

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES AND
INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS JOINTLY
WITH THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES

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December 14, 2016

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B E F O R E:

JAMES G. VAN BRAMER
Chairperson

ANDY L. KING
Co-Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

ELIZABETH S. CROWLEY
JULISSA FERRERAS-COPELAND
PETER A. KOO
STEPHEN T. LEVIN
COSTA G. CONSTANTINIDES
LAURIE A. CUMBO
HELEN K. ROSENTHAL

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Iris Weinshall
Chief Operating Officer of New York Public
Library

Anthony Marx
CEO of New York Public Library

Christopher Platt
Vice President of Public Service at New York

Michael White
Citizens Defending Libraries

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[gavel]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good morning.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: [off mic] Good
morning.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I apologize to
everyone for the shuffling of the decks but we have
a very busy day here at the New York City council.
I myself have three different hearings at this
exact moment including chairing this one. So we'll
be running around a little bit but thank you all
for being here. I think if Anthony Marx, Iris
Weinshall, and Christopher Platt would like to
approach the witness stand which sounds so very
formal we'll begin the proceedings and my name is
Jimmy Van Bramer and I'm proud to Chair the
committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries and
International Intergroup Relations and we are proud
to co-chair this meeting with the Subcommittee on
Libraries chaired by Council Member Andy King and
we are in session. We are thrilled to be joined by
Council Member Dan Garodnick who has a very special
interest in these projects and Committee Member
Peter Koo from Queens. And I think everybody here
understands the importance and the value of

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libraries and of course the centrality of the New
York Public Library and it's two remarkable
structures, the Mid Manhattan Library and of course
the Schwarzman Building. To Midtown Manhattan, to
all of the City of New York and there has been a
worthwhile and unprecedented investment in these
projects. They have changed a little bit over the
years, they have meandered but we have reached a
critical point where the New York Public Library is
ready with some very exciting and dramatic plans to
move forward in both completely renovating the Mid
Manhattan branch but also continuing the process of
further democratizing and opening up the Schwarzman
Building and, and improving and increasing public
access to that remarkable building which is so very
much at the core of what we all believe in. so it
is appropriate that we have an oversight hearing to
get the latest to take a look at how this funding
is going to be spent, when it's going to be spent
and all of the related issues with, with the
various parts and moving parts that will go into
making what will at the end of the day from the
renderings that I've seen and what we see in front
of us, a truly remarkable building and, and an

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incredibly exciting library. So, with that I will
ask Council Member King to say a few words and then
I think we will hear from New York Public Library
before we take questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Good afternoon,
thank you Chair and ladies and gentlemen excuse my...
this is my holiday voice, got a little something,
something so I'm still waiting for my hot toddy to
kick in so... but I wanted to say thank you Mr. Chair
and good afternoon everyone...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you for
the warning, I got to move a little bit further
away from you now but okay...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: We're one big
happy family here. I'm Council Member Andy King,
Chair of the Subcommittees on Libraries and I'm
really looking forward to hearing about today's New
York Public Libraries renovation of its Midtown
campus. Libraries and the New, New York City public
libraries in particular not just are places for us
to borrow books, they're important community hubs.
In addition to free and open access to more than 65
million books, periodicals, and other reference
items local branches are for career service and

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internet access as well as educational, cultural,
and recreation program for New Yorkers of all ages
from toddlers to seniors. Our libraries are multi-
purpose communities for information centers; they
are safe havens for our children after school, a
place where immigrants and non-native speakers can
learn English and where people can go to obtain
free tax assistance and business services including
technical assistance for small businesses. It is
therefore vital that we support libraries that we
support the expansion of libraries and programming
and services that they offer. This is especially
true in our current political climate. Libraries
are not just a place to borrow books, libraries do
not discriminate, and they are the great equalizer
serving people of every age, educational level,
income level, ethnicity, and physical ability. For
more than a century the New York Public Library has
provided a central access to books and information.
Now with an announcement of the New York Public
Library moving forward 300 million and its
renovation of its main branch the landmarks our
Schwarzman Building on 5th avenue and 42nd Street
and the Midtown Manhattan Library located across

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the street library will continue its commitment to
New Yorkers. The project includes the creation of
more library space at the Schwarzman Building and
major renovation at the Mid Manhattan Library
branch which contains the New York Public Libraries
largest circulating collections. Eventually the
renovation... the renovated Manhattan branch where I
hear is going to have 35 percent more public space
and currently... than it currently does now with the
capacity for about 400,000 books and other
materials. It will also feature five floors open
for... of open browsable book stacks and two floors
of meeting rooms and an appointment skill center
and an area for job search help and small business
support. A full floor dedicated to separate
libraries for children and teens, over 11,000
square feet of multi-purpose space, 100 more seats
than the current branch and last but not least and
the only publicly accessible roof terrace in
Midtown Manhattan, let the sun shine on in. These
current changes directly address the needs of the
immigrant and low income communities, the new
campus will provide more public library space than
is currently available to Midtown with longer hours

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and enhanced libraries to library collections,
technology and staff expertise. As these
improvements are implemented these libraries will
therefore be... [clears throat] excuse me... these
libraries will be there for patrons when they need
them the most. I am proud to be Chairing the
Subcommittee on Libraries during the time of
expansion and to be doing so alongside a tireless
advocate for the library sense of our majority
leader, Jimmy Van Bramer. So again I'm looking
forward to hearing more about these renovations,
how money's being spent, how President Mark is
going to paint here and paint there, put a nail to
the hammer there and do what we got to do to make
sure that today is a success and just want to thank
again my legislative director Michael Armstrong as
well as the Subcommittee staff, Counsel Aminta
Kilawan, policy, policy analyst Chloe Rivera and
all the finance staff and the finance... and the
finance... and I'll state it again, and the finance
analyst, Aliya Ali. So, thank you again Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
much and, and because this is a 300 million dollar
project and we want to make sure the funding is

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being spent correctly we don't want Tony Marx
painting, let's just be very clear about that. So,
with that special introduction whoever would like
to begin for New York Public Library.

ANTHONY MARX: Well thank you Mr.
Chairman. Let me thank Speaker... the Speaker of the
city council and you, the majority leader, Jimmy
Vab Bramer, our Subcommittee Chair, Andy King, Dan
Garodnick, Peter Koo and the entire city council
for your tireless and, and just inspirational
support of libraries for all the reasons that you
eloquently described in terms of meeting the needs
of the citizenry. We are here today for a very
happy occasion which we've been looking forward to
for some time arguably New York City has been
looking forward to for half a century. So, the Mid
Manhattan Library is the largest circulating branch
in our system and it is one of the largest
libraries in the country though it is heavily used
about 1.7 million visitors a year, more than half
come from outside Manhattan, it is badly in need of
renovation. In fact, when I used it in High School
and it was practically new it was badly in need of
renovation then. So, this, this is a project we've

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been eager to get to because it is the central
branch library that needs to be the great central
branch library that this great city deserves and
has not had in Manhattan. In preparing for this
renovation through a process which Chair Van Bramer
described as complex we have learned to listen to
our communities and to our users and to engage with
experts this is the culmination of a process of
many multiple public meetings, surveys, we got over
65,000 responses, we've met with 70 organizations
and of course engaged the expertise of our library
colleagues and we learned that we... that everyone
agrees we need to provide New Yorkers with a world
class central circulating library, that we need to
increase public library space specifically program
space that expands the opportunities for learning
and that we need to ensure enough flexibility to
prepare for the future. We engaged with a world
class team of architects who are prepared to
deliver on those requirements and to create a
central circulating library that will be a partner
and as inspiring and as used and beloved as the
Schwarzman Building across the street. Let me just
highlight a few points which you will see as Iris

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and, and Christopher walk you through. More... by
more public space it's more public space but it's
about 50 percent, five oh, about 600 more seats in
this facility than previously in this facility and
Sybil combined. Another element of this design
which you will see as a, a pop out really which
will be the sort of what people will recognize I
think internally is a long room in which we are
creating a five stack tall wall of books, doesn't
have all of the 400,000 circulating collection but
it has a majority of them, it will be a dramatic
statement of the centrality of the circulating
collection, it will be easily accessible from all
levels of the library and it allows us to condense
the storage of the books which is why we're able to
have 600 more seats in this facility. So, it is a,
a... in my view a, a stroke of architectural genius
and, and is really going to pay dividends in this
project. For the first time the Mid Manhattan will
have a dedicated space for children and teens, it
will have an adult learning center, our largest
free adult learning center at the hub of Midtown
providing English language, computer skills all the
things the people need and then connected to that a

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business library that will help people find jobs,
start businesses, run businesses. We want people to
get skilled and we want people to be actively
engaged to use those skills for the work, the
meaningful work that they are looking for and as
Council Member, Chairman King mentioned the only
rooftop terrace, the only free rooftop terrace in
Midtown and I believe it may... that may be true way
beyond Midtown, we're working on that and 22,000
square feet of program space for classes, events,
and consultations. In short, we aim to provide to
New Yorkers the great library at the center of this
great city which we have all been waiting for. Let
me turn it over to Iris, the Chief Operating will
give us some key elements and walk us through
further parts.

