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Press Release

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Town awards \$24 million construction contract for New Tufts Library

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Weymouth, MA – Mayor Robert Hedlund announced today that the Town of Weymouth has awarded a \$24.2 million contract for general construction of the New Tufts Library on Broad Street. This project will replace the existing library, now more than 50 years old, and reconstruct the building as a modern, 21st-century library with an additional 17,000 square feet of enclosed space. The contract was awarded under budget, saving approximately \$700,000 in budgeted costs and preserving all project contingencies.

"This is a major milestone for our public libraries and for our community at large," **said Mayor Robert Hedlund**. "In less than two years, we'll have a new building that exemplifies what a library can and should be. I congratulate the Library Construction Committee, our dedicated team of designers and project managers, and the many staff and residents who contributed to the success of this project and who continue to move Weymouth forward."

General construction of the New Tufts Library is projected to span 18 months and will include the demolition of the existing building, construction of the new library, and more than 200,000 square feet of site work, including drainage, parking, and landscaping. Safety improvements along Broad Street are also included in the project.

General bids for the New Tufts Library were opened on December 19, 2018. The Town received four general bids, with CTA Construction Managers, LLC, of Waltham submitting the lowest responsive and responsible bid. All four general bidders were prequalified to compete for the public project, with the legal requirements for contractor [prequalification](#) set by state law.

"Until now, our work has involved many meetings, discussions, designs, and budgets in preparation to build the New Tufts Library," **said Robert MacLean, Director of Library Services**. "With the hiring of CTA as our general contractor, the project moves out of conference rooms and offices to the construction site where the first shovels breaking ground bring to life the reality of what is to come – a public library that will be a source of pride for Weymouth."

Work on the New Tufts Library will commence in January, starting with the fencing of the project site, mobilization of the contractor's personnel and equipment, and abatement of the existing building. Once cleaned, the current Tufts Library will be demolished, with a focus on salvaging materials for beneficial reuse – a step that will advance the project's certification for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED).

Following demolition, construction of the New Tufts Library will proceed from the ground up. The new building will provide an additional 17,000 square feet, or a total enclosed area of approximately 50,000 square feet. The [new design](#) will support a vast expansion of library and community services, including an expansive children's department, new local history center, the library's first digital media lab, a scalable technology infrastructure, a large assortment of study rooms and programming areas, and five public meeting rooms, three of which will be available for after-hours use.

In addition to building enhancements, construction of the New Tufts Library will incorporate numerous site improvements including a cascading terrace, a hillside amphitheater, butterfly and sensory gardens, pedestrian-scale lighting, and accessible walking paths. The playground at Weston Park will also be relocated and remodeled in coordination with the new library.

A ground breaking event is planned for March 2019. The New Tufts Library is tracking to a substantial completion date of June 1, 2020.

Background on the New Tufts Library Project

Planning for the New Tufts Library began in February 2016, when Mayor Hedlund and his staff recognized the need to invest in a new building shortly after taking office. Apart from accessibility challenges, the existing Tufts Library contains asbestos and has substantial repair and renovation needs, including a roof, elevator, HVAC, electrical, and technology infrastructure. Replacement of the HVAC system alone would cost upwards of \$1 million, while fixing the building's other deficiencies would cost millions more.

To finance a new library, Mayor Hedlund assembled a Library Construction Committee (LCC), composed of a small working group of Town staff and residents, and charged the committee with preparing a grant application for the Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP). While most cities and towns plan for at least two years before applying to the MPLCP, the Town had less than 12 months to complete the state's detailed planning requirements. Mayor Hedlund quickly initiated development of a [library building program](#), and committed \$100,000 to hire an architectural firm for the building's preliminary design. Failing to submit an MPLCP application in the 2017 grant round would have resulted in a five- to six-year delay, as grants through the MPLCP are offered on an irregular funding basis.

The Town's MPLCP application contained nearly 70 pages of narrative and totaled more than 100 pages with forms and attachments. In July 2017, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners (MBLC) awarded the Town a \$12,085,184 Provisional Construction Grant, representing approximately 41 percent of the new library's eligible costs. Weymouth was one of only nine communities to receive a MPLCP grant out of 33 library applicants.

In October 2017, the Town Council voted unanimously to accept the Town's MPLCP grant and authorized borrowing of the total estimated project cost of \$33 million. In December 2017, Mayor Hedlund [reestablished the LCC](#) as a 13-member public body to oversee and advise the Office of the Mayor on all phases of the New Tufts Library Project. Goals of the LCC have included designing a main library that will be a source of pride for the community, a cultural and economic anchor for Weymouth Landing, and an example to the state of what a public library can and should be.

Over the last year, the LCC has spearheaded selection of the Town's project manager, architect, and design team, and has held 24 public meetings, including two public forums, to oversee development of the library's design and the bidding of the public project. The LCC's first public forum was held in March 2018 and included a series of early building design schemes for community feedback. A preferred scheme was approved in April 2018, and the scheme was immediately advanced through design development into final design and construction documents. A second public forum was held in September 2018 to assist residents in becoming fully acquainted with the future library.

The design of the New Tufts Library was prepared by Tappé Architects of Boston, with oversight from the LCC and Hill International of Needham, the Town's [Owner's Project Manager \(OPM\)](#). Over the last 37 years, Tappé has designed, planned, and facilitated over 90 public, private, and academic libraries, and is nationally recognized for its up-to-date understanding of trends and requirements in library design. In the past three years, the firm has opened five libraries, including two renovations and three new constructions. In addition, all libraries completed by Tappé since 2008 have achieved or exceeded their LEED certification goals.

In preparation for the New Tufts Library, staff and collections from the existing building were relocated and divided among the Town's three branch libraries. All three branches will operate with [extended hours](#) until the New Tufts Library opens in 2020.

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