

NEWS RELEASE

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Mayor announces plans for “massive transformation” of the downtown Main Library

More than \$8 million in improvements planned

LOUISVILLE (December 16, 2022) – With the swing of a sledgehammer, Mayor Greg Fischer marked the start of a major renovation of the city’s downtown Main Library.

The Mayor was joined by Library Director Lee Burchfield, State Senator Gerald Neal, and Library Foundation Executive Director Chandra Gordon for the announcement, which included the demolition of a wall in the Main Library’s historic Carnegie lobby.

“The Main Library is the largest public library facility in the state and serves as the nucleus of our Louisville Free Public Library System,” said Mayor Fischer. “Over the last twelve years we have invested \$55 million to construct three regional libraries and build or renovate ten neighborhood libraries – to make them first-in-class. Thanks to American Rescue Plan funds, our flagship Main Library will now join those ranks.”

The \$8 million project, funded by Metro government through the American Rescue Plan, will include:

- Exterior improvements to the appearance of the 1969 addition
- Renovation and reopening of the Main Library’s third floor (closed to the public in 2018 due to pension-driven budget cuts)
- The creation of 16,000 square feet of usable public space by reimagining the existing historic “stacks” area of the 1906 Carnegie Library building
- Major improvements to landscaping and the grounds, with the possible addition of a public art installation

Additional funds will be raised through private donations to the Library Foundation.

“This significant investment and initial renovation is just the beginning for our flagship Main Library. The Library Foundation is excited to discover just how big our city can dream as we look to the future for the heart of Louisville’s library system,” said the Library Foundation’s Chandra Gordon.

The historic Main Library was built in 1906 with support from philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. A contemporary addition, designed by Louis and Henry Architects of Louisville, more than

doubled the space when it opened in 1969. Today the Main Library serves more than 200,000 visitors annually, houses more than half a million books and other items, and is home to the Kentucky History Collection.

“The Main Library has been a destination place in downtown Louisville since it opened its doors in 1908. As our city continues to grow and change, so too does the Library,” said Library Director Burchfield. “With this investment, our Main Library will remain a vibrant hub of ideas, information, and social engagement for generations to come.”

A Request for Proposals has been issued to determine the design and construction team. For more information about the Main Library project, go to LFPL.org or follow the Louisville Free Public Library on social media.

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