IRIS WEINSHALL: Great, if I could just
direct your attention to the screen. So as Tony
said this is an extremely exciting and complex
project for the New York Public Library. We
selected the design team of Mecanoo and Beyer
Blinder Belle; I might note a all women led design
team and they have spent the last year working to
make Midtown campus a reality. It became clear

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after tactile analysis and consideration that MML
needed to move in an accelerated design path due to
a number of factors which we will go into. As such
today's presentation will focus on the Mid
Manhattan Library. SASB or the Schwarzman Building
we have committed to keeping that open during the
renovation, it's our own complex project and will
be coming back at the appropriate time to go into
great detail with the council about our plans for
the Schwarzman Building. So, what you're seeing now
is a cross section of, of the, of the proposed
building. Patrons will enter the building from 5th
Avenue which they do now, the ground floor will
feature grab and go, an area to browse periodicals
and to pick up holds in the central service desk.
Going down the building will have as Tony noted a
dedicated library for children and for teens and by
creating this space we're going to be utilizing the
lower level which currently is non-public space and
this design brings light from the street level down
to the, the ground... what we call the ground level
now. Moving up the floors we have two through four
which will have three floors of a multi-purpose
space for reading and researching and working as

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well as Tony noted, five stories of book stacks and
then all of the, the, the space is flexible meaning
that as we move into the future this space can then
be adapted to what we sort of envision in the
future or quite don't know what we'll envision in
the future. Above these floors is a learning center
for adults, one of the largest free learning
centers in the city adjacent to a business library,
one floor above to provide a seamless continuum of
learning for people here in the city of New York.
That business library a whole floor will
incorporate the services and classes currently at
the Science Industry and Business Library. On top
is a new rooftop programming space featuring two
large room and an outdoor terrace which will have
use of the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building and of
Midtown. So, the next slide will show you a
rendering of what Tony referred to as the long
room, we're now looking of a close up, we asked our
design team to find a way to accommodate the same
size collection in the new MML as we currently
have, 400,000 books and materials and they did that
by making use of unique... the unique shape of the
building. MML has a narrow arm that spans from 40th

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Street to 39th Street and they use the space to
create a book stack area calling it the long room
which because it, it runs the entire length of the
building it will hold the majority of MML's
collections while the remainder will be spread out
on the floors throughout the building. The design
also offers increased lighting and open space, the
books are concentrated in the long room
prioritizing floor space for people and for
programs. The next slide shows you a rendering of
the public roof terrace, this is the 7th floor
addition which offers large multi-purpose spaces
and outdoor terrace space supporting a wide variety
of programming needs and the next slide shows you
the current façade of the MML, the Mid, Mid
Manhattan Library and it's now going to morph into
what we believe will be the future façade of the
building and while the rooftop is the only
significant change to the exterior of the building
the building will receive a façade restoration
including cleaning and the replacement of the
windows. The rooftop is unique to MML but the
material used mirrors that of the buildings in the
surrounding area that are also from the same period

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of the Beaux Arts style. And if I might Mr.
Chairman we'd like to run through a video that the
architects have prepared so the, the council can
get a true feeling for what it's like to walk
through this truly remarkable building.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Absolutely,
there's also one behind you just so... if you know...
we're looking...

IRIS WEINSHALL: Oh great...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...that way...

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...I didn't...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...too...

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...know...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...that's
alright...

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...great... I, I was
wondering why you were all looking at me...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...it's right
above your head so yeah...

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...oh okay, great,
terrific.

ANTHONY MARX: It's a little out of
focus.

IRIS WEINSHALL: No, we're good...

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Alright.

IRIS WEINSHALL: Yes, we're good.

ANTHONY MARX: So, here we go. So,
that's Bob Dillon, we put... that was put in before
he won the Nobel Prize, the...

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...okay and there's Tony
walking up 5th Avenue...

ANTHONY MARX: ...that's, that's 5th
avenue so you get the first sense of... and you can
see the void downstairs that's letting light into
the lower floor where childrens [phonetic] and
teens are. We're walking now, that's Iris behind me
and we're walking past the, the entrance which is
where the current entrance is though reconfigured.
We're going to put some, some image of lions there
to connect the two buildings more explicitly. So
here is what the building will look like from the
front of the Schwarzman Building with all the
description that, that Iris gave. So here I am
again for some reason I'm walking back and forth
but the... so now I'm coming into the 5th Avenue
entrance so we've gotten rid of the vestibule which
gives us extra space with this kind of an opening.
This lobby area is obviously a whole different

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sense than where you started its self help on the
left so as you walk in you can do things for
yourself until you get to the help desk at the back
there. Now we're in glass fronted elevators, we're
going downstairs into the separate, separate kids
and teens area, lots of soundproofing here. There's
a large programs space. There's a surprising number
of schools I'm sure Councilman Garodnick knows this
within proximity of this... of this Midtown location.
So now we have a dedicated children's and teens
area and program space for them, strollers of
course. Now we're up in the long room, we're going
from the second floor up through the third and
fourth floor, you see the atrium and the stack of
books so five stories of books on the left, three
stories of library on the right, every level
connected of course for ADA and for east of, of
grabbing books and, and, and taking them out or, or
using them in, in house. So, you can... sorry. Here's
another image that will no doubt be the iconic
image of this amazing library, every area where
there's... looking onto an atrium or a, a void as the
architects call it has bars of computer users,
people love to sit and look while they're working

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on their computers. Similarly, the windows that are
being replaced will have those. Now we're giving
you a sense of what the other side from the atrium
will look like in this case the fourth floor you'll
notice that the architect has integrated the
columns which are necessary to hold the building up
so they are now part of the furniture in this case
the long table which I suppose matches the long
room. Again, you'll see there's lots of circulating
books out on the floor but unlike today, today
they're in high shelves blocking all the light from
the windows instead we are bringing the light into
this building. We are now on the fifth floor so
this is the education center, all the spaces behind
the space you're in are the classroom spaces
particularly English language, citizenship, lots of
immigrant folks coming through this part of town
eager for those services as well as tech-connect so
teaching computer skills, coding all kinds of
things that people need to move ahead in this city
of opportunity. So now we're back again over the
long room this time it's a two story tall atrium
which physically connects as I mentioned the
education center, get your skills would go upstairs

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to the business library and figure out how to apply
those skills. So now we're on the business library
side in... on these floors the long room instead of
housing books houses consultation rooms so the tax
preparation services described etcetera are right
there. Again, the books, books for the... from Sybil
are here, there's a more office feeling to this
floor as people are preparing for... looking for work
or starting businesses but... and lots of
consultation space, lots of communal work space.
Again, notice all the windows are, are accessible
and the light is flowing in instead of being
blocked as it has been. Sorry, reference books in
that case on the floor. Now we're on the floor... on
the roof which obviously now is just utilities. So,
this will be probably one of the great program
spaces in New York, it has two spaces which
combined can house 250 people, there's a café up
here. We can have author talks, programs, events
and all of those glass walls are sliding so as the
weather changes you can take advantage of that or
not. There's an overhand of the roof so that if
it's raining you can be outside and still... and not
get wet and the roof... the level of the roof itself

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is raised so that you can see over the parapet to
the Schwarzman Building, there's another little
garden in the back there, we call that the secret
garden, it has to be there because of the
agreements with the... with the neighbors but it's a
great nother [phonetic] outdoor space. Here you get
a sense of the whole; we're now walking along 40th
Street to see the length of the roof pavilion and
the garden and terrace. Again, you know the fact
that New Yorkers don't have a free public roof
terrace to enjoy this great city is sort of amazing
and now they will and a café and a vent space. This
is really a, a strong statement of the values of
this institution to say everyone in New York and I...
the writers and the researchers god bless have the
Schwarzman Building that is the focus of our
research efforts but every New Yorker who uses the
library should have an amazing facility and that's
what we hope we've presented to you today. Why
don't I turn then... sorry, that's the last image of
the roof terrace overlooking the, the building and
I will now turn it to our Chief Branch Library
Officer Christopher Platt who's going to describe
the process by which we get to this.

