construction and Queens Library on this milestone, and thank Borough President Katz and Council Member Richards for their critical support and advocacy for this important project.”

“Far Rockaway residents rely heavily on the amazing services offered at Queens Library, which is why this groundbreaking for a brand new state-of-the-art facility is the perfect symbol of this community’s transformation,” said **Council Member Richards**. “This new facility will allow Queens Library to serve twice the residents and provide even more life changing services for students and seniors with a Teen Room and a Cyber Center, as well as services for business owners at the Small Business Center. I’d like to thank Queens Library President Walcott, DDC Commissioner Lorraine Grillo, EDC President Patchett, Mayor de Blasio and Queens Borough President Katz for helping to make this project a reality for the Far Rockaway community.”

“Libraries are one of those quintessential community resources. I spent a lot of time at the Far Rockaway Library growing up. That’s where we learn, where we delve into new ideas, and increasingly, where we go online,” said **Assemblywoman Pheffer Amato** (D-Far Rockaway). “The new Far Rockaway Community Library will be an invaluable resource for everyone! It was my honor to play a role in this redevelopment, and I know that I, my kids and everyone else can’t wait to get inside and check out the new space!”

“When we were hired as the designers of the new Far Rockaway Library, Queens Public Library asked us for a building that would become a beacon for the neighborhood,” said architect **Craig Dykers**, the founding partner **Snøhetta**, the Norwegian architecture firm that designed the building. “Yet in certain ways we saw that the original library, well-used and well-loved, was already a kind of beacon. Our design draws inspiration from this energy, and we are excited to see the library embark on the next chapter of its life in its new home, with the ability to better provide for the dynamic needs of its people and community.”

“It is all very exciting,” said **Jonathan Gaska**, District Manager of Community Board 14. “It’s an important first step in the renaissance of Downtown Far Rockaway and we cannot wait until this state-of-the-art-library is completed.”

The project calls for the demolition the existing 9,000 square-foot single-story library that’s been at 1637 Central Avenue since 1968. The existing branch has long served as the center of community life. Its importance was well-demonstrated in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy in 2012, when it was used to provide disaster relief to local residents. The new branch will be a two-story structure built at the same

location featuring a unique glass façade and central space designed to let natural light penetrate deep into the building while giving patrons views of the sky above. Entry will be through a tall transparent glass pyramidal opening at the corner, with interior spaces organized around an inverted pyramidal atrium. In accordance with NYC Active Design Guidelines, the design encourages use of a central staircase and bike racks will also be provided.

Programming will include after-school study hours, story reading and various community events. The new branch will feature a Teen Room and a Cyber Center on the first floor, along with library offices, a book sorting area and staff lounge and lockers. The second floor will have separate adult and children reading areas, a meeting room and a Small Business Center. The entire structure will be ADA compliant, with an elevator and restrooms on both floors plus in the Children's Area. There will also be a rear yard with plantings accessible to the public.



The structure aims to meet LEED Gold standards for environmental efficiency, with high performance glazing on the glass façade to reduce heating of the building from sunlight; daylighting and occupancy sensors that work with automated building management systems to reduce electric use; and an energy efficient underfloor heating distribution system. Local, recycled and durable materials have been considered for all aspects of the design to ensure minimal environmental impact.

Snøhetta's design of the new Far Rockaway Library, which received an Excellence in Design Award from the Public Design Commission under [DDC's Design and Construction Excellence 2.0 program](#), which pre-selects and pre-qualifies design firms that DDC works with on projects with construction budgets of up to \$50 million. The program is designed to decrease the amount of time required for DDC to procure design services, while ensuring the highest levels of quality and professionalism in construction projects managed by the agency. The general contractor is E.W. Howell Co. LLC of Plainview, NY.

### **About the NYC Department of Design and Construction**

The Department of Design and Construction is the City's primary capital construction project manager. In supporting Mayor de Blasio's long-term vision of growth, sustainability, resiliency, equity and healthy living, DDC provides communities with new or renovated public buildings such as such as firehouses, libraries, police precincts, and new or upgraded roads, sewers and water mains in all five boroughs. To manage this \$14 billion portfolio, DDC partners with other City agencies, architects and consultants, whose experience bring efficient, innovative and environmentally-conscious design and construction strategies to City projects. For more information, please visit [nyc.gov/ddc](http://nyc.gov/ddc).

### **About NYCEDC**

[New York City Economic Development Corporation](#) is the City's primary vehicle for promoting economic growth in each of the five boroughs. NYCEDC's mission is to stimulate growth through expansion and redevelopment programs that encourage investment, generate prosperity and strengthen the City's competitive position. NYCEDC serves as an advocate to the business community by building relationships with companies that allow them to take advantage of New York City's many opportunities. Find us on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#), or visit our [blog](#) to learn more about NYCEDC projects and initiatives.

**About Queens Library**

Founded in 1896, [Queens Library](#) is one of three independent, nonprofit public library systems in the New York City. It serves a population of 2.3 million in the most ethnically diverse urban area in the United States. With 65 locations, Queens Library is one of the highest circulating library systems in the nation and among the busiest in the world.

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