



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
DESIGN + CONSTRUCTION

**TESTIMONY OF COMMISSIONER DR. FENIOSKY PEÑA-MORA**  
**OVERSIGHT HEARING**  
**CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES,**  
**AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS**  
**&**  
**CITY COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES**

APRIL 28, 2014

Good afternoon, Chairperson Van Bramer and members of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations, as well as Chairperson Constantinides and members of the Subcommittee on Libraries. I am Feniosky Peña-Mora, Commissioner of the Department of Design and Construction, and I am pleased to be here with you today. I have a statement on our work on behalf of the City's three library systems and the Department of Cultural Affairs, after which I will gladly answer any questions you may have.

As New York City's primary capital design and construction manager, DDC provides communities with new and renovated buildings, including firehouses, libraries, health and senior centers, police precincts, and courthouses. We also build the City's roadways and

plazas, as well as sewers, water mains, and other related infrastructure projects for DOT and DEP. DDC's active portfolio includes more than 825 capital projects valued at nearly \$10 billion. The funding for these projects is transferred to us from the capital programs of our client agencies.

As you may know, this is my first day as DDC Commissioner. I am committed to bringing world-leading design and construction practices to city projects, and to strengthening the resiliency, sustainability, efficiency, and safety of every project we oversee. But I also want to emphasize that it is just as important to me to forge strong relationships with the communities we serve. Accordingly, it is fitting that we are here today to discuss our library and cultural projects. Libraries, museums, and cultural facilities are the centerpieces of their neighborhoods. In a city where non-commercial public space is often hard to find, these facilities are the hubs of community life. More than any others in our portfolio, library and cultural projects are also the means by which DDC advances its mission to bring great architecture to neighborhoods in all five boroughs, not just the city center.

In the last five years, DDC has completed 10 new libraries or major renovations of existing library facilities. Major library projects recently completed include the new Glen Oaks Branch in Queens, the new Kensington Branch in Brooklyn, and the new Mariners Harbor Branch and the greatly expanded Stapleton Branch on Staten Island. DDC has also completed 88 roof, façade, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical upgrades for the three New York City library systems, projects that are critical to the continued use of these facilities and the comfort of their patrons. Later this year, we expect to substantially complete another new library, the Elmhurst Branch in Queens.

Over the last five years, 85% of DDC's completed library projects were delivered either on time or earlier than expected, and 84% were delivered on budget.

For new libraries and major renovations completed over the last five years, DDC's average cost is \$660 per square foot. For library renovation projects, which typically are far simpler in scope and involve interior spaces only, our average cost was \$150 per square foot.

**DDC's recent projects for the Department of Cultural Affairs have included 7 new facilities or major renovations to existing facilities, including the Weeksville Heritage Center in Brooklyn, and 39 reconstruction or upgrade projects, including the transformation of the Queens Museum in Flushing Meadows Corona Park.**

**Over the last five years, 81% of DDC's cultural projects have been delivered either on time or early, and nearly 98% percent have been delivered on budget.**

**The average cost for our cultural projects is broadly similar to the cost of our library projects. Newly-constructed or comprehensively renovated cultural facilities have cost an average of \$732 per square foot, while relatively simple interior renovation projects have cost approximately \$121 per square foot.**

**All in all, the average cost per square foot of new library or cultural facilities is broadly similar to that of new construction projects across our public buildings portfolio, where costs typically average between \$700 and \$850 per square foot, depending on the client and building type.**

**The duration of the design and construction process varies widely depending on the size and complexity of the project. For renovation and new construction projects, it can take anywhere from 6 months to 2 or more years to design the structures, 4 to 6 months to bid and award construction contracts, and 8 months to 3 or more years to complete construction. This results in an overall duration, from the beginning of design to the substantial completion of construction, of approximately 18 months to 5-1/2 years.**

**DDC's current project portfolio –that is, projects that are now in design or construction-- consists of 171 projects for the three library systems and 73 projects funded by the Department of Cultural Affairs.**

**As we work to complete these projects, I want to emphasize that it is just as important for us to deliver projects on time and on budget as it is to create buildings that are resilient, sustainable, distinctive, and of high architectural quality. Indeed, it has been our experience that good planning and design practices lead to timely project delivery and fewer cost overruns.**

**As with all DDC programs, the capital funds for our library and cultural projects flow to DDC through our client agencies and the City's Office of Management and Budget. The initial capital allocation is established through dialogue between the Mayor's Office, OMB, the Council, the 3 public library systems, and, in the case of cultural facilities, the Department of Cultural Affairs. Projects included in the capital budget are then transmitted to DDC over the course of the fiscal year by the library systems and the Department of Cultural Affairs. Once this is done, the pre-design process begins, in which DDC assigns a team of architects and engineers to visit the site and prepare detailed scoping documents.**

**Throughout the design process, DDC project managers and technical staff review the work of the design team, and ensure it is code-compliant, constructable, responsive to the client's program, and within budget.**