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CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Thank you Tony and
thank you Chair and thank you council, committee
members for allowing us to present today. Again,
I'm Christopher Platt, I oversee the branches and
so as Tony mentioned I wanted to talk briefly about
how we get from today to this result and being very
mindful of the residents, the commuters, the
researchers, the students, the lifelong learners
who rely on this building today that we spend that
time during construction addressing their needs to
the best of our abilities. So, I want to talk to
you through the swing space plan which will come
into play when we start construction and you'll see
a start of it now on the screen. So, in preparation
for the renovation of the Mid Manhattan Library the
first thing that will happen is construction of
swing space in the Schwarzman building and the core
functions of the Mid Manhattan Library including
the collection and the reading, computers and
program spaces will be housed on that street level
of the Schwarzman Building and you see it there,
I'll step you through it. The main entrance to this
swing space will be on the 42nd Street side, that's
the entrance kind of in the center of the building.

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The children's room will continue to be where it is
and then as you step to the left you'll see kind of
a dark red room there that will be program space,
we'll continue to offer some of the most robust...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Tony you're
proving very helpful I just...

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...thank you...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...want to let
you...

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...Tony...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...know.

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Vanna White behind
me. So, continue to offer the robust programming
that happens at the Mid Mid Manhattan Library today
and just beyond that is where you'll enter into the
books and kind of the grab and go, pick up your
reserves and check out area, we will have both a, a
staffed desk there as well as a couple of self
check for people to... who just need to come in and
pick up their book and go. As you look along the
street front part of the building I should remind
people that when this building was first built this
was public space so this is in a way restoring it
to that. We will have seating for people who's used

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the building as well as browsable book stacks there
that people will be oriented towards the windows
and the books oriented towards the inside wall and
then as well as you step to the rest of the orange
space we will have ample provision for pc's and
laptops which is one of the important services that
we offer today. The green spaces that you see in
the center there are staff spaces, that yellow
hallway across the, the middle there is the real
connector between those, those spaces and then it's
important to note you see a little blue there in
the middle we are constructing new restrooms on
that level, we know that's very important when we
have that many users coming into the library. We
will have as many books as we can out browsable and
then those that we can not fit in the browsing
shelves we will put into that first level stack
which is the light blue area at the top and they
will be pagable by library staff so most of what
the program and service at Mid Manhattan will go
into the Schwarzman Building. It is important to
note though that we will be leveraging the other
spaces that we have in Midtown so for instance in
the Sybil Library we will move our tech-connect,

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tech training and other computer training courses
to their labs down there as well as bolstering more
popular collection and places to pick up your,
your, your reserves and what have you from Sybil
and as well the Grand Central Branch which we... as
you know we renewed the, the lease on recently, we
will move... again not just bolster those collections
and, and a spot to pick up reserves but as well
move our community partnership programs there so
IDNYC, Single Stop, and the NY Citizenship Program
will be moved to that location for the duration and
then as well through all of these sites including
the new 53rd Street Library we will leverage
programming space where we can and again bolster
those collections. We have a state of the art
programming space at 53rd Street and we, we
definitely want to make sure that we're helping
address the program needs during this time. Again,
so we don't want to alienate people for two years,
we really want to continue to offer the robust
library services that come on to rely on from us
and so that when we reopen the renovated building
we don't necessarily have to lure them back, they

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are already still part of our family so to speak.

So, with that let me hand it back to Iris.

IRIS WEINSHALL: So I said at the beginning that we were going to talk about the Mid Manhattan branch but let me just go over with you some of the investments that we have made in the Schwarzman Building over the last couple of years. So, I think as this committee knows that we completed the construction of the Milstein research stacks underneath Bryant Park and as Tony likes to say it's going in a better direction, the books are going in, they're not coming out. We completed the renovation of the Rose Main Reading Room, we open... which opened a few weeks ago as well as Bill Blass Public Catalog Room and Gottesman Hall has been renovated as well and we are in the process of restoring the exterior fountains which were originally on when the building opened in 1911 and they will now be restored and we are... as you know we are in the process of, of installing a new fire alarm system in the building and we're very much appreciative of the help that the city council gave us to secure that money. So, we have made a tremendous investments in the Schwarzman Building

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in addition to improving the visitor experience and
we will be back to the council some time in the
late fall to go through our further plans for the
Schwarzman Building. In terms of community
engagement we have been incredibly involved with
meeting with folks and telling them what is going
on so beginning in 2014 the library we've met with
other cultural institutions, we've conducted as
Tone noted public surveys, we met with key
stakeholders and we have held several public
meetings including a major town hall meeting in
March of 2015 and we just had a meeting yesterday
to go over this Mid Manhattan plan. So we have
solicited key feedback and we've ensured that all
the voices have been heard and in terms of next
steps let me just say that we're very excited about
moving ahead, we plan on opening the swing space in
the Schwarzman Building in the fall of 2017, we've
started the early work there already. Construction
will last around two years and we will have a new
Mid Manhattan branch by early 2020. and now I'd
like to turn it back over to President Mark.

ANTHONY MARX: Thank you Iris and
Christopher. So we have an obligation to maintain

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and enhance the research libraries that's why we've
spent about 75 million dollars just in the
Schwarzman Building, massive renovation of the
Schomburg going on right now which just there two
days ago as well as great work at LPA and we will
have a new Sybil but I think this project, the Mid
Manhattan project that we're focusing on today
should be seeing literally and figuratively as the
center piece of a reinvestment by this institution,
by this city council, by this city in it's branch
libraries and the crucial role they play as
Councilman King said all the more in this
particular environment. So, I just want to make
that very clear that this is a pattern that goes
way beyond and must go way beyond the Mid
Manhattan, we aim to offer inspiring, safe and, and
great spaces and services throughout the
neighborhoods. We've been able to make great
progress on that again with huge thanks to the
leadership certainly Council Member Van Bramer's
been in the lead on libraries for oh so long and it
shows so our smallest branch, Macombs Bridge in
Harlem after decades is finally going to move to a
space five times it's size across the street. We're

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creating larger facilities, that was Christopher
clapping over here... we're going to create larger
facilities and we're... new facilities in Roosevelt
Island, Woodlawn and Westchester Square, there's a
new branch being built in Charleston, we're... with
the city's increased investment through the ten
year capital plan we're going to gut, renovate five
Carnegie libraries and made them absolutely
fantastic. All told today we have 545 million
dollars worth of improvements going including the
upcoming Mid Manhattan Library project. Public
funding has allowed us to leverage private dollars,
the library itself is investing in these projects
in partnership with the city council and with the
mayor and with the city at large and we know these
improvements make a difference. In Stapleton for
instance a high needs area of Staten Island fully
renovated in 2014 we saw a 33 percent increase in
visits over it's last full year open prior to that
renovation. Similarly, in the Kingsbridge Library
close to where I grew up. After moving to a new
larger modern space in 2011 an 80 percent increase
in visits during it's first full year. When you
build great new spaces the people come because they

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1 need those spaces, they need those educational
2 programs; they need those services, the computers
3 and the information. If I can I just want to close
4 with one story since it is the holidays. We... two
5 weeks ago we went to Washington Heights again
6 neighborhood close to where I grew up to a
7 beautiful Carnegie Library, the third floor, the
8 entire third floor had been empty for decades
9 because it had been a custodial apartment, this is
10 New York, right empty real estate and this is
11 Washington Heights, a high needs neighborhood so
12 with the support of the city council and the mayor
13 and good great work of Iris and Christopher and the
14 whole team we gut renovated that custodial
15 apartment into this incredible teen center,
16 classroom, computer center, it's just fantastic. So
17 we had an opening and a man gets up and he says my
18 name is Mr. Clark and I grew up in this apartment,
19 wonderful, dignified African American gentleman
20 described how his father, the custodian would go
21 down at night to shovel coal to keep the library
22 warm while he would sneak down to the library to
23 read and he would read, he loved to read books
24 about building boats and navigating by the stars,
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he became the first person in his family to
graduate from high school, to graduate from
college, he ended up an administrator and by the
time he was ready to retire he had built that boat
and he navigated by the stars. We want everyone to
have that kind of life changing experience. Thank
you all for making that possible.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
much Tony, Iris and Chris for your joint
presentations, I want to recognize Council Member
Elizabeth Crowley from Queens who serves on the
committee and has joined us and I want to thank you
Tony for pointing out my now almost two decades
worth of work on libraries actually it's always
thrilling to hear you and Iris testify before the
committee but I think this is Chris's first time
and he and I worked together at the Queens library
over a decade ago. So it is a treat to have
Christopher testifying, a former colleague from
long time ago and, and I'm thrilled to, to chair
the committee and be a part of this council that is
involved in record funding for libraries and that
includes all of the capital funding and I'm very
excited and in terms of your outdoor free rooftop

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terrace which is spectacular and, and may in fact
be the only one in Midtown, I believe there's a new
library being built on the waterfront in Queens
that will also have a free and accessible rooftop
terrace...

