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Press Release

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Tufts Library moving to branch libraries during construction project; overdue fines eliminated

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Weymouth, MA – Mayor Robert Hedlund announced today that plans are finalized to move current Tufts Library services and collections to the three neighborhood branches of the Weymouth Public Libraries for the duration of the construction project. Starting December 1, 2018, the Fogg, Pratt, and North library branches will offer expanded hours of operation to meet the needs of all Weymouth library patrons. Each branch will be the new home of services previously offered at Tufts.

Fogg Library for Kids! will house only the children's collection from Tufts Library and will provide only services and programs for kids. Fogg's current collection will be placed in storage. At Fogg Library for Kids!, all patrons may continue to pick up items placed on hold. Starting December 1st, the new hours of operation for Fogg Library for Kids! will be:

- Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays 9:00 am to 9:00 pm
- Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

Tufts @ Pratt Library will house the adult and teen collections including DVDs and audiobooks from Tufts Library. Pratt's current collection will be placed in storage. Starting December 1st, the new hours of operation for Tufts @ Pratt Library will be:

- Mondays 9:00 am to 9:00 pm

- Tuesdays 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Wednesdays and Thursdays 9:00 am to 9:00 pm
- Fridays and Saturdays 9:00 am to 5:00 pm

North Library will keep its current collection and will house the science fiction, Western, paperback, microfilm, and art book collections from Tufts Library. Tufts' local history collection will be placed in storage. Starting December 1st, the new hours of operation for the North Library will be:

- Mondays 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
- Tuesdays 1:00 pm to 9:00 pm
- Wednesdays and Thursdays 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

While all three branch libraries already provide wireless access to the internet, **Tufts @ Pratt Library** and **North Library** will have public computers with printing capabilities for patron use.

"Moving the staff and collections out of Tufts Library is another step towards realizing our vision for a New Tufts Library that is a place of opportunity, community engagement, and lifelong learning for residents," **said Mayor Robert Hedlund**. "And, with their expanded hours, our three branch libraries will be open 152 hours per week, an increase of 23 percent over the current hours of Tufts and the branch libraries."

"The New Tufts Library project began in earnest last March with the hiring of Tappé Architects and by keeping our noses to the grindstone, we are now ready to move out of Tufts just six months later," **said the Town's Director of Library Services, Robert MacLean**. "Although it is temporary, we are looking forward to bringing the Tufts' collections and staff to our beloved neighborhood libraries."

With the move from Tufts to the other branches starting in October, there will be periods of time when one or more of the current four libraries will be closed. When that schedule of closings and re-openings is confirmed, the Weymouth Public Libraries will announce it through the local press, in house to patrons, and on its website and social media platforms.

In addition to the move of Tufts Library to the branches, the Weymouth Public Libraries also announced the elimination of overdue fines on all parts of its collection starting Monday, October 1, 2018. Any existing overdue fines will also be waived. Fees for lost or damaged materials will remain in place.

"In 1852, Weymouth son and merchant banker Joshua Bates made a large donation to establish the Boston Public Library and requested that the library be 'Free to All,'" **said Mayor Robert Hedlund**. "Now the Weymouth Public Libraries are truly 'Free to All' with the elimination of overdue fines that have prevented some children, teens, and families from accessing the library's collections and services."

“With the sharp increase in the use of our collection of ebooks and audiobooks, overdue fines have been decreasing for several years,” **said Director of Library Services, Robert MacLean**. “That, along with the punitive nature of fines and the fact that not all of our patrons can afford to pay fines, makes it the right time to end the policy.”

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Background on the New Tufts Library Building Project

The New Tufts Library is a \$33 million public building project to replace the existing library, now more than 50 years old, and reconstruct the building as a modern, 21st-century library. The new building, while sitting on the same site as the existing Tufts Library, will provide an additional 17,000 gross square feet and will include an expanded children’s department, a new local history center, the library’s first digital media lab, numerous study rooms, a scalable technology infrastructure, programming space for various user groups, and a suite of community meeting rooms, many of which will be available to the public for after-hours use.

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 new roof, elevator, and technology infrastructure. Replacement of the HVAC system alone would cost upwards of one million dollars, while fixing the building’s other deficiencies would cost millions more.

To finance a new library, Mayor Hedlund assembled an informal Library Construction Committee (LCC), composed of a small working group of Town staff and residents, and charged the members with preparing a grant application to the competitive Massachusetts Public Library Construction Program (MPLCP). While most cities and towns plan for at least two years before submitting a MPLCP application, Weymouth completed the required planning process in under a year. Doing so was critical to meeting the program’s 2017 deadline, as MPLCP grants are offered on an irregular basis, typically every five to six years.

In July 2017, the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners awarded the Town a \$12,085,184 Provisional Construction Grant for its New Tufts Library application. Weymouth was one of only nine communities to receive a MPLCP grant out of 33 library applicants. In October, the Town Council voted unanimously to accept the grant and authorized borrowing of the total estimated project cost of \$33 million.

In December, 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 Building Project. Goals for 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 nine months, the LCC has spearheaded selection of the Town’s project manager, architect, and design team and has held 19 public meetings to oversee

development of the library's design. 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, and the scheme was immediately advanced through design development into the final design and construction documents phase. At present, construction documents for the project are 60% complete, and bidding is anticipated to be completed by the end of the calendar year. The library's final design was presented to the community in a public forum held early this month.

Design services for the New Tufts Library have been provided by Tappé Architects, with oversight from the LCC and Hill International of Boston, 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 two 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 Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification goals.