**The architects and other consultants for our library and cultural projects are chosen through the Design and Construction Excellence Program. Design and Construction Excellence is our agency's flagship program. It emphasizes high architectural standards to**

ensure that all City buildings, regardless of size, are creatively designed, beautiful, and built to last. For this program, we use Quality Based Selection, a Procurement Policy Board standard procurement method that is widely recognized as the best way to ensure that a public owner, such as the City of New York, gets the best service at prices that are fair and reasonable. Through this procurement method, architects and other consultants are selected based on their qualifications, demonstrated creative capability, and relevant experience. By choosing the best qualified consultants for each project and negotiating fees that are sufficient to allow them to do all the work they are expected to perform, our projects are well-planned and well-coordinated when construction begins. DDC projects also undergo extensive, detailed peer and constructability reviews prior to the start of the bidding process. All of these measures have resulted in change-order rates below industry standards. For example, excluding client-initiated scope changes, change orders for DDC's new-construction library projects averaged 8.5% of construction costs.

The contractors for our library and cultural projects are selected from lists of pre-qualified bidders, ensuring that projects are awarded to firms that we know are fully qualified to perform the work and to deliver the projects on time. We also engage in extensive pre-bid conferencing with these construction firms to ensure that they have accurate and complete information regarding the scope of work. Perhaps most significantly, the agency's use of Project-Labor Agreements allow us to award construction bids to a single general contractor -rather than letting separate prime contracts for plumbers, electricians, and HVAC contractors- which significantly increases coordination on the job site, resulting in fewer cost overruns.

Agency-wide, as we approach the end of Fiscal Year 2014, I am pleased to report that the department expects to meet or exceed the major statistical indicators that reflect our mission to deliver the City's construction projects in a safe, expeditious, cost-effective manner, while maintaining the highest degree of architectural, engineering, and construction quality. We expect to meet or exceed our construction completion indicators while maintaining a change order rate well below industry standards.



**As we move our agency forward, we will strengthen the resiliency and sustainability of all of our projects. We will work to strengthen our relationships with our client agencies as we implement Mayor de Blasio's vision for the city. And we will always be mindful that our most important clients are the 8.5 million residents of New York. On their behalf, we will build a new generation of street infrastructure and civic buildings that will bring our communities closer together and enrich the built environment of this great city.**

**That concludes my prepared remarks and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.**

# Aren't libraries about Democracy?

## Aren't libraries about providing equal access and opportunities for all?

If so, why are NYPL and other NYC library administration officials still implementing Bloomberg's agenda of *selling* libraries, *shrinking* them, *underfunding* them, getting rid of books and getting rid of librarians?

Why did the NYPL Board of Trustees (Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>) give an award to Mayor Bloomberg for selling, shrinking and libraries while getting rid of books and getting rid of librarians? (On the very election eve when Mayor de Blasio, calling for a halt to these sales, would be voted into office!)

- Why did the NYP suddenly and secretly sell the beloved Donnell library for a pittance?
- Why are we selling Mid-Manhattan and SIBL?
- Why are we demolishing and wrecking the research stacks of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street Central Reference Library?
- What about the similar not full disclosed plans for "North Manhattan's" libraries?
- Why are we reducing books in Manhattan's flagship, destination libraries from *13 million* to perhaps *only around 4 million*?
- The NYPL "Central Library Plan" reduces *over 380,000 square feet* of library space to *80,000 square feet*.
- We are selling and shrinking Brooklyn's libraries with some strategic plan that calls for "*leveraging*" *all the real estate in the Brooklyn system* in deals that benefit developers, *not* the public.

*"When you are growing up, there are two institutional places that affect you most powerfully: the Church, which belongs to God and the public library, which belongs to you. The public library is a great equalizer."*

Keith Richards of the Rolling Stones

***Take action and inform yourself via*** (web pages, Facebook, Twitter, Youtube):

- **Citizens Defending Libraries**- *Sign our online petition*
- **Committee to Save the New York Public Library**- Sign the *new* letter to de Blasio - <http://www.savenypl.org/email-the-mayor/>
- **Library Lovers League**



Don't sell or Shrink us away!



sign our petition on the web: **Citizens Defending Libraries**

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Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. \_\_\_\_\_ Res. No. \_\_\_\_\_

☐ in favor ☐ in opposition

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: DAVID VAROCH

Address: 3030 Tremont Ave, LIC, NY 11104

I represent: Dept of Design + Construction

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: C. M. PYLE

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I represent: Self

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Name: Charles Markov

Address: 210 W. 101

I represent: OSNYALL

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Veronika Conant

Address: 45 W 54 St, 7C

I represent: Committee to Save the NYPL

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Commissioner Dr. Fenuosky Peña-Mora

Address: 30-30 Thomson Ave LIC 11101

I represent: DPC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Deputy Commissioner David Resnick

Address: 30-30 Thomson Ave LIC 11101

I represent: DPC

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: Lauren Rudick  
Address: Hillier PC 600 Madison Ave  
I represent: Citizens Defending Libraries, et al.  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Date: 4-28-2014

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Name: Cawlyn McIntyre  
Address: 62 Manhattan St Brooklyn NY  
I represent: Citizens Defending Libraries  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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