ANTHONY MARX: And, and a beautiful...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...so...

ANTHONY MARX: ...view.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes so it may
not be the only one. I think ours is scheduled to
open first but... so check with DDC on that but... so,
so let me ask you a few questions and I know Chair
King and Council Member Garodnick for sure have a
few questions as well. Look there's, there's no
doubt this is a, a dramatic, a dramatic vision for,
for this building and, and one that I think New
York City would be profoundly fortunate to, to have
and to, to experience but let's talk a little bit
about budget and, and acknowledge that there's been
some changes and, and so how much is all this going
to cost, where's that funding coming from, how's it
broken out, delve into that a little bit?

IRIS WEINSHALL: So the, the budget
that we're carrying now for the entire Midtown

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campus renovation is about 265 million dollars. 151
is city funds of which 125 million was appropriated
by the mayor, 25 million by the city council and a
million by the borough president of Manhattan. The
remainder of the money is what we call private
funds they are a mixture of proceeds that, that the
library has as well as, as you know Mr. Chairman we
did a bond financing a couple of years ago, we took
some of that money and we applied it towards this
project and the remainder of the money will come
from fundraising activities by the library.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And given the
changes is it more expensive, less expensive, are
you achieving all the same goals that you... that
you... you've essentially always had in mind?

IRIS WEINSHALL: So it's a different
project, it's a very different project from the
central library plan and the... because under that
plan the Mid Manhattan Library was going away and
that function was being incorporated into the
Schwarzman Building let me just say that you know
we have hired Tishman Construction, they are our
construction manager, we are pretty confident about
the cost for the Mid Manhattan Library, we've done

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a lot of estimating and based on the schematics
which you've seen we feel pretty confident that we
can build this building for 200 million dollars as
well as we also with the elements that Tony
described we're putting back all the books that
were there before plus additional books because the
children's library will now be going into the Mid
Manhattan Library as well as books... some of the
books from Sybil will be going into this branch. We
will be increasing the seats available to people as
well as computers available to people. So we feel
that we have accomplished a lot with this plan and
I know Tony wants to add to it.

ANTHONY MARX: I just... look, we've all
lived through, many of us have lived through this
process to get here. The central library plan ended
up in addition to having serious concerns from
elected officials as well as from the public. The,
the, the sort of practical issues were very real,
seriously over budget in, in a way that we did not
feel we could stretch and we certainly didn't want
to take money away from the rest of the system to
get it done. Structurally very challenging and
therefore complicated to get done and too small and

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we realized that actually that New Yorkers need more space for more library and more educational programs and more opportunities. This plan solves all those problems.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I, I took some notes because I know in the past there's been some concern about books and I, I, I am a great lover of, of, of books in libraries and in my own home and yet I know that, that libraries and how we use libraries, how we plan for libraries in the future has changed because technology has changed, usage has changed so speak to that balance, alright that balance of books versus technology and where some might see fewer books or book stacks and maybe they saw it in the past library but we're building these gorgeous new libraries all over the world and, and they don't often look like what libraries used to look like and someone who obviously is very much in love with the Hunters Point Library in Long Island City that is not what your library used to look like. I believe that that's a good thing but why don't you talk a little bit about your own internal balance between books, technology, seats, and communities.

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ANTHONY MARX: So we think those are
all important, that's one of the powers of the
library. We... we're delighted that we'll have 600
more seats here, the library is the civic space in
this town where everyone can come together and now
we're going to have one where people are going to
be delighted to come together in Midtown.
Obviously, we need to give them computer access as
we've all talked about; there are two or three
million New Yorkers without broadband at home which
is incredible in the 21st century in this city or
anyplace else. And there's increasing amounts of
information of ours particularly the Sybil
collection is almost all used now on-line and
that's been true for a decade which is a big change
in how that library has been used. So, we have to
do the seating, we have to do the computers, we
have to have educational programs because we are
the free provider cradle to grave of educational
programs and we have really transformed the
libraries in this city into those education
providers again with the support and leadership and
guidance of, of yourself and of the city council.
Lastly, as for books if you walk into this library

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and you see a five story tall wall of books you're going to know right away the centrality of the book to the library and that's important, people come from all over the city as I did as a kid to use this collection because it's our largest collection, you will find things you didn't even know you were looking for, alright. E.L. Doctorow told me amazing stories about writing his books based on what he literally stumbled upon in this library. So, it's going to be very visible in a way that it hasn't been that the books are at the center but as Iris said that whole book stack is flexible use meaning if 40 years from now we don't need as many books as we have and therefore as much storage I hope that isn't the case but if it is that space can all become consulting room space, shared workspace, collaborative work space quite dramatically as well.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you, I mean as someone who loves to read and cuddle up to a book at night every night that's what I know but I also know that the future may hold something different for, for people much younger than ourselves and, and that's why libraries have

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continued to be so central to everything we believe
is because they are flexible and meeting the needs
of, of people where they are today. I wanted to
talk a little bit about the swing space before we
go over to my colleagues because obviously having
worked for a library for 11 years swing spaces are
challenging, they're disruptive, they're never
everything that you had in the previous iteration
and then there's the, the swing back to where you
were in the Schwarzman Building so as you... as Tony
was very, very helpfully pointing out all of those
spaces that will be used for public service in
Schwarzman as the swing I was thinking about what
you're going to be doing with that space once MML
reopens and, and, and, and what that's going to
look like?

ANTHONY MARX: So that is part of the
master plan that we will be coming back to you
with, we want to do Mid Manhattan, get it done...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure...

ANTHONY MARX: The... that, that dramatic
space which much of it is recaptured public space
so that's a great thing and some of it was back
office space, those staff are now across the street

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in commercial space on 39th Street where we added
75,000 square feet so that we could serve the
public more including particularly in the
Schwarzman Building so the first big move of that
by definition has to be the swing space. And we are
going to fix that space up and invest probably 14
million dollars or so in a way that will last past
the swing space; it becomes permanent improvements
to the Schwarzman Building. When, when MML swings
back across the street we anticipate that that will
become the central research library, education
center and we aspire, we aspire to take our
treasures out of the safes where they've been kept
for 100 years, put them on display and welcome
every school kid in this town in to see those
treasures and then to spend time in our education
center to learn what a research library can do and
what primary documents can teach you, what real
news rather than fake news actually looks like and
so we look forward to a great future use of that
for the public on the ground floor of the
Schwarzman Building.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And we could
of used that elimination of fake news a couple of
months ago Tony honestly but...

ANTHONY MARX: I didn't promise to
eliminate it...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...yeah...

ANTHONY MARX: Mr. Chairman.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's a,
that's a tall order if you're going to fix that
but... how, how, how are you going to keep this on
time and, and make sure that... you know that, that
legitimately disruptive period is, is kept to a, a
minimum, we all know that, that library usage is,
is, is very driven by habit and, and people go to
the same place and, and the same time and then if
something's not there maybe they, they stop going
and then they have to get reacquainted so as little
disruption as, as possible, I mean this is an
important project and you need to do this but, but
how, how hard will you drive and how assured can
you be and ensure the committee that this is going
to happen in the time lines that you've set it up
for?

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IRIS WEINSHALL: So, so let me just say that the swing space is just temporary; it's just temporary for the period of time that we are in construction. We are doing this project as... we, we aspire to do this project as a pass through so the library will be overseeing the construction of the project. This is why it's important that the library close during this construction period. Just imagine doing a renovation in your apartment while you're living there which is what I'm doing now which is a horror. So, we're going to close it, we're doing a lot of pre-investigation now so we don't open up a wall and oh my god this is what, what we found. So, we are keeping a very tight schedule in terms of like ordering the steel early on, making sure that we do the buys that we have to do before so you're not doing the demolition and then you have to wait to buy the steel and do all that. I'll let Christopher talk about educating the public in terms of how people will find their way there and then find their way back.

