



Omaha
Public
Library



Omaha
Public
Library
foundation



Heritage
Omaha



For more information:

Carrie Murphy, City of Omaha,
402-444-3520

Emily Getzschman, Omaha Public Library,
402-444-4896

Sarah Baker Hansen, Emspace + Lovgren,
representing Heritage Omaha and Do Space,
402-210-9199

NOT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
EMBARGOED until Friday, Jan. 28, 11 a.m. CST

Focused exploration, schematic design and engagement phases begin for a new Omaha Public Library central location at 72nd and Dodge

Omaha Neb., January 28, 2022 — Today the City of Omaha; Omaha Public Library (OPL) and the Omaha Public Library Foundation (OPLF); Do Space and the Community Information Trust, which operates Do Space; and Heritage Omaha are pleased to provide an update on the exploration phase of a new central public library.

Reflecting careful analysis of public input and previous OPL facilities master plans, representatives from OPL, OPLF, the City of Omaha, Do Space/CIT and Heritage, along with stakeholder groups and members of the OPL staff, will focus on the southwest corner of 72nd and Dodge as the potential location for a new library.

Citing recommendations from the OPL 2010 and 2017 facilities master plans, OPL Executive Director Laura Marlane shared how a new central public library would serve Omaha and Douglas County residents.

“A new central library provides OPL with an opportunity to welcome its patrons at an accessible location, offering collections, programs and services that they value and expect, while incorporating flexibility and technology that will help meet their needs well into the future,” Marlane said.

The group is beginning initial scope and design phases for 72nd and Dodge, at the current site of Do Space, which was among the nation's first technology libraries. Any future project at this location would incorporate Do Space technology programs with traditional library services.

Do Space would continue to operate during the building project phase and is committed to continuing to provide access to technology and innovative programs. If the project moves forward, more information regarding interim operations will be announced.

"Do Space empowers our community through access to technology and innovative learning experiences, and we are excited to continue to broaden our community impact through this opportunity," said Rebecca Stavick, CEO of CIT.

The team officially launched the schematic design and engagement phase the week of January 10, 2022. The philanthropic nonprofit Heritage Omaha, whose role would be to raise funds and manage the design and construction project of the new central public library, has received seed funding to engage three partners:

- HDR, an Omaha-based architecture and engineering practice, is serving as lead designer on the project.
- Margaret Sullivan Studio (MSS), a nationally recognized library expert and full-service design firm that specializes in civic projects. MSS will run community engagement as part of the exploration phase.
- Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture (APMA), an Omaha-based architectural firm that specializes in library design, will focus on library programming and interior space design.

Together, HDR, APMA and MSS began working earlier this month with library staff and community partners to gather input and begin the schematic design process.

Tom Trenolone, vice president and design director at HDR, said the project has the potential to transform the corner of 72nd and Dodge.

"The location has some of the best public transportation access in the city, affords the opportunity for adequate parking, and as the area further develops, will include beautiful pedestrian-friendly spaces that connect new and existing residential, retail and office space around the intersection," he said.

Margaret Sullivan Studio has worked with more than 40 public library systems to define what 21st century libraries should and can look like. Among their clients: New York Public Library, Richland (SC) Library, D.C. Public Library, Las Vegas-Clark County Library District, New Haven Free Public Library, Salt Lake City Public Library and Memphis Public Library.

"I know from my previous work with OPL that Omahans love their libraries and that the staff is passionate about the future of the city's libraries," said Margaret Sullivan, principal at MSS, who first worked with OPL staff in 2019. "The library staff is already providing vital input, and I look forward to engaging with the community to create a new central library that will invigorate the city, enhance digital equity and inspire entrepreneurial innovation."

OPL staff, OPL board members who serve on the facilities committee for the OPL trustees as well as Omaha City Council, OPLF, Do Space staff, community partners and library staff members are taking part

in a building stakeholder group that kicked off the week of Jan. 10. Additional stakeholder and community group input opportunities will begin in the coming weeks.

While the confirmed focus on 72nd and Dodge and the kickoff of the schematic design and engagement phases don't guarantee that the project will move forward, these steps enable greater opportunity for stakeholders and the community to contribute to the process.

The location focus and the schematic and engagement phases follow the OPL Trustees' resolution on Nov. 18, 2021, in which the board members engaged with Heritage Omaha to explore the potential of a new central public library.

Rachel Jacobson, president of Heritage Omaha, said the exploration phase will engage library staff and the community to help develop a central library that integrates books, community spaces, technology and programming, among other ideas.

"We're so appreciative of the opportunity to further this exploration with the community and the partners," she said. "Omahans recognize the need for a beautifully-designed, world-class buzzing hub that inspires people of all ages and communities to enter, explore, learn, and create."

A new central library project website, which launched today at omahacentrallibrary.org, includes ongoing project updates and opportunities for future community engagement.

The exploration of a new central public library is separate from the City's and OPL's work to transition the W. Dale Clark Library downtown library to 14th and Jones. For more information on the downtown library project, visit the City's [website](#).

###

[Omaha Public Library](#) (OPL) has served City of Omaha and Douglas County residents for 150 years and is one of the most visited institutions in Nebraska. OPL's mission is to strengthen our community by connecting people with ideas, information and innovative services. Learn about OPL's collections, facilities, services, programs and more at omahalibrary.org.

Founded in 1854, the [City of Omaha](#) has grown by 19 percent in the past decade to reach 486,051 residents calling Omaha home. The City of Omaha is principally responsible for the operational and capital funding, leadership and oversight of the Omaha Public Library (OPL) system.

The [Omaha Public Library Foundation](#) has raised more than \$10 million in private support for Omaha Public Library programs and services since its creation in 1985.

Founded in 2015, [Do Space](#) is the first technology library in the United States. Created by Heritage Services and operated by the Community Information Trust, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, Do Space empowers the community through access to technology and innovative learning experiences. Do Space is a catalyst for innovation in Omaha. With more than 85,000 members and an average of 475 visits per day, Do Space is uniquely equipped to expose community members to technology and to inspire them to take ownership of their digital learning experiences.

[Heritage Omaha](#) is a nonprofit organization committed to developing impactful philanthropic projects that enrich the Omaha community. Heritage identifies substantial needs or opportunities with high community impact and supports the realization of viable and sustainable civic projects.