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Yeah, we do plan to your point Jimmy that in some cases if it's not handled best you do kind of have to lure people

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back and remind them there was a library here, we don't want to do that which is again part of the investment in the swing space itself but also a really robust marketing and communications plan that keeps people up to date building on the building for you the work that we've started with some of our branch renovations so that there's constant community conversation and updates of what's going on and you know we're meeting our deadlines and you can come and celebrate with us when we reopen this new building and remind them that this new building's also going to include the new children's center and the teen center and the adult learning center and, and the new components that weren't in that building when it closed.

IRIS WEINSHALL: If, if I can just point one other thing Ken Weine is here who does our, our communications and marketing one of the things that we're going to have is on our web page people will actually like they did with the Rose Main Reading Room they'll be able to see in real...

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...right...

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...the progress and that will also remind them hey you know we closed this

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branch but it's going to reopen and this is what's
going on.

ANTHONY MARX: And... it... not only do we
need to not lose people from the Mid Manhattan but
we are delighted that the swing space will help us
to invite more of the public into the Schwarzman
Building and we hope that will be maintained...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...that's right...

ANTHONY MARX: ...as well.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Great, so I, I
will have some more questions but I know Chair King
and then Council Member Garodnick and Rosenthal
also have some questions for you.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Thank you Mr.
Chair, I'll try to be brief about it but just a
couple general questions and budget questions but
thank you for your presentation, you were able to
open my eyes and educate me a little bit more what
two years will look like... or actually three years,
you're saying it's 2020 when you're looking to
open. What was your start date again?

ANTHONY MARX: So we will... we are
commencing on repairing the swing space now and we
expect to move the Mid Manhattan into it roughly 12

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months from now and then 24 months after that we
will reopen the Mid Manhattan so...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...so...

ANTHONY MARX: ...it's a tight schedule.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Very tight
schedule so out of the 300 million which is the
total project, correct?

ANTHONY MARX: So it's...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...just...

ANTHONY MARX: The current project is
265 but I am confident that the library it's
private funds will be continuing to be past that
particularly in the Schwarzman Building.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: How much of that
265 is going to build the swing space?

ANTHONY MARX: So I think it's 12 or 13
million is the swing space plus the 151 from the
city sources, thank you and the roughly 50 that we
have to fill from private sources and I am hard at
work.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Well thank you
so... thank you for that my budget part, part of it.
I want to ask a little bit about some of the
programming that you've done. I know that the space

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is... you have a Single Stop space there for people
who come in for health insurance, SNAP and all of
those programs and help the human component what
happens to that program, how are you going to
manage all of that during this transition?

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: So those programs
Single Stop, IDNYC, and the NY Citizenship Programs
that we offer in the Mid Manhattan Library today
will be relocated for the duration to the Grand
Central Library which is just east of Grand Central
terminal on 46th Street, we've identified a space
where they will fit and will outfit it for them for
that duration and then they'll move back.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay...

ANTHONY MARX: ...again the city council
are Councilman Garodnick led the way in our
discussions of not getting out of that space which
had originally been designated as swing if you will
for the extended process on 53rd Street so now we
have 53rd Street open and we didn't close Grand
Central, thank you and that makes it possible for
us to have further space to meet public needs
through this process.

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COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Oh okay, good. I
want to talk a little bit about the construction, I
love the building I saw some of the things that
you're looking to do there. I did have a question
you know the big windows on all the floors are
those windows able to be opened for the patrons or
is it central air or is it central heat or...

IRIS WEINSHALL: So, so on the seventh
floor the windows will open...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...right...

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...on the floors
themselves, no they probably won't open but they'll
be new windows and the openings that the current
windows are in we'll just put new windows in those
spaces.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, you said
probably won't be opening?

IRIS WEINSHALL: Yeah you know this is
schematic and we're still working out with the HVAC
consultant but you know we have to... we haven't
gotten to that level of detail yet. Let me just say
one other thing, I'm sorry. Yeah, this will be a
lead certified building, it's always our aspiration

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to seek gold or platinum and so this will be a lead
building.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, I've, I've
been in some buildings especially when it comes to
having patrons and children windows can be a safety
issue if they're able...

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...yes...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...to have access
to open and close, I just wanted to get a feel for
that. I know you've done a lot of surveys; you did
a lot of town hall meetings I just wanted to know
how was the feeling of the patrons about being able
to say hey we have to pause coming here for a while
and we have to possibly go elsewhere to get
services, is everyone 100 percent happy about what...
about what's getting ready to go down or are there
some challenges, what were some of the
conversations you were having?

ANTHONY MARX: This is New York City so
I'm, I'm not sure I can claim 100 percent ecstasy,
I think there is certainly in my sense that... and
from what we've seen particularly from the surveys
etcetera is people are saying it's high time that
this library that the New York public paid

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attention to it's central branch library and worked
with the city to solve this. I think people
understand that you can't solve a problem without
you know having some disruption along the way and
see that we are working very hard to minimize that
disruption and meet needs in, in other ways. We
are... we've heard... also hear... you know there are
people who sort of have lived in that library for
45 years and sort of got used to it and don't quite
see why it's not good enough. I think generally
people understand why it's not good enough and why
we need to do much better and we're also getting
suggestions. Yesterday we had a public meeting
where people pointed out some places where there
should be seating that there hadn't... we hadn't
thought about, people talked about needing to make
sure that glass walls in, in front of open space
might need to be taller just for security reasons
so the same issues around the windows actually has
to be true internally as well so you know we're
also learning as we go and I expect that will
continue.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, I'm going
to just ask some more questions because Council

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Member Garodnick which is in... this is his district,
I'd like to hear from him as well because I know
he's put a lot of energy and effort as well as our
Chair Van Bramer in this. My next question is the
Schwarzman Building, as you do any upkeeps in there
is there anything in any of this funding that
you're doing that's going to improve the Schwarzman
Building not just as a swing stop but to improve it
as well doing this renovation?

IRIS WEINSHALL: So as you can well
imagine we've done a lot of exploring of the
Schwarzman Building, the architects have swarmed
all over that building. It's a building from 1911,
there have been numerous renovations over the 100
plus years but there is an enormous amount of work
that needs to be done in that building. Just as an
example, HVAC systems, redoing the elevators,
redoing how people... the, the restrooms in that
building are antiquated, how people navigate the
building, the loading dock which brings in all the
books and brings in all the, the staff; all of that
is being explored as we speak and as I said we will
come back in, in the spring to talk about the
master plan for the Schwarzman Building and as Tony

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said it's, it's... it will probably be an enormous
undertaking for the library and one that we have to
prioritize in terms of what we can afford and when
we can afford to do the work.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay and my A B
question the Single Stop office how many people
will you say you were serving and then I want to go
ask a question about construction because here in
Midtown on the block you know going around the
corner how does... how's that construction... how are
you going to be managing the sound or how will
people be affected you know when construction
happens people are not... they, they say they want
stuff and then when construction goes down you know
you have a whole new ball game with... not just
people who, who are walking past but the people
that are working across the street or you know
people live across the street, how are we...

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...or, or actually...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...I mean...

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...live right above it...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...above it, yeah...

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...yeah...

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COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...how is that
evident...

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...so we... we're very
lucky because we are not taking the façade of the
building down, this is a great, a great old
building, it's with the old Arnold Constable
Department Store and it was built around the same
time that the Scharzman Building was built so we
believe the façade's great, it's just... it's dirty
and it needs to be cleaned up. So most of the
renovation will be internal to the building so
we're, we're not going to really be disrupting. You
raise a good point though we are in Midtown,
materials have to come in, probably you know we're
going to have to take the lane out on, on 40
Street, I know there's a city bike station there,
we're going to have to work with the city, with the
Department of Transportation to make sure that we
get the proper flow on that block and that we're
not too disruptive to Midtown traffic

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: You might...

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: And on the Single
Stop question we'll get back to you the numbers, as

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you know that location and our Bronx Library Center
are where we...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...right...

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...going to Single
Stop but we'll, we'll get the numbers of how many
people we serve back to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: And my final
question before I, I just want to... question kind of
comment as you do the renovation I haven't had the
privilege to get to Mid... at Midtown that library
but talking about there has a history in it, you
know I've always said during all our conversations
being able to make sure as we prepare and develop
and build for the future that we still hold onto a
piece of the past so when people walk in they still
feel that sense of nostalgia of what was meant from
Carnegie and all those who made a commitment to
build libraries so whatever that piece or symbol is
on that... in that building I look forward to you all
maintain or even... you know putting something there
that people can remember where it all began.

IRIS WEINSHALL: So Councilman I just
want to applaud you for saying that because some
people have been critical of the fact that we

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aren't, we aren't taking down the façade and I
would just like to applaud you for that comment
because this is a beautiful façade that can be
reused into the new design of the building so thank
you.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: You're welcome.

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: You're right;
you're right and thank you, thank you Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. I
had one important question I forgot to ask but I
wanted to make sure I ask it before we go to
Council Member Garodnick. Staffing, is there any
reduction, increase, where are we in terms of
staffing after all of these changes take place?

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: So um both... we are
in active planning on staffing for both the swing
space and the, the new renovated space, we do not
anticipate... we're not getting rid of any staff in
either phase of this project, we are going to in
fact be staffing up some of the new... so the teen
center is new, we are holding vacancies to make
sure that we have staff to staff that unit for
example and we've already hired the leader of the
unit to help us plan through that and then as

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vacancies come up during the course of the time we
may, you know revisit how we use those as we would
in, in the general course of business.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good so
particularly with all the increased funding that
has been allocated for libraries and for staffing
would be not appropriate to see a reduction in
staffing but, but obviously there is always when
these things happen sort of a... shifts in, in, in
where folks are working and, and that is important.

ANTHONY MARX: So let me just say that
Caryl Soriano was here, she is the incredible
branch director of, of the Mid Manhattan and she's
working intensively with her colleagues as we
prepare for this so that we can understand what
their interests are and make sure that everybody's
feeling comfortable.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Great, well
thank you to the... all the staff having worked in a
library that was undergoing a significant
renovation it's not easy but I appreciate
everything that you all do. Council Member
Garodnick.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank you
very much to both the Chairman today and to the
library, thank you for, for your creativity and
also your commitment to getting this, this done
obviously Mid Manhattan is screaming for help and
we are glad that it's coming so thank you for that.
I wanted to... you, you answered a lot of questions
but I wanted to just ask a few technical questions
which I know are of concern to people who I hear
from periodically and they first relate to numbers
of books, today how many books do we have at the
Mid Manhattan Library?

ANTHONY MARX: So Christopher correct
me if I'm wrong I believe the circulating
collection at the Mid Manhattan is 400,000 items.

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Yes...

ANTHONY MARX: ...is that correct?

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Correct.

ANTHONY MARX: And that is... we, we have
planned for space for that number plus the addition
of bringing the children's collection from across
the street so it can join the teens collection,
adding the teen's collection as well as the Sybil

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circulating collection though that is diminished
because so much of that work now happens online.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay, so
400,000 items so that's books plus DVD's and
everything else...

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...audio books and
everything else, yes...

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ...okay. And
the new Mid Manhattan Library will have those
400,000 plus the children's library you said that's
currently in the Schwarzman which is how many
items?

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: We'll, we'll get
that number for you, yeah...

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ...okay and
the teen.

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: The teen... it should
be roughly the same size but that, that...

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ...same as the
childrens...

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...collection... yeah,
that will be built more from scratch because it'll
be a bigger space than what the teen collection we
have there now.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: And Sybil
today versus what you will have in the new Mid
Manhattan?

IRIS WEINSHALL: I don't have an exact
number but let me just say the following and we
will get you the exact number, a big portion of the
Sybil books which currently aren't used because
they're reference books and as Tony's noted a lot
of that information is online. We plan to move
those materials to the Schwarzman Building to the
Milstein stacks and so if people want them they can
easily get them called from that space either read
them in Schwarzman or we can take them over to the
new Mid Manhattan Library. As you saw on the
rendering there will be a number of books that will
go on the floor of the business library and we will
get you that exact number unless Christopher has it
now.

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: I don't have it
now, no.

IRIS WEINSHALL: Okay...

ANTHONY MARX: So could I just add...
sorry, we're, we're doing this in real time for
you, the... we have seen a 68 percent decline in the

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1 use... print usage in Sybil over the last decade and
2 a 72 percent explosive increase in online material
3 so this is particularly the data material it's just
4 much easier to find, to use, to manipulate online
5 and so we make that available to folks. We also
6 know that from surveys that over half of the users
7 of SASB, Mid Manhattan and Sybil go around to more
8 than one building, right so we're trying to figure
9 out in this process as Iris just referred to it how
10 to make it more obvious to people, right so that's
11 why we're returning the research collection that it
12 is Sybil into the research library so you don't
13 have to run back and forth to try to figure out
14 where your research book might be but have the... the
15 sort of... the more service books and reference books
16 as part of the sort of job finding, job creating
17 center in the new Mid Manhattan but we'll get... we
18 can get you those exact numbers.

19
20 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay, good I
21 appreciate it. and in the swing space obviously
22 that's your... that's the temporary situation
23 presumably the, the, the children's whatever is
24 there now stays, will all 400,000 items of Mid
25 Manhattan be available at the Schwarzman's swing

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space during the time that Mid Manhattan is being
done?

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Yes, that's an easy
one. And part of that is because we were able to
leverage that stack space. We're still coming up
with the exact count that will be out browsable
that's... we want to make that as perfect as we can
and then the rest will be pagable with page staff
on request and findable online or with the
assistance of staff.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay, the
Sybil space you, you, you talked a lot about moving
books out and the decrease in demand for print
usage at Sybil and increased online needs. What,
what... so what's going to happen with the, the space
that will be vacated by those books at the... at
Sybil your...

ANTHONY MARX: ...sorry, at the current
location or the...

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ...yeah,
current...

ANTHONY MARX: ...future location?

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Current
location.

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2 ANTHONY MARX: We have always said that
3 we won't close that location until it's new
4 location is ready and open for the public but we've
5 also always said that we will sell that, that
6 facility, it is owned by the library.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay, is
8 that part... is the sale of that facility part of
9 the... let's see here, 114 million dollars in private
10 funds that, that you mentioned before?

11 ANTHONY MARX: It, it could be that is
12 up to the trustee's, the trustees are committed to
13 finding those resources, there are various sources
14 and various places we can apply those resources so
15 we're going through that process and the library's
16 been doing this obviously for some time so we have
17 just in the last decade invested in the library
18 services center in Long Island City, 53rd Street as
19 you know, the Milstein stacks, new HVAC, the
20 reading room all of those projects have come from
21 various sources with the library finding and
22 allocating private sources sometimes those are real
23 estate proceeds, sometimes those are fund raising
24 proceeds, sometimes they're bond proceeds and we
25 try to find the best combination in each case.

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COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: But your
expectation here is you sell the current Sybil and...

ANTHONY MARX: ...those are...

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ...that's part
of your...

ANTHONY MARX: ...resources...

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ...plan...

ANTHONY MARX: ...available for the
library to do more for the public, right.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay. The
current operations at Schwarzman, impact of current
operations by moving things over and forgive me if
you addressed that in the colloquy with, with the
Chairman but is there any... I know you are, you are
activating swing space over there for everything
that needs to happen how will that if at all impact
current operations at Schwarzman?

ANTHONY MARX: We think there should be
relatively minimal disruption in Schwarzman. We...
the users of the Mid Manhattan swing space will be
encouraged to use the 42nd Street entrance which is
on that same level and with... the, the Mid Manhattan
space is not space that is used by the public, some
of it was designed to be used by the public and is

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being restored to the public so it's not like we're taking anything away from the research library and in fact and we will come back to you in the, in the next calendar year we hope to move aggressively not only with this project but with opening more space for the research community in the Schwarzman Building and also do that in a way that is additive, right restoring space to the public and therefore not only not disruptive but should be welcomed. Again, but there is in any building of this age, you know there are inevitably whenever you're doing work there's going to be some level of... you know disruption and we'll try to keep that minimal. We're, we're committed to the Schwarzman Building staying open and you know people continuing to use it throughout this process.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Got it, that, that really was the core of my question not...

ANTHONY MARX: ...certainly...

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ...not... no, I got it but I appreciate it inevitably it's going... there will be some...

ANTHONY MARX: ...there is no...

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COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ...some
discomfort...

ANTHONY MARX: ...question about...

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ...here I mean
this not a... it's not going to be a, a total smooth...

ANTHONY MARX: ...but that's why...

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: ...sail...

ANTHONY MARX: ...we're also... you know
with the Mid Manhattan we said we need to close
this to do a gut renovation and we need to be able
to get it done in two years which is really you
know aggressive. The, the Schwarzman Building we
can't close it, right so we know that that master
plan that the trustees are going to go through is
going to take some time so that we don't close it
and so that we minimize the disruption at the same
time we're eager to get as much of it done as we
can, as quickly as we can.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Did you want
to add anything?

IRIS WEINSHALL: I just want to say so
when the Rose Main Reading Room was closed, you
know there's 600 seats there and that sort of gave
us like a little bit of a fire drill in terms of

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putting other people in the building and so it was
a good learning lesson for us so when we do get to
this point where we have swing and we have extra
people coming into the building we sort of... it gave
us a, a sense of what we could sort of expect in
the building.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Last
question from me is during the time in which the
Mid Manhattan items are relocated to the swing
space will, will there be anything that... put aside
the number which we talked about a little bit will
there any... will there be anything that you are
today able to take advantage of at Mid Manhattan
that you would not otherwise be able to take
advantage of during the period of time in which
it's in it's swing space?

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: So in terms of the,
the collection itself will continue to... it'll
continue to be a refreshed collection, new popular
materials will continue to enter in the browsable
and, and, and circulating. We are as part of this
project moving the picture collection across
permanently into the Schwarzman Building so that
it's getting it's own grand space across the street

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and a closer adjacent seat to the other curatorial
units where we know people use both so that would
be a change and then I will also just remind that
we do intend to bolster the circulating collections
at the surrounding Midtown sites as well. Again, to
just make it as easy as possible for people who
need to get the books that they want to read during
this time.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: So is that
more or less a nothing that you can think of at
this moment or... I don't know, how would you
characterize it because it doesn't sound like...

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...no plans to really
change anything around the collections, no not in
that two year period of time.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: And it'll be
essentially everything that will... that is available
today would be available across the street?

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: I'm sorry,
just one, one other thing which comes to mind on
the, the business portion of the new Mid Manhattan
space reflecting the decline in print usage and the
increase in online demand you had mentioned the

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meeting room spaces which I think are very
appealing in this context what more does the
library anticipate doing to accommodate the
increased demand for online material in that space?

ANTHONY MARX: So we continue to add to
our licensing of, of data for the public to use, we
will be, you know adding and, and refreshing and
buying new computers for the access to those
material and the library is aggressively working
with our colleagues around the country, around the
world to think about how to get more information
online for people and the library's responsibility
to make sure that that happens and we look forward
to talking about that in the year or two to come as
well.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Okay.
alright, Chairman thank you very much for the time,
I appreciate it, thank you

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
much Council Member Garodnick. Council Member
Rosenthal?

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you so
much Chair. Congratulations, this looks amazing and
I appreciate your coming before the council today.

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I want to ask about services for those people with disabilities as you know it's ten percent of the New York City population has disabilities and it's of all variety different ways that we need to meet their physical challenges and emotional challenges and I'm wondering if you have a schematic that shows in what way the library will meet those... the needs of those New Yorkers. For example, the obvious and easy one is... well of course ADA bathrooms, I'm sure you're doing that so... but then access to all the spaces for wheelchairs and then the other one that's just incredibly important is to have hearing loops at the... and you're just about to talk about that...

IRIS WEINSHALL: ...I'm just... just about...

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...my heart's going to go pitter patter so let's hear?

ANTHONY MARX: Well first, first let me start by saying... reiterating the entire building is wheelchair ADA accessible, every spot place of it, we're committed to that, all the bathrooms of course, all of that you know that's part of the beauty of a gut renovation. Maybe Christopher you can talk about the, the... and, and let me just say

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we are also as a system talking about how we make
sure even our web access is as accessible to people
with disabilities as well so we're... this is a, a
subject we are very much focused on.

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Yeah, I would, I
would just reiterate that not just a physical
facilities around the system as we upgrade them and
our online website but also the content that we
provide, you know we are one of the national
library hubs for library for the blind and print
disabled and as well we are investing in more e-
content that is readable by people who are... have
reading challenges and then as well the hearing
loops is a great example, 53rd Street we heard loud
and clear from the community that we should have
one there and so we... as we go and renovate branches
it's now part of our standard to make sure that
there's hearing loops in all of the locations and
we will do so here as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Could you
describe to me what a hearing loop will look like
in this renovation, where will they be and what
purpose will they serve?

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CHRISTOPHER PLATT: They would be on
all the floors and, and, and in the meeting rooms
as well, we're... which is where we hear they need
them, they are needed the most so people can
participate in programs and lectures and, and book
discussion groups and conversations of that sort.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So that was
a little bit of a trick question, the other place
that it's really needed, sorry, is at the
information booth...

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...right...

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...and at the
checkout where you're checking out your book.

IRIS WEINSHALL: And we do at...

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...right...

IRIS WEINSHALL: 53rd Street that...

ANTHONY MARX: We have that...

IRIS WEINSHALL: We already have it.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You do?

IRIS WEINSHALL: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay. I
think it would be... I mean this sounds great and I
would of course like to run it by the commissioner
through the mayor's office of people with

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disabilities, I don't know if you've already done
that but I would love to see a schematic that shows
that if you could send that over without doing new
work, something you already have and...

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: ...of course...

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...I'll share
that with the commissioner.

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Happy to.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you
very much.

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Thank you.

ANTHONY MARX: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
much. I know Chair King has an additional question
still, yeah?

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Yes. Again, thank
you. I was reading about the square footage that
you had prior to the construction and then now
there's going to be an additional after it's all
gutted and said and done, 80... lost my page there...
you're going... 82,000 square feet of public space
which is going to be brand new, approximately
24,000 square feet of general reading space, study
space and 22,000 square feet of programming my

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question would be is you're adding on this new
space for programming I'd like to know is there
going to be like... you say new programming, I don't
know exactly what that means, is that like programs
already in existence and you're pulling out and
putting back on the shelf or are you grabbing
something that has never been done anywhere and
this location is going to be the new model and is
this when it's finished and said and done when we
walk through there is this going to be the new
model of libraries of how libraries are going to
look in the future?

ANTHONY MARX: That is our intention
sir. We, we, we... there are programs that we do
that we do well that are in high demand, we want to
increase our offerings of those and there are new
programs that we are exploring and we will be... you
know working with the city council, with the mayor
and with private donors to make sure that that is
possible. We, we want...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...is, is...

ANTHONY MARX: ...this...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...is there...

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ANTHONY MARX: ...library to be in part a
laboratory for the expansion of meeting the
educational needs of this city.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, I guess I
like your answer, thank you. Is there one... I'm just
trying to identify is there going to be something
new here at this library that doesn't exist at any
library once you reopen it up?

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: A good example
Council Member King is you know we'll have a state
of the art media lab for the youth in that
childrens and young adult level. There are... it's
not just open space for books and a community space
to hold programs, there will also be small work
spaces especially in the teen area where we know
teens come together to learn to code, to tinker, to
create, to create media and drawing a large part on
some good... for examples by peers across the country
including Queens Library we know that they love to
create audio, they love to create video and this is
a, a flagship area where we want to blow up that
programming and create real templates and, and
innovative best practices that we can build across
the system.

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COUNCIL MEMBER KING: So if I can... this
is my, my final kind of statement as I talked
earlier about your façade as you continue to build
libraries across the city I'm asking if there's
always in every library that you renovate,
reconstruct that there's always a connection to
yesterday so our youth when they go in take in a
media... you have to figure out what it was for Walt
Disney when he started doing all this media work,
what did Warner Brothers do, what did the film
industry do from day one to understand media as it
is known today so I'm asking for that and I will
reiterate the words of Chair I want to thank
everyone who works in a library, who picks up a
book, who puts back a book after a child leaves it
on the floor, whatever you've got to do to keep the
libraries moving and flowing straight, I say thank
you, thank you, and thank you and happy holidays.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
much Chair King and we are very excited, I think a
fair to say that we've come to this point and it is
a significant, significant investment on behalf of
the city of New York and one that clearly is going

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to be very, very special and unique so with that
we'll say thank you...

ANTHONY MARX: Thank you...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...and...

ANTHONY MARX: Mr. Chair...

CHRISTOPHER PLATT: Thank you Mr.
Chair...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: We have one
panel additionally with two people on it who want
to speak to this issue. Michael White and Allen
Sugarman, Sugarman. Is Allen not with us,
apparently not so Mike will be the only speaker on
this panel and the final speaker of the hearing, I
think we have a three minute clock or so. So,
Michael you are free to begin.

MICHAEL WHITE: Michael White, Citizens
Defending Libraries. The NYPL did a presentation of
this replacement of Sybil and Mid Manhattan and the
alterations to the 42nd Street Library last night
for the public. They said at that presentation that
they would answer questions that the public asked.
The public asked how many books were at Sybil not
just the other day but before the central library
plan was conceived and we know that it was over a

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million and similarly how many books were at Mid
Manhattan back then versus how many were going to
be in the new library. The NYPL would not answer
that question whether they didn't know the answer
or whether they were just unwilling to give the
answer each is objectionable and unfortunate.
Another question was asked that they wouldn't
answer, they were asked why Booz Allen Hamilton,
the nations top private spy agency working
principally on surveillance for the U.S. government
was hired in connection with the dismantling of the
libraries in this reorganization that's getting rid
of books just shortly before the central library
plan and now this replacement was proceeded and,
and, and we're seeing similar things around the
rest of the city and that was right after the NYPL
board had been advised according to it's minutes
that the government was going to require the NYPL
to quote, reengineer their internet service
facilities to enhance law enforcement stability to
monitor and accept internet communications...
intercept communications. So, that was something
else they wouldn't answer. These are critical
essential questions; you can ask these questions... I

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heard Council... Councilman Garodnick answer some questions that were not quite these questions about the number of the books and I think he got more information, better answer than the public was given last night but these questions have to be asked, there's a drastic reduction of books and it results in the opportunity for surveillance. We also were told last night that the NYPL has stopped collecting science books, I mean we have a whole library that's called the science industry and business library and the reason was that they said people can just go to the internet well I know a lot of people who are studying climate science these days and they're reading a lot of books it's not available elsewhere and what we need to address what is going to potentially destroy our planet probably the greatest threat is for our population to understand climate science and to have access to the science that could create solutions. We can not be shrinking our libraries at this point.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you Michael for your testimony obviously you are a very regular contributor to our hearings so I'm familiar with some of your positions. I only have one

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question and I think Chair King has a, a question
as well. The Booz Allen Hamilton concern what
exactly is your concern here, what, what are we...
what are we concerned about, what are we alleging?

MICHAEL WHITE: Well one of the things
we've given you there's an addendum to the
testimony that I've submitted and you'll see that
we have a resource page at Citizens Defending
Libraries which is links to many articles and
excerpts about surveillance in libraries. So, Booz
was hired shortly after a Connecticut librarians
had won a fight against the patriot act and
surveillance but the changes that are being made in
the library is basically wind up being an end run
around the kind of victory those Connecticut
librarians won. The American Library Association is
adopted resolutions pointing at... to the importance
of preserving the libraries as zones of privacy
free from surveillance and just last week issued a...
two weeks ago issued an advocacy alert on the
subject. There's increased surveillance now with
the adoption of rule 41 which you may also have
heard covered on, on the media this week.

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CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Right but you,
you don't know for a fact that, that NYPL's work
with Booz Allan is about snooping and spying and,
and revealing proprietary information about
library...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...you know I...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...users do you...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...I, I, I, I don't know
for a fact and I don't know that it's not now the
NYPL was... has not been willing to produce the
contracts with Booz and we have foiled the
contracts with Booz and company with the Brooklyn
public library and they have been unwilling to
produce them. Now the United States government has
70 percent of it's surveillance through private
firms of that 80 percent is with five firms, the
top firm of those five firms is Booz Allen, their
principle work is surveillance for the federal
government...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...I mean I, I...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...now it may sound...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...will
definitely you know continue to work with NYPL and,
and you know we'll... but I'm, I'm, I'm pretty sure

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that Booz Allen does other things as well and, and,
and I'm also fairly sure that the New York Public
Library like all of our great libraries across the
country and as you know I worked for one and am
very familiar with the Patriot Act we are the place
where everyone comes to feel safe as... New York
Public Library just like the Queens, Brooklyn
Public Libraries have 100's of 1,000's if not
millions of undocumented folks who can trust both
the staff and, and the system to, to keep them safe
and I, I believe and I just want to say this for
the record that the New York Public Library is
committed to that. I know that our system's are
committed to that, our city is committed to that so
you know I just think this is a... it's a, it's a
very, very loaded allegation and, and I don't know
in the absence of, of proof that somehow the NYPL
is conspiring with Booz Hamilton to, to, to
accomplish what you're saying is, is potentially
being accomplished here is, is, is appropriate
particularly given the record that I think NYPL,
it's librarians, it's staff has in serving everyone
regardless of, of a status and I think that's a

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well, well earned reputation on the, on the part of
all three of our library systems...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...these, these...

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: ...quite
frankly...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...these questions have
been asked and they're not being answered that's
the problem. Now in terms of... I have not alleged
that they are conspiring, I've raised the question
you can is this a conspiracy... well maybe this is
conspiracy and maybe it's not a conspiracy but you
don't want to pick and choose selectively in this
day and age in terms of what's possible, in terms
of what you are willing to consider is possible,
things that you have to be concerned about and
groups like the American Library Association tell
us that we do need to be concerned about
surveillance in libraries.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I, I, I hear
what, what... with the ALA of which I was a member of
course when I worked for libraries I understand
their position on these issues very carefully, I
think making the direct connection between the
ALA's overarching concerned about some of these

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issues and then to connect it to NYPL's work with
Booz Hamilton I think that's a stretch and I think
that's what's not really resonating with me but I
understand you have a position and, and, and I just
want to you know finish that point by stating that
the work, the body of work of this city's three
public library systems protecting and really being
the first line of defense for every New Yorker
particularly for the undocumented is in my
estimation unchallengeable and, and, and that
commitment I know is shared by, by Tony and the
three other... and the two other library system head
so you stated your position, your concern, I
understand it, I disagree with it but, but it's
been raised. I know Council Member King has a
question.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Good afternoon
and again thank you for your testimony. Just a
question you sat here through the testimony of
President Marks and the New York Public Library was
there anything that you agree with what they were
saying or what they were doing, what their plans
are?

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MICHAEL WHITE: Of course, I... there are things that I agree with you know I think that this plan is very expensive and I think it's an expensive way of getting rid of Sybil. We do not... if you go to Sybil which will be used very valuably as they're proposing during the transition phase, it is a very valuable resource, it was completed recently in 1996, it was considered a state of the art library upon completion in terms of technology it is absolutely state of the art in terms of supplying computers, I don't think we should be cavalierly getting rid of Sybil and I don't understand why that is, is, is a proposal. I think that...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...there's one thing...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...this, this, this...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...you disagree...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...this, this, this

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...with... that's one thing you disagree... I'm going to cut just one thing you disagree with, what do you agree with?

MICHAEL WHITE: This is a far better plan than the central library plan which we

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litigated against and helped to derail and if you
have this kind of money to spend on this library
particularly if you're willing to put more books in
it so that we are... have books more like we used to
have it... there are a lot of things that are good
about this design.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: So my final
question to you if you had three questions that you
wanted to get asked and answered can you just
submit them in, three questions?

MICHAEL WHITE: Well...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...I want you to
give me your top three questions, put it on a
piece...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...okay...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...and submit...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...we, we, we...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...them to us...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...we, we, we have asked
repeatedly for a census of the, the books and the
numbers that they used to be before the central
library plan was concocted...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...okay...

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MICHAEL WHITE: ...and they... NYPL has
refused to give that...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...that's one
question, second question?

MICHAEL WHITE: The second question is
we would like to see the contracts that were
requested to be seen with Booz Allen both from the
NYPL and from the, the EPL and...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...two... that's,
that's your second question...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...we'll... okay, alright...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...third question...

MICHEAL WHITE: ...well lets throw in the
queens library too because they... also had a
contract with Booz and Company.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay and number
three?

MICHAEL WHITE: I have to... I've got
some...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...so you only have
two, that's okay...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...alright.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: That's okay, you...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...alright...

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COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...only have two,
you don't have to make up a third one.

MICHAEL WHITE: Well I've, I've, I've
asked who the internet providers singular or
multiple are for the NYPL and, and I did also want
to find out about who their third party... they have
a privacy exception for third party providers in
their privacy policy and I would like to get a list
of all the third party's that they...

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...okay...

MICHAEL WHITE: ...are concerned about.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Alright, I thank
you for your time today, I appreciate it and thank
you and I want to get answers to your questions,
okay.

MICHAEL WHITE: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Well thank you
very much Council Member King, I think you got
Michael White to compliment the New York Public
Library on, on a portion of, of this plan and, and
that is, that is not insignificant. So, thank you
to everyone who was here today and I wish everyone
a very, very happy holiday and look forward to this

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project being completed. Thank you again to all of
the library staff who are here to serve and protect
the people who use the New York Public Library
every single day, I know that they're well being is
at the heart of what you do and, and I, I believe
with all of my heart that all of our library
systems are protecting the people who use their
libraries and not exposing them to, to any danger.
So, with that we thank everyone and this hearing is
adjourned.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date December 31